

DRAWING ON THE ARTS:
THE MANITOBA ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM
AND THE ARTS CONNECTION

BY

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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**Drawing on the Arts:
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Pamela Ball

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
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MASTER OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

A review of the literature suggests that the benefits of including the arts in the school curriculum can be broadly categorized in the following four ways. The arts are our cultural legacy, they give us multiple ways and means of communication, they release the imagination using diverse approaches to explore critical and creative thinking and they are connected with life lessons. In this study, the benefits of the arts in a student's schooling and the inclusion of the arts in high school English programming with reference to the Manitoba English language arts curriculum and its viewing and representing strands are explored. This investigation was a qualitative study focusing on the perspectives of two English teachers, an ELA consultant, as well as the researcher's personal voice. Through open-ended interviews and conversations with the participants, as well as the researcher's personal insights as a source of meaning, common and emergent themes about the arts, the viewing and representing strands of the high school Manitoba English language arts curriculum and the implementation of the curriculum were uncovered. The findings yielded many commonalities among participants' responses. These centered on the themes of teachers, students, curriculum and school. Implications of these findings include the importance of providing in-service training, allowing time for teachers to collaborate with their peers, opportunities for teachers who embrace the arts in the English curriculum to workshop other teachers and the re-organization of teachers' timetables in high school to accommodate same grade level disciplines.

Dedication

The completion of this thesis could not have been possible without the guidance and support of many people. Firstly, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Renate Schulz, for helping me to direct my efforts and for her unfailing support and guidance. I would also like to thank the 3 exceptional teachers who were willing to participate in the study and who gave up so much of their time to be interviewed. Even though you cannot be named, you know who you are and I value our friendship. Last but definitely not least, I would like to express my sincere thanks, gratitude and love to my family. To my husband, Garth, for your unending encouragement and love, to my children, Bronwyn and Brendan, for your understanding and support when my studies and writing took me away from home, and finally to my mom, for being a wonderful role model and for always believing in me.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction: Sketching Out the Situation

The Background

Being an experienced teacher at all grades levels and in many different subject areas, I have collaborated with, spoken with and taught with many teachers over my 24 years in the school system. Even though the content area for my teaching has changed throughout the years, my student-centered focus in teaching has never wavered. I had taught English and Art for 17 years in a junior high setting and then was given the opportunity to teach English in a high school. After having worked in a junior high milieu for so many years, entering the high school world was quite a change. I became increasingly aware that teachers seemed to be at varying stages in their acceptance of the new English language arts curriculum and the inclusion of the arts.

During the last decade, North American schools have been devising new curricula to include the arts, with the common belief that visual art, drama, dance and music have the power to humanize the curriculum. The arts are neither Canadian nor American, but “universal in their appeal and importance for the development of a child’s physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual strengths” (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p. v). Larson (1997) contends that the arts and humanities are poised to become leading contenders in school reform. The Manitoba English language arts curriculum, released in the 1980’s, reflected an evolution and change in thinking about the ways in which language learning was accomplished. The rationales listed to support this study of English language

arts are comparable to the reasoning behind the importance of the arts in a student's education. The various components which make up the curriculum, reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing, require the teachers to include the arts in their teaching by providing opportunities "for students to interact with a variety of oral, print, and immediate texts from a variety of forms and genres"(Senior 1 English Language Arts Implementation Overview, 1998, p.35). This is especially true for the viewing and representing components although all strands are able to include an arts component. Through informal discussions with colleagues, it seemed that embracing the new curriculum and adhering to its various components was a "hit and miss" proposition with teachers in the schools. The research questions I am exploring for my thesis address the issues concerning the new English language arts curriculum and teachers' views on the importance of the arts in a high school student's schooling. In this research study, the term "the arts" refers to the visual arts, drama, dance, and music and focuses on the viewing and representing components of the Manitoba English language arts curriculum. Given all the benefits of the arts cited in the literature and outlined in Chapter 2, what do teachers *believe* and *think* about the importance of the arts in a high school student's schooling? Are the curriculum documents being used fully, in part, or not at all? How are teachers incorporating the arts, via the curriculum and the viewing and representing strands, into their programs?

These were the questions I had in mind and where better to get the answers from, then from the direct source, the teachers in the field. My study,

which includes the perspectives of two English teachers, an English consultant as well as my own personal perspectives regarding these issues, will hopefully paint a clearer picture of the situation.

Research Methodology - Qualitative Research

The transformation in the way we think about research in education, shifting from quantitative to qualitative research methodologies and acknowledging that the researcher's subjectivity and personal knowledge is valid as part of the inquiry process, was significant to me. I wanted to tell my personal story and that of others in the field, as it related to curriculum. This led me to search out a field of inquiry that I could embrace as well as one that would prove valuable to teachers for their professional growth. Qualitative inquiry, as Eisner (1998) explains, "can provide the double advantage of learning about schools and classrooms in ways that are useful for understanding other schools and classrooms and learning about individual classrooms and teachers in ways that are useful to them" (Eisner, 1998, p.12). I began with the thoughts of exploring my own stories of experience as an inquirer and those of others to discover truths in the experience of living and teaching. As the researcher and the principal data collection instrument, my goal was to try to understand how the teachers, who were my research participants, felt about the arts and its inclusion into the curriculum.

Qualitative researchers are interested in insight, discovery and interpretation. To gain insight and a greater understanding, I conducted a

qualitative inquiry that focused on teachers' views regarding the arts in general, their feelings and opinions concerning incorporating the arts into a school curriculum, and their understanding of the viewing and representing component of the English language arts curriculum. I gained entry by seeking out two teachers and a language arts consultant who were willing to participate in the study and were teachers who I believed, understood the English language arts curriculum. I then received formal permission for them to be a part of the study from the school division. Semi-structured, open-ended audio-taped conversations / interviews with the two Winnipeg high school English teachers were my primary data sources. The two teachers who I interviewed were a first year male teacher and a veteran female teacher who has many years of experience. Both teachers use the arts in their programs and are from the school where I once taught. There were benefits to knowing the teachers and having taught with them in the same school, for it allowed me to have a better understanding of the participants and I knew the context of their responses. However, it required careful listening on my part and I had to be attentive to the participants so as not to make unwarranted assumptions or conclusions. I was also aware that the participants knew of my arts background, and this could create biases. To flesh out the context within which these teachers are teaching, I also interviewed the English language arts consultant to get a sense of the division's position regarding curricular implementation. As well, I wanted her personal views on how the curriculum is being used in the majority of the high schools that she is connected with.

I conducted an initial one hour audio-taped interview with each teacher and an hour long interview with the consultant at a location designated by the interviewees. For these initial interviews, I raised a few general questions regarding their views on the arts, their experiences with the arts in the schools as well as their work with the English language arts curriculum. I used the same general questions to begin the interviews with both the teachers and very similar questions for the consultant. The initial questions are listed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allowed the participants to respond to a few focused questions but there were also unscheduled questions and other relevant issues raised by the research participants. Eisner (1998) contends that in qualitative research, flexibility and unexpected or unscheduled turns occur and this contributes to richer data. The emergence of something unanticipated during the course of my investigation and interviews was not unexpected. For example, when the teachers all spoke of high school organization and the students of today, even though this was not anticipated, it has significance. This is the essence of a qualitative inquiry in that the course of development cannot be planned and controlled and there is always the necessity to be flexible, and to make adjustments that are appropriate in order to remain in touch with what the teachers feel is important.

After the interviews, in order to ensure trustworthiness and to establish a check on the data, I shared my transcript notes and emerging understandings with the participants so that they could corroborate what I was hearing and inferring. The participants were able to make written comments on the

transcripts and after my close reading, and taking into consideration their written comments from the first interview, I conducted a second and third hour-long, semi-structured audio-taped interview with the two teachers. The open-ended, unstructured interview allowed the participants to speak naturally while I was able to guide the conversation to the issues at hand. Each teacher also spoke of successful assignments that focused on the arts in their English programs and these examples are also included in the study. Pseudonyms were used to protect their confidentiality. The transcripts from all interviews were read thoroughly for recurring themes and from this, the emergent themes that reflected the teachers' and the consultant's beliefs, values, practices, understandings, concerns and successes, were identified. My professional reading in this area of study, my own use of the English curriculum and the cited benefits of the arts were also used as a way of informing my understanding of what the teachers were saying. The high school English curriculum is used as an additional framework against which I interpreted the teacher's statements.

While interviewing teachers with their rich source of information on how they perceived the situation, I have also kept a sense of my voice, a personal tone and personal insight as a source of meaning. My personal bias could tend to colour the interpretation of data but being cognizant of this, I have told the story of the participants while weaving my personal story into it. My personal narrative and being able to examine my own convictions is an important part of the study.

An unstructured interview was necessary to encourage a conversation so that the interviewed teachers would have the opportunity to tell their story in relation to a number of broad questions. I could study teachers' experiences and beliefs and follow where they lead with the data collection tool being the unstructured interview. The research interview as an inquiry into personal experience can be simultaneously focused in four directions. According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), *Inward* focuses on the internal conditions, *Outward*, the wider environment, social roles and relationships, and *Backward and Forward* refers to the temporality of experience that acknowledges the sense of history. For myself, the stories I heard evoked my own experiential memories, and all of these stories will hopefully be able to, in turn, influence the readers of this research. As noted by Cortazzi (1993), for real change to occur in curriculum at the student level, teachers' experiences and thoughts must be taken into account. Research must then aim to learn more about teachers' perceptions and daily classroom practices. This study delved into the insights of these three teachers regarding the arts and their teaching practices. It also provided the opportunity for me to explore my own personal convictions.

The Importance of This Study

When thinking about seeing and broadening one's understanding, using the metaphor of visual art, one must truly see in order to make changes and create. According to Eisner (1998), "seeing is central to making. Seeing, rather than mere looking, requires an enlightened eye: this is as true and as important in understanding and improving education as in creating a painting" (Eisner, 1998, p.1). The significance of the arts and the relevance and importance for the inclusion of the arts into school curriculum is well documented. Manitoba's provincial ELA curriculum documents encourage diverse approaches for exploring critical thinking and multiple ways of communicating. Stressing the importance of culture and the life connected lessons realized from the arts, is now a part of the curriculum. The use of this newer, mandated curriculum document is important especially with the inclusion of the various components necessary for our ever-changing world. In the newest book by Eisner (2002), he states that "it is important for teachers to recognize that nonlinguistic and nonquantitative forms of representation should be a part of the programs" (Eisner, 2002, p. 205). Are the Manitoba English Language Arts documents, specifically regarding the arts related components, being used fully, in part, or not at all? How are the two teachers that I will be working with incorporating the arts into their programs? What are their feelings about it and how well do they understand the various aspects of the curriculum, particularly, the viewing and representing components? My interviews with the two teachers and the consultant, as well as my personal voice, will hopefully shed light on these

questions and invite others to look where I looked and to see what I saw. The importance will be both in what I learn from this study and the insights that the research participants gain about their own practice. As Eisner (1998) suggests, a study whereby teachers are able to have their voices heard, has the potential of being useful at many levels. The participants will learn more about their classroom practices in ways that will be useful to them and at the same time, I, as well as those in other classrooms, will be able to gain a new understanding of these issues.

Chapter 2 – The Benefits of the Arts

Background

According to Cornett & Smithrim (2001), the relevance of and reasons for the inclusion of visual arts, music, drama and dance in school curriculum is well documented and the many authors who write on this topic, group the benefits in various ways. In synthesizing the various ways in which noted curricular theorists and educators such as Elliot Eisner (1994, 1998, 2002), Fowler (1996) and Gardner (1983) categorize the benefits, I have chosen to group the benefits in the following four ways:

1. The arts are our cultural legacy.
2. The arts give us multiple ways and means of communicating.
3. The arts release the imagination using diverse approaches to explore critical and creative thinking.
4. The arts are connected with life lessons or aspects of humanness that embody a solid base for the foundation of an upright and respectable citizen.

Our Cultural Legacy

The arts show us what we were yesterday and what we are today. They reflect our relationship to time. Much of what we call civilization and culture is stored in the art that has been created by each generation. As stated by Cornett and Smithrim (2001), the arts are the fundamental component of all cultures and

time periods because the history of the human species is told through stories, art, drama, dance and music. Culture can be connected to culture and the emotions of ancestors can be felt through the various subject matters of the arts. One's culture is also important in the school milieu where there is such a diversity of culture and where so many different languages represent these cultures. "In Toronto and Vancouver over a hundred languages are now spoken by schoolchildren" (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p.4). Similarly, in our own setting in Winnipeg, we must gain an appreciation and understanding of the valuable contributions of each culture and one source for this understanding is the arts. The arts are our heritage and their value lies in being able to provide a neutral ground to learn about histories, skills, values, beliefs and multiple communication symbols. Building a sense of identity among students and expanding the worldview of people of varying races and ethnicities can be facilitated through the arts.

Unique to the arts is what they teach us about ourselves and about other people. Moody (1990, p.166) contends that "the arts can establish a basic relationship between the individual and the cultural heritage of the human family". One of the greatest gifts one people can give to another is to share their culture. A revealing way to do this is through the arts. Our deepest values can be shared with others when we share artistic creations across cultures. With today's technological advances that seem to foster individualistic pursuits, recognizing our similarities and understanding our differences can establish a solid base for cultural respect with the arts being the common heritage shared by all. As

Fowler (1996) states, the arts enable students to interact with the culture and today our pluralistic, multi-ethnic culture requires more, not less, cultural understanding. The arts can bridge differences and open many avenues for human understanding.

The arts can supply vibrant modes of teaching and learning that celebrate the diversity of our population and promote understanding. As Fowler (1996) states, the cultural aspects of the arts add a dimension to education that is beneficial to all students. The arts can teach students about themselves, about other cultures and at the same time give them an appreciation for the arts. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and representing are the six strands or components of the English language arts curriculum in Manitoba, with the most recent additions being the viewing and representing components. Including viewing and representing in the English language arts curriculum “acknowledges both social change and an evolving understanding of the way language learning takes place” (Senior 1 English Language Arts: Implementation Overview, 1998, p.11) and also addresses many aspects which are connected to the arts. Viewing and representing specifically recognize the aspects of culture, imagination, as well as the different ways of learning and communicating.

My teaching for the past ten years took place in a multicultural school environment where the slogan, “Together We’re Better”, was stressed. I taught Art and English incorporating the visual arts, drama and music into my programs. I felt that my students gained a respect for the other cultures in the classrooms, were able to have a greater understanding of others, and parents and teachers

benefited as well. The assignments that I created helped students to explore their roots, their values and the events taking place in the world today in relation to the past. Students created paintings and sculptures, viewed films, analyzed and listened to music, acted out scenarios and participated in a variety of assignments that led them to evaluate their role and place in the world. I found that the viewing and representing components spoke to the intrinsic value and the overall importance of the arts to education in my English classes. However, the arts can and should be a part of the other strands of reading, writing, listening, and speaking as well. While teaching in the junior high, most teachers included the arts in their English programming, however, when I began teaching in the high school, I discovered that this was not the case. This led me to speculate whether or not this was only my observation or did others see what I saw? I was also interested in the teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the viewing and representing components of the English language arts curriculum, the strands that focus on the arts in the curriculum.

Multiple Ways and Means of Communication

The arts are the most basic and most essential forms of human communication; they are the most important aspects of civilization and culture, preserved in art, drama, dance and music, and they help us make meaning of our deep feelings and significant thoughts. In the creation of an artistic work, whether it is through the visual arts, dance, music or drama, communication by the artist and the viewer is taking place. The purpose of the arts is to supply

insight, wisdom and meaning, telling us about the people, their feelings, thoughts and values. They are powerful tools of communication. "Each of the arts functions as a communications system that has allowed people through the ages to articulate observations, interpretations and possibilities" (Fowler, 1996, p. 49). The arts are an expression of the beings that create them and are responsive to people. They communicate by putting us in touch with each other as the arts are by the people and for the people. The arts touch everyone, ensure a connection between all kinds of people and should be a part of basic education.

The study of the arts teaches students to be communicators of their thoughts, feelings and ideas. It also helps students to learn to give, to accept, and to follow constructive criticism. According to The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities & Arts Education Partnership (1999), inclusion of the arts helps students to "listen courteously and critically as others speak; become more logical, more direct, and more creative in organizing thoughts for presentation; learn to control the fear of speaking or performing before an audience, and, as a result, become a more confident person" (Longley, 1999. p.61).

In our information society, if one cannot communicate effectively, one is handicapped. All art forms are a means of communication, and education in the arts is primarily a search for meaning. Our life stories are relayed and recounted through the ages and being able to view the world through different perspectives opens the door to understanding. Fowler (1996) believes that the schools of today need to give students access to their expressive and communicative being

and access to participation in creating their own world. He believes that in the process of overselling the sciences, mathematics and technology as the panaceas of commerce, schools have denied students this access. According to Fowler (1996), the mechanisms for communicating both the ennobling and the starkly revealing scope of human life cannot be put at stake. The classical arts represent a value system to be prized and valued as civilization's languages, through which dreams, feelings and understandings can be realized.

