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Integration of contemporary artworks into the curricula

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

INTEGRATION OF CONTEMPORARY ARTWORKS
INTO THE CURRICULA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Jennifer Crawford

College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Art and Design

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has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in
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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this research was to examine arts-integrated lesson plans that use contemporary artworks to promote relevant learning experiences and also develop skills to transfer knowledge from multiple disciplines. The lesson plans examined were from pre-service teachers who enrolled in a methods class, Contemporary Art in Society, at the University of Northern Colorado. The class provided methods and techniques to teachers for creating arts integrated lesson plans from contemporary artworks.

The findings of this study showed evidence that the methods used in Contemporary Art in Society to instruct teachers how to use contemporary artworks within arts-integrated lesson plans provided them with skills to develop curricula relevant to K-12 grade students because it connects to their contemporary culture. The study also showed evidence that these arts-integrated lesson plans develop skills in transferring knowledge from multiple disciplines. Contemporary artworks aid in the transfer of knowledge by mimicking methods and tools associated with multiple disciplines. When teachers use these artworks as a catalyst for lesson plan designs, the lessons uncover several discipline standards that transcend disciplinary boundaries. Contemporary artworks also use ideas and research from contemporary culture that connect to a student's culture and global world.

Further research is needed to fully understand the strengths of using contemporary artworks as a catalyst for curricular design. In an ever changing world, contemporary artworks might be how we prepare our students to become better citizens and self-actualized individuals in the future.

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER?

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. Paulo Freire (2014), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

The father of progressive education, John Dewey (1938) has argued that educational progress is essential for our democratic society and the advancement of our educational system. In my several years of teaching experience, I still see many teachers creating similar lessons that are taught over and over again each year with little change; even while our world seems to change at a rapid pace, our educational strategies in the classroom seem to remain stagnant. Olivia Gude (2014) recently published an article, *New School Art Styles: The Project of Art Education*, which proposes other ways of teaching content that would provide a more compelling learning experience for students.

This study came from my experience in teaching an education methods class, Contemporary Art in Society, which was about integrating art into the regular classroom curriculum. It also examined how these methods might provide the educational experience Olivia Gude (2014) stated was lacking in our current education curriculum methods:

If we are to evolve education curricular practices that have relevance to the lives of student and their communities, we must imagine an education that is grounded in the realities of contemporary cultural life as well as in the realities of current school settings. (p. 14)

During this University of Northern Colorado class, I asked pre-service teachers what they thought the role of the classroom teacher was in the 21st century and how could they provide a more compelling learning experience for their students

This study examined those and other questions: Does using contemporary artworks in the instruction in a pre-service teacher class provide a compelling learning experience that increases the development of curricular design skills needed to create lessons that are relevant to a student's contemporary culture? Does the use of contemporary art develop skills in students to transfer knowledge from multiple disciplines?

One of the most positive outcomes observed from the students' design of these arts-integrated lesson plans was how contemporary art could help a non-arts education major think creatively and apply it to his/her lesson plans. Another positive outcome observed was how by asking students to view one topic from multiple disciplines, they were able to transfer their skills to another discipline. Students became more interested in important topics from their contemporary culture through their exposure to this artwork. Throughout this methods class, students used "artistic methodologies to experience and interpret the world in fresh ways" that could be used for curriculum design. "Because in a democratic society it is the responsibility of teachers to enable student to understand, participate in, and contribute to contemporary cultural conversation (Gude, 2014, p.14).

This methods class was rooted in approaches taken from the philosophy of progressive education and much of what John Dewey has written on progressive education theory. The articles on arts education and contemporary art assigned to these teachers supported this theory and provided tools and research to these pre-service teachers to discover what they thought their role would be in the classroom. In Chapter II, this study examines several of the articles used in discussion for this class. The ideas covered in the articles included topics in arts education, arts integration, and why and how using contemporary art in the classroom develops traits of mind needed to better prepare students to participate in contemporary culture. Chapter III covers some of the contemporary art used in the methods class to connect the methodology from the readings to actual contemporary artworks. Although the research and literature related to arts integration (including the use of contemporary artwork for instruction) supported the research found in this study, there is still a need for further research in how arts integration and contemporary artwork can aid in the design of better lesson plans. This includes those who can develop skills in the transfer of knowledge that are relevant to the K-12 student's contemporary culture.

Many of the students in this methods class admitted they entered this class never expecting to actually use arts integration when teaching. After these students were introduced to contemporary artworks, artists, methods, and tools for integrating art into their classroom, they changed their minds. Many students admitted that because of this methods class, they were excited to use contemporary art in their lessons when they were teaching. The motivation for this thesis came from witnessing the changed perspective of the students after their learning experience in Contemporary Art in Society.

This study examined lessons created from four methods class students that utilized ways of thinking from other disciplines, uncovered standards by connecting learning through several disciplines to develop skills in transfer of knowledge, and connected learning by relating it to the students' contemporary culture. The results of this study revealed that the use of contemporary art and arts integration methods for curricular design provided a compelling learning experience for both teachers and students.

CHAPTER II

ARTS EDUCATION AND CONTEMPORARY ART

This chapter summarizes some of the readings assigned to students in a pre-service teachers' methods class that were used to support their work in designing arts integrated lesson plans using contemporary artworks. The following articles support how a teacher can create compelling instructional learning experiences by integrating multiple disciplines into one lesson through arts integration and how using contemporary art as a catalyst for learning creates a relevant learning experience for K-12 grade students.

This study questioned how relevant a learning experience is to a student's contemporary culture. For this study, students' contemporary culture was defined as the understanding of the world and culture they inhabit inside and outside of the school day. The book *Rethinking Curriculum in Art* (Steward & Walder, 2005) discussed making curriculum choices for relevancy and provided three areas to consider: "(1) student interests and needs, (2) artistic understandings and processes, and (3) contemporary culture" (p. 111). When a teacher chooses to use contemporary artworks as the catalyst to create integrated lesson plans, he/she considers all of these areas, especially contemporary culture.

This study also questioned how to develop skills in transfer through a learning experience. Transfer was defined in this study as the process of combining multiple disciplines into one lesson to stimulate "engaged inquiry utilizing a variety of methods

drawn from a wide range of disciplinary practices” (Gude, 2014, p. 14). In Julia Marshall’s article, *Five Ways to Integrate: Using Strategies from Contemporary Art*, she discusses that arts integration lessons “focus on key ideas- ideas that transcend disciplinary boundaries” (p. 13). It is this transcending of disciplinary boundaries that helps define what transfer is and how it combines knowledge from several disciplines to deepen the learning and metacognition. In *Rethinking Curriculum in Art*, Steward and Walder (2005) discussed what the arts could do that other content areas did not: “Not only are the arts a rich resource of objectives that speak of human existence, past and present, but they invite--indeed they demand--interpretation of the world in ways that other subject areas do not” (p. 111). It is this demand to interpret the world from multiple perspectives that the arts can richly contribute to a student’s learning experience. Students “will need to have learning experiences that require them to appropriately take knowledge learned in one context and use it in another” (Steward & Walder, 2005, p. 111). Through arts integrated learning experiences, students will develop the skills defined as skills of transfer.

The arts use various tools and strategies (such as metaphor) to transcend discipline boundaries. The book *Rethinking Curriculum in Art* (Steward & Walder, 2005) and Julia Marshall’s (2010) article *Five Ways to Integrate: Using Strategies from Contemporary Art* provide arts teachers and non-arts teachers with a rationale for incorporating arts integration in the classroom through concepts and techniques found in contemporary artworks. Marshall mapped out five strategies that contemporary artists use as practices associated with other disciplines.

- Depiction--rendering a subject from observation

- Extension/projection--speculation about possible outcomes, taking into consideration the impact of a given idea.
- Reformatting—re-contextualizes a topic by picturing it or mapping it in a new visual format.
- Mimicry--using the tool and methods associated with other disciplines.
- Metaphor--the description of one thing in terms of another.

Marshall's (2010) article was given to the pre-service teachers to help with designing an arts integrated lesson, including the lesson plans examined in Chapter IV. This article provided them with five strategies to create a learning experience that would create transfer between disciplines. As a class, we discussed the differences and similarities in thinking practices found in contemporary artworks and other disciplines. For example, "the concept of metaphor crosses disciplinary boundaries; we usually place it in language arts but metaphors are also conveyed visually" (Marshall, 2010, p. 17) .

