Context and Teacher Practice:

Visual Art in a Secondary Traditional School

by

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ABSTRACT

Based on a ten-week case study in a senior Visual Art class, at The Secondary Traditional School in Lower Mainland British Columbia, this thesis identifies how the traditional educational philosophy conditioned the curriculum decisions and pedagogical practices of a Visual Art teacher. Data was collected from three groups of participants: the Principal of the school, the Visual Art teacher, and a focus group of Visual Art students using the ethnographic methods of document collection, participant observation, and formal and informal interviews. Analysis of the characteristics of Goodlad et al's (1979) five domains of curriculum: official, perceived, ideal, operationalized, and experienced indicated that recent reforms to education, reflecting neoliberal policy, significantly shaped the experience of teaching and learning in Visual Art in the traditional public school. Legislated neoliberal reforms to education, legitimized schools-of-choice in the province allowing for the propagation of traditional schools by individuals well versed in the idioms of choice. The traditional philosophy's back-to-basics curriculum and teacher-centered pedagogical approach, coupled with visual acts of symbolic respect created a learning environment, which challenged the implementation of Visual Art curriculum and pedagogical practices that emphasized critical thinking and contemporary conceptual art practice. The discursive practices of the official curricula constructed the student as transitioning from child to young adult. The official role of those in the school community was to enforce the values of the home and parents during this suspended state of transition. To do so the school culture reformed the typical autonomous activity of teaching in a Visual Art class into a distributed process by conforming teacher practice to the official philosophy. The ways in which student 'lifers' of traditional schooling experienced the operationalized and ideal curriculum directed the curriculum and pedagogical practices of the teacher. Critical thinking and social responsibility emphasized in the perceived curriculum were passively resisted by student participants performing the visual acts of respect and integrity perpetuated by the Key Visuals and Ten Tenets of traditional schooling. These acts served to redirect teacher practice to maintain the aims of the teacher through pedagogical practices and curriculum design that closely mirrored the teacher-centered approach.

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CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

1.1   Background

Teaching practices in Visual Art[1] are highly reliant on the teacher's personal and professional

background, beliefs and values. Despite the individualistic nature of instruction, commonalities in

curriculum decisions and pedagogical practices in Visual Art have created normative patterns of

curriculum and instruction (Bresler, 1994). While autonomous in nature, the teaching practices of Visual

Art teachers are susceptible to the effects of the context of their practice. Stokrocki (2004) documented

the historical background of contextual studies in Visual Art instruction and the implications for the field

of Visual Art education. She determined that teacher practice in Visual Art is shaped and defined by the

context in which it occurs. Using Goodlad, et al (1979) five domains of curriculum, this thesis examines

the study of the traditional school philosophy and how it shaped the secondary Visual Art teacher, Ms.

Terri's[*], practice and student learning. Traditional schools, as schools-of-choice[2], are unique in the public

school system in British Columbia (BC), as the traditional philosophy interprets curriculum through the

back-to-basics[3] approach and pedagogy through a teacher-centered approach. Mainstream public schools

support a less stringent approach to the basics and a focus on student-centered pedagogical styles. The

traditional philosophy represents a significant trend in education that is proliferating in the public system

in BC, yet few studies have explored how this philosophy in its contemporary form impacts teaching and

learning.

Apple (1999) argues that:

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[1] Visual Art as a subject in British Columbia is composed of two areas of specialty in grades 11 and 12, including art foundations/studio art and media arts. This thesis explored classroom practices and learning in art foundations and studio art (Fine Arts Curriculum, BC Ministry of Education, 2009).

[*] Name of the teacher has been changed to protect anonymity.

[2] Discussed further in Chapter Two, schools-of-choice are public, non-fee based schools, offering a specialization or intensified curriculum focus, including athletics, French Immersion, Fine Arts, or in the case of this study, a traditional educational philosophy. These schools are not private or independent of the public system.

[3] Back-to-basics implies a greater if not exclusive return to academic subject including languages, Math and Science. Practices include a teacher-centered approach focusing on direct instructional methods.

to understand the social reality of schooling, it is necessary to study it in actual classroom settings. Each concept, role, and object is a social creation bound to the situation in which it is produced. The meanings of classroom interaction cannot be assumed, they must be discovered. (p. 53)

To better understand how this philosophy was made visible in curriculum, pedagogy, and learning, Ms. Terri, the Principal, and a focus group of three, grade twelve, life-long (K-12) traditional students were selected from The Secondary Traditional School** in lower mainland BC to participate in a ten-week study. The primary focus of the study was to examine how the conservative traditional philosophy influenced teaching and learning in this particular classroom. The primary research question explored during the study was: What insights can be gained about the contextual nature of Visual Art teaching and learning in The Secondary Traditional School?

As Grossman and Stoldosky (1995) argued, "the nature of the school subject as well as teachers' beliefs regarding the subject, help create a conceptual context within which teachers work" (p. 5). Ms. Terri's curricular and pedagogical decisions influenced by her beliefs and values elicited a unique response to the implementation of the traditional philosophy in her teaching practice. Ms. Terri's curriculum and pedagogical decisions, as well as the ways that students experienced her practice, contextualized in the Traditional School Movement (TSM)[4] provides an understanding of the political and cultural environment that shaped this context for teacher practice and student learning.

Stokrocki (2004) defined context as a "complex set of factors, conditions, and contradictory elements that support a historically and culturally related framework that is constantly changing…a sociocultural phenomenon" (p. 440). The historical framework for this study begins with the report produced for The Royal Commission on Education in British Columbia in 1988 titled, *A Legacy of Learners*, also known as *The Sullivan Report*. As part of the recommendations for reform, *The Sullivan Report* expressed that the education system should better reflect parental choice as the commissioner found that "British Columbians seemed to believe that choice was too restrained within the public

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** Name of the school has been changed to protect anonymity.
[4] The Traditional School Movement refers to the growing number of traditional schools and programs in British Columbia since 1994. The movement includes key individuals, including parents, academics, politicians, and conservative and Christian fundamentalist groups who have lobbied the government using research agendas and the media to advance the traditional agenda (Kalaw, 1999).

system" (*Legacy of Learners*, 1988, p. 11). This document came at a time when neoliberal[5] based public policy began to further influence educational reforms in Canada and the United States. These reforms, which began in the 1980s, intensified with the change in provincial government in 2001(McBride & McNutt, 2007). The Ministry of Education, using market value strategies such as efficiency and competitiveness, streamlined public education through a variety of reforms, which included changes to teachers' labour laws, graduation requirements, curriculum, assessment, and the structure of public schools to include schools-of-choice.

The establishment of schools-of-choice in the public system has contributed to the tension about the purposes of public education within the discourse of democracy. This tension increased in the mid 1990s and again in 2004 as the media and funded research scrutinized traditional schools as a type of parent initiated school-of-choice. The funding agencies of these studies used their research agendas as political lobbying mechanisms to influence provincial and school district policy makers to either support or eliminate traditional schools.

The first round of funded research came during the period when the provincial government began drafting legislation to increase the role of choice in the public system of education. The second round of research was initiated two years after the province passed schools-of-choice legislation following a string of decisions by several school districts to deny traditional choice school proposals (Kalaw, 1999). The two primary research agendas included the left-wing British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF)[6] and the right-wing Society for Advancing Excellence in Education (SAEE)[7]. The opposition in position focused on: the contested nature of the school's philosophy in terms of curriculum and pedagogical

[5] Neoliberal implies the right wing liberal policies of economic growth. These policies include reducing government funding for social programs, including education while using competition to increase outputs. This shifts control over the economy from the public to private sector, emphasizing efficiency of market values. These values are applied to social programs as well to reduce perceived inefficiency caused by government intervention in the market (McBride & McNutt, 2007).

[6] "The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), established in 1917, is the union of professionals representing 41,000 public school teachers in the province of British Columbia, Canada. All public school teachers belong to the BCTF and their local teachers' association. They are affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress and maintain membership in the BC Federation of Labour" (British Columbia Teachers' Federation, 2009, Np.).

[7] SAEE is strongly supported by right wing business groups such as the Donner Canadian Foundation (Donner Canadian Foundation) and support neoliberal initiatives of social program reform (Donner Canadian Foundation Website, 2009).

orientation; preferential hiring practices; restricted access; and parents' right to choose in their child's education (Kalaw, 1999).

The number of traditional schools in BC has increased from one in 1994, Langley Fundamental Elementary, to a reported forty-nine schools that either operate fully as a traditional school or have a traditional curriculum stream within the larger school curriculum (Achieve BC Education, 2008). Despite their growing popularity, research that examines the unique curriculum and pedagogical practices within these schools is very limited. Researchers from the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)[8], commissioned by the BCTF were denied site access to traditional schools because of a perceived political agenda (Kalaw, McLaren, & Rehnby, 1998). Researchers, funded by SAEE, including Brown (1999), were granted access to the schools, but the findings were heavily influenced by the funding agency of the study. These studies focused on the nature of school-choice and the official traditional philosophy within the broad discourse of democracy. What was not offered in either study was the exploration of how the philosophy of traditional schools was manifested in teacher practice and learning. As Eisner (1985) argued:

> the ideologies that make a difference for those in school- teachers and students- are those that permeate their activities on a daily basis. A written manifesto of educational beliefs that never infuses the day-to-day operations of schools has no practical import for either teachers or students; such beliefs are window dressing. (p. 55)

To study the manifestation of the traditional philosophy in teaching and learning, the subject area of Visual Art was selected. Visual Art operates with considerably more autonomy than other subject areas in the education system in BC primarily because of the structure of the Integrated Resource Package[9] (IRP), the lack of standardized assessment[10], a lack of official texts, and a tradition of individualism that encompasses the arts (Gray & MacGregor, 1991). These subject characteristics provide a unique opportunity to explore the traditional philosophy manifested in curriculum content and

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[8] "The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social and economic justice" (Canadian Center for policy Alternatives, 2009, Np.).

[9] The Integrated Resource Package is a curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education, which outlines learning, instructional, and assessment strategies for all subjects, including the Visual Arts based on grade level (Visual Arts 11 and 12 Art Foundation and Studio Arts, 2002).

[10] In BC, secondary courses that are externally assessed by the Ministry of Education are Grade 10 Language Arts, Math and Science; Grade 11 or 12 social studies; Grade 12 language arts. Visual Arts is not part of an external assessment system (Program Guide for Graduation Transitions, 2007).

instructional practices. This apparent absence of external control over the curricular decisions of the teacher offers potential insight into the conditioning of teacher practice to adopt the traditional philosophy's perspectives on learning and instruction. Kalaw et al's (1998) study indicated that much of this philosophy is cosmetic and that traditional schools do not provide a different learning experience through a distinct educational philosophy. Traditional school advocates, including SAEE and Brown (1999; 2004), argue that the structured pedagogical styles and an academic curriculum focus offer a different educational experience for their students. While this thesis does not resolve this dispute, it does offer insight into the role of context in the decision-making process in teaching Visual Art, and the ways in which this school's traditional philosophy functioned in this classroom.

Stokrocki (2004) determined that "The form, content, meaning, and value of art teaching are determined by the context in which they are used" (p. 439). She categorized the study of art instructional contexts and concluded that contextual studies demand research that embeds a local context, such as a school, within the larger a socio/political/cultural context. Studies such as Gray and MacGregor's (1991) cross-Canada study of high school art teachers attempted to record "what it is to be a high school teacher of art in Canada" (p. 47) but neglected the distinctive contextual realities that bear on classroom practice. While useful as a means to examine overall trends, research that does not explore the specifics of context can lead to a misaligned belief that learning and instruction in Visual Art is a homogenous process, not subjected to multiple and distinct contexts. The study of context offers an informed understanding of Visual Art education and the culture within which it exists.

The autonomy in Visual Art potentially affords both the students and the teacher greater influence over curriculum and pedagogical decisions in the classroom. For the student, this often implies a student-centered approach to curriculum and instruction, allowing for individualized and independent learning. For the teacher this implies a greater reliance on professional values and beliefs versus prescribed curriculum outcomes (Grauer, 1998). The design of The Secondary Traditional School's philosophy is intended to influence curriculum and pedagogy across disciplines, creating an immersion experience in the official school culture, defined by the traditional focus. As such, the autonomy of Ms. Terri within the Visual Art class may potentially be subjected to conformity through pressure to adhere to the official

or formal curriculum of the school and community. An initial operating assumption is that the aims of the teacher and the subject will conflict with the official or formal curricular aims of the traditional school. This study explores the negotiation of the aims of the official, ideal, perceived curriculum within the operationalized and experienced curriculum.

1.2   Purpose

The purpose of this study is to critically analyze and contextualize the curriculum decisions and pedagogical practices of a secondary Visual Art teacher in a traditional school in BC.

1.3   Significance

I believe this thesis will contribute to the educational discourses of choice, democracy, and educational pluralism, context and teacher practice, and the role of teacher beliefs and values in Visual Art education. The majority of research about traditional schools has either been performed off site and/or through a strong political agenda. It is my aim to understand context and Visual Art teacher practice better through classroom fieldwork and through the constructivist paradigm. The findings will contribute to a greater understanding of the nature of classroom practice within traditional schools in BC. This will assist in situating teacher practice and student learning in the discussion of traditional schools. This study of context in the field of art education will broaden the body of knowledge pertaining to learning and instruction in the arts. This thesis will also offer an interpretation of the impact of school reforms, since 2001, on teaching and learning in Visual Art, in the province of BC.

1.4   Rationale

The research addressing schools-of-choice (Brown, 1999, 2004; Davies & Guppy, 1997; Gaskell, 1999, 2001; Kalaw, 1999; Kalaw et al, 1998; Phillips, Raham, & Wagner, 2002; Powers and Cookson, 1999; Study X[11], 2005) examined schools-of-choice within the broad discourse of democracy in education and represents a conflict over the role of public schools. I believe that understanding the impact of schools-of-choice on teaching and learning practices can contribute to the broad discourse of democracy by critically locating teacher practice and student learning within the historical evolution of current

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[11] Reference information is being withheld because information contained in within this study would compromise the anonymity of The Secondary Traditional School.

reforms. The study of teacher practice and student learning in schools-of-choice offers an understanding about the manifestation of reform trends in the Visual Art classroom. This dimension of understanding will greatly contribute to understanding the 'real' impact of reforms in schools and classrooms, and not simply on ideology in education.

As educational reforms continue to change the context of classroom practices in the province, it is important to understand how these reforms impact learning and teaching. As proponents of the traditional philosophy market the school curriculum and pedagogical model as a better model for education (Brown 1999, 2004), it is important to understand how the official philosophy manifested in practice, influences learning. Current trends in curriculum orientation in public schools suggest that the learning process is located in student-centered approaches, which allows for greater inclusivity and social responsibility, while the traditional model of the teacher-centered approach promotes hegemonic forms of knowledge transmission. As such, it is important to explore why some school divisions are returning to this model and what the implications are for students and teachers in these districts and schools.

1.5   Limitations

Limitations to this study include the length of time spent on the site and the size and diversity of the focus group. While I was there to observe the introduction, completion, and evaluation of two studio projects, the entire length of the study was 10 weeks; three of those weeks were holidays or interruptions, allowing only seven weeks of actual observation. During the study, I observed a shift in the way the teacher oriented her role in student learning. Additional time may have allowed the opportunity to see how the teacher continued to resolve certain conflicts between her beliefs and practices.

Ideally, five to eight students would have agreed to participate in the focus group, representing the diversity of the class: however, only three students chose to participate. The students in the focus group were female and shared similar backgrounds, that included: K-12 attendance at a traditional school; the same grade level; and similar support of traditional philosophy, expressed during the interview process and observed during class time. They did not represent the gender or ethnic diversity in the class, nor did they represent all behavioural types in class, as they consistently conformed to the traditional dress code and rules guiding behaviour, while several other students did not. There were notable

differences observed in the way the students in the focus group experienced the class as compared to other students, yet due to ethical considerations, these groups could not be included in observation or interviews. As such, the focus group represents students who have transitioned from one form of traditional schooling to another, which offers an understating of the traditional philosophy from a 'lifers' perspective, yet a diversity of understandings would have provided greater insight into this vague term in educational practice.

As Erickson (1984) argues, "Fieldwork is heavily inductive, but there are no *pure* inductions. The ethnographer brings to the field a theoretical point of view and a set of questions, explicit or implicit" (p. 51). I bring to the site and to the data analysis, experiences, and knowledge about curriculum and pedagogy as well as an emancipatory agenda for teacher practice towards a democratic, comprehensive, and progressive education. I also bring a professional hybridity of insider/outsider as a teacher of Visual Art for ten years in public and private schools, but with no experience within the traditional system. Merriam (2001) considered hybridity and cautioned against the overlaying of meaning by the researcher. She suggested that meaning is locally created and is site specific. The majority of my teaching was performed in a school with a strict religious code, in which I did not participate, and so I must consider this in relation to how I interpret this setting. Ogbu (1981) recommends that to deepen an understanding and to avoid overlay, the researcher must recognize that meaning in language and jargon are specific for the context.

As Jordan and Yeomans (1995) note, "critical ethnography purports to present us with a view from the bottom-up, its practitioners nonetheless come from the ivory towers of academia" (p. 400). Analysis of findings must consider the power imbalance between the participants and me. The constructivist paradigm allows for the voice of the participant, understood through the interview and observation data, as affected by the relationship between the participants and myself.

This study is situated in the experiences of Ms. Terri and as such, generalizing these findings to other Visual Art programs or other traditional schools is limited. Interpretations can inform a body of research about context and teaching, particularly the impact of provincial reforms, district policy, school

contexts, student learning, and teacher practice within Visual Art, yet the findings must be accepted as co-constructed between the researcher and Ms. Terri.