When students actively engage with artistic content and connect with others, they take risks and intensify the quality of their interactions. A drama production, participating in a music concert or having one's artwork on display is communication between the viewer and the creator. Being able to assess the true value of experiences with the arts is not always as tangible as some would like it to be. However, when students work as a team to mount a production, when students communicate with each other through various mediums and when students deal with audience acceptance or rejection, it has been my experience that the impact is profound.

Imagination

The arts give students multiple ways to experience and express the world and their relationship to it. Cornett and Smithrim (2001) contend that "life in the 21st century demands citizens who have diverse approaches – people who will readily use intuition, as well as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to make judgments with moral ramifications" (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p.4).

Involvement in the arts prepares students for a world that wants creative problem solvers and artistic thinkers for, in the real world, problems and questions seldom have just one answer. Our economy depends on imaginative people, individuals who can imagine and create products for the world. To prepare for a world that is constantly changing, students need enthusiasm sparked by creative discovery and by playing with ideas. They achieve this motivational energy from the arts. Creative thinking or thinking "outside the box" is important and as Uchida (1996) states, "students will need to think laterally and rely on flashes of insight that go far beyond the traditional reasoning process" (Uchida, 1996, p. 17). According to Moody (1990), the arts can make a unique contribution as they require a high order of abstract reasoning. The arts are unique in respect to the ambiguities they comprise. There are very few absolutely right or wrong answers, and this requires one to exercise a higher order of thought processes. This creative thinking and dealing with complex problems is what Elliot Eisner (1982) refers to when people deal with their personal relationships with others, at home and in the workplace.

Maxine Greene (1995) concentrates on imagination as a means through which one is able to work towards the creation of a logical and sound world. She believes that imagination makes empathy possible because it is the one cognitive capacity that permits us to give credence to alternative realities. The imaginative capacity allows us to experience different points of view, and according to Greene (1995) "it may be the recovery of imagination that lessens the social

paralysis we see around us and restores the sense that something can be done in the name of what is decent and humane” (Greene, 1995, p. 34).

Strong support for arts-based learning comes from Howard Gardner (1983) and according to his theory of multiple intelligences, the arts are dimensions of human power. They are major civilizing forces that help us to learn how to feel and are a part of what makes people well educated. The arts offer a variety of ways to develop different kinds of cognition. According to Fowler (1996), they can enhance and enliven education and “add dimensions that improve the effectiveness of education” (Fowler, 1996, p. 161). Each person possesses unique qualities of intellectual capacity, personality and behaviour and the arts are the best medium to accommodate individuality. Gardner’s theories of multiple intelligences show the shortcomings of certain tests that are used in schools which measure only the achievements in verbal and mathematical ability. According to Blythe and Gardner (1990), intelligences seldom operate in isolation and this view of understanding is an important reason for the inclusion of the arts since they provide ways of transforming one’s ideas and feelings using nonverbal and verbal approaches. Howard Gardner (1983), in his writings about multiple intelligences, believes that even though no intelligence is inherently artistic, each can be used to create or understand artistic works. He has shown that the human mind has several different cognitive capacities and as each person’s profile is different, education should provide opportunities to develop all these capacities.

The arts require abstract reasoning and Elliot Eisner (1982) brings this to life outside of school. He reminds us that we deal with the ambiguities of right and wrong and what is appropriate or relevant when facing the difficult decisions that we are so often required to make in the adult world. The arts offer a variety of ways to develop different kinds of cognition while stimulating the imagination. Maxine Greene (1995) sees the arts as providing insights that are inexhaustible to assist in understanding the mysteries of life. "They allow us to imagine in new realms and to 'break through the boundaries' of linear, logical thinking and go beyond the confines of a single reality. Educating artistic intelligences nurtures more awareness" (Fowler, 1996, p.40).

Jensen (1998) explains that movement is a pleasure link to the brain and the arts are strongly linked to emotions with the most significant learning occurring when the emotions are integrated with instruction. He discusses this power of movement as an element in learning and states, "Give a school a daily dance, music, drama, and visual arts instruction where there is considerable movement, and you might get a miracle" (Jensen, 1998, p.87). Since the arts offer many ways to develop diverse methods of cognition, education should provide the opportunities to further this development. Students use imagination and creatively problem solve when emotions are integrated with their learning.

As a teacher, I believe it is incumbent on me to make an effort to touch the consciousness of students, to help to strengthen their moral intelligence and to empower the young to be able to creatively deal with problems. Reality should be understood as an interpreted experience with multiple perspectives and

interpretations within a given context. The ability to think, to make judgments and to solve problems creatively is critical to success. Giving students the opportunity to be creative in their assignments, giving choices and incorporating the various multiple intelligences into coursework stimulates the learning environment and enhances their awareness and imagination.

Life Lessons

When pondering the question of whether or not there is a place for the arts in the curriculum, one can turn to classical Greek thought for the answer. The Greeks believed the arts were important in life's higher values. If education is to create useful and productive citizens, then the arts are necessary because they allow us to think about the higher values of life in a very tangible way. The arts bring meaning to experience and help us to reflect as well as to project. "One of the arts' most important contributions to the development of young people is the cultivation of their emotional and spiritual well-being" (Fowler, 1996, p. 53). The arts introduce us to human perceptions and understanding and show us extraordinary human possibilities. Human beings are creatures of feeling as well as thought and, according to Fowler (1996), the arts tend to our spirit. The arts enhance one's capacities to participate significantly in the world and through the arts, students see themselves as functioning members of the human race facilitating communication within and across cultures. "They are the languages of civilization through which we express our fears, our anxieties, our hungers, our struggles and our hopes" (Fowler, 1996, p.56).

The arts provide opportunities to learn to work collaboratively with others on an artistic endeavor, whether it is a mural, a musical or a drama production. Learning to cooperate and work in a team situation, to respect unusual perspectives and points of view as well as learning to focus on the whole as well as the parts, is what occurs when students create and respond to the arts. "Business leaders tell us that the skills and abilities their employers will need in the twenty-first century include the following: teamwork, problem solving, interpersonal skills, oral communication, listening, personal development, creative thinking, leadership, goal setting, organizational effectiveness, computation, and reading" (Barth, 2001, p. 17). These are precisely the skills and lessons for life that students learn while collaboratively engaged in artistic endeavors.

Critical thinking is more than intelligence and more than a skill. It engages students in higher order thinking skills. Arts integration involves students in thinking critically about their work and the work of others. In this classroom climate, students are encouraged to ask questions, defend and extend their positions, state their opinions and beliefs and are given the opportunity to collaborate, which promotes critical thinking. The arts in the curriculum help students to develop critical thinking, and critical thinking does not grow automatically out of knowledge acquisition. The notion of critical thinking in arts-based education originates from a program called Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE). DBAE is a comprehensive approach to learning in art that centers instruction on works of art and derives content from four foundational art

disciplines that contribute to the creation, understanding and appreciation of art: a) art production, b) art history, c) art criticism and d) aesthetics. One of the tenets of this program is critical thinking. The program is highly valued as a way of integrating the arts into curriculum (Greed, 1997).

Students who learn through and in the arts become critics of their own work and become motivated to learn for the experience itself, not just for test results. "The arts provide the tools needed to imagine the solutions and the dedication needed to follow through in pursuing answers" (Goldberg, 1997 p.168). For example, when practicing a musical instrument, one learns perseverance, self-discipline and becomes trained with an aesthetic awareness. This can transfer to all other areas of learning, promoting deep reflection and an aesthetic awareness in life. According to the "Champions of Change" study (1999), learners develop the capacity to experience self-regulation, identity and resilience, which are qualities regularly associated with personal success. Work with the arts allows for multiple outcomes, effective learning becomes complex and multidimensional, and students become challenged. Students are provided with authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts and bodies.

Thornton (2001) in his paper, writes of Nel Noddings who believes that the principle goal of education should be that of producing competent and caring persons and one of the things that she believes to be educationally vital is a meaningful connection between the interests and capacities of students. She objects to standardization and coercion and believes that students will engage more readily in activities in which they have intrinsic interest. She believes that

“our preoccupation with the traditional academic subjects is harmful” (Thornton, 2001, p.8). When the arts are included in the curriculum, avenues for achievement for students who might otherwise be unsuccessful are opened. According to Fowler (1996) and Noddings (2001), the arts can teach students to feel and to care. The arts naturally relate to community enterprises, promote multicultural understanding, provide opportunities to work collaboratively and draw students into the school environment.

In John Dewey’s book, *Art as experience* (1934), he suggested that there was a “gap existing between the everyday experiences of the child and the isolated material supplied in the curriculum” (Dewey, 1990, p.76). When the arts are included in the curriculum, the life connected lessons, those that enhance our humanness and help us to think receptively, can be improved. Being able to take part in a musical or drama production, paint murals on the walls and take ownership for creations of art, draws in students. The arts are a part of what make people well educated and cultivation of emotional and spiritual well-being is central to the arts. “Students can be inspired by the arts to reach deeper within themselves to stand in awe of dimensions of life we cannot fully understand or grasp” (Fowler, 1996, p.53). The enthusiasm for school and learning which for some students gets lost as they disengage, can be rekindled when the arts are used as inducements for change.

When promoting multicultural diversity, the arts provide “culturally vibrant modes of teaching and learning that celebrate and reflect the diversity” (Cortines, 1994, p.9). Teachers must help their students realize the ways in which they can

construct their realities as they learn together and acknowledge the multiple perspectives that exist in this world.

When my teaching units include the arts, I see students respond in ways that provide evidence to me that the arts are a time-honoured way of learning, knowing and expressing. The arts help to build teamwork skills and tolerance. Students become self-disciplined in order to work on an artistic endeavor. They gain confidence and when self-assessing their work, students realize the importance of effort and determination. When a project does not turn out the way it was envisioned, students learn to deal with disappointment and find ways to re-work the assignment. This encourages strength of mind and helps students to turn to others for advice and understanding. The fact that there is no single right answer in the arts, that there are multiple ways to see things and to arrive at conclusions, assists students in their lifelong learning. Through the arts, students are made more clearly aware that the world is not black and white or right or wrong and cannot be answered like a multiple-choice test. This is an important life lesson that opens doors to learning.

Chapter 3 - The Arts in the School System

Background

In most educational environments, from my experience, what occurs is the identification, cultivation and rewarding of two forms of intelligence – linguistic and logical-mathematical. Those blessed with that combination of intelligence are most often guaranteed a positive experience in school. However, Howard Gardner defines intelligence as “an ability to solve problems or to fashion a product, to make something that is valued in at least one culture” (Moody, 1990, p. 16). This takes the focus away from what’s important for success in schools to the broader question of what it takes to be an effective member of society. Those who focus only on the importance of logic and language can miss what is truly important. The human differences in teaching and learning as well as the concepts of intelligence and creativity lead to the implications of artistic intelligence which Elliot Eisner, a noted curricularist, embraces.

Elliot Eisner (Moody, 1990), questions the aims of education and directs our attention to the implications of artistic intelligences for teaching and the decisions about curriculum, when he asks the question, “What are we after?” He believes that good schools should diversify the outcomes of schooling and the “assembly line” of learning that presently is thought about in our school system, needs to undergo major changes. He believes that, in the best situation, “teaching would utilize multiple forms of representation to foster learning and would develop in students the ability to ‘read’ forms other than those that are linguistic or mathematical” (Moody 1990, p.41). Arts education is, therefore,

critical for quality and meaningful education. The arts have the power to humanize the curriculum. "Many of the most complex and subtle forms of thinking take place when students have an opportunity either to work meaningfully on the creation of images -- whether visual, choreographic, musical, literary, or poetic -- or to scrutinize them appreciatively" (Eisner, 2002, p. xii).

Incorporating the Arts

One of the early projects founded in 1967 by the philosopher Nelson Goodman at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, was titled Project Zero. The initial mission was to examine the philosophy and psychology of the arts with Howard Gardner and David Perkins as original members of this project. The project viewed the arts "not as mere entertainment but, like the sciences, as ways of understanding and even of constructing our environments, and thus looked upon arts education as a requisite and integrated component of the entire educational process" (Gardner & Perkins, 1988, p. 1). The idea of seeing the arts as cognitive with systematic studies in art education taking place was met with hostility at the beginning of the Project. Project Zero's project REAP (Reviewing Education and the Arts Project), conducted the first comprehensive and quantitative search for all studies from 1950-1999 of what the research on academic outcomes of arts education really shows as well as what happens in schools when the arts are given a prominent role. The research shows that studying the arts does not, in and of itself, lead to improved test scores yet schools with strong arts programs often report a rise in test scores. This study

raises many questions about academic improvement and the role of the arts. According to the REAP study done in 2000, the arts must be justified in terms of what the arts can teach that no other subject can teach, and not on its secondary utilitarian value (www.pzharvard.edu/Research/REAP.htm). Arts education should not be seen as only something that will reform schools and boost student achievement. Rather, the arts should be seen as a basic and crucial part of any program of education.

A report from 1999 entitled *Champions of Change*, compiled seven major studies which provided evidence of enhanced learning and achievement when students are involved in a variety of arts experiences. While learning in other disciplines may focus on a single skill, the arts regularly engage multiple skills and abilities. According to the report, "When well taught, the arts provide young people with authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts, and bodies. The learning experiences are real and meaningful for them (<http://aeparts.org/Champions.html.p.2>). In 1988, a National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) was conducted in the United States with resurveying done through four follow-ups in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000. James Catterall (NELS:88) found that arts experiences help to level the educational playing field for the disadvantaged student. Steve Seidel (NELS:88) found that arts learning can re-energize the teaching workforce and Shirley Brice Heath (NELS: 88) found that the arts can have a profound impact on learning for youth outside school settings. These findings demonstrate how involvement with the arts provides unparalleled opportunities for learning and that it must be made a basic

part of students' learning experiences. This notion of art as fundamental to experience and knowledge was discussed in depth by Dewey (1934) and the enabling of students to develop both intellectually and emotionally as they construct greater understanding of the subject matter, is not disputed. How this is best achieved, whether it is through the specialist programs or through integration and teaching through the arts is a topic of debate.

Separating the Arts

According to Larson (1997), "Schools with strong arts programs regularly incur the benefits of increased student motivation to learn, better attendance among students and teachers, increased graduation rates, improved multicultural understanding, revitalized faculty, greater student engagement, growth in use of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills and increased creative capacities" (p. 97). When discussing the arts in education, traditionally the arts have remained removed and distant from other learning as if they were something that was distinct and added on to the core basic subjects. Even today, as discussed in Moody (1990), too often the arts are reserved for only the aspiring musician, painter or dancer, and aesthetic education is only offered to the gifted and talented. As noted by Goldberg (1997), historically the most common form of arts education involved a specialist who taught the subject unto itself, but today, this way of learning *about* the arts is failing. Due to the limited time specialists have to teach the arts as well as the small number of specialists in schools, specialists alone will not be able to help students meet all the goals of

having an education based in the arts. Also, keeping the arts separate from other subjects severely limits the potential of using the arts as a methodology for teaching and learning.

Teaching through the Arts

“Using the arts as a way to teach subject matter places the learner in the position of truly working with ideas and taking control of learning in a manner that is at once intellectual, personal, meaningful, and powerful” (Goldberg, 1997, p. 5). When classroom teachers become art collaborators, students have the opportunity to “view the arts as learning tools used throughout the curriculum, and life on a daily basis” (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p. 7). The artistic process is a process of learning and students actively work with obtaining knowledge. “Multiple intelligences and the extension of the idea of artistic intelligences offer many programmatic possibilities for reconceiving the nature of general education” (Moody, 1990, p.86).

The possibility for alternative integrated curricular programs exists and during the last decade, according to Cornett & Smithrim (2001), “North American schools have been devising new curricula using the arts as content centres and teaching tools” (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p. 2). The programs have been given many names such as “arts based”, “interdisciplinary instruction”, “learning through the arts”, “arts integrated” and many other programs that believe in the transforming power of the arts. Integration of the arts, teaching with and through the arts so as to have a balanced and realistic perspective has many benefits

according to Cornett & Smithrim (2001). By learning through the arts, students engage with ideas, stretch their imaginations and are involved in critical thinking. When integrating the learning strategies based on the arts, the teacher must engage in the exploration of multiple learning styles and modes of expression. Utilization of the arts within the various curriculum content areas of literacy gives the teacher more opportunities to find new ways of engaging students, new ways to communicate subject matter and new ways to connect the course of teaching with student discovery. According to Fowler (1996) and Cornett & Smithrim (2001), the integrated and interdisciplinary approaches are seen as the best methods that meet all the goals of having an education based in the arts.

“Interdisciplinary arts is an infusion of the arts with other subject matter in the general curriculum” (Fowler, 1996, p.70). The arts enhance learning in other subjects and at the same time improve learning within the arts. Goldberg (1997) contends that as a methodology for teaching and learning, the arts provide the teacher with an expanded repertoire of actions and activities in order to introduce subject matter. New connections are easily made, and the opportunity to be creative and imaginative allows students as well as teachers to practice many skills. The arts offer many kinds of knowledge. “The arts are humanity’s expression of life itself” (Goldberg, 1997, p. 5) and they have not been used to the fullest in learning as well as in teaching. Art can be used to create, to communicate and to explore one’s own perceptions and share them with others. According to Fowler (1996), when the arts are viewed as interdisciplinary studies and used as tools for all learning, they reinforce learning in general. The

interdisciplinary approach whereby the arts, referring to music, visual arts, dance and drama, are integrated with the school's fundamental goals and priorities, validates the arts and demonstrates their educational value.

