

Running Head: Influences of Self-Identity

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Final research project

Influences of Self-Identity and Empowerment of Adolescent Artistic Style Development

by

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ABSTRACT

The influence of identity development on the personal artistic style of adolescents has been absent from much of the literature on adolescent artistic development. This art-based qualitative research study explores the influence self-identity might have on the artistic style development of high school seniors. Through observations, interviews, and artwork this study explores student perspectives of identity and its influence on personal artmaking experiences. The results of this study demonstrated students' varied understanding of their personal identities as empowering their artmaking activities through self-challenge, self-expression, and self-inspiration. The final results of the study were applied to an identity-empowered unit for art educators to use in fostering students' connections between the concept of self and their developing sense of personal artistic voice.

Keywords: artistic style development, adolescent identity, artistic development

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Observing the studio practices of several advanced students over the past year, the differences in artistic development among high school juniors and seniors at Combs High School in San Tan Valley intrigued the researcher. While some explored media and techniques endlessly, others honed specific skills to perfection. While one engaged with a single theme throughout the entire year, another never seemed quite settled on any theme. These differences, and a genuine interest in identity development among adolescents, led the researcher to question: in what ways might students' sense of self-identity influence their own artistic style?

Background to the Study

Factors in both the immediate and distant environment shape the concept of identity. Likewise, one's choices and preferences are shaped by the concept of identity. Akerman & Ouellette (2012) investigated the creative process and the development of identity among arts professionals and demonstrated that "the creative process involves a concurrent interrogation and dislocation of the self" (p.383). Each artist experiences this process differently, and it yields different insights and understandings of each one's identity. Selarque (2011) wrote about the development of the artistic-self noting, "in art, like in identity, there are no solitary solutions, each art problem, like each soul and solution, is idiosyncratically expressed" (p. 2).

Artmaking offers an opportunity for adolescents to explore concepts of identity, self, and others, and thus the artworks adolescents make are directly influenced by this exploration. Simpson (2013) notes the ability of the artmaking experience to prompt both positive and negative emotional responses in the artist and explains that the experience is enhanced by each individual's previous experiences. Likewise, Smith (2005) notes that the experience is likely to

be enhanced when students learn “how to perceive, judge, and value aesthetically what we come to know through the senses” (p. 23).

While teaching a Portfolio Art course for high school juniors and seniors at Combs High School, in San Tan Valley, Arizona, the researcher observed that given similar artmaking opportunities, some students seemed to develop themes and related artworks more easily than others. This difference was most obvious when artmaking assignments were less structured and allowed for student interpretation. This raised the question, what factors might be influencing the distinct development of personal style? With that concern in mind, how might the researcher best support these students in this process?

Research Goals

The research endeavored to understand how junior and senior level students at Combs High School in San Tan Valley, Arizona perceived the influence of self-identity on their developing artistic style. Examining the connection between self-identity and artistic style offered insights toward implementing experiences that would help facilitate more meaningful student understandings of the specific connections between self-identity and development of personal artistic style.

Research Questions

This research was guided by the main question: In what ways might students' sense of self-identity influence their own artistic style? More specifically: What are the perceptions of high school juniors and seniors at Combs High School in San Tan Valley, AZ about potential influence of self-identity on one's artistic style? What are the implications of this research for the art educator when facilitating the development of personal voice among art students? The focus of this research was not to examine individual concepts of self-identity, but rather to examine

how students' perceptions of self-identity might influence artistic choices and the development of a personal artistic style.

Conceptual Framework

Understanding the connections (if any) these students made between their sense of self-identity and their artistic decision-making processes which lead to their personal artistic style, required a multi-faceted approach. This study was shaped by four factors: the researcher's prior knowledge, prior research in this and related fields, the action research to be conducted within the study, and the connections between and among the data.

Having taught all levels of visual art at Combs High School for the past five years, the researcher had prior knowledge and experience in teaching identity themed art lessons. The researcher had also completed previous readings and literature reviews on research and information related to identity formation in adolescents as part of previous coursework and professional development. In personal artistic practice, the researcher had also completed a number of narrative and identity themed artworks. These personal experiences and prior knowledge formed a strong foundation for the research.

While the personal experiences and prior knowledge of the researcher provided a secure basis for the formation of the study, further information was available in the form of published literature and research in the areas of adolescent identity development, adolescent artistic development, the relationships between artmaking and identity, and individual perceptions of self-identity. Review of these areas of research further informed and guided this study.

The structure of this study utilized a variety of approaches for data gathering and analysis, which included observation, interviews, and artwork analysis of three junior/senior level art students from Combs High School. The researcher hoped to collect data about students'

perception of the influence self-identity might have on their artistic style and the specific aspects of their personal artwork the students identified as being influenced by self-identity.

With the goal of improving the development of personal voice among junior and senior art students at Combs High School, the researcher sought to make connections between the students' perspective and their artmaking experiences. These connections would assist the researcher in creating meaningful experiences for students to begin to recognize these connections as well. These connections would also allow the researcher to infer implications for the role of the art educator in facilitating the development of personal voice among art students.

Theoretical Framework

The search for identity has been a common theme among art and artists since the beginning of time. For the purposes of this research, identity was defined as the maker's understanding of him- or herself as a being related to historic, geographic, political, social, psychological, economic, familial, or other factors. This broad definition reflected both the multiplicity of the ways in which adolescents begin to define themselves, as well as the factors, which influence this definition. McPhillips, Mudge & Johnson (2007) echo this notion of the multiplicity of influences on identity, writing, "identity is a struggle and not a given, and that multiple perspectives of self in the development of identity is experienced as a positive embodied value" (p. 233). The emerging concept of self during adolescence is central to the development of identity. This emergence is credited to the cognitive, social, and physical developments individuals experience during adolescence, which offer, for the first time, the challenges, which precipitate this type of meaning making (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McLean, 2005; Roupp, 1996).

The concepts relating to the creation of identity are varied and expansive in the world of today's young people. Tavin's (2005) acknowledgement of the important questions recent cultural movements have raised about the bearing of everyday life and student voice in aesthetic experiences is a cause for inclusion of daily life and student voice as factors in the development of the self-concept. Grauer (in Moore, 2004) encourages students to analyze their personal spaces in their inquiry into personal identity. As students further develop the concept of identity, the communication of that concept through personal narrative becomes an indispensable tool for continued development. Roupp (1996) acknowledges the essential nature of personal narrative in her creation of narrative units of study that specifically ask adolescents to focus on questions of "who they are, what's important to them and why" (p.20).

As in identity development, adolescent artistic development is often inward focused and exploratory in nature with changing perspectives and newfound abilities to think in more abstract ways, not only about the concept of one's own identity but also about experiences, cultures, and the world around. Parsons (1986) identifies three stages of artistic development, with the second stage closely matching the cognitive and practical skills of adolescents. Similarly, Kerlavage (1998) names the adolescent period the "artistic thinking stage" (p. 62), and notes the development of personal style and acknowledges the effect of multiple influences on adolescent artistic development, just as in identity development. Both Gardner (1990) and Kerlavage (1998) acknowledge the individuality of adolescent artistic development and note that learners may exhibit vast differences in knowledge, skill, and understanding. Selarque (2011) notes the tendency of adolescents to engage with art as a means of making connections between inner and outer worlds, and expressing ideas. The common theme across these viewpoints is that during adolescence, artistic development deepens and enriches thinking and leads to no particular end-

point, but rather a larger and qualitatively different capacity for the expression of ideas, feelings, and concepts.

Much research into the relationships between artmaking and identity development has been accomplished, with implications that artmaking may be instrumental in the successful navigation of the adolescent exploration of identity (Burton, 1984; McLean & Mansfield, 2012; Selarque, 2011). The transformative nature of artmaking on the individual identity was elucidated by Dewey (1934) and again by Burton (1984) half a century later. While the influence of artmaking experiences on the development of adolescent identity is well documented, there is little research on the influence of identity on the development of personal artistic style. One exception to this is Dewey's (1934) assertion that art products are clearly influenced by the artist's identity. It was the perceived gap in the research that interested the researcher and lent meaning to this study.

Significance of the Study

Research reveals identity achievement increases as students progress through the stages of mid to late-adolescence (Archer, 1982; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Kehily, 2013; McLean & Mansfield, 2012). This progression toward identity achievement has implications on the artistic choices students make and on artistic development. For example, Hamilton (1998) noted the interest of secondary students in using symbols to represent concepts of self. Understanding how students perceive the relationship between self-identity and personal artistic style offered insight into the artmaking process of this age group and provided implications for how best to support students in making purposeful connections between their developing sense of self-identity and their artwork. This understanding highlighted areas where curriculum enhancement might help

students make better connections and ultimately to further develop their own sense of personal artistic style in artmaking.

Limitations of the Study

While the study offered the opportunity for insights into students' connections between self-identity and the development of their own personal artistic style, the range of this research was limited by several constraints. Time constraints, participant relationships, and researcher bias, were validity concerns with bearing on this study.

Time and Situational Constraints

Time constraints in the study limited the opportunities for observation to the production of a single artwork. This study being conducted during participants' summer break, limited the pool of potential participants to a smaller number of students, and thus presented a more limited representation of diversity in both student demographics and skill levels than if the study were conducted during the school year.

Participant Relationships

The participants in this study were selected based on their prior participation in introductory level art courses, where the researcher was the teacher, and on an expressed interest in continued arts learning in future courses. Each of these participants had developed a personal/professional relationship with the researcher as their teacher prior to the study. This relationship had potential implications for the data collected from this study, as these participants were likely to be committed to the success of the study. This commitment had both positive and negative implications for the study. Positive implications included the likelihood that participants would be open with their thoughts and opinions. Negative implications included the

possibility that participants might wish to provide what they perceived to be the right answers to questions rather than focusing on the authenticity of their responses.

Researcher Biases

The biases of the researcher posed an additional potential validity threat. Remaining objective in this setting was challenging as the participants in this study were the researcher's students and the researcher had developed a personal rapport with them prior to the study. One strategy for remaining objective was to gathering multiple types of data from multiple perspectives. Knowing in advance what the researcher's assumptions and potential biases might be also helped in remaining objective. Additionally, creating a collaborative structure in which data was validated with participants also helped keep the research objective as biases and misunderstandings could be quickly revealed (Maxwell, 2013a).

Summary

The background to the study for this research introduced the foundational concepts of adolescent identity development and adolescent artistic development. These concepts focused the research goals and questions toward student perception of the relationship between self-identity and the development of personal artistic style in an effort to guide the practitioner in developing experiences that support students in making purposeful connections between these concepts. The researcher's experiences leading to the goals and research questions were presented as well as both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks in which the research was situated. Validity threats were presented through the constraints of the study and included time and situational constraints, participant relationships, and researcher biases.