Most significantly, it is through the arts that many of our metaphors are created. Artists often generate fresh and novel metaphors that disrupt conventional perceptions and induce new insights and understanding. This is one of art's most important functions. (Marshall, 2010, p. 63)

Depiction is commonly used in science and social studies but it is also used in artworks when visually rendering a subject or event. "Perhaps the most radical strategy in contemporary integrative art is mimicking the methods and using the tools associated with other disciplines" (Marshall, 2010, p. 17). The method of mimicry is perhaps the strongest method an arts integrated lesson can use as it can increase transfer and cross disciplinary boundaries. Essentially, through mimicry we understand how multiple disciplines think alike and how we make connections to deepen the knowledge and metacognition from a learning experience.

Dewey's (1938) writings on progressive education promote the idea that schools should improve our way of life and our citizens through experiencing freedom and democracy in schools. Quality education should connect to "a sense of participating in the unfolding of contemporary culture" (Gude, 2009, p. 5). Through these articles and discussion, teachers were encouraged to create educational experiences that used contemporary art for instruction to explore concepts from all areas of inquiry and connect to real life issues and ideas.

Relevancy is important to consider when designing a lesson or unit of learning and delivering new knowledge in a meaningful way that engages K-12 students. The world is rapidly changing and preparing our students for the future become increasingly challenging. Through the work done in this methods class and the artworks examined by these teachers, students will not only consider multiple perspectives that connect to real life issues and ideas but also make these connections through multiple disciplinary methods.

David Darts (2004) wrote about the relevance of students understanding creative resistance as part of their education in his article *Visual Culture Jam: Art, Pedagogy, and Creative Resistance*. This article discussed what creative resistance is and the relevancy of creative resistance in a student's education and contemporary culture. We live in a visually dominated world more than ever before. Thus, teachers must use contemporary artworks to "attend to the complex connections between culture and politics, and evaluate how effectively their courses prepare their student to engage as thoughtful and informed citizens within the contemporary cultural sphere" (Darts, 2004, p. 313). Darts

emphasizes the importance of using this creative resistance for genuine pedagogical value:

Where students and teachers together are able to critically reflect upon and effectively challenge repressive practices and dominant structures that reinforce the inequities of the status quo. Resistance thus becomes both disruptive and creative, a site of thoughtful opposition and a place for reflective inquiry and meaningful engagement. (p. 317)

Creative resistance is found in many contemporary artworks such as Ai Wei Wei (Art 21, 2014) and in street art such as Banksy's (Ellsworth-Jones, 2013). These artists' artworks are the product of creative resistance and what is known as "culture jamming." Culture jamming is a term that refers to artists who stress the critique of sociopolitical issues and social norms as the focus of their artworks. Many of these cultural jamming artworks use the five methods Julia Marshall (2004) talks about including metaphor to visually stress their critique of contemporary society. Rabkin and Redmond (2004) in *Putting Arts in the Picture* discuss the importance of students taking on the responsibility and the risks of being cultural producers, not just cultural consumers. Much of the artworks produced by cultural jammers are works that critique contemporary societies' consumerism and advertising culture. This idea of using creative resistance in the classroom also draws from Dewey's (1938) progressive education theories that schools should improve our way of life and our citizens through experiencing democratic principles. Students who can "read" contemporary artworks and identify the messages and metaphors found in these artworks are developing skills in transfer and learning ideas grounded in contemporary culture.

Rabkin and Redmond (2004) discuss how the arts increase content transfer and raise student achievement in schools that use educational strategies such as arts

integration for cross-curricular instruction. They reference a study by Burton, Horowitz and Abeles that found

evidence that transfer occurred in schools that evoked arts-related competencies in other subjects, arguing that transfer is far more dynamic and complex phenomenon than the conventional notion of a linear connection between prior learning and new problems. (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004, pp. 7-8).

This book also discusses the notion that arts integration is “hard”; the term “hard” implied challenging rather than boring lessons that “remain strikingly similar for several decades” (Gude, 2014, p. 1). During the methods class, we discussed how this challenging or “hard” lesson is what Gude (2014) referred to when asking if there were other ways of teaching content that provided a more compelling learning experience for students.

Social reconstruction in education is an extension of progressive education. Social reconstruction’s philosophy emphasizes addressing social questions as educational strategies to create a better society and worldwide democracy. Arts educator Maria Letsiou (2011) has written about social reconstruction and issue-based arts education in her article *Issue-Based Art Education and Creative Inquiry Process and Art Intervention and Social Reconstruction in Education*. Letsiou mapped out for teachers how to use the artistic process, similar to the scientific method, for educational methods of inquiry, research, and evidence-based arts education. The focus of issue-based art education is to integrate the visual arts with social, political, and cultural themes examined through the exploration of art materials (Letsiou, 2011). Issue-based art education emphasizes addressing, questioning, and researching socially engaging topics, in a way that mimics how many contemporary artists work today. This process includes doing research on current social topics from various cultures and content areas, examining issues, and

finding resolutions through the discussion of their artworks. Artists who create effective and socially challenging contemporary artworks demonstrate a deeper awareness of an issue, ask the viewer to consider solutions, while also making connections between multiple perspectives.

These issues are often contentious and cause conflicts among people. Art within a different context often becomes a research tool by focusing sometimes on visuality, other times on art practice as research and other times by recording critical consideration of social and other issues. (Letsiou, 2011, p. 2)

These strategies promote learning experiences that are compelling and can change year after year depending on the interest of the students. Not only do many of these artists cover topics students are interested in but they also demonstrate the habits of mind students will need to develop to transfer knowledge within their present contemporary culture to their future contemporary culture.

In *Art Intervention and Social Reconstruction in Education*, Letsiou (2012) argues that social reconstruction can happen through arts education if the education is relevant to social problems. She encourages the use of contemporary art to shift the teaching and learning practices into a paradigm for social reconstruction through education as an intervention for the students and teachers. Letsiou also argues, “The ideology of social reconstruction can be an umbrella for these learning objectives and issue-based teaching is the teaching methodology that must be adopted” (p. para. 6). This method of teaching naturally connects to multiple perspectives from different content areas, standards, and differentiated methods of teaching to increase transfer and relevancy in arts integrated lessons. For example, issue-based art education integrates personal concerns with social, political, and moral issues by creating discourse on contemporary and controversial issues while integrating science, social studies, reading and writing, math, and art into

one lesson. This integrated teaching develops traits of mind that improve the ability to think analytically and use good interpretive skills when questioning the world. The instruction does not separate content areas but is an interconnected weaving of all content areas. In conclusion, Letsiou and Darts (2004) remind us that to use art intervention or creative resistance as a teaching method can cause us to question our role as teacher. They also remind us of the levels of power and knowledge with regard to the teacher-student and student-teacher perspectives. We are just facilitators of the learning experience.

CHAPTER III

SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY ARTWORKS

This chapter consists of a survey of contemporary artists and their artworks used during the pre- service teacher arts method course at the University of Northern Colorado taught through the College of Performing and Visual Arts. The course was designed to instruct future teachers in how to examine the role of the arts in contemporary society and how to integrate other content areas with the arts to create arts integrated lesson plans. Teachers were introduced to contemporary artworks and encouraged to share opinions and ideas of how to use these artworks for an arts integrated lesson. The following survey examines these artworks through other discipline areas and shares the ideas generated during the methods class for incorporating these artworks into a lesson.

For the first day of class, students viewed the music video *Bad Girls* by artist M.I.A. (2012), a contemporary British recording artist, songwriter, painter, and director. The *Bad Girls* video was used as an introduction to ask students to decode visual metaphors and to consider how contemporary artworks engage students in a relevant way (M.I.A., 2012). The video showed women in leopard skin patterned breaks driving cars fast and doing tricks in the car such as donuts and only having two wheels on the ground. The visual metaphors found in the artwork were women driving in what appears to be Saudi Arabia and wearing non-traditional stylish breaks, which indicate a contemporary culture. With further research, the class discovered that Saudi Arabia has an underground

driving culture where traditionally woman cannot drive. After many questions and discussions around the video and the images presented, many of the teachers decoded that the video addressed women's rights in Saudi Arabia, particularly the right to drive (Flock, 2012). Viewing this music video was used as an introduction to the course in hopes teachers would begin to discover how the power of art could bring an understanding of different perspectives on current cultural topics and to demonstrate the possibility of transfer knowledge from perspectives as a method for cross pollination to develop more effective and compelling instruction.