1.6   Organization and Conclusion of Thesis

Chapter Two includes a review of literature, which provides clarification for the ways in which context has been defined in this thesis. Context has been defined as physical contexts such as institutions, the classroom, and the school; and through conceptual frameworks such as: provincial reforms, district reforms, and the TSM as a historical context; through discursive practices which established the official context and the perception of official context as an imagined context; and through Visual Art as a subject forming a context. These definitions of context are significant in the understanding and shaping of teacher practice and student learning in Visual Art in a traditional school. This review also addresses research that examines the influence of teacher beliefs and values as well as the role of the student in directing classroom practice. A review of literature, which explores the historical evolution of the traditional school movement in BC is offered to clarify how this phenomenon has been previously studied, what gaps have been left in understanding this movement, and how the historical background of the school in this thesis creates a context for teaching and learning.

Chapter Three provides a discussion of the critical case study methodology that was used in this study as well as the ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis. In this section, I have also included the ways in which the site of this study has been bound as a specific case to be studied. It also includes profiles of the participants and site descriptions.

Chapter Four presents data examples, analysis, and key findings. These findings are organized in categories established by research questions that emerged during the study, which inform the broad research question about the nature of context and teacher practice in Visual Art in a traditional school.

Chapter Five offers a discussion of the findings as they relate to the primary research question. Additionally, implications and recommendations are offered based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO
Review of Literature

2.1   Introduction

The first section of this review examines the five domains of curricula defined by Goodlad et al (1979) and redefined for this thesis. Goodlad et al (1979) argues, "All of these domains involve some kind of product, tangible or of the mind" (pg. 60). These domains represent the formal or official curriculum; the perceived curriculum; the ideal curriculum; the operationalized curriculum; and the experienced curriculum.

The second section of this review, the Historical Evolution of School Choice and Traditional Schools, includes: scholarly research, executive reports, and relevant legislation, related to the growth of the TSM in BC. This movement gained momentum through reforms made to public education and social programs in BC, resulting in a significant shift in the purpose and structure of the public education system and as such, created a unique context for teacher practice. The research included in this literature review, produced by both the advocates and detractors of traditional schools provides a better understanding of the positions held by both sides of the school-choice debate. Additional research explores how reforms at state/provincial levels influence the work of teachers differently, based on the subject area taught. These works provide critical, historical grounding of the official context of traditional schools in the broader educational reforms and sociopolitical climate in BC. Critically situating teacher practice within these reforms "involves understanding the sets of historically contingent circumstances and contradictory power relationships that create the conditions in which we live" (Apple, 1993, p. 5).

The third section of the review, Visual Art Instruction in Context, focuses on a body of literature that examines Visual Art teaching in a variety of contexts. This thesis explored context using Goodlad, Klein, and Tye's (1979) five perspectives of curricula. Scholars have argued (Eisner, 1985; Goodlad, 1979; Apple 1990) that no singular definition of curriculum encompasses what is taught in a school or classroom. Instead, there are domains of curriculum, which are specific areas of curriculum defined by the perspectives of relevant individuals and groups involved in instruction and learning (Goodlad et al, 1979).

2.2   Five Domains of Curriculum

i.   Official (Formal) Curriculum

The official curriculum is the curriculum as it should be, or ought to be. "The important consideration is that it is official; it has been sanctioned" (Goodlad, et al, 1979, p. 61). The provincial government, district board, parent boards, and administration of a public school set out the official version of curriculum. The official curriculum, enacted at the school level through mission statements, rulebooks, and official philosophies, evolves out of provincial legislation. The first section of this review, which examines the historical evolution of the traditional school movement, accounts for the formulation of the official context of the traditional school. Two types of research were included to provide an understanding of how this context affects teacher practice. These include: Art instruction outside the public school system; and school culture design and implementation for school reform. Visual Art instruction in public institutions outside the public school system, including prisons and detention centers, provided insight into curriculum and pedagogical practices in schools with an explicit philosophy and purpose. School culture research presents an understanding of the methods used in establishing a school culture. This research reveals how culture is defined and how it redefines and alters the practices of teachers and students to conform to the official curriculum.

ii.   Perceived Curriculum

The perceived curriculum, constructed by the teachers' understanding of the official curriculum, represents the expectations and goals with which teachers formulate their curriculum and pedagogical practices. The teachers' perception of the extant curriculum provides "significant insights into 'school' as seen through the eyes of this group of participants" (Goodlad, et al, 1979, p. 62). This context is constituted by the official curriculum mediated through the teacher's personal and practical knowledge, values, and beliefs. Research about teacher perception of practice was included to provide insight into how teachers' construct the context of their practice. It is in the perceived context where the teacher formulates roles and designs practice.

iii.   Ideal Curriculum

The materials, resources, and expected behaviours form the third curriculum perspective: the ideal curriculum. As Bresler (1994) illustrates, the "lack of formal requirements and materials (for example textbooks) has contributed to a scarcity of literature about the operational curriculum in schools" (p.92). Visual Art teachers are responsible for finding, developing, and integrating resources in their classrooms. Many materials used in the Visual Art class reflect what is commercially available to teachers including paper, paint, clay, as well as resources for lesson and unit plans. However, the resources selected often reflect the teachers' personal and professional skills, knowledge, and beliefs about learning in Visual Art. These materials coupled with the unique characteristics, knowledge, behaviours, and beliefs of Visual Art, create a distinct subject area consistent in many schools and institutions (Gray & MacGregor, 1991). Additional research examined how the nature of subjects situated within the larger school context create particular contexts for teaching and learning.

iv.   Operationalized Curriculum

The fourth perspective of curriculum is the operationalized curriculum. It encompasses the actual day-to-day practices within the classroom. As Goodlad et al (1979) explain, the operationalized curriculum functions as a perception of practices as they "exist in the eye of the beholder" (pg. 63), interpreted by the teacher and/or the researcher through a variety of observational techniques. The studies included in this section of the review examine classroom practices of Visual Art teachers. Similar to the ideal curriculum, the operationalized curriculum elucidates how the subject of Visual Art is a distinct context of practice based on specific behaviours and teaching styles established as normative in Visual Art. These studies explore how teachers in Visual Art enact curriculum and pedagogy.

v.   Experienced Curriculum

The experienced curriculum is "what students derive from and think about the operational curriculum" (Goodlad et al, 1979, p. 64). The studies included in this section explore student processes in the subject of Visual Art including the critique, class discussions, and studio work. These studies examine how students perceive their context of learning by examining the students' perceptions of the teacher's practice.

These definitions of curriculum and context are significant in understanding the shaping of teacher practice and student learning in Visual Art in a traditional school. By avoiding the process of identifying a primary factor of influence, research can illuminate teaching practice within the intertwining of contexts.

2.3   The Historical Evolution of School Choice and Traditional Schools

> ...liberalism as a form of social amelioration is focused upon because its assumption and dimensions have penetrated patterns of education practice more decisively than any other ideology. (Apple, 1990, p. 18)

Since 2001, legislation regarding educational reforms in BC, has favored neoliberal policy (McBride & McNutt, 2007). The application of neoliberal values to social programs reduces the perceived inefficiency caused by government intervention. The 1994 provincial curricula reformed by the New Democratic Party[12], was re-reformed by the BC Liberal[13] government in 2001 to reflect the perceived demand for school choice by parents (Schaefer, 2002). These changes constructed the students and parents are educational consumers and the school is a market to meet their needs (Davies & Guppy, 1997). Adjustments to the provincial curricula, which included an increase in standardized assessment of students in academic courses, incorporated concepts such as competitiveness and accountability as a means to improve school outcomes in the province.

Assessments done through different 'think tanks', including the pro-business Fraser Institute[14] depicted school outcomes as low, including the skills of public high school graduates for the work force (Schaefer, 2002). The findings reported assessment based on provincial exam results, which interpreted

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[12] The New Democrat Party represents the left wing labour movement in BC and typically supports increased spending on social programs, including health care and education.

[13] The BC Liberal party is not affiliated with the federal Liberal Party. In 1987, the party separated from its federal counterpart and formed as a third party option in BC (BC Liberal Party, 2009).

[14] The Fraser Institute is a conservative think-tank dedicated to the liberation of the market through laissez-faire values as a means to improve both the public and private sector. The Fraser Institute was founded in 1974 as an independent economic and social research and educational organization. The objective of the Institute is to redirect the public attention of the role of competitive markets in providing for the well-being of Canadians. (Fraser Institute, Public Policy, 2008). Controversy over the Fraser Institute includes funding by corporations and political parties as well as challenges to data reported in their monthly publication, the *Fraser Forum*. Many educators feel that the data published by the Fraser Institute in relation to school standings does not accurately reflect school and student achievement and creates a false tool for assessment by government, parents, and students.

schools as failing the majority of students by not better preparing them for the modern work force (Schaefer, 2002). Reforms that followed clearly indicated that the dominant purpose of schooling in the province was to prepare students for the workforce, achievable by making schools and students more competitive. Through this competition, and through the implementation of neoliberal policy, the provincial government was able to restrict inputs, such as funding for programs and diversity in programs, yet demand an increase in the output of skilled students by expanding choices of schools, increasing assessment, streamlining graduation requirements, and reducing the number of mandatory courses in school. Additionally, the outsourcing of certain disciplines such as Fine Art came in the form of credit approval for programs taken by students in sites other than schools. While the official provincial position was that education should provide opportunities for multidisciplinary knowledge acquisition, these opportunities were restricted and extended to the student as a paying consumer.

i. Educational Reform

a. <u>Key Legislation for Educational Reform</u>

The removal of class size caps and legislation of teachers' work as essential services were adopted by the BC Liberal government through Bill 18, *The Skills and Labour Statutes Amendment Act*, Bill 27 *Education Services Collective Agreement Act 2002,* and Bill 28 *Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act 2002*. These reforms have contributed to the streamlined and efficient education system (McBride & McNutt, 2007). Bill 34, introduced in April 2002, allowed catchments' boundaries to become open, allowing some parents choice in which school their child attended.

> Bill 20, introduced March 26, 2007:
>
> introduced legislation today that will help improve student achievement by making school boards more accountable for student results, providing students and parents with more choice, and increasing support to school districts. (British Columbia Ministry of Education News Release March 26, 2007)

These reforms were enacted by establishing achievement contracts with school boards (renamed Boards of Education) and were monitored by the superintendent of the newly named initiative, Achieve BC. Achieve BC also provided additional opportunities and courses of action for: "A parent, or a group of parents, [who] may want to develop a type of school in their home district that is not currently offered"

(Achieve BC Education, 200, p. 2). In addition to these policies relating specifically to teachers' work, the province adopted open enrollment policy in 2002, making catchments permeable (Brown, 2004). The Fraser Institute published the 'Report Cards' given to schools, which based performance on standardized assessment. The Fraser Institute argued that parents would be able to make an informed choice about which school they would send their child, based on the school performance outcomes (The Fraser Institute website, 2009).

b.   <u>Independent Schools</u>

BC has both a public and independent (private) school system, which includes the Catholic School system and fee based schools. Typically schools that serve a particular belief, ideological strain, or religion, fall under *Independent Schools Act 1989* (ISA). The ISA indicated that independent schools may not create programs or practices that promote racism, religious intolerance, social change through violent action, or sedition. (British Columbia Ministry of Education, Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools, 2009). Following *the Legacy for Learners* the Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA) was established, which regulated all independent schools, whether they received provincial funding or not. The recommendations of this report affirmed the parents' right to make educational decisions for their children and the province's responsibility to partially fund these schools.

c.   <u>Schools-of-Choice</u>

Schools-of-choice have many different areas of specialty including athletics, the arts, academics, language, and traditional values, but they operate within the general parameters of the public education system and not the independent school system. *The Sullivan Report* has led to the expansion of school choice in BC, since its publication in 1988. *The Sullivan Report* identified that; "Choice is expressed as a fundamental democratic right, especially as it concerned the primacy of parental over state rights in children's education" (*Legacy for Learners*, 1988, p.11). In theory, this report, created the opportunity for school divisions and parents across BC to explore choice schools as an alternative to mainstream public education.

The primary difference between schools-of-choice and independent schools is that schools-of-choice offer an intensified or specialized strain of a subject within the provincial curriculum without

reflecting a particular religious belief and they do not have fees associated with attending (Achieve BC Education, 2008). Schools-of-choice offer specialized or intensified strains of the provincial curriculum. These schools have preferential hiring practices to ensure that the staff is able to effectively deliver the specialized curriculum. It is important to note that teachers cannot be dismissed from a school-of-choice if it appears as though their practices do not reflect the school philosophy. Teachers may be transferred, but they cannot lose their job based on their adherence to the philosophy.

Since 1977, there has been a steady increase of enrollment in independent schools in BC from 4.3% to 10.8% of the total population of students in the 2007/2008 school-year (Federation of Independent School Association, 2008). Schools-of-choice reflect a desire by the provincial government and school districts, in part, to maintain student enrollment in public versus private education by offering diversification and specialization within the system. This is achieved by creating schools that respond to the demands of parents for alternate forms of education; choice without tuition fees.

ii.   Research Opposed to Traditional Schools

Traditional schools are unique schools-of-choice as their curriculum is adapted to emphasize a traditional, back-to-basics approach that reflects a conservative understanding of educational practices including teacher-centered[15] approach to classroom instruction, the use of uniforms, organized classroom environments emphasizing structure, traditional seating arrangements, conservative behaviour, and an emphasis on academic subjects, which include languages, math, and science (Mason, 2000). Similar to independent schools, traditional schools have the opportunity to hire staff whose beliefs and pedagogical practices adhere to those of the school. They can also challenge the implementation of curriculum that conflicts with the values outlined by the school.

While schools-of-choice differ from independent schools particularly because they emphasize a provincial curriculum focus versus religious or ideological view, traditional schools have come under scrutiny because of their perceived connection to Judeo/Christian values (Kalaw et al, 1998). Davies (1999) examined the ways in which religious coalitions have "couch(ed) their claims in the idioms of

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[15] The teacher-centered approach implies that both the source and transmission of knowledge is directly related to the teacher. Accountability of student achievement is at the forefront of teacher-centered curriculum in that standardized learning can be assessed with a standard format and compared across schools and districts.

multiculturalism and choice…reframing religion as a form of culture that needs protection" (p. 1). Cummins and Cameron (1994) argued that the back-to-basics discourse attacks progressive education including multicultural and social justice education.

The historical lineage of the TSM began in the 'excellence in education' movements that flourished in Canada and the United States (US) in the 1980s. During this time, both countries experienced severe economic recessions that ushered in governments with strong conservative ties (Finkel & Conrad, 1998). In the US, *A Nation at Risk* called for reforms to education including increased centralized curriculum construction and standardized assessment because "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (A Nation at Risk, 1983, Np). In BC, the Royal Commission on Education called for an increase in parental involvement through choice education as described in *The Legacy for Learners* (Montmarquette, 1990). An increase in schools-of-choice in BC followed *The Legacy for Learners*, but it is since the shift from left to right-wing provincial governments in 2001, that schools-of-choice have flourished in BC.

The first school, Langley Fundamental School, began in Langley, BC in 1994 as an amalgamation of two other pre-existing schools with a fundamental ideology, Langley Prairie and Langley Central (Langley Fundamental Elementary School, 2009). However, the nomenclature of 'traditional' has replaced 'fundamental' for schools and programs emphasizing the back-to-basics curriculum and pedagogical practices typified in this category of schooling. Three studies (Kalaw, et al, 1998; Kalaw, 1999; and Study X, 2005[*]) explored the TSM in BC and reported findings that challenged both choice and traditional ideology in public education.

In 1998, the BCTF hired the CCPA, to study the TSM and to "provide the general public with information about BC's three 'traditional schools' including their unique characteristics" (Kalaw, 1999, p. 5). The school districts denied researchers access to the schools because the commissioner of the study and the agency hired to conduct research were closely associated with the labour movement (Kalaw et al,

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[*] The reference information has been removed as revealing it would compromise the anonymity of the school and participants in the study.

1998). SAEE, funded by the Donner Foundation and under the guidance of Dr. Daniel Brown of University of British Columbia, completed a study of the three schools included in the CCPA study. Brown's study supported the concept of school choice (Brown, 1999). The various school boards indicated that they were content with this study as accurately reflecting the TSM and did not see the point of pursuing additional studies with similar research objectives.

The BCTF also had a long and well documented antagonistic relationship with the TSM. "The history of direct and indirect conflict between the BCTF and key members of the TSM prior to the study factored into the refusal of various bodies and individuals to cooperate with the CCPA study"(Kalaw, 1999, p. 19). Kalaw et al (1998) argued, "for a broad and impartial understanding of public schools, it is necessary that research be undertaken from a variety of perspectives and funding sources" (Kalaw et al, 1998, p. 11). They also argued that a school body's selection and approval of research based on the source of funding would create a lack of accountability in research. Despite the claim of arms-length participation, Kalaw et al (1998) were denied on-site access to the schools, and completed research through public documents, media clippings, and one traditional teacher, parent, and district administrator who volunteered for off site interviews. The findings from this study, published by the CCPA, indicated that:

> the push for traditional programs in BC has been highly organized, with key individuals and organizations playing crucial roles. By all accounts, a collaboration of sorts between fundamentalist Christians and neo-conservatives in British Columbia has been central in pushing for a return to 'traditional' education. (Kalaw et al, 1998, p. 19)

The findings also reflected that despite school policies based on the notion of choice, statistics indicated that traditional schools were elitist because of restricted parental access due a first come, first serve waiting line policies (which have now been eliminated in favor of call-in registration) and lower than district averages enrollment of ESL students and special needs. A comparison of traditional statistics with mainstream public schools in the district refuted the traditional school's claims to better school outcomes. The findings indicated that there were few, if any, substantial differences between the learning outcomes of traditional and mainstream public school students. The study also found that the schools were not significantly different from BC's neighborhood or catchments schools and that what ultimately

makes traditional schools unique was the "perceptions and homogeneity of the schools proponents and the parent groups" (p. 57), who are primarily right-wing conservatives and fundamentalist Christians.

