ART FOR SOCIAL ACTION AND AWARENESS

by

Blake Smith

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has been approved

November 2008

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ACCEPTED BY THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of incorporating social action and awareness into high school visual arts content area courses. In order to assess the views of teachers, artists, and others in related fields, graduate student Blake Smith distributed 400 surveys to a variety of participants over a four-month period, yielding 154 samples collected for analysis. The unique and contrasting professional and personal responses from participants, most of whom were ninth through twelfth grade public high school art teachers, revealed mixed opinions, concerns, and possibilities. Findings are presented regarding teachers' expected roles, contextual and instructional conflicts related to social issues, and the potential problems and benefits of incorporating social action. This study suggests a need for more research and course materials on the studied topics, as well as an exploration of future curricular possibilities for social action in order to meet competing agendas in art education.

This Master's thesis is dedicated to those who dare teach and dare to devote their daily lives, however underpaid and exhausted, to the uplifting of others in the act and art of teaching. From Paulo Freire's *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach* (1998), a book that inspired my thesis, I present his words of hope and inspiration:

> *We must dare, in the full sense of the word, to speak of love without the fear of being called ridiculous, mawkish, or unscientific, if not antiscientific. We must dare in order to say scientifically, and not as mere blah-blah-blah, that we study, we learn, we teach, we know with our entire body. We do all of these things with feeling, with emotion, with wishes, with fear, with doubts, with passion, and also with critical reasoning, However, we never study, learn, teach, or know with the last only. We must dare so as never to dichotomize cognition and emotion. We must dare so that we can continue to teach for a long time under conditions that we know well: low salaries, lack of respect, and the ever-present risk of becoming prey to cynicism. We must dare to learn how to dare in order to say no to the bureaucratization of the mind to which we are exposed to every day. We must dare so that we can continue to do so even when it is so much materialistically advantageous to stop daring.*

May we **never** stop daring.

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Preface

Selecting a topic of study for any graduate research program is to select a piece of oneself that represents an area of study one wants to explore in depth. This topic must be something that keeps one motivated, curious, passion-filled, and full of more questions than answers. Social action and awareness in art as research concept became, throughout the duration of this study, one that encouraged personal and professional growth for this graduate student researcher, who is also an art teacher and artist. With a great desire to study something of both interest to herself and relevance to her job, she wanted to research and write about something that would be of use in the high school visual art setting and applicable both philosophically and pedagogically.

Perspectives from Teaching

Determining the place and relevance of social action, issues, and awareness in both general education and art education is more difficult a task than the researcher originally imagined and properly understood. The cause of some debates in the field of art education, this topic can be somewhat challenging, provocative, subjective, and layered. As a public high school art teacher over the course of several years, she realized a need among her students for a broader, more culturally-rich and socially-relevant view of both the art world and global society; ways of creating and illustrating connections between one individual and all of humanity, between life and art, became a challenge and personal goal. Thus, she became interested in the incorporation of social action, awareness, and issues into visual art curricula as a potential way to

achieve or at least attempt this cultural and social broadening. From the researcher's viewpoint, the frame of mind most of the students encountered possess is focused on the local, individual, and often monocultural point of view, rather than a multicultural, global, or community-oriented point of view. With experience teaching in a variety of environments, it seemed that most of her students were able to see through *their* eyes only, walking rarely "in another's shoes" or looking at the world from alternate social or cultural perspectives. A question arose as to how to expand and contribute to the ways students define "their world," be it outside their own peer group, their physical neighborhood or city space, or even their country of residence (here, in the United States of America).

Graduate School

After entering graduate school at Arizona State University, the researcher excitedly came across the concept of "social action in art" as discovered in a course on multiculturalism in art. This subject seemed to encompass all of the goals, interests, and aforementioned needs for her students as well as met her own goal of studying something practical and worthwhile to a high school art teacher. After countless research papers and coursework, that initial discovery of social action in art guided her to compose this, a culminating piece of writing in graduate school: the Master's thesis.

Journey to Africa: A Different Kind of Education

In the summer of 2007 when this study was underway, the topics of social action and social justice led the researcher to the country of South Africa on a

unique university-sponsored study abroad and cultural immersion to the sites of Cape Town and Khayelitsha (a black township) in South Africa. With a group of thirteen other students, the group traveled there to study the effects of racial discrimination and economic disparity in a post-Apartheid society, as well as examine various efforts towards peace-building, social healing, restorative justice, and change. In this case, the nation of South Africa is affected in a cyclical manner, with the past affecting the present and the present affecting the future of a nation, its people, its history, and its ongoing, evolving narrative. Delicate and layered concepts and goals, each represents individual social components that can help to redefine and describe a society trying to rebuild. *A Donated Line*

Studying in a foreign country offered new contextual viewpoints from which to see the world, presenting much visual and spiritual poetry for artistic inspiration, and instigated much personal growth for the researcher and the group. Having traveled far both on a physical and an emotional level, this journey abroad greatly affected her learning process and sense of cultural understanding and appreciation. It proved to be a life-changing, awakening adventure abroad but also within. New connections were established with regards to this research, some of which are included in this thesis. Notably, the notion of educator's ethical and/or moral responsibility was discussed while the researcher was on this trip and was later added as a research question in the study.

At one point that summer in Africa, Teri Murphy, the trip leader, described a term in poetry called "the donated line" that has stuck with the researcher ever

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since and applies here. The phrase denotes a mysteriously bestowed line of poetry that appears seemingly out of nowhere as a poet writes, one that acts as an unexpected gift somehow completing or complementing the poem. This journey to South Africa represents such a donated line by greatly enriching both her graduate and life education. Like a miniature case study to complement or extend the research on art for social action and awareness, the learning experience offered a real-world context that could be applied to the study.

Introduction

Overview

Abstract-Expressionist painter Mark Rothko once described art not only as a form of action, but also a form of social action and type of communication capable of producing effects on the environment just as any other form of action does (Rothko and Prizel, 2006). Whether it be a painting, song, photograph, or play, the arts have been used as a tool for reflecting, communicating, remembering, honoring, questioning, protesting, and in some cases, attempting to affect change. As a form of social action or attempted social change, visual art in particular lends an opportunity to speak via a tangible, subjective visual record, a statement for, against, or representative of an event, a time period, individual experience, or collective narrative. Visual art presents an avenue for social commentary and critique due to its ability to react to and reflect upon events in human history. It can also become a universal communicator capable of reaching out to school children, the general public, artists, politicians, communities, and entire nations. Studying, creating, and critiquing artworks of a social nature as well as determining the feasibility of incorporating social action and awareness within art education studies rests at the center of this thesis.

Deeply rooted in this study is a concept envisioned by Brazilian educator and visionary Paolo Freire and others: the development of education for critical consciousness. It is an issue of important debate whether there is need for school subjects, including the arts, to encourage or explore student learning that involves the development of social consciousness and ethical responsiveness.

Roles of schools, teachers, communities, and students are under examination, as the intertwined relationships between society, schools, and culture remain in question. Freire (1998) envisioned teachers as more than simple deliverers of knowledge and rather as socially-engaged cultural workers equally as devoted to the task of consciousness-raising, character and ethical development as they are to their trained academic subjects. Social action in art can be defined as the incorporation of individual, local, or global social issues into art environments, including art classrooms. The incorporation of social issues such as politics, social justice, poverty, stereotypes, etc. can be involved by studying, critiquing, reflecting, and art-making. The term action can refer to the act of making art of a social nature or the action(s) taken by artist(s) or society members to address such social issues. This research study proposes that art for social action and awareness has a relationship with the development of critical, social, and ethical consciousness among today's students and can be a viable, valuable course component to include in visual arts content area courses either as a unit of study or a larger curricular goal.

Opposing views exist with regards to the incorporation of social action and issues into today's art classrooms. Some believe school is intended for studying and strengthening traditional academic subjects only, *not* a forum for the discussion of pressing social issues, politics, taboo subjects, or social justice. Within the visual arts, criticisms arise on both sides of the issue: Are art classrooms designated sites for art-making, skill and technical development, and

creative expression, or can they also be possible sites for social, cultural, and/or political engagement? This thesis attempts to make a case for both, a space where life and art become one, where art students can learn, not only how and when artists create art, but also why and in response to what, as well as learn that they, too, can use art as a tool for communication and social commentary.

Justification of the Study

Several respected researchers have studied social action and social justice issues, conducting studies in classrooms and exercises in theoretical research. A need exists to assess the opinions and experiences of practicing art educators and other professionals in related fields regarding the research topic of social action. This need, among others, is explored in this study two ways: first, in the form of a review of related literature presented in Chapter 2; second, in the form of a survey undertaken as a research method whose results are presented in Chapter 4 and further discussed in Chapter 5.

The purpose of this study is to examine, question, and discuss whether social action, awareness, and issues have a place in the school setting, particularly in visual arts content area courses in high school in terms of projects, course content, curricula, and pedagogical goals. Content area courses are dedicated to the teaching of a particular art medium or subject, such as Ceramics or Photography, but also include broader introductory classes, such as Introduction to Visual Art, Visual Culture Studies, or Art History. In the context of this thesis, art for social action and awareness proposes that instructors consider

looking beyond classroom walls to explore current and historical social issues and their effects both inside and outside of school, aiming for objectivity, historical truth, cultural relevance, and social justice by exploring the arts as a means of both social commentary and critique. Examining and incorporating social issues in general and art education might initiate meaningful student responses, greater understanding of social and global issues, mature cultural sensitivity, and character and ethical development. Students in the visual arts may be exposed to artworks, artists, and art-making of a social nature and gain new knowledge in art history, art criticism, multiculturalism, social justice, service learning, and other areas.

In this thesis, the views of art educators, other professionals, and researchers regarding the pros, cons, possibilities, and potential problems and benefits inherent in the task of teaching art situated in practices of social action are included and discussed. Theories and movements informing the study include: multiculturalism, social recontructivism, critical pedagogy, social justice education, cultural diversity, socially- and culturally-responsive pedagogies, critical inquiry, ethics, service learning education, and visual/material culture.

Some of the main issues explored in this study include:

- The connections between culture, education, and art by examining the roles each play in society and schools;

- The possibility of including and expanding social action as a learning component to multiculturalism, social justice education, and service learning education within art education;

- The ensuing debate over whether or not to incorporate social action, awareness, and issues in general and art education; and

- The views of practicing art educators and other professionals in related fields on these issues to determine if and how social action, awareness, and issues fit into art education.

It is from a review of related literature as well as the data from a qualitative survey that a collection of significant emergent themes, criticisms, questions, conclusions, and recommendations for further study can be made. In order to provide a richer perspective and in some cases, evidence in support of social action's inclusion, research from the following respected academics and others is used, including: Garber, 2005; Chalmers, 2002/2007; Zimmerman, 1990; Trend, 1992; Desai, 2007; Stuhr, 1994; Darts, 2004/2006; Young, 2007; Knight, 2006; Sleeter, 1996; and Freire, 1998.

Importance of the Study

As a field of study, social action and awareness receives attention in some academic and curricular circles and may deserve more in others. A major goal of

this research is to better understand if, where, and how social action and awareness instructional content might best apply to visual arts content area courses, particularly in high schools, by asking teachers and others in related fields for their views. The importance of this study rests on its assessment of the views of others in order to provide a broad yet personalized view of the possibilities and problems regarding this topic.

As a research instrument, the survey is an original tool that combines questions about several contemporary topics in art education today, and its findings represent fresh data that might be used to generate new ideas and address implications for further study. By asking and addressing the personal and professional opinions of over 150 participants, this study becomes a means for reflection and assessment for teachers, artists, curriculum writers, researchers, and the public. The findings provide an up-to-date view from those working inside active art education venues (including elementary, middle, and high school classrooms, museums, galleries, studios, and universities among others) and aims to provide information that can inform both theory and practice in art education. Other professionals who may apply these research findings are in various fields, including, but not limited to, humanities, justice and peace studies, studio art, multicultural education, anthropology, sociology, and educational leadership. Educators, curriculum planners, authors, researchers, college/university faculty, artists, students, and those studying to become teachers might be attracted to this study's findings for relevance in their subject

areas. Whether one is for or against art for social action, the data presents unique findings that readers on both sides of the issue concerning the content of visual art courses may find beneficial.

Since it is valuable to study the actual goals, methods, and challenges of teaching art in today's schools and society, the following chapters examine social action and awareness in art from a pedagogical, academic, and cultural point of view and illicit responses from a survey distributed in order to address these challenges.

Review of Literature

Framework for Social Action and Awareness

The study of social action, awareness, and issues in art can be separated into three sections: the connections between art, culture, education, and politics as well as a brief history of social action in art; theoretical and pedagogical views on multiculturalism, social justice education, and service learning education as connecting threads that link together and offer connections to social action in art; and the debate over the place and importance of incorporating these topics, particularly social action and awareness, into art education.

Definition of Terms

Several variations on the word "social" appear throughout this thesis, including: social issues, art for social action and awareness, social justice education, social consciousness, social responsibility, and social change. A long and ever-evolving list of past and present social issues includes (but is certainly not limited to): politics, social justice/injustice, image and identity, peace, ethics, cultural diversity, poverty, human, animal, and disability rights, crime, racism, violence, discrimination, feminism, stereotypes, war, environmentalism, and more. With some visible and others less visible, such issues represent strife, sacrifice, and sometimes bloodshed as well as questions of privilege, identity, equality, and social status. Social consciousness and a sense of social responsibility may inform an individual or groups' understanding or awareness of existing social issues and, therefore, may inform a perceived need for change, reform and justice by the individual or group. Viewed backwards, social issues

are often acknowledged as issues of concern because of some perceived problem, need, or often a sense of injustice that an individual or group feels needs to be addressed or changed.