Chapter Two address the literature reviewed that provided foundational research and themes which influence the research presented. The literature review additionally address any sub-themes that arise from the literature.

Definition of Terms

Artmaking – the process of the production of art

Identity – the maker’s understanding of him- or herself as a being related to historic, geographic, political, social, psychological, economic, familial, or other factors.

Perception – a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something.

Personal Artistic Style – the characteristics we identify as consistent traits or choices in the artwork of an individual and may include a combination of media, technique, and subject matter.

Portfolio Art - At Combs High School in San Tan Valley, Arizona, the capstone year-long course in the visual arts program for juniors and seniors in which students create a cohesive portfolio of personal artworks to demonstrate mastery of the content presented in prerequisite courses. The course is optional and is intended for students who plan to continue arts education in college or pursue arts careers after high school.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on identity development during adolescence is rooted in the understanding that humans begin to construct a unique view of the self during adolescence, which can have a lasting influence on how the adolescent perceives him- or herself and others (Erikson, 1950; Feldman, 1996; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Kerlavage, 1998; Lowenfeld, 1957; McLean & Mansfield, 2012; McLean, 2005; Selarque, 2011). This developmental process affects a vast number of daily decisions, personal choices, social interactions, and much more in the lives of adolescents. With the effect of identity development in mind, the focus of this research was to explore the influence (if any) students' sense of identity has specifically on their artistic style. This chapter offers a review of relevant literature surrounding adolescent identity and artistic development including the relationships between artmaking and identity and the perception of self.

Conceptual Framework

This study was shaped by four factors: the researcher's prior knowledge, prior research in this and related fields, the action research to be conducted within the study, and the connections between and among the data. Figure 2.1 organizes and illustrates the conceptual framework of the study.

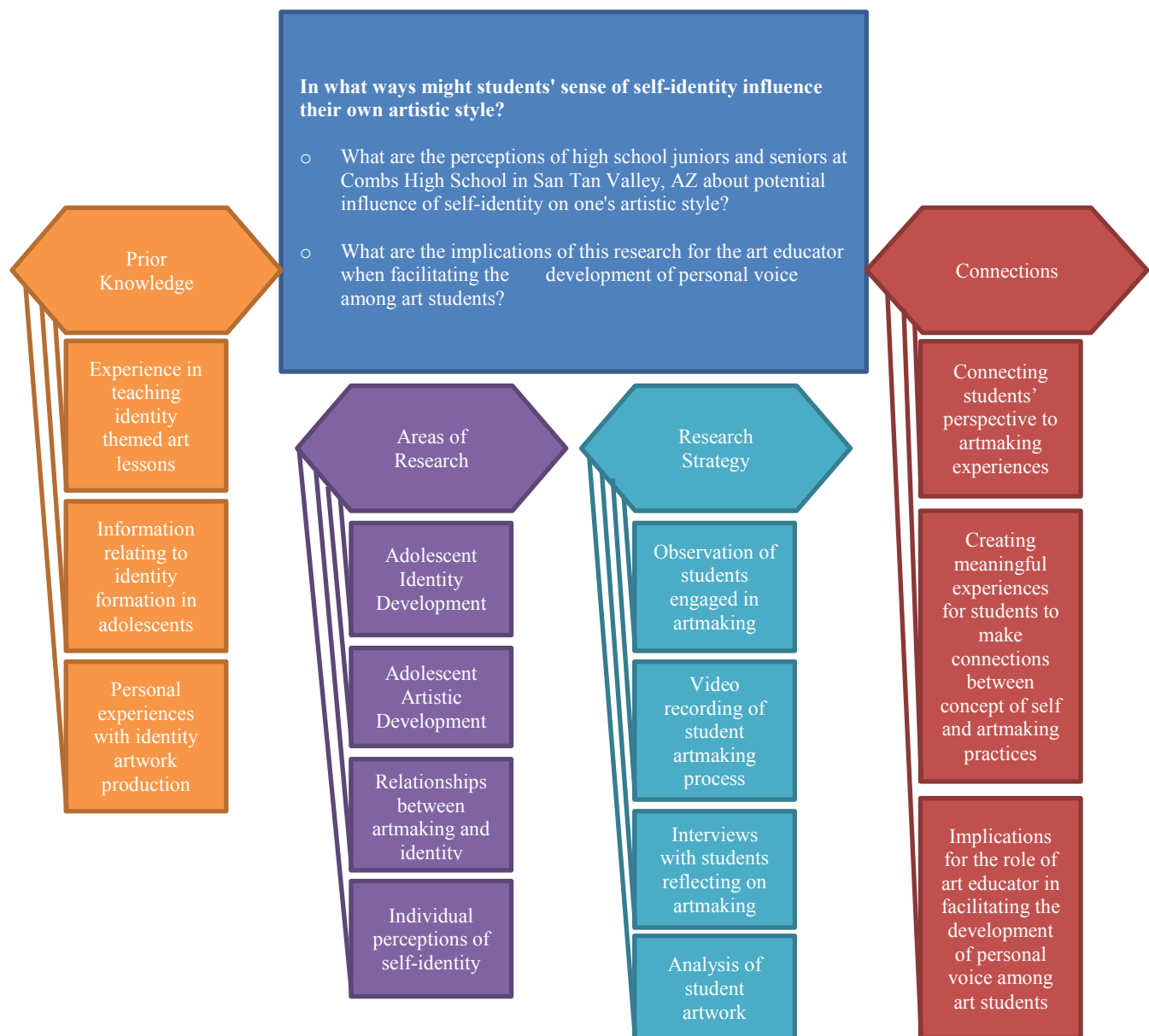


Figure 2.1. Conceptual framework of the study including influential considerations.

Review of Literature

During adolescence, identity development influences a vast array of intra- and interpersonal processes, and is in turn influenced by those same experiences. These processes frame the adolescent's understanding of him- or herself, while simultaneously being influenced by this developing understanding, creating an interactive loop of identity development where the

identity is both dependent on the experiences and a large influence on how the experiences come about. The nature of this recursive development surrounded the focus of this research, which explored in what ways students' sense of self-identity might influence their artistic style.

Adolescent Identity Development

As young people transition from the resilience and accomplishments of childhood into the quasi-adult world of adolescence, the skills and understandings with which they previously organized their personal worlds become engulfed in uncertainty as their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual spheres begin to change rapidly. Erikson (1950) ascribes this upheaval to the physical and psychological changes of puberty and impending adulthood and describes the task of adolescents as one of integrating previous identity information with acceptable social roles the youth begin to explore during this time. Likewise, McPhillips, Mudge & Johnson (2007), McLean (2005), and Habermas & Bluck (2000) note the sometimes-turbulent development of identity during adolescence as being brought on by changes in the physiological, psychological, and social realms of the youth. It is from within these realms that adolescents begin to explore divergent concepts of the self-and to try on different roles in an attempt to integrate identity elements from earlier times with the new roles they see both for their adolescent selves and for their eventually realized adult selves.

Today's adolescents face multiplicitous concepts relating to the creation of identity, which are ever expanding to include new areas of knowledge, industry, and understanding. Tavin (2005) acknowledges questions raised about the bearing of everyday life and student voice in the development of the self-concept. Personal spaces, values, interests, and narratives are all acknowledged as important facets of identity development in adolescents and as having influence on adolescent self-concept (Feldman, 1996; Moore, 2004; Roupp, 1996). As adolescents

encounter daily activities and experiences that cause them explore these numerous aspects of self-concept, they create meaning from these events. Throughout the review of literature, several themes emerged about the types of encounters and influences that seem to have repeated influence over adolescents' developing sense of identity, personal experience and narratives, visual culture, community and social culture, and family.

Personal experience & narrative. As adolescents become increasingly independent and experience new situations, try on a variety of personal roles, and explore personal dispositions, the role of personal experiences and the ability to communicate about those experiences becomes of paramount importance. Habermas & Bluck (2000) remark on the unique situation of adolescence as the proto-typical stage for the creation of the life story, and the proclivity adolescent youths have for integrating a variety of events into a cohesive narrative. McLean & Mansfield (2012) clarify the importance of narrative by highlighting the influence personal experiences can have in creating a reflective understanding of the self; as adolescents encounter events and reflect on the meaning of those events they learn important lessons about who they are as individuals.

Visual culture. The experience of visual and aesthetic encounters in modern times extends throughout contemporary life. Modern adolescents develop an extensive visual library of information before they reach school age, and that information becomes an integral part of who they become. Freedman (2003) explains that adolescents engage in the construction of knowledge based on a variety of visual information experienced both in and out of school. This visual information extends to products, entertainment, advertising, infographics, and much more (Moore, 2004). Many researchers acknowledge the pervasiveness of visual culture and its influence on the adolescent experience including Duncum (2010), Freedman (2003), and Tavin

(2005). As students work to make meaning from the visual information that permeates their lives, they explore social, intellectual, and aesthetic understandings and begin to integrate those into their developing sense of identity.

Community & social culture. The role of community in adolescent identity development is one of noted importance and has been acknowledged as a significant factor in individuals' permanent self-concept. Lowenfeld (1957) notes changing social responsibilities during adolescence, as individuals become expected to accept more responsibility for themselves and become more connected to and involved with their communities. Kerlavage (1998) expands on this concept, noting the complicated nature of navigating these social changes between and across the multiple social and cultural settings that many modern students experience simultaneously. During adolescence, the individual becomes acutely aware of socially and culturally acceptable aspects of the self, and thus grows the need to resolve their sense of self with what is acceptable in their community and social cultures. Habermas & Bluck (2000) note the function of organizing these complex community and social culture concepts as important in adolescents' reflective process and the integration of multiple aspects of identity.

Family. Research (Benson, 2009; Faber, Edwards, Bauer, & Wetchler, 2006; Papini, Sebby, & Clark, 1989) indicates the important role of the family in adolescent development. As in previous stages of development, the family unit creates a safe base from which adolescents can explore their changing identities and which offers the structure that affords security in an otherwise tempestuous developmental stage. Faber et al. (2006) note the role of the family in providing consistency and supportive structure for the adolescent exploration of both intra- and interpersonal discoveries within clear boundaries. Similarly, Papini et al. (1989) acknowledge the enhancement of identity development in attentive, consistent, understanding family

environments. The response of the family has a large impact on adolescent identity formation since the family is one of the primary sources of feedback for adolescents (Benson, 2009). Without the safety and support of the family system, adolescent identity development becomes much more problematic, and the uncertainty, anxiety, and struggle to strike a balance between autonomy and connectedness the adolescent experiences make it difficult to explore and commit to an identity (Benson, 2009; Erikson, 1968).

Varieties of factors influence the adolescent task of developing an integrated identity and that sense of identity then becomes an influence on a variety of factors as outlined here. The development of identity is in large part a reflective process in which adolescents must explore the events and activities in which they engage and then examine the results to create meaning that connects their experiences. This reflective meaning making process shares many parallels with the process of adolescent artistic development that is explored next.