After discovering the issues around women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia, many of the teachers became passionate about the topic and did further research outside of the classroom, which was not part of any assignment or grade for the course. These teachers were inherently developing skills in transferring knowledge from one discipline to the next to create deeper meaning from the visual images presented in M.I.A.'s video and by reading and researching this topic from several news sources including music journals. The intrinsic satisfaction of learning was also triggered by discussing a topic of interest or relevance to this pre-service teacher population. Many of the teachers in this methods class were young females who found the topic of interest as well as finding it appalling that women in Saudi Arabia could not experience the same rights they had in the United States. This lesson thus again exposed these teachers to the power of art and provided a compelling learning experience.

The artwork of Michael Ray Charles (Art 21, 2014) generated enthusiastic discussions in the methods class regarding stereotypes. Charles's paintings are executed in a loose, graphic style that questions "Blackness" through visual metaphors of racial

stereotypes while mimicking American advertising techniques and styles. Charles said the images he studied and painted into his artworks were just as much White as they were Black. Teachers were asked to identify the visual metaphors exposed in Michael Ray Charles's artwork (see Figure 1). *Forever Free: 'Servin with a Smile'* metaphors were identified as an image of the Pillsbury doughboy but instead of being White, the doughboy is Black. Teachers at first had a hard time discussing his artwork and avoided discussing the actual topic of racism. Teachers discovered through Charles's artwork that art could open a conversation up that is sometime hard or challenging for students. For this particular artwork, the class discussed Charles' visual metaphors of showing the stereotypes of whiteness and blackness from this time period in history. The title suggested a possible meaning of this visual metaphor while also leaving the teachers to question what "Forever Free" might stand for in contemporary U.S. culture. Through this activity, teachers were asked to think about their own life in terms of racial stereotypes. In doing so, students began to mimic Charles' thought process in terms of understanding their own contemporary culture's stereotypes through multiple disciplines and perspectives in social studies, history, writing, marketing, advertising, and art. Charles mimics American advertising as the method of delivering his message and exposes how advertising has perpetuated stereotypes of Black people throughout history (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Michael Ray Charles (1994), Forever Free: 'Servin with a Smile'.

Using Marshall's (2004) terms, teachers discussed Charles' (1994) artwork in the context of reformatting and mimicry. In terms of reformatting, Charles borrowed images from the past and altered those images to create a new meaning while also using the methods found in past advertising as a form of delivering a new message. Most of the artworks presented in this course formed a rupture of teachers' conceptual norms of their

own cultural and hopefully introduced the teachers to multiple perspectives or ways of thinking about stereotypes. This rupture of multiple views is something often found in contemporary artworks and is what Darts (2004) often describes as creative resistance. The rupture asks the viewer to look at the artwork from multiple perspectives and to consider using methods of thinking from multiple disciplines. These contemporary artworks were used in this methods class to engage teachers to consider the effects of contemporary art on their own cultural perspective and how these work could ultimately provide students with the skills to become free-thinking individuals.

Another artist studied in Contemporary Art in Society was Mark Dion. Dion's (Art 21, 2014) *Neukom Vavarium* is the largest of his artworks and connects discipline skills in science and art by using methods of sculpture, architecture, environmental education, and horticulture to create his artwork. Dion also mimics methods and tools used in art, science, curation, and history in his *Cabinets of Curiosities* (see Figure 2) where he questions the perceptions forced upon us from the past and presents us with a new classification system. Dion's artworks bring to our awareness the past and present classification systems we see in museums of all types and everyday life. Dion discusses in his Art 21 interview that the way we see objects presented, especially in museums, can shape our perceptions and understanding of the world. In the arts method class, teachers discussed how Dion's artwork challenged them intellectually and socially to rethink what they once knew as fact from scientific classification and began to reconsider other possibilities from multiple social perspectives and from multiple disciplines.



Figure 2. Mark Dion, *Cabinet of Curiosities*, 2005.

The artwork *Neukom Vivarium* is an installation of a 60-foot-long planter in an 80-foot-long, custom-designed greenhouse set on a slab under the glass roof of a greenhouse. The artwork was created by removing a fallen tree from the local rainforest out of Seattle, Washington and preserving its ecosystem by displaying it as a man-made greenhouse located at the Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle (see Figure 3). Its ongoing decay and renewal present a view into the complex systems and cycles of the processes of life. Visitors may observe the various life forms on and within the log using magnifying glasses supplied in the installation or by opening Dion's Cabinets of Curiosity inside the installation to experience Dion's (Art 21, 2014) classification system. The installation inhabitants range from bacteria, fungi, lichen, plants, and insects--all are illustrated as field guide scientific drawings on blue and white tiles around the artwork (Seattle Art Museum, 2014). Methods teachers were asked how to use *Neukom Vivarium* to create arts integrated lesson plans and combine discipline tools and methods from science and art. The class found Dion's work an easy fit to create arts integrated lesson plans, which would promote transfer between disciplines and interest students in grades

K-12. Dion's artwork is also relevant to L-12 students because it connects to ecology and environmental changes in contemporary culture.



Figure 3. Mark Dion, *Neukom Vivarium*, 2006.

Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla (Lisson Gallery, n.d.) are contemporary artists who work collaboratively to create artworks that are an effective fit for creating arts- integrated lesson plans. Their artworks are ironic and humorous, which always piques a student's interest. The artworks are also politically, socially, and intellectually challenging and use methods of extension/projection, reformatting, mimicry, and metaphor. Allora and Calzadilla's artworks are rooted in research that often takes the form of an experiment by questioning ideas of authorship, nationality, borders, democracy, and today's increasing global and consumerist society. Teachers in this methods class found these artworks rich in metaphor but sometimes challenging to decode even though they enjoyed the irony and humor of the artworks. This is what makes Allora and Calzadilla's artwork so interesting to use for lesson plans; their artworks

often have a vague message that allows viewers to find their own voice in interpreting the artwork.

A repeated theme in Allora and Calzadilla's (Lisson Gallery, n.d.) artworks is to "identify and stress the hairline fractures in societal systems--nationhood, environmentalism, states of war and resistance--through performance, sculpture, sound, video and photography"(p. 1). It is this hairline fracture that introduces us to the multiple perspectives wherein we begin to think from multiple disciplines to decode some of the possible metaphor in the artwork.

For example, in *Chalks* (see Figure 4), we may look at this artwork as an actual piece of chalk from a chemist's view point. But we may also think of chalk as an instructional tool in the classroom that K-12 students may connect to this artwork through playful experiences with sidewalk chalk. Allora and Calzadilla's (Lisson Gallery, n.d.) ways of thinking and working include meticulous research on materials, history, culture, and politics that are used throughout their artworks. In class, we looked at Allora and Calzadilla's artwork to identify examples of Marshall's (2004) *Five Strategies*. In *Chalks*, Allora and Calzadilla produced a powerful artwork that is also an important piece of research into democracy, public voice, civics, social studies, and science. *Chalks* invites passersby to participate in the artwork by using human size pieces of chalk placed in public squares around the world in countries with a democracy such as Lima, New York, and Paris. Those passing by are invited to write their political thoughts on the sidewalk. The artwork is an extension/projection into a study of what democracy is for these countries. For example, in Lima, Peru, government agents took the artwork away after several passersby wrote on the city sidewalk in front of the government capitol their

political thoughts and opinions. Teachers in the methods class discussed the irony that presented itself through this artwork. Peru is considered a democracy but the chalk was arrested, symbolizing the people's voices, and their words were washed away with water. Teachers found this artwork connected easily with studies into social studies and science regarding human reactions, documenting research, and questioning differences of opinion from multiple perspectives on a topic. They also saw this artwork as a way to mimic a social studies experiment in their own school where students would document the findings and chart the results.



Figure 4. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, *Chalks (Lima)*, 1998-2006.

Allora and Calzadilla (Lisson Gallery, n.d.) represented the United States in the 2011 Venice Biennale with an exhibit titled *Gloria*. The Venice Biennale equates to the Olympics of the art world and *Gloria* exemplified this analogy. The six artworks by these artists that teachers in the methods class looked at questioned the relationship between art, politics, national identity, and international identity. Teachers connected

these artworks from the *Gloria* exhibit with the familiar Olympic games, corporate sponsorships, war, and America. The first artwork we looked at in class was the work titled *Track and Field* (see Figure 5). This artwork was a life-size tank turned upside-down in front of the U.S. pavilion. The tank's tracks were actually running with a running treadmill atop of it; an athlete from the U.S. Track and Field team was running on the treadmill on top of the tank. In class, we talked about irony, juxtaposition, and the use of familiar objects as methods Allora and Calzadilla routinely used in their artwork that helped connect the viewer to the artwork. Visual metaphors in their artwork were often presented in the form of questions, e.g., why is the tank upside down and what does this say about military or the United States military? Teachers struggled with some of Allora and Calzadilla's artwork but most of them saw a connection to ask students to find their own meaning in the artwork or discover a question they could answer through research. One teacher reminded us that the only time the Olympics were cancelled was because of war. Most students found this connection strong for trying to make a relevant learning experience for students while helping students understand the impact of war and how it affects everyone's life--even countries not involved in the war.