Often, change or reform occurs or is achieved when the development of social consciousness is combined with an intellectual and/or physical form of action on some level. This consciousness as well as the action can be individual or collective, such as a cultural or social group or an entire society. Collective action, in which groups of people are mobilized together in support of a cause, may, in turn, become a recognized social movement. Sleeter (2005) writes, "social movements speak to and represent counter-ideologies that frame issues and group identity different from the dominant ideology" (p. 226). Social action is often a means for reconstructing or transforming some type of activity, belief system, community, or policy in the hopes of directional change for a certain culture or society. Webb (2004) describes social action as part of a "community-work toolkit" that aims to "mobilize people around a send of indignation – anger against social injustice" (p. 2). In addition, Golub (2005), a cross-cultural traumatologist, describes social action as the following:

Social action, by definition, happens in community, the product of historical forces. It occurs not only on a continuum of time and history but also of place...(A community's) group action can be tentative and modest or expansive and organized. Some change begins within the individual who has potential for influencing collective transformation (p. 17).

Furthermore, action is often brought about by examining both sides of an issue, by understanding its context, and by recognizing who is affected by it. Webb (2004) describes those affected by or concerned with social issues as either the direct or indirect stakeholders, referring to people on both sides of an issue or call to action. When one is conscious of an issue, problem, need, or perceived injustice, a feeling of social responsibility and understanding may lead to social action which, in turn, may lead to social change and social justice.

Brief History of Social Action in Art

The history of social action and social issues in art is long and dates back hundreds of years. Journalists, photographers, artists, poets, musicians, fashion designers, and playwrights alike from across the globe aspire to capture, create, and communicate their visions of the world, delivering individual messages of creative expression through their chosen media. In some cases, these messages are socially-engaged, either in response *to* or to provoke response *about* a certain event or idea. Any given medium can offer direct and subjective insight about individuals, societies, events, and time periods. Amassed over time and place as interpretive documentations of society and its encompassing history, art exists as an important segment of our collective visual culture.

Visual records, particularly photography and film, can act as societal mirrors revealing the subjective real, which sometimes includes revealing crisis or injustice to an often unknowing public eye. WPA Photographer Dorothea Lange suggested, "While there is perhaps a province in which the photograph

can tell us nothing more than what we see with our own eyes, there is another in which it proves to us how little our eyes permit us to see" (Dorothea Lange Quotes, n.d.). A key example of social action in art is the genre of social documentary photography, a movement in art that evolved in the 1920's in America, capturing a nation in grave distress through unforgettable images of poverty, bread lines, and child labor. The reproducible, instantaneous, and real-world nature of documentary image-making and image-taking illustrates one example of the provocative and narrative power of graphic art images to communicate visually.

Eyerman and Jamison (1998) write about the connection of art, politics, and culture and cite specifically the impact of music as an artistic form of cultural and individual expression on social movements. They refer to the "mobilization of tradition" (in social movements) in which "musical and other cultural traditions are made and remade, and after the movements fade away as political forces, the music remains as a memory as a potential way to inspire new waves of mobilization" (p. 2). It is this concept of the music remaining as a memory that art for social action supports; by using art and its potential power to make visual social statements, students, communities, and societies can become aware and knowledgeable of the sounds and histories of social movements. An artwork, then, can also remain as a memory, possibly as an avenue for storytelling, inspiration, or action. Many historical and contemporary artists use social issues in their work, as both catalyst for meaning and subject matter.

In the complex history of art, social action and socially-motivated art works and art movements are just some of several ways artists express themselves. Formal and expressive modes of working, in addition to social expression, all inform the expansive history of art and help tell the stories of life through art. Embedded within this relationship between life and art are other influences on society that are part of these stories, including culture and education.

Cultural Pedagogy: Examining the Links Between Culture, Education, and Art

To illustrate where social action in art education may fit, it can be helpful to first determine the place of social issues in general education and the role teachers play as links in the chain of cultural work. Cho (2007) suggests "many facets of the arts should be thought of as meritorious activities that help to preserve cultural significance and authenticity" (with the arts) "considered as a public good, non-excludable, and non-rival in consumption (p.1). In his book entitled *Cultural Pedagogy*, Trend (1992) presents and examines the relationship between education as pedagogical practice and cultural work or production, suggesting that this connection is part of a bigger "political and ethical project which links education in the broader sense to the relevancies shared by diverse cultural workers" (p. 1). In his view, this relationship "extends the principles and practices of human dignity, liberty, and social justice" (p. viii).

Giroux, who writes the Foreword to the text, writes:

As a cultural practice, pedagogy both contests and refigures the construction and presentation, and engagement of various forms of

images, text, talk, and action which results in the production of meaning,

through which students construct their individual and collective futures

(p. ix).

As Desai and Chalmers (2007) propose:

Socially-engaged works of art require us to ask critical questions about our

current political, social, economic, and cultural situation. And, through this

questioning, we arrive at different ways of looking at our situation and,

hopefully, creating some change (p. 9).

Along the same lines, Freire (1998) asserts:

It is not enough to say that education is a political act... It is necessary to

truly assume the political nature of education. I cannot consider myself

progressive if I understand school space to be something neutral, with

limited or no relation to class struggle, in which students are seen only as

learners of limited domains of knowledge which I will imbue with magic

power (Cited in Garber, 1998, p. 16).

As relationships between schools, societies, and its members are further

developed and strengthened, fields such as art education may find a niche to

include the study of social action in art.

Social Action in Art: Problems and Possibilities

Giroux described pedagogy or teaching as "both a discourse of critique

and a project of possibility" (Cited in Trend, 1992, p. ix). Social action can be

viewed under the same premise, as both critique and possibility – a critique of

culture, history, social issues, ideas, and art and the possibility of learning from and being motivated to action by such critique through art. The term "action" can refer to the act of making art of a social nature or the action(s) taken by artist(s) or society members to address such social issues. In 1985, Freire and Betto proposed that:

> A humanizing education is the path through which men and women can become conscious about their presence in the world. The way they act and think when they develop all of their capacities, taking into consideration their needs, but also the needs and aspirations of others (p. 14-15).

This consideration of one's "presence in the world" is perhaps what concerns those in support of art for social action and awareness. To some, art has the potential to be used as a vehicle or tool for awareness, action, and change. Art can do so by illustrating common social issues, events, and human conditions, acting as universal yet subjective language that speaks *about* and/or *to* societies at large. With curricular foci in art education often on the art-making and expression, some would like to include the study of social message, commentary, and critique in art education. Social action can be used as a teaching concept for art history, art criticism, art making, visual culture, multiculturalism, social justice, service learning, and more. Numerous examples of social action art projects and organizations exist worldwide dedicated in various ways to promoting collective consciousness-raising, change, and/or

service learning through the arts. By critiquing and creating socially-engaged works of art, rich and subjective dialogue about social issues may occur (Desai and Chalmers, 2007). Darts (2004) writes of "the inseparability of the cultural from the aesthetic" where "art educators are ostensibly the best placed within schools to directly attend to these commitments," which can include social action (p. 315). Several methods and reasons for sparking classroom dialogue on these topics exist.

Connecting Threads: Multiculturalism, Social Justice Education,

and Service Learning Education

In art education, some major changes have occurred in the last fifty years, including multiculturalism, social justice education, and service learning education. These movements represent efforts towards incorporating more diverse, international, socially- and culturally-relevant art, artists, materials, and methods in the classroom as well including more holistic, democratic ways of teaching, making, and appreciating art. There is a substantiated push in numerous academic and social circles for materials and pedagogies to include cultural diversity, interdisciplinary studies, character and ethical development, and creative and higher-level thinking. Regarding today's ever-changing classroom environment where such pedagogies might be useful, Knight (2006) states that:

Globalization, changing demographics, and other socio-economic factors have led to increased diversity in (our) various teaching contexts.

Differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, physical abilities, language,

sexual identifications, social class, religion, and political beliefs are making

teaching not only more exciting but more challenging as well…creating a

demographic imperative to which art educators will have to respond

(p. 39).

The study and incorporation of social action and awareness in art is part of a

larger pedagogical and social web that encompasses several facets of art

education, detailed next.

First Thread: Multiculturalism

Zimmerman (1990) writes about the need to educate all students in

multiple contexts when focusing on global and social education pluralistic models

for the arts, stating:

In global education programs, emphasis on commonalities shared by all

peoples and at the same time understanding and appreciation of

differences within various cultures and subcultures may provide strong

rationales for those who wish to teach art in a social context (p. 1).

Stokrocki (2004) defines context as "a complex of factors, conditions, and

contradictory elements that support or limit a historically and culturally related

framework that is constantly changing" (p. 440). Contexts and their subsequent

interpretations can vary, including local contexts such as classes, schools,

institutions, and communities as well as broader, larger contexts such as cultures

and nations. Based on the work of Anderson (1979), she details four socially and

culturally relevant teaching contexts for teaching art: multinational, multicultural, community-based, and as part of global education. Zimmerman writes, "To prepare students to be citizens in a global age, educational efforts need to be undertaken to bring about changes in content, social context, and methods through which cultural values are taught" (1990, p. 1). When referencing education from a global perspective, she paraphrases Nadaner's (1984) view that "Art making...could be reconceived rather than abandoned within a social context by expanding the range of subjects students choose to portray" (Cited in Zimmerman, 1990, p. 2) It is the "reconceiving" of art education's goals and pedagogies to involve more critical inquiry and social as well as cultural dialogue that perhaps deserves more attention and research.

Social movements as a method or means of social transformation can be defined as "central moments in the reconstitution of culture" (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998, p. 6). Multiculturalism, the larger umbrella under which social action in art can fall, was a social and educational movement that fought against ethnic discrimination in education and society, emerging in the early 1960's from the Civil Rights Movement and was, in its fight for equality, a form of social action (Stuhr, 1994). Young (2007) describes multicultural education as both a philosophical concept and an educational process "built upon the philosophical ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity" (p. 1). Additionally, he adds that multiculturalism aims "to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, religious, social class, and cultural

groups" (p. 1). Multiculturalism as an educational reform had and still has its affect on all teaching disciplines, including the arts. Goals towards including a diverse, representative array of artists, artworks, techniques, and ways of appreciating art from around the globe are now a part of this growing tradition of multiculturalism. Various approaches to multicultural education have been employed and reviewed and are discussed next.

Teaching with a worldview: The need for multiple perspectives. Knight (2006) presents a useful model that describes four approaches to teaching art from a multicultural point of view that celebrates diversity, challenging both teachers and students to reflect on cultural diversity, history, social issues, as well as the representation and artistic attributes of minority groups. These approaches appear below (as Knight described) in four "levels" that act as a framework for introducing multicultural perspectives into art classrooms. Knight's Four Levels of Teaching Multiculturalism (2006) include:

- The Contributions Approach focuses on "holidays and heroes" (described by the author as the dominant method of approaching multiculturalism in North American schools). It does not challenge "long-established ethnocentric curriculum" and involves the discussion but not necessarily the "meaning and significance" of "cultural artifacts" to their respective "cultural and racial groups" (p. 41).

- The Additive Approach supports the addition of minority group perspectives but does not change the structure of the established

curriculum. It teaches such minority students only a small amount of their own history and subsequently teaches little to other students about "the history and contributions of other racial and cultural groups to North American society" (p. 41).

- The Transformational Approach involves art teachers' efforts and actions towards changing the established curriculum "to enable students to view matters from the perspectives of 'the Other'." It demonstrates "changes in the basic assumptions and fundamental structure of the curriculum" (p. 41).

- The Social Action Approach entails students investigating social issues and taking "action to help resolve them" and emphasizes art teachers' involvement to help students "acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to participate in social change" to therefore and ideally "feel empowered." It also encourages "value analysis, decision making, problem solving, and social action" as vital to the effectiveness of this approach (p. 41).

While not all art educators teach using these approaches, they each define informational categories that could benefit from further examination. The difference in each level's desired goal or outcome may be very significant in the understanding of Knight's approaches.

Five approaches to multiculturalism. Similarly, Sleeter and Grant (1990) conducted an extensive review of multicultural education in the United States and

summarized their findings into five approaches to multicultural education, reviewed by Stuhr (1994) and others. Each of these approaches provides insight into methods, means, and motivations for choosing to teach from a multicultural perspective, wherein art for social action might best fit in terms of art education curricula for content area courses. Furthermore, Sleeter and Grant analyze each approach for its capacity to instigate and mobilize radical social change, how each acknowledges "conceptual conflict," and how each aids or impedes "consciousness-raising" in the name of democracy, equality, and justice. The Five Approaches to Multiculturalism presented include: Teaching the Exceptional and Culturally Different Approach, The Human Relations Approach, Single Group Studies Approach, Multicultural Education Approach, and Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist Education Approach. Of these five categories, two relate directly to this study.

The Multicultural Education Approach can also be referred to as "cultural democracy," as termed by Sleeter and Grant (1990), where emphasis is placed upon providing "a more equitable distribution of power, to reduce discrimination and prejudice, and to provide social justice and equitable opportunities" for all students, regardless of gender, class, race, or disability (Stuhr, 1994, p. 175). In art education, instructors might include diverse perspectives from a variety of cultures and groups in efforts to present and encourage appreciation of diversity both in what is being studied and how the pieces are presented to the diverse student population. Finally, she suggests that this approach, in comparison to the

previously described three, might best foster school reform, cultural diversity, and equity. Due to the nature of the approach's "conceptual analysis of conflict" that recognizes the student's need and ability "to develop a critical perspective towards sociocultural art communities they study," students would ideally "begin to consider the roles that power and knowledge have played in each instance" (p. 176). It is important to point out that art teachers would be responsible to presenting material, opportunities for dialogue, and a classroom environment where this critical perspective might be sparked and allowed to ignite in the form of critical discussion, analysis, and/or art-making.

The Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist Education Approach challenges social inequality to promote greater diversity not only in the school setting but also in society and the structures built within it. Stuhr quotes Grant and Sleeter as they explain how the "reconstructionist approach educates students to become critical thinkers capable of examining their life experiences and the social divisions" that separate them (Stuhr, 1994, p. 176). Stuhr (1994) outlines what best practices an art education program might encompass under this approach to teaching art. These practices include: a) the practice of democracy; b) the opportunity for students to "learn how to analyze their own situations;" c) the opportunity for students to "learns social action skills that help them practice democracy;" and d) for students to be "taught to coalesce and work together across the lines of race, gender, class, and disability in order to strengthen and energize their fight against oppression" (p. 176). This approach

(of the five) is perhaps the most radical and difficult and might require teachers and students to select content that is relevant "to the students' understandings of the political and economic situations concerning a particular topic" and require that art teachers "direct attention to the ways that artistic production by diverse sociocultural groups can contribute to this understanding and lead to democratic action" (Stuhr, 1994, p. 177). Finally, after reviewing these five approaches, Stuhr (1994) concludes:

> Multiculturalism in art education can claim a relationship to radical social reconstruction only in so far as the approach taken and practiced through curriculum design, teaching methods, content, goals, and objectives is congruent with this type of belief system. Although there are at least five approaches to multicultural education in general (Sleeter and Grant, 1990) and art education, specifically only social democracy and social reconstruction are compatible with the tenants of radical social change (p. 177).

Stuhr suggests, "There is an implied visionary hope that the students will, at some time in the future, effect social change" (1994, p. 174). It is this hope, this possibility of change, social justice and reform, consciousness-raising, true diversity, and the development of critical thinkers that the future of art for social action may depend on.

Second Thread: Social Justice Education

As quoted in Emma Goldman's *My Disillusionment in Russia*, "The ultimate end of all revolutionary social change is to establish the sanctity of human life, the dignity of man, the right of every human being to liberty and well-being" (1923). Social justice in education involves teaching goals and practices that support and study Goldman's ideals of dignity and liberty for all people. It also involves a thorough examination of the various contexts and issues that are going to be taught and whom these contexts and issues affect. Garber (2005) writes:

> Social justice education brings together the goals and perspectives of feminist, multicultural, disability rights, environment, community-based, critical pedagogy, social reconstruction, and visual culture education. It is also related to socially responsive contemporary art and visual and material culture (p. 4).

Garber presents four contexts, or set of circumstances, to consider and acknowledge when approaching social justice art education. Stokrocki (2004) defines context as "a complex of factors, conditions, and contradictory elements that support or limit a historically and culturally related framework that is constantly changing" (p. 440). Contexts and their subsequent interpretations can vary, including local contexts such as classes, schools, institutions, and communities as well as broader, larger contexts such as cultures and nations. Garber (2005) describes the three contexts: 1) The Ideological Context, where

she points out the importance of determining and understanding various ideologies and goals of democracy for both individuals and society, 2) The Economic Context, in which she suggests that teachers acknowledge educational inequalities and advantages/disadvantages that affect people, particularly students; 3) The Context of Practice, where she states the need for recognizing and studying the connection of what is being taught/learned to political and social structures as well as the need to examine community value systems that affect what is taught and how its received; and 4) The Student Context, in which she describes students as creators of culture and knowledge not just "recipients" of it. Garber (2005) further writes that the teacher must respect students' identity and culture, as well as allow for the development of their own learned space and suggests that educators may want to consider how such contexts may affect their teachings and teaching environments.

Additionally, Garber (2005) presents four additional complementary discussion themes for applying her art for social justice model in the classroom setting. These themes include:

- Identity: This theme is devoted to the identity of the student and the need for such identity to be recognized, explored, respected, and found.
- Understanding Beyond Ourselves: This theme describes how investigations of culture often look at "what art and artists can tell us," and reminds is to remain careful not to water down or simplify a culture or the context of culture.

- Discrimination: This theme is about "disparity based on differences" of race, sexual orientation, gender, "ableness" or disability, nationality, how discrimination and "whiteness" affects human rights, access, and equality.

- Becoming Political Subjects: This theme looks to understand the relationship of culture and work (here, teaching art) and to determine if "content and means work toward the goals" (p. 13-14).

She proposes "In social justice education, students' interests, voices, and lives are now understood as part of the curriculum" and that learning and social engagement must take place both inside and outside of classroom walls in order to be effective and relevant (p. 6). She continues by quoting the writing of Weis and Fine, who state that "Educators need to deepen their understandings of the many contexts that are meaningful to youth if (they) are to engage with them intellectually and ethically. It is precisely this notion of intellectual and ethical engagement that art for social action sustains" (Cited in Garber, 2005, p. 6). Garber (2005) provides this juxtaposition:

> While visual culture education advocates emphasize tangible manifestations of culture that can be studied using the principles of social justice or critical pedagogy, the emphasis of social justice education on is the acts and outcomes, rather than the objects... Education for social justice is education for a society where the rights and privileges of democracy are available to all. Art education for social justice places art as a means through which these goals are achieved (p. 16).

Darts (2006) advocates "art education for a change" by supporting an art education which includes "investigations and analyses of cultural objects, symbols, signs, products, and styles" to help students "understand how cultural processes and visual artifacts inform, cultivate, legitimate, normalize, glamorize, and communicate our evolving beliefs, values, understanding of ourselves and each other" (p. 7). In the abstract introducing Darts' (2004) article Visual Culture Jam, the author writes:

> Visual culture is an essential direction for contemporary art educators who are committed to examining social justice issues and fostering democratic principles through their teaching" in that "visual culture education can empower students to perceive and meaningfully engage in the ideological and cultural struggles embedded within the everyday visual experience. (p. 313).

Furthermore, Ayers and Quinn (Cited in Garber, 2005, p. 6) write:

> Teaching for social justice might be thought of as a kind of popular education – of, by, and for the people- something that lies at the heart of education in a democracy, education toward a more vital, more muscular democratic society. It can compel us to action, away from complacency.

It is important to note, however, that social justice is not always the desired outcome, but more a means for teaching in a democratic way.

Third Thread: Service Learning Education

Service learning in art education emphasizes a hands-on, community-service-oriented approach to learning and growth about self and others. Goals such as empathic development and social or emotional healing can accompany the goals for making art in some areas. Garber quotes Danto (1986), who "argued for art making to be in the service of bettering people's lives rather than directed towards the art world" (2005, p. 4). Through their participation in art projects designed to be for the service or benefit of both students and others, students may develop a sense of empathy and feel what it is like to be in someone else's shoes. Social action in art, when manifested as an individual, classroom, school- or community-wide project, can become a method of service learning. Cho (2007) writes:

> Service learning and arts education contribute to youth and community development in unique ways. Service-learning fosters principles, moral values, and individual standards by providing opportunities for students to make community contributions...Service learning and the arts share an approach to education that promotes authentic, active, community-connected learning and share core values (p.1).

These values, according to Cho (2007), may include student learning that is engaging for the student both socially and personally, that requires "in-depth investigation, critical thinking, and problem solving," and that provides "opportunities to address and reflect on authentic problems" (p.1). As a potential

benefit to incorporating social action via service learning projects is the development of ethics and empathy. Pink (2005) explains:

> Empathy is the ability to imagine yourself in someone else's position and to intuit what that person is feeling. It is the ability to stand in others' shoes, to see with their eyes, and to feel with their hearts...but empathy isn't sympathy – that is, feeling bad for someone else. It is feeling with someone else, sensing what it would be like to be that person (p. 159).

Taylor studies the effects of service learning on students and communities and argues, as quoted in Garber (2005), "that the goals of service learning are to inspire long-term commitment, a sense of caring, a sense of hope, and a belief that through involvement we can make a difference" (p. 9). It is the nature of teaching to be dedicated to the ideas and ways of "making a difference;" however, each educator determines his/her own ways. Manifold (2007) writes:

> Part of the responsibility of the art teacher is to teach the accepted customs, mores, and values of the larger society within which the disciplines of art are couched. Among the behaviors to be taught are tolerance, sharing, polite speech, cleanliness, punctuality, responsibility, organization, diligence, kindness, honesty, fairness, cooperation, and development of good work habits. These are the hidden curriculum of art education (p. 1).

These disciplines can be seen as way for working together to support changes in art education, including, perhaps, the incorporation of art for social awareness

and action, as all three means support similar ends: the concept of educating the whole student and taking into account his/her relationship with the world through art by simultaneously criticizing, re-evaluating, and creating anew these connections for the betterment and equality of all. A strong debate over such relationships (students and society, schools and society) exists, which is presented next.

The Great Debate: Re-examining the Place of Social Issues, Action, and Awareness in Art Education

In existing curriculum for high school courses, it is an issue of contention whether or not to integrate social issues and concepts of ethics, citizenship, democracy, or servitude. Additionally, making connections between the study of social issues and the study of art can be a challenge at times.

Studio Art versus Social Action

In visual art, many conventional and existing curricular materials emphasize design, studio techniques, craftsmanship, art history and criticism. While these components are extremely important to the development of art knowledge, skills, and understanding, others suggest the need for something more in terms of cultural and social connections between the art made and studied with the life of the student artist and society at large. Garber (2005) states that "critical inquiry is related to Freire's (1970/1993) notion of praxis, meaning that students learn to reflect and act on the world to transform it" (p. 8).

Furthermore, Knight (2005) proposes:

> Though it may be comfortable for art educators to design lessons or create curricula that shun controversial topics and the challenging discussions they incite, evasion, nevertheless, forgoes truthfulness and authenticity in tackling issues of our past and present societies. The issues (I.e. race, power, privilege, hegemony) that art educators tend to steer clear of, due to the belief that they spark contention, are the very ones we cannot afford to neglect (p. 44).

Some believe that cultivating students' social awareness and citizenry are important components to developing holistic approaches in art education; others feel strongly that such concepts do not belong in or complement standard visual arts curriculum. Proponents of art education with an emphasis on studio art, art history, and art criticism might suggest that social-action based instructional motives can distract from the study and creation of traditional fine art and, rather, may support a school space for art that is "appropriately decorative, about 'safe' subjects, and discussed mostly in terms of the elements of art and principles of design" (Desai and Chalmers, 2007, p. 7). From a contrasting viewpoint, Freire (1998) differentiates between learning that is stagnant, predictable, impersonal and unrelated to the life of the student or his/her community with learning that is engaged, relevant, and beneficial to the learner, socially reflective, and socially conscious.

Chalmers (2002) describes themes that can be considered part of what he calls a "transcultural, hybridized experience" in his push for the study of art that can create change. From his view, educators must embrace and understand notions of pluralism; he defines a relative checklist for a new kind of art class:

Studio projects will encourage students to tell their own important stories. Technical skills and accomplishments will be admired and appreciated in objects from a variety of historical and transitory cultures. Students are asked to find similarities in "function" and to compare and contrast cross- and trans-cultural examples of art where the makers are, or have become, and where they themselves become ascribers of meaning, ascribers of status, catalysts of social change, enhancers and decorators, interpreters, magicians, mythmakers, propagandists, recorders of history, sociotherapists, storytellers, and teachers. (p. 297).

It is within this type of learning environment that art for social action and awareness might best fit, for Chalmers offers a holistic, engaging, open-minded, and layered view of what art can offer to students and what students and teachers can offer the study, creation, and evaluation of art.

Freire's Vision: Teachers as Cultural Workers

In addition to the exploration of curricular content and the relevance of social action in art, it can be valuable to understand and examine the role(s) art teachers play or are expected to play as classroom teachers, particularly at the high school level. As described in the Introduction, this thesis is influenced by the

work of Paolo Freire (1998) and his notions of teachers as "cultural workers" who teach and push their students to think, see, and do more as active, engaged, aware participants in society, in their local community, and in their own education. Quoting Giroux, Garber (2005) suggests, "Teachers need to engage as critical citizens working for a democratically just society…and see themselves as agents of change" (p. 6). Furthermore, she writes of "the importance of teachers seeing themselves as intellectuals – that is, as professionals able to conceptualize, design, and implement ideas and experiences in educating students – rather than as technicians implementing prepackaged content and instructional procedures, is crucial" (p. 7-8). She continues with "teachers' empowerment as leaders capable of contributing to social change and social justice both inside and outside of schools provides a basis for the belief in the possibility of social justice" (p. 7-8).

Within Freire's type of learning environment, teachers are involved in the process of consciousness-raising by designing and implementing critical teaching units. Similarly, students, too, may become citizens aware and knowledgeable of local and global issues affecting society and come to perceive the sociocultural relevance and implications of their learning, behaviors, and interaction with the world. Since schools are most students' primary sources of learning and engagement (both academically and socially), they become, then, not only the traditional academic platform for teaching math, science, and literature, but also a necessary forum and unique opportunity for teaching principles of

multiculturalism, ethics, diversity, peace, citizenship, democracy, and social justice. Art for social action is calling for a new era of "art teachers as cultural workers" whose pedagogies and classroom practices involve and incorporate such principles as part of their existing curriculum.

A Changing Art Education

In their article "Notes for a Dialogue on Art Education in Critical Times." Desai and Chalmers (2007) write about an art education that is shifting, or may be in need of a change, describing a confliction over the inclusion of social issues and politics in art classrooms. In a reflection on the inclusion of social justice art education, Desai and Chalmers state two views that inform their interpretations: 1) Although, art education has certainly changed from the 19th century, formalist notions of art that still emphasize conformity and obedience largely govern the kinds of art projects assigned in school today; and 2) Art is a contested terrain that offers different ways of considering, imagining, and representing our lived situation (p. 7). From a 2006 NAEA Higher Education list serve debate over this issue of inclusion, Desai and Chalmers extracted several contrasting comments from art educators. Three excerpts demonstrate a great divide of opinions on this issue:

- Teachers advocating politics agendas in the classroom are an assault on our professional responsibility to teach art. (Richard Ciganko, posted 9/27/06)

- The violence, dishonestly, immorality, irresponsibility, etc. that plagues our society comes from our society itself…Why not make school a haven where these sorts of things don't invade their day? (Kathy Bell, posted 09/28/06)

- (O)ur 'professional responsibility to teach art' clearly includes creating visually literate students. And this inexorably includes exploring the complex interconnections between images and ideology, representation and bias, art(ists) and society. (David Darts, posted 9/28/06)

- (T)he extent to which a teacher of art functions as if walking on eggshells, fearing virtually any engagement with social/political issues, that teacher is, at the very least, lacking the professional autonomy and/or courage that the job requires." (Charles Wieder, posted 10/09/06)

By discussing the relationship between "art education in schools and society at large," the authors propose a necessary space for social justice art education as a means for digesting, de-fragmenting, and understanding life in these "critical times" (Desai and Chalmers, 2007, p. 6).