Adolescent Artistic Development

During adolescence, artistic development deepens and enriches thinking and leads to no particular end-point, but rather a larger and qualitatively different capacity for the expression of ideas, feelings, and concepts. Analogous to adolescent identity development, adolescent artistic development is an often reflective and exploratory process as adolescents with changing perspectives and newfound abilities begin to think in ways that are more abstract and contemplate not only the concept of one's own identity but also the experiences, cultures, and the world around. Parsons (1986) illustrates the increased abstract artistic thinking of adolescents noting that they:

can understand art as the expression of subjectivity, appreciate the expression of a wide range of difficult emotions – the violent, the ugly, the tragic; and later find meaning in the formal aspects of paintings, in style, genre, and social and historical context. (p.109)

Noted as being individually paced, adolescent artistic development is dependent on a variety of factors, and learners often exhibit vast differences in knowledge, skill, and understanding (Gardner, 1990; Kerlavage, 1998). The multiple influences adolescents experience on artistic development are also noted by Kerlavage (1998) and she notes the important development of personal style during the "artistic thinking stage" (p. 62) corresponding with adolescence. A review of information surrounding adolescent artistic development reveals several themes emerging across the literature including stages of artistic development, the importance of narrative, and the role of culture in adolescent artistic development.

Stages of adolescent artistic development. Echoing human development, adolescent artistic development has been the subject of much research and literature (Burton, 2000; Gardner, 1990; Kerlavage, 1998; Parsons, 1986; Selarque, 2011). Gardner (1990) views adolescent artistic development as a part of a larger spectrum of artistic endeavors in which adolescents develop a deepening understanding of themes, media, materials, and processes through continued engagement with the arts. He draws connections with developmental positions writing, "Growth involves a deepening of this knowledge and an attainment of higher levels of understanding" (p. 43). Gardner's perspective views adolescent artistic growth as an enrichment of previous modes of thinking.

In contrast, Kerlavage (1998) notes adolescents' capability for abstract and metacognitive thought and posits adolescence as a "stage of artistic thinking" in which adolescents develop a new ability to think artistically and analyze artwork from multiple perspectives and place

artworks into various contexts for deeper understanding. She notes the tendency of young artists to use art processes and materials expressively and to experiment with a variety of media in search of more effective means of expressing their ideas. The stage of artistic thinking suggests adolescent artistic development is both a method of making meaning toward identity development and a process influenced by identity development. Similarly, Parsons' (1986) second stage of artistic development corresponds to the developmental stage of adolescence and views this as the time when young artists become able to appreciate that art is made from the unique perspective of an individual artist and make connections between the expression of a variety of emotional content and the ability to interpret subjective imagery. Burton's (2000) conception of adolescent artistic development also views the adolescent artistic experience as a stage of new discoveries in the wake of developmental changes. She ascribes the derivation of artistic responses to the maturational changes of adolescence and notes that culture drives much of the visual composition skills adolescents exhibit, while personal style is largely influenced by the physical awareness of maturational changes.

The importance of narrative. Much of adolescent artistic development literature revolves around the ability of the adolescent to express personal views, emotions, and ideas. Olson (1998) posits that "all art encompasses a story, in one way or another" (p. 168) and makes connections between adolescents' personal stories and the choices they make in artmaking activities. Likewise, Kehily (2013) notes that young artists use artmaking to create narratives that reveal their current perceptions of their personal identity and the characteristics they wish to develop. Selarque (2011) expands on this idea with the notion that the development of technology has created an environment in which adolescents are continually developing and re-developing narratives that inform their artmaking practices.

The role of culture. In as much as personal narratives are created through adolescents' developing artistic skills, their culture frames, constrains, and informs the adolescents' artistic efforts. In the context of the adolescent's culture, artistic decisions are compared to cultural norms and socially acceptable interpretations. Burton (2000) elaborates on this theory writing:

For the culture offers the tools and establishes the larger climate within which young people construct ideas about themselves and their worlds in visual materials. An examination of development tells us that from the beginning youngsters' image-making capacities integrate ideas, techniques, systems of organization and values drawn from the culture in which they live. (p. 342)

Kerlavage (1998) similarly emphasizes to art educators the importance of understanding students' ethnic and cultural contexts and the differences among behaviors, values attitudes that a variety of cultural contexts can generate. She notes that these differences may extend to how the culture defines art and that students' artistic development may be influenced by their cultural definition of what artmaking means.

Engaging with art as a means of making connections between inner and outer worlds, and expressing increasingly complex ideas is typical of adolescent artistic development, and conceptually frames the study presented here. Clearly, there are a number of factors influencing adolescent artistic development, with identity in its multi-faceted understanding being a significant influence. This relationship frames much of the research presented and thus is the next area of literature reviewed here.

Relationships Between Artmaking and Identity

Research into the relationships between artmaking and identity development has provided implications that artmaking may be instrumental in the successful navigation of the adolescent

exploration of identity (Burton, 1984; Burton, 2000; Dewey, 1934; McLean & Mansfield, 2012; Selarque, 2011). The influence of identity on artmaking choices was highlighted by Dewey's (1934) assertion that individual interest, largely defined by one's sense of identity, drives the choice of materials and construction methods of creative products and that individual creative products are distinct because of these unique choices. Half a century later, Burton (1984) suggested that the connection between meaning making and individual perspective is made through the creative process. Building on this idea, McLean & Mansfield (2012) noted meaning-making activities, such as art making, facilitate adolescent identity development through the selection of events to represent and integrate into a larger narrative. Selarque (2011) notes similar relationships, but cautions the assumption of personal identity based on artistic style, noting the differences between various artists' historic style and their individual identities. The literature implies a reciprocal rather than causal relationship between identity development in adolescents and their artistic style development. In light of this reciprocal relationship, the research presented here is further focused with the question of what perception the researcher's students have about the potential influence of self-identity on their individual artistic style.

Individual Perceptions of Self-identity

This additional focusing question leads to a final theme observed in the literature, that of individual perceptions of self-identity. Erikson (1968) posed the question of the consciousness of self-identity, and elaborated on the idea noting that individuals extremely aware of their own identity formation become self-conscious, a characteristic typical of adolescence. Erikson further suggests that the successful achievement of identity formation leads beyond this self-consciousness, to a more general "sense of psychosocial well-being" (p. 165). This general sense of well-being is, according to Kehily (2013), the development of identity created through

reflective processes and narrative stories individuals tell about and to themselves. Likewise, McLean (2005) notes that self-defining memories and narratives become integral parts of the sense of self, and are crucial to the formation of self-identity. These notions of the self-perception as being influential in the healthy development of adolescent identity frame and support the research presented here into students' sense of self-identity and the influence it may bring to bear on their artistic style.

Summary

The connections between and among the literature presented here represent the researcher's focus on the questions of the influences students' sense of self-identity may have on their own artistic style. Specifically, exploring what perceptions students might have about the potential influence of self-identity on their personal artistic style. The review of literature has presented four emerging themes including adolescent identity development, adolescent artistic development, the relationships between artmaking, and identity and individual perceptions of self-identity. These themes create an interrelated network of concepts, influences, and ideas in the study of adolescents and their identity and artistic development. The interrelationship of these ideas and themes guided the methodology of the study presented in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

This was a qualitative research study focused on improving classroom practice, specifically developing students' individual artistic style. The study used observations, interviews, and artwork of two senior level art students from Combs High School in San Tan Valley, Arizona. Maxwell (2013b) noted the participatory and collaborative nature of action research intended to "generate data that is useful to the participants as well as to the researcher, contributing to personal and social transformation" (p.92). This study was designed to help both the researcher and the participants to understand students' perception of the influence self-identity might have on their artistic style. Students were presented with a prompt for the creation of an identity themed artwork targeted at visual representation of student's thoughts and ideas about their self-identity. The selection of this theme supports the research question centering on how students' sense of self-identity might influence their artistic style. Once collected, the data were analyzed by categorizing student responses and using constant comparison to explore any similarities that were revealed.

Site Selection

Combs High School in San Tan Valley, Arizona, a public school in the J.O. Combs Unified School District, was selected for the research. This location allowed the researcher to work collaboratively with students in conducting observations of the artmaking activity and subsequent interviews in the familiar setting of the researcher's art classroom at this location. This site and location offered the opportunity to observe the participants in a familiar artmaking

environment, and provided accessibility to common art supplies the students have used in previous art courses.

Participants of the Study

The students selected for the study were selected from a group of students who have previously enrolled and completed at least one art course with the researcher as their teacher. The researcher selected these specific participants because of the significant possibility that these students will be engaged in the portfolio course mentioned previously. As potential candidates for the course that precipitated the research questions, these students are representative of the kind of student population in that course. The participants include one female and one male student, which is approximately representative of the previous year's gender ratio in the portfolio course. Both students have attended Combs High School for the past three years. Pseudonyms are used in place of the participants' names throughout the study to offer privacy to the participants and their families.

Crystal, a seventeen year-old, Hispanic female, will be a senior in the 2015-16 school year. She is active in the school's student government, and consistently engages in activities that help her improve both personal and academic development. She previously participated in one advanced level art course with the researcher, and has been the president of the school's art club for two years. Born in Mexico, Crystal currently resides in the suburban community of San Tan Valley, Arizona. She is the oldest of three siblings and lives with her parents.

Nick, a sixteen year-old white male, will be a senior in the 2015-16 school year. He is an active member of the school's student government and regularly participates in activities that help him improve in all aspects of his personal and academic development. He has participated in one previous art course with the researcher and is an active member of the school's art club.

Born in Globe, Arizona, Nick currently resides in the suburban community of San Tan Valley, Arizona, with his parents and older brother. Nick has a strong familial background in visual arts, as several of his close relatives are artists. He has traveled to various art shows with his family for much of his life. Nick has been creating his own artwork since he was 15 years old, and considers it an occasional hobby.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted the study during one day of the students' summer break in July 2015. The researcher observed and recorded the participants' individual artmaking activity after they received an identity related prompt. The researcher then interviewed participants regarding their sense of self-identity. Table 3.1, [Appendix C] outlines the objectives, goals, sources, methodology, and reasoning for the data collection, as well as how each kind of data was analyzed.

Observations

The initial data collected were observations of individual students engaged in an artmaking activity. The researcher presented the following prompt to engage students in the artmaking activity centered on the theme of self-identity. The researcher introduced the prompt in figure 3.1 below.