The limited access to information questions the validity of these findings. The nature of the study's funding both problematizes and legitimates the findings. On one hand, if only pro-business, right-wing conservative funded projects are granted research access, one can assume it is linked to a fundamental quality of the institution. On the other hand, the BCTF has had a tumultuous history with the TSM and many of its founders and supporters over issues linked to teachers' rights and the preferential hiring practices of schools-of choice. As such, it is reasonable that the schools did not foresee an unbiased research process made by the investigators, despite claims to the contrary.

Once this study was complete, Kalaw (1999) used some of the data and pursued a Master of Arts degree from Simon Fraser University. The TSM as a parent-initiated movement in BC formed the basis of her thesis. She used data from the previous CCPA study to critically analyze school promoters and the parents behind school initiatives to explore the impact on public education policy in BC. Several interviews with PAC members in Surrey and Richmond as well as teachers' association representatives supplemented the data from the CCPA study.

Using Bourdieu's (1997) theory of reproduction as the theoretical underpinning, Kalaw explored social reproduction and three forms of cultural capital: as embodied forms of knowledge in its objectified state; as cultural goods reflecting dominant forms of knowledge; and as institutionalized recognition of a person's knowledge, value and skills. As well, she explored Bourdieu's theory of social capital as establishing relationships, which "yield material or symbolic profits over time" (Kalaw, 1999, p. 4). She felt that her study departed from the CCPA study primarily because the focus shifted away from the schools and programs to the initiatives and choice reform in schools as a part of the intertwining of class and cultural reproduction in public education and neoliberal politics through fused agendas. The problems that were associated with the CCPA study lingered with Kalaw's 1999 study, which included: a lack of onsite research leading to a reliance on secondary interpretation; a reliance on data from the initial study that carried with it the highly politicized agenda; and a reliance on American statistics about choice schooling.

The findings from her study though, did offer an expansion on the arguments put forward in the publication of the CCPA study. She examined the unsubstantiated claims that the traditional approach is a superior pedagogical model. She examined the TSM founding through the discourse of mothering in schooling[16]; the back-to-basic discourse attack on progressive approaches to learning; and the role traditional schooling as the educational arm of the Conservative Right. She examined the discourse of discontent propagated by TSM as a way to generate a pervasive illusion about the public dissatisfaction with schooling. She examined claims made by TSM advocates about the public system, which under scrutiny were little more than propaganda. Her study also revealed the roots of TSM in right-wing political movements in BC and elsewhere obscuring their religious doctrines in the discourse of choice.

> National curricula and assessment, greater opportunities for 'parental control', tighter accountability and control, the marketization and privatization of education-all of these proposals may be internally contradictory as a set of 'reforms', but all are part of the conservative package that has been formed by the neo-liberal and neo-conservative wings of this movement. (Apple, 1993, p. 3)

Study X (2005) explored the phenomenon of traditional schooling by examining the role of the parents and district boards in the establishment of an elementary traditional school in 1995. The study outlined: the motivation of parents to lobby for the school; factors that led to the quick approval of the school; the socio-religious commonalties of the proponents of the schools and the board trustees; the community culture influence in the process and outcome of the school proposal; and the broader discourse on the parents' role and choice in public education. This study identified that unlike certain districts that rejected the establishment of traditional schools, this school district rapidly approved the proposal for a traditional elementary school. The choice to allow the formation of the traditional school was a decision, which fundamentally reflected: the political power carried by the parent supporters; the board's conservative concept of the goals of public education; the influence of groups advocating for both sides; and the desire of school board to maintain student enrollment in the public system. Findings from the study indicated that the mothers of children in the elementary public system initiated the traditional elementary school. The summary of their arguments for traditional schooling were situated around choice, education as training for the work force, and parental involvement in schooling and these

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[16] This discourse examines the work that mothers do and the difference in socio-economic positions that allows for very different experiences of their children in the public school system (Griffith & Smith, 2005).

arguments were generated out of dissatisfaction with the public school system. The board, which consisted of seven trustees elected over multiple terms found little controversy over the matter of allowing traditional schools to open in the district.

Study X (2005) found that the lack of scholarly and rigorous research about traditional schools in BC was due to the bias held by many liberal educationalists that these schools were a threat to the democratic aims of education and to the current decision-making structures in the public school system. The reforms to the decision-making structure included an expanded role for parental input into curriculum and pedagogical practices and decisions, decisions typically made by teachers and administration. Additionally, the study found that school boards denied access to researchers from universities because of the potential for damaging results. Study X (2005) ascribed the lack of research to researchers' beliefs that traditional schooling is not so much a movement as identified by Kalaw (1999) but an insignificant and isolated phenomenon of schooling within certain conservative school districts. Other arguments (Kalaw et al, 1998, Kalaw, 1999) are that the TSM philosophy reflects dominant neoliberal trends in education in Canada and the United States.

Study X (2005) found that the pedagogical benefits of the instructional and curriculum adjustments in the elementary school were merely cosmetic and would be mirrored in students in the public system with equal parental involvement in the day-to-day schooling of their child. Findings also indicated that the extrinsic community versus the intrinsic ethos of the school accounted for the unique nature of the TSM. The values of discipline, patriotism, and religion as educational ethos were more aptly found in the family values and were present in the school because of its structure as a parent initiative. This study claimed that at the board level, the proposal for traditional schooling was met with little resistance as the school board trustees shared the ideals, values, and beliefs encompassed in the term 'traditional' and believed that certain families would be better served through the physical segregation of their child from mainstream public school children. These beliefs reflected the noted conservative community. The school trustee membership at the time of the study, did not reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of community as indicated by the 2006 Census report (Census Report Profile for the city,

2006[*]). There were no members reflecting Indo-Canadian or South Asian ethnicity, which represented 18% of the population of the city.

iii.   Research Advocating School Choice and Traditional Schools

Research supporting the TSM reflects the position of the parents, community, and policy makers who supported this form of schooling. These works offer a unique perspective on the TSM defining the aims of public education in significantly different ways than research that critiques it. SAEE, or similar organizations, primarily fund this body of research. Owens (2004), Brown (2004), Phillips, Raham, & Wagner (2004), and Baumann, Blesch, Luchi, & Rickard (2005) have explored school choice and school choice legislation and the problems associated with district implementation of choice in the public school system. Like Kalaw et al (1998) and Kalaw (1999), these studies co-mingle data and agendas that call the results of the studies into question, yet they offer insight into the beliefs and values of the individuals and groups who support this form of schooling.

The Frontier Center for Public Policy (FCPP) based in Winnipeg, MB, is a similar organization to SAEE. The FCPP focuses on implementing policy that develops an education system that "makes it more sensitive to the needs of its clients and more effective in its performance" (Owens, 2004, NP). FCPP research offers a limited literature review of essentially SAEE funded articles. It explored Canada's schools-of-choice implementation and found that the decisions "are completely dependent on the political whim of individual school boards" (p. 1) requiring, charter[17] legislation to extend the option of school choice to all parents. Statistics provided from SAEE reports indicated, "on standard provincial evaluations, its students have generally performed at a higher level than other local schools and had better scores than the provincial average" (Owens, 2004, p. 6). FCCP research does not question traditional schools' achievement of higher outcomes nor does it problematize the use of standardized testing.

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[*] Reference information has been withheld to protect anonymity of the school and participants.

[17] Charter Schools, according to Owens (2004) are "independent public schools" (p. 2). The difference between Charter and Choice schools is that public authorities must pass laws establishing the processes and eligibility of charter school proposals, as well as an appeals process. This mandated process would remove the political whimsy with which Owens feels School Boards use to approve or disapprove choice in schooling proposals, which would allow better access to all parents in all school divisions.

Brown (2004), funded by SAEE, examined the condition and prospects for school choice in BC and found that "The Ministry of Education's aim of making schools more responsive to the wishes of parents and students is the primary consideration. Other concomitant features of school choice, such as competition, innovation, and efficiency are secondary" (p.9). In light of reforms to legislation regarding open enrollment (choice), he found the condition the Ministry was most responsive to was parental demand for choice, which broadly focused on Traditional, French Immersion, and Fine Art. He argued school trustees and districts differ "considerably in the climate of school choice"(p. 10). He found that many districts have policies that restrict student flow. Some school districts allow for choice, while others restrict it and favor the neighborhood school model.

Brown (2004) provided a comprehensive review of the preliminary conditions of school choice legislation and consideration of how and why some districts implement choice legislation, as "differences in context make for varied interpretations and impacts of school choice" (p. 24). He examined choice as a means for districts to keep students in the public system through permeable catchments boundaries, choice schools, choice programs, and locally developed programs. He noted that at the same time, an increase of standardized assessment provided accountability through reporting student outcomes.

The study examined the importance of the difference between choice schools and the neighborhood school. Brown (2004) found that without significant differences (real or perceived) in program offerings and/or student outcomes, parents would not enroll their children. Research supports that "the extent of parental choice will depend upon the extent to which schools are differentiated and the level of interest expressed by chooser, along with the rules that govern choice procedures and the context in which they operate" (Brown, 2004, p.27).

Baumann, Blesch, Luchi, & Rickard (2005), four graduate students, under the supervision of Brown, (in a Master of Education at the University of British Columbia) explored district responses to choice legislation and whether the legislation had resulted in an increase in school choice. Their study indicated an inconsistent enactment of choice legislation across districts in Lower Mainland BC. They cited a tension between "the libertarian and the egalitarian conception of public education" (p. 80), and found this accounted for the difference in choice implementation. Their study indicated that choice

legislation "has not resulted with a significant change in the types or numbers of programs available" (p. 83). They argued that while permeable catchments' boundaries demonstrate a strong philosophy shift in education in BC, there has not been a substantial shift to enact those reforms at the district level in the cities they studied.

Phillips, Raham, & Wagner (2004), through SAEE, explored school choice in the public systems of Anglo-democracies in Canada, the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia in relation to impact on students and academic performance, graduation rates, employability skills, retention, and satisfaction rates, with an emphasis on disadvantaged and minority students. The article supports and reiterates the arguments that school choice is international, is on the rise, and that by appealing to parental choice, public systems versus private education systems will maintain enrollments. This study though, did not offer a critical examination of choice research as it only included, in Canada, research performed by SAEE. The consensus reached was that there was a lack of study about the impact of school choice research, a common thread in all pro-school choice research.

iv.   Timing of the Research Agendas

During the time-period of 1996-2000, successive scandals dominated the political climate in the province of BC, resulting in the resignation of three NDP Premiers. Various special interest groups began calling for changes in the government and their policies, including the restructuring of the province's education system. During this time, the SAEE funded research examining the impact of school choice on Canadian schools (Brown, 1999). The report produced recommendations for governments, outlining the benefits of school choice. In 2004, two years after the passing of choice legislation, both sides of the traditional school debate began funding research to explore the various effects of school choice.

Brown (2004) and SAEE research examined the benefits of school choice, particularly traditional schools, and the lack of school-choice options in different districts in BC. They argued that choice represented a democratic approach to education and expressed concern about the discretionary power of certain school boards that denied choice schooling in their districts. This school-choice research addressed the lack of implementation of school-choice programs throughout the province and argued for a standard practice for parents to initiate school choice in their district.

Both sides of the school choice debate marketed a difference in the perception of the state of education in BC. The pro- school-choice research heightened the concerns of parents over the failing of the education system. The timing of the research is relevant as SAEE funded several research initiatives supporting choice in 2004, despite little statistical data reflecting positive or increased student outcomes. Research, such as Owens, did not provide a rigorous exploration of student outcomes in choice schools and relied on the discourse of dissatisfaction to inform the value of choice schools. The BCTF and the CCPA research found that restricted access to the schools was counter to the democratic aims of the public education system. They argued that traditional schools were a form of privatized public education that favored conservative-minded parents. Both sides anchored their position within the discourse of democracy, in an attempt to gain public and political approval for their position.

Choice-in-schooling and ultimately, traditional schools, won favor from the Province. This approval was part of a greater trend in provincial reforms to social services that favored market values of competition and efficiency. These reforms made catchments permeable, school choice more available through parental initiatives and school performance statistics more available through reporting of standardized assessment scores. Districts that quickly adopted and enacted school choice proposals, were prepared to accommodate parents by limiting access to certain schools. These districts create a context for teaching that is fundamentally different from those districts that actively deny school choice proposals.

v. **School Districts as a Context for Teaching**

In BC, school district boundaries adhere to the borders of the various cities or groupings of towns in the province. There are 93 school districts in BC (one of which, Conseil Scolaire Francophone, is not confined by boarders). There are 14 school divisions in the Lower Mainland (School/District Contact Map, Ministry of Education BC, 2009). Boards of elected trustees govern the operation of the schools in their districts. Their role is to assist in the implementation and enactment of provincial educational legislation and policy including policies related to school choice.

While schools-of-choice remain politically contentious, traditional schools-of-choice are perhaps, the most contested because of the conservative philosophy and because of their perceived connection to

the Christian Right organizations (Kalaw, 1999). While some school districts in BC have allowed the establishment of traditional schools and programs, Phillips, Raham, & Wagner (2004) found that "between 1994-96, 11 BC school districts rejected proposed traditional schools. Between 1998-2001, five of nine further proposals were rejected" (p. 14), yet these statistics reflect prior decisions to 'open enrollment' legislation, which came in 2002. Gaskell (2001) found that more than a debate about pedagogy, the denial of traditional schools in some districts brings up "the merits of recognizing difference in public educational space"(p.27). She found that when choice in education is treated as a market phenomenon, important conversations about teaching and learning in public schools were set aside to examine school choice solely within the discourse of democracy.

In the review of eight proposals for traditional schools in BC, Kalaw (1999) found that, without exception parents demanding a traditional school option wanted:

1. Schooling experiences that strive for individual excellence and specifically 'content mastery' and basic skills acquisition.
2. Organizing and regulating educational environments for consistency and order through reliance on direct instruction over other learning approaches; separation of knowledge in discrete subject areas and minimizing mixed ability groupings.
3. An educational environment fostering order through clearly defined authority structures both within the classroom and outside of the classroom;
4. An education environment that recognizes the primacy of the family as the source of ultimate authority on all educational matters. (p. 55)

Talbert & McLaughlin (1992) explored how educational reforms negatively influences teaching and learning, by compelling teachers to use "direct instruction to teach the objectives of minimum competency and basic skills for achievement tests" (p. 10). These reforms have created a context for teaching, which provides a fundamentally different experience for the practice of teaching in a district based on the perceived value of the process and products of education.

Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton, & Oakes (1995) found that as they tried to study resistance to tracking or streaming in 10 schools, they needed to expand the context of their studies beyond the schools to include the local community and politicians. They found that the case of school reform efforts created a context that surrounded multiple schools in their district. They found that families in the district held more power in guiding the educational practices within schools given their ability to influence reforms at

the district level and that to understand the school level resistance, the community and political environment needed to be explored as a context for the resistance in the schools.

Cobb, McClain, de Silva Lamberg & Dean (2003), found that situating teacher practice in the official district policy illuminated the tension of subject teachers' agendas with those of the school systems and the districts. They argued that districts as "lived organizations"(p. 20) are far from static, creating a setting for teachers, which is dynamic and evolving. They situated the practice of teaching, in the school and the community, contextualized in the broader district and state reforms. The context of the district and state/provincial organizational polices, the values, beliefs, rules and regulations establish a conceptual context in which teaching functions.

Provincial legislation and district policies have inconsistent affects on the day-to-day teacher practices depending on the subject taught. These studies indicate that discretionary power of school boards complicates consistent enactment of provincial legislation. This discrepancy in application provides a different experience for teachers based on district implementation of reforms. Further to this difference, the subject area taught dictates the extent to which the reforms affect day-to-day practices. The intended outcomes of the official curricula mediated by the unique nature of subject characteristics further impedes uniform application of reforms.

2.4   Visual Art Instruction in Context

i.   Official Context and Visual Art

As Stokrocki (1986) explains, "Since teaching is a multi-dimensional activity, a researcher needs to consider all factors that relate teacher behaviour within the entire art learning environment"(p. 82). The context of teaching in BC has changed dramatically in the last decade, due in part, to policies generated by the provincial government regarding teaching and learning in schools (Davies, 1999). In 2004, Visual Art became an elective[18] for students at the secondary level, no longer mandated as compulsory for graduation. Students are able to choose between Fine Art and Applied Skill in grades 10, 11, or 12 as part of requirements (2004 Graduation Program, BC Ministry of Education, 2009). As a

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[18] An elective is a course taken by students that is considered optional in the academic requirements of the school and district.

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result, the Fine Arts have experienced declining enrollments, but increasing class sizes because of the removal of class size caps.

Provincial education legislation is one of many factors that contribute to the unique context of learning and teaching in Visual Art. The district, as examined earlier, plays a central role in defining a particular context of teaching and learning, however the school itself, which enacts provincial and district policies plays a very significant role. School culture, established by administration, staff, and students, plays a significant role in the way Visual Arts is incorporated and adapted into the larger school curriculum. To further understand how the culture of schools shapes teacher and student practices in Visual Art, art instruction outside the public system is provided to examine the role of a central culture on instruction.

a. <u>Official Context and Visual Art Instruction-Outside the School System</u>

Different types of public institutions have incorporated Visual Art, to support their aims, such as art therapy in hospitals and art workshops in prisons (Cleveland, 1992). Examining Visual Art instruction in an institution helps illustrate how teachers formulate a perceived context of practice, from the official curriculum and context. This perceived context influences the ways the teachers construct their role and that of their students, in these settings. It assists in developing a perception of the nature of the learner and it influences the decisions made about curriculum and pedagogy within a particular site. The following studies provide examples of the role of the arts within specific institutional contexts and explicate how the official and perceived context of an institution affects practice in Visual Art. Additionally, the study of practice provides a nuanced interpretation of the context.