In 2001, art educator Wanda Knight taught a seminar entitled "Using Contemporary Art to Challenge Cultural Values, Beliefs, and Assumptions," whose goal was to "empower teachers to critically scrutinize their opinions in order to clarify the social information they are conveying overtly or covertly to their students" and "to incite art educators…to challenge the values that underlie their curricular design, materials, and activities" (Knight, 2006, p. 41). She

suggests, "Creating and maintaining classrooms that affirm diversity requires an awareness of our worldview" which "consists of our values, beliefs, and assumptions, or the way in which we perceive 'the Other'" (2006, p. 40). In support of cultivating a grander, more critical and reflective "worldview" for both students and teachers, Darts (2004) adds:

> Teachers who are committed to examining social justice issues and fostering democratic principles through their teaching are obliged to consider how their pedagogical practices attend to the complex connections between culture and politics, and ought to evaluate how effectively their course prepare their students to engage as thoughtful and informed citizens within the contemporary cultural sphere (p. 314).

It is in the context of a changing art education and ever-evolving global society that will inform further changes in schools and communities. How visual art can potentially be used as a vehicle or tool for such change is something that remains in question.

Literature Review Conclusions

Multiple conversations currently ensue over the somewhat controversial subject of incorporating social action, awareness, and issues in art education today. Should art students be encouraged and taught only to articulate proper technique and craftsmanship through studio art studies? Or, should they be encouraged to engage in dialogue about social issues and their social world via art? Can students, in fact, be taught both? If so, how can this integration of

content be done effectively and objectively in high school visual arts content area courses? Finally, what materials are useful and necessary to make this goal of integration between social action and studio art possible? These questions exist for those interested in furthering research, understanding, and possibilities for social action in art. In order to gain a real-world view of those possibilities, a graduate research study was conducted and is described next.

Methodology

The specific research agenda, methodology, and design components are examined in this chapter, including a theoretical framework, research questions and objectives, recognized limitations, and study design and participants.

Description of the Study

This study involves and draws upon academic literature, qualitative survey data, and personal interpretations in order to understand the differences in theory and practice regarding art for social action and awareness, exploring both the benefits and burdens of *including* versus *excluding* social issues as course content, both in general and art education alike. By administering an anonymous survey to various members of the art and education communities, this study aims to determine the views of others and compare this to the existing literature. A goal of this research is to build a bridge of understanding that links and informs conceptual ideas with practical working methods and vice versa so that teachers, academic researchers, schools, communities, students, artists, and the public sector alike can find common ground for seeing whether and where social action and awareness in art might have a place in art education and schools today.

Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by a combination of two theoretical frameworks: social constructivist and participatory/advocacy (Creswell, 2003). The work is mainly social constructivist because the researcher aims to determine what others think about social action in art by examining their responses to a survey instrument intended to facilitate this information. The work is partially

participatory/advocacy in that a goal of the research is to advocate for the creation of curriculum and activities relevant to Art for Social Action and Awareness in the hopes of developing a substantial and prioritized academic space for these topics in art education.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research is to determine the feasibility of incorporating social action and awareness in high school visual arts content area courses by assessing the views of art teachers and other professionals.

Research Questions

Four research questions are posed for this study in efforts to define the nature of the research and steer it in the researcher's chosen direction of inquiry. These questions include:

1. Do art teachers (and others in related fields) support the incorporation of social action and awareness in high school visual art content area courses?

2. According to art teachers (and others in related fields), what are the potential benefits and problems of Incorporating social action and awareness in art education?

3. What various roles are visual art teachers expected to play beyond classroom instructors, if any?

4. Do or should educators have an ethical and/or moral responsibility to uphold when teaching?

These questions act as guiding structures for inquiry throughout this paper and are discussed in the final chapter.

Limitations of the Study

The determined limitations for this study include:

- Limited participant sampling: The study includes a sampling of participants (many but not all from Arizona), which can be seen as a geographic limitation. Thus, this study represents only one group's opinions and sweeping generalizations cannot be made.

- Survey cost and distribution: The total cost to print, mail, and collect the survey was high in relation to a graduate student budget; total costs were over $300. Distribution and collection of this survey was a time-consuming undertaking as well. Due to such costs as well as time constraints involved in the distribution and collection, the final number of returned surveys meets the established research goals and does represent a relatively broad sampling of participants.

- Survey versus direct observation: The nature of an anonymous survey as an investigative method is different than other research methods, such as face-to-face interviews or direct observation, as Art for Social Action and Awareness as a practical instructional model was not tested or directly observed in a real classroom setting.

Design Considerations

The research design for the study involves a qualitative method of inquiry in the form of an anonymous survey in an attempt to reveal both individual and collective viewpoints from participants. This method includes the collection, interpretation, and numerical analysis of the survey data. The following sections detail specific components that make up the study, including its participants, survey design, data distribution and collection methods, and overall methodology.

Selection of Study Participants

The sample of participants for this study consisted of 154 art educators and other professionals from various educational and art settings, including: both practicing and former fine arts teachers in grades P/K-12 (and some teachers from other disciplines, such as science, math, etc.), college/university-level faculty (including studio art, art education and other professors/assistant professors), artists, art museum staff, college/university students, as well as a small sample of participants in related disciplines and job fields (including justice studies, law, sociology, humanities, political science, government, administration, and cultural and peace studies). Strong emphasis was placed by the researcher on including high school visual art content area teachers in this study because a main research goal was to determine the place of social action and awareness in secondary art education. Directed paper mailings and emails were sent to most high schools the Phoenix metropolitan area and its surrounding school districts,

including: Phoenix, Tempe, Scottsdale, Chandler, Gilbert, Dysart, Deer Valley, Mesa, Fountain Hills, Paradise Valley, Higley, and Peoria. In total, approximately 400 people were contacted via mail and email for participation in this research study.

Description of Study Participants

Participants' Occupations

The survey asked participants to describe their current occupation, number of years of teaching experience (if they teach), and to describe the populations in which they work with and in. Table 3.1 describes the survey participants' range of occupations.

Table 3.1

Survey Participants' Occupations

Occupation	Response Percent (Count/160)
Certified art teacher P/K-8	30.0% (48)
Certified art teacher 9-12	52.5% (84)
Non-certified art teacher	8.8% (14)
Pursuing teacher certification	5.0% (8)
Nationally Board certified teacher	1.3% (2)
International Baccalaureate art teacher	1.9% (3)
Professional/practicing artist	35.6% (57)
College/University student	26.9% (43)
College/University faculty	20.6% (33)
Art museum educator	2.5% (4)
Former teacher	10.6% (17)
Other*	(54)

The "Other" category included 54 additional responses, some of which include and are transcribed directly as submitted from the surveys: Arts Administrator or Director; grade 9-12 teacher of other disciplines (Career and Technical Education, Performing Arts, Business/Marketing, Theatre, Special Education, and more), office worker, art education researcher, history museum educator; BFA and MFA candidates, and the Department of Education.)

Participants' Teaching Experience

Out of 154 total responses, twelve were excluded from the data in order to determine the mean, median, and mode regarding participant teaching experience (in years); therefore 142 responses of 154 were calculated. Only participants who indicated having teaching experience of half a year or more were included and participants with no teaching experience nor those who did not fully or legibly answer the question were excluded from the results presented in Table 3.2. Twenty-six participants skipped this question.

Table 3.2

Survey Participants' Teaching Experience

Values	Years
Mean (Average Number)	12.75
Median (Middle Number)	10
Mode (Most Reoccurring Number)	3 and 10 (both appear 11 times each)
Maximum (Highest Number)	42
Minimum (Lowest Number)	0.5

Participants' Occupational Settings and Populations

Table 3.3 describes the survey participants' occupations. Twelve participants skipped this question. Since this survey question prompts participants to mark all that apply, some answers likely represent multiple responses from a single participant (for example: a public high school teacher

would mark two boxes, one for public school and one for working with children grades 9-12).

Table 3.3

Survey Participants' Occupational Settings and Populations

Occupation or Setting	Response Percent (Count/165)
Public school	67.9% (112)
Private school	6.7 (11)
Charter school	2.4 (4)
School with religious affiliation	3.0 (5)
College/University	29.7 (49)
Art museum	4.2 (7)
Art gallery	5.5 (9)
Art studio	20.0 (33)
Working with children grades P/K-8	19.4 (32)
Working with children grades 9-12	43.6 (72)
Working with college/university students	23.6 (39)
Working with adults	18.8 (31)
Working with the public	15.8 (26)
Other*	(19)

The "Other" category includes nineteen additional responses, some of which include and are transcribed directly as submitted from the surveys: the Department of Education, Higher Education planning in developing countries, graphic design studio, homeless shelter, and a historic preservation center. Some of the populations that participants recorded working with include: K-12 administrators, art educators, artists, and at-risk youth. With regards to participant demographics, it is important to state that the survey did not ask them to provide their geographic location nor whether they taught in a rural, suburban, or urban setting. This information might have provided more insight into the contexts that inform participants' responses and could be investigated further in another study.

Participant Privacy and Anonymity

In terms of participant privacy, their personal information was not requested or needed for this research, as the survey was intended to represent a broad sampling only, releasing participants from the burden of leaving contact or personal information. Other than original handwriting and return addresses posted on some returned paper surveys, no other information or identifiers are linked to the participants; therefore, participants are at no risk of liability or damage by choosing to participate. As stated in the survey's cover letter to participants (Appendix B): 1) Their participation in this study was voluntary; 2) If they chose not to participate or to withdraw their comments from the study at any time, there is no penalty; 3) Their survey responses were kept confidential, and

each returned survey was assigned an identification number for data collection purposes; and 4) The results may be used in educational publications and/or presentations, including this Masters level thesis. Finally, the Arizona State University Research and Compliance Office approved and granted exempt status for this research study in October of 2007(Appendix A).

Designing the Survey

The process of creating and editing questions for the survey was intensive, involving several months and countless revisions, as the type, structure, and wording of each question would determine and affect the type and structure of participants' responses. It was decided by the researcher that, to reach the largest number of potential survey participants in the most efficient manner, an online survey would also be designed and distributed by the researcher in addition to the paper survey (Appendix C).

To create the online version of the survey, the internet-based, commercial company Survey Monkey was used and paid for by the researcher. Self-described as "an online survey tool that enables people of all experience levels to create their own surveys quickly and easily" (Survey Monkey, n.d.), this software allows the researcher to import survey questions (identical to the ones in the paper survey) in a customizable template-based format. Furthermore, the benefit of using this software is that it allowed me to efficiently create, manage, distribute, collect, analyze, and compare my surveys electronically.

Generally, the devised qualitative research instrument posed questions to participants about their occupation, topics of study (for teachers) and asked about their views about incorporating social action, awareness, and issues into their teaching or occupational settings as well as general and art education. The final part of the survey asked participants to share known references and resources on the subject of social action. All of the eleven questions were structured in efforts of gaining summative, generalized data as well as individual, subjective, experience-based data. Both types of questions and their data: 1) Aimed to gain greater understanding of teaching practices in the realm of art for social action and awareness, including challenges, curricula, and resources; 2) Revealed reoccurring trends and themes among participant answers; and 3) Provided plentiful information for further analysis and study.

Survey Distribution and Collection

In total, the researcher distributed 400 surveys to various potential participants over a period of four months from December of 2007 to March of 2008. Table 3.4 illustrates a breakdown of all surveys distributed and collected.

Table 3.4

Survey Distribution and Collection

Type of Survey	Response Percent and Count
Online surveys distributed via email	250
Online surveys completed	124
Paper surveys distributed via US mail	150
Paper surveys completed	30
Total # surveys distributed	400
Total # surveys collected	154
Percentage of return (all surveys)	38.5% (154/400)
Percentage of returned online surveys	49.6% (124/250)
Percentage of returned paper surveys	20% (30/150)

The researcher contacted all participants via mail or email, depending on the availability of their contact information in the community or the internet. Each participant chosen to receive a paper copy of the survey was mailed an envelope to either his or her work or home address. The mailing contained: one cover letter, one double-sided survey, and one, pre-addressed, stamped envelope. Envelopes were addressed to Dr. Bernard Young (C/O Blake Smith) at the School of Art at Arizona State University; thus, all paper data was collected at this address. Each participant chosen to receive an online version of the survey was contacted via his or her work or personal email account. The initial email contained: an introductory statement explaining why he or she was selected to

participate, one PDF of the cover letter, and a link to the online survey, powered by Survey Monkey. Once participants clicked the link to the survey, they were taken directly to the survey where they could complete and submit it directly, anonymously, and immediately online. In addition, those people who received the online survey via email invitation were asked to consider forwarding the survey to anyone they thought might be interested in participating in the study; thus, the researcher does not know exactly how far reaching the survey went, since it was anonymous and submitted electronically online.

To merge the data from returned paper surveys and submitted online surveys, participants' online survey responses were automatically entered into a collection database and averaged together; whereas, paper surveys were manually entered by hand, one at a time, into the same database whose responses are then averaged together with the existing online survey responses to generate a cohesive data set. The researcher paid a monthly fee of twenty dollars for the online company to assist in the collection and numerical analysis of the survey responses.