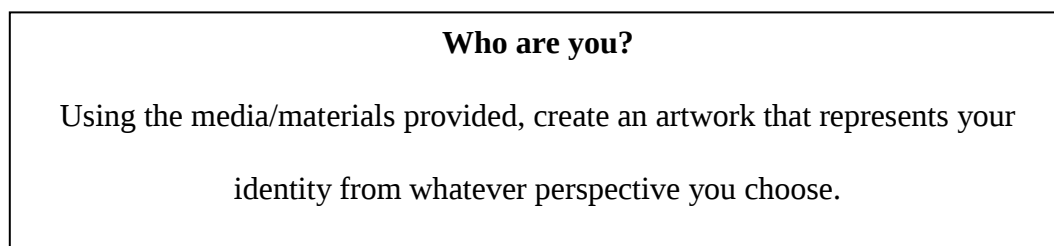


Figure 3.1 Identity art making prompt

Students selected from a variety of media, with which they had prior experience from previous art courses. As the researcher observed participants artmaking activity for approximately one hour each, she took on the role of participant observer, engaging the participants in informal dialogue. The observation focused on the students' artmaking process and the informal discussion, guided by the researcher, centered on their choices related to the artwork in progress. This method offered the opportunity to infer based upon students' choices of media, materials, processes, subject matter, composition, and informal dialogue, information he or she may be unable or unwilling to share verbally in a more structured interview. Please refer to the complete observation protocol for this portion of the study in Appendix A. The observation documented the artmaking process with a video recording, and the researcher photographed the completed artwork for further analysis.

Interviews

Following the observation, the researcher interviewed each participant individually. The semi-structured, open-ended interview offered the ability to explore the student's ideas and personal perspective in his/her own words. The interviews were grounded in predetermined questions, the format became conversational allowing participants the opportunity to freely discuss their ideas about the influences they perceive having an effect on their artistic style. Focusing on the students' descriptions of self-identity, the interviews inquired about how students view themselves in context (social, cultural, family, etc.) as well as how their perceptions of self-identity, how students understand their own artistic style, what choices they made during the artmaking activity, and what (if any) influence they perceive their self-identity may have on their artistic choices and style. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and

were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. For the complete interview protocol, please refer to Appendix B.

Student Artwork

While the observation of the artmaking activity lasted only one hour, the participants were free to continue working on the artwork until they were satisfied with it. Students' resulting artwork was photographed for analysis of connections to interview descriptions of self-identity and informal conversation surrounding the creation of the artwork during the observation. The artwork was analyzed according to the materials/media selected, application of techniques & methods, subject matter, symbols & graphic element selections, and composition strategies. The analysis focused on creating a description of the student's style surrounding the concept of his or her self-identity. The analysis of student artwork offered a third data point, and the opportunity to compare the resulting product with the student's verbal description of his or her perspective and the student's physical behavior choices in the creative process.

Data Analysis

The researcher reviewed observation notes and recordings and analyzed them using constant comparative method of data analysis to identify common connections about how students perceived the influence their unique identities may have on their artistic style. Photographed artwork was also examined and analyzed for commonalities and for evidence of the influences, students' cite during informal conversation surrounding the artmaking activity.

Interview recordings were transcribed and reviewed using constant comparison method of data analysis for emerging themes about how participants perceive self-identity and concepts of its influence on their artmaking activities. These themes were noted and grouped into similar categories.

Summary

The study focused on understanding the connections (if any) these students make between their sense of self-identity and their artistic decision-making processes that lead to their personal artistic style. Although the research group of two students is relatively small, the students selected were representative of the previous year's portfolio course demographics, and provided significant insight into the connections between students' self-identity and personal artistic style. Chapter Four explores the data collected and analyzed using the methods outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This qualitative research study focused on the perceptions of Combs High School seniors surrounding the influence personal identity factors might have on their artistic style. Additionally, attention was given to noting student perceptions of other influences on their artistic style including personal interest, personal relationships, skill level, and other factors. Data was gathered from two participants over the course of one week during the students' summer break. Data included interviews, observation, and identity themed artworks, which were categorized, coded, and critically reviewed. Constant comparative analysis of the data gave insights into student perceptions, and will have implications for the role of the art educator in facilitating the development of personal voice among art students engaged in the portfolio course at Combs High School. As the data were analyzed, three themes emerged; *Figure 4.1 Themes Diagram* illustrates these themes and related sub-themes. This chapter discusses validity considerations, explains the methods of analysis used, and describes the results of the study.

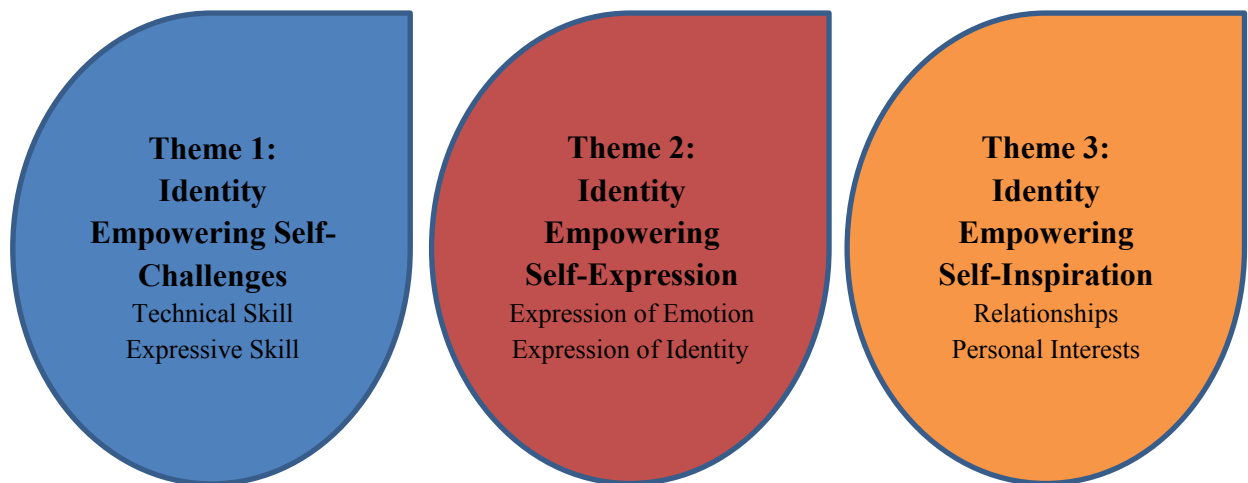


Figure 4.1 Themes Diagram

Bias and Validity

Bias

Remaining objective in this setting was challenging as the participants in this study were also the researcher's students and members of an extracurricular club sponsored by the researcher. A positive personal rapport between the researcher and the participants existed before the study and helped to put the participants at ease during the study. The personal nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participants required additional measures when planning for data collection and analysis. Strategies included multiple modes of data collection, and a collaborative structure to the study. Interviews were transcribed and provided to participants to review for accuracy. Observation notes and artworks were analyzed alongside interview information and all connecting and diverging aspects were recorded.

Validity

Multiple modes of data collection including interview transcription, observation notes, and critical review of artworks were used to promote validity in this qualitative study and prevent researcher bias. Since this research was conducted within a very limited one-week time period, interviews, and observations were limited to no more than one hour each and conducted on the same day for each participant. Participants were afforded additional time to complete the artwork, however, only one hour of the artmaking was observed. Interviews were transcribed and the documents were provided to participants to review for accuracy before coding and organization of themes. The results were compiled from the interview answers, observation notes, and artwork analysis. Collected data were coded and categorized according to planned methods.

Analysis of the Data

Data collected from the participants' semi-structured interviews were transcribed, analytically reviewed and summarized, coded, and categorized. Each interview was played back at ½ speed over headphones and typed into word documents, one for Crystal, and one for Nick. Then the interview was played back at full speed and the word document read back for accuracy. Afterward, notes from each participant observation were treated with the same procedure. Then, participants' artworks were critically analyzed for connections to the data gathered from interviews and observations. The artworks were critically reviewed keeping the three themes in mind, which had emerged from the interview analysis. Finally, notes, quotes, and comments were pulled and inserted into the coding matrix [Appendix D] and the constant comparative method of data analysis was used to evaluate concurrence and divergence across all data collection methods. The interviews became the primary source of data collection and emerging themes as they offered the participants' expressed insights and perceptions of the influences on his/her artmaking. The coding and analysis of the observation data and artwork analysis became secondary.

Interview Coding & Organizing

After the transcripts were reviewed for accuracy, the researcher wrote an interpretive analysis of the interview summarizing data gathered, connecting ideas, and recording key words and ideas found throughout the transcripts. As the transcribed interviews were summarized and coded, a new set of themes emerged from the data: self-challenges, self-expression, and self-inspiration. Using constant comparative method, these three themes were then compared with the observation data and the coding matrix re-organized to reflect the emerging themes. Transcripts were highlighted to coincide with the color-coded matrix and key quotes were

selected and placed in the appropriate sections of the matrix [Appendix D] along with the observation data. The information from the interview coding became the majority of the data used to understand the results because of the narrative nature of the data. The analysis of the observation data and artworks provided supporting and substantiating verification for the study's findings.

Results of the Study

This section gives the reader insights into participant responses in relation to the research question. Insights were gained regarding the influence of students' perception of self-identity on their artistic style, as well as the role of other possible influences and the connections between and among influences in the development of artistic style. Additional connections include student perspective on artmaking experiences, implications for creating meaningful experiences to help students make connections between self-identity and artmaking practices, and the role of the art educator in facilitating the development of personal voice among Combs High School art students.

Identity Influences Empowering Self-Challenge

Self-challenge was the first emerging theme taken from data collected. Under this overarching theme, sub themes of technical skill and expressive skill also arose. The participants of the study each noted a desire to challenge themselves in the artmaking experience as important aspects of their self-identity. Each participant spoke about and demonstrated a desire to improve both technical and expressive skill through challenging him/herself with new media applications and combinations in an effort to represent his/her perception of personal identity.

Technical skill. Both students chose watercolor and at least one other medium to create the identity themed artwork prompted in the observation. In the informal discussion and in the

reflective interview each commented on a desire to challenge themselves to improve technical skills and to create in new and inventive ways. Both students noted that skill level does significantly influence the choices they make in artmaking, and that their explorations of new media and skill development are what they consider personal challenges to continue improving their work.

Crystal found personal challenge inherent in mastering media and techniques: “I kinda realized that you need to explore different kinds of things... and so I’ve been trying to create things that have different elements to it, like watercolor, or pastel even, anything different that can represent what I am trying to do” (personal communication, July 10, 2015). This intent was evident in her artmaking activity as she chose five media to create a mixed-media artwork representative of a multi-faceted self-identity concept. She also commented informally, that she has been drawing figures recently, but she really prefers to draw female figures in general because when she draws male figures they “just look like heavy, bulky girls” (personal communication, July 10, 2015).