Fowler (1996) believes that working with the arts encompasses *encoding* actions, the process of translating thoughts, feelings and observations, into a symbolic form. The symbols communicate perceiving, reacting and creating. Fowler (1996), also sees the arts encompassing *decoding* or receiving what others say and thus, interpreting the meaning of the symbols or works of art. "The subject matter of the arts explores multiple facets of the world and human life and can quite naturally relate to learning in general and add dimensions that are compelling and insightful" (Fowler, 1996, p. 71).

The English Language Arts Curriculum in Manitoba

In the 1980s, the English language arts curriculum that was released in Manitoba reflected an evolution and change in thinking about the ways in which language learning was accomplished. Students were no longer viewed as simply the audience that made meaning of and developed skills necessary for literacy, when creative works were studied in class. Instead, students were seen to become the creators of language forms themselves. Also reflected in the new documents was the earlier re-definition of text that states, "text refers to all language forms that students explore and create, including film, advertising, newspapers, books, poetry, sound recordings, and drama" (Senior 2 Manitoba Education and Training, 1998, p.21-22). By redefining texts as the vehicle for

language learning, students learn to make meaning of all texts - visual, oral and print.

The reshaping of language arts curricula occurred throughout western Canada and was partly due to social change. In today's technological age, there are greater literacy demands and electronic media and visual texts are the media of choice for many students. According to the English Language Arts Overview (1998), "Students study the language arts in order to function in their communities and cultures: to appreciate, enjoy, communicate, interact, identify, and solve problems, think critically, and make informed choices. Just as they need skills to comprehend and communicate through print and oral texts, students need to learn techniques and conventions of visual language to be more conscious and discerning in reading visual media, and more effective in creating visual forms" (Senior 1 Manitoba Education and Training, 1998, p.12). These various rationales listed to support the study of English language arts are comparable to the reasoning behind the importance of the arts in a student's education. The importance of culture, multiple ways of communicating, the use of diverse approaches for exploring critical and creative thinking and the life connected lessons realized from the arts are also seen as valuable in the English language arts curriculum.

In the secondary English language arts curricula today, the six language arts, listening and speaking, reading and writing, and viewing and representing are interrelated and interdependent. According to the Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes, Manitoba Education and Training, (1998), "students

need knowledge, skills, and strategies in all six language arts to compose, comprehend and respond to texts” (p.5). This is quite different from decades ago when literature, mainly the “classics” of British and American literature, were studied and this was what largely defined the language arts curricula. The focus then was on reading and writing. However, when the new curriculum was released in Manitoba during the 1980s, texts were recognized as vehicles for language learning. Reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938) and the new definition of texts, referring to all language forms and symbol systems that students explore and create, have greatly influenced English language arts instruction. Within a Reader-response orientation, students attend to their own response in making meaning of texts and connect this meaning to their own experiences with life and with reading.

Students explore how they make meaning by examining personal and cultural factors as well as by using textual connections. This broader notion of texts opens the door to integration of the arts because both the broader notions of text and Reader-response theory’s emphasis on student response, invites connections and other ways of encoding and decoding.

The English language arts curriculum endorses the arts and with the viewing and representing strands being included as part of the curriculum document, I questioned how the arts are being used in the classrooms. According to the literature, there are a number of ways in which teachers are able to integrate the arts into their programming.

Integration of the arts can occur along a continuum from a small degree to a total arts infusion throughout the curriculum. According to Cornett & Smithrim (2001), integration can vary in the ways and intensities with which teachers include the arts. If teachers teach *with* the arts, it gives the students an opportunity to work creatively and get pleasure from the arts. When teachers teach *about* the arts, students enjoy and develop both creatively and artistically and there is “a conscious effort to develop students’ aesthetic sensibilities through guided experiences” (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p. 35). Students are involved in creation, response, performance and exploration with specialists or guest artists supporting the focus to help construct the substantive units that involve other curricular areas. Teaching *through* the arts involves the students living and learning through the arts and being part of an aesthetic environment with the arts used as both content and a means of learning in the regular curriculum. An example of a Canadian outcome-based program focusing on curricular integration with the arts, *The Learning Through the Arts* program (Cornett and Smithrim, 2001), has the arts infused directly into the general curriculum. It was originally a joint venture of the Royal Conservatory of Music and the Toronto District School Board and now has expanded to the six regions of Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Windsor, Corner Brook, and Cape Breton. “At the heart of this innovative program lies the conviction that the disciplines of cooperation, creativity, and self-esteem developed in the arts are essential to life skills” (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p. 33).

In the area of English language arts, the subject area of my focus regarding the inclusion of the arts into its curriculum, the instruction and use of the six language arts: listening and speaking, reading and writing, and viewing and representing are seen as interrelated and interdependent and are covered in the curriculum documents. Even though the visual arts, music, drama and dance are not written about specifically they are encompassed by the six strands. A case for the arts, in particular, is not really mentioned. Of interest, however, is that in the contents of the English Language Arts Framework (1998), the principles, aims and beliefs for the development of English language arts are discussed in the overview section (pp 3-6), with the rationale paralleling the rationale for the importance of the arts. The curriculum promotes and endorses the arts and integration and opens the door to many possibilities for teachers even though the importance of the arts in a student's education is not specifically documented or discussed. "Including viewing and representing in the English language arts curriculum acknowledges both social change and an evolving understanding of the way language learning takes place" (Senior 1 English Language Arts Overview, 1998, p.11). Students learn in different ways and visual media which may be the primary source of information and entertainment for many students is also mentioned in the overview.

Another very important item noted in the English language arts curriculum document is the role of the teacher in the process. "A teacher who brings the attitudes and behaviours of a learner to the classroom, plays an essential role in transforming the classroom into a stimulating learning community" (Senior 4

English Language Arts curriculum, 1998, page 1-3). A number of the things I will be exploring in the next chapter are the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of two teachers and their roles in the education process. The teachers as well as the consultant have played, and continue to play an important role in the promotion of the arts in the school system and in their students' lives.

Chapter 4 – Naming the Teachers

Background

Before I began my research work, through informal discussions with the teachers interviewed for this study, I became aware that they endorsed and supported the arts. I had seen the work that their students had done in the classrooms and I was impressed with the creative assignments and the way that they connected with their students. When I approached the teachers to be a part of this study, they were more than willing to be involved because of their convictions regarding the importance of the arts in students' schooling.

The people interviewed for this study all have a personal connection with a specific "arts" that I discovered only through the interview process. They all support the various arts, visual, drama, dance and music, however, each one has a special affinity to one of the arts. After the interviews were completed, when deciding on a special and creative pseudonym to give the participants in the study, I thought of their connections to the arts. Thus, I have used the labels of the people involved with the arts, that is, Artist, Dancer, Musician, and Actor, as the pseudonyms in my study. This is not to say that Artist only appreciates the visual arts, or Dancer only appreciates dance. The titles seem very appropriate because I had chosen to focus on the four categories of visual arts, drama, dance and music and there were four participants, and each of the participants seemed to have a specific "art" that they felt more comfortable with than the others.

As the researcher with a fine arts background, I will be calling myself "Artist". The first-year male teacher I interviewed is a physical education graduate and will be called "Dancer". The female teacher with many years of experience has a degree in English, is a trained pianist, is a singer and plays the flute . She will be called "Musician". The English language arts consultant who has a master's degree in teaching secondary English, a reading and resource background, also spoke of her training in teaching drama. She will be called "Actor".

Artist

I had known that I would be a teacher from the age of six. My love of children, reading, teaching, and instilling a sense of wonder and excitement in others is what makes me who I am. As the eldest of four children, I seemed to always have a ready class that consisted of my brothers and sister. My earliest memories of reading are of me getting up at six o'clock in the morning, sitting against the heat register, and reading my novels. I was, and still am, an avid reader and a lifelong learner. I also love teaching. I remember being six years old and standing in front of a small, cracked black board printing out words and doing arithmetic questions for my siblings. I come from a family of teachers - it is in my blood. I entered the Faculty of Education and attained a diploma in Education.

Another interest of mine involves the arts. I have always loved art, specifically painting and drawing, and furthered my studies in art by obtaining a

Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in the same year I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in English. My first job after obtaining my degrees was to teach classes in Art and in English. It was the perfect job! Students loved the art class and for me, it was a natural to include the arts into my English programming. Being a lifelong learner I continued studying about the arts and how people learn. Teaching the art program made me very aware of multiple intelligences and the different ways that students can communicate knowledge. This I transferred to my English classes and the curriculum documents support this.

The benefits of the arts are so easily seen in classrooms when students are given opportunities to use their imaginations, communicate in various ways and when students have choice. One of the ways to foster appreciation of the value of learning is to offer choices. "Intrinsic motivation is closely tied to students' self-selection of texts, topics, activities and creative forms. Teachers need to support students in the search for texts that are developmentally appropriate and of high interest, and encourage students to bring language forms they value into the classroom", (Senior 2 Manitoba Education and Training, 1998, p. 8). Thus, when I entered the high school to teach English, you can imagine my disappointment when I looked at the books that I was supposed to teach and saw novels that I had studied thirty years previously. These were the novels I was expected to engage the students with and yes, some were classics and should be studied but, many of the texts were not. I also was cognizant of the fact that the other teachers balked at the viewing and representing strands and

did not readily consider the arts an important part of their programming. This led me to question other teachers' views on the arts, their feelings about incorporating the arts into their program and whether or not they really understood the viewing and representing components.

For me, over the past 20 years, the arts have always been an integral part of the English curriculum. When I first began teaching English language arts in the late '70s, reading and writing were the focus. With the introduction of the new curriculum and the six strands of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, representing, being interrelated and interdependent, literature was not the only focus. Literacy became the focus. Research reinforces the role of arts in education. Cornett and Smithrim (2001), state that because the history of the human species is told through stories, art, drama, dance and music, the arts are a fundamental component of all cultures. The arts also focus on an individual student's learning style. The majority of today's students are visual learners and helping students to learn to view and represent is very important. The viewing and representing components also deal with the multiple intelligences of students. According to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1983), the arts offer a variety of ways to develop different kinds of cognition. Each student in my classroom possesses a unique quality of intellectual capacity, personality and behavior and the arts are the best medium to accommodate this individuality. Education should provide opportunities for all students to develop their own cognitive capacities. My teaching has always been student-centered and students are at the core of all programming that I do. The arts are a natural

way for children to learn. The engagement factor is intense, students want to attend class, students fully participate and feel valued in the class, students put an immense amount of energy into artistic types of assignments that interest them and they learn! The arts connection in my classroom was and always will be a necessity

When I taught art, some students were very adept at building and sculpture while others excelled at drawing and painting. Every child was good at something. Music was a part of every art class and students had the freedom to move about the room. The environment was welcoming, students felt safe and happy, and learning was taking place. This is also what should take place in English classrooms and the Senior 2 Manitoba Education and Training (1998), states, "A vital language arts class grows out of, and is reflected in, a stimulating and inviting physical environment" (p. 9). My background and my interests have helped to solidify my belief in the importance of the arts in education. I was so fortunate to be able to group my three loves, teaching, reading and the arts into a profession that was meant for me.

In my high school English teaching, I was able to engage the students in creative assignments that allowed them choice and helped them be aware of themselves and those around them. This is consistent with the benefits of the arts and with the curricular intentions. Two memorable high school English assignments that I assigned students to complete were the "Anything Assignment" and a mask assignment done in connection with the Human Rights unit. At the start of each semester, each student is asked to complete an

"Anything Assignment". I began by explaining how every student is an expert at something. I value the students in the class and expect them to respect and value their peers. Their job was to create a presentation for the class and how they did the presentation was up to them. The presentations could be as basic as discussing which restaurant has the best pizza, and they were the expert because they know best, or all about a favorite place to visit. They could also describe how to play the guitar or how to tap dance. Students chose the topic and the method of presentation. The results were astounding. The variety of presentations such as videos, dramatic presentations, speeches, scrapbooks and so on, was impressive. Students got to share their expertise with their classmates and their classmates got to learn about them. This built community in the classroom and everyone was valued for being an expert at something. Students chose numerous ways to communicate to their peers, they used their imagination and this assignment helped to bridge differences and opened many avenues for human understanding. It certainly demonstrated the benefits of the arts.

Another assignment which is connected to the Human Rights unit and a book titled, *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl (1993)*, deals with emotions, colour theory and personal reflection. Students are taught a lesson on colour theory and how colours can influence emotions as well as behavior. This is followed by a study of various portraits realistically or abstractly painted by well-known artists. Students are then required to create a portrait of one of the characters in the diary based on a certain event in the story. The colours that students chose

helped to depict the emotions of the character. A written explanation of why they drew the face the way they did and why they chose certain colours, completes the assignment. This assignment is not threatening because students do not have to be realistic artists as the portraits they complete deal with shapes and simple looking faces. Colour is the focus, although the effects of soft flowing lines versus sharp, jagged lines are also discussed. Their portraits are hung on the wall for a gallery walk and members of the class are invited to make positive comments on post-it notes which are placed on their artwork. This helps them to value each other's efforts. In this assignment, students understand how colours affect people and they are also required to think deeply about how another character might have felt, thereby dealing with point of view. Curricular requirements are realized with these assignments as students communicate their knowledge in diverse and creative ways and make meaningful connections to others, embracing life connected lessons. These are only two examples of how I incorporated the arts into my programming.

This is my personal story and, as the researcher and one of the voices involved in this study with a background in the arts and experience teaching the English language arts curriculum, my story contributes to this thesis as I am the lens that views the situation. I will be called Artist.

Dancer

When I first met Dancer, I was struck by his quiet demeanor, his intelligence and the way that students responded to him. It was his first year

teaching and the subjects he taught were English and Geography. My room was just down the hall from his and we would spend the first few minutes before every class talking about the students and lesson plans. I shared what I had created for my English classes in the previous years with him and he in turn, shared lessons he had created. We never really had meeting times to go over programming and curricular issues but any spare moment between classes was spent collaborating.

Dancer is a first-year male teacher who had spent many years working with children before he decided to go into education. He is married with two children and is passionate about his beliefs regarding education. He connects with students. He coaches sports teams and works very hard to make his lessons in both English and Geography creative, stimulating and thought-provoking. He graduated from the faculty of Physical Education with his first degree and has worked with children for most of his adult life. Going into education after his Physical Education degree was a natural progression for him.

We talked about Dancer's upbringing and he spoke of his mother's basic premise in raising her children. He and his sisters were raised to be well-rounded and his mother always said that "you have to have a broad range of experiences from different areas. She encouraged us not to get too wrapped up in one activity and put everything into that. She wanted us to try a whole bunch of different things and she thought that was the way to become, or to grow as a person -- experience things and grow across a broad range of activities" (Interview #1, p.1). Dancer has many varied interests and he sees that this helps

him with connections. "I was always connecting things that were totally different. Things like what we talked about, the art with texts, the dance with expression rather than physical activity and so on" (Interview #1, p.2). We had specifically spoken of a required course in the faculty of Physical Education, called social dance. Social dance was not seen as being a physical activity but rather as a display which was aesthetically pleasing and students in the Physical Education class connected it with the arts. He believed the future Physical Education grads were more into the competitive sporting activities and did not often want to attend these courses. He went on to mention ballet dancers and figure skaters. He saw these athletes, especially the men, as being in peak physical shape and thought that some people did not see these avenues as an acceptable physical activity. Due to our discussions regarding sports and dance and his athletic background, the pseudonym *Dancer*, seemed quite appropriate for this male teacher.

I began the interview with *Dancer* by asking him about his views on the arts. He stated, "I think it enriches the culture of your community. It provides outlets to broaden the horizons of the citizens of a community. The art gallery and even such things as art in the park...it encourages people to take pride in their community and to explore the different forms of expression that are going on in a community" (Interviewed #3, p.1). *Dancer* spoke of the importance of art and culture and what is left behind in a culture is the people's art. He saw the arts broadening the horizons of the citizens of a community and spoke of Winnipeg. Winnipeg is a vibrant multicultural community and a place where different forms of artistic representation come together. "An event like

Folklorama is all about the arts. It is a celebration of the arts in Winnipeg. You can go to a pavilion and see dance, the dramatic presentation that represents their homeland, you can see paintings and cultural displays and the food... even that is another form of artistic representation" (Interview #3, pg. 1).