Williams (2003) defined how the aims of an art workshop in a men's prison, designed to improve identity and self-awareness through creativity, conflicted with the official goals of the prison institution, which sought conformity. This collection of research reflected on the existence and role of prisons, conditions within prisons, and how art workshops and instruction functioned within these institutions. Hillman, (1992) identified particular behavioural differences between the inmates who participated in the arts workshops in terms of violent outbreaks, stress levels, and recidivism. Cleveland (1992) substantiated these observations, that Visual Art, in these contexts, provided the prisoners with a means of

individuality and expressionism in an environment that typically attempted to heavily surveil and control these characteristics. While providing an opportunity for participants to seemingly work outside the 'acceptable' parameters of behaviour in the prison, Visual Art actually served the purposes of the institution by contributing to the aims of non-violence and resulted in a reduction of repeat offences once the inmate was released. Rates of recidivism among inmates who participated in the workshops dropped comparatively, indicating coherence in the function of the art program with the goals of the prison system. Exploring this further, Cleveland (1992) found that Visual Art contributed to higher rates of self-expression and a more concrete self-identity, providing for greater control over chaos attributed to violence and repeat offences.

Williams (2003) observes that prisons have become more about incarceration than rehabilitation with the rise of the prison industrial complex[19]. The goals of art programs have increasingly come to conflict with the goals of privately run prisons. The individualism and positive self-identity created through artistic expression reduced recidivism, but did not increase the productivity of the prison as a site of industry for manufacturing. This reflects a schism in the official philosophy of rehabilitation and the ways in which the instructors perceived the official context of the institution. Within this perceived context, the value of learning Visual Art, the nature of the student and teacher are constructed, by the instructors. Examining the roles of art programs in prisons reveals a unique insight into the attitudes and beliefs of the instructors, participants, and administration of the institutions. As well, the study of Visual Art in context revealed a transition in the purpose of the prison, defined by the official curricula of the institution.

Venable (2005) examined the facilitation of juvenile offenders' learning styles through art production and discussed the expanded role of the arts outside of the domain of art therapy for incarcerated youth. For this specific context, Venable provided a 'thick description' of the physical environment of the detention center and cell. As well, he provided details pertaining to the learning

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[19] The term prison industrial complex is used to describe the rise of prisons as a central feature in the economy of the United States. Private capital is being used to build and operate prisons. These prisons receive private manufacturing contracts and the inmates provide the labour. As the number of incarcerated increases, due in part, to a loss of funding for social programs, the prison industrial complex's purpose has shifted from prisoner rehabilitation to economic profit (Gordon, 2004).

abilities of the participants and how the loss of freedom and control affected the prisoners. He addressed the need for additional research to examine the potential benefits of art education in these centers as a means to reduce stress, depression, violence, and recidivism, as current and available statistics relate primarily to incarcerated adults.

These studies provided insight into the nature of the subject of Visual Art and coherence in the beliefs and values of teachers/instructors who worked in the subject of Visual Art in these facilities. Grossman and Stoldosky (1995) noted that similarities within a subject setting, such as Visual Art, in different institutions were more consistent than were similarities across varied subject settings within the same institution. The aims of the programs within these sites directly reflect the aims of the instructors and their beliefs about the value of learning and teaching in these institutions. In what Wilson (1977) would describe as institutional rule breaking, the teachers in these scenarios adapted the curriculum against the aims of the institution in support of both subject and individual beliefs and values about learning in Visual Art. In addition to further clarifying the role of beliefs and values in teacher practice, this research has informed understandings about methods used to promote uniformity in application of policies, including: developing teaching as a distributed activity; increased assessment; and highly visible school cultures.

b.   Official Context and Visual Art Instruction-Inside the Public School System

School culture

> Teachers' instructional practices are profoundly influenced by the institutional
> constraints that they attempt to satisfy, the formal and informal sources of assistance
> on which they draw, and the materials and resources that they use in their classroom
> practice. (Cobb et al., 2003, p 13)

Most often, the research and study of teaching and learning context informs school reform policies, primarily because factors effecting outcomes are isolated within a particular context so they can be assessed in relation to school performance. School culture is defined by "cultural patterns [that] are highly enduring, [have] a powerful impact on performance, [which] shapes the way people think, feel, and act" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 4). The official school culture is defined by what is purposely made visible to the school and community through accepted practices, traditions, rules, and behaviours. The non-official, hidden school curricula is less purposely visible but significant in school outcomes,

including school day organization, subject streaming, administration and department organization, and school community make-up including socioeconomic factors (Apple, 1990). The tacit teaching of norms, values, and beliefs in the routine of the school day conveys the hidden curriculum. This curriculum also includes implicit social labeling and behaviour modification as aspects of school life (Apple, 1990).

Research focusing on the implications of context, typically facilitates agendas aimed at improving school outcomes by centrally establishing an official school culture. Deal and Peterson's (1999) study of tribal behaviour in schools specifically focused on context-effects as related to school reform. These studies offer the opportunity to understand how school culture and schools-as-tribes have refined the official context into an immersed experience to promote conformity by the staff and students to the school culture or philosophy. Schools-as-tribes re-work the concept of school culture to explore, more deeply, how the non-official school culture is shaped and how it functions to guide teaching and learning, in schools. The case study of a primary public school in Northern Arizona focused on school improvement by developing a highly visible culture. This work described the visual qualities akin to tribal nature in a school that redefined the context of learning. The community, described as having a high rate of unemployment, extreme poverty, is on Navajo residential lands with traditional housing, and a picturesque natural environment. The study focused on the visual elements, brought to the school to support the indigenous traditions, values, and religion and to develop a school culture, linked to positive connotations of the Navajo people. Additionally, school architecture, posters, and other visual public displays supported the core values and beliefs of the community and school:

> The school's purpose is reflected in artifacts and architecture, embodied in core values and beliefs, reinforced through ritual and ceremony, carried through stories and lore, and watched over by an informal group of players. (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 21)

As the school's culture became more visible in the physical space of the school, as well as in the curriculum and pedagogical aims of the teachers, Deal and Peterson argued that the learning experience for these students was improved. The school adopted visual cues to alter the teachers' and students' perceptions of the community and the learner. The structured environment became a visual reminder that the school was a community, a tribe of sorts, with individual responsibilities designed to support the collective.

Deal and Peterson's (1999) work on school reform explores how a visible school culture promotes reform based on a consistent adherence to a defined official school culture. The official curriculum, constituted by acceptable behaviours, curriculum focus, and the physical organization of the school created a school culture, adhered to by staff and students. Cobb et al (2003) argues that this form of adherence to an official school culture alters teaching from an autonomous activity to teaching as a distributed activity. This alteration promotes the uniform adoption of school reforms, through levels of assessment and surveillance performed by administration, parents, students, and other staff. This directly influences the likelihood that teachers across subject areas will conform their curriculum and pedagogical decisions to meet the outlined expectations of the official school culture.

Visual Art frequently functions as a more autonomous subject within schools, due in part to the lack of external assessment. That said, teachers might be more vulnerable to the constraints placed on their curriculum and practice based on the school philosophy and school culture. More recently, research focused on reform acknowledged that unique subject natures resisted uniform application of policies, offering resistance when conflict between policy and subject values arose.

<u>Visual Art and School Culture</u>

Asher (2000) examined the development of her emancipatory agenda in her Visual Art instruction in an inner-city school. This agenda encouraged students to develop a more positive connection to their community and neighborhood environment through drawing exercises in outdoor locations. The school's context and culture was linked to external factors of the neighborhood and community. The school was identified as inner city; the city existed as a typology of urban decay. The community defined itself through negative behaviours associated with poverty, drug addiction, and homelessness in an environment devoid of beauty. The student population was defined as 'at-risk', raised in foster care, and poor. These non-official attributes defined a hidden context, which significantly and detrimentally, affected teaching and learning.

Asher (2000) confronted the non-official culture of the school by increasing student achievement and by interrupting the cycles of poverty through empowerment. The school culture as a "complex phenomenon affected by students and teachers, curriculum content, and internal and external political and

social forces" (Stokrocki, 2004, p. 442) became the perceived context for the teacher. Within this perceived context, she structured the subject aims of Visual Art, the nature of the learner, and the role of the teacher to counter community and student perceptions of the school. In this study, the values of the subject of Visual Art were consistent with those of the teacher, and with those of the school. Congruency existed between the curricular and pedagogical decisions made by the teacher and students and the aims of the official context of the school. School reform research also describes how school culture as an experience of immersion, alters the incongruent aims of teachers and school reforms to promote conformity.

A study performed by Stokrocki (1991) that explored Visual Art teaching practices in a public school with a religious philosophy/ideology explicitly defining the official context, found that the aims of the teacher yielded to the goals of the institution and to the students, despite a dissonance between the values of the subject and the community. The site of this study, an Amish public school in the United States, resembles the official context of The Secondary Traditional School, given the fundamentalist undertones of the school ideology, the back-to-basic discourse, and the commonalities in the community's religious majority. She began with a thick description of the historical background, and the religious and culture practices of the Amish people. She identified the role of education in that society and the expectations of the community and students. She identified teacher and student characteristics that related to the practice of teaching. While Deal and Peterson would recognize that many schools function as tribes given their organizational nature, schools such as the Amish school dramatically define their separation from mainstream education through dress, beliefs, and values that form the philosophy in that particular school.

The official school philosophy permeated the practices and curriculum decisions of the non-Amish grade eight, art teacher. Instead of working against the culture or official context of the school, the art teacher incorporated specific aspects, which included: an emphasis on structured classroom settings, incorporation of practical knowledge in curriculum development, a craft approach to project design to honor the students community practices, avoidance of religious connotations during instruction, and incorporating cooperation versus competition. These adjustments reflected patterning behaviours,

learning content, and expectations from the community. The school, community, or students did not

encourage the hallmarks of democratic education such as individualism, freedom of expression, and the

right to question, which are generally located in the Visual Art subject, and as such, the teacher did not

incorporate these values in her curriculum or pedagogical decisions. While Stokrocki did not specifically

address the teacher's beliefs and values related notes that:

> L had taught in this school system for five years, had a Bachelor's Degree in Art Education,
> and excelled in drawing and painting. She was recommended as an outstanding teacher by a
> university art education professor and the president of the state art education association. (pg. 7)

These findings support Talbert and McLaughlin's (1992) conclusions that the official context of a school

can dramatically influence teacher practice, despite apparent dissimilarities between the teacher and

subject beliefs and those of the institution. These findings reflect that a close study of the official and

perceived context revels the socialization and conformity of teacher practice in an attempt to adhere to

school culture. A further exploration of subject context reveals how teachers interpret the official context

of their practice.

ii.   The 'Perceived' Curriculum as Context

Significant research has indicated (Bullock and Gailbraith, 1992; Carter, 1993; Connelly et al,

1997; Clandinin, 1985; Gess-Newsome et al, 2003; Grauer, 1998; Pajares, 1992) that the personal and

practical knowledge constituted in part by beliefs, attitudes, and values held by the teacher may have the

greatest influence in directing classroom practice, providing an individualized response to official and

subject context. While a majority of research suggests that beliefs are inextricably linked to the subject

matter, other beliefs and values held by teachers prior to teaching direct their aims in the classroom

through decisions made about curriculum and pedagogy. The following studies are offered as a means to

better understand the role of personal and practical knowledge research and how the teacher's knowledge

and values provide a unique interpretation of the contexts within which they teach. Carter (1993)

considered the role of stories in teaching found that:

> teaching events are framed within a context of a teacher's life history. As a result, the central
> themes are often moral and philosophical, having to do more with feelings, purposes, images,
> aspirations and personal meaning that with teaching method or curriculum structures in
> isolation from personal experience or biography. (p. 7-8)

As Goodlad, et al (1979) found, "perceived curricula are curricula of the mind" (pg. 61). He further found that what teachers perceive the extant curriculum to be and what attitudes they have toward what they view as reality have a significant impact on reforming the context; a perceived context of practice.

Connelly, et al (1997) identified that teacher knowledge research reflects on what teachers know and how they express this knowing in the classroom. Their studies used narrative data including autobiographies, teaching stories, family stories, memories, and oral histories. These sources of data define personal practical knowledge as experiential knowledge, which is "embodied and reconstructed out of the narrative of a teacher's life" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987, p. 490). The findings from studies of personal practical knowledge assist in understanding the practice of teaching as fundamentally driven by teacher knowledge versus the demands of the school and district. The apparent and consistent link between teacher knowledge and beliefs to subject knowledge help explain links or commonalities, which exist across subject areas in different schools (Grossman & Stoldosky, 1995). The consistent link in research illustrates that teachers' subject knowledge, beliefs, and values affect school change. Research about the alteration of teacher beliefs for reform efforts in schools (Gess-Newsome et al, 2003) explored teaching as a distributed activity, where official curricula used multiple methods to conform teacher beliefs and attitudes about practice to the official contexts. These findings assist in understanding how teachers can hold beliefs about practices that fundamentally conflict with each other; one supporting personal values of teaching while the other supports subject values of teaching.

Bullock and Gailbraith (1992) examined the practices of two secondary Visual Art teachers and what role their beliefs played in their practice. They questioned, "Are art teachers' beliefs and practices actually student-centered or subject centered or are they more ambiguous and undefined due to the real-life complexities of schooling itself" (p. 87)? The findings from their study indicated a common theme of dissonance between the beliefs and experiences of the teachers and the external sources such as school policy, opinions about Visual Art education, and lack of background knowledge of students. The findings indicated, "each teacher modified her beliefs, preferred theories, and teaching strategies within the contextual nature of schooling and appeared to result in an ongoing compromise" (p.95). While this study provided an interesting perspective on the classrooms practices and the knowledge and values of the

teachers, it did not contextualize the teachers' practices in the school, other than to identify that grade-levels taught. Were the realities they wrote of in schooling initiated by state, district, or school level? Did community attributes create contextual realities? Did the students solely initiate them? How did the teachers accommodate their students' beliefs? Situating the teachers' work in additional contexts, would offer a better understanding of the decision-making process.

iii.   Operationalized and Ideal Curriculum: Visual Art Classroom Practice as Context

As Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) argue, "The organizational context of high schools also explicitly interacts with subject matter" (p. 5). They examined the nature of school subjects within institutions and contended:

> Because teachers work in subject-specific contexts and hold a number of subject-specific beliefs related to teaching and learning, the particular issues and policies that high school teachers view as problematic vary. We argue that these conceptions of subject matter create conceptual contexts. (1995, p.6)

These conceptual or subject contexts were formed through: the different histories and epistemologies; the nature of the curriculum; the perceived and real ranking within the school; and the culture and norms of the class. Talbert and McLaughlin (1992) argue that further to the "structures, policies, resources, values, beliefs, norms, routines and social relations" (p.6) which help define the subject and school contexts, behaviour related to the "unwritten rules and traditions, norms, and expectations that seem to permeate everything" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p.2) define the implicit curriculum (Eisner 1985). By exploring the practice of teaching through interplay of contexts, subject/discipline settings can be located within the larger arena of the school context. This framework allows for a greater inclusion of factors, which include both the official and implicit qualities of the schools and disciplines as relevant to the practice of teaching in Visual Art.

Gray and MacGregor (1991) documented broad similarities in secondary Visual Art classrooms across Canada, which included a studio-based approach to learning and instruction and teacher roles, which included providing technical advice and support to students during the studio process. This study found that typically, Visual Art programs and the teachers operated with considerable autonomy and the central tenet of the art classroom was the emphasis and encouragement of student individualism. Additionally, they found that the role of the art teacher was defined as providing students with

opportunities to realize their own goals, including career pursuits and art as enjoyment. They found that typically instruction was one-on-one, and that a teacher-centered approach was not the norm.

Disciplines-as-tribes as documented by Wilson (1977) indicated that the unique nature of the Visual Art classroom, adopts ceremonies, rituals, and behaviours, which separate it from other disciplines in the schools. Grossman and Stoldosky (1995) explored the role of subjects in secondary teaching and found that teachers belong to distinct subcultures, characterized by differing beliefs, values, and norms, all which create unique contexts for teaching. Cobb et al (2003) found that different disciplines function differently within institutional settings and that similarities in disciplines across institutions are more frequent than similarities across disciplines within the same institution.

While subject-centered beliefs are significant in guiding practice, individual attributes of the Visual Art teacher are extremely relevant in understanding classroom practices. Kowalchuk (1997) explored the differences in the perceptions of art and art teaching between experienced and novice teachers and found that novice teachers typically relied on published lesson plans to guide studio work with students. She also found that novice art teacher's had superficial understanding of the subject area and were frequently unable to relate artistic knowledge to student experience. Experienced teachers had broader and richer knowledge of their subject area and had better conceptual and procedural knowledge. She also found that preservice and novice teachers typically had a very limited number of strategies to communicate their ideas and knowledge about art. If students did not understand or were resistant, these teachers had a limited ability to redirect their teaching to provide an explanation. She also found that novice teachers did not create strong connections or cross-links within the curriculum, confirming that novice teachers had a difficult time assessing and applying their content knowledge in the classroom.

Grauer (1998) explored the beliefs brought to education programs by pre-service teachers in elementary and secondary cohorts and whether these beliefs changed during their education program. Her findings indicated that for the Visual Art specialists in the program, school experience promoted subject socialization, supporting Grossman and Stodolsky's (1995) findings that as beliefs and values are subject oriented in secondary schools, the subject itself becomes distinct within the school organization.