In contrast, Nick found personal challenge in the observation of peer works, and experimenting with and combination of a more limited range of media: “As I look at other artists, student artists, and how much they can achieve, and how much they practice, it inspires me to practice and get better at my work overall” (personal communication, July 7, 2015). Supportive of this inference, Nick commented during the informal conversation that his media choice was an opportunity to try out two things he had seen recently at an art show and attempt to combine them in a unique way. He also noted that his choices are often influenced by his own technical skill, “I’m more on the cool color scale when it comes to my watercolor. I try to stick away from the warm colors because I think it’s harder to work with the warm colors in my

opinion” (personal communication, July 7, 2015). This influence was evident in his selection of monochromatic tones of blue in his artmaking activity.

Expressive Skill. Both students took the time for formulate an idea before beginning work and encountered challenges along the way. Both used problem-solving skills to adapt to challenges and integrate them into the artwork in a way that enhanced the expressiveness of the work. Both encountered unique challenges that stretched their expressive skills to represent personal identity.

Crystal seemed comfortable with allowing the artwork to unfold over time, refining a basic idea into an expressive image. She began with a general idea and refined it into a specific representation of the idea she was trying to express. A perceived mistake in the artmaking process was viewed as a challenge to overcome and incorporate into the overall work to enhance the expression. Once the mistake was “fixed,” she commented that the newly corrected area seemed to fit better with the rest of the image after the mistake was remedied.

Nick was very focused on executing the work according to his plan, and ensuring all areas conformed to his visualized outcome. He began with a specific plan in mind for how the artwork would be organized and executed that plan. He did, however, experiment a bit with the dry pastel, and seemed pleased when it performed according to what he envisioned. His confidence in expressive skills and desire to expand his expressive skill led him to create unexpected solutions in the combining of two dissimilar media to represent a single expressive emotion.

Identity Influences Empowering Self-Expression

Through the data collection and analysis, a second theme of self-expression emerged as both being influenced by self-identity and having a significant influence on artistic style. Both

participants defined personal identity as unique to the person, and provided examples indicating their understanding of personal identity as representative of a unique individual. Crystal defined self-identity as a categorization of the self, stating, “[It’s] something that you identify yourself with, like, you think it represents you or expresses yourself” (personal communication, July 10, 2015). In contrast, Nick defined self-identity more in terms of how others categorize the self, remarking, “[It] is really something that is unique to you that someone can look at and be like ‘oh that is what that person is’” (personal communication, July 7, 2015).

Expression of identity. The connection between the influence of identity and the development of artistic style arose through the concept of self-expression. Both participants defined artistic style as a method or process used as a means of conveying a message or idea, and that the ideas communicated are heavily reflective of one’s own self-identity. Both chose subject matter reflective of their current thoughts and ideas and each noted thoughts and ideas as a key facet of self-identity, but each represented the subject matter in uniquely different ways.

Crystal’s identity themed artwork illustrates the influence of identity on the development of artistic style through self-expression. When presented with the challenge of representing how she sees herself, she chose techniques that lend themselves to creating representative imagery in a very cartoony style including an overall strategy of mixed media layering starting with sketching, and followed by pen & ink, watercolor technique, application of colored pencil and finally marker outlining. She chose subject matter directly symbolic of her identity in choosing to represent her brain and escaping thoughts categorized by different symbolic shapes and forms. A yellow “goo puddle” underneath the brain represents sunshiny positivity. A heart represented her happiness and affection for other people. A thought cloud with ellipses inside represented her understanding of the uncertainty of life. A globe represented her concept of trust in a larger

plan, and a peace symbol further represented her trust in the world. A butterfly represented her concept of inspiration. Her self-expression centered on the facets of personality she uses to define her self-identity, including her relationships with others, her sense of trust in the world, and her positivity among other ideas. Her artwork (see figure 4.2) made clear connections between her sense of self-identity and the artistic choices she made during the artmaking activity. She noted that the colors she chose were representative of her desire for fun and excitement, and that the symbols she chose were representative of her thoughts and emotions.



Figure 4.2 Crystal's Identity Themed Artwork

Nick defined artistic style as “what direction you want to go, how you express things, however you can express your message out... I think the style helps me convey my message” (personal communication, July 7, 2015). Focused on his captive thoughts of rain, Nick’s self-identity artwork (see figure 4.3) became completely about the rain and the emotions he was experiencing surrounding his thoughts of an impending change in the weather. This is not to say that Nick’s identity is tied to the concept of rain, but that his identity, as he perceives it, is tied to whatever thoughts or emotions he may be experiencing at the time. In the reflective interview, Nick commented, “I thought of rain again, ‘cause well there’s not rain outside, but just rain on my mind” (personal communication, July 7, 2015). At the time of the artmaking, he was experiencing anticipation and excitement surrounding the thought of rain, and thus his identity themed artwork became all about that emotion and subject matter.



Figure 4.3 Nick's Identity Themed Artwork

Supportive of the view that these students perceive their identity as influencing their artistic style through self-expression, it was noted during the artmaking observation that Nick chose techniques that lend themselves to abstraction and the emotive communication of color and texture. Nick's unique way of layering the watercolor and dry pastel created diffuse color with a great deal of movement and variety through texture. This is consistent with Nick's definition of artistic style as a method of expression or as a means of communicating an idea.

Expression of emotion. While self-expression of identity played a vital role in the development of these artworks, a second self-expression sub theme emerged as these students were also concerned with self-expression of emotion. While both students define artistic style as

a process employed toward conveying a message, interestingly, when asked to define their own styles, they responded with descriptions of visual characteristics and emotive qualities. Both defined their style in terms of visual characteristics influenced by cognitive, emotional, social and ability concepts. Both students also asserted the graphic qualities and symbols with their artworks were a function of their definition of personal artistic style. Their descriptions of the graphic qualities and symbols differed in terms of perceived consistency. While the descriptions differed, the underlying theme of self-expression and representation of thoughts and emotions remained consistent between the two participants.

Crystal saw her style as consistent while she explores emotions and thoughts, and Nick saw his style as changing to accommodate his exploration of emotions and thoughts. Crystal described her style as “very cartoony”, with a use of bright colors and imagery representative of her own positive thought processes, expressive of fun, excitement, and mystery, and explorative of concepts and ideas from her daily life: “It usually represents my mood, if I’m happy or sad...It’s broken down into simplicity” (personal communication, July 10, 2015). She further commented that her style is usually the same, while her work often includes a variety of subjects and concepts.

In contrast, Nick described his style as frequently changing, and being reflective of his own thought processes in a given moment, expressive of his positive and negative emotions surrounding those thought processes and explorative of challenging media and techniques: “I kind of really don’t associate my personal interests with art, like hobbies and what not. I really express emotions and moods” (personal communication, July 7, 2015). He commented that his artistic style is “Very different, not different like in a sense of different art styles, but different like every time I try to do something it seems different” (personal communication, July 7, 2015).

Identity Influences Empowering Self-Inspiration

A third theme of self-inspiration emerged while reviewing the data related to the perceived influence of social roles, or relationships, and personal interests. When the participants were asked to describe themselves, each one described his/her personality and character traits. These descriptions involved connections with others, values, and communication styles, and both participants noted positive character traits as being most important to themselves. Both students noted that personal relationships greatly influence their artistic style, but for different reasons.

Inspiration from social roles. While each student has different reasons for his/her artmaking, the influence of personal relationships was noted as being significant enough to influence their artmaking activities by both students.

During the observation, Crystal was very focused on her work for much of the time and engaged in conversation intermittently. Much of the conversation related to her summer babysitting job and the infant for whom she has been caring. Her sense of identity, as a caretaker, was evident in the conversation, and her descriptive stories about the child. Later in the interview, Crystal described herself as, “very creative, sometimes quiet, nice, kind to you if you are kind to me” (personal communication, July 10, 2015) while Nick described himself as “pretty outgoing, funny, reserved most times, I usually warm up to them once I get to know a person” (personal communication, July 7, 2015). She commented that the personal qualities she valued about herself are, “being positive, having an open mind, not rushing a process” (personal communication, July 10, 2015). Crystal perceived that these personal qualities radiate into her social interactions and social relationships and influence her artmaking in a variety of ways. She observed that her cartoony, representative style is focused around recording and “keeping” memories of personal relationships and interactions with peers, commenting, “I’ll sketch it out,

and that will be like my memory or keepsake of that conversation” (personal communication, July 10, 2015). Commenting along the notion of peers, she also noted, “you want to...be good at what you like, and you wouldn’t really appreciate people not liking your artwork or criticizing it” (personal communication, July 10, 2015).

Crystal’s social roles and personal interests are reflected in the artwork she chose to create representing her identity. In the informal discussion surrounding her artwork, Crystal noted that the heart symbol in the work is representative of her happiness and love for others. She cited her recent babysitting role as one of the sources of inspiration for this facet of herself, and that she feels happy when she thinks of the infant she cares for. She also noted the influence this social role has on her sense of identity, and in turn on her personal artmaking choices with this piece.

Nick, on the other hand, described himself as friendly, sometimes a little shy at first, but then very sociable as he gets to know people. Nick was very congenial and conversational throughout the observation, easily working and chatting even inquiring about the researcher’s summer activities. Nick stated that he values, “always being a good person, not treating yourself higher than anyone else, and always respecting others” (personal communication, July 7, 2015) most about himself. He noted that his ever-changing style is reflective of emotions and thoughts often surrounding and based on peer interactions and personal relationships, commenting, “I really think the connection between others really influences me. How I am reacting to that person might have an effect on my artwork that day” (personal communication, July 10, 2015). Nick later noted his relationships with family members who are artists also has a significant influence on his desire to create artwork and to find his own way of doing things.

Inspiration from personal interests. While each participant noted a variety of different personal interests and sources of inspiration, both indicated artmaking as a personal interest. The influence of self-identity on their personal artistic style through self-inspiration from personal interests was drawn from interview and observation data. Both students discussed personal interests in artmaking and related activities, and both students noted sources of inspiration as influences on their respective artistic styles.

Crystal discussed how a recent interest in people watching and observing people with unusual features, dress, or mannerisms has become a frequent activity for her, and that she has begun recording these characters in her sketchbook. She also noted additional influences might include sources of inspiration like books, cartoons, and Instagram. She commented, “I like watching movies about fairy tales and mystery and things that don’t really happen in your normal day to day life... something that keeps you wondering, keeps you, you know, wanting more” (personal communication, July 10, 2015).

Nick discussed a personal interest in exploring new media and techniques in his artmaking, commenting, “Well, one of my personal interests *is this* [artmaking]” (personal communication, July 7, 2015). His personal interest in artmaking, and the art of others, leads him to explore additional media and techniques and to attend a variety of art shows with his family members in search of new ideas and inspiration.

The inspiration for Nick’s identity themed artwork came from Nick’s thoughts and feelings related to rain, or the anticipation of it anyway, as well as the desire to challenge himself to combine media in new and unusual ways. Nick’s combination of watercolor and dry pastel in this work forced him to think throughout the process about the timing of the application of each of the media. Nick’s personal interest in the use of watercolor as a “safe” medium and dry pastel

as an “experimental” medium allowed him the opportunity to explore new combinations and to create a unique work inspired in part by his curiosity of what would happen if he combined these two media.