Dancer has two sisters and one of his sisters had the opportunity to dance for the Contemporary Dancers and be involved with gymnastics, while the other sister played volleyball. The children in the family were encouraged and allowed to find their own way. "All of us took piano and all of us were involved in the church choir" (Interview #1, p.3). I asked if his upbringing was similar to a lot of the kids that he grew up with. "No! Definitely not. In fact, the complete opposite. Most of the kids in my peer group played hockey and that was the only acceptable sport. It required a certain type of personality, you had to wear the right clothing to go with it and I think you weren't allowed to stray outside that acceptable norm" (Interview #1, p.3). Dancer certainly valued the fact that he was encouraged to be engaged in a lot of different activities. His father was in the Air Force and he lived in a variety of different areas so there was always something different going on depending on where he lived. Diversity was a part of his life and "the diversity of places that we went, helped out with the diversity of things that I did" (Interview #1, p.3). When asked about feeling different he responded that he really didn't fit into one crowd but was accepted by all because he had different pursuits. Dancer sees himself emotionally healthier for having a variety of interests.

When he lived in Montana and was in kindergarten, they used his school as one of the sets for a movie. He remembers seeing a figure sitting in a director's chair with actors milling around. It was Clint Eastwood. "It wasn't until years later when I actually watched the movie, it was *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot*, and there's a scene where there's a car parked across the street from my old elementary school and it really brought back a lot of memories. But that kind of exposed me to what drama was and how it could involve so many people and how it could be a job" (Interview #1, p.3). Dancer uses a lot of drama in his classrooms. He was in school productions and said that it was "all part of being well rounded. It wasn't that I was being pushed, it was that it was something that actually interested me. Being a ham and being the center of attention at times, and acting. It was fun -- it was neat to do and experience and it didn't matter what other people thought" (Interview #1, p.3). As we spoke further about his experiences, he began to examine his high school experiences saying that he didn't dislike one group or attach himself to one group. "I think emotionally I was a lot more healthy for it" (Interview #1, p.3).

He definitely believes in a well rounded approach to language arts and spoke of classes when he was a student and what he wants now for his students. "One specific class that dealt with something you'd never seen before, that dealt with something in a unique way and... those are the things that stick with you and that is where the learning took place" (Interview #1, p.4). As a teacher, "the more you bring into the class, the more you're going to connect with your students" (Interview #1, p.5). Dancer told of a number of engaging lessons that

incorporated the arts. When studying the novel, *A Night to Remember* (1955) by Walter Lord based on the sinking of the Titanic, he asked students to "be" one of the passengers on the ship. They were to show their character's last few hours with another character from the ship and from close reading of the novel, create what might have transpired. They worked together in groups of three or four and they could either film it or act it out in front of the class. How students presented this to their classmates was up to them and he was thrilled to see what the students came up with. Some videos involved student's families, there were dramatic presentations and some even did a presentation on computer with sound effects and an antique tone to it. There were many discussions and it was fun. Dancer commented on how one could have easily done a "write a character sketch" kind of assignment and that would have been extremely dry. Students also got to critique each other, three stars and a wish, what worked and what didn't work, and this led to further discussions and total involvement by all students. They were engaged. Assignments such as these help to build a community with students and help expand a world view of people in different situations. "It was incredible the quality of the performance that came back. And the learning experience in some cases with whole families, brothers and sisters, moms and dads involved in playing characters on the boat and then we just sat and watched them. It was a really neat experience for everybody. They interpreted people in different ways, the discussions in the class...that's learning" (Interview #3, p.3).

Dancer certainly connects with his students. He is athletic, has taken sketching and art classes, has gone to the museum of art in Chicago, has taken folk and social dance classes, has had "hands-on experience" as well as an "educational experience" and sees the arts connecting to all of the English language arts components. "If you go through the document, if you have a couple of years to go through it (chuckling), there are instances where you can incorporate the arts into all of it. I mean, they give examples, there are a plethora of examples of how you can incorporate the arts into the curriculum" (Interview #1, p.6). However, he sees that teachers, in general, think art in the school system is art class. "There may be allowances for it in an elementary school where it might be part of the curriculum, but people at the high school level, from my experience, shy away from it unless they've had specific experience in it" (Interview #1, p.1). This is supported by Fowler (1996), when he speaks of classroom teachers pressured to teach the basics and make sure that students excel on standardized tests. Teachers sometimes view the arts as frivolous, distracting from the real and important learning that is the main and required business of education. Dancer also believes that a certain segment of English teachers equate English with literature. He had some other thoughts regarding the arts in the English Language Arts high school curriculum. "I don't think a lot of teachers have read it fully or investigated it fully. They get kind of in a comfort zone of what they know. People are, for the most part, afraid to take chances, and the arts, for someone who doesn't have a background and has built-up confidence in them, is something you are going to shy away from"

(Interview #1, p.6). Eisner (2002), agrees saying, "All of us who have taught for several years have acquired ways of doing things. We organize our curriculum in ways that are familiar: we know the pedagogical moves we want to make, we have an idea of what we want to cover and at what pace, and we know what the final material to be turned in by the student is likely to look like. All this experiential knowledge allows us to get by with the least expenditure of energy" (Eisner, 2002, p. 56). Dancer saw the art component as a huge aspect for success in teaching the curriculum and believed good teachers that he admired, stuck with it for that reason. "I mean, even at University, the teachers or the professors who I connected with the most, incorporated art into their program" (Interview #1, p.7). Interestingly enough, he finds that, "people who have an artistic background, kinda have those kind of attractive personalities. Just from the experience of the teachers that I've had and the people I've been associated with, I find them more interesting" (Interview #1, p.7). He says that they are not one-dimensional and that there's something to them that attracts most people. "They have that artistic background and that stimulates interest. I have to say it engages people. It's not even learned. It requires taking a risk. It requires doing something different. It requires looking at things in a different way" (Interview #1, p.7). Since Dancer is a recent graduate of the University of Manitoba, I asked if his training incorporated some avenue of the arts. He replied that there was a strong art component to the education curriculum and that he learned from the course that you could integrate anything. "You have to understand the power of it" (Interview #3, p. 6).

The students in Dancer's class are his focus. Therefore, regarding the arts in the English language arts curriculum, his main concern is "it being top-down, it being teacher driven, it being content driven. My concern would be that I think English and the inclusion of the arts within that context in high school should be focused on the students first. What experience would most benefit this group of students, that individual student, rather than I'm doing this novel and the easiest way to get the content to the kids and make sure they understand the novel is to do this activity" (Interview #3, p. 6). This contention is supported by Noddings (Thornton, 2001), when she states that what is most educationally vital is a meaningful connection between the interests and capacities of pupils and the curriculum. Dancer certainly focuses on the individual successes and giving kids opportunities for success. "That is what I value. And to do that you have to give the opportunity to explore the arts because that is where some of them are really good" (Interview #3, p. 5). He takes whatever opportunities he can to give students the opportunities for success, to take a leadership role and to be the teacher because he believes that "everybody is an expert about something that you know nothing about" (Interview #3, p. 5). He saw that a healthy classroom environment was when teachers moved "between the role of the teacher and the learner as well. I think that's what education is all about" (Interview #1, p. 6).

There are many sides to Dancer. He is a caring, compassionate teacher who has varied interests. He is well respected by his peers, coaches many successful sports teams, is a loving father and an excellent educator. His views on the arts in a student's education were insightful and as a result of our

conversation, he also was able to reflect on his own teaching and beliefs. He spoke of our interviews saying, "I found it very beneficial as a learning experience. It's reflective examining one's own practices and I think a lot of times we get so wrapped up in what's going on in the classroom, we don't take the time to reflect. This has been very beneficial for that alone" (interview #3, p. 8). As Eisner (1998), contends, when teachers are able to have their voices heard, valuable learning takes place and it is useful at many levels.

Dancer spoke at length about the changing clientele, that is, our students and the teachers. He also spoke of the present-day high school organization and the curriculum itself. "You're more compartmentalized in high school with less opportunity for interaction between teachers and there's less opportunities for discussion. At the high school level, whenever there's a staff kind of meeting, it is a burden and dreaded (Interview #1, p. 12). Dancer believes that the way the high schools are organized, discourages interaction between teachers because the opportunities to meet just don't occur at the high school level. His student teaching took place in a middle school and in comparing the high school and middle school level environment, he said, "at the middle school level the students came first. I saw more connection to the students and that caring for the students...in the high schools, it almost seems as if the students are a burden" (Interview #1, p. 13). He even went on to say that "they try everything to get rid of the bad ones instead of asking what is it that I need to do to connect with the students", (Interview #1, p. 13). Dancer went on to discuss the differences between junior high, high school or elementary teachers and how people chose

the stream to enter at the university level. "The ones that went into the elementary stream, they love kids. The middle years, I think, they love teaching and they didn't know whether they wanted to work with elementary students or with high school students but they knew if they did middle years it would allow them the opportunity to do any kind of teaching they wanted. High school teachers, I found, they liked teaching high school because the kids were closer to being adults. They're more manageable and they can relate better to them" (Interview #1 p. 13).

Dancer sees immense value in teachers being able to make connections between subject areas. He discussed the integrated curriculum project that was a major focus of the middle year's program. For this project the teacher candidates were required to integrate every aspect of the curriculum by having to integrate all six of the Curriculum and Instruction courses. Dancer created an aviation unit and connected math, science, social studies, the arts and language arts into the learning experience. He shared this with his father, a man who didn't really like school and didn't connect with teachers when he had been a student. His father commented that if he would have had the opportunities when he was going to school to have an integrated curriculum, he would have stayed on. Dancer believes that the middle year's program is important because it is, "where you make connections with kids and their learning for the future" (Interview #1 p. 14). Multiple ways and means of communicating, one of the benefits of the arts, can be realized when making connections and incorporating the arts into the English language arts curriculum. Dancer's beliefs are echoed

by Cornett & Smithrim (2001). Giving students the opportunity for success is something that will stay with them for a lifetime and to him, that is what education is all about and what Dancer values. Eisner (2002), agrees when he says that, "the effects of teaching may not show up until long after students leave school and in ways the teacher never dreamed of" (p.50). He also believes that "the really important effects of teaching are located outside of the school and teachers often take the scores from tests seriously, as if they were good predictors of what students will do outside school" (Eisner, 2002, p. 50). Dancer and Artist both have their educational training from the elementary or the middle year's stream and when Dancer was asked about a possible connection between teachers willing to embrace the viewing and representing components and their University training, he responded enthusiastically that it was a great question. A major focus in middle schools and in junior high is the time allowed for different subject area teachers to collaborate and plan. This is something that is not often seen in high schools and Dancer believes that this is an important organizational piece that is missing in high school.

Musician

I first met Musician when she transferred into the school I was teaching in and was pleasantly surprised to discover that this teacher appreciated and used the arts in her teaching. The walls in her classroom quickly became display boards for students' work, students could be found practicing dramatic presentations throughout the halls, and trips to the gallery or the ballet were

common. The experience was wonderful! Musician and I spent time discussing our philosophy regarding education, student engagement and the arts. Musician, like Dancer, has a classroom where the students are the focus and the arts are a part of her programming. She says, "I use a ton of artwork in my class, by the masters, contemporary artwork...I am thrilled with the new curriculum because it's been something I've always valued highly and something that I've always seen as a complete enrichment of my life so I'm thrilled and excited to incorporate it" (Interview #1, p.1). Musician definitely teaches *through* the arts by having the students become part of an aesthetic environment and using the arts as both content and a means of learning.

To begin speaking with Musician, I asked her about her personal experiences with the arts. Musician is a trained pianist, has an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto (ARCT) teacher's degree, is a trained singer, plays the flute, has participated in a number of bands and choirs, and has always been involved in the arts. When I was contemplating a pseudonym, Musician sang out to me. Musician is not only talented in the music field but is a member of the artistic community, visits art galleries regularly, attends the Manitoba Theatre Centre, the ballet and the symphony. She feels she has a thorough knowledge of the arts and is familiar with the language and the discourse. She has also taken theater lessons "for years and years" at Prairie Theatre Exchange. She feels that she has a well rounded background and an appreciation for the arts. "I've always been involved in the arts and music and productions and now as the teacher, the bridge that happens, you go from being

a performer to being a conductor or an organizer or an arranger, and so there's always a special place in my heart for the arts in high school" (Interview #1, p.1). The arts are a part of who she is, how she was raised and what she values. Her mother also enjoys the arts and started taking her to the ballet at a young age. She chuckled when speaking of the ballet lessons she was forced to take until close to the age of 12. When speaking of the arts she says, "I value it, I love it, and it enriches my life. It's not just the stepping off point for a lesson or a text we will study in class. It's sort of an approach...that the arts enrich your life and I try to instill this in the kids from all sorts of different backgrounds" (Interview #1, p.6). Like Dancer, she has a well rounded background in the arts.

Musician has a true respect for the artists in society and believes, "that the artists are the people who have the vision to lead us through trouble. I think you can always get a picture of the times we are living in, politically, socially and economically, by looking at what happens to the arts" (Interview #3, p.1). Taking a look at any art institution will help you find the pulse of what is going on politically and economically, according to Musician. If you are looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the arts are the icing on the cake. The arts are what self actualized people are able to involve themselves in because they have all their other needs met. She went on to say that the artists are the ones tapped into a higher power for the good. "Look at Marc Chagall's work and how can you not cry. You look at the artistry that came out of that. You just have to believe in a higher power for the good and I think artists are most tapped into that" (Interview #3, p.1).

When speaking about her English classroom Musician says, "My whole classroom, as you know, is papered wall to wall -- it's so stimulating. I'm always talking to kids about what movies they've seen, what concerts they've gone to, plays, actors. I try to take all classes on field trips to the arts and I have no problem whatsoever justifying those because you can read anything as text" (Interview #1, p.6). She feels very comfortable with the viewing and representing strands in the curriculum and says, "there's a lot of exciting work to be done in those areas" (Interview #3, p. 4). Both Dancer and Musician use the arts in their programming and value it. Musician sees that the arts give students a greater sense of their world and who they are within it. "I think it makes them more open, more creative, more disciplined, more empathetic,...I could keep going on and on" (Interview #3, p. 2). Elliot Eisner (1982), speaks of abstract reasoning which is required when the arts are involved in schooling and Fowler (1996), speaks of awareness being nurtured when educating artistic intelligences. Research certainly validates what Musician believes.

Musician is an excellent, experienced English teacher and a lifelong learner who is completing her master's degree in English. She sees herself as a huge risk taker in teaching. Perhaps this is because at times, her use of the arts in the English language arts curriculum was frowned upon by a number of English teachers whose focus was a very traditional approach to the teaching of literature. She has her students complete a variety of artistic assignments such as Hollywood style posters, dioramas, sculptures, photo essays, dramatic presentations, and of course field trips are a part of every semester. When I

asked Musician about an assignment that she believed to be successful she told of a unit that she had developed in which students compared artists and authors in self construction. She asked students to study the self portraits of classical artists such as Van Gogh, Matisse, and Gauguin, and then they had to look at how they would personally represent themselves. What are the risks we take when representing ourselves and how do we define ourselves was asked of the students. This creative writing assignment with its connection to the visual arts was very exciting and led to further study involving detailed movie analysis connected to the subtext. "When you start off with film study or cinematography, so much of what you're discussing is directly relevant to literature. You're talking about contrast, juxtaposition, backgrounding and so on, and students become engaged" (Interview #3 p. 3). There are so many ways a teacher can approach a topic and the arts draw the students in. These few examples that were shared only touch the surface. Vibrant and exciting learning takes place in the classroom and in others when students are given choices, when text is a jumping off point for discovery and when the arts are included.

Musician teaches a variety of programs. She teaches Senior 1 and Senior 3 classes, Transactional, creative writing, and the International Baccalaureate program. "I'm literally wearing four different hats throughout the day...creative writing is so specialized and then the S1 is curriculum based and outcome based and then the IB is a totally different program, totally different goals, and philosophical approach, and then you go to Transactional which is still outcome based but is so different from the literature focus" (Interview #1, p.5).

She loves the variety and being a different teacher with different students. She takes a different approach to everything taking into account differentiated instruction and multiple intelligences. She is very aware of the work of Howard Gardner (1983), and believes that differentiated instruction and multiple intelligences is "our key for our curriculum" (Interview #1, p. 5). Just as Dancer's focus was the student, so too is the student the major focus in Musician's classrooms. One of the things that she appreciates with the new curriculum is that process is just as important as product. This is in keeping with Eisner (2002) and his beliefs about teaching. "Teachers cannot merely transmit information or skills to another, if for no other reason than that the student always mediates and hence modifies what is being conveyed" (Eisner, 2002, p.47).

As we spoke about the English language arts curriculum she stated that she believed there was some real difficulty with it, but she could see where both "sides" were coming from. "There are the core groups with the core values of literature with a capital L. and then there's the group that promote literacy. They're so different" (Interview #1, p.3). Dancer also spoke of teachers who have been concentrating on literature for so long and now their strength isn't the focus of the curriculum anymore. Musician believes we have to be really careful that we don't lose literature as an art form but at the same time, our clientele is changing. "The curriculum so clearly emphasizes literacy as opposed to literature and a lot of people are struggling with how to translate, if you will, what is to be done and how it is to be done" (Interview #1, p.4). "I think we have to have a mixture of the two because the things that we are so interested in doing is

putting in more visual representation or film study or things like that... which is literacy in a sense, but we also value literature and that's what got us all hooked in there. Literature is an art form" (Interview #1 p.3).