The second artwork we looked at was *Armed Freedom Lying on a Sunbed* (see Figure 6). This artwork was a scaled down replica of the statue on top of the U.S. capitol, *Freedom Triumphant in War and Peace* and sometimes also referred to as *Armed Freedom*, lying horizontal, which is unusual for a sculpture, inside an elaborate electric sun bed that was on (using halogen lighting) and glowing blue. Although this artwork piqued the interest of the students, they had some trouble decoding the metaphors and meaning behind the work. The big questions asked from the methods class and from this

work were how this work represented what we know as America. Many teachers discussed America's need to look the best and possible obsessions to vanity. Teachers also used the name of the artwork as a metaphor, which created a conversation as to what it means to be armed and free living in America. Because Allora and Calzadilla (Lisson Gallery, n.d.) live in Puerto Rico, one must also question their patronage to America—they are not actually allowed to vote in the territory in which they live. Conversations and discussions around Allora and Calzadilla's artwork promoted teachers to create arts integrated lesson plans to combine a sculpture of two objects--one representing a metaphor of America and the other creating a juxtapose or irony about what we know as America. This method is what Marshall (2004) refers to as extension/projection in speculating about possible outcomes, taking into consideration the impact of a given idea by placing two objects together to create a new meaning.



Figure 5. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, *Track and Field*, 2011.



Figure 6. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, *Armed Freedom Lying on a Sunbed*, 2011.

Algorithm is another artwork that allows teachers to see how to integrate several content areas through an arts integrated lesson plan that promotes a learning experience of high transfer and relevancy from multiple perspectives presented by the artists (see Figure 7). This artwork by Allora and Calzadilla takes your pin ATM code and turns it into a personalized musical score performance. The ATM machine is attached to a life-size pipe organ, which plays a musical score based on an algorithmic pattern from your PIN code. To start the performance, the viewer or participant places his/her ATM card into the machine; by entering the PIN code, he/she starts the performance and the music begins to play. The music continues to play during the transaction; once the transaction is complete, the music ends, thus ending the performance. Method class teachers discussed the juxtaposing of church pipe organs to an ATM machine. The artwork also included the consumer as part of the performance and the questions associated with algorithms, especially when looking at religion, currency, and consumerism. Using these

artworks, as a class we created arts integrated lesson plans that combined social studies and art, asking students to consider their own opinions of current political issues.



Figure 7. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, *Algorithm*, 2011.

Judi Wertheim (The Tate, 2007) is an artist from Argentina who uses mimicry in her artworks to address economic justice and human rights. As a class, we discussed the visual metaphors found in Wertheim's artwork that addressed immigration and economic justice. The biggest metaphor was the sneakers were made in China and crossed several borders but the people the sneaker was designed to help cross the board could not. These topics are relevant to Colorado residents and invite discussions from many points of view. *Brinco* is a high-top designer sneaker produced in China by the same factories as Rebook and Nike and is equipped with several features to aid someone attempting to illegally cross the U.S. border from Tijuana, Mexico to San Diego, California (see

Figures 8 and 9). Brinco in Spanish means “jump”; it is slang to describe people who cross the border illegally, referred to as “jumping the border.”



Figure 8. Judi Werthein, *Brinco*, 2005 (sneaker).



Figure 9. Judi Werthein, *Brinco*, 2005 (special features).

Brinco sneakers are equipped with

- A compass and small flashlight.
- A map of the Tijuana, Mexico to San Diego, California border in the inner sole.

- A Mexican eagle embroidered on the back of the shoe, showing where they came from.
- Front of the shoe has the eagle sign found on the U.S. dollar coin representing where they are going.
- The back of the sneaker has an image of Santo Toribio Romo, the official saint of the Mexican migrants, recognized as such by the Vatican.
- Colors refer to the Mexican flag.
- A secret pocket to hide money.
- Two Tylenol painkillers because many people get injured during crossing the La Sierra Mountains, a three-day trek.

Wertheim (The Tate, 2007) also embroidered the shoes with the following words:

“This product was manufactured in China under a minimum wage of \$42 a month working 12-hour days” (p.1). Approximately 1,000 Brinco high-top sneakers were produced in China--500 sneakers were given away to immigrants about to cross the border illegally and the other 500 were sold in high-end, one-of-a-kind sneaker boutiques in California and New York for \$250.00. The proceeds from the sale of those sneakers were donated to a shelter on the Tijuana side. Wertheim referred to her artwork as the Brinco Project. This project addressed economic issues of global trade including how goods can cross any border but people cannot. These works of art acted as a research project for Wertheim to examine people--the immigrants saw the sneakers as an object to help them cross the border and were not concerned with the name or designer. The opposite was true in the United States, which saw the high-top sneaker as an object of desire in a consumerist society. Wertheim juxtaposed high-top designer sneakers to

crossing the Mexican to U.S. border. *Brinco* created space for the difficult discussion of immigration among people who might share very different opinions. In the methods art class, students discussed Werthein's work through metaphors, mimicry, and reformatting what we know as borders.

Werthein (The Tate, 2007) collaborated with Leandro Erlich in another artwork project, which was exhibited during the 2000 Havana Art Biennial in Cuba. *Turismo* was an installation of a Swiss Alps/Hollywood-ish style, snowy landscape design for Cubans to pose in front of to have their Polaroid photograph taken as if they were vacationing in the Swiss Alps (see Figure 10). The images captured a fabricated reality inherent to tourist pictures juxtaposed against Cubans in which their reality to be a tourist is unimaginable and inaccessible. Again, Werthein's artwork provoked a difficult conversation by using the artistic tool of juxtaposition to create the space for a difficult discussion to exist.



Figure 10. Judi Werthein, *Turismo*, 2000.

In 2001, Werthein (The Tate, 2007) was part of an exhibit at the Bronx Museum titled *One Planet Under a Groove: Hip-Hop and Contemporary Art*. For this exhibit, Werthein created an installation titled *Manicured*. The installation was a professional nail salon where participants could make an appointment to have their nails professionally painted by a nail manicurist. The manicurist would paint one of the 10 works of art displayed on the wall from the museum's collection. In the room, she had chairs and a table with magazines as in a waiting room and two televisions playing Spanish soap operas. Again, Werthein juxtaposed a nail salon against an art museum's collection to create the space for a difficult discussion about socioeconomics of high art versus low art (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. Judi Werthein, *Manicured*, 2001.

In 2008, Werthein (The Tate, 2007) created her artwork, *Das Land Der Freien* (*The Land of the Free*), exhibited as an eight minute, two channel video installation with sound. The video documented the performance of a group of Colombian native performers who were displaced to urban areas of California because of the drug wars between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (RAFC) and Colombian

paramilitary units. Werthein asked these Colombian natives to perform *The Star-Spangled Banner*. They were only given the words of the song. The musicians sang the words using their native instruments, rhythms, and language. Werthein videotaped the performance and created subtitles of the literal translations of the words. Something interesting happened in translation--band members would sing “you say you can see” instead of “oh say can you see.” Werthein again juxtaposed two cultures against the lyrics of a song. Werthein said what could not be said through her artwork and created the space for difficult discussions to happen (see Figure 12).



Figure 12. Judi Werthein, *Das Land Der Freien (The Land of the Free)*, 2008.

The power and ability of the artist to say what cannot be said is something artists do through multiple perspective and mimicking methods from multiple disciplines. Contemporary artist use these methods to expose students to topics and ideas that are relevant to their contemporary culture and global culture. Opening a student’s eyes to multiple view points and multiple methods of thinking are skills students will need to become contributing, free-thinking individuals for a better society.

Other artists who could have been included in this survey were Amy Youngs, John Cage, Beck, Martha Graham, Anna Deavere Smith, and including the power of performance ethnography--a branch of anthropology dealing with the scientific description of an individual's culture.