These findings support Talbert and McLaughlin's (1992) conclusion that different disciplines influence how teachers understand reforms which affect what they teach and what students learn.

Grossman and Stoldosky (1995) concluded that consistency in subject knowledge may be unaffected by school context. The consistency of values between teacher and subject created boundaries between disciplines in schools. The distinct nature of each subject provides a rationale about the resistant nature of disciplines to the uniform application of reforms directed by provincial/state, district, and school level administration. For example, the nature of Visual Art resists the use of standardized assessment, which means that learning in this course, with this evaluation strategy, cannot contribute to reported school outcomes. As such, a pervasive perception that learning in arts is less valuable, significantly affects the relative importance of Visual Art in a student's education.

iv.   **Experienced Curriculum: Student Learning in Context**

Gray and MacGregor (1991) found that, in general, the role of the art teacher was defined as providing students with opportunities to realize their own goals, including career pursuits and art as enjoyment. Stokrocki (1991) found that the teacher's instructional practices in the Amish school were very much directed by the official curriculum, but that her practices were also modified to meet the desires of the students about particular studio projects in art, including preferences for geometric designs and realism. She also found that despite the modifications the teacher made to accommodate the official religious context of the school, the teacher encouraged her students to use non-stereotypical images, which contradicted the Amish traditions. She also planned a multitude of studio projects as she found that the students did not have the attention span for long-term projects. The Amish typically fostered characteristics around the values of craftsmanship and hard work. As well, the lack of vocal participation in the class, which Stokrocki attributed to a language barrier, but may have also been a cultural barrier, directed the teacher's modifications to instruction, which included step-by-step instructions. As the students' behaviours at times, conflicted with the traditional values, such as attention to craftsmanship, the teacher altered the program to support the needs and desires of the students. These modifications were not radical and did not reflect a lack of support for the Amish traditions; they simply were adapted to meet the needs of the students.

Research has explored the notion of student behaviours and needs directing the classroom practices of the teachers in numerous ways. For the purposes of this study, a focus on how teachers adapt curriculum to meet the needs of culturally, non-vocal students in class; how cultural factors relate to classroom participation; and how early Visual Art or pre-service art teachers perceive their practice in terms of what they need to do and know for success in the Visual Art classroom is provided in the literature review.

Johnson (1997) explored how cultural norms affect oral communications in classroom as a way to understand how and why students of varying cultures participate differently in courses at the post-secondary level. Stokrocki found that students in the Amish class were non-vocal, limiting a significant process in critical learning. Students, culturally conditioned to be respectful of adult authority and to be accepting of teacher-centered approaches, are unaccustomed to verbally expressing an opinion or position to a teacher or to classmates (Johnson, 1997). As well, Stokrocki found that students in the Amish class had a higher reliance on realism as the goal for their artwork. Conceptual or contemporary work reflecting beliefs, a position on social issues, or significant use of imagination was not the norm. The teacher found that students were reluctant to think independently because they were not encouraged to develop opinions or preferences. The teacher also avoided the use of symbolism as it often resulted in conflicts with religious doctrines.

Hartley, Bray, and Kehle (1998) confirmed a vast amount of research, which indicated that student learning and achievement increases through active participation. Engaged learning increased behaviours and beliefs in students, which promoted a positive experience in education. Within Visual Art, the use of verbal critique for peer and self-assessment promotes an increase in social responsibility, self-awareness, and critical thinking skills related to acquisition and organization of new knowledge (Cotner, 2001; British Columbia, Ministry of Education, Social responsibility: A framework, 2001). Critique is a process intertwined in critical social theory and "critique is a constructive force in arts communities precisely because it opens discussion that might otherwise be closed" (Freedman, 2000, p. 321). Freedman, (2000) also argues that a social reconstructionist perspective in art education implies that art can make a difference and incite action in students' lives for an enriched and improved society

and that critique is a process linked to this perspective. While Cotner (2001) confirms that getting high school students to talk about art is a difficult task, she found that critique revealed the implicit references to social goals important in their schools.

Howard (2004) examined the ways students in Northern Thailand experienced the socialization of respect at their school. This study examined the "face-to-face interactions [as] infused with symbolic acts that display the recognition of the sacredness of self and others" (p. 2). The study explored the "demeanors of deference to others [which] constitute the means by which social actors make public their attitudes and stances toward the personal identities of the other community members and/or social roles that they occupy" (p.3). This research examined the modeling of behaviours of the authority structures from the home, in the classroom setting. Howard (2004) found that the students' socialization into the practices of respect linked to what it "means to learn, what it means to be a student, and what it means to teach others" (p. 4). Primarily, the findings indicated that children needed to learn how to embody the practices of respect made explicit in the metadiscursive practices of the community members. Howard found that the displays of respect structured the forms of participation in the classroom during specific activities, and not throughout all classroom activities.

In the traditional school literature, a quiet classroom in all subject areas, signifies that the teacher is firmly in control and that students are actively engaged in learning (Key Visuals, 2009). Research related to new and preservice teachers' beliefs about behaviour and discipline in their classroom also suggests that new teachers interpret quiet behaviour as good behaviour. Student teachers and new teachers focused on developing and maintaining non-disruptive class behaviours, typically attend to students who are acting out (Kowalchuck, 2000). In classrooms where students' behaviour is non-responsive or non-vocal, teachers may adapt curriculum and instruction in order to develop student participation, including small group settings, peer support groups, student presentations, and limited use of whole group interactions. The teacher in Stokrocki's (1991) study opted to avoid classroom participation due to a lack of response. Indirectly, this behaviour supported the official aims of compliance and conformity by limiting opportunities for critical engagement in learning. By allowing student behaviours to guide classroom practices, the teacher adapted both curriculum and pedagogy,

which conflicted with the nature of the discipline of Visual Art to accommodate the behaviours of the students, which supported the cultural and religious direction of the school.

2.5   Summary

"…(Our) view of teaching [is that it is] permeated by multiple layers of context, each of which has the capacity to significantly shape educational practice" (Talbert & McLaughlin, 1992, p. 31). The studies selected for review offer insight into contextual research to better understand the practice of teaching in Visual Art. The understandings gained in research offered ways in which context has been established by reforms, policies, philosophies and disciplines in their official and perceived state.

The official context of schools, constructed through the discursive practices of rules, purposes, policies, and mission statements, define the school culture through official signs and symbols. The design of school culture reconfigures the concept of teaching as a distributed activity, as a means to conform teacher practice to particular aspects of the school environment. Research on the role of teacher beliefs and values defines teaching as an autonomous activity navigated not by official context, school culture, but by teacher perception of the values of education.

The perceived context is constructed by the teacher's interpretations of the official context and mediated by their history, their values and beliefs about their role as a teacher, the nature of the learner, and the nature of the discipline of Visual Art. A majority of studies found a consistent interpretation between the values and beliefs of teachers within the subject of Visual Art. These beliefs supported a democratic and emancipatory agenda taught through self-expressionism, creativity, inclusivity, and self-awareness (Gray & MacGregor, 1991). While beliefs of teachers are inextricably linked to the discipline they teach, Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) found that teachers hold beliefs and values about teaching that are not directly linked to normative subject specific knowledge, and that these beliefs may conflict with the subject held beliefs. For example, Bresler (1994) found that despite a normative perception of student learning in Visual Art as highly individualized, pedagogical practices that restrict creativity, such as prescriptive projects, reflected a conflicting teacher desire for order and uniformity. Additional studies (Venable, 2005; Williams, 2003) have also indicated that the cohesive values of both the Visual Art subject and the teacher often times conflicted with the aims of the institution within which they function

yet the initial values and beliefs were maintained. At other times, the values of the teacher yielded to the official context of the school through an alteration of curriculum content and pedagogical practice offering an inconsistent understanding of how beliefs and values of the teacher guide practice in institutions whose official context conflicts with the teacher's and disciplines aims.

Studies that have explored the facets of contextual relationships frequently offer an incomplete understanding of how the multiple layers of context and their unique make-up interact to inform teacher decisions about curriculum and pedagogy. Visual Art, because of its relative autonomous nature within the school system, creates a unique opportunity to better understand this interaction. While research supports the perception that there is uniformity between the Visual Art teacher and subject beliefs, the nature of the subject is not fixed or static, as Stankiewicz (2000) established through the examination of discipline construction in Visual Art education. As the nature of the discipline changes, so do the inherent values and beliefs guiding curriculum and pedagogy. As such, the context of the practice, understood through the interpretation of the teacher, offers a better understanding of practice situated in both subject and personal values and beliefs.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.1   Introduction

> Contextual studies demand field study and an interpretative type of research that positions a local context, such as a class, a school, a community center, or an institution, within larger embedded context within a given culture. (Stokrocki, 2004, p. 440)

The focus of this thesis is the study of one teacher's curriculum decisions and pedagogical practices within a specific context: a traditional school. Using a critical, case study methodology, data was gathered using ethnographic methods, including participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews, and document collection. The participants were the senior Visual Art teacher, the school principal, and a focus group of students. The district and school characteristics provided unique insight into the formulation of curriculum decisions and pedagogical practices in Visual Art. Five domains of curriculum, as defined by Goodlad et al (1979) were used to organize the findings.

The constructivist paradigm "maintains that human beings construct their perceptions of the world, that no one perception is 'right' or more' real' that another" (Glesne, 2006, p.7). This paradigm describes knowledge as created and not discovered and that we understand behaviour only in the context in which it occurs. As such, my role as a researcher was not to simply overlay a theory as a means to explicate teacher practice. To explore the effects of the traditional philosophy on the behaviour studied, namely teacher practices and student learning, these behaviours were located, critically, in their socio/political context.

The inclusion of a focus group of students within the inquiry into teacher decision-making reflects the potential role of student needs in directing the classroom practices of Visual Art teachers (Gray & MacGregor, 1991; Stokrocki, 1991). Their inclusion provided understandings about how they experienced curriculum in a traditional school and a Visual Art class. It also provided insight into how Ms. Terri's perception of the students' experience conditioned her teaching practices. These findings were critically contextualized in the historical evolution of TSM and current reforms, as a means to explore external contingent factors affecting the teacher's practice and the students' learning. As theorists examine neoliberal reforms within the discourse of democracy, teacher practice and student learning is

often implicitly defined as a homogenous activity, equally impacted by external factors. This study situates Ms. Terri's practice in educational reforms and the evolution of TSM to explore the unique impact of these reforms on teaching and learning in Visual Art.

The analysis of legislation, educational reforms, district and school policies, and traditional school research explicated the formulation of the official context of The Secondary Traditional School. Analysis included a holistic interpretation of data. The coding of data identified dominant themes, which were organized into four categories, based on research questions that emerged during the study.

3.2   Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gain a greater understanding of the influences on the teaching practices of the Visual Art teacher in The Secondary Traditional School. To do this, I utilized Goodlad et al's (1979) five domains of curriculum to define the contexts of Ms. Terri's practice. Using the domains as a framework to understand curriculum allowed for the exploration of Ms. Terri's perception of practice, her day-to-day practices in the classroom, and the students' understanding of those practices, while critically locating these interpretations in school reforms and the official curriculum of traditional schooling. The primary research question was:

1. What insights can be gained about the contextual nature of Visual Art teaching and learning in The Secondary Traditional School?

The questions that emerged during the study included:

2. How do discursive practices form official context of the traditional school?

3. How does the Visual Art teacher's perceived context guide her curriculum and pedagogical decisions?

4. What are the curriculum and pedagogical practices of the Visual Art teacher?

5. How do students experience the teacher's curricular and pedagogical decisions in Visual Art?

The order of questions 2-4, narrows the curriculum domain from an abstract philosophy and document established at the provincial and district levels to the concrete experiences of both the teacher and the student participants. This order implies a linear progression of curriculum implementation, from province through to the student, yet the findings indicate that the implementation is not linear. These findings will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four and Five.

3.3   Defining "The Case"

The case, a grade eleven/twelve Visual Art class within a traditional school in lower mainland BC offers a distinct and unique opportunity to understand teacher practice amid educational reforms. Stake (2005) distinguishes three forms of case study: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case studies. The use of the instrumental case study is "mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization (p. 445). While Stake (2005) defines the epistemological question defined by case studies as "What can be learned about the case?" (p. 443) opposed to what may be generalized beyond it, he acknowledges that context must be considered when studying a case. The instrumental case study still requires the in-depth exploration of the case, but the knowledge gained facilitates our understanding of something else. The 'something else' in this study is the impact of educational reforms and the traditional school philosophy on teaching and learning in Visual Art.

Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton, & Oakes (1995) extended the definition of case to include context as case. They utilized the constructivist paradigm to define a case as context to explore detracking[20] within the multiple of contexts of social reforms, community contexts, and district level policies. During the course of their study, they learned "to build outward from the school site into the local community, and to co-construct the boundaries of the case with the help of our respondents" (p.18).

Nominalists[21] would argue, cases are theoretical in nature and do not exist until the researcher constructs or co-constructs them with participants (Wells et all, 1995). For this study the case of the grade 11/12 Visual Art class, was bound by both the physical structure of the school and by specific activity patterns, histories, characteristics, beliefs, and values of the subject. The boundaries created by the unique behaviours, beliefs, and values, of Visual Art, form a case separate from other disciplines in the school. The ordering[22] of disciplines within the school hierarchy, as perceived by students, parents, and teachers and the inconsistent application of provincial and district reform efforts create further

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[20] Detracking is a process of removing tracking or streaming as a classroom organizational method for learning.
[21] Nominalists argue that the meaning of a general term cannot be independently understood, and that meaning is relational.
[22] Ordering includes the number of instructional minutes, use in assessment in student outcomes, and designation as a compulsory course.

boundaries for practice (Eisner, 1985). As provincial reforms restructure education in the province, the way in which different subject areas participate reflects an uneven application of reforms, such as standardization and assessment. This further serves to establish the case's boundaries in the subject of Visual Art.

The broader historical evolution of school-choice and the TSM in BC illuminates the various positions of the players who have attached meaning to traditional schools through a discourse of democracy and choice. This context is comprised of the political agendas that construct and reconstruct social programs in BC creating specific conditions for teacher practice in the province. The Secondary Traditional School must be contextualized within broader legislation and school reforms, yet "any text exists in a constant state of multiple references to other texts. It is through these references that a text takes on its identity" (Harker, 1992, p. 2). Although earlier policies and legislation are discussed in this thesis, the use of legislation, since the election of the BC Liberals is problematic as the adoption of neoliberal reforms began prior to the BC Liberals taking office in the Province. It should be noted that the *Legacy for Learners*, 1988, was produced during the Social Credit[23] government. This document brought the concept of choice in schooling to the forefront and legitimized parental choice in schools, but in terms of legislation adopting school choice, the BC Liberal's have consistently implemented neoliberal policies for social programs.

3.4   Methodological Practice and Research Design

As Connelly, Clandinin, & He (1997) argued, attempting to overlay a theory onto a teacher is not productive in developing an understanding of their practice. What is necessary is to work with teachers and students during research so that the study will emerge through a process of research, directed in part, by the participants. Data collection included participant interviews, observation during class time, which focused on individual and relational behaviour of the participants, and document collection. Transcripts of the interviews were submitted to Ms. Terri and the Principal for review and Ms. Terri reviewed the summary and analysis of her as a research participant contained in the Chapter Four. She included

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[23] The Social Credit party was established in 1949, but held continuous political power in BC from 1952-1972 and 1975-1991. The original social credit policies of monetary reform were rejected and the Social Credit Party became a political party for social conservatives in BC (BC Social Credit Website, http://www.bcsocialcredit.bc.ca/)

adjustments to both the interview transcripts and summary that clarified the intended meaning of her responses. These adjustments typically pertained to the role of her experience as a student in religious schools and her perceptions of students' levels of engagement in class. Ms. Terri felt that her practice was very responsive to the needs of the students and she felt that she continually adjusted her curriculum and pedagogical styles based on their needs. Although the students were initially included in the scope of the study, the greater emphasis subsequently placed on the participant students' role in directing practice, in part, is attributed to Ms. Terri's direct contribution to the research process.

i.   Fieldwork

a.   <u>Time and Validation</u>

One of the primary markers of validation in fieldwork is time. Ethnographic research confirms that time is a mark of quality of knowledge. Wolcott (1995) claims "Fieldwork takes time. Does that make time the critical attribute of fieldwork? According to ethnographic tradition, the answer is yes" (p.77). More recently, consideration has been given to ethnographies that employ less time in the field, based on "the intensification of academic life and the pressures ...for quick completion [which] make a sustained 12 month minimum research period a luxury" (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004, p. 536).

The aforementioned authors suggest several methods for rich data collection without extended time in the field. Such methods are particularly relevant for school ethnographies, where the immersion in the context through participant observation and formal and informal interviews offer rich data collection. The length of time spent in the field for my study was ten weeks. Modifications were made to the time frame during the course of the study to observe the introduction, process, completion, and evaluation of the focus group's studio art projects. The students in the focus group completed three projects during the course of the study. Observing three completed projects allowed for the repeated observation of the characteristics of teacher practice. Interviews explored classroom observations and the collection of multiple forms of data allowed for triangulation of sources of data.