Musician is an amazing educator who has the respect of her peers. She is a collaborator and strives to incorporate the arts into all of her programming. She is also instrumental in working with teachers in other subject areas to incorporate the arts. She is presently working with a number of teachers in different subject areas to create units that integrate other fields of study. Her love of learning, of teaching and of the arts is evident. Embracing the new English language arts curriculum as well as specific curriculum concerns were part of our conversation. Musician also had some thoughts on high school organization and changes that are needed stating that there needs to be more time for teachers to get together to discuss programming, how to include the arts and time for collaboration.

Actor

In order to paint a clearer picture regarding the use of curricular documents and teachers' acceptance of the arts component in the curriculum, I chose to interview a consultant. The consultant has a master's degree in teaching secondary English, a resource certificate, has taught every grade from 5 to 12 and has had training in teaching drama. During our interview she spoke a number of times about her use of drama in the classroom and, as a consultant, many times she is "onstage" as she presents in-services for teachers. Actor

seemed to be the accurate pseudonym to use for this extremely respected and gifted educator.

Actor has worn many hats throughout her career. As she herself states, she has a lot in her bag of tricks besides a master's degree in teaching secondary English. "Besides having responsibilities for teaching English, I have in that capacity taught drama and journalism, which was a school-based course that later became the Transactional program" (Interview #1, p.1). In terms of music or art, she states, "I have no formal training but I think in my own life experiences, I've always been interested in those things and always used them" (Interview #1, p.1). She has 26 years of experience in the education field, beginning her teaching career in 1974, and considers herself a lifelong learner. "I think one of the things that led me through my career is, every time I changed jobs, I thought that I needed to know something new. It is wonderful to be a lifelong learner" (Interview #1, p. 6). Actor has presented many professional development workshops and taught numerous courses and sees that her whole career and all the University courses she has taken, make the curriculum a natural fit for her. "I've actually done courses in teaching English language Arts. I know the difference between the transactional and expressive language..." (Interview #1, p.4).

As a teacher and now as a consultant, in regards to the material, she says, "I always change it. I change it from year to year -- I didn't like this, I might add something, take something away...what worked, what didn't...that all comes down to being a reflective practitioner" (Interview #1, p.6). The changes that

have occurred in the new curriculum in regards to viewing and representing, require teachers to reflect on how they have taught previously and evaluate how to incorporate the arts into their programming. Being reflective and analyzing how a lesson or unit could have been better taught, is very important. Eisner (2002), speaks of teachers facing the arduous task of evaluating how things went and how they might have been done better. "The task is arduous because the ability to notice what one has done is often impeded by *secondary ignorance*; that is, by not knowing that you don't know. *Primary ignorance* – knowing that you don't know -- is far easier to deal with. The way to reduce its presence is to organize schools so that they allow colleagues to see and critique each other's teaching" (Eisner, 2002, p. 49). Dancer and Musician both spoke of a high school reorganization that would include the opportunity for teachers to be able to work with their peers. When working with the new curricular documents, being able to share beliefs and ideas and work with others to develop engaging and creative lesson plans is invaluable. For teachers who feel that they are not confident or knowledgeable when working with the curriculum and the viewing and representing strands, giving them the opportunity to work collaboratively provides a sense of confidence and the sharing of lessons is a benefit to teachers and students alike. Just as students benefit from working collaboratively, so too is it necessary for teachers to have the opportunity to share ideas and make peer connections. The integration of the arts into the English language arts curriculum provides the impetus for this to take place.

Actor is a very respected educator and was able to give some new insights into the how the curriculum is being used by teachers and was able to explore her personal thoughts about why some teachers embrace the curriculum and others are slow to do so. She sees that teachers are at various points in their careers, some teach as they were taught and some simply resist change. Similar to both Dancer and Musician her concern is for the students in the classroom. "It has always been a part of my approach to make things interesting for kids and to make learning active" (Interview #1, p.3). She says she 'kind of' stumbled on that in her own teaching by looking at what the kids "got engaged with and what they didn't like". When she was being trained as a teacher, contracts were very popular. "Well, I did contracts, you know where you give them a set amount of work and they work through it...but I found those the most boring things in the world to mark. And it was the same thing with class essays. If I'm finding this really boring, what's it like for the kids? And that forced me to re-examine my practice" (Interview #1, p.3). "What I always learned was you have to know your learners. If you know your learners, how can you just walk in and use something pre-made and give it out?" (Interview #1, p.6). A good teacher tries to reach every student therefore, teaching is a complex job. "You know that you have to change something or do something differently for each person and so I've never been able to teach the same thing or the same exact way, because the students are different. They have different strengths, interests, and so on" (Interview #1, p.6). Incorporating the arts into programming is one way in which student differences can be addressed. According to Cornett &

Smithrim (2001), building a sense of identity among students is important and can be facilitated through the arts.

She spoke of her daughter's experience with a novel study. Her daughter ended up completing a 30 page response journal on a tiny little book that maybe would have required five or six journals. She spoke of the "misunderstanding because the teacher had tried something very good, reader response, in a way without really examining what it was all about" (Interview #1, p.4). She hoped that maybe the teacher taught it differently next time after reading 30 similar responses, but basically her belief was that the teacher did not truly understand reader response. "So to me that's just another way... if you don't understand what you're doing, you can sort of make it interesting but not as dynamic as you'd like it. If people have never been exposed to it or experienced it, then they won't try in the classroom" (Interview #1, p.4). "What I've learned from doing professional development and workshops and planning things for teachers, what I've really noticed, is that if they do something at the workshop, they're more likely to try in the classroom. You can't just talk about strategic teaching, you have to use the strategies" (Interview #1, p.4). Actor's discussions centered around teachers and best teaching practices as well as why teachers embrace or do not embrace the viewing and representing components of curriculum. "There are some people for whatever reason, who do not agree with the curriculum... because of their own personal way, their philosophy, you are tapping into some very fundamental things. They believe what they're doing is justifiable... and when you start tapping into people's values about English, they tend to value

literature very highly, the classics. You're looking at a whole intellectual belief system" (Interview #1, p. 11). According to Actor, people study English and then go into Education and they want to teach English because they love it. However, for some people, translating that to the reality of the classroom can be shocking. Having a love for literature and trying to transmit this to your students by standing up in front of the class and being the "sage on the stage", is not the curriculum nor is it successful today. Students need to be engaged, have choices, need viewing and representing incorporated into their programming and need to feel success. Her thoughts regarding the students in the classroom, like Dancer and Musician, were that students needed choice to be engaged and commented, "research that I've read lately enforces the role of the arts in education. And that has to do with learning styles and multiple intelligences" (Interview #1, p.11). There are documents on differentiating instruction and instruction strategies that should be used in conjunction with the curriculum but according to Actor, they are not used by many teachers. Actor is someone who is extremely passionate about good teaching practices and in her role as a consultant, she strives to make teachers aware of what is out there to assist them in implementing the curriculum. This, at times, can be frustrating.

She spoke of the previous curriculum that came out in 1987, the curriculum before this present curriculum. "I know at that time I was so upset with the changes that they were making, it led me to be a pilot teacher so I got some information" (Interview #1, p.9). In comparing the piloting in 1987 to this curriculum she said, "they didn't even pilot this in the same way because of

government cutbacks or whatever, they didn't have the same kind of trial of this curriculum that they had back in '87" (Interview #1, p.9). When talking about the curriculum in 1974 when she started teaching, she said the guide was about two pages long and it was by "hours" that teachers completed segments of the curriculum. At that time there was no direction at all for what you did, no set of skills or no particular content identified. "Now we're looking at very much a literacy based curriculum and it doesn't particularly matter what the piece that you're using is, it's what you do with it that is important and how you do it" (Interview #1, p.10). She keeps up with the latest on brain research, multiple intelligences and teaching methodology and says "some of the reading I've done in the last few years and coming into this role, has helped to justify in my own mind, very often research is validating now what good teachers have always done" (Interview #1, p.11).

When asked how the arts are involved when teaching the curriculum, she replied "as far as I'm concerned, it's always been an integral part of it" (Interview #1, p.2). This is almost the exact thing that Dancer said. Actor has always used art in terms of asking students to draw or make collages, has used music in the classroom, creative drama, and like Dancer, if the students had a particular talent, "it would be a natural thing that I would encourage" (Interview #1, p.1). About the curriculum she says, "you've got to make it active for them, give them responsibility, help them understand what they're studying or learning, identify key concepts and so on..." (Interview #1, p.7). Eisner (2002), agrees when he says, "Students learn more because of the personal meanings they make of what

we have taught since meaning is located in the interaction between the student and the rest of the situation, and since each student brings a unique history to that situation, the meanings made by each student will differ from those of others, sometimes in very significant ways" (Eisner, 2002, p. 51). According to Actor, brain research states that the emotional effect of the classroom, "a safe and caring learning environment, is more important than anything else that goes on" (Interview #1, p.7). This contention is supported by Thornton (2001), when discussing Nel Noddings' curriculum of caring and competence. Noddings believes that a meaningful connection between the interests of the student and their capacities is vital. Actor believed that using the arts in teaching is a natural way for children to learn. "It's the whole idea of representing as showing what you know. That's what representing is all about. Teachers need to have an understanding and a framework for putting that into practice in the classroom" (Interview #1, p.12). This is supported by Eisner's (2002) contention that "Representation, like sensibility and imagination, also performs critically important cognitive functions" (p. 5) Actor stated that teachers are at various points in their understanding and their adoption of some of the strategies depending on their own personal background in education. "If they're more reflective, then they tend to be more willing to try something new" (Interview #1, p.3). Dancer, Musician, Actor and Artist all stressed the importance of being a reflective practitioner and according to Actor, "if you don't know yourself, you don't understand" (Interview #1, p.6).

Chapter 5 - Recurring Themes

Background

In choosing the research questions for my thesis, I wanted to address some of the issues concerning teachers' views on the arts, their views on the importance of the arts in a student's schooling and then focus more specifically on the viewing and representing strands of the English curriculum. My aim was to be able to paint a better picture of what was happening with the high school English curriculum and I was also hoping to shed some light on what the teachers were doing vis-à-vis the arts. Due to the nature of the interviews and the open-ended questions that began our conversations, our discussions led to many topics such as teachers, the environment they work in, today's students, and the English language arts curriculum. What amazed me about the information gleaned from the interviews was the consistency among the three participants. As I read over and transcribed our conversations, each person's interview that began with a question regarding the arts, ended up focusing on the arts in connection with teachers, students, the curriculum and the existing organization and structure of high school. It was so interesting to break down the information because with all three interviewees, four categories leapt out at me. Each one of the participants spoke about *teachers*, *students*, *the curriculum*, and *the school*. These recurring themes will be dealt with in this chapter with the primary focus being on the three important questions that began this study: the teachers' views on the arts, their feelings on incorporating the arts into

programming, the ways in which this can be accomplished, as well as their understanding of the viewing and representing components of the curriculum.

Teachers

I began the interview with *Dancer* and *Musician* by asking about their personal experiences with the arts and their experiences with the arts as a teacher in the school. *Dancer* immediately commented that "the arts" was a broad topic and he equated it to using the word text. "To me, text doesn't just mean the written word.... it can be music and art, and arts in general, it encompasses dance, ballet as well as painting and sculpture -- it is such a broad topic" (Interview #1, p. 1). He went on to say that he believed people equated the arts with a formal art curriculum and art class. "Teachers in general -- they think art in the school system is art class and there may be allowances for it in an elementary school where it might be part of the curriculum but people at the high school level, from my experience, shy away from it unless they've had specific experience in it" (Interview #1, p. 1). This belief is echoed by *Moody* (2001) when he states that too often the arts are reserved only for the talented and are seen as removed and distant from the basic core subjects.

Musician was asked the same initial question about her involvement with the arts and she responded that she's always been involved in the arts, values the arts in her personal life and sees it as an important aspect of society. She believes that it is very important to integrate many aspects of the arts in the classroom. As stated in *Cornett & Smithrim* (2001), using the arts as teaching

tools and including integrated arts programs has many benefits. Goldberg (2001) agrees stating that as a methodology for teaching, the arts provide the teacher with a repertoire of ways to introduce subject matter. Very soon after mentioning her beliefs, she began speaking, just as Dancer did, of other English teachers and their use of the curriculum and the arts in their programs. Actor also spoke of other teachers and stated, "I think a lot of English teachers, at least from what I hear out in the field, feel, I don't know if threatened is the right word but, perhaps not trained or schooled enough in the theory and I think a lot of people have concerns about integrating it into the English language arts curriculum. I can see how they could be intimidated or even unsure of how to approach integration" (Interview #1, p. 1). Goldberg (1997) agrees with Actor and also believes that the arts have not been used to the fullest in learning and in teaching and some teachers are reluctant to integrate the arts. The conversation with Actor very quickly led to teachers and their comfort level, expertise, desire, and experience in teaching just as it had done with the other two interviewees. All three interviewees had some strong views regarding English teachers and their acceptance of the curriculum and why teachers might or might not embrace the viewing and representing strands of it.

In synthesizing the reasons why teachers do not embrace the new curriculum and the viewing and representing components, all interviewees had the following explanations for why they believed teachers are often reluctant to adopt the new curriculum and incorporate the arts. They believed that teachers are at various points in their careers and many want to *cling to the "old school"*

ways, teachers are *unsure of how to use it*, they often *teach the way that they were taught* and some are very strong willed and believe that what they are doing is right and therefore, they *resist change*. The interviewees also discussed some qualities that they believed were important for a good teacher to possess. They believed teachers should be *risk-takers, reflective practitioners*, have a *student-centered philosophy of teaching, collaborate with their peers* and should *use the curriculum*. These beliefs about their peers came out of the interviews and will be discussed in further detail.

Actor believed that teachers were at various points in their adoption and understanding of the curriculum depending on their personal background in education. "I think that we've got a number of people who would be, like the front-runners, who are out there and have done this consistently for a number of years. And then we have other people who have been more traditional in their approach to things and perhaps a little less enthusiastic about adopting some of the strategies that they are being asked to do" (Interview #1, p. 2). This comment was confirmed by both Musician and Dancer. Eisner, as cited by Moody (1990), concurs with the thoughts of the interviewees. He believes that the more traditional approach and the "assembly line" of learning, needs to undergo major changes. The consultant, Actor, commented that some teachers had missed the great paradigm shift that had occurred over the last thirty years and that was sad. "Until we start looking at the understanding of the curricula as part of the process of talking about roles in the classroom, then not much is going to change" (Interview #1, p.8). Actor believed that very often there are some

people, for whatever reason, who do not agree with the curriculum. "Because of their own personal way, their philosophy, you're tapping into some very fundamental things. They believe what they're doing is justifiable... so it comes down to your own personal understanding of it and whether it corresponds to your values and when you start tapping into people's values about English, they tend to value literature pretty highly" (Interview #1, p.11). Actor believed that some teachers focus on what was considered important decades ago, when the classics of British and American literature were studied and reading and writing was the focus. This is contrary to the present curriculum whereby students are expected to gain knowledge from all six language arts in order to compose, comprehend as well as respond, to text.

Dancer being a first year teacher in high school and having completed his student teaching in a middle years setting, really saw that literature was a focus in high school and that the "*old school*" thinking still existed. He was asked by another English teacher in the school what he was doing with "literature" in his class because the teacher believed that "we have too many new people who aren't spending enough time on literature, and they're doing too many of these little art projects" (Interview #1, p. 4). It seems that teachers who would ask this question do not understand that the English language arts curriculum endorses the arts and do not realize as Goldberg (1997) does that, keeping the arts separate from the other subjects severely limits the potential of using the arts as a teaching tool. According to Dancer, some teachers seem to think that reading and writing equals literacy and now "there may be a threat to the "*old school*"

who have been focusing on a literature basis for everything for so long and then, all of a sudden, there is this new thrust towards getting arts into the curriculum and bringing forward all these new forms of expression. All of a sudden their strength isn't the focus of the curriculum anymore. The focus has moved along and they haven't moved along with it. They're stuck in their strength instead of trying to develop other strengths in other areas" (Interview #1, p.8 & 9). Cornett & Smithrim (2001) endorse the power of the arts in curriculum when they write about new curricula being devised across North America that uses the arts as content centers and teaching tools. Teachers who do not embrace the integration of the arts, are not making use of new ways to engage students and communicate subject matter. According to Actor, "most teachers of English are people who love literature, did really well at University doing literary analysis and studying literature, and now believe that this is what they are to do in the classroom" (Interview #1, p. 7). This focus on analysis is not always successful. This was reiterated by both Musician and Dancer when they both said that one cannot be the "sage on the stage" anymore. However, being "a guide on the side" can threaten some teachers as many are in a comfort zone now and resist change.