Data Analysis: A Plan for Understanding

After collecting all 154 surveys, the data is reported by the researcher both quantitatively (in terms of percentages of participant answers) as well as qualitatively (in terms of descriptive language regarding participant answers). The methods for analyzing the survey data include: identifying, categorizing, coding, and interpreting the emerging themes, particularly from participant responses to

the short answer, open-ended questions #9-11. The researcher included a

variety of direct quotes from participant answers to survey questions #9-11 to

provide personal, narrative, and experience-based evidence. The following

chapter details the results of the survey conducted for this thesis research study.

Results

The data received from the survey appears in several formats. Participant answers collected for each survey question are presented in a one by one, question and answer pairing. Overall findings appear in numerical tables. From this data, the researcher presents significant themes and categories that emerged from participant responses to each question. Several selected direct quotes from participants are included as well. A full sample of the collected survey data is available upon request.

Key

Participant responses, including the individual survey response numbers, are represented throughout the paper as (R) as well as the corresponding survey question number, represented throughout the paper as (Q). For example, if survey participant 10 was the 10th individual survey response to survey question 8, the key would read: (R10, Q8) following the quote or response. Additionally, the researcher entered 24 paper surveys into the database and assigned a new survey participant number to the collection of online response data. The total survey participant count is 154, numbered 1-154, with paper surveys assigned an additional number from 1-24. All individual survey participant numbers are available upon request.

Survey Results

Responses to Questions 1-3

Results to questions 1-3 appear in Chapter 3, Methodology, under *Selection and Description of Participants*. These three questions asked about the

participants' work experience, occupation, and the population with which they work with and in.

Responses to Question 4

Survey question 4 asked participants to assess the following statement, from Highly Agree to Highly Disagree:

It is important to teach high school visual art students to be: (1) Aware and knowledgeable of past and present social issues and their effects; (2) Knowledgeable of artist/movements that dealt with social issues; (3) Exposed to international and multicultural perspectives in art; and (4) Participants in art-related service learning.

Table 4:1 illustrates data collected for this question. Twenty-six participants skipped this question.

Table 4:1

Important Characteristics to Teach to High School Visual Art Students

Characteristics	Response Percents and Counts/151				
	Highly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Highly Disagree	No Opinion
Aware and knowledgeable of past and present social issues and their effects	66.0% (99)	30.7% (46)	2.7% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.7% (1)
Knowledgeable of artists/movements that dealt with social issues	60.3% (91)	38.4% (58)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Exposed to international and multicultural perspectives in art	82.0% (123)	17.3% (26)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Participants in art-related service learning	45.3% (68)	44.0% (66)	4.7% (7)	1.3% (2)	4.7% (7)

Responses to Question 5

Survey question 5 asked participants to assess the following statement, from Highly Agree to Highly Disagree:

Educators have an ethical and/or moral responsibility to uphold when teaching.

Table 4:2 illustrates data collected for this question. Twenty-nine participants skipped this question.

Table 4:2

Educators' Ethical and/or Moral Responsibility

Rating	Response Percent and Count/148
Highly Agree	85.8% (127)
Somewhat Agree	13.5% (20)
Somewhat Disagree	0.7% (1)
Highly Disagree	0.0% (0)
No Opinion	0.0% (0)

Responses to Question 6

Survey question 6 asked participants to assess the following statement, from Highly Agree to Highly Disagree:

It is important to incorporate the following values or principles in secondary education: (1) Cultural diversity; (2) Peace studies; (3) Ethical behavior; (4) Human rights education; and (5) Social justice.

Table 4:3 illustrates data collected for this question. Twenty-seven participants skipped this question.

Table 4:3

Values to Incorporate in Secondary Education

Values	Response Percents and Counts/150				
	Highly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Highly Disagree	No Opinion
Cultural diversity	87.3% (131)	12.7% (19)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Peace studies	52.7% (79)	40.7% (61)	3.3% (5)	0.7% (1)	2.7% (4)
Ethical behavior	82.0% (123)	18.0% (27)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Human rights education	69.1% (103)	28.9% (43)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.7% (1)
Social justice	66.7% (100)	30.7% (46)	2.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.7% (1)

Responses to Question 7

Survey question 7 asked participants to assess the following statement, from Highly Agree to Highly Disagree:

Social action, awareness, and issues should be incorporated in today's visual art content area courses.

Table 4:4 illustrates data collected for this question. Twenty-eight participants skipped this question.

Table 4:4

Social Action, Awareness, and Issues in Visual Art Content Area Courses

Rating	Response Percent and Count/149
Highly Agree	51.0% (76)
Somewhat Agree	43.0% (64)
Somewhat Disagree	4.7% (7)
Highly Disagree	0.7% (1)
No Opinion	0.7% (1)

Responses to Question 8

Survey question 8 asked participants:

If you teach, which of the following topics have you incorporated into your teaching in the last three years?   (1) Visual/Material culture; (2) Multiculturalism; (3) Politics; (4) Identity; (5) Race and/or Discrimination; (6) Cultural diversity; (7) Peace studies; (8) Ethical behavior; (9) Human

rights education; (10) Social action/awareness; (11) Social justice; (12)

None of the above; and (13) Other.

Table 4:5 illustrates data collected for this question. Forty-seven participants

skipped this question.

Table 4:5

Topics Incorporated into Teachings in Last Three Years

Topics	Response Percent and Count/130
Visual/Material Culture	76.2% (99)
Multiculturalism	77.7% (101)
Politics	50.8% (66)
Identity	80.0% (104)
Race and/or Discrimination	48.5% (63)
Cultural diversity	80.8% (105)
Peace studies	27.7% (36)
Ethical behavior	56.9% (74)
Human rights education	31.5% (41)
Social justice	42.3% (55)
Social action/awareness	57.7% (75)
None of the above	3.1% (4)
Other*	(22)

The "Other" category includes twenty-two additional responses, some of which include and are transcribed directly as submitted from the surveys: Stereotypes; Slavery; Poverty; Animal rights; Environmentalism; Feminism; Character traits (responsibility, dependability, compassion); Queer studies; Conservation of natural resources; Social commentary; Meaning in art; and Service.

Responses to Question 9

For responses to survey questions 9-11, direct quotes, excerpts, and examples were selected from numerous individual surveys by the researcher are transcribed directly as submitted from the surveys, including errors. These selected responses illustrate the variety of viewpoints, including both pros and cons on various subjects, as well as personal and professional opinions of participants that provide insight and narrative data regarding each survey question's topic(s). A full data set is available upon request.

Survey question 9 asked participants:

If you marked any of the topics in the previous question, please describe briefly how you incorporated them, in terms of specific themes, artists, projects, etc.

Of the 115 responses to this question, several are highlighted below. In addition, 62 participants skipped this question. The following projects and topics of study emerged as the six most recurrent categories, and several participant

responses for each category are provided. Participant numbers associated with the sampling of responses below are not included but are available upon request.

- Studio Art Project or Community Service Art Activity: Pinwheels for Peace; Anime; Mandalas; Pass It On; Empty Bowls; Anti-Violence Mural Program; Public Service Announcements (videos); peace crane origami; letters to Iraq troops; photojournalism; Martin Luther King Day local poster contest

- Study of Artists or Artworks: Jacob Lawrence (Builders series); Christian Holstad (Eraserhead work); Keith Haring; graffiti artists; Gordon Parks; Barbara Kruger; Mexican muralists; Romare Bearden

- Study of Art/World History or Movements: Documentary photographers from Great Depression era (Lewis Hine, Dorothea Lange) Pop Art (Warhol); Day of the Dead (ofrendas); Dadaism and Surrealism

- Study of World Cultures or Regions: Examine how art reflects values of a culture, e.g. Oaxacan ceramics; African tribal art; Non-western units incorporated into AP Art History (Africa, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islands, etc.)

- Study of Contemporary Objects/Visual Culture Study: Fashion and product photography to study media influence on self-image

- Other Non-Art Activity or Discussion: Online discussion board; guest speakers; reading articles published in art education literature and New York Times; teach about advocating for arts education; incorporated

specific themes and topics as period pieces, stressing their cultural and

social impact and/or response to current/historical issue

Sample of direct quotes. For survey question 9, several direct quotes

illustrate specific views from participants. These are some of the selected quotes,

divided by category.

Studio Art Project or Community Service Art Activity:

- When teaching any classes (Art Education) I make sure that students are

  acquainted with differing voices (artists of different cultures, authors, etc.).

  I also make sure that social issues relate to education as well as the lives

  of their future students. I teach idea-based instructional units that center

  on issues related to works of art = lives of students. I choose artists + art

  that deals with important social issue –ie: Adrian Piper, Sandy Skoglund,

  Joe Norman (R24, Q9).

- I always encourage my students to examine social issues through art. I

  have led an anti-violence mural program, a feminist media literacy and art

  club about healthy relationships, and I have worked with schools on

  smaller projects about identity, peace, and other issues (R5, Q9).

  Study of Artists or Artworks:

- I do my best to show only contemporary artists who hold social positions

  that are not from the hetero-white-male perspective. Using Elizabeth

  Catlett's work (I am the Negro Woman), I had students create their own, "I

  am the…" statements to assert their own personal identities. Using

Christian Holstad eraserhead work, I work with students in appropriating, deconstructing, and transforming the images found in newspapers to create their own transformed newspaper eraserhead drawings (R4, Q9).

- The topics mentioned above are incorporated in a broad way-not necessarily as individual topics, but as valid approaches that one can take when making art. In my class (2D Design, ART 112), socially-motivated art is taught as one mode of working, along with two other modes-formal and expressive. None of the three are given more precedence. Every student steps through all three in order to be introduced to what it means to make that kind of work (R110, Q9).

Study of Art/World History or Movements:

- I teach a lot of history (art) what was going on, why art was done. A lot of great art comes from ugly events. I want my students to know what inspired artists we learn about (R17, Q9).

- I taught globalization through contemporary Chinese art. I taught about Civil Rights struggles (including Women's, Blacks, Jewish, & disability history). I also used a lesson on Man Ray & photo to talk about gay rights (R6, Q9).

Study of World Cultures or Regions:

- We look to art of different cultures to get a different perspective on the use of the topic at hand.... a lesson on Masks for example. We look to African

Tribal Art to see how the masks were made, used and what affect socially do they take part in (R14, Q9).

- I teach multicultural lessons including those that celebrate important holiday of various cultures such as Black History month and contemporary and other artists, Cesar Chavez, Cinco de Mayo, Day of the Dead with an ofrenda for the school, ImaginAsia festival celebrating Japanese culture, Chinese New Year, Environmental themes, themes of identity in many projects, and peace project public art projects (R54, Q9).

Study of Contemporary Objects/Visual Culture Study:

- Consider the social aspects of graffiti, both how the art is viewed (as either vandalism or mural art) and how this can be both a valuable escape and form of expression for inner city youth, and is often considered deviant (R68, Q11).

- Students analyze objects/images from American culture to determine their influence on culture's ideas on class, race, gender, GLBT. Also discuss bullying, respect for sts (sic). MA projects deal with curriculum on social action, peace ed (sic), identity (R16, Q9).

Other Non-Art Activity or Discussion:

- Social justice is an essential part of my teaching and through discussion and art making we (students and faculty) discuss and make work related to issues of multiculturalism, identity, politics, discrimination, diversity, human rights, and social awareness. I use numerous activities that I

create to generate discussion ranging from looking at contemporary and historical works of art and the meanings found in those works, to visiting contemporary art galleries and talking about the works meanings and contexts... (R32, Q9).

- All are central to my pedagogy. I teach undergraduate level students. They are just now opening up to global/social justice awareness. I use a lot of visuals - music, videos, and poetry as a mechanism to teach social justice and human rights. (R1, Q9)

- As someone responsible for preparing our future art teachers, these topics are critical to the courses I teach. All my students engaged in service learning projects, we look at these issues in terms of theory and practice in art education, and they are responsible for bringing their knowledge and understanding of such concerns to their involvement in an afternoon lab school (R40, Q9).

Reponses to Survey Question 10

Survey question 10 asked participants:

If you do not teach social action, awareness, and issues, please discuss why not.

Of the 42 responses to this question, several are highlighted below. In addition, 135 participants skipped this question. Participant responses to question 10 are divided into three main emerging categories, illustrated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Reasons for Not Teaching Social Action

Context

School/Community Context

      Discouraging school policy

      Social/political/religious community climate

      Time/schedule constraints

      Prescribed/chosen course content

Student Context

      Difficulty and appropriateness of material

      Student age/maturity level

      Student interest in subject

Personal Context

      Teacher's own ethical/political/personal beliefs

      Fear of addressing touchy subjects and potential negative responses

      Teacher's lack of knowledge on subject

      Access to relevant teaching materials on subject

Sample of direct quotes. For survey question 10, several direct quotes illustrate specific views from participants. These are some of the selected quotes, divided by category.

School/Community Context:

- The primary emphasis of the classes I teach is the subject matter (i.e. media, ceramics, stained glass, jewelry). Given the time constraints of a high school schedule, 45-50 minutes per day, the interest of the student (or lack thereof), demographics, interruptions outside the subject (AIMS, prep), I don't believe that I am able to even do the subject matter justice. I believe the issues in this survey are important and have a place in an art curriculum. I just do not have time or space (R5, Q10).

- School policy discourages slanted political issues (R13, Q10).

- I'd like to teach a more radical curriculum, but find myself limited by the conservative nature of the school/district/population that I work within. It is very highly religious (Mormon) (R32, Q10).

Student Context:

- Most of the time students do not want to think; it is sometimes better to explain the concept and work on awareness (R20, Q10).