CHAPTER IV

EXAMINATION OF LESSON PLANS CREATED USING CONTEMPORARY ART

This chapter examines arts-integrated lesson plans created by four University of Northern Colorado pre-service teachers who participated in an education methods class: Contemporary Art in Society. Originally, the lessons were part of an end of the semester assignment for the teachers. Some of the requirements for the assignment were as follows:

- Choose a living artist who expresses an enduring idea that integrates several content areas together in their artistic thinking.
- Provide a brief history of the artist and his or her artwork that you have found through research. Analyze the work(s) of art, use the terms you received the first week of class, or any terms you learned through your reading and class.
- Provide at least *five* questions you could pose to your students about the artwork(s) and your enduring idea that would encourage or create higher-order thinking dialogues from your students.
- Create a lesson using this work of art as a way to uncover standards and content(s) to be covered in a classroom. Tell us the standards you will uncover.

- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation around your artist with images or links to video or music if needed.

Students were asked to consider the following questions when choosing their artist and lesson plan design:

- How is contemporary art being produced today connect to the school curriculum?
- How does the thinking of a contemporary artist help us understand society and the world we live in today?
- How can the art being produced today be used to strengthen student's metacognition of a curricular idea?
- What are some of the unique ways in which artists think?
- How can those ways of thinking help them gain a deeper understanding of their contemporary cultural and the world they live in today?
- How can this knowledge make learning more relevant to a student's education?

The four pre-service teachers who provided permission to use their lessons for this study (see Appendix A for Institutional Review Board approval and Appendix B for Consent Form) chose contemporary artists Ann Hamilton, Mark Dion, Ai WeiWei, and Sarah Sze. All four artists are living and working artists. The lesson plans were examined using three criteria for this study: (a) which strategies they utilized using mimicry from Julia Marshall's (2004) article, (b) how they uncovered multiple standards, and (c) how the lesson provided a relevant learning experience for K-12 students.

Strategies in mimicry from Marshall's article were examined to see if the lesson provided students with a learning experience that promoted using the tools and methods associated with other disciplines. The second area of examination looked at the strengths in uncovering standards from multiple disciplines in one lesson that connected ideas that transcended disciplinary boundaries. The third area of examination measures whether the lesson plans considered relevancy in providing a learning experience that connected to a K-12 student's interests, needs, and contemporary culture. Although these areas were not part of the original assignment for the methods class, they were discovered after the lesson plans were submitted for the course. Some of the lesson plans did not receive the highest scores for the assignment but considering that some of the students in the class were very skeptical about using the arts to integrate, the lessons showed the potential of how learning through contemporary art could provide a compelling learning experience for both the teacher and the student.

The first lesson plan examined the artwork of Ann Hamilton (Art 21, 2014) entitled *The Event of a Thread* (see Appendix C). The artwork is a beautiful, whimsical installation piece located in the large Armory building in New York City. The artwork consist of swings and large hanging drapes that are all attached by a thread-- the viewer participates in the installation by swinging on the swings and the whole installation comes alive with the cloth moving in the raising and lowering of the swings' motion. The installation also has sound coming from small speakers wrapped in paper bags of a recording of poem readings from the day before. The name comes from Anne Albers's description of weaving--a horizontal and vertical crossing of a thread.

The arts-integrated lesson plan used Ann Hamilton's *The Event of a Thread* (Art 21, 2014) to incorporate fifth grade Science, Reading Writing and Communication, and Art standards with a potential tie to Social Studies. This lesson plan used Hamilton's artwork to connect to Standard 2 of Life Science: Human body systems have basic structures, functions, and needs. The lesson plan explains, "The class would use Hamilton's installation as inspiration as they create a visual representation of how all of the different systems of the human body connect" (see Appendix C). Using the visual images from Hamilton's artwork as a metaphor for how the body's systems rely on each other and impact each other mimics how a scientist thinks about the body's systems while also deepening the knowledge through metaphor. Colorado Department of Education's suggested inquiry question for this standard was: How are organs impacted when different body systems fail to work correctly? The visual metaphor that every part of life is connected to the weave of our life is visually represented in each thread of the artwork. Just like the artwork, if one system is out of balance, it can cause other systems to fail to work correctly or vice-versa. Seeing this teacher make such a strong connection to Hamilton's artwork was something I did not expect so many of these teachers to make. The lesson plans designed by this teacher promoted metacognition into multiple discipline areas by transcending disciplinary boundaries. The use of relevancy in this lesson for fifth graders' interest is the use of the swings and playful aspect of the artwork. Although this might be a stretch for relevancy, the lesson also connects to a student's need to understand respect and citizenship in contemporary culture; what we do, say, and act on impacts the thread and weave of our daily lives and the lives of others.

This lesson plan also incorporated the Common Core Reading Writing and Communicating, Standard 4: Research and Reasoning: High-quality research requires information that is organized and presented with documentation. Instructions for this arts integrated lesson plan are that through small research projects, students would explore different systems. From analyzing the information they collected, students would determine which body systems connected with each other. Students' findings from their research would be delivered to the class by creating a string model of the human body systems. Using the model, students would be able to decide if being interdependent on each other meant the systems needed to all work together and be properly doing their part. The performance piece in this lesson mimicked the processes found in Hamilton's *The Event of a Thread* (Art 21, 2014) but the lesson also mimicked Hamilton's use of research and showed evidence of research through performance or artwork. Research is something students K-12 will need to know how to do in their contemporary culture but Hamilton's artwork is a fun and creative catalyst to interest students in developing research skills. The lesson also included the following questions to interest students in making their own connections to the artwork through transcending discipline areas:

- How would you explain to your parents why the fabric moves in all different directions?
- How would it look different if only one of the swings was swinging, or hat if none of the swings was swinging?
- Why do you think Ann chose to have so many swings?

- Is it better when all of the swings were moving together; so are there times when people need to work together similar to the swing, to make things better?
- What are some advantages of working together with others?
- Why do you think it is important for you to be able to work together with you classmates?

The lesson asks students to work in groups to conduct research on a specific human body system and how this system functions independently and with other systems. This lesson asks student to mimic skills of research and working together, which are skills students will need to develop for the future. Another standard this lesson might also uncover is social studies in understanding how we all work: (a) how we as humans connect and work together and (b) how our contemporary cultural is connected and works together. The end performance of this lesson asks students to connect each body system together with strings and perform how each system “pulls” or affects the other system. This group project/performance/research-based, arts-integrated lesson plan mimics the metaphors found in Ann Hamilton’s contemporary artwork by exhibiting student’s metacognition in understanding transfer of knowledge from several disciplines while also designing a fun and interactive lesson that is a relevant learning experience for fifth grade students

The second lesson examines the use of contemporary artwork by Mark Dion (Art 21, 2014; see Appendix D). This fourth grade lesson used Dion’s *Cabinets of Curiosities* to mimic the thinking process associated with science classification and understanding organisms and their habitats. Fourth grade students will be asked to create their own

“Cabinet of Curiosity” based on an assigned habitat. Students will research, plan their cabinet habitat, and decide how to organize the information in their habitat. Each cabinet should be unique and exhibit multiple perspectives of how to organize thoughts and information. This assignment used the artwork and thinking process of artist Mark Dion as a catalyst for learning. Teachers found the work of Dion easily integrated with other disciplines because his artwork transcends so many boundaries, especially science. The teacher who designed this lesson made the connection that these cabinets contain artifacts based around a central theme placed together in a thought out manner and designed to evoke curiosity and a new way of thinking about the way museum displays influence our understanding of different things. The lesson designed from Dion’s artwork exhibited relevancy in meeting the students’ needs in allowing them to develop and voice their opinion on deciding how they saw classification systems from their perspective. This lesson is also relevant to a fifth grade student’s contemporary culture in his/her interest in decorating and organized the shelves in his/her bedroom with parts and piece of his/her life and what he/she thinks is important to them. The lesson included questions to increase transfer of knowledge between disciplines, such as

- In what ways can Mark Dion’s work be thought of as art?
- In what ways is his artwork science?

Through these questions and the use of Dion’s artwork in this lesson, students begin to break the barriers between disciplines and mimic the thinking process of contemporary artist, e.g., Dion’s process of questioning scientific classification and how we interpret the world around us. Some additional questions this lesson could ask are did Dion choose to organize the objects on display? What objects do you think he left out? What

objects would you choose and what classification would you give them? These questions allow students to mimic how a scientist and artist think to create a new meaning from knowledge.