The interviewees speculated that teachers did not use the curriculum documents or incorporate the arts into their programming because they were *unsure* of how to use the documents and they were not trained as English teachers nor did they have training in the arts. Musician, Dancer, and Actor all believed that teachers teaching English should be specialists or have training in

the teaching of English. "I certainly am all in favor of having specialists and I think what happens to English departments all the time is if someone speaks English, they get to teach it! If you don't have a background in English, it is a pretty hard job", Musician believed (Interview # 1 p. 4). Actor thought that more should be done about looking at the theory behind the teaching of English. "If people haven't had the opportunity to look at English and the theory behind the teaching of English, then they don't understand it. And if they don't understand it, they figure all they have to do is ask a bunch of questions about whatever piece it is they're teaching, and that's teaching English... and they've missed the whole thing" (Interview #1, p. 5). She believes that some people are willing to try and other people are coping the best they can. Goldberg (1997) believes that the arts have not been used to the fullest in teaching, and according to the curriculum, including viewing and representing in the English language arts curriculum acknowledges the understanding of the way language learning takes place. Teachers seem to equate the viewing and representing strands with art and feel either threatened or inadequate regarding their expertise in the subject. According to Dancer, "people are, for the most part, afraid to take chances. The arts, for someone who doesn't have a background and has built up confidence in them, is something you are going to shy away from" (Interview #1, p. 6).

Another common thread that all participants wove into their stories was that teachers often *teach as they have been taught*, especially if they have not had training in the subject they are asked to teach. Actor has dealt with teachers who are sometimes asked to teach a section of a subject and you get "this

unwieldy curriculum guide that really doesn't tell you how to do things or model things for you, and all these kids and you look in the room and it's the same stuff that you did when you were in school, so you know exactly how to teach it -- the way you were taught!" (Interview #1, p. 8). With Actor's specific job as a consultant, she also sees many new teachers and if they have been given an English class to teach and they have no English background, "What I maintain is you teach as you've been taught. So if we get people who are new to the profession but they don't have any particular background in some of these things, they tend to be a little more traditional" (Interview #1, p.2).

The three interviewees also believe that many teachers *resist change*. Artist witnessed this firsthand during her first year teaching high school English when at times her teaching practices, which did not include being the sage on the stage, were questioned by other teachers. Change is a threat for some. Actor commented that it is stressful to change but resisting change also causes stress. Musician also had some comments regarding change saying "I just think that there is a percentage of the population that just resist change and that is the majority and then you've got five to ten percent who are innovators and to seek change and embrace change and you've got to let people do it" (Interview #2, p. 7). She said that one can't force someone into accepting something and believed that you don't need everyone on board, but you need to let the innovators forge ahead.

To summarize what the interviewees believed about other teachers either embracing or resisting the new curriculum with the viewing and representing

strands, they thought that teachers often equate the viewing and representing strands with art. They feel threatened and/or inadequate about their abilities and thus avoid integrating the arts. Some teachers cling to their former ways of teaching believing what they have done in the past is the correct way to teach. Others have a philosophical belief that what is important is literature plus analysis and that is what equals teaching literacy. Finally, the participants thought that some teachers are unsure of how exactly to use the curriculum and the viewing and representing strands.

This led me to our conversations that focused on specific qualities a teacher of today needs in order to embrace something new, for example, the viewing and representing components. One quality is that of a risk taker. Being a risk taker was seen as important by all participants and they all saw themselves as risk takers.

Teachers need to be *risk takers* and Dancer believed that if you're not taking risks, you're not asking questions. If one is accepting of differences and readily embraces change, that is being a risk taker and isn't that what we want for our students? Dancer believed that many teachers are comfortable being the sage on the stage but "you have to take a risk to move into that guide position" (Interview #1, p. 7). Musician saw herself as a huge risk taker in education even though in her personal life she did not see herself as a risk taker. "I embrace change professionally. I'm a huge risk taker in teaching. I take tons of risks but personally, I'm a very careful person. Financially, I'm incredibly careful. In teaching and in traveling I'm very much at risk taker but I think personally, I'm

not" (Interview #1 p.9). I have seen Musician teach a variety of creative and exciting units that hook the kids in; she takes students to the ballet and art gallery and introduces new initiatives in school with other subjects. Among the other things her students have designed huge posters to advertise Shakespearean plays, have painted on the walls of her room, and have done parodies on a variety of television shows comparing them to novels studied. She is also working with other teachers in other subject areas to integrate English and Art with their subjects. She truly is an innovative teacher who does take risks. Actor saw the difference in teachers' programs between those who are willing to try new things and those who are afraid. A teacher must be able to give up some things and embrace new ones in order to be a risk taker. One of the benefits of the arts is that it teaches one to be a risk taker. That is, how much of a risk taker you are is important when embracing something new and when working in the arts, people learn to take risks. Regarding the viewing and representing strands of the curriculum, all participants believed that teachers must be able to take a risk and try new things when integrating the arts into their programs.

All participants stressed the necessity of being a *reflective* and thoughtful practitioner. Dancer stated that one needs to be reflective and also commented on how much this was stressed during his University experience. "Reflection was a key component in my education course and the only way you're going to make use of those reflections is to write them down. Reflect on a consistent basis and learn from your reflections. The teacher as a reflective practitioner was one of the courses and it's true... if you want to improve as a teacher, you should be

doing those things" (Interview #1, p.11). If one reflects on a lesson that has just been taught, changes for the better can be made. Musician stated that self reflection is very important and teachers need to keep on top of their field. "I think a good teacher is self reflective, you check out how the lesson went, you change and modify" (Interview #1, p.10). Eisner (2002), agrees but he believes that "Self-reflection on one's own teaching, so important, is seldom sufficient" (Eisner, 2002, p.56). Teachers simply do not know what they are unaware of. What teachers need is, "supportive feedback from those who know how to see the teaching of the arts in practice" (Eisner, 2002, p.57). He calls this connoisseurship, the art of appreciation, and says, "we see it in the arts all the time, as well as in other areas of life where someone really knows by virtue of experience and study what he or she is attending to. But connoisseurship is a solo enterprise; one can appreciate something in private, without uttering a word. Making public through language what one has seen, interpreted, and appraised is an act of criticism" (Eisner, 2002, p.57). The purpose of the criticism is to contribute to the improvement of education. Having the opportunity to connect with others in your field is what is needed because then one is able to get feedback from peers and be able to improve and grow as a teacher.

Teachers should focus on student needs and have a *student-centered* philosophy when dealing with students. Artist's teaching style is such that she focuses on the needs of the student before the curriculum. This student-centered approach is also embraced by Musician, Dancer and Actor. A student-centered philosophy is also mentioned in the curriculum when it states that

"Successful learning is more likely to occur if programming decisions are informed by an understanding of students and the way they learn" (Senior 3 English Language Arts Overview: Implementation Overview, 1998, p. 4). It is also suggested that teachers can gain an understanding of the unique qualities of each student by daily interaction and observation. Actor stressed the importance of making the curriculum interesting and the learning active so that it connects with the students. Dancer also discussed this in great detail saying that teachers needed to concentrate on individual students not just see them as "a class". Musician stated that the teaching should be student-centered and the way that she teaches is to "try to break down barriers by being very familiar with the kids" (Interview #1, p.7).

Actor expressed frustration at certain teachers who do not consider the student concerns in the classroom before programming. She told a story from a few years back when she was teaching high school. It took place in a duplicating room with a teacher excitedly telling her that he had just copied his entire year's work and now was set for the year. The demographics of his students, the individual needs or the makeup of the class did not concern him. "For two semesters, all his courses, everything was done. So it meant that he was doing it pretty well the way it was done the year before. And what I always learned was you have to know our learners. If you know your learners, how can you just walk in with something pre-made and give it out?" (Interview #1, p.6). Teachers can not plan out the year in advance. Musician states that you should never do the same thing twice as the students are always changing and your

classroom is too. Dancer concurs when he states, "I have a problem with teachers who have their year planned out in September. To me, your idea of what you're going to do needs to be constantly re-evaluated based on the students in your classroom", (Interview #3, p.5). Seeing students as individuals is certainly confirmed by the literature, especially when reading the work about multiple intelligences written by Howard Gardner (1983). Teaching with the arts can celebrate the diversity of our population and promote understanding as Fowler (1996) contends. Teachers should allow students to display their talents and abilities. When teachers recognize student needs and know the learners, then according to the life lessons benefits of the arts and Fowler (1996), students see themselves as functioning members of the human race and communicate within and across cultures.

It is necessary for teachers to adjust the curriculum to individual student needs. A wonderful analogy using the medical field was discussed with Musician. She had been speaking to her mother who told her the story of a young man in the faculty of Education. He had never had a course that told him what to teach or what activities to do. Musician stated that there were no specific courses like that and one needed to know the curriculum, go in with ideas and rarely do the same thing twice because students and classrooms are always changing. Her mother then equated it with nursing. A nurse "is given the intellectual information or the content from books, studies the information, but that is completely different from applying it to a real-life situation in which someone is in need of medical care. It might be a crisis situation but it is different

every time you apply it" (Interview #3, p.2). Patients and situations determine the line of action just as the students in your classroom should determine the line of action. According to Musician, "it isn't only people who aren't teachers who don't realize this, it is also people who are studying to be teachers. And I said, that is my biggest gripe about student teachers that they don't realize that" (Interview #3, p.2). She explained this difference to her mother saying, "Yes Mom, that's the difference between being teacher-centered and student-centered. And why are we there in the first place? That's what we're there for! They should come first and I don't know how they couldn't" (Interview #3, p.2). Dancer agrees and when asked about concerns regarding the arts in the curriculum he replied, "my concern would be that I think English and the inclusion of the arts within that context in high school, should be focused on students first. What experience would most benefit this group of students, that individual student, rather than I'm doing this novel and the easiest way to get the content to the kids and make sure they understand the novel is to do this activity" (Interview #3, p.6). From Artist's perspective, when she sees students totally engaged in an activity, totally enthralled with something they have read because they have chosen it, and totally absorbed by an arts activity being shared by their peers, she knows the power of the student-centered English language arts curriculum.

As well as teachers focusing on student concerns, the participants also believe that *teachers need to focus on each other*. Experienced teachers have a lot to share and we should be doing more team teaching, sharing our strengths and working on our weaknesses. Musician mentions that we should be doing

more team work - by buddying up master teachers with those new to the English program. "I think we have to start doing a heck of a lot more peer collaboration - experienced teachers passing on knowledge to new teachers coming in" (Interview #2, p. 6). Peer collaboration is seen as very important by all participants and Musician mentions that "new teachers need the support, they need someone to go to bounce ideas off and I think it is so important, that sense of collaboration, that should be built in. Not just a built in buddy, where do I get the photocopy code, but experienced teachers being matched up with new teachers...and I think you get a benefit for both" (Interview #2, p.6 &7). As Eisner (2002) believes, the job of teaching is often insular and it is easy to fall into familiar routines. "Such routines are not conducive to professional growth. For professional growth, we need, as I have suggested earlier, feedback on our teaching" (p. 56). Artist found that her first year teaching high school English was a lonely year. No one really reached out to her to assist her with programming or the new curriculum. In retrospect, Artist now sees that the way she pursued her teaching that first year, following the curriculum documents and incorporating the arts, was quite different from what was going on in other English high school classrooms. She assumed this because of visual observations and discussions with the other high school teachers regarding their own programs. Since Artist's teaching was different from the way they were teaching the program, the other teachers did not offer feedback or share ideas. When she discussed this with other teachers in other schools and divisions, she found that her experiences were not unique. Dancer found that working with other teachers was not

encouraged in the high school. "The way it is organized discourages interaction between teachers. The opportunities to meet just don't occur at the high school level" (Interview #1, p.12). He remembers that during his first year at high school, he met with other members from the English department only four times during the year. This compares to meeting every Friday afternoon on a weekly basis in the junior high setting. Having the opportunity to meet with colleagues to discuss programming and receive validation or advice regarding curricular initiatives, provides valuable feedback and a sense of camaraderie. Reflection is an important part of good teaching practice and as Eisner (2002) believes, connecting with your peers for feedback, promotes reflection and can help a teacher improve and strengthen skills.

Each of the interviewees had some ideas of how teachers could integrate the arts, specifically the viewing and representing strands, into their programs. Musician believes that by talking about it and valuing it, students get on board. "I'm always talking to kids about what movies they've seen, what concerts they've gone to, plays, actors... I try to take all classes on field trips to the arts and I have no problem whatsoever justifying those because you can read anything as a text. I value it, I love it and it enriches my life. It's not just the stepping off point for a lesson or a text we will study in class. It's sort of an approach. The arts enrich your life and I try to instill this in the kids from all sorts of different backgrounds" (Interview #1, p. 6). The arts are beneficial to a student's education and are necessary for society as a whole. According to the Senior 2 Language Arts Implementation Overview (1998), "Viewing and representing also

are language arts in their own right. Students need to learn the techniques and conventions of visual language to become more conscious, discerning, critical, and appreciative readers of visual media, and more effective creators of visual products" (p. 15). Research reinforces the role of the arts in education as the arts are a natural way for children to learn. According to Eisner (2002), the arts "can serve as models of what educational aspiration and practice might be at its very best" (Eisner, 2002, p. xii). Representing is showing what you know. All teachers are not at the same comfort level and not all teachers embrace the viewing and representing components of the curriculum for differing reasons, but there are ways to address this. Actor spoke of the Success for all Learners (1996) document which is a key part of the curriculum. "But there are very many people who have not looked at the documents in any depth or detail" (Interview #1, p.12). Using these documents is an important part of teaching the English curriculum. Perhaps one reason why these documents are not being used, according to Actor, is the method in which the documents were distributed. Many documents were simply put in teachers' mailboxes and in-servicing on the material was optional. While the participants in this study believe that it is necessary for teachers to embrace the new curriculum with the viewing and representing strands and integrate the arts into the high school programming, they identified a number of stumbling blocks. Some of these are the teachers' feelings of inadequacy with the arts integration, their clinging to "old ways", the dichotomy between literature and literacy teaching, and certain qualities that are

needed when supporting the incorporation of new practices and the curriculum itself, that is, the distributions of it and the in-servicing of the actual document.

Students

Another topic that the discussion focused around concerned the students. The students of today are not the same as when the adults of today were students or even the same as they were a few years ago. Actor stated, "information doubles every 22 months because we are in this information age. So that means that everything we know, in 22 months many things that we know will no longer be current. That's how much things have changed" (Interview #1, p.5). Students need to be our focus in education and we need to realize that our clientele is changing. "The world that students now live in and that they will enter as adults is riddled with ambiguities, uncertainties, the need to exercise judgment in the absence of rule, and the press of the feelingful as a source of information for making difficult choices" (Eisner, 2002, p. xii).

Musician noted that students need to be hooked in. They need to be engaged and must like what they are reading. "My number one thing is that kids can't learn or don't value English if they cannot read something that they cannot engage in" (Interview #1, p.7). In the Senior 1 English language arts Overview (1996) it states that, "Intrinsic motivation is closely tied to students' self-selection of texts, topics, activities, and creative forms" (p. 8). Choice is an important part of the curriculum and one of the benefits of including the arts in programming, according to Noddings as quoted in Thornton (2001), is the meaningful

connection between the interests and the capacities of students. Musician has purchased many books for literature kits to be used by students and would never dream of buying the books without first consulting the students. Students need to have input and be able to make choices for their own learning. "The most important thing...it's their choice! They are controlling what they're doing, where they're going and how they're doing it. They are a part of this equation and we are there as teachers to help them realize and actualize whatever their goals are. They have to be the motivators and the directors" (Interview #2, p.3).

Dancer noticed a definite difference between junior high school students and high school students. "As a teacher in junior high, there is more of an energy there for the teachers. There's a real connection to the student's energy that I think in the middle school level, it's almost a concerted effort to build on that energy. In the high schools, there is a concerted effort to quell that energy and to make students conform...to have a quiet class" (Interview #1, p. 12). The junior high students are energetic and can be easily drawn in to an exciting program. However, once students reach high school, schooling is more subject driven, their lives become busier with dating, jobs and other responsibilities and it does take more effort on the part of the teachers to totally engage the students. Eisner (2002) agrees saying that adolescents seem to fluctuate between being children and adults. The curriculum documents give information about the Senior 1-4 learners. According to the Senior One English Language Arts Overview (1998), Senior 1 students are some of the most exciting and challenging students in the school system. "Teachers need to be sensitive to the dynamic classroom

atmosphere and recognize when shifts in interests, capabilities, and needs are occurring, so that they can adjust learning activities for their students" (Senior 1 English Language Arts Overview, 1998, p. 4). In Senior 2, "More have part-time jobs. Students are more sophisticated in their knowledge and use of information technology, and much of their understanding of the world comes from television" (Senior 2 English Language Arts Implementation Overview, 1998, p. 3). The physical, moral, ethical, social, psychological and emotional characteristics are discussed in the Implementation Overview for Senior 3 and 4 students. There is a great deal of information about teaching high school students in the Implementation Overviews and teachers need to be aware of the characteristics of the students in their classrooms.