While this study is not an ethnography in a true sense, primarily due to the relative short length of time in the field, time at the site is still important in establishing validity to prevent what Wolcott (2002) calls "educational travel writing" (p. 45). My research required data collection to occur during school

hours, specifically linking the research process to available class time. Data collection also included fieldtrips to observe the teacher and the focus group in environments outside the classroom related to curriculum and pedagogical decisions. Spindler and Spindler (1992) concluded the following regarding time on site:

> There is no hard and fast rule regarding what constitutes sufficient time on the site. Significant discoveries can be made in 2 weeks or less of ethnographic observation, but the *validity* of ethnographic observation is based on observation in situ that lasts long enough to permit the ethnographer to see things happen not once but repeatedly. (p. 65)

b. Participant Observation: Schedule and Procedures

I observed four classes per week (Monday, two classes, one before and one after lunch; Wednesday morning; and Friday afternoon). This schedule provided some time to Ms. Terri where I was not present in the classroom, yet allowed for observation during 67% of her classes.

During class hours, I observed Ms. Terri and the students in the focus group's patterns of activity and illustrated these activities with field notes using thick description. The observations and description attended to: How Ms. Terri situated herself in terms of teacher-centered or student-centered approach. This included: how students contributed to the design of their art assignment, reflecting the level of individualized, student-centered learning opportunities; the level of uniformity required in the work; the goals prescribed by Ms. Terri; the perceived level of student technical ability, verbally communicated by students and the teacher; and the level, form, and amount of assessment. I observed the interactions between Ms. Terri and the students for resolution of technical and aesthetic difficulties. I noted what questions the students asked, who asked the questions, whom they asked for assistance, and how those questions were responded to. I observed how Ms. Terri identified behavioural issues and how she attended to them, as well the work and behaviour that did and did not receive praise. I observed the level of student engagement with the projects and how they expressed that engagement as a reflection of their individualized learning. I described how the teacher and students interacted with the physical environment of the classroom, including where the teacher stood in the class during one-on-one discussions, during lectures, and during class discussions; where and how the teacher positioned herself during critique; where the students chose to sit and their overall movement throughout the classroom. As the traditional philosophy dictates the physical ordering of classrooms and the ways in which students and

teachers interact with each other during class time, I attended to these physical interactions to understand how they might relate to the operationalized and experienced curriculum. I documented the forms and processes of observation with field notes using thick description.

Participant observation as a means to gather data, done in a casual way, could contribute to Wolcott's fear of the educational travel writing, but done with a holistic intent, contributes to the descriptive and non-evaluative characteristics of qualitative research. Although contradictory, the idea of participating in observation is essential to being fully engaged in the research. The observer as a separate and detached entity conflicts with the holistic notion of the constructivist paradigm. To that end, I spoke with students in class, assisted Ms. Terri in material preparation, assisted with technical aspects of artwork, observed and participated in project critiques, and had informal discussions with Ms. Terri and the students about art work in progress. Additionally, I attended a school fieldtrip to the Vancouver Art Gallery as a supervisor, to observe the extension of classroom activities in the gallery space. The role of participant allows for a greater repertoire, particularly with the students, yet a process must be carefully understood, in terms of the claims about relating to and understanding the student and teacher participants.

The extent to which the researcher can truly understand the perspective of the observed is problematic. The researcher can do no more than interpret the situation and co-construct an understanding limited to the time and space of the case. Within participant observation, theorists utilizing a constructivist approach examine power relations between the researcher and the researched as a means to "see and report [as] a function of the position they occupy within participant groups, the status accorded to them, and the role behaviour expected of them" (LeCompte & Preissle Goetz, 1982, p. 46). Thompson (1981) argues that critical researchers must ensure that participants "are not naively enthroned, but systematically and critically unveiled" (p. 143). Smith (2002) also considers the possible extent to which a researcher can develop relationships that will yield rich data in an urban school setting. The need for an intimate relationship in the observation-based relationship is key to gain an understanding. It is this "haste to gain 'understanding' of the other and to publish our findings, particularly in urban schooling

contexts, [that] we seem to have lost sight of this important facet of participant observation" (Smith, 2002, p. 182).

Observation at The Secondary Traditional School extended into what Fetterman (1989) described as outcroppings: "portion of the bedrock that is visible on the surface, in other words, something that sticks out" (p. 68). Hebert and Beardsley (2001) interpreted outcroppings as visible cues in a larger context. In the case of their study, "*Jermaine: A Critical Case Study of a Gifted Black Child Living in Rural Poverty*", the researchers included abandoned automobiles, citizens seated in front of the local store, and the condition of the furniture in different settings. In terms of my research, I observed what artwork was displayed, where it was displayed, and work posted on the school website. In addition, I observed community interaction within the classroom and the use of external resources, such as artists in the classroom, literature, and visuals brought to the class. In addition to descriptive note taking during formal observation periods, the use of photography enabled an additional view the culture of the class and school by documenting the students' work and the school's physical environment. As participant-observation engenders a holistic approach to understanding, it also acts as a forerunner to the development and creation of formal and informal interview questions. While I entered the study with the initial research question formulated, in keeping with an inductive epistemology, additional research questions were formulated to explore concepts of context that emerged during the study.

c.   Interview Schedule and Procedures

Three formal interview times were established over the course of the study with Ms. Terri. These times reflect her availability. The first was February 20th, 2009, the second was on March 9th, and the third was April 25th. The first interview gathered data about her background and initial impressions of the traditional philosophy and teaching environment. Themes that emerged during the research process formed the basis for the following interviews. The Principal was interviewed twice; once at the beginning of the study and once at the end. The student focus group was interviewed twice; once on March 4th at noon hour and a second time on March 30th at noon hour. The first interview took place in the classroom and the second took place in a private room in the school. The second meeting was rescheduled twice because of scheduling conflicts with one of the participants. The students' rights were reviewed each

time, but confidentiality was an issue as the students discussed their participation in the study in front of Ms. Terri and other students despite reminders about confidentiality. The formal interviews were recorded using audio equipment and were then transcribed and submitted back to the participant for review. Ms. Terri sent back clarification for the first interview.

With guidance from Ms. Terri and as part of the interview and observation portion, I selected a focus group of student participants. The three students, who volunteered, were observed during studio work and critique. They were also informally interviewed during class time and formally interviewed twice outside of class. I conducted the interviews with the students, based on participant availability, during the third and sixth week of observations. The interviews focused on the students' process of designing and completing a project, on the process of final group critique, and on their views about traditional education and the connection between traditional values and their learning in Visual Art. Interviews, conducted in groups, contributed to a better understanding of their views on their learning in Visual Art and their perception of the school's philosophy in their artistic education, through the dialogue established between the participants. The use of focus groups allows for "opening up possibilities for reimagining knowledge as distributed, relational, and embodied" (Kamberlis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 898). They found that focus groups decreased the authoritative power of the interviewer and allowed for interactions between participants of a horizontal versus vertical nature, in terms of power. Open-ended informal interviews took place during class time while working on projects.

The interview as a means of narrative inquiry as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argue, is a "study of the ways humans experience the world" (p.2). The researcher describes such lives and writes the narratives of these stories. Denzin (2001) described the post-modern era as an interview society, a society of spectacle. Within this spectacle where the private becomes public, the interview becomes a confessional form of entertainment, creating the private as authentic. As Atkinson and Silverman (1997) note, the interviewer must deconstruct these notions, as there is no authentic self. There is what Denzin (2001) metaphorically refers to as a pentimento, where the layering of materials obscures but does not obliterate what came before. The contemporary interview builds on a narrative collage, both by building on successive observations and interviews to form a narrative. Ms. Terri's perceived context and

perception of practice informed understandings made during observations of the operationalized curriculum. Observation was designed not to prove or disprove her perceptions of practice, but to offer an understanding of how situational factors influenced her practice. To gather her perceptions of practice, she reflected on becoming a teacher and how she perceived her beliefs and attitudes influenced her curriculum and pedagogical decisions in the classroom. As well, I asked her to consider the research process, topics, and themes brought up during the interview process and during the observations. These narratives provided a deeper, richer contextualization of practice and a more holistic inclusion of participant voice in the study.

d.   <u>Documents Collected to Explore the Official, Operationalized, and Ideal Curriculum</u>

The official documents collected during the study include: The Middle School Proposal; The Ten Tenets of Traditional; The Key Visuals; The One-to-One Notebook Policy in the parent information package; research that was referenced in the parent information package; The Dress Code; the Student Code of Conduct; the Student Code of Conduct, Teacher's Edition; Four websites including the city's, the district's, the school's, and the traditional coalition's; District Achievement Contract; District announcements about the school; The Visual Art Course outline; The Assessment Outline for each project; Project Outlines; Self-Evaluation forms; and articles posted by Ms. Terri in the classroom. Photographs taken included: Student artwork; Journal entries; classroom and interior school images. The documents used to explore the history of TSM and school reforms include provincial legislation, funded research, a Ph. D dissertation, and an MA thesis as secondary sources.

ii.   Participants

The participants were: the Principal of The Secondary Traditional School; the grade 11/12 Visual Art teacher, Ms. Terri; and a focus group of students. The Principal initially recommended a more senior Media Studies teacher for participation, but this teacher declined to participate based on time commitments. Ms. Terri was initially my first choice, primarily because she teaches Visual Art, which is more in keeping with my subject area knowledge. I felt that the broader nature of the subject area, in terms of materials and methods, would also provide greater opportunities to explore student and teacher selection processes reflecting teacher or student centered approaches. I also felt that her level of

experience would provide insight into the early processes of developing curriculum design and pedagogical practices potentially reflecting normative subject characteristics and traditional characteristics. A singular teacher in one school as a case provided the opportunity to deeply explore the contextual nature of her practice. The focus group was composed of three female students, Piper, Paige, and Phoebe[*]. All three were grade 12 students, enrolled in the Ceramics and Sculpture course within the grade 11/12 Visual Art class. While all students were consulted about participation in the study, only three students agreed to participate. The characteristics of the participants are addressed further in Chapter Four of this thesis.

3.5   Data Collection and Analysis

i.   Analysis Methods

The field data was divided into: interviews, documents, and field notes. The data was then organized into the following categories based on Goodlad et al's (1979) domains of curriculum: Formulation of the Official Context; The Perceived Context and Perception of Practice; Ideal and Operationalized Curriculum and Teacher Practice; and Student Perception of Context and Teacher Practice. Data was analyzed within these categories for key themes and for the relationships between these themes. A detailed discussion of data analysis follows.

a.   <u>Formulation of the Official Context</u>

<u>Part 1: Discursive Practices Establishing Roles of the Teacher, Students, and Principal in the Traditional School</u>

I identified and collected several sources of official literature produced by the district, community and the school, which defined the official school curriculum, including: the Middle School proposal; The written philosophy as the 'Ten Tenets' of Traditional and 'Key Visuals'; Teacher and Student Code of Conduct manuals; city, district, coalition, and school websites; and the Principal's interview transcripts. Within these documents, the discursive formation of the role and function of the parents, students, teachers, and administration in both the mainstream public schools and the Traditional school emerged as significant trends in the data.

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[*] All names have been changed to protect anonymity.

Part 2:   Official Context as Perceived Context

The interpretation and analysis of the teacher interview transcripts and observational notes explicated the construction of perceived context through the teacher's perception of the official context. The teacher's perceptions and understandings about traditional philosophy and the traditional student generated the context within which she situated her beliefs about her practice.

Part 3: Legislation Establishing Role of Public Schools, Traditional Schools, Parents, and the Sociopolitical Context

Legislation was significant in forming the official context of teaching. The findings from the analysis of this section of data provide the historical grounding of the official context within the sociopolitical climate of BC. These findings are discussed in Chapter Five as a response to the overarching research question. The documents included in this analysis include: *Legacy for Learners*, 1988; British Columbia, Bill 18, *The Skills and Labour Statutes Amendment Act;* British Columbia, Bill 27 *Education Services Collective Agreement Act 2002*; British Columbia, Bill 28 *Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act 2002*; British Columbia, Bill 34 *School Amendment Act*, 2002; British Columbia, Bill 20 *School (Student Achievement Enabling) Amendment Act*, 2007; and *Independent School Act*, 1989. Additionally research funded by the BCTF and the SAEE was used to explore the arguments of the proponents and detractors of traditional schools. In addition, I reviewed a Ph. D. dissertation that provides lineage for The Secondary Traditional School. This thesis will not be cited to protect the anonymity of the school and participants in my study.

b.   The Perceived Context and Perceptions of Practice

The teacher's perceptions of her practice formed the second category of analysis. The perceptions of practice are formed, in part, in the perceived context of the traditional school. The themes included in this category centered around how she constructed the roles of the teacher, the student, the aims of learning in Visual Art and the emergence of an emancipatory pedagogical practice. Her views on the nature of Visual Art and the role of learning Visual Art in the students' overall education were important themes that emerged. Her perception of her practice in response to her observations of the students' experiences was also an important theme, which presented itself repeatedly during formal and informal interviews and during observation.

c.   Ideal and Operationalized Curriculum and Teacher Practice

The third category relates to Ms. Terri's practice as a Visual Art teacher and the curriculum and pedagogical decisions made within her Visual Art class. Analysis and coding of interview data, assignment outlines, assessment outlines, and observation field notes generated several dominant themes. This analysis examined the orientations of curriculum and pedagogy in terms of teacher-centered, student-centered, or subject-centered approach. Her practices were considered in relation to consistent practices in the subject of Visual Art documented in the literature review. Themes emerged around student experiences modifying teacher practice, her perceptions of students as modifying practice, and official curriculum, expressed through symbolic acts of respect, modifying teacher practice.

d.   The Experienced Curriculum: Student Perception of Context and Practice

The fourth category relates to the ways the students experienced the curriculum decisions and pedagogical practices of Ms. Terri. Interview data, photographs of student artwork, and observational data, relating particularly to the critique process, were coded into themes for analysis.

ii.   Reporting the Findings

The findings from each category were specifically organized to respond to a research question in Chapter Four. The primary research question, responded to in Chapter Five includes the synthesizing of the findings from the four research questions that emerged during the study. Additionally, the response to the primary research question includes the contextualization of the findings in the sociopolitical climate of BC, reflected by an analysis of TSM and educational reforms.

3.6   Conclusion

A majority of research, exploring the context of traditional schooling does so by examining the role of the school within the broader discourse of democracy and schooling. This work, though, does not provide an understanding of the impact of this philosophy on teaching and learning. As traditional schools represent a growing phenomenon in public education in BC, it is critical that research, which engages in on-site fieldwork explores the ways in which this conservative approach to education, impacts curriculum, pedagogy, and learning. It is insufficient to explore choice as a phenomenon within the

public education system. The ways in which this phenomenon affects the experiences of teachers and learners must be part of the discussion about the role the traditional philosophy has within the public system.

The constructivist paradigm is essential to understanding and interpreting the impact of this philosophy on classroom practices. This methodology allows the participants' perception and experience of context to inform the understanding of the contextual nature of the classroom. Participant observation and interviews create the opportunity for participants to guide research findings with their understandings. The critical aspect of this research situates their understandings within the historical evolution of the TSM and within recent educational reform in BC. In doing so, the ways in which reforms are brought to bear on teaching and learning is better understood. Ms. Terri and the focus group in The Secondary Traditional School offered the ideal opportunity to examine the contexts of teacher practice and student learning in Visual Art and the how educational reforms have influenced these processes.

CHAPTER FOUR
Analysis and Findings

4.1   Introduction

The interpretation of Goodlad et al's (1979) domains of curriculum within Visual Art at The

Secondary Traditional School, elucidated the formation of the context of Ms. Terri's practice and student

participant's learning. The first question that emerged during the study, explored how the official school

curriculum of The Secondary Traditional School was established through discursive practices within

official documents including: the Middle School Proposal; the school philosophy; the Code of Conduct

for Students, the Parent Handbook; and the Code of Conduct for Students, Teachers' Edition. Ms. Terri's

perceived curriculum as a context for practice, interpreted through observation and interview, revealed the

ways in which she understood the traditional philosophy in its formal capacity and how it defined the

official roles of teachers, students, and parents. The second question explored her perceptions of practice

within the perceived context. The analysis examined her perception of the design of her practice in

Visual Art situated the perceived context. Observation of Ms. Terri's practice in the Visual Art class and

formal interview provided data related to her ideal and operationalized curriculum. The experienced

curriculum is located in the fourth question, which situated the students' experience of operationalized

curriculum in the official and perceived curriculum.

The historical evolution of the TSM, detailed in the literature review in Chapter 2, provided a

background for a critical interpretation of the discursive practices, which constitute the official context of

The Secondary Traditional School context. This history of the TSM reveals the ways in which particular

participants have ascribed meaning to this form of schooling at provincial and district levels. At the local

level, meaning is also interpreted and is manifested in practices that further define the context of

traditional schooling for teaching and learning.

4.2   Descriptive Analysis of the School, the Classroom, and the Participants

i.   The Secondary Traditional School

a.   The District Site

Between 2000 and 2008, the school board in the district of this study experienced a decline in

enrollments, resulting in school closures (Study X, 2005). Research provided to the board credited low

enrollments to increased student enrollment in independent schools and to an increase of students being home schooled. Enrollment numbers across the province indicated that between 2000 and 2008, the total combined enrollment numbers for both public and independent schools dropped a little over 4% from 667, 388 to 638, 525, yet public school's total enrollment dropped by 7%, while independent school enrollment increased by 15% (Federation of Independent School Associations, *Legacy for Learners*, 2008). To resolve this problem, school boards began to provide parents with additional options for the education of their children. The district of this study marketed the traditional model as a strategy to appeal to parents, to draw students back to the public system. They quickly approved proposals for both elementary and middle traditional schools and approved The Secondary Traditional School, based on their perception of demand without a proposal from the community (Principal, personal Communication, April 25, 2009).

b.   <u>Description of the School Site and Culture</u>

The original site of The Secondary Traditional School was a Mennonite Church in the lower mainland of British Columbia (Kaethler, 2005). The Church, faced with bankruptcy, sold the building to the school district to open a traditional secondary high school in 2004 (Source K[*], 2005). In 2006, the school moved to its current site, a former high school building in a community of single-family dwellings. Information provided to parents described the student population as drawn from local and international populations. The particular school chosen for this study exists as a physically separate school, operated entirely within the traditional educational philosophy. This school's website demonstrates the arts are a prominent part of the school's identity. At The Secondary Traditional School, students are not permitted to have spares[24] so courses such as Visual Art, maintain adequate enrollment as students fill their timetable.