Summary

In this qualitative research study, the perceptions of Combs High School seniors, the focus was on examining the perceptions of these students regarding the influence self-identity might have in shaping their artistic style. Review and analysis of the data found three themes emerging from the interview data and supported by the observation and artwork data. These three themes included self-challenge, self-expression, and self-inspiration. Through these three lenses, insights about student perceptions of how self-identity might influence personal artistic style began to emerge, specifically about their perception of the part self-identity plays in shaping personal artistic style. Chapter Five explores these insights and the implications these results might have for creating meaningful experiences for students and the role of the art educator in facilitating the development of personal voice among art students.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence students' sense of self-identity might have on their own artistic style at Combs High School in San Tan Valley, Arizona. More specifically, this study examined the perceptions of junior and senior level art students about the potential influence their self-identity might have on their artistic decision making in the development of a personal artistic style, as well as the implications for art educators seeking to empower students in their development of personal voice. Observations, interviews, and personal artworks were used for data collection and analyzed using constant comparative method. Three themes emerged identity empowering self-challenge, identity empowering self-expression, and identity empowering self-inspiration. The results of this qualitative study showed comparative data concerning the various influences of students' self-identity on their artistic choices.

This closing chapter considers connections to existing literature and the implications for further study. Presented here are the confirmatory significance of the study, implications for personal and professional practice, and advice to the field and fellow art educators.

Discussion

The qualitative data presented here strengthened the sense of the reciprocal nature of the relationship between adolescent artistic and identity development. The results of this study supported existing literature pertaining to the definitions and influences of adolescent self-identity and artistic growth. Various ways in which students perceive identity as empowering artistic development were identified in the research and provide the basis and inspiration for personal implications for supporting students' development of artistic voice and suggested advice to others.

Reflections on and Connections with Existing Literature

The data from this study revealed that students perceived a variety of ways in which their self-identity influences and empowers their artistic decision-making. With identity formation being the primary task of adolescent development, this study was rooted in the understanding of identity formation during adolescence as having a lasting effect on a variety of personal spheres (Erikson, 1950). Student responses identified ways in which their self-identity empowers them to explore self-challenges including technical skill and expressive skill, self-expression including expression of personal identity and emotion, as well as self-inspiration derived from social roles and personal interests. The students' identification of ways self-identity empowers their artistic development supports the idea that identity formation interacts with and results from changes in the physiological, psychological, and social realms (Erikson, 1950; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McLean, 2005; McPhillips, Mudge, & Johnston, 2007). The ways in which the students perceived the influence of their self-identity as empowering their artistic development made clear connections to these spheres. The empowerment of self-challenge and skill development relating to the physiological changes adolescents experience, the empowerment self-expression of identity and emotion relating to psychological changes, and self-inspiration from social roles and personal interests relating to social changes are all examples of the connections in these spheres. These connections and the supporting literature, imply a reciprocal relationship between adolescent identity formation and artistic style development.

Student responses indicated a sense of their identity as empowering self-challenge in building technical and social skills. Both participants exhibited and discussed aspirations for improving skills and noted that their individual skill level influences choices they make in their artmaking activities. Parsons (1986) noted the meaning adolescents find in the technical aspects

of artworks and in the appreciation of expression. Likewise, both Gardner (1990) and Kerlavage (1998) note the skill and knowledge differences as common among adolescent learners. These differences were illustrated in the divergent views of the participants. Crystal described her self-challenges including improving technical skill with figure drawing and expressive skill in the combination of media to create mixed media works. Meanwhile, Nick found personal challenge in observing peer works and seeking mastery of new techniques and individual media. In this study, technical skill and expressive skill were found to be significant influences in artistic choices and ways in which student's self-identity empowers these students to self-challenge and continually improve in these areas.

Research results also indicated self-identity as being a significant inspiration for self-expression of identity and emotion among the participants. Feldman (1996), Moore (2004), and Roupp (1996) note personal spaces, values, interests, and narratives as important aspects of identity development and as having an extensive influence in the lives of adolescents. This notion is supported in the findings that students perceived their identity as empowering their self-expression not only about their views of themselves, but also about their unique emotions and ideas. Parsons (1986) noted the ability of adolescents to "understand art as the expression of a wide range of difficult emotions – the violent, the ugly, [and] the tragic" (p. 109). These viewpoints were supported in the artistic choices of both students during the artmaking observations as they selected composition strategies specifically for their power to express ideas about the self and the emotions surrounding the concept. Additionally, both students commented during the interviews that he or she connected his or her personal style with self-expression of emotions. Kerlavage (1998) similarly noted that young artists tend to be very expressive in their selection and use of materials and processes as well as experimentation with a variety of media

to find ways to express their ideas. Likewise, Dewey (1934) noted that identity influences much of the adolescent's choice of creative methods and materials. The student data certainly supports this notion as both students selected media, processes, and compositions based on their ability to use them to express a specific emotion or set of ideas.

The third area where students perceived their self-identity as influencing their artistic style was through the empowerment of self-inspiration. The literature makes connections between the creative process and the integration of personal events, stories and interests into the developing sense of identity (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McLean & Mansfield, 2012). These connections were evident in Crystal's representation of her social role as caregiver in her identity themed artwork, as well as Nick's comments about the influence the experience of attending art shows with his family has on his work. Both students were heavily influenced by social roles as peers, caregivers, and family members in the decisions they make artistically which is consistent with the research of both Kerlavage (1998) and Habermas & Bluck (2000) both noting the complicated task of integrating changing social and community expectations with their developing sense of self. Nick's comments on his family and the role they play in his sense of self-identity and developing artistic style are consistent with the literature on the function of family during adolescent identity and artistic development (Benson, 2009; Faber, Edwards, Bauer, & Wetchler, 2006; Papini, Sebby, & Clark, 1989).

Additionally, Freedman (2003) noted the variety of information and experiences that adolescents integrate in the creation of new knowledge and a unique sense of self. Certainly, these students noted a wide variety of experiences, information, and interests which are integrated into their sense of self and which influence their artistic decision-making. Moore (2004) further pointed out the incorporation of a wide variety of visual information, which

influences adolescent artistic style development as well. The data were supportive of this, as Crystal noted the influence cartoons, television and Instagram, all heavily visual media, have on her own personal style. Likewise, Nick noted that the artworks of others and even his own visual works have heavy influence on his developing style.

Adolescents find themselves in a stage of development when their perceptions of themselves, their skills, their emotions, and their social roles are changing rapidly. These students are responding to a variety of external and internal stimuli in the development of a unique identity. At the same time, adolescent art students are developing a unique artistic style representative of their technical and expressive skills, expressive of their personal views and emotions, and inspired by their personal interests and social roles. The research presented here demonstrates the reciprocal nature between the students' sense of self-identity and their artistic style development. As these students continue to grow as artists, their sense of self grows and further empowers their artistic development.

Personal Impact of the Study

This study has shown the reciprocal nature of the relationship between self-identity and students' development of artistic voice. Data showed that students perceived their self-identity as empowering their development of artistic voice through self-challenge toward technical and expressive skill, through self-expression of how they see themselves as well as their emotions, and through self-inspiration based on social roles and personal interests. The results of the data generated by this study not only confirmed the researcher's belief about the reciprocal nature of the relationship between identity and artistic voice, but also expanded on the researcher's understanding of how students see this relationship as empowering their artistic choices.

The literature demonstrated that the adolescent process of identity development is multifaceted and cross-relational among and between categories. While the literature consistently supported the idea that various aspects of adolescent physiological, psychological, and social development and situation have an influence on the developing sense of self-identity, there was little research about the relationship between artistic development and identity development. This study demonstrates the value for art educators and students, to promote an understanding of the connection between students' artistic development and how they see themselves as individuals. This study provided strong evidence to show that students' perceptions of this relationship serve to enhance and promote their understanding and expression of their personal artistic voice.

Influence on Personal Practice

The implication of this study is that art educators can further facilitate the development of personal artistic voice among art students by creating meaningful experiences in which students have the opportunity to make connections between their concept of self and the artmaking processes and practices that facilitate their artistic development. As students explore art elements and composition strategies best suited to expressing their unique message and sources of internal and external inspiration that are most significant to themselves, they make connections to their own unique sense of self-identity and strengthen their understanding of how their sense of self influences their artistic voice. When teachers feel empowered to help students make these connections they also empower their students to realize their potential as artists and to recognize the uniqueness of their artistic voice.

The research presented here was conducted over a one-week period of time and included a single artmaking observation, a single interview, and analysis of a single student artwork for

each participant. The resulting data is reflective of the literature and the researcher's beliefs about the relationship between students' self-identity and their development of personal artistic voice. This study has encouraged the researcher to share her findings with a larger population in art education. The unit plan (see Appendix E), based on the students' perceptions about the influence of self-identity on their artistic voice, was developed to share with art educators interested in creating meaningful experiences for students to make connections between the concept of self and artmaking practices as well as facilitating the development of personal artistic voice among art students.

Rationale for the Unit. Students make meaning by exploring ideas, reflecting, refining, and revisiting old ideas. According to Habermas & Bluck (2000), "Whenever we help a child or a student in the unfolding process of freeing his creativeness, we help him to face himself and to organize harmoniously his feeling, thinking, and perceiving in his art expression" (p.7). Given time and space to explore connections between their skills, their expression, and their inspiration, students will discover the unique qualities of their own artistic voice and learn to create unique solutions that reflect who they are as individuals. Empowering and using one's artistic voice means taking the time to explore the things that make one unique. Lowenfeld (1957) writes, "There is nothing which can ever replace sensitivity to ourselves and our environment. Without it no art teaching or, as a matter of fact, no art expression is possible on any level" (, p.5).

In developing their artistic voice, artists must define the elements and composition strategies that best communicate their message, and identify their sources of inspiration. Habermas & Bluck (2000) denote the importance of self-identity in this process writing, "One way to explicitly thematically integrate a life narrative is by reference to a central metaphor of oneself" (p.751). This unit will introduce students to the concept of incorporating their life

narrative through the use of personal artistic voice and encourage them to examine the connections between their self-identity and their personal artistic style.

Implications for Further Research

The results of this study provide useful data for both the classroom and the broader field of art education. While there is merit in technical and expressive excellence in the field of art education, there is very often diffused attention toward fostering a sense of unique and innate ability among individual students. With little research on the nature of the relationship between self-identity and the development of personal artistic voice among adolescents, an opportunity exists to inquire into student's perceptions, respect their perspective, and encourage their continuing artistic development. Beyond the outcomes of this study, further research and implementation opportunities exist.