The science standard in this arts integrated lesson was Life Science: All living things share similar characteristics, but they also have differences that can be described and classified. One of the suggested 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies inquiry questions from Colorado Department of Education (Core Standards, 2014) for this standard was: How have classification systems changed over time? The use of Dion's artwork in this lesson not only mimicked the thought pattern used to answer this question, it also transcended discipline boundaries between science and art to create a strong connection to science standard and art standards into museum curation. The teacher for this lesson understood that Dion's artwork questioned past and present classifications we see in museums, science, and everyday life. The ways we see objects presented, especially in museums, shape our perception and understanding of the world. Dion's (Art 21, 2014) artwork questions these perceptions of the world that are forced upon us presented to us by others. This lesson asked students to present a their own way of thinking and looking at an organism's habitat, challenged students to think independently about their own contemporary cultural, and to think free and independently in a democracy. This activity also had the potential to develop the habit of mind artists use when creating a work of art:

The things that artists do all the time are things that kids need to be able to do-- forming alternative solutions to a problem, working with other people, being persistent, adjusting something after you've made a choice, taking responsibility for decisions, looking at options. (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004, pp. 24-25)

Ai WeiWei (Art 21, 2014) is a very controversial artist and activist who creates socially engaging contemporary artworks. His artworks are deeply rooted in challenging past and present perceptions of history and mimic methods and tools of an activist. Much of Ai WeiWei's work could be described as challenging or "hard" for elementary age students because his topics are heavy on human rights and government violations of these rights. Because of this hard or heavy content, this teacher chose to write her lesson plan for high school age students. The teachers used Ai WeiWei's artwork to uncover standards from multiple disciplines--science, social studies, and art (see Appendix E). The objective of this lesson was for students to use their knowledge of plate tectonic theory to understand the cause of natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis while connecting those natural disasters with the tragic loss of human life during these events to uncover standards in social studies. The lesson connected Ai WeiWei's *Remembering* artwork to something relevant to a high school student's contemporary culture and life by discussing death and the remembrance of someone he/she lost. The artwork is a large installation that uses 9,010 children's backpacks of different colors to spell out the phrase, "She lived happily for seven years in this world"--a phrase said from a mother of one of the seven-year-old children who passed away in the earthquake. The artwork is a memorial to the thousands of children who died in the 2008 earthquake in China due to poorly constructed government school buildings. The title of the exhibit *So Sorry* is said to be in reference to the generic apology the Chinese government delivered to the citizens for the death of these thousands of children. Ai WeiWei's work provided a powerful metaphor and reformatted a visual image of the strong emotion of this event had for all its viewers and readers, almost shocking them to

perceive this natural disaster from multiple perspectives including a child's perspective. This lesson transferred the power of a natural disaster event that ended in destruction and death to the scientific explanation found in science textbooks. The Colorado Department of Education (Core Standards, 2014) learning standard this lesson connected to was Earth Science: The theory of plate tectonics helps to explain geological, physical, and geographical features of the Earth and natural hazards have local, national, and global impacts such as volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and thunderstorms. Some suggested inquiry questions for this standard were as follows: Why are some natural hazards difficult to predict, while others are easier to predict? How are humans impacted by natural hazards? How can we prepare for natural hazards? All these suggested questions have a connection to the artwork *Remembering* by WeiWei to create a learning experience of high transfer, building upon past knowledge to create a learning experience to deepen knowledge and to connect this knowledge to a real world learning and human experience for relevancy. For this lesson, students are asked to choose a natural disaster that has happened in the last 20 years and research both the scientific and social effects of the disaster. From their findings, students will then create a work of art that reflects the effects of this natural disaster, i.e., poem to the victims, diorama of the destruction, or a model of a memorial for the citizens lost. This lesson has the potential to deepen a student's awareness of the complexities of a natural disaster, its effects on society through the transfer of knowledge found in WeiWei's artwork, the impassive information found in textbooks on natural disasters, and the emotional, societal effect of a natural disaster, which also creates high relevancy in this arts-integrated learning experience.

The fourth lesson examined the artwork by Sarah Sze (Art 21, 2014) entitled *Still Life with Landscape (Model for a Habitat)* (see Appendix F) to connect scientific habitats and architectural design of these habitats. *Still Life with Landscape (Model for a Habitat)* mimics the skills of an architect, sculpture, and scientist who studies habitat and creates an interactive space for viewers and animals to experience. Sze's artwork is described as installations that balance whimsical with ecological themes in interconnectivity and sustainability. Using the artwork *Still Life with Landscape (Model for a Habitat)* located in New York at the Highline Park for an arts-integrated lesson, students are engaged in the study of various habitats to deepen an awareness and understanding of the complexities of animal and human habitats and how they connect to each other. The lesson objectives are beautifully written:-

Objective: Students will learn about the seven different ecosystems and the components that make it up each one. Using this knowledge, they will uncover Sarah Sze's art piece *Still Life with Landscape (Model for a Habitat)* and discuss it according to the previous knowledge of ecosystems. Students will then gather information on a particular animal and design their own piece in accordance with the information gathered.

This lesson promoted a learning experience with high transfer between student's previous knowledge of habitats and applying knowledge from Sze's habitat and the research of an animal's habitat. Evidence of this transfer will take on visual evidence of their learning through their habitat design. This lesson integrated Science Standard 2: Students know and understand the characteristics and structure of living things, the processes of life, and how living things interact with each other and their environment. Higher order thinking questions created by the teacher using Sarah Sze artwork included: What is the importance of ecosystems and artists like Sarah Sze? This question revealed multiple layers and perspectives for students to consider about their own cultural sphere habitat.

This question could probably be refined to: What is the importance of ecosystems including artist like Sarah Sze to our society? The question implies that artists like Sarah Sze are an important part of our ecosystem, which helps with skills in deepening a student's awareness of what defines an ecosystem and how that ecosystem functions and works together. In so many ways, the examination of these students' arts-integrated lessons shows us the importance of artists like Sarah Sze who create contemporary artworks as an important part of our educational ecosystem.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS

Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform.
(Dewey, 1938)

Olivia Gude (2014) believed there are ways of teaching content and standards that provide a more compelling learning experience for students. This study sought to examine if contemporary art could act as the catalyst to provide teachers with skills in developing curricula that would provide a compelling learning experience for K-12 grade level students. The findings of this study were based on four lesson plans created by pre-service teachers from Contemporary Art in Society, an educational methods class on the techniques and methods for integrating art into the curricula. The use of contemporary art in these lessons exhibited strengths in ideas from current cultural topics that interest students in grades K-12 as well as using contemporary artworks methods in mimicking tools associated with other disciplines to help students develop skills in transferring knowledge and methods of thinking from multiple disciplines.

The contemporary artworks the pre-service teachers used for their lesson plans mimicked skills of knowing from multiple disciplines. The lesson using the artwork of Ann Hamilton's *The Event of a Thread* (Art 21, 2014) showed how social studies, science, and art came together in this contemporary artwork to make a deeper cognizant connection to the meaning of cause and effect. The lesson uncovered standards from

science, reading and writing, and art into one arts-integrated lesson that utilized the contemporary artwork by Hamilton using swings and play in the artwork as a perfect fit for a fifth grader's interest. The lesson that used Ai WeiWei's artwork (Art 21, 2014) connected scientific facts to the emotional facets of a natural disaster--something that is hard to fully comprehend for many students who are just reading passive information in a text and have never experienced an event of that magnitude. The lesson that used Dion's *Cabinets of Curiosities* (Art 21, 2014) used contemporary art to teach skills in scientific classification. Students learn to see classification systems from multiple perspectives and question how classification systems are organized. Allowing students to provide their own perspective can lead to understanding one's own thinking patterns and perspectives from others.

The required skills students will need to answer many of the questions found in these arts-integrated lesson plans will require deduction and analysis, skills students will need to develop in their unfolding contemporary culture (Gude, 2009, p .5). Teachers in this methods class discovered how to use contemporary artworks as a catalyst to develop a curricular design skill that will prepare students with the habits of mind to be better educated, self-actualized individuals who participate in a democratic society (Gude, 2009, p. 6). These types of learning experiences are what John Dewey (1938) and progressive education philosophers believe the education system and teachers should be providing to our students for the future.

Teachers and policymakers often speculate how educational practices can improve our future way of life and prepare citizens to participate in a democracy. The teachers in the Arts and Contemporary Society educational methods class repeatedly

discussed what they thought their role in the classroom would be in the future. I reminded them that the skills we once believed students needed to know in the 20th century have now changed in the 21st century. The ideas of what we need to prepare our students for will continue to change just as contemporary art continues to change with time. The only constant in life is change so education should constantly be changing. This study begins to question how contemporary art could be used to develop better curricular design for a K-12 educational experience through history and for the future of education. More research is needed to see if the changes in contemporary art making are also the possible changes education should be following.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



Institutional Review Board

DATE: September 13, 2013

TO: Jennifer Crawford, Masters in Art Education

FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [494827-2] Integrating Contemporary Art in the Classroom.