- We have a specific and full curriculum. We also have a minimum of 30 students in two different preps all day. All of your ideal topics are necessary but there is no time. We also have the rebellious and

sometimes hopeless youth of 2008. There are lots of other issues before they know who Edward Munich is (R15, Q9).

- I know I have talked about these issues, especially in historical context. Actually creating a lesson specifically with these themes, no. I try to find a seamless blend of these ideas in art works, often giving students choices. You have to be prepared for the 'negative' responses to these issues that many be inappropriate to discuss in a classroom. If they are present themselves, and not necessarily directly from the teacher, I think these issues are more thought provoking (R25, Q10).

Personal Context:

- I believe it is unethical to propound personal political and social beliefs to a captive audience the same as it is unethical to try to instill one's personal religious beliefs in students. I think it is ethical to discuss human values and how to apply them but forcing or using one's position as an educator to prevail upon those we have a fiduciary responsibility to is not ethical... (R18, Q10).

- I believe that a teacher should at all times aspire to live by the ethical standards s/he sets – rather than giving some long and bolsterous (sic) rantings about 'the state of the world.' It could easily mutate into hypocracy (sic) and phoniness. My own experience as a student was that the loudest advocates for justice turned out to be some of the most injust people on the planet (R35, Q10).

- Because I incorporate social issues into my own work, I have to try not to bias students too much in favor of my onw (sic) views. Rather I TRY to make them challenge ideas critically. I teach them specifically about the difficulty in treading the fine line between art and propaganda in political and socially concerned art (R37, Q10).

- While I teach about the power artists have to craft social messages, I do not feel it is ethical to explicitly teach my social or political convictions to students. I feel it is more appropriate to teach those values by example. When I prioritize what should be taught according to the AZ Visual Arts Standards, I see many more PO's that should come first. Teaching social action should not represent the focus for an art program (R2, Q10).

Responses to Question 11

Survey question 11 asked participants:

For the benefit of this study, do you have any specific recommendation or references of specific artists, curricular materials, websites, books, or social action lessons/projects to share? I am seeking information on social action instructional models and invite your suggestions.

Of the 83 responses to this question, several are highlighted below. In addition, 94 participants skipped this question. The following projects and topics of study emerged in the five categories listed in survey question 11, and some participant responses for each category appear. Participant numbers associated with the sampling of responses below are not included but are available upon request.

- Artists/Artworks: Yinka Shinobare; Edgar Arcineaux; Adrian Piper; Robert Smithson; Keith Haring; Xiao Ping and Junia Shou (local artists from china); Maus and Maus II by Art Spiegelman; Barbara Kruger; Yoshitomo Nara; Mexican muralist artists; photographer Gerda Taro; Lorna Simpson, Stephen Marc, Faith Ringgold

- Curricular Materials/Books: The Object of Labor, Art Cloth, and Cultural Production by Livingstone and Ploof, Eds.; Journal of Social Theory in Art Education; Rethinking Schools (author not provided); PBS Art21 series; Social Justice: A Sourcebook Teaching Aid (author not provided) ; Keith Haring: Drawing the Line (video); Multicultural Artworlds by Erickson and Young; several writers including: Jonathan Kozol, Paolo Freire, David Trend, Wendell Berry, Gandhi, Bell Hooks; curricular materials by Marilyn Stewart and Eldon Katter; Art on the Edge and Over by McEvilley

- Websites: booklyn.org; ArtistTeacher.org (website in progress); Spiral Art Ed website; teachingtolerance.org; forbetterlife.org; centerforsocialmedia.org; communityarts.net; pbs.org; artforachange; artlex.com

- Social Action Lessons/Projects: Environmental sculpture project on campus; the Memory Project (thememoryproject.org); Books of Hope (booksofhope.org); Pinwheels for Peace project; selected PBS Arts21 projects, lessons, and artists

- Other Recommendations: Southern Poverty Law Center; Oakland Men's Project anti-violence curriculum; work of Olivia Gude; New York Times lesson plan archive online; selected Crizmac multicultural art materials; Chicago Public Schools Service Learning division; Arizona Art Education Association workshops and conferences; read International Baccalaureate curriculum for visual arts; videos by Sharon Mitchell and Dave Snyder from UIC Center for Disability Studies

Sample of direct quotes. For survey question 11, several direct quotes illustrate specific views from participants. These are some of the selected quotes. On the paper version of the survey, this final question is not numbered "11" but rather is listed on the last page unnumbered and was an unintended mistake. On the online version of the survey, it is listed as "11."

- I definitely agree that artwork should be studied in the context of its time and place. I also believe that in a perfect work of art content and form and inseparable. The works I have used that express the things you have talked about are probably fairly standard: Goya "Third of May," Annie Leibovitz photo of massacre of Tutsi school-children "Horrors of War;" Jacob Lawrence (lots); Elizabeth Catlett (several); Picasso "Guernica" (R11, Q11).

- Peace as a theme for campus art projects was a subject I brainstormed and suggested for an integrated art grant porject (sic) on my campus...I brought in a Tibetan Rinpoche and 2 other monks for a week at my high

school to teach about Tibet, and the Buddhist way of life. I framed it as the
Mandala project because I knew that was a connection to art and to the
lives of kids – if they created personal mandalas. A literature and social
studies teachers collaborated and 520 students were taught for a
week...Grant funds were needed to pay for the services of the monks –
and it was the experience of a lifetime for most students (R41, Q11).

- It is important to point out that all the great artists we regard as profound
  were considered radical in their times (R51, Q11).

- I frequently use a digital projector to project the website ArtLex Dictionary
  and show students articles about the words: issues, xenophobia,
  propaganda, feminist art, gender, vandalism, fascist aesthetic, First
  Amendment rights, censorship, ethnocentrism, lookism, iconophobia,
  stereotype, visual culture, multiculturalism...articles about individual
  nationalities and ethnic groups, anda number of other key terms that relate
  to social issues. ArtLex defines these terms as they concern visual art,
  and provides images that are helpful to art learning (R72, Q11).

- I wouldn't say I teach these things explicitly as stated above they are a
  part of who I am. I think art and politics have a strange relationship and
  unless things are taught wholistically (sic) they will be problematic (R78,
  Q11).

In conclusion, the survey results are mixed yet present an array of professional
and personal views from active members of the art education community and

from other professional in related fields. Each view represents a unique opinion by a single individual; however these responses and opinions can be compared and contrasted in order to provide contextual analysis of the chosen research topic of social action in art. A further analysis and discussion of these results is offered in Chapter 5, Conclusions and Discussion.

Major Findings

The major findings of this study reveal that there are numerous factors that affect if, when, and how to incorporate social action, awareness, and issues in art. Traditionally, schools are places of new learning, where the challenging of existing structures and ideas are welcome. It is the contexts of these "places of learning" (including the classroom, school, district, student group, culture, time period, etc.) that many of this study's participants cited as main factors in their decisions and capabilities for incorporating social action in art. Findings from this study illustrate an important point: While it may be necessary to exercise caution when expressing personal opinions and bias while discussing social issues in the classroom, it is important to embrace intellectual debate, critical thinking, reflective and socially-constructive actions; these can be done in visual art but there are many variables that must be considered.

Specifically, the following main propositional insights are apparent from the study and represent points for further discussion:

- The majority (51.0%) of participants responded in support of the incorporation of social action, awareness, and issues into visual art content area courses.

- Age and experience (in terms of years teaching or working in a related field) are not seemingly factors of how much or whether one supports social action in art.

- Many participants described social action as closely linked in both concept and content to community service.

- A broad range of interpretations of social issues and social action emerged from the study. Besides the topics listed in the survey, participants included more from slavery to environmentalism as well described a wide variety of approaches taken to teach and incorporate social issues. Some approaches include studying specific artists or movements to doing art-based community service-type projects as well as assigning arts-based projects that involve student-driven selection of social issues. In addition, some seem to focus more on process than product than others.

- In terms of teaching topics incorporated in the last three years by participants, several topics ranked highest and represent significant themes for art education, including: multiculturalism (77.7%), cultural diversity (80.8%), visual/material studies (76.2%), and identity (80%). Other teaching topics ranked higher than 50%, thus deemed majorities,

including: social action/awareness (57.7%), ethical behavior (56.9%), and politics (50.8%). These represent significant curricular content areas within art education that could benefit from greater attention and review, both in theory and practice.

- Several participants described the dilemma that occurs when attempting to fit social action projects into existing visual art content area courses that emphasize studio art. Some participants expressed views regarding the task of determining which projects and content best fit with their existing curricula and how to align (social action) project objectives with studio art project objectives.

- A very strong majority (85.8%) of participants responded in support of educators' ethical and/or moral responsibility being upheld when teaching.

- Many of this study's participants who teach made a distinction between how their role as an educator is seen by others, such as the administration, parents, students, colleagues, versus how they see themselves and view their role in the classroom. Some teachers seem compelled to utilize social issues as a way of meeting their own personal or social responsibilities, while others choose or are expected to follow school policies and respect the values of their local communities.

- Participants identified three main contexts that, at times, affect their decisions and abilities to teach or incorporate social issues: School/Community Context (as in where someone works or teaches),

Student Context (as in who is being taught, who is the audience), and

Personal Context (as in who is teaching or providing information).

- Participants submitted numerous lessons and other resources through this survey and, together, offer a small collection of valuable social action resources worthy of being shared, perhaps in the form of mini-guidebooks on social action for teachers.

These findings represent the big ideas generated by the data collected, illustrating numerous important points for further study.

Conclusions and Discussion

In conclusion of this research study, the guiding research questions are answered and discussed. This study focused on four research questions:

1. Do art teachers (and others in related fields) support the incorporation of social action and awareness in high school visual arts content area courses?

2. According to art teachers (and others in related fields), what are the potential benefits and problems of Incorporating social action and awareness in art education?

3. What various roles are visual art teachers expected to play beyond classroom instructors, if any?

4. Do or should educators have an ethical and/or moral responsibility to uphold when teaching?

Each research question is addressed and interpreted based on emerging themes from the data, as well as concerns and questions for further study regarding the teaching of social action in art.

Addressing the Research Questions: Implications for Practice

Question 1: Do art teachers (and others in related fields) support the incorporation of social action and awareness in high school visual arts content area courses?

It appears there are a variety of opinions from art teachers as well as professionals in other fields regarding reasons for and against the incorporation of social action and awareness in art. The study data reveals that such topics,

according to teachers and others, can successfully be incorporated in visual art in some cases and not as easily in others. Depending on individual teaching, learning, and community contexts one works with and in, the feasibility of incorporating social action may be altered and must be reconsidered. For those who view social action in art as valuable, education is seen as a powerful and unique opportunity to illustrate to students the relationship between life and art, highlighting common themes and inevitable human conditions of culture, identity, diversity, struggle, triumph, and humanity.

From the review of literature, three facets or threads of art education provide avenues for the possible incorporation of social action and awareness into visual art content area courses: multiculturalism, social justice education, and service learning education. These three subjects are each, in their own way, slight non-conformists to conventional art education models that strictly emphasize studio techniques, art history, and art criticism. Presenting alternative ways of experiencing and understanding art, these subjects are different but not separate from previously dominant ideologies rooted mainly in tradition, technique, and monocultural approaches to education. They can each been seen as "the other," often fighting for recognition, relevance, and a respected, permanent place at the art education table. Darts (1994) writes about the process of and emphasis on considering "the everyday experience" of art as both a student and teacher. Multicultural education may support the consideration of the "everyday experience" of one's own culture, of how one encounters (or does not)

other cultures through life and art, and how equality and equity can be either built up or shattered by the process of educating diverse groups of learners. In art education, multicultural and cultural diversity studies lend academic and artistic space for the examination and appreciation of identity, justice, and perhaps social action. Social justice education may support the consideration of the "everyday experience" by examining life from the social perspectives of others, and by studying how social issues and the existence (or nonexistence) of democracy and justice affect society on both an everyday and historical scale. Artists and artworks can be included in the study of such perspectives, as they provide contextual and historical analyses to learn from, including social action. Service learning education may support the consideration of the "everyday experience" of encountering others as part of the collective human experience, and can offer opportunities for helping others. In art education, service learning can become an avenue of artistic expression through arts-based community service and social action projects.

Participants' viewpoints towards this research question varied. One former elementary art educator and practicing artist said:

> I want all my students (i.e. "children") to be aware of issues in the world
> that they don't have access knowing about, or will never experience. I like
> to think that I am arming them with the "tool of knowledge" (i.e. information
> and how they have the ability to use their own brain to figure out what is
> right and wrong and their responsibility as a member of the human

race/planet earth) so they can be a more informed citizen that can

contribute positively to society = social action! (R15, Q11).

A view from another participant offers this statement:

Often art edication (sic) becomes so focused on social action and

awareness in art that the idea of doing art for personal reasons and self

examination is forgotten...Social consciousness has its place and is

valuable in its own way, but for some (myself included) art is a way to

escape from everyday social issues and escape to a place where personal

emotion, expression, and exploration reign king. When Social awareness

is crammed down student's throats K-12 and beyond, I strongly feel that

art classes should be the one haven where the students doesn't have to

worry about anything else but growing into the artist that they are and will

become (R34, Q10).

Essentially, this research suggests that schools, curriculum writers, teachers, and

communities should reflect upon their current philosophies on art, education, and

culture to determine if including social action, awareness, and issues might

compliment or expand existing areas of study and teaching. Contextual conflicts

(such as those expressed by participants) ought to be analyzed, and in some

cases may need to be challenged; in others, such conflicts must be recognized

and respected.

Question 2: According to art teachers (and others in related fields), what are the potential benefits and problems of Incorporating social action and awareness in art education?

The goals and justification of incorporating social action and awareness specifically in art may include these potential problems, as expressed by participants in the research study:

- Various contextual conflicts can and do affect teachers' decisions towards choosing to incorporate social action and awareness (or not), including these three main contexts that emerged from the study: School, Community, and Personal. These conflicts seem to present both a hurdle for teachers to overcome as well as a barrier for instruction, depending on the situation, project, objective, and context.