High school students don't see literature as important according to Musician. In regards to teaching Shakespeare, she sees that the focus has really changed and sees that the goal should be to expose students to his work only. She vows to never teach Hamlet again cover to cover, because, "the kids don't have the language, they don't have the tools. They don't have the curiosity. The focus has really changed" (Interview #1, p. 5). She felt that literature should be retained as well as the focus on literacy and, because of the programs that she teaches, she is able to do this. Musician teaches the Manitoba English language arts curriculum as well as the International Baccalaureate (IB) program which is its own program and different from the Manitoba English Language Arts curriculum, so she gets to teach courses with a literature focus and with a literacy focus. "The philosophical approach is you teach literature for literature's sake,

not for literacy. The approach totally differs" (Interview #1, p. 5). "In the International Baccalaureate classes, they know Hamlet backwards and forwards and know the symbolism because it is a requirement. The International Baccalaureate program course is within the context of the high school and I have to produce marks that reflect the provincial outcomes of a course that is not targeted towards Manitoba outcomes" (Interview #1, p. 5). She finds it interesting and notes that the students are definitely going towards a higher level. Musician loves the variety of what she teaches. She believes that students should be able to dictate what they want to learn and that is why she makes sure that the students have an integral part in the decision-making process.

The children of today are affected by society's quick fix and quick consumption attitudes, the results of which can be seen in the classroom. According to Dancer, "with the proliferation of information technology and the Internet, computers and all these new things in society, students are becoming more visual learners" (Interview #2, p.1). According to the Senior 1 English Language Arts: Implementation Overview (1998), "many students are avid and sophisticated consumers of visual media" (p. 13). Most students today would rather see a movie in two hours instead of reading the novel which would take longer. According to Musician, students "are really into an instant gratification mode of doing and learning things. I think they have a shorter attention span, they are far more visual in terms of their learning style and you didn't even see that five years ago, as much of the instant turning on or turning off. It seems to me that kids, even five years ago, had a longer attention span and could focus

and concentrate more" (Interview #2, p.1). Dancer agrees saying that students want everything so fast that often they can't focus on what they have to do. Their attention span is shorter partly due to the increased amount of sensory input in society everywhere. This barrage of stimuli coming at them makes it hard for some students to focus. The arts in the English curriculum, incorporating viewing and representing, can assist students and teachers in this. According to Eisner(2002), through the arts, "We are given permission to slow down perception, or look hard, to savor the qualities that we try, under normal conditions, to treat so efficiently that we hardly notice they are there" (p.5). He also believes that, "A school system designed with an overriding commitment to efficiency may produce outcomes that have little enduring quality" (Eisner, 2002, p.xiii). Dancer believes, "there's more to school than reading, writing and arithmetic. It is a whole environment of learning" (Interview #2, p.3). Introducing the arts into the curriculum helps to address the visual learner as well as the auditory and tactile learner

One of the things that the technology age has brought us is the realization of how information can be skewed. The curriculum encourages students to question, to explore and to create. "I think that our curriculum encourages that and it is valuable" (Interview #2, p.3). According to Fowler (1996), educating artistic intelligences nurtures more awareness. Students become very enthusiastic about an integrated curriculum according to Dancer. He sees value in "having thematic units that integrate Science and Math and integrates English into the theme so that kids have all these opportunities to express themselves

within a structured theme instead of in a structured individual course" (Interview #2, p.3). This is in keeping with the literature and according to Cornett & Smithrim (2001), integration of the arts and teaching through and with the arts, when coupled with a balanced and realistic perspective, has many benefits. Musician agrees saying that "students like to control what they're doing, where they're going and how they're doing it" (Interview #2, p. 3). Students need to feel that they have a stake in the system.

Unfortunately, students' curiosity seems to have diminished once they reach high school, according to Musician. "The thing that frustrates me is that it seems to me, children's curiosity has been absolutely sapped or sucked out of them. They have no intellectual curiosity by the time they hit high school. I think they've been flogged down by the system... sit here in your desk, do this assignment, hand in this worksheet, and move onto the next one" (Interview #2, p.3). For all students, being able to take courses in the arts or having the arts integrated into their English program, gives students the greater sense of their world and who they are within it. According to Goldberg (1997), the arts offer many kinds of knowledge and are "humanity's expression of life itself" (p. 5). Fowler (1996) believes that the subject matter of the arts deals with multiple facets and relates quite naturally to learning and thus, students respond. All respondents expressed disappointment that including the arts could not always be realized for all students.

Curriculum

Interestingly enough, Artist, Musician, Dancer, and Actor all found difficulties with the curriculum both in its implementation and in its structure, but all respondents eagerly embrace the curriculum, especially the viewing and representing components. Actor, having taught for 26 years and now in contact with many teachers in the division, has seen major curriculum changes throughout the years. The English language arts curriculum that was released in Manitoba in the 1980's, reflected the change in thinking about the ways in which language learning was accomplished. Students became the creators of language forms themselves instead of just an audience that made meaning of creative works studied in class. Another major change was the definition of text in that it referred to all language forms that students explore and create. With this redefinition of text as the vehicle for language learning, students learn to make meaning of all texts including visual, oral and print texts.

Four benefits of the arts mentioned in chapter two are cultural legacy, communication, imagination and life lessons. "Including viewing and representing in the English language arts curriculum acknowledges both social change and an evolving understanding of the way language learning takes place" (Senior 1 English language arts Overview, 1996, p. 11). Students need to communicate effectively and as Fowler (1996) believes, the study of the arts teaches students to be communicators of their thoughts, feelings and ideas. The arts are powerful tools of communication. The arts are our cultural legacy and reflect our relation to time. Including the arts into a curriculum provides a frame

for reading the world. According to Eisner (2002), "These frames, theories, concepts, images, and narratives parse the world in particular ways. Becoming socialized within a culture means acquiring these frames, for they allow you to join and participate in a discourse community, where discourse refers to the sharing of any form in which meaning is encoded and can be decoded. Common frames make a shared way of life possible" (p. 85). The curriculum mentions that culture is increasingly transmitted visually in society and in today's technological age, there are greater literacy demands with the media of choice for many students being electronic media and visual texts. "Imagination is highly visual and readers form mental constructs in reading all texts" (Senior 1 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes, 1998, p. 11). Involvement in the arts prepares students for a world that wants creative problem solvers and according to Greene (1995), imagination makes empathy possible because it permits one to give credence to alternate realities. To become an empathetic person is a life lesson for students as human beings are creatures of feelings as well as thought. Fowler (1996) contends that the arts tend our spirit and through the arts, students see themselves as functioning members of society. The English language arts curriculum, especially with the viewing and representing strands, deals with the benefits of the arts that can be realized when teachers work with the curriculum.

The six language arts, listening and speaking, reading and writing, viewing and representing, are interrelated and interdependent. Thus, the focus on reading and writing so as to complete literary analysis, is not the focus of this

curriculum although some teachers continue to stress it. When the participants in this research study discussed their concerns regarding the curriculum, specifically the viewing and representing components, they spoke of the actual document, the way it was presented to teachers as well as the problems for implementation.

Regarding the actual curriculum document, all of the teachers found that it was too lengthy. According to Actor, "The curriculum is huge and for many people it is a huge change for the way they thought about it" (Interview #1, p. 4). It is an unwieldy curriculum guide that doesn't really show one how to do things or model it for teachers. "It is like a complex knotted string to deal with, like a ball of yarn that is all messed up -- that's exactly what we're trying to unravel for people. And some people are willing to try and other people are coping the best they can do" (Interview #1, p. 8). The representing is showing what you know and "teachers need to have an understanding and a framework for putting that into practice in the classroom" (Interview #1, p.11). According to Actor, teachers are expected to learn about the curriculum on their own and it hasn't necessarily happened. She is critical of the way that the curriculum was presented to teachers. "People's lives are so busy now it's hard. Any private sector job, when they're expecting you to implement change, provides time for you to do this. The amount of time needed for something this complex should've been built in when this came out from the province. There should've been opportunity for people to go for, say, summer training institutes for three weeks or..." (Interview #1, p.11). She also believes "that the way the curriculum was sort of run out like fishing line

by the department over a series of years, some people went into in-servicing, some people, say department heads, got the information but they didn't necessarily give it out because it was quite contentious, or they shared it in the same way the department did, by putting it in teacher's mailboxes and unless there was a sort of chemistry in a particular school or the particular grade level that was sort of the catalyst for this change, this implementation, it just didn't make a big impact on a lot of people"(Interview #1, p.8).

An interesting comment about the structure of the curriculum was made by Dancer when he stated that the columns and charts in the curriculum only tended to compartmentalize the curriculum. "Instead of having the columns and the lists at the top, what about presenting it as the piece of the pie? That the six strands are pieces of the whole; there are various ways you can present it so that people see it as being part of the whole "(Interview #2, p.5). The minute you start using columns and charts, people want to look in column A and combine that with column B and work towards an end. If one works with the circle image, it is part of a whole, he believes.

Along the same line, the strands are seen as paired components. Teachers tend to think that only the two strands together should be integrated. Reading goes with writing, listening goes with speaking, and viewing and representing are to be paired as well. According to Actor, keywords are used in the five general outcomes at every grade level. "The specific things underneath each grade level get progressively more difficult so that by the time one is looking at S3 or S4, one is looking at transactional uses of language and expressive or aesthetic uses of

language in a much deeper way" (Interview #1, p.5). But if teachers are still looking at each discrete piece of literature, novel or contents of a book instead of looking at how it could be used as an example for language use, then one is not teaching the curriculum. "I think in a lot of cases, again I'm talking high school, the attitude is that you are teaching a work of literature but you're not necessarily doing that anymore with this curriculum. You want to get some key ideas out of it, you want the students to understand it but you're not teaching them to do literary analysis" (Interview #1, p.7). Students are different and have different strengths and weaknesses. This is certainly in keeping with Howard Gardner's (1983) theories of multiple intelligences. Teachers should guide students in choosing what they are good at and what they enjoy doing and have the literature as a base. According to Musician, "You're still valuing the literature, it is the base, but you're allowing kids choice to do authentic tasks with it and do authentic evaluation. And isn't that what we're try to teach kids -- how to self-regulate, how to learn on their own, and how to assess their learning?" (Interview #2, p. 5). The curriculum has to be active for them and students need to be given responsibility and help so that they understand what they're learning.

According to Eisner (2002), "Teaching is not restricted to the direct interactions between teacher and student" (p. 57). Teachers need to use the occasions of their teaching as opportunities to learn to teach, and Eisner (2002) believes that teachers need critical and supportive feedback from their peers. If a teacher is unsure of how to implement the curricular objectives and feels

insecure or inadequate with various strands of the curriculum, having the opportunity to connect with other teachers is critical.

Actor strongly believes in teaching the representing and viewing components, giving students choice and incorporating multiple intelligences. She believes the curriculum went into the deeper research base of teaching language arts more than it needed to because it is beyond what many teachers understand about the nature of teaching language arts. It is not anybody's fault really, "it's because people either have not been trained, so it's a lack of experience with the ideas or if they were trained at one point, they haven't sort of kept up with it. I think there's a real need for ongoing education" (Interview #1, p.5). Eisner (2002) contends that, "The disposition to continue to learn throughout life is perhaps one of the most important contributions that schools can make to an individual's development" (p.240). This is not only true for the students in the classroom. It also applies to the staff in the building.

Literacy has changed due to the world situation, society and the students themselves. Students need to have the opportunities to explore their belief system in relation to the arts and their connectedness to the world through the arts. Musician speaks of the connection between the arts and viewing and representing components. "We have cultural icons. We have movies that we consider classics just as we have books we consider classics. I also think viewing and representing takes a different form other than just visuals. Representation could be reading a book that really moves you and then writing a screenplay. People's reactions and reflections -- people stories -- to me this is so

fundamentally important because...why do we have the arts if not to comfort us and to be an outlet for us. Where would we be without them?" (Interview #1, p.8). We should go out of our way to create opportunities for students to experience the arts.

The viewing and representing strands are new to the curriculum and are seen by most teachers as the "arts" component. However, this implementation didn't make a big impact on a lot of people according to Actor. It is a process curriculum just as the arts are a process, and she finds it ironic that people are now trying to create a great process exam. "They're trying to model their own testing on the department's model of the S4 test. There's a reading process, writing process and it takes place over a series of days" (Interview #1, p.8). During the year, teachers should be doing thematic work, giving choices, engaging students, encouraging group interaction and exploring ideas. She states "I find it so ironic because I believe that if what we're doing in the classroom was modeled the same way so that people were doing maybe themes, there were a number of choices, students were engaged in things in a different way, there was group interaction, the students explored ideas and all that kind of stuff...if that is how it was being taught, there would be no need to prepare students for that test, the S4 exam; they know how to work that way" (Interview #1, p.8).

According to Dancer, "the arts" assignments in the curriculum are what students take away from the educational experience. They are the key. "I find the arts in general, almost soothing and calming in a way. No matter what is

going on in your personal life or scholastic life with regards to pressures and things like that, these forms of artistic representation are an outlet. The forms of visual arts, music, dance... through this kind of multitude of opportunities, an outlet is open to you" (Interview #3, p.2). He also believes that in thematic units, students can express themselves within the structured theme. Connections can be made and people can be exposed to the value of that type of curriculum. The curriculum needs to be made active for the students giving them responsibility and helping them to understand what they are studying. He sees the curriculum as being a guide so that, "I am free to explore areas of expression" (Interview #3, p. 4).

For curricular implementation to be successful, in-servicing needs to be mandatory followed through by the administration. "We have people doing amazing work and offering these great programs. I think there needs to be an emphasis on this by administration. These people are doing amazing work and therefore, you are going to this professional development opportunity. You make whatever arrangements needed but this is too beneficial for you not to go" (Interview #2, p.6). Dancer also believes strongly in an integrated curriculum at the high school level. "That would be my goal to see if we could look at things like integrated curriculum at the high school level. Having thematic units that integrate Science and Math plus English into the theme so that kids have all ways and opportunities to express themselves within a structured theme instead of in a structured individual course" (Interview #2, p.3). Fowler (1996) and Cornett & Smithrim (2001) agree with this when they state that the integrated and

interdisciplinary approaches are seen as the best methods that meet all the goals of having an education based in the arts and therefore, realizing the benefits of the arts. One needs to start small with curriculum changes, focus on an initiative, get support from administration and staff in the school and allow people a certain amount of time for in-servicing and collaboration. Dancer sees strength in integrating curriculum because teachers then have the opportunity to collaborate with their peers in different subject areas and students benefit because they have the opportunity to explore many subject areas according to a specific theme.

School

The fourth common theme that emerged in all interviews was the structure of the high school. Actor, Musician, Dancer and Artist all agree that the high school organization needs to change. All interviewees used the same phrase stating that the high school system is compartmentalized. Dancer stated, "The whole high school system is compartmentalized -- it discourages interactions between teachers. There are basically no opportunities for a grade nine English teacher to talk to a grade nine social studies teacher. It's amazing if they know each other's last names" (Interview #1, p.14). Eisner (2002) writes of the culture that is developed in schools and classrooms and it constitutes a way of life. "The social conditions, the prevailing norms, the comments and attitudes of peers, the organizational structure of schools, the hidden messages that are conveyed to students in evaluation and testing practices – these also teach" (p. 157). He sees that "the culture is used to 'grow children', and the pace and direction of

growth are influenced by the features of the environment in and through which they live. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of what students learn in school requires considerably more than attention to curriculum and teaching practices" (Eisner, 2002, p. 158). Teachers need to be able to connect with one another and Dancer believes the compartmentalization, which is part of the high school organization, is one of the things that prevents teachers from attending professional development opportunities. "I think you need to know the system you're functioning in to make changes. And if you're not aware, you're not asking questions and you just become part of this straight line education that never goes anywhere" (Interview #2, p.7). Further to this, he spoke about the structuring of education in Manitoba. "How much interaction is there between faculties of Education and the school? There's nowhere near the interaction and the level of cooperation there should be between those two entities" (Interview #2, p.6). Musician states "what happens in high school in a way that is so inauthentic is, that kids are boxed. I think it is incredibly problematic because what that does is...instead of what it should be doing which is promoting disciplines or areas of discourse, you're getting disciplines that seem to exist in a vacuum. That's the structure of an academic institution. That's where we get our structure of the University" (Interview #2, p.4). She agrees with Dancer when she says, "wouldn't it be nice to talk to other teachers in other disciplines about integration and other programming? I find that you just don't have that in a high school. If we could do more team teaching, but this would involve an entire restructuring of the entire institution as we know it" (Interview #2, p.4). She would like students placed at

the center of their programming, have their coursework self-directed, and put learning into the student's own hands. When asked how it would be done she said, "you'd have to do block time tabling and scheduling. But there has to be something where kids feel they have a stake in the system because otherwise, you get really passive learners and apathetic kids" (Interview #2, p.5).

Due to timetabling, sometimes teachers are given subjects to teach when they do not have the background. According to Actor, when this happens, in order to teach the subject, teachers revert back to the way they were taught and that is not what the new curriculum is about. Musician feels that collaboration time should be built in when timetabling in a high school. New teachers should be matched to teachers who have taught the course before. Having the opportunity to work collaboratively is endorsed by Eisner (2002) and he also contends that "most school curricula are highly fragmented, that their parts do not fit well together, that subjects have independent existence" and "the farther students proceed in school, the greater the separation among the various disciplines" (p.156). As a first year teacher, Dancer found that there was very little time to confer with colleagues. Artist agreed and both found that meeting time in departments was often used only to discuss exams and was also seen as a burden and an inconvenience by the teachers.