The reduced time period, and limited number of participants in which this study was conducted created a significant constraint on the possibilities of the study. Given the opportunity to conduct a similar study over a more extended period, and/or with a larger population of students, might offer further insights into unique student perspectives and further documentation of the ways in which self-identity empowers students' artistic development. Such an extended study might also offer the opportunity to identify additional opportunities for art educators to foster students' developing personal artistic styles.

Additional opportunities exist for examination of the ways in which students perceive their development of technical and expressive skills, as well as the role of self-expression in the development of personal artistic style. The students participating in this study indicated the development of technical and expressive skills were key influences in their artistic styles, however the constraints of this study left little time or availability for thoroughly exploring these

concepts in detail. Likewise, the participants identified self-expression as important to their artistic development and empowered by their own identities, however the limitations of time and research scale did not afford the opportunity to investigate exactly how self-expression might be interrelated with artistic development. Additional research into these student-identified influences might yield interesting perspective on the interrelationship between identity and artistic style.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the influence students' sense self-identity might bring to bear on their own artistic style. Knowledge gained by conducting this study offered implications for the role of the art educator in facilitating the development of personal voice among art students at Combs High School in San Tan Valley.

Advice to the Field of Art Education

The results of the study offered vital insight into student perspectives on artmaking experiences and the ways that their sense of self-identity empowers their artmaking to continue to improve and to explore personal artistic voice. The development of each student's unique personal artistic voice and the reciprocal relationship with self-identity are important aspects of adolescent artistic development. By fostering connections between their self-identity and their artistic development art education can help these students become the artistic leaders and teachers of the next generation.

Advice to Art Teachers

There were several connections revealed by this study for helping adolescent art students develop their personal artistic voice. The unit developed as a result of this study [Appendix E] is recommended for implementation at the high school level. Because the unit depends upon

students having a body of personal work to examine and analyze, the researcher recommends that educators who implement this unit of study do so after students have had time to accumulate a sufficient amount of completed work. For the lessons and activities to have the most meaning, it would be best to implement this unit sometime during the second semester of a year-long portfolio course. Students should be encouraged to trust their own feelings and intuitions relating to the selection of elements, composition, and inspiration sources in order for these selections to have the most powerful impact on the resulting series of work. Individual conversations throughout the lessons about students' impressions, thoughts, and understandings of their own work are valuable in encouraging students to trust their own judgment.

Fostering the development of artistic voice among these students requires helping them to understand the influence of personal identity in their artistic development. The art educator must create unique ways for students to explore connections between the ways self-identity influences artistic development, and to help students learn to trust their own judgment if the students are to fully realize the achievement of their artistic potential. This process requires a unique relationship of structure and freedom in which students and teachers become partners throughout the learning process. As these young artists begin to perceive their unique skills, expressive abilities, and sources of inspiration, their distinctive artistic vision comes to life. The measure of success for art education is the strength with which our students find and use their artistic voice.

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Appendix A

Observation Protocol

Your Name: Treena Scism Research Questions: General Research Question: In what ways might students' sense of self-identity influence their own artistic style? Specific Research Questions: What are the perceptions of high school junior and seniors at Combs High School in San Tan Valley, AZ about the potential influence of self-identity on one's artistic style?		
How will you record your observation (check all that is applicable): ☐ Audio Tape ☐ iPhone ☒ Video Tape ☒ Field notes ☐ Other means: Please explain		
Other data to be collected (check all that is applicable): ☒ Artworks – one photo of each artwork from the participants (2 artworks total) ☐ Photographs (include number) ☒ Video Tape ☐ Other: Please explain		
Number of Observations: one observation per participant Number of students or teachers that you might be observing: three Duration of Observations: 60 minutes Potential Date & Time: July 6-10, 2015 Location: Combs High School, San Tan Valley, Arizona Type of Observation (check all that is applicable): ☒ Participant Observation ☐ Non Participant Observation Comments/Questions for me:		
What is that I am looking for?	Student Observation Notes	Teacher Observation Notes
Student's selection of artmaking media & materials		

Student's selection of artmaking techniques and methods		
Student's selection of subject matter for personal artwork		
Student's strategies for composing the artwork		
Student's selection of symbols and graphic qualities for personal artwork		
Student's individual approach/process to completing the prompted artwork		
Student's informal conversation surrounding the completion of the artwork		

Rough Sketch of Classroom

Post Observation Reflection Notes:

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Your Name: Treena Scism Research Questions: General Research Question: In what ways might students' sense of self-identity influence their own artistic style? Specific Research Questions: What are the perceptions of high school junior and seniors at Combs High School in San Tan Valley, AZ about the potential influence of self-identity on one's artistic style?		
How will you record your interview (check all that is applicable): ☐ Audio Tape ☐ iPhone ☒ Other means: Audio Recording app on Android phone		
Other data to be collected (check all that is applicable): ☐ Artworks (include number) ☐ Photographs (include number) ☐ Video Tape ☐ Other: Please explain		
Number of Participants: three Duration of Interview: 45-60 Minutes Potential Date & Time: July 6-10, 2015 Location: Combs High School, San Tan Valley, Arizona Type of Interview (check all that is applicable): ☐ Structured (Survey- contact me independently for this) ☐ Unstructured & open ended ☒ Semi structured & open ended		
Interview Question	Type of Question (Check what applies)	Probe (Check what applies)
What do you think personal identity means?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
How would you describe yourself to someone you've never met?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More

What personal qualities do you think are the most important things about yourself?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ Interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
What do you think artistic style means?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ Interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
Can you walk me through the process you used with the artwork you just created?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ Interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
How would you describe your artistic style to someone?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ Interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
What kinds of symbols or graphic qualities to you think are representative of your artistic style?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ Interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
What influence might your sense of identity have on your artistic style?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ Interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
How might your personal interests affect your artistic style?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ Interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More

How do you think your skill level might influence your decisions when you make art?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
When you think about your artistic style, in what ways do you think your personal relationships with others might influence you?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More
What else do you think might influence your artistic style?	☐ Devil's Advocate Question ☐ Hypothetical Question ☐ interpretive Question ☐ Ideal Position Question	☐ The Silent Probe ☐ The Echo Probe ☐ The Uh-huh Probe ☐ The Tell Me More

Appendix C

<i>What do I need to know?</i>	<i>Why do I need to know this?</i>	<i>Where will I find this data?</i>	<i>What kind of data will answer these questions</i>	<i>How will I analyze the data?</i>	<i>Why choose these methods?</i>
How do students perceive their concept of self as influencing the act of artmaking?	To better understand how participants think about the connection between their concept of self and its influence on their artmaking practices	Observation of artmaking activity	Informal conversations during artmaking activity Student choices during artmaking activity	Observation notes Categorizing student artmaking choices. Comparing student artmaking choices.	Provides opportunity to infer information from participants actions that he/she does not share verbally
How do students perceive areas of personal interest, relationships, and skill as influencing their personal development in artmaking?	To better understand how participants think about other factors that may influence their concept of self and artmaking activities	Student interview Observation of artmaking activity	Interviews Informal conversations during artmaking activity Observation of artmaking activity	Interview audio transcription. Response comparison. Categorizing responses. Observation notes Categorizing student artmaking choices. Comparing student artmaking choices.	Provides understanding of student's perspective Inferences drawn from observation offer a different perspective
How do students define the concept of self-identity?	To understand participants' views on the relationship between their self-identity and their art style	Student interview	Individual responses to interview questions	Interview audio transcription. Response comparison. Categorizing responses	Provides understanding of student's perspective
How are students' ideas about self-identity reflected in their artistic style?	To better understand how self-identity is represented in students' artmaking processes	Participant art products	Symbols, graphic qualities, media selection, processes and techniques used in the artwork	Categorizing student choices in the artwork. Comparing student choices in the artwork	Provides visual representation of student understanding of self-identity.

Table 3.1 Data collection chart

APPENDIX D

Coding Matrix

Theme	Source	Crystal	Nick	Similarities	Differences
Self Challenge					
Technical Skill	Observation: Artmaking Media & Materials	• Watercolor – semi-moist & concentrated • Colored Pencils • Graphite • Ink Pen • Markers • Large watercolor paper (12x18) • Large eraser	• Watercolor – semi-moist • Dry pastel • Standard copy paper (8.5x11)	Both students chose watercolor and at least one other medium	Crystal chose a wide range of additional media, while Nick chose only dry pastel
	Interview: skill level	“I kinda realized that you need to explore different kinds of things... and so I’ve been trying to create things that have different elements to it, like watercolor, or pastel even, anything different that can represent what I am trying to do.”	“As I look at other artists, student artists, and how much they can achieve, and how much they practice, it inspires me to practice and get better at my work overall.”	Both students noted that skill level does significantly influence the choices they make in artmaking, and that their explorations of new media and skill development are what they consider personal challenges to continue improving their work.	Crystal seems to find personal challenge inherent in mastering media and techniques, while Nick seems to find personal challenge in the observation of peer works.
	Artwork Analysis	unique personal challenge to combine a variety of media	media selection was of familiar materials, but he challenged himself to use them in new and interesting ways.	Both challenged themselves to use media in inventive ways	Crystal chose to experiment with several media while Nick chose to experiment with two

Expressive Skill	Observation: Individual approach/process	Began with a general idea and refined it into a specific representation. Perceived mistake was viewed as a challenge to overcome and incorporate into the overall work.	Began with a specific plan in mind for how the artwork would be organized and executed that plan Experimented with addition of dry pastel to finished watercolor work	Both students took the time for formulate an idea before beginning work, and encountered challenges along the way. Both used problem solving skills to adapt to challenges and integrate them into the artwork in a way that enhanced the expressiveness of the work.	Crystal seemed comfortable with allowing the artwork to unfold over time, refining a basic idea into an expressive image. Nick was very focused on executing the work according to his plan, and ensuring all areas conformed to his visualized outcome. He did, however, experiment a bit with the dry pastel, and seemed pleased when it performed according to what he envisioned.
	Artwork Analysis	Perceived mistake offered challenge of incorporating an organic fix	Confidence in expressive skills led him to create unexpected solutions	Both created unique challenges that stretched their expressive skills to represent personal identity	Crystal's acceptance of the process led her to explore a perceived problem as an opportunity for growth; Nick's desire to expand his expressive skill led him to experiment with media in unusual ways
Self-Expression					
Of Identity	Observation: Techniques & Methods	Mixed media layering Sketch technique Pen & Ink Watercolor technique Colored Pencil Marker Outlining	Layering of Media Watercolor technique Inventive pastel application	Layering Watercolor technique Experimenting with additional media	Crystal chose techniques that lend themselves to creating representative imagery while Nick chose techniques that lend themselves to abstraction

Of Identity	Observation: Subject Matter	The brain and escaping thoughts	Rain	Both chose subject matter reflective of their current thoughts and ideas	Each represented the subject matter in uniquely different ways
	Interview: student definition of concept of self-identity	"Something that you identify yourself with, like, you think it represents you or expresses yourself"	"[It] is really something that is unique to you that someone can look at and be like 'oh that is what that person is'."	Both participants defined personal identity as unique to the person, and provided examples indicating their understanding of personal identity as representative of a unique individual.	Nick seemed more focused on categorization by others while Crystal seemed more intent on categorization by self
	Interview: definition of artistic style	defined artistic style in terms of process and representation	defined artistic style in terms of method of expression	Both students consider artistic style as a method or process as a means of conveying a message or idea.	Recurring difference between representation and abstraction
	Artwork Analysis	Expression centered on facets of personality she uses to define her self-identity	Expression centered on current thoughts which he perceives as influencing his sense of identity	Both participants sought to use self-expression to share visual imagery related to their unique sense of identity	Differing definitions of self-identity created very different expressive imagery
Of Identity	Interview: reflecting on artmaking	responses were very focused on the use of symbols to create representational imagery to represent her thought processes. "I think that you can be identified, like, what goes on in your mind, what you desire, what you hope for"	responses centered on the use of artistic choices to create abstract imagery to represent his thought processes "I thought okay, what can I make with the colors I like and that I think will look cool, SO, I thought of rain again, cause well there's not rain outside, but just rain on my mind"	Both students were able to articulate their artmaking processes in the interview and very specific reasons for their choices, methods, and processes. Both students' descriptions detailed specific steps and choices s/he made to approach the creative process in a way that would allow the expression of very specific ideas and emotions.	