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: September 12, 2013

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX B

**CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
IN RESEARCH**



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Integrating Contemporary Art in the Classroom

Researcher: Jennifer Crawford, UNC - PVA College of Art and Design

Phone Number: (970)351-2443

e-mail: Jennifer.Crawford@unco.edu

UNC Advisor for this project will be Dr. Connie Stewart. (970)351-2426 or connie.stewart@unco.edu

And Tom Stephens. (970)251-2243 or Thomas.stephens@unco.edu

UNC PVA 310 Students,

The purpose of this research is to study University of Northern Colorado Teacher Candidates' lesson plans. Two areas of research will be conducted for this study: a survey of contemporary art works that can be integrated into other content areas and a review of arts integrated lesson plans created by teacher candidates attending UNC. As a participant I would review any arts integrated lesson plans voluntarily submitted by you for the research. The research will analyze your lesson plans and you may be asked to answer several questions about your lesson plans via email or by phone. These responses will be conducted as often as once a month during the Fall 2013 semester and will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your responses will remain confidential in the research findings and all information will be safely stored in digital form on my password-protected computer. This data will also be kept with my advisor Dr. Connie Stewart, in a School of Art & Design office. All identifiable data will be destroyed three years or less after the completion of this research. No grade will be administered for your response and it will have no bearing on your grade for PVA 310.

Results of the study will be presented to my advisor and other Art Education faculty at UNC. All original paperwork will be kept in locked cabinets on campus in the School of Art & Design office.

Risks to you are minimal. You may feel anxious or frustrated answering questions or uploading your lessons as an attached document to an email, but we are trying to minimize these feelings because the results will have no bearing on your final grade or employment. Though this study will have no impact on your standing in this course; the benefits to you include gaining practice in interviewing, written responses, techniques that may help with your teaching techniques and the future of education and art education.

Participation in the study is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. After signing your document, please scan and email it back to Jennifer.crawford@unco.edu or mail to Office of College of Art & Design, Attn: Jennifer Crawford, Guggenheim Hall, Campus Box 30, Greeley, CO 80639 to indicate your permission of participation. You may keep this form for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Subject's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

ANN HAMILTON LESSON PLAN

Ann Hamilton

Questions

The following are some questions that would be helpful in prompting a student discussion relating Ann Hamilton's *The Event of the Thread* to teamwork and its importance.

- 1) How would you explain to your parents why the fabric moves in all different directions?
- 2) How would it look different if only one of the swings was swinging? If there were none swinging?
- 3) Why do you think Ann chose to have so many swings?
- 4) So it was better when all of the swings were moving together, are there times when people need to work together?
- 5) What are some advantages of working together with others?
- 6) Why do you think it is important for you to be able to work together with your classmates?

Lesson Plan

Purpose: For students to understand that all of the systems of the human body depend on each other, and therefore all need to be working properly for the body to function.

Grade: 5th

Colorado State Standards:

Science:

- 2.2.b Analyze and interpret data to generate evidence that human systems are interdependent (CDE).

- 2.2.d Create and evaluate models of human body systems and organs (CDE).

Reading, Writing, and Communicating:

- 4.1.a Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic (CDE).

Objectives:

- Students will be able to conduct research on a body system.
- Students will be able to conclude which systems depend on others.
- Students will understand why the body systems need to all work together.

Artist Inspiration:

Ann Hamilton is a contemporary artist who created an art installation called *the event of a thread* in which all of the different swings are needed in order to keep the whole silk curtain moving constantly. I would show my class the video of the installation and have a discussion with them, using the questions listed earlier, about the importance of working together and how all of the swings are working together to make the silk move. The class would use Hamilton's installation as inspiration as they create a visual representation of how all of the different systems of the human body connect. They will use string to connect all of the different systems just like Hamilton connected every swing to the silk using chains. However, instead of wanting to keep something moving like Hamilton's silk, the students will try to keep their string from moving around, but they will find that it is only possible if the systems are all doing their jobs. This activity, inspired by Ann Hamilton, provides a visual and tactile way to see how all of the body systems work together to keep a body functioning.

Lesson Introduction:

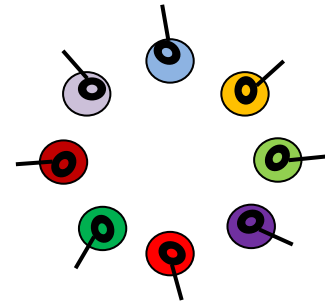
The human body has many different systems: skeletal system, nervous system, digestive system, etc. With so many systems, do they have to work together to keep us alive? In this lesson, students will discover that all of the body systems work together to keep us alive. Through small research projects, students will explore the different systems. From analyzing the information they have collected, the students will determine which body systems connect with each other. With their conclusions, they will create a string model of the human body systems. Using the model, students will be able to decide if being interdependent on each other means the systems need to all work together and be properly doing their part.

Procedure:

- 1) Show students the video on Ann Hamilton's *the event of a thread*.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fJ4umqXGjM&feature=player_embedded>
- 2) Have a discussion on her artwork and what it shows about working together (Using questions listed above).
- 3) Introduce lesson by asking students if they think the systems of our body have to work together like the swings in the video.
- 4) Assign students different body systems. Have them conduct small research projects on their assigned system; specifically determining what systems their system connects with. Prompt them with questions such as:
 - How many nerve receptors are there in our muscles?
 - How much energy does it take to digest food?
 - How is blood pumped through the body?

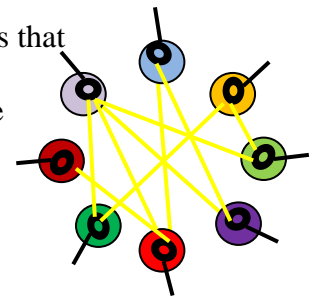
- 5) Have students share projects.
- 6) Give the students a worksheet with all of the different systems written on it. Using information from the projects, have students draw lines connecting systems that depend on each other.
- 7) Discuss the worksheet as a class and determine the correct answers.
- 8) Split the class into groups.
- 9) Have each group take colored dots (one for each system) and lay them in a circle on the floor.

- 10) Place one medium-sized ring with a black string attached to it on each dot with the string extending to the outside of the circle. Each black string is labeled as a different body system.



- 11) Explain that the ring/black strings represent different systems and the dots represent proper functioning. So to keep the body functioning healthy, the rings need to stay over the dots.

- 12) Have the students take white strings and connect the systems that they had determined depend on each other. For example, the nervous system ring would have a string tied from it to the cardiovascular system ring and the muscular system ring and etc. So in the middle of the circle should be a web of crisscrossing strings showing all of the different connections.



- 13) Have one student holding each of the black strings.

- 14) Call out different scenarios and have the students react accordingly. Example:
Teacher says, “The heart fails.” So the student holding the string for the cardiovascular system pulls their ring out of the circle and off their dot to show that it isn’t working properly. All of the rings that it was connected to are then pulled off their dots.
- 15) Ask students what this means.
- 16) Repeat with other scenarios.
- 17) Have a discussion about how systems were affected by other systems and how this means the systems depend on each other.
- 18) Have students answer questions on a worksheet on why the systems must work together to keep the body functioning properly.

APPENDIX D

MARK DION LESSON PLAN

Mark Dion

Questions for Higher-Order Thinking

1. In what ways can Mark Dion's work be thought of as art? In what ways is his work science?
2. In what ways can we use art to shed light on scientific issues in the world? (ex. loss of biodiversity)
3. How does using art to make a statement about a global issue make an impact?
4. How are art and science different? How are they the same?
5. Does art have any relationship with subjects other than science, such as History or English?

Lesson

Grade- 4th

Content area- Science

Topic- Habitats

Standard- 2.) Life Science

1. All living things share similar characteristics, but they also have differences that can be described and classified
 - a. Use evidence to develop a scientific explanation for similarities and/or differences among different organisms or species
 - b. Examine, evaluate, question, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media to investigate questions about characteristics of living things

2. There is interaction and interdependence between and among living and nonliving components of the ecosystems
 - a. Use evidence to develop a scientific explanation on how organisms adapt to their habitat
 - b. Identify the components that make a habitat type unique
 - c. Compare and contrast different habitat types
 - d. Create and evaluate models of the flow of nonliving components or resources through an ecosystem
 - e. make a plan to positively impact a local ecosystem
 - f. Examine, evaluate, question, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media to investigate endangered habitats

Connection to Contemporary Artist- Mark Dion Curiosity Cabinets

As a final project after learning about habitats, including what they are, where they are, and what they are composed of students will create their own curiosity cabinets like artist Mark Dion.