Both Artist and Dancer found a huge difference when comparing the junior high situation to the high school setting. In junior high, every opportunity to meet in teams to discuss students was welcomed and encouraged. In high school, time to meet with colleagues was not available and there was very little sharing

of resources. The student-centered philosophy in junior high versus the subject driven focus in high school is an issue, but so is the time factor.

According to Dancer, the biggest issue in high schools is time management. We need to provide educators with time to look at the new ways of doing things. Because of the semester system and because the high school structure is so subject driven, time to meet and confer with colleagues is at a premium. Artist knows that students enter high school with the understanding that a certain number of credits must be completed in order to graduate. If they have aspirations to attend post-secondary schools, the courses they study must be chosen with care. Teachers in the high school institution are pressured to complete their course load over the semester, and the course load seems to be getting heavier. Also, the organization of the high school does not always allow for students to take courses of interest to them as they are limited by timetabling constraints. If a student has an interest and ability in art or music, these courses might not fit into their timetable due to the academic requirements for post-secondary education. The benefits of the arts must be realized and the inclusion of the viewing and representing strands into the English curriculum accomplishes this. However, if English teachers perceive the viewing and representing strands as "add ons" to the curriculum instead of valuable components that need to be incorporated into the curriculum, teachers might not embrace their inclusion.

Another commonality that was brought out by all respondents was the lack of resources. According to Musician, administrators don't seem to realize the engagement factor for students. "There's certainly that hidden agenda, science

and math, the way of the future. But the other thing is I think that administrators don't realize is that you need texts to teach. They think you can teach any text because you're teaching outcomes and goals perhaps. They don't realize the engagement factor" (Interview #2 p.2). Students need to have a choice of texts. However, all respondents commented on the fact that there are few resources to buy the books and according to Actor, one of the biggest problems for the introduction of the arts into the English language arts curriculum is acquiring supplies. "The biggest problem was supplies -- always, every time. If you're doing little poetry books, you have to scrounge around to see if you can get some fairly nice paper" (Interview #1, p.2). English resources need to keep up with the redefinition of text and we need to replace antiquated novels to increase the engagement factor for students. The high school English program has so much potential to captivate students and give them a sense of what it means to become engaged with literacy and learning. The importance of incorporating the viewing and representing components into the curriculum was stressed by the participants and they had strong beliefs in why the curriculum is not being embraced by all teachers. When I began our conversations about the arts and the curriculum with a focus on the viewing and representing components, I did not know specifically where our conversations would lead. The three participants all spoke of the teachers, students, curriculum and the school and had similar beliefs in what they thought needed to be done in order for the benefits of the arts to be realized. This qualitative study provided the opportunity to learn about teacher attitudes and beliefs about the arts, curricular acceptance and reasons

why the curriculum is not always embraced. As Eisner (1998) suggests, a study in which teachers are able to have their voices heard is useful at many levels. By participating in this study, the participants learned more about their own practices, I gained a new understanding into the issues and as well, others who are interested in similar issues are invited to look where I did and see what I saw.

Chapter 6 – Summarized Insights

Observations and Recommendations

I began this study with three questions in mind. I wanted to explore the teachers' beliefs and thoughts about the importance of the arts and their feelings about incorporating the arts into the high school English program, to get their perspective about whether or not the curriculum documents were being used by teachers and to know what their understanding of the viewing and representing components of the new English language arts curriculum was. From my conversations with these three excellent educators, I gained new insights into these questions and our conversations led to discussions about other concerns as well. The three educators all focused on four specific categories, each of which connected to the issues revolving around the arts, curriculum, and specifically, the viewing and representing strands. The research participants in this study spoke of teachers and their acceptance of the new curriculum and the arts component and spoke of the students and how teaching the arts benefited and affected their learning. The curriculum and the problems surrounding its adoption by the teachers and the structure of the high school and how it contributed to the acceptance or resistance to the new curriculum and also how it impinged on teacher collaboration were also discussed. I will deal with the three questions that began my study individually and make observations and recommendations that relate to the four themes that were discussed by the teachers. Recognizing that this is a study using the insights of only three people,

the information gleaned from this research can nevertheless provide valuable insight into the use of the arts in the English language arts curriculum.

For my first question I asked the respondents about their views on the arts and the importance of the arts in a student's schooling. The teachers all valued the arts and realized the importance of the arts in their teaching. They spoke of the cultural mix of students in the classrooms and how the arts afforded the opportunity to bridge differences and celebrate the diversity of the population. The arts were seen by the interviewees as powerful tools of communication and they believed that the arts should be a basic part of education. To prepare for a world that is constantly changing, teachers saw that the arts gave students the opportunity to imagine and deal with complex problems where there was no right or wrong answer. The teachers felt that students saw themselves as functioning members of the human race, shared experiences and learned to cooperate and respect unusual perspectives in their classrooms because the arts were a part of the students' program. Through my conversations with all participants, I learned that these teachers all value the arts, realize the importance of the arts to society and see it as an important part of their teaching. They had all been exposed to the arts during their childhood and as adults, continued to be involved with the arts. They valued the chance to take part in learning opportunities to promote the arts and took opportunities to confer with colleagues. They saw the viewing and representing strands of the English language arts curriculum as an integral part of the curriculum and stressed the integration of the arts in their programming.

All three teachers truly believed in the value of the arts and in the importance of the arts to education.

My second question to the teachers concerned the actual curricular documents and whether they were being used fully, in part, or not at all. All teachers commented that they were disappointed that the curriculum was not being followed by many high school teachers. They had a number of thoughts as to why teachers did not embrace it and why it was not being used. Their thoughts about this topic revolved around teachers, the students, the curriculum and the high school environment.

Teachers

Teachers did not embrace or use the curriculum for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the interviewees believed that teachers were unsure of how to use the document, did not really understand the viewing and representing components and thus, they did not use it. One reason why teachers did not understand the document could be due to the way teachers were in-serviced and the way that the documents were distributed to teachers. Generally, it was up to the English department heads to make the information available to the teachers and they also coordinated the in-servicing for the new curricular documents. The method of distribution was seen as a concern because many teachers did not get in-serviced along with the curriculum and the excellent resource, *Success for all Learners* (1996), was not received by all teachers. Even though there was in-servicing for the new curriculum when it came out, many teachers did not attend

and if teachers missed the in-servicing, there was no way to ensure that all teachers learned about the new curriculum. I believe that if teachers have not attended a session that explains the curriculum and the viewing and representing strands, it should be made mandatory. This would be my first recommendation. As part of the implementation of this recommendation, department heads would have to keep up-to-date records as to who had received in-servicing and the onus would fall on the teachers to carry out the curricular initiatives with the department head ensuring that the curriculum is followed. The record of attendance could also be placed in the teachers' file so that it becomes part of their records.

Secondly, the interviewees expressed concern about teachers who are teaching English without sufficient background or without a degree in English. This is a situation that often cannot be avoided, due to the high school organization and to situations that can arise. I would recommend however, that any teacher who is new to the English curriculum be required to attend the in-servicing on the curriculum, which should have a particular focus on the viewing and representing components. A scheduled meeting time for English teachers to collaborate with their peers would also assist those new to the program so that lessons and approaches could be shared and discussed.

Thirdly, the participants discussed the teachers who were resistant to change and wanted to keep the "old school" ways of teaching. The teachers resistant to the viewing and representing strands and those who value literature above literacy or equate English with literature, were a concern to the

interviewees of this study. As Eisner (2002) states, "There has been a longstanding tension in the field of education between the desire to be rigorous in a disciplinary way, that is, to provide programs that initiate the young into the concepts and procedures of the disciplines taught within the school curriculum, and programs that relate field to field and are relevant to the student" (p. 155). Even the teachers seeking disciplinary rigor acknowledge that most school curricula are fragmented and according to Eisner (2002), "Integration is, on one hand, an aspiration and on the other hand a problem when one tries to maintain the 'integrity' of a discipline" (p. 156). Even though there are some teachers who value literature above literacy, the curriculum has the focus on literacy and teachers need to concern themselves with following the curriculum. The creation of meeting time to confer with colleagues, share ideas and work collaboratively so that teachers are all working together with the curriculum is necessary, especially in a high school which tends to be very compartmentalized. Connecting with others in the field and getting feedback from peers is, according to Eisner (2002), important for the improvement of education.

Teachers also mentioned a few qualities that they personally possessed and qualities that they believed were important in order to embrace a new situation or in this case, a new curriculum. The interviewees believed that teachers needed to be risk-takers and they also needed to be reflective practitioners. It is difficult and seldom sufficient to reflect on your own as Eisner (2002) says, because teachers do not know what they are unaware of. Teachers need supportive feedback from their peers and a scheduled meeting time built

into teachers' timetables in order to discuss programming and other related issues, would accomplish the goal of connoisseurship, the art of appreciation. The purpose of this is to improve education.

My second recommendation, therefore, is that teachers be given time to collaborate and share ideas with each other. Meeting time needs to be built into high school teaching schedules to allow teachers to be able to confer with one another and work in partnership. This poses its own problems with the tight time constraints and demands in a high school setting. However, I believe that it is important to give teachers who embrace and work with the curriculum, the time to implement new lessons and programs and to connect with others. When teachers with a similar belief system and similar ideas concerning integration of the arts collaborate, they will learn from each other and then teach more powerfully. Working together is a way of supporting and sustaining the practices of teachers who incorporate the arts into their programming.

What about teachers who do not embrace the new curriculum or the benefits of the arts in a student's schooling, but are required to attend these meetings? These teachers hopefully will, through exposure to new ideas, begin to teach in different ways and will begin to understand the viewing and representing strands. It is impossible to force someone into accepting something but hopefully through the opportunities of education and collaboration with peers, teachers who resist will begin to be able to see the benefits of having students work with the arts. This opportunity to confer with colleagues should be made

available to all English teachers each year, not just when a new curriculum is introduced or for new teachers, but in an ongoing way for all teachers.

Students

The interviewees all mentioned the changing student population and how students are not, in general, interested in the analysis of literature. Teachers need to be cognizant of this and to recognize that the benefits of the arts can nevertheless be realized when the viewing and representing strands are used. The participants in this study spoke at length about how their teaching centered around the individual students in their classrooms rather than only on the class as a whole. The curriculum endorses this and asks teachers to “Learn to understand each student’s unique combination of abilities and learning styles” (Senior 1 English language arts Overview, 1996, p.5). When students are seen as individuals, each with unique strengths, and teachers work to foster a connection with them, using the arts in programming assists in making this connection. Including the arts, specifically the viewing and representing components, provides additional means of addressing the many different ways that students learn, the different forms of intelligence and the unique needs of each student. In order for teachers to become more skillful and proficient in the integration of the arts, in-servicing and scheduled meeting times in teachers’ timetables are recommended and should be pursued.

Curriculum

Teachers criticized the implementation of the curriculum as well as the actual structure of the document saying it was too lengthy and the column format made it seem compartmentalized . The structure of the document as well as how it was distributed cannot be changed now but perhaps in the future, ways to structure the document and to ensure successful distribution to all teachers can be studied. When the curriculum was introduced, there was in-servicing offered to teachers. However, not all teachers attended the sessions. This was for a number of reasons but the important thing to note was that if they did not attend, there was no real consequence – except for the students. This goes back to my first recommendation. I believe that all teachers must have in-servicing in the English language arts curriculum and there needs to be a system to keep track of who has attended and who still needs to attend. There should also be workshops presented, as there are now, that deal specifically with the viewing and representing strands. These workshops would give teachers the opportunity to learn about tried and true ways to incorporate the arts and give them excellent lesson plans. Through these workshops, teachers would also be able to collaborate with other teachers and build on the collegiality of the English teachers' community.

School

The teachers in this study felt that the structure of the high school and the organization of the school year promoted isolation. The compartmentalization of

high schools and the semester system that many high schools now have, does not allow for teachers who teach the same subjects to readily connect with one another. It is important that teachers feel that they belong to a community of learners where they can readily dialogue and collaborate with each other. Meeting time should be scheduled into a teachers' timetable, and it would also be valuable for teachers from different schools to get together to share ideas and build community. A group of teachers could form a workshop committee and work towards publishing units, workshop other teachers in implementing the curriculum and grow in their own professional development. Building a collegial community and forging ahead to create new ways to integrate the arts into the curriculum would benefit all teachers. Thus, my third recommendation is that teachers who have an interest in promoting the arts with a focus on the viewing and representing strands of the curriculum, should be encouraged and have the opportunity to get together and share ideas, present workshops, collaborate with one another and put together lessons plans or units that could be used by other teachers. With some teachers forging ahead as the implementers of new ideas, others who have previously resisted might feel more supported and might begin to feel more comfortable in embracing the curriculum.

The last question that I asked the interviewees dealt with the viewing and representing strands, the comfort level of implementing these strands into their programming and how the implementation was being carried out. All participants were very comfortable with the integration of the arts in their own classrooms. They were disappointed though that not all teachers used the arts in their

programming. After speaking about their own programs, they went on to speak about other teachers.

Comfort level was seen to be something that grew with continued exposure and with confidence because of having used the arts in the classroom. Having the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues and having the chance to get critical and positive feedback from peers was seen as an important aspect of addressing the viewing and representing strands. This could be accomplished using the English curriculum but also, the integration of the arts into other subject areas was addressed by the interviewees. Similar grade level classes could be slotted in the same time frame so that teachers could work towards integration of the arts and English with different subjects. That is, teachers' timetables need to be designed so that same grade level classes have common teaching times. With the help of administration, through timetable re-organization, this is possible. Teachers from different disciplines who teach the same grade level should also have the opportunity to collaborate with each other in grade level meetings. Thus, my fourth recommendation is for a re-organization of timetabling and the provision of meeting time for teacher collaboration across disciplines. The integration of the arts thematically could be realized within different subjects and teachers and students from all subject areas could benefit. Dancer stated, "That would be my goal, to see if we could look at things like integrated curriculum at the high school level. Having a thematic unit that integrates Science and Math and integrates English into the theme so that students have opportunities to express themselves within a structured theme, is

a beneficial priority” (Interview #2, p.3). When the arts are included in a student’s education, many benefits are realized and with the integration of different subjects, the impact can be profound and memorable for students as well as teachers. As Goldberg (1997) states, “Using the arts as a way to teach subject matter places the learner in the position of truly working with ideas and taking control of learning in a manner that is at once intellectual, personal, meaningful, and powerful” (p. 5). One of the benefits of the arts is that teachers and students are working as a team to achieve a common goal. In this way, teachers can realize the power of the arts, how it can humanize the curriculum and how it can make the high school situation, which one interviewee called “inauthentic”, a place where real, authentic learning can take place in an environment conducive to growth of mind and spirit.

This study focused on the views of three teachers concerning the arts, the English language arts curriculum, its focus on the viewing and representing strands and the use of this curriculum by high school teachers. According to Larson (1997), the arts and humanities are poised to become leading contenders in school reform. The new Manitoba English language arts curriculum which includes the viewing and representing strands, reflects this change in thinking about language learning and the arts. Cornett & Smithrim (2001), believe that the arts are important for the development of students’ emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual strengths and these beliefs were echoed by the participants in this study. Interviews with the teachers provided a rich source of information on how they perceived the situation in their school settings. They helped me to

truly see, rather than merely to look. As a result, significant insights were gained and this study has resulted in four recommendations related to the English curriculum and the arts.

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Appendix 1

Protocol for, and Interview #1 Questions for the Teachers

Researcher says: Hi... I'm so glad that you are able to speak with me regarding your educational experiences and beliefs. I want to explore a number of issues concerning the English program and topics concerning the arts. My questions will be rather open-ended, so that you may say whatever you wish or say as much as you want to. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The conversation we will have will be taped and you will receive a typed copy of the transcript of our interview. Your participation is voluntary and I appreciate the fact that you are willing to share your thoughts about the English program and your experiences with the arts.

Let me start by asking you about the arts.

1. Tell me about your personal experiences with the arts and your experiences with the arts as a teacher in the school.
2. Give me a sense of how you incorporate the arts into your English program.
3. How do you understand the connection between the arts and the viewing and representing component of the English curriculum?

Protocol for, and Interview #2 & #3 Questions for the Teachers

Researcher says: Welcome back. When we spoke last time, we discussed the arts and their connection to the curriculum, especially, the viewing and representing component of the curriculum. I would like to follow up on this and ask for further clarification.

1. Could you please tell me more about _____.
2. Would you mind please clarifying your point about _____.

Appendix 2

Protocol for English Language Arts Consultant and Interview Questions

Researcher says: Hi....I am so glad that you are able to speak with me regarding your educational beliefs and experiences. I want to explore a number of issues concerning the English program and topics concerning the arts. As the English language arts consultant, your job dictates that you assist teachers in the implementation of the English curriculum of which you have a close knowledge. I am interested in your personal thoughts and beliefs regarding the arts as well as the issues of curricular implementation. I would also like to get your insight into the divisional use of a specific component of the curriculum, the viewing and representing component.

Let me start by asking you a little bit about yourself.

1. For how long now, have you been an English consultant and what is it that you taught before becoming a consultant?
2. Tell me about your personal experiences with the arts.
3. How do you see the arts relating to the English curriculum?
4. What have you seen in the school division regarding the acceptance of and embracing of, the English language arts curriculum?