- Another potential problem that arises is a possible lost connection to art, as in: the study and incorporation of social action (or the study of art) by itself or the study and incorporation of social action in art. Additionally, merging social action with art-making techniques and formalist art teachings can be a challenge. Other content, including art criticism, art history, aesthetics, visual culture, multiculturalism, and social justice represent topics of study art teachers must also consider, and it can become a trying task to cover it all in the class time allotted.

- Participants own beliefs about social issues and moral and ethical responsibility may create conflicts for a cohesive social action in art

curricula: One teacher may subconsciously "push" students one way based on his/her own beliefs and goals for the project, whereas another may do the opposite. Others may be constricted by their school context or, on the contrary, may be encouraged to approach topics he/she is not knowledgeable on or comfortable teaching.

On the contrary, the goals and justification of incorporating social action and awareness specifically in art may include these potential benefits, as expressed by participants in the research study:

- By exposing students to historical, social, cultural, and political problems inherent in society through art, teachers spark intellectual awareness of others and lead to the development of new knowledge. Consistent with the goals of progressive education, instructors and schools can provide tools, information, and academic as well as artistic spaces *open to* and *in support of* students conversing with the world through art.

- These topics of study generate opportunities for critical dialogue and teaching about: reflective critique of social issues, cultural diversity and awareness, social justice, and interdisciplinary cross-curricular subject matter.

- The development of social consciousness, character, empathy, and ethics can be viewed as a beneficial outcome to the study of social issues. In art, social action projects, service learning, and the study of artworks and

artists whose work is of a social and/or historical nature are some ways to achieve such development.

One participant offered this statement about the benefits and problems of teaching art connected to the social world:

I feel that teaching multicultural art themes is very empowering to the minority groups being represented. I have learned that empowerment is an important teaching mechanism. Identity is key in H.S.-students want to share so passionately who they are. Art enables them to positively channel there (sic) deep desire to express themselves. Finally... discussing social issues can be a little delicate, especially...where there tends to be more traditional value systems in place. Race issues and immigration issues are especially delicate where children of white farm owners and there (sic) Hispanic field workers attend the same school...yikes! (R54, Q11).

To many, these described goals and potential benefits represent noteworthy ambitions that should be incorporated in art classrooms today; to others, these goals belong elsewhere, perhaps not in schools at all, replaced instead by the list of potential problems deemed not worth the risk of encountering or tackling. We know that change and the development of critical consciousness can be a personal choice and can be influenced by teachers, events, experiences, opinions, and information coupled with one's individual maturation and judgment. These things can be difficult if not impossible to judge objectively as well as

teach. Sometimes, change is subjective and invisible, an internal metamorphosis that can be gradual or instantaneous, can be individual or societal and not necessarily measurable in terms of meeting a state standard or lesson objective. The degree to which these issues and theories are discussed with students is a question that remains, as well as whether or not this is part of an art teacher's role.

Question 3: What various roles are visual art teachers expected to play beyond classroom instructors, if any?

Based on participant responses, both art and general education teachers seem to recognize the plethora of roles they are expected to play, from mentors to artists to role models to inspirational giants at times. This study reveals that, when working as a public servant teaching or working with young children and teens on a daily basis, teachers and community workers alike deal with the issues, lives, and events that affect young people and that impact all of society. One of the challenges, then, is to blend these roles by acknowledging that teaching involves not only the expectation to cover standard course material, but may also involve a responsibility to include content relevant to social and cultural awareness as well as present opportunities to address, discuss, challenge, and question such material in ways that include and honor all people in a democratic, civilized manner. One participant from the study said:

> I teach these topics as a vehicle for student thought and content in
>
> artwork. I find that when students are informed in a topic in their artwork

and it is meaningful to them and their lives, they can more and more easily

understand difficult artistic processes. I also feel it is my responsibility as a

public school teacher to prepare my students to be more reflective and

reactive citizens, this includes developing their artistic voices (R72, Q9).

Another participant voices this observation:

> Regardless of teacher beliefs in certain issues, we teach in a compulsory
>
> system where students are basically a captive audience by LAW. I could
>
> and have talked about religion and politics with out actually talking about
>
> my beliefs...it is not important. We have to offer and accept opposing
>
> viewpoints. This is the burden of teaching such things (R57, Q11).

Numerous pressures and expectations fall upon the shoulders of teachers; it is

understandable that one's personal expectations may conflict or coincide with the

expectations established by one's employer or local community regarding

"expected roles" and social responsibility. Teachers have daily access to student

populations in their classrooms; therefore, they become not only academically

but also socially responsible for these students' education, enlightenment, and

ways of knowing and understanding this world and their place in it. This

responsibility might include student learning, their interactions, their character

development, and most of all their understanding of democratic, just ways. It is

the art teacher who determines the delivered curriculum in terms of daily content

and teachings; to what extent these social issues are included into the curriculum

remains as a critical question, as school policies and community and cultural values are also in place and affect what is included in curriculum.

Question 4: Should high school educators have an ethical and/or moral responsibility to uphold when teaching?

Part of the discussion over whether or not to incorporate social action into art education is considering a teacher's role of exhibiting or upholding a certain moral and ethical responsibility. It is necessary to consider teachers' sense of ethical and/or moral responsibility, as this component informs how and why teachers may choose to include social action and issues or any of the aforementioned topics (social issues, ethics, etc.) in their classrooms. From this study, a new question arises in terms of the presence or absence of an ethical/moral responsibility combined with the teaching of social issues: Can one exist without the other?

Garber (2005) enlists educators to be careful of the risk posed when involving students in "crossing borders," referring to issues of social justice and culture. She recognizes and suggests "education may inherently present other worlds to students, but in crossing borders they are at risk...No space is insulated from social contradictions: racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, power, or privilege." She continues with an important point for educators to keep in mind, quoting Weis and Fine, "All spaces carry the capacity and power to enable, restrict, applaud, stigmatize, erase, or complicate threads of youth, identity, and their ethical commitments" (Cited in Garber, 2005, p. 14).

With schools situated as spaces for learning in a world where having an education can mean owning a sense of power, it is necessary to discuss and define how schools and art education will approach teaching. Methods and resources that lend towards critical, reflective, and engaged pedagogies are significant to those interested in educational models that are democratic, equity-based, culturally-diverse, and contemporary. More research is needed on such educational models, specifically in art education and remain as points for further discussion.

Questions and Implications for Further Study

Several vital questions remain as points of further discussion concerning the possibility of incorporating social action and awareness as course content, particularly in the visual arts. Based on the findings, this study should initiate curricular and pedagogical review for art educators interested in social action in art or related topics, as numerous problems and contextual conflicts were identified by participants, most of who were high school art teachers. Since it is crucial to meet the needs and goals of evolving societies and its variety of members, the raising of individual and collective social consciousness is addressed by the researcher as both a need and a goal of this study, in the hopes of greater social and cultural awareness for all. For future studies, it is recommended that some or all of the questions below be addressed and researched in both theory and in practice, particularly via direct observation and critique of social action projects in visual art classes in Pre-Kindergarten-twelfth

grade classes in both the United States and other countries. International social action projects and cross-cultural comparisons on these topics might offer interesting and beneficial insights into social action as a facet of global art education.

The following list of questions for further study offer topics for further study that may be of interest to those who study or practice social action, awareness, and issues in art and include:

- Borrowing from Desai and Chalmers (2007): What should the relationship be between art education in schools and society at large?

- What social issues are appropriate for certain age groups and grades?

- What values and principles are considered appropriate and/or important to teach in secondary (general) education?

- Under what academic standards or objectives do social action and the study of social issues fall?

- What are best practices for connecting social action and awareness to the study and making of art?

- Does teaching social action in art conflict with the teaching of studio art, art history, and art criticism? If so, how might art educators work to solve this problem?

- For art teachers who do incorporate art for social action into their teachings, how do they determine what social issues to address and what to avoid?

- How do the intentions of social action and awareness "projects" and that of the participants (i.e. who becomes the giver and receiver?) influence and/or determine the outcome of the projects (or products)?

- How can one measure the effectiveness of social action projects? In other words: How can one measure change, if at all? Also, must there be measurable, visible change in order to be successful or effective?

- Is there a connection with art therapy as a form of service learning and social healing that could be considered as part of art for social action studies?

Shortcomings and Successes of the Study

Part of the research process is to reflect upon what worked and what could have been done better or differently. If one was to reconsider duplicating or expanding this study, the following research components should be considered:

- Revise one of the research questions: One participant noted that the fourth research question on the survey is somewhat confusing and could be misinterpreted. After considering this criticism and completing this study, the revised question should read: Do educators have a duty or calling to develop a sense of ethical/moral responsibility from their students? If so, how can they go about such development? These questions are more direct.

- Poll a larger, more diverse sample: To make more accurate claims and include more voices from the art education community, the study could be

extended to include a larger sampling of participants, perhaps in other states or neighboring countries. It might also be interesting to conduct a similar study that compares results from contrasting educational and socio-economic communities.

- Simplify the scope of the study and just focus on social action and awareness, leaving out questions on visual culture, politics, etc. Though these topics are all related to the study of art, they may have broadened the initial research topic of social action too far and, thus, yielded a great amount of data to analyze.

- Add two more research questions: 1) What social action (in art) instructional models currently exist?; and 2) A follow-up question might be: What are some of the specific results you have observed from doing social action projects, in terms of benefits, successes, failures, problems you encountered? For clarification, it would be helpful to add: "Is your answer based on your own opinions or from actual experience teaching or incorporating these topics?" These new questions are more specific and clear.

- Gather specific information from participants about their social action projects and lessons: From the survey data, it was often unclear how to duplicate the lesson or project without a more detailed lesson explanation or an understanding of how and why a certain stated artwork or artist was used to teach social action (or a related topic).

- Find a way to directly observe social action projects nationwide and on an international level as well: Direct observation as a research method might have offered a more in-depth and realistic portrayal of the benefits and problems of incorporating social action in the classroom. This would be a valuable project to undertake as part of a grant award or doctoral research study.

Research components that contributed to the success of the study are:

- Use of an online survey: Survey Monkey and its customizable templates for computerized surveys allowed for quick and simple distribution, collection, and data analysis. This saved time and helped compile the data in an organized, cohesive manner.

- The survey questions: The variety of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer survey questions helped but also may have hurt this study. Some questions rendered easily-interpretable data; whereas, others, regarding the short answer questions 9-11, rendered long quotations and some explanations that were difficult to understand, translate, or simplify. Coding and categorizing short answer survey questions from samples of 154 participants is very time-consuming and can also lead to much researcher bias towards the interpretations of the responses.

- A current and relevant topic: Choose a topic of study as well as research methodology that would be both interesting and useful to the researcher

on both a personal and professional level, as both a teacher, artist, and graduate student researcher.

- A personal connection: An important and unusual opportunity that presented itself during the course of graduate school and the duration of this study: participating in a cultural immersion to South Africa as part of a study abroad university program. This decision provided an extremely enriching and contextual view of social issues in the real world, and it offered a most humanizing experience that shed new insight into the study.

Importance of Dialogue in Art Education

It is necessary to acknowledge the value established by conducting a study that involves subjective and varied opinions of practicing artists and art educators as well as other professionals in related fields. By using members of the education, art, and social community as resources, those directly affected by curricular decisions and those who are in direct contact with today's students have authentic experiences upon which to base their opinions. It is the bringing together of these voices and opinions from real people with real experiences combined with academic literature and research in art education that can help bridge existing gaps between theory and practice, hopefully informing future decisions about the incorporation of art for social action and its potential curricular components. It would be more helpful and valuable if more specific information was gathered from the survey, in terms of social action projects, to

assist in the process of sharing, something that educators do often. Discussion forums, blogs, an online and/or printed guidebooks for social action in art may encourage and make this type of regular, contemporary dialogue possible as well as provide opportunities for direct and peer-to-peer exchange of social action curricula, projects, lessons, and suggestions.

One Final Reflection: Considering the Ethics of One's Intentions

The need and desire for social awareness training became evident after this researcher spent the summer of 2007 in South Africa studying transitional justice and living in Khayelitsha, a poverty-stricken township in Post-Apartheid South Africa. She experienced firsthand what it is like to be both a participant in and an observer to change, and it became imperative for her, upon returning to the United States and her job as a high school teacher to find ways to share and implement what she observed and learned. By living "inside" the social issues affecting that country and the surrounding community groups, it became necessary to acknowledge the reasons (or intentions) for being there: to help, to see, to learn, to listen, to affect change, or perhaps, to change something within herself realizing there is always something to give as well as something to gain.

Intention can be defined as what one plans to achieve with regards to a purpose in mind. Some questions for consideration might include: 1) What is one trying to achieve or what greater purpose does one have in mind when considering social action in art?; 2) As a teacher, is one somehow trying to instill one's own personal beliefs, however unconsciously or indirectly, in his or her

students?; and 3) Is social action in art education capable of being used as a means of helping students become aware of their social world and other cultures? The responses to these questions likely affect how and why one chooses to incorporate and teach social action in art, if at all, and are important factors for teachers to consider and answer. It is valuable, however, to note that this study is not attempting to study social action from an anthropological point of view. Rather, the focus here is geared towards examining social action in a sociological context within an art education setting where art is used as a vehicle to study society.

For social action and awareness in art projects and curriculum, educators and their students should thoughtfully consider the ethics of their intentions and the objectives of their projects, both artistically and socially, and (if it applies, in cases such as service learning or community-service-type projects), ethically as well. Establishing the needs and goals of both participants (i.e., volunteer and recipient, or the "stakeholders") can be valuable and important, as well as defining first what is "success" to better assist in the learning process (Webb, 2004). Freire and others spoke of reform, change, evolution, citizenship, and engagement but it is critical to consider all sides of that which may be reformed. World War II General Omar Bradley remarked, "The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants" (Omar Bradley Quotes, n.d.). Educators must determine and constantly assess their intentions, considering their own brilliance

and power. Teachers can help students avoid becoming or remaining "ethical infants" by encouraging them to tread lightly enough not to offend but firmly enough to question. Students can be guided towards the development of social consciousness as well as ethical, social, and cultural awareness in order to offer them opportunities to challenge and engage on issues that matter and affect all.