The school offers Grades 9-12 and has roughly 490 students in the four grades. The school capacity is between 560-570, so an average of 143 students per grade is the target. Currently, the grade

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[*] The reference information was removed as revealing it would compromise the anonymity of the school and participants in the study.

[24] Spares are blocks of time in a students daily school program where they are not studying in a particular class. A spare is considered 'free time' in a student's schedule.

12 class is the smallest at 79 students. The Principal identified the ethnic population of the school as 38-40% Indo-Canadian or Punjabi; 5-8% Asian (Korean); 2% Hispanic and 12 students as First Nation. He was unsure of how to identify the remainder and settled on European/Caucasian. There are 27 staff members, primarily of European descent, with no representation from the Indo-Canadian community, based on a Staff and Student Multicultural display, which indicated their country and ethic origins.

Upon entering the high school, there are noticeable differences between this and a typical mainstream public school. During class time, the hallways are empty, as all students are in class. Students who are in the hallways, must carry their school agenda with a teacher signature permitting students to be in the hall. On the day of my arrival, the walls were bare. The front entrance of the school has a flat screen TV in a glass display case, containing images from the Media Studies class rolling across in slide show format, as well as student sport's team accomplishments.

The office is much like any office of a public school. The three secretaries sit at desks behind a four-foot counter. The office wall space prominently displays the dress code, the picture of the Queen of England, and a signed photo of the Premier of BC. Several black leatherette chairs line the wall for those who need to wait to see the vice-principal or principal. Visitors must sign in and out, and wear a visitor badge while in school, although parents frequent the hallways without them. The student handbook directs students to report individuals who are not part of the school community and who are not wearing a visitor badge (Student handbook, 2009).

The physical structure of the school offers little difference to that of a public school, as it was once a mainstream public school, yet visual difference is significant in the traditional philosophy and to the culture of the school. The parent handbook outlines aspects of traditional education as "Key Visuals" (p.10). These 'Key Visuals" are described as "visual ways of demonstrating respect for yourself and others" (p. 10) and include students standing when adults enter a room and remain standing until told to be seated; raising hands to receive permission to speak; standing to speak and remaining standing until told to be seated. These symbolic acts of respect act as visual cues that students respect the authority of teachers and administration. Other visuals include the school uniform, which is not the norm for dress in BC public schools. The dress code includes: wearing the school uniform; not altering significantly, the

school uniform; "no visible body piercing except for appropriate earrings; and no unnatural hair colour, hair can be dyed but only in a colours that occur naturally as hair is a big part of 'dress for success'"(p.7). I observed several students in the hallways who had circumvented these rules. They pierced their lips and noses and dyed their hair in several shades of naturally occurring colors. They remained as such through the length of this study.

The purpose of "Key Visuals" is to help identify students as part of a community and provide safety through quick identification of strangers on the school campus. The campus is closed and guardians must provide written permission for their children to leave the school grounds. During the course of the study, students and staff repeatedly asked if I needed assistance, identifying me as an outsider. While initially this seemed polite and accommodating, on several occasions the tone that accompanied the question indicated that I was an intruder, until the individual asking me recognized me as part of the study that was occurring on their campus.

The visuals in the hallways leading to the Visual Art room are significantly different from those in many mainstream public schools. Primarily, any posters, or images that are on the walls promote official information such as scholarships, healthy eating tips, Canadian WWI history, and school uniform information. These images are deeply connected to the value of patriotism as expressed in traditional philosophy. Long stretches of continuous hallways are devoid of any posters, artwork, or student work. Bulletin boards painted in school colors remain empty and are without staples, pins, or bits of paper, which indicates a lack of previous use. Student work was not posted in the school cafeteria, yet the school logo and dress code are prominently displayed. Towards the end of the study, the art teacher began putting student work up in the Visual Art area, but there was little to differentiate the Visual Art space and any other space in the school. When asked, the Principal indicated that the austere walls were not part of the traditional philosophy and were more than likely due to a term change. This implied that student work had been taken down and given back to the students, yet during the ten weeks of the study, this appearance did not change.

Athletics are a prominent feature in the school. Posters and signs, posted in glass cases, illustrate the sports teams' accomplishments. There is a large gym beside the art room and there is constant

activity during the school day. Sports teams' uniforms, considered part of the school uniform, are an alternative to the standard uniform. The Principal frequently broadcasts team accomplishments of over the school PA system.

Another unique feature The Secondary Traditional School, which supports the emphasis on academics (and one the Principal is especially proud of), is the one-to-one notebook program in the school. The technology to student ratio represents a significant accomplishment for a public school, given the cutbacks to operating budgets since 2001. The Principal acknowledges that this use of technology is not 'traditional' in terms of the back-to-basics focus for the school's official curriculum. In grade nine, students can lease to own new notebook computers. The costs vary, depending on the courses the student enrolls in and based on the software required. The school district requires web filters for adult material; drugs; gambling; games; illegal or questionable material; information technology for hacking; proxy avoidance and URL translation sites; militancy or extremist sites; sites that promote racism or hate; society and lifestyle sites (social networking sites); tasteless sites; and sites that promote violence and weapons. These filters are operational from both home and school.

Five roughly one-hour blocks of instruction make up the five-day schedule. The school day begins at 8:05 am with a warning bell and class starts at 8:10 am. Students have a Homeroom block between 10:12 am-10:42 am on Wednesdays. Lunch lasts from 11:34 am-12:14 pm. There is a cafeteria where students can purchase and eat lunch. The end of the school day is 2:28 pm. At 10:28 am each day, the Principal makes school announcements, announces student birthdays, and two to three female students sing *O Canada* over the intercom as the student body stands at attention in their various classrooms. It is a five-day schedule so each week is the same. Consistency, more so than mainstream public schools, is key and is found in the uniforms, constant respectful behaviour, consistency in teaching styles, consistency in support of the traditional values, consistency in key visuals, consistency of school routine, and consistent behaviour from students and staff. In this school difference is glaring.

ii.   The Grade 11/12 Visual Art Classroom

a.   <u>The Physical Classroom Space</u>

The classroom is a large, industrial space with cement floors: Overhead suspended fluorescent lighting with exposed white piping, venting, and heat ducts. The desks are large, interlocked, rectangles laid out in horizontal rows, facing the front of the room, with a center aisle dividing the left and right sides. Storage cabinets line the walls and banks of windows run across the left and back sides of the room, although the metal blinds remain shut with the exception of one day during the study. The outside space, accessed through a classroom door, is a courtyard, a shared space between two schools.

Along the back side of the room is a pottery area with two wheels sectioned off with a partial wall. Ms. Terri's desk is right of center at the back of the room, providing a vantage point to observe students while they work. Counter and cupboard space, line the front of the room with two sinks, ventilation hoods, and tall cupboards to store three-dimensional work. Sliding white-boards form the covers for the materials cupboards and are used to outline due dates for Visual Art and Social Studies, which is also taught in this space. At the beginning of the study, the room did not have a single piece of artwork, with the exception of a broom, fashioned into a large paintbrush, suspended from the ceiling. Other than that, no markings identify this room as an art room. The desks were clean, the cupboards' surfaces did not have fingerprints, or paint splatter, the sinks, and surrounding areas did not have drying racks for water containers, paintbrushes, or palettes. During participant observation, I noticed that students washed, dried, and replaced all of the painting supplies automatically. The materials available to students in this course are consistent with materials in mainstream Visual Art programs and students have free access to the materials outlined in the assigned project.

During the course of the study, the Visual Art teacher altered the space and included personal items such as photographs, a nesting doll, and examples of her artwork. She also began to put up images produced by students and had students hang their own work, in the hallways. She also began posting weekly articles from a BC artist on the role of art in society. As she was a new teacher to the school when the study began, she inherited the look of the space from the previous teacher, but she did not significantly alter it during the course of the study.

b.   <u>Organization of the Class</u>

Visual Art is taught in six blocks each week and on odd weeks, seven during an X-tumble block, for a total of 375 minutes to 443 minutes of instruction per week. The 11/12 Visual Art class is a split of three offerings of studio art. Included are Grade 11 Painting and Drawing, Grade 12 Painting and Drawing, and Grade 11/12 Sculpture and Ceramics. While seating arrangements are left to the students, they have self-selected to sit roughly in areas devoted to each split.

There are 21 students in the Visual Art class. 19 students attended regularly during the course of the study: 12 females and 7 males. Five of these students are South Asian, one student was Korean (International Student), and the thirteen remaining students were European/Caucasian (Ethnic classification reflects the Principal's categories). As the course is divided into three sections: 3 female students are enrolled in Painting and Drawing 12; 8 students, 6 female and 2 males are enrolled in Ceramics and Sculpture 11/12; and 8 students, 5 males and 3 females are enrolled in Painting and Drawing 11.

The courses, within the Visual Art class, have similar formats. The Painting and Drawing 11 and Ceramics and Sculpture 11/12 students receive packages outlining the studio work for each project. These packages include a title page with the studio topic, 'Observational Drawing', for example listed. The package includes quotes from artists related to the topic of the studio work, IRP connections, rationale for the studio work, formative and summative evaluation schemes, including rubrics and checklists, exercises to establish skills and the final studio assignment outline, helpful tips, resources, images to assist in explaining processes, and sketchbook assignments as warm-up procedures. To introduce each new studio assignment, Ms. Terri speaks with the students in their work area, hands out the packages, reviews the work with the students, and then establishes deadlines with the students (written on the white board). At that point, the students are left to follow the instructions in the package and to meet the variety of assessment deadlines. During independent studio work time, Ms. Terri moves through the room, offering one-on-one guidance. She also works from her desk and students often come to her for additional help and instruction. Students submit work during the process for formative evaluation and assessment. Assessment of student work includes: 30% for their sketchbook work; 60% for projects, and

10% for portfolio of work. Assessment takes into account both teacher and self-assessment. The outline for individual criteria of assessment of studio work is included in the project packages.

At the end of the project's studio process and when work is complete, students meet for a group critique where students receive between 6-12 minutes to discuss their work and have it critiqued by the group and the teacher. This process is somewhat laborious as the students are visually and audibly non-responsive. They remain extremely quite during this process. Ms. Terri encourages them to respond using critique sheets and prompts such as 'strengths', 'polishes', and 'personal voice'. The students are somewhat new to formal critique[25] as the previous teacher did not engage in the process, but over the course of the study, certain students (not in the focus group) became more verbal and began responding by asking questions offering responses, which were more complex than 'I like it'. The comments are supportive, particularly for work viewed as less successful. During the critique process success, as established by the students related primarily to the work effort put into the project, which may or may not have resulted in a pleasing aesthetic. Student work considered unsuccessful is described so because of a lack of obvious effort. Students in the focus group acknowledge that it is not their place to be overly critical of others' work. Students find that the critique is not effective and that it takes away from valuable studio time.

During the studio time most students work consistently and quietly. Ms. Terri frequently addressed several students who moved from their desks to the perimeter of the room to work, for not working on their project, yet their behaviour was not disruptive to the other students. The class remained quiet and focused on their work during the studio portion. Ms. Terri assigned deadlines to all studio work. Students could opt for a late mark so that with additional time and effort the completed project would earn them a higher grade, even with the mark reduction. The following section introduces the participants in the study. The description of participants was included to enable a personal context for the analysis of observation and interview data included in the section that follows.

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[25] Formal critique may include the following characteristics: It is a summative assessment process, occurring in a group at the completion of the studio session; a specific time and format is chosen for students to present works, which includes displaying and discussing formal characteristics of work including elements and principles of design; the teacher guides the critique, with the use of formal assessment sheets, which the students have previously filled out. It is not spontaneous nor is it designed to be formative, offering advice during the process.

iii.   The Research Participants

a.   <u>The School Principal</u>

The Principal began his teaching career at the school district in 1983 and taught in several elementary and secondary schools prior to becoming an administrator. He started his administration experience as a summer school principal and then moved to a secondary school as vice-principal and then to a vice-principal of a traditional middle school and then to principal of The Secondary Traditional School. His formal education included a degree from Western Washington University and Trinity Western College in the Fraser Valley.

While the school supports the traditional 'Key Visuals', the Principal is quick to recognize that teenagers do not always follow the rules, so infractions to the school rules happen. He feels the substantial differences between this school and others in the public system stem from values and beliefs of the families who choose to send their children to the school. He feels that as families self-select to send their children to this school, it implies that their values are similar to traditional values; otherwise, they would not want their children to attend. The role of the school encourages and reinforces the natural tendencies that students bring from structured backgrounds. When I asked him if parents would send their children to this school to reform bad behaviour, he did not seem to think that this would happen.

He feels that the small size of the school also contributes substantially to the ethos. Teachers and students know one another, know each other's names, and this relationship makes a significant difference in student behaviour. Despite the community feel to the school, the existence of two separate communities within the school became apparent during the research process. Because this school does not have the same systemic problems that large schools in the district do such as, gangs, weapons, drugs, and assaults, the teachers and administration can focus on finer infractions and behaviours which are not traditional, such as arriving late to school.

The Principal feels that primarily, the hiring practices used to identify teachers compatible with the traditional are of utmost importance in maintaining the traditional philosophy throughout the school. As this is a public school, teachers cannot be dismissed because their teaching style conflicts with the philosophy of the school, yet they can be selected over another candidate if they appear to be a better

mesh with the traditional philosophy. Transfers can be initiated at the administration level to remove incompatible teachers, but the Principal feels this is an extreme measure and one, which he does not necessarily support using. As a means of support, he reviews traditional values with the staff at meetings and allots some professional development towards reinforcing the traditional philosophy in teaching. These include having students stand upon entering the classroom, being firmly in charge of the classroom, encouraging respectful behaviour from the students. One important role for administration is supporting teachers when they call students out for infractions, as based on his own experience, if the administration does not support the teacher, then the teacher will not support the rules of the school.

The Principal establishes his role as a central authoritative figure by maintaining a significant presence in all aspects of school life. He monitors the hallways, particularly during breaks between classes, reminding students to get to class, monitoring behaviour, and school dress code. During the study, I noticed other faculty reminding students that the Principal would be in the hallway, so they needed to be in the appropriate dress, or they would be in trouble. He does morning announcements each day and is involved in the school athletic programs, all which help establish his somewhat paternal authority in the school.

Support that he receives, as an administrator, comes from the district and the Assistant-superintendent in charge of traditional schools. He meets with the Assistant-superintendent once every two months to review enrollment, procedures, processes and challenges in the schools. There is a Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) made up of parents, teachers, administration, and the area superintendent and they meet every month and a half. These meetings are to establish consistency throughout traditional schools in the district, particularly at the elementary level. Principals from other areas in the lower mainland and BC do not get together and while they have looked at coordinating a meeting, there has yet to be a formal gathering. Dr. Dan Brown, a professor from UBC, (mentioned previously) has gathered information from traditional schools in the United States and has set up correspondence between them and traditional schools in this district, but primarily interaction of traditional schools is between schools in this district alone. He did mention that in a previous year, some traditional principals went to a traditional school in Calgary, Alberta, but this was a traditional program,

within a mainstream public school, similar to many programs in BC. The Principal discussed some of the challenges presented by having both public and traditional students in the same facility, including student interactions during lunchtime. As well, Alberta has a lottery system, which selects students, at random from a pool of applicants, to attend the school. At this traditional school, parents used to line up, sometimes for a week, to have their child attend, but now, parents use an online registration system and it is first come first serve.

He has a great deal of pride in the school and is quick to inform that responsibility for the success is very much rooted in the families of the children who attend. He discussed the athletics program in the school as having success against larger public schools and while he indicated a hesitant support of the Fraser Institute, he is looking forward to seeing this years rankings of schools, as he anticipates a better report, academically, than in previous years. He noted that the number of Advanced Placement[26] courses being offered, including Calculus, Psychology, and English, were increasing. He mentioned that teachers love to work in this school as they have far fewer problems to deal with than other public high schools.

When asked what other public high schools could learn from the traditional school model, he indicated that he did not think that they could. While he felt that much of what traditional schools emphasized was important in mainstream public schools, the nature of the student body, the size of the school and the diversity in the mainstream system, did not make traditional philosophy easily implemented. He explained that the client base (students) that traditional schools draw from is different from the public system, which take everyone, and as such, are faced with the problems that come with open access and large populations. He feels that the students that struggle in public school would not want to come to a traditional school nor would their families want them to come because the emphasis on structure and positive behaviour would conflict with their agendas.

He is unsure of how the art program would instill traditional values, other than supporting the school rules (dress code, standing to ask questions, for example). He does not think that what is acceptable in a traditional school, in terms of curriculum content, would differ substantially from that of a

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[26] The Advanced Placement (AP) program is a cooperative educational initiative between high schools, and universities. AP courses allow high school students to experience university-level academic learning in addition to the regular provincial curriculum (Advanced Placement Program Canada, 2009).

mainstream public school. He believes that successful art programs reflect the interests of the students and that students are then highly motivated. Additionally, he believes that public art displays communicate that the program is successful because it demonstrates a high level of involvement. He believes that students need to be well rounded by enrolling in a wide range of courses. This provides for a more balanced education.