Of Emotion	Interview: influence of identity on artistic style	identified herself as thinking differently than others, and a generally positive individual, when considering what impact that may have on her artistic style she noted that her personal preference for cartoons and their simplicity is something that may influence her mood, and in turn causes her to try to represent her moods in a simple, positive way. Radial composition with main image in the center and other symbols radiating away from it in a circular or spiral pattern	defined himself through positive personality traits early in the interview, identified constant changes in his thinking as influencing his artistic style. "I think with my unique identity, it helps me put into the artwork what I am viewing that day."	Both students made clear connections between their sense of identity, their own unique contextual representations of themselves, and the thoughts and emotions they represent in their artistic work	Crystal connects her consistent identity with creating a consistent artistic style, while Nick connects the flexibility of his personality to the fluidity of his artistic style
Of Emotion	Observation: Symbols & Graphic Qualities	Observation: Composition Strategies	Representative imagery used to symbolize different personality characteristics and thought processes	Horizontal composition with picture plane divided into sky, middle, and ground	Both composition strategies were selected for their ability to convey the emotion and representation desired
Of Emotion	Interview: define personal artistic style	Crystal described her style as cartoony, with a use of bright colors and imagery representative of her own thought processes, expressive of her emotions, and explorative of concepts and ideas from her daily life.	Nick described his style as consistently changing, reflective of his own thought processes, expressive of his emotions and exploring media and techniques for new challenges. "Very different, not different like in a sense of different art styles, but different like every time I try to do something it seems different"	While both students define artistic style as a process employed toward conveying a message, interestingly, when asked to define their own styles, they responded with descriptions of visual characteristics.	Crystal chose representative imagery, while Nick chose abstract imagery
Of Emotion	Interview: define personal artistic style	"It usually represents my mood, if I'm happy or sad...It's broken down into simplicity"		Both defined their style in terms of visual characteristics influenced by cognitive, emotional, social and ability concepts.	

Of Emotion

Interview: graphic qualities

defined her personal artistic style as cartoony and representative of everyday life, described stars as a recurring graphic symbol in her work and representative of her emotions and thoughts.

defined his artistic style as constantly changing based on his thoughts and emotions at any time, described large brush strokes and cool colors with varying techniques and media in his work and representative of his emotions and thoughts.

Both students aligned graphic qualities and symbols with their artworks as a function of their definition of personal artistic style.

While the descriptions differed, the underlying theme of expression and representation of thoughts and emotions remained consistent between the two responses.

Descriptions differed in terms of consistency. Crystal sees her style as consistent while she explores emotions and thoughts, and Nick sees his style as changing to accommodate his exploration of emotions and thoughts

Self-Inspiration

Social Roles

Observation: Informal conversation

Babysitting

Reasons for volunteering

Both students seemed to want to discuss personal social events over the past several weeks to varying degrees

Crystal was very focused on her work for much of the observation and only engaged in conversation intermittently.

Interview: self-description

“very creative, sometimes quiet, nice, kind to you if you are kind to me”

“pretty outgoing, funny, reserved most times, I usually warm up to them once I get to know a person”

Both participants described personality traits when asked to describe themselves to a stranger.

Nick was conversational throughout the observation easily working and chatting and inquiring about the researcher’s activities.

Interview: valued self-characteristics

“Being positive, having an open mind, not rushing a process.”

“Always being a good person is important to me, not treating yourself higher than anyone else, always respecting others.”

Both participants noted positive character traits as being most important to themselves.

Social Roles	Interview: personal relationships	noted that her cartoony, representative style is focused around recording and “keeping” memories of personal relationships and interactions with peers. “I’ll sketch it out and that will be like my memory or keepsake of that conversation”	noted that his ever changing style is reflective of emotions and thoughts often surrounding and based on peer interactions and personal relationships. “How I am reacting to that person might have an effect on my artwork that day.”	Both students noted that personal relationships greatly influence their artistic style, but for different reasons. While each student has different reasons for his/her artmaking, the influence of personal relationships was noted as being significant enough to influence their artmaking activities.	Each noted different reasons for artmaking related to social/personal relationships
			Nick later noted his relationships with family members who are artists also has a significant influence on his desire to create artwork and to find his own way of doing things.		
	Artwork Analysis	Represented social self with symbols representing love of others	Explores ways to be unique among a family of creative artists	Social concepts influence both participants	Influences come from different areas, and affect them in different ways
	Observation: Informal conversation	People watching & sketching	Media & Techniques San Diego Art Show	Both students discussed personal interests in artmaking and related activities	Crystal was very focused on her work for much of the observation and only engaged in conversation intermittently.
Personal Interests	Interview: Additional influences	noted additional influences might include sources of inspiration like social media or entertainment media	noted additional influences as inspiration sources such as the art shows he attends with his family, as well as curiosity	Both students noted sources of inspiration as influences on their respective artistic styles	Each noted different personal interests and sources of inspiration

Appendix E

Unit Plan



Empowering Personal Artistic Voice

The Department of Art Education

Component	Explanation
Name:	Treena Scism
Descriptive title for the unit:	Empowering Personal Artistic Voice
Goals:	Students should... Understand: • Through artmaking, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences. (AZVAS: 11) Know: • The sources of inspiration from which individuals synthesize, and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art (AZVAS: 10) • The art making processes necessary to experiment, plan, and make works of art or design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea or concept (AZVAS:2.PS:AD.b) Be able to: • organize and develop artistic ideas and work (AZVAS:2) • visualize and hypothesize to generate plans for creating art or design (AZVAS:1.PS:AD.a)

Instructional Concepts:	Students make meaning by exploring ideas, reflecting, refining, and revisiting old ideas. "Whenever we help a child or a student in the unfolding process of freeing his creativeness, we help him to face himself and to organize harmoniously his feeling, thinking, and perceiving in his art expression." (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Lowenfeld, 1957, p.7). Given time and space to explore connections between their skills, their expression, and their inspiration, students will discover the unique qualities of their own artistic voice and learn to create unique solutions that reflect who they are as individuals. Empowering and using one's artistic voice means taking the time to explore the things that make one unique. Lowenfeld (1957) writes, "there is nothing which can ever replace sensitivity to ourselves and our environment. Without it no art teaching or, as a matter of fact, no art expression is possible on any level" (, p.5). In developing their artistic voice, artists must define the elements and composition strategies that best communicate their message, and identify their sources of inspiration. "One way to explicitly thematically integrate a life narrative is by reference to a central metaphor of oneself"(Habermas & Bluck, 2000, p751). This unit will introduce students to the concept of incorporating their life narrative through the use of personal artistic voice and encourage them to examine the connections between their self-identity and their personal artistic style.
Lessons:	Lesson One: Empowerment through Self-Challenge: Improving technical and expressive skill. Building on students previous understanding of the elements of art, students review their own portfolio of work to identify 2-3 elements they have emphasized repeatedly. Students define what they were trying to achieve with the emphasis of these elements. Next, students discuss which elements they might be able to add or remove from the work to make it stronger. Students write a reflection in their journal summarizing their ideas about which elements they are using to represent and express their unique artistic voice. Lesson Two: Empowerment through Self-Expression: Improving expression of personal ideas and emotions. Students review basic composition strategies, and then review their own portfolio of work to identify the two

	most commonly used composition strategies in their own work. Students write a comparison of the two strategies, defining what ideas or emotions they were trying to communicate with the use of these composition strategies and compare the effects of the two kinds of composition. Afterward, students write a reflection of whether the compositions were successful in communicating the intended message and determine whether to continue with their most common strategy or use a different strategy. Lesson Three: Empowerment through Self-Inspiration: Defining sources of inspiration. Students explore the concepts of internal and external inspiration centers and practice identifying internal and external inspiration focus in several works. Students create two sketches , one of an external focus object and one of an internal focus idea or emotion. Students reflect on which one engaged or excited them more and which felt the most natural to them. Students examine their portfolio of work and select the pieces that please them most from the collection. Students then determine whether their most favored pieces are internal or external focused. Afterward they write a reflection about their discoveries related to their source(s) of inspiration. Lesson 4: Empowering Personal Artistic Voice Through Artmaking Individual discussions about the discoveries students made in the three previous lessons before they begin sketching. Students define which elements, composition strategies and inspiration focus they'd like to use to create a series of three works relating to a personally selected theme. Students begin by creating sketches of their empowerment series. Students complete the series of works, and write an artist statement describing how their individual skills, ideas, emotions, and inspiration worked together in the creation of the series.
	•Materials: • Student portfolios of previous work • notebook paper • pencils • sketchbooks • white drawing paper • 9x12" canvas panels • Acrylic paint • Watercolor

	• Oil Pastels • Varied selection of paint brushes and painting implements • Drawing pencils • Colored Pencils • Blenders • Pencil Sharpeners • Eraser •Exemplars from Georgia O’Keeffe: • Church Bell, Ward Colorado 1917 • Untitled (Hibiscus) 1939 • Untitled (Abstraction with Blue Lines) 1970s • Tan, Orange, Yellow, Lavender 1959/60
Assessment:	1. Written reflections 2. Project rubric 3. Written artist statement

References

Habermas, T., & Bluck, S. (2000). Getting a life: The emergence of the life story in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(5), 748-769.

Lowenfeld, V. (1957). The adolescence of art education. *Art Education*, 10(7), 5-12.