Considerations for Teaching Art for Social Action

Social issues represent a plethora of shared and individual human concerns, some positive, some negative depending on one's viewpoint and within what contexts. Nonetheless, they are indeed real issues of concern affecting all of humanity in some way, be it on an individual, local, global, or multicultural level, and they cannot easily be ignored. Dissecting and discussing social issues in a classroom setting can sometimes mean traversing moral and ethical territory that is both fragile and subjective, approached and accepted based on its contextual fittings. Thus, some educators and schools avoid such topics and/or find them lacking curricular relevance, appropriateness, or substance. In contrast, many school subjects (such as Social Studies, History, English, etc), find social issues as an important foci of their course content. Some issues may become emotionally charged, touchy, controversial, and radical topics that teachers must be careful about introducing, considering implications for their job and student population prior to broaching these issues in the classroom. To develop students' individual and collective social consciousness (if this was determined as a goal) may be difficult without including discussions on

values, morals, character development, and/or ethics in the process. Embedded in many social issues are opposing viewpoints and often, an injustice in need of resolution. To study social issues is to study those viewpoints and the contexts that frame them; these contexts likely include an ethical and/or moral stance from one side or the other. Where these concepts fit into art becomes another question for further examination.

When schools are sites of engagement in support of the development of social consciousness and as spaces for ethical/moral character-building for students, this creates an ideal setting for the possibility of incorporating social action. If teachers are seen and view themselves as more than just "deliverers of knowledge" (Freire, 1998), and instead as cultural workers engaged in the struggle for equity, equality, democracy, justice, and peace in addition to academic excellence, this may also present an ideal pedagogical context for possibility of incorporating social action. It is important to note that teachers are trusted with students and trusted, based on their credentials, experience, research, and own judgment to make the "right" and best decisions in the classroom daily. If social action is supported by the art education and general education communities, these decisions to teach social action might be better supported and be easier to justify the links between established course content for visual art, the teaching of studio art, and the study of social action, awareness, and/or issues. More materials and research is needed on these subjects, particularly the assessment of the effectiveness and goals of social

action projects as well as a review of existing materials for teachers to utilize and learn from.

Looking Ahead at the Possibilities

By incorporating social action in art, one invites the possibility of change, reform, dialogue, reflection, public service, and artistic engagement. On the other hand, one simultaneously invites opposing views, potential arguments, and conflicts along cultural, social, moral, political, and religious lines as well as takes a detour from existing or formal art education dogma. Here, the exchange of opposing views and opinions about social action in art is a healthy, natural, and intellectually challenging one based on subject matter dialogues, not doctrines for life. It may, in some contexts, be a struggle to incorporate art for social action and awareness; still others may avoid these areas altogether, suggesting a choice be made: art or social action. It is this researcher's belief after conducting this study and from her own experience as a high school teacher, that both can be done. Just as peace and conflict are not polar terms but rather intertwined together, so can art and action be intertwined. Teachers, artists, community members, and others who choose to tackle social action in their place of work choose to do so, perhaps compelled by a sense of personal or social responsibility. By informing students about the social world they live in, the potential for actions towards justice, peace, democracy, and cultural understanding may become more real and possible. Though educators might encounter struggles along the way, the risk of not teaching social action, awareness, and/or issues may be greater than

the repercussions of attempting them. Desai and Chalmers (2007) offer this

perspective:

> To say/claim that a student who leaves your art classroom (more than
>
> when they walked in) is: knowledgeable about cultures other than his/her
>
> own, knows the power and history of art to make social statements, to
>
> initiate change, to improve/heal lives, and communicate narrative, to re-
>
> write history, able to decode/criticize visual symbols that surround
>
> him/her...is something to be proud of. There is power in new ways of
>
> thinking and doing – social action is just another way, can it hurt? Yes, but
>
> the risk may be worth taking. A world without art needs to be unimaginable
>
> –not just because art enhances and decorates – but because we need art
>
> for cultural survival and cultural change. And sometimes the art that we
>
> need most may be the art that is the most critical (p. 9).

Since schools are sites of engagement, learning, socialization, and growth for

millions of people worldwide, it seems they are an ideal setting to offer a more

global and holistic education: one that links the atmosphere outside the

classroom with the people and pedagogies inside, establishing a connectivity, an

artery of understanding and reciprocity between the local and the global, the

mono-cultural and the multinational, the individual and the collective, and finally,

the part and the whole of humanity. Art has the capacity to illustrate these

connections, to be used as a vehicle for inspiration and change, and to act as a

catalyst for historical analysis and the development of social consciousness. For

a world society in need of its social heartbeat to be strong, art for social action may be one way to keep it alive and well. It is in the midst of competing ideas and agendas in art education that we must consider the inclusion of social action and awareness in the study of art, as it may open the doors to new research that measures and encourages a closer look at how art can be understood in society and how society can be understood through art.

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APPENDIX A

ASU IRB APPROVAL LETTER

ASU ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

To:	Bernard Young ART
From:	Mark Roosa, Chair Institutional Review Board
Date:	10/15/2007
Committee Action:	**Exemption Granted**
IRB Action Date:	10/15/2007
IRB Protocol #:	0710002254
Study Title:	Art for Social Action and Awareness

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY COVER LETTER

HerbergerCollege
of Fine Arts

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

ART FOR SOCIAL ACTION & AWARENESS SURVEY (2007-08)
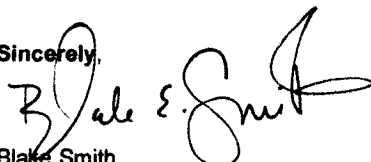
Dear Supporter of the Arts,

I am a graduate student of Art Education at **Arizona State University** under the direction of Dr. Bernard Young within the Herberger College of the Arts. I am conducting a qualitative **Master's thesis research study** to determine if *social action, awareness, and issues should or can be effectively incorporated in visual arts content area courses, specifically in high schools. Teachers from all instructional levels as well as artists, museum educators, college faculty, and others in the fields of art, education, and related disciplines are welcome to participate. I am inviting your engagement and encourage you to take this opportunity for your voice to be heard within the art and research community.

If you choose, your participation will involve simply answering the enclosed **eleven-question survey**, which should take only a few minutes to complete. Your efforts, responses, and suggestions may be used to generate ideas and recommendations for further study in the field of art for social action. Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may skip questions you wish not to answer. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw your comments from the study at any time, there is no penalty. Your survey responses will be kept confidential, and each returned survey will be assigned an identification number for data collection purposes. The results may be used in educational publications and/or presentations.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please contact the research team at the phone numbers or emails included below under "Research Team." If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Research Compliance Office at 480.965.6788. **Your return of the survey will be considered your consent to participate.** Thank you immensely for your time and consideration. *This study has been approved by the ASU Research Compliance Office.*

- ❖ **PLEASE RETURN THE SURVEY WITHIN TWO WEEKS FROM THE DATE YOU RECEIVED IT.**
- ❖ **A PRE-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE IS ENCLOSED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE.**
- ❖ **ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE – Please contact B. Smith if you prefer the online format.**

Sincerely,

Blake Smith
Graduate Studies, Art Education
Arizona State University

> **Research Team:**
> Principal Investigator: Dr. Bernard Young,
> ASU Art Education
> Email: bernard.young@asu.edu
> Phone: 480.965.3341
> Address: Arizona State University School of Art
> C/O Dr. Bernard Young/SURVEY
> PO Box 871505 Tempe, AZ 85287-1505
>
> **Co-Investigator: Ms. Blake Smith,**
> ASU Art Education
> Email: blake.e.smith@asu.edu
> Address: Same as above, C/O Blake Smith/SURVEY

***DEFINITIONS:** The following terms describe how this researcher interprets social action, awareness, and issues as they apply to the visual arts specifically.*

1. **Social action in art** can be defined as the incorporation of individual, local, or global social issues into art environments, including art classrooms; this incorporation can involve studying, critiquing, reflecting, and art making. The term "action" can refer to the act of making art of a social nature or the action(s) taken by artist(s) or society members to address such social issues.

2. **Concept of social action and awareness in art education:** To some, art has the potential to be used as a vehicle or tool for awareness, action, and change. Art can do so by illustrating common social issues, events, and human conditions, acting as a universal yet subjective language that speaks *about* and/or *to* societies at large. Social action can be used as a teaching concept for art history, art criticism, art making, visual culture, multiculturalism, social justice, service learning, and more.

3. **Some examples of social issues include** (but are not limited to): politics, social justice, identity, body image, peace, ethics, poverty, human and animal rights, crime, racism, feminism, discrimination, stereotypes, war, environmentalism, and more.

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APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF SURVEY INSTRUMENT

ART FOR SOCIAL ACTION & AWARENESS SURVEY   *ID #:_____(Leave Blank)*

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION: #1 - 3

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1 How do you describe your current occupation?

Mark an X by all that apply.

___Certified art teacher P/K-8   ___Professional/practicing artist
___Certified art teacher 9-12   ___College/Univeristy student
___Non-certified art teacher   ___College/University faculty
___Pursuing teacher certification   ___Art museum educator
___Nationally Board certified teacher   ___Former teacher
___International Baccalaureate art teacher   ___Other:_____

2 If you teach or have taught art or a related discipline, how many years have you taught, including this year?

_____

3 What setting and population are you currently working with/in?

Mark an X by all that apply.

___Public school   ___Working with children grades P/K-5
___Private school   ___Working with students grades 6-8
___Charter school   ___Working with students grades 9-12
___School with religious affiliation   ___Working with college/university students
___College/University   ___Working with adults
___Art museum   ___Working with the public
___Art gallery   ___Working with (other):_____
___Art studio   ___All of the above
___Other setting:_____   ___None of the above

SURVEY QUESTIONS: #4 – 10. Please review the definitions provided in the cover letter if needed.

For questions 4-7, use the tables to asses the statements provided, marking your answers with an X as they correspond to each criterion in the far left column.

4 Statement: *It is important to teach high school visual art students to be:*

	Highly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Highly Disagree	No Opinion
Aware & knowledgeable of past & present social issues & their effects					
Knowledgeable of artists/movements that dealt with social issues					
Exposed to international & multicultural perspectives in art					
Participants in art-related service learning &/or community service					

5 Statement: *Educators have an ethical and/or moral responsibility to uphold when teaching.*

Highly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Highly Disagree	No Opinion

6 Statement: *It is important to incorporate the following values or principles in secondary education:*

	Highly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Highly Disagree	No Opinion
Cultural diversity					
Peace studies					
Ethical behavior					
Human rights education					
Social justice					

7 Statement: *Social action, awareness, and issues should be incorporated in today's visual arts content area courses.*

Highly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Highly Disagree	No Opinion

8 If you teach, which of the following topics have you incorporated into your teachings in the last three years?

Mark an X by all that apply.

___Visual/Material culture
___Multiculturalism
___Politics
___Identity
___Race and/or Discrimination
___Cultural diversity
___Peace studies
___Ethical behavior
___Human rights education

___Social justice
___Social action/awareness
___Other social or related issues you teach/discuss:
    (List here)_____
    _____
    _____
___None of the above

9 If you marked an X by any of the topics in question #8, please describe briefly how you incorporated them, in terms of specific themes, artists, projects, etc. *Use the back of the survey if needed.*

10 If you do *not* teach social action, awareness, and issues, please discuss why not. *Use the back of the survey if needed.*

OTHER INFORMATION

For the benefit of this study, do you have any specific recommendations or references of specific artists, curricular materials, websites, books, or social action lessons/projects to share? *I am seeking information on social action instructional models for part of this research and invite your suggestions here.*

*The research team of B. Smith & B. Young conducting this study would like to thank you sincerely for taking the time to complete this art education thesis survey. **Please return it as soon as possible by sending it to the addresses listed in the cover letter <u>in the enclosed pre-addressed, stamped envelope</u>.** We are pleased to include your voice as part of this research. ☺ If you would like additional copies of the survey or would like to share it with others, please contact the research team.*

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Blake Smith was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1979, where she attended Sagamore Hills Elementary School and Lakeside High School. From 1998-2002, she began college at the College of Charleston in South Carolina then transferred to the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, where she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education in the summer of 2002. In college, she pursued studies in art education, photography, painting, jewelry-making, and art history among other collegiate activities. Upon graduation, she moved to Charlotte, North Carolina and taught high school photography and art for three years. During this time, she took her students on summer photography trips to the Grand Canyon and abroad to Italy, Germany, and Switzerland. In the fall of 2005, she decided it was time for a change moved to Tempe, Arizona to pursue a Master of Arts in Art Education at Arizona State Univeristy. There, Blake also studied printmaking, photography, and ceramics and was a member of the Photography Club, assisting with the annual Photo Club Print Auction. During this time, she taught adult drawing and painting classes for ASU's Herberger College at Large and taught art at an elementary school in Scottsdale. The latter included the study of Sponge Bob Squarepants and the creation of fascinating Eric Carle-style caterpillars with the little ones. During her second year of graduate study and amidst the writing of this thesis in 2007, she traveled abroad to South Africa to study social justice and peace building as part of a study abroad program with Arizona State University and the South Africa Community Fund. This was a life-changing journey for Blake and was partially funded by a competitive Hardt Graduate Fellowship in Religion, Conflict, and Peace. At the time of this publication in the fall of 2008, she was again teaching high school photography in Peoria, Arizona... with dreams of California, trees, writing a book, world travel, and life's next chapter on her mind.