Lesson-

Students will create their own Curiosity Cabinets to display items representing different habitats in an end of the year science project. Throughout 4th grade students will learn about many different habitats and the relationships between the many organisms in these habitats. The Curiosity Cabinets they create will be a visual representation of these many habitats.

Start lesson by providing students with background on Mark Dion as an artist and his Curiosity Cabinets.

Background-

Mark Dion is a contemporary artist who creates unique art installations by combining scientific discovery and process with art methods. He works with habitats in many of his pieces and challenges the way we see the world with his Curiosity Cabinets in museums around the world. These cabinets contain artifacts based around a central theme placed together in a thought out manner and designed to evoke curiosity and a new way of thinking about the way museum displays influence our understanding of different things.

Have students watch this short video of the assembly of “Oceanomania” Mark Dion’s largest curiosity cabinet in the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s73iJHF_QKg

Discuss what kinds of things the cabinet contained around the central theme of ocean.

Explain students will create their own cabinet based on their assigned habitat. (Students can all have the same habitat or many different ones)

See Attached List for Habitats.

Students can use any form of presentation they would like including anything from a 3D shoebox model with real life artifacts to a drawing with different pictures.

Students must include:

- a representation of the kind of animals that live in the habitat
- 1 unique thing about the habitat
- any environmental problems within the habitat i.e. deforestation or endangered animals
- Cabinet must be visually appealing and well planned out
- The cabinet must include different sections
- must stand alone as a visual representation of the habitat

Students will plan their cabinet and research their habitat to decide what is appropriate to include. Each cabinet should be unique.

Students will turn in their planning along with the cabinet.

Students will also answer question- How can art help us learn in science?

Assessment will be based on students planning and researching efforts and how well they were able to depict their habitat in a creative way through their curiosity cabinet.

Habitats may include.

- Desserts
- Rainforest
- Grasslands
- Urban areas

- Tundra
- Coastal
- Coniferous Forest
- Mountains
- Fresh water (lakes or rivers)
- Salt water (oceans)

Many of these can be further divided into more specific regions. Habitats will need to be specific to those studied previously.

APPENDIX E

AI WEIWIE LESSON PLAN

Ai WeiWie

Five Questions

1. What message is Ai Weiwei sending by breaking and/or painting over ancient pieces of pottery? Is his message conflicting with his actions?
2. Do you think it is right, permissible, useful, beneficial for Ai Weiwei to destroy an ancient artifact? Why or why not?
3. How have values changed from ancient society to contemporary society? Should we preserve old values, should we move forward and progress, should we try to do both? How? Why?
4. Is it important to memorialize loss/death? Why or why not? How do you/could you memorialize a loss in your own life?
5. How does Ai Weiwei's work question/challenge the establishment? How is free speech important to a democracy?

Lesson Plan

Content Areas: Earth Science (Plate tectonic theory)

Colorado State Standards: High school

Plate tectonic theory allows for prediction of natural hazards and their impacts.

(SC09-GR.HS-S.3-GLE.3-EO.a,b,c;IQ.4;N.3)

(SC09-GR.HS-S.3-GLE.7-EO.a,b,c;IQ.1,2,3,4;N.1)

Objectives: Students will use their knowledge of plate tectonic theory to understand the cause for natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis. Students will also make a connection between natural disasters and the loss of human life.

Plan:

1. Teacher will use power point presentation to review the theory of plate tectonics and the natural disasters that they can cause. Then teacher will ask students if they have personal experience with such an event, and allow up to 10 minutes for discussion.
2. Teacher will present give brief presentation and explanation of the earthquake on May 12, 2008, in Sichuan province, China. This earthquake killed about 70,000 people and left over 18,000 missing, according to the *New York Times*. The *New York Times* also states, “Thousands of the initial quake’s victims were children crushed in shoddily built schools.”
3. Teacher will then present Ai WeiWei’s art installation *Remembering* which memorializes the death of these children in the earthquake. Teacher will also lead a short discussion about reaction to this event and to Ai WeiWei’s art.
4. Students will choose a natural disaster that has occurred in the last twenty years that happened because of moving tectonic plates. Students will do research of the scientific cause of this event and the human outcome of this event.
5. Students must create some kind of art that reflects the effects of this natural disaster. This presentation may be a poem about the victims, a diorama of the destruction/effects, a clay sculpture dedicated to the families of the victims, or any other creative project students can come up with. All project ideas must be pre-approved by the teacher, however. The main goal of this is for students to understand the scientific explanation for this event and then to make a human connection.

6. Students will present their projects in front of the class. In this brief presentation they must explain why the natural disaster happened, and the human connection they made with it. They must then explain their piece of art: the inspiration, the meaning, the message, to whom it is dedicated, etc.

Evaluation:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 Points | Selection of natural disaster caused by plate tectonic activity in last twenty years. Students will lose points if their event was not caused by plate tectonic activity or if it occurred more than twenty years ago. |
| 10 Points | Scientific explanation of cause of event and statistics of event.

Students will lose points if they do not include any numerical statistics such as number of casualties, magnitude of earthquake, size of tsunami, size of volcano, size of area affected, etc. |
| 15 Points | Artwork inspiration and explanation. Students will lose points if their artwork does not make a “human” connection. Students will lose points if the connection between their artwork and the event is unclear. |

APPENDIX F

SARAH SZE LESSON PLAN

Sarah Sze

Science/Art Integration

Grade Level: 5th grade

Science Standard: Standard 2--Students know and understand the characteristics and structure of living things, the processes of life, and how living things interact with each other and their environment.

Objective: Students will learn about the seven different ecosystems and the components that make it up each one. Using this knowledge, they will uncover Sarah Sze's art piece "Still Life with Landscape (Model for a Habitat)" and discuss it according to the previous knowledge of ecosystems. Students will then gather information on a particular animal and design their own piece in accordance with the information gathered.

Materials Needed:

Pictures of "Still Life with Landscape (Model for a Habitat)"

PBS Art21 segment *Sarah Sze in "Balance."*

Big poster paper

Computers

Computer paper

Colored Pencils

Ordinary materials (plastic bottles, sticks, cotton balls, aluminum cans, anything metal, etc.)

Lesson Description:

Day One- Students will first be introduced into Sarah Sze's contemporary artwork

“Still Life with Landscape (Model for a Habitat).” Original reactions will be shared with the class and discussed. Following this, the students will watch the PBS Art21 segment *Sarah Sze in “Balance.”* This will provide them with more insight into the piece of artwork and how while it is a sculpture, it also is an experiment and is more than just something “pretty” to look at. A discussion about the segment will be held, about what they learned and what they saw, making sure they understand the crucial points made.

Day Two-Eight- Students will learn about what the scientific definition of an ecosystem is, a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment. Each day, for the next seven days, they will learn about a different type of ecosystem: forest, desert, grassland, mountain, aquatic, marine, freshwater. For each type of ecosystem, they will learn about the environment, the key animals and plants that inhabit that environment, and where it is located throughout the world. The students will also learn about how the environment influences the animals and plants that inhabit the ecosystem. A big poster will be created each day, as a class, listing the information learned on each ecosystem and will be hung up to be left on the wall.

Day Nine- Sarah Sze’s artwork will be re-shown to the students. A discussion about how it has become an important aspect of the area for birds and insects will be held. Also, we will discuss about whether or not this piece of work would be considered an ecosystem. The students will

then break up into small groups of three to four and do research on an animal located in the Colorado area. They will find out about the ecosystem it lives in, the food it eats, the requirements it needs to live, etc.

Day Ten- In the research groups from the previous day, students will then design their own contemporary artwork that serves as an “ecosystem” for the animal they choose, similar to what Sarah Sze did. They will make drawings and use materials brought in to accomplish their design. Each group will then share their animal and design with the class, explaining their thought process behind everything they did.

Day Eleven- To end and wrap up this lesson, an in depth discussion over the higher order thinking questions will be held as a class.

Higher Order Thinking Questions:

1. After learning about Sarah Sze’s artwork and ecological ecosystems, what is an ecosystem?
2. After learning about Sarah Sze’s artwork and ecological ecosystems, what is needed to create an ecosystem?
3. Is Sarah Sze’s “Still Life with Landscape (Model for a Habitat)” an ecosystem? Why or why not?
4. Should artwork be something just for exhibits or should they have a dual purpose like Sze did? Why or why not?
5. What is the importance of ecosystems and artists like Sarah Sze?