The Principal is the central figure in communicating, supporting, and assessing traditional values on the school campus. The Principal's primary function is the implementation and enforcement of policies established by the province, district board, and the traditional parent groups. He is an ardent supporter of the traditional philosophy, in that it supports the values and beliefs of the families in the school community. He recognizes that not all students or staff at the school will willingly respect the traditional philosophy, and so he perceives his role as supporting staff that enforce the rules and guiding those that do not. His consistent presence in the hallways and high involvement in the school culture aids his evaluation of teachers' practice and students' compliance. These methods provide an unobtrusive means to assess the level of staff enforcement of the Key Visuals and Ten Tenets of traditional. These roles and behaviours unique in the public school system, as typically, principals are removed from the day-to-day activities of the school. His adapted position as principal, contributes to the consistent implementation of the official traditional curriculum and to the immersion experience of staff and students in the school culture. Ms. Terri was aware of this form of administrative presence and she was cognizant of it when enforcing some of the traditional behaviours in her class.

b.   <u>Teacher: Ms. Terri</u>

The senior Visual Art teacher is relatively new to both the school and to the teaching profession. She taught formally at the public school she graduated from, for six months and worked as a tutor and instructor for other courses during university. Her current position at The Secondary Traditional School began three weeks before the study began. Ms. Terri offered a unique opportunity to explore the curriculum and pedagogical decision-making process in the beginning stages of her teaching experience at the school. She spoke about her hesitancy in accepting a teaching contract at a traditional school, based on her perceptions about the teaching and learning environment, discussed further in this section. As

well, since Ms. Terri was on a temporary contract with the division, I felt that she was more willing to speak candidly about her beliefs about the traditional philosophy and her experiences in the school. The temporary nature of contract coupled by her uncertainty about traditional schools would potentially offer an alternate perspective to the traditionally entrenched views of the Principal.

Ms. Terri has an interesting mix of traditional background complemented by a progressive and liberal attitude. She acknowledges her traditional Christian background influenced by her family and formal education including attending Trinity Western University. When asked about aspects of her background that she felt related to her current teaching position, she referenced her formal education as an artist as well as her current practice as an artist over her connection to traditional values and beliefs. She described her choice to be a Teacher-on-Call[27] in the school district so that she that she could dedicate time to studying ceramics. She did not feel that her skills as an artist occurred naturally. She described how she needed to practice and focus on developing her skills. This value of diligence and work ethic permeated her formal discussion with her students during the study. Experiential knowledge informs Ms. Terri's pedagogical decisions as she emphasizes practice, diligence, and perseverance as means to artistic ends. She believes that skill in artistry can be both a natural predilection and one that can also develop through practice.

During the formal and informal interviews, she discussed her reservations about teaching in a traditional school based primarily on her own experiences in a private, religious school with similar instructional, behaviour, and learning expectations. She described negative experiences with the learning style of her private elementary school and that in the senior grades of high school, she transferred to the public system. She felt that this system supported a more casual approach to learning, which complemented her learning style. Because of this experience she was unsure of how she would respond to the pressures of the instructional style identified in the traditional approach.

She had also been a TOC in The Secondary Traditional School before accepting her current contract and was somewhat uncomfortable with the fundamental nature of the school including the dress code and level of strictness. She was also resistant at first, to teaching in the school full-time because of

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[27] Teachers-on-Call are certified teachers without a contract. They are hired by school divisions as 'on-call' staff to replace teachers during illness or other absences.

the diversity of courses included in the position and did not apply for the position. The Principal contacted her and asked her to apply, and she did. Ms. Terri felt that during the interview process for the teaching position, her answers honestly reflected who she was as an individual and as a teacher. She did not feel that her beliefs relating to individualism conformed to the traditional concept. She reflected this during the interview process by leaving her nose ring in, despite this being against the school dress code. She did not feel that an underlying religious context existed in the school, although other staff members had warned her about certain curriculum topics. Ms. Terri relayed conversations from other teachers cautioning her that some parents would not allow their child to be present for some areas of instruction in her Social Studies class, because the topic might conflict with their religious views.

The perceived level of higher parental involvement in the school was also a concern Ms. Terri, yet she felt that because the parents chose to have their children to attend, they could potentially offer more support than mainstream public school parents. The strict behavioural code and expectations for the students, she felt, created a less confrontational place to teach. Students were respectful, which made teaching easier. The support from administration made her feel 'pampered' (Personal communication, February 20, 2009). She also felt that the resources made available to her as a teacher, including the classroom, the consumables (paint, paper, etc), and the non-consumables (video cameras, student computers etc.) enabled her to run a strong program.

The methods that Ms. Terri used to teach were initially highly reliant of the students' ability to work independently. During the studio work, students received one-on-one feedback sessions where she queried them about their process and the product in various stages of completion. She encouraged them to extend their understandings and their skills through moving their work into unfamiliar areas, to raise an awareness of an issue or to use a material in a unique and challenging way. While the she verbally encouraged individualism, as an important quality in artwork, the students' work frequently did not deviate from the prescribed path of the assignment. Work ethic and completion of the formative and summative goals established by the Ms. Terri were more the norm than individual conceptualization of studio work. Ms. Terri's curriculum decisions reflect her experience and formal education as an artist. Students are required to exhibit technical skills in their work through formal drawing exercises. There is

an almost exclusive emphasis on conceptual art work in the curriculum design of class. Ms. Terri defines conceptual work to include contemporary art production that uses materials and ideas in non-traditional ways and she typically emphasizes that the idea, central to student work, should engage in a critical social commentary. This definition of conceptual art is congruent with Ms. Terri's perception of the value of learning in Visual Art, which includes visual literacy. Ms. Terri defines visual literacy as a skill incorporating criticality in viewing and understanding visuals. She described the nature of the student as susceptible to media images and that a role of Visual Art was to develop student skills so that they would be more sophisticated and less naïve, when interpreting images. The conceptual aspect of the work is discussed during the formal critique process. The critique is a fundamental aspect of the students' experience in the art room. The student participants, discussed in the next section, found the critique to be the most problematic aspect of the Visual Art class.

c.   The Focus Group

Three students participated in the study. Students who declined indicated that their schedules were too busy, that they were not interested, or their parents would not allow them to. The three students who offered to participate were enrolled in Ceramics and Sculpture 11/12 section, were Caucasian, female, and in grade twelve. Other students, in the course acknowledge that these students' artwork is the strongest in the course. All three describe themselves as 'lifers' in the traditional school system and that they did not have experience in mainstream public school. All three students prefer media art, namely photography, to traditional art forms.

Piper

 Piper[*] had considered attending a private Mennonite school in the Lower Mainland in the senior grades of school, but because of her friends at The Secondary Traditional School, she decided to stay. She is a close friend of Phoebe's, and the two work together and sit with each other during class. Piper, as with most students in class, does not verbally engage in class discussions or critiques, other than to offer supportive comments, yet during informal conversations during class, and during the interview, she offers opinions and insight into her beliefs about learning in a traditional environment and the role of art

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[*] All participants selected pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

in her life. She has a witty sense of humor and is very nonchalant about traditional education. She thinks that it is 'old school' and feels it is about respect (Personal communication, March 30, 2009). Overall, she feels it is hard to define the traditional philosophy, but that it has been a positive experience for her. She indicated that traditional has never been explained to her, that it is just "kind of 'normal'" (Personal communication, March 30, 2009).

She feels the transition to the secondary school from the middle school, came with additional freedom, but that this is simply a natural process of getting older. She feels there was more freedom with the uniform at the senior school and that compared to the private Mennonite school, The Secondary Traditional School was less strict. Unlike the other two participants, Piper does not have formal education plans for the year following graduation. She believes that art will be something primarily for personal enjoyment versus a profession. She has family members that she considers artists, but that they do art for personal enjoyment and not as a profession. She took art in high school because she liked it, but grades in the course are not important for her future, as she does not plan to attend post-secondary school right away. Unlike the other participants, she does not take art classes outside of school, but uses her spare time to doodle and draw. She does photography in her spare time and enjoys it more than traditional art forms, such as drawing and painting. She feels that the latter forms of art require the building of something from nothing, while, photography offers more advanced starting point. She also belongs to an online art community, where she shares her artwork and blogs about other participants' artwork.

Piper identifies that individualism in art is important to her. For her, individualism means the ability to work, without input or guidance from the teacher or other students. She prefers an unstructured approach to learning in the art, where she is free to experiment with materials of her choosing. She feels that collective practices, such as group critique, could potentially interfere with individualism in art. She does not find the critique process beneficial as she critiques her work during the studio process. She feels that this form of critique provides a very strong sense of where her work is going. For many projects, she works primarily at home, resisting any input from Ms. Terri or other classmates. Additionally, she does not find the critique beneficial because the work is complete at the critique stage in the assignment, and so

the opportunity to incorporate suggestions has passed. Additionally, her contributions to the critique process offers only generic responses, particularly when she does not like the artwork of other classmates. She phrases her critique responses so that her words do not belie her opinion. She resists the contemporary/conceptual design of art, as she believes that the idea or meaning in art is not always intended or purposeful. She believes that art has goals other than social commentary.

The two projects that Piper completed during the study included a ballerina made out of recycled cardboard and a room (diorama), intended to repel the viewer. Both of these projects strongly adhered to the project outline provided by Ms. Terri. She was not sure about why she selected a ballerina (See Figure 2), but she did reference Degas as an artist she knew. She was happy with how 'she' turned out. For all three students, the discussion of artwork is a very hesitant process. They appear to be uncomfortable, unable, or unwilling to discuss the reason or purpose behind their work or how they selected the image or idea to be developed. They emphasize a random nature in their decision-making process. When I asked Piper about a section of the tutu of the Ballerina she had built, which had the phrase 'designed for real life' inserted into he skirt she replied,

> Well, I used a Reitman's box to make her tutu. And so, I was like, "Oh, hey, that's cool. That
> could mean something." I don't know. I mean, it's kind of a statement, but it's not reflecting…
> I don't know. (Personal communication, March 4, 2009)

The second work that she completed (see Figure 6), a room, which repels, was a literal nod to both film noir and 'Great Expectations'. Piper had not seen either on film, but had read the book and had learned about the film genre from a friend. The room was composed of a sweeping staircase, to a second floor mezzanine with scale framed Renaissance-style portraits. Piper felt that the work reflected her personal voice primarily because the work was a representation of the book and film genre, which intrigued her.

Phoebe

Phoebe, unlike the other two participants, intends to pursue post-secondary education in Visual Art. She is using the work that she produces in Ceramics and Sculpture 11/12 to develop a portfolio to apply to the University of the Fraser Valley for a Visual Art Diploma. Of the three students, Phoebe is the most verbal and is quick to respond during the critique process and during formal and informal

interviews. She, like the other students though, remains quiet during class discussion and work times. She shared Piper's opinion about the critique process, but was more strongly opinionated about the conceptual turn that the class had taken since Ms. Terri's arrival. She values art primarily for the aesthetic value and feels that the social commentary of contemporary art practice is over done and repetitive. She enjoys the independent nature of learning in art and finds that the critique process does not allow for a true critique. She edited her own responses so that others were not hurt or offended by her opinions.

She enjoys the process involved in planning her work and the surprise of how the work turns out when completed. She finds the unpredictable nature of some materials, such as the cardboard in the first assignment frustrating, which offers some insight into why digital photography has so much appeal. She feels there is certain predictability with photography and that the medium offers an opportunity to master technique. She feels this mastery allows additional time for composition and aesthetics. The 'odds' of having a successful image to work with greatly increases the appeal of photography. She feels that sculpture offers a single chance at a successful product, while with photography, "if it's not perfect you can edit it on Photoshop and you can always delete" (personal communication, March 4, 2009). She feels that photography offers more control.

Phoebe does not recognize traditional qualities, which she identities as respect and integrity, as essential parts of her learning in Visual Art. She feels that editing some information such as nudity in art is acceptable, but feels this would be a similar experience in most mainstream high schools. She related an experience of having an art magazine in class, which included nude images that other students took from her during class and displayed for the rest of the class. She got into trouble for bringing the magazine, which she felt was appropriate as that particular class was not the right setting for that information. Phoebe also participates in the online art community, where she contributes and discusses art.

Phoebe's artwork, like Piper's, adheres to the parameters of the assignment set out by Ms. Terri. She created a book made from recycled cardboard, which represented the *Alice in Wonderland* movie, a suggestion provided by Ms. Terri. The freestanding book was composed of pages, which created a

shadow box effect for characters from the story. The layering of characters provided depth and interest and she played with color to draw emphasis to certain areas and to draw the eye across and through the entire form. Phoebe placed a miniature of Alice peering into a door in the back of the book. During critique, both Piper and Phoebe described the amount of work behind producing the sculpture as a significant marker of success. Phoebe's work was not complete by the due date and she took a late mark so that she could complete it to the point where she felt it was visually successful.

The second work, a room that enticed and repelled, was a trapezoidal cube constructed out of Styrofoam, based on four nights of recorded dreams. While the room assignment required students to select one option, Phoebe did all three. She perforated the cube with a dozen or so sharp bamboo skewers and spray-painted it black. She spray-painted the interior black and suspended three men, constructed out of red candy licorice, throughout the cube. While drawn in by the candy, the viewer was, at the same time, repelled by the human form, the sharp skewers, and the webbing strung from skewer to skewer.

Paige

Paige is by far, the most quiet and soft spoken of the three, modeling exemplary traditional behaviour. During the interview process and during critique, her responses were often inaudible because of the quietness of her voice. She is heavily involved in a number of different aspects of extracurricular practice in the school, including a school leadership club. It was challenging to get Paige to attend the formal interviews because of her busy academic and extracurricular schedule; she was frequently busy at lunch. She does not appear to be close friends with either Piper or Phoebe and does not interact with the other two during class time. Paige was also the only student to agree to participate after the first introduction of the study.

Like the other two, Paige has attended a traditional school her entire life. She feels that respect for others is a primary focus of a traditional education. She remembers her experience at the elementary level being far more rigid. The secondary level, she feels, offers more freedom.

She has taken art since grade six and takes courses outside of school. She identifies that others have more skill than she does, but she has accepted that it requires more work on her part to become better. She appreciates art for the flexibility it provides in not being 'stuck in one path'. She feels that

she is able to re-work or scrap ideas and fix mistakes, which differs substantially from other courses where marks reflect a permanence of achievement.

Similar to the other participants, Paige enjoys photography more than traditional art forms. The work that she produced for both assignments reflects a strong and diligent work ethic and attention to detail requiring commitment and focus. The first work made from recycled cardboard was a replica of a violin, an instrument that she plays. The second sculpture was a room derived from her perception of a dream-like state. She collects materials for class while she is at home and while she is on vacation. During the critique process, Paige offers words of encouragement, particularly for those students whose work is considered less successful. She does not enjoy the critique process, but is patient with it as she feels there are benefits to understanding the interpretation of her work, despite her claim that her work is explicit and is without deeper meaning. She assesses the value of her work through the achievement of realism and representation accomplished through hard work.

In the following section, the perspectives and experiences of these participants, collected through multiple forms of data, are explored through the five curriculum domains, described by Goodlad, et al (1979). The critical aspect of this study seeks to do more than represent the perspectives and experiences of these groups of participants. In this study, the perspectives and experiences of these participants were gathered to understand the influence of the traditional philosophy on teaching and learning in Visual Art. These understandings contextualized in the TSM and in contemporary educational reforms will contribute to better understanding of how educational reforms impact the day-to-day practices in the Visual Art classroom.

4.3   Research Question 1

How do Discursive Practices Form the Official Context of The Secondary Traditional School?

> It is in the formal [official] curriculum that society's interests usually are embedded.
> When the sociopolitical process has functioned, when societal decisions have been made,
> a formal curriculum remains, for better or for worse. The process continues, but the
> product is the artifact left for analysis...in the analysis, one finds those beliefs, values,
> attitudes, and the like which society or some dominant group in society wishes the young
> to acquire. (Goodlad et al, 1979, p. 61)

i.   The Proposal: Juxtaposing Difference

In 1994, a group of parents in the school division of this study petitioned the board for a traditional middle years school. Parents did not submit a proposal for the secondary school, as findings from a survey initiated by the school board indicated adequate support for a secondary school (Study X, 2005; Principal, personal communication, April 25, 2009). The proposal for the middle school, carried over to The Secondary Traditional School, laid the groundwork for identifying the roles of the parents, teachers, administration, and the students. It established the hierarchy of authority and the emphasis on parental involvement in the operations of the school. The proposal also recommended a back-to-basics curriculum approach, the use of uniforms, the separation of grades, and an emphasis on a continuum of values from home to school as central to the core beliefs and practices of the traditional school. The board ultimately approved the middle school, which subsequently functioned as a feeder for the secondary school in this study. The mission, outlined in the traditional middle school proposal, was as follows:

> WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN WILL BECOME GOOD CITIZENS, CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING THEIR GOALS, IF THEY ARE GIVEN CONSISTENT, STRUCTURED EDUCATION, WITH HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS TRADITION VALUES OF HOME AND SOCIETY. (Emphasis in original, Proposal in Brief, 1994, para. 3)

The mission of the school was to provide an environment of learning that supported the values and beliefs from home. The proposal described the student's potential to become, which served to form the concept of the child-in-transition. The goal outlined in the proposal called for like-minded teachers and administration to realize the child's potential, through structure, rules, and discipline. The conception of the traditional child and the school, juxtaposed against the mainstream public child and school implied that mainstream public was neglecting the child. Parents involved with the proposal wanted their children "NOT be disadvantaged in getting access to best colleges and universities" (Proposal-in-brief, 1994, para. 3) so that they would be "ready to take their place in our ever changing society" (Proposal-in-brief, 1994, para. 2). This 'becoming' was to be guided by the transmission of values and beliefs from the home and closed society to the school through familiar authority structures and through a consistent surrounding of compatible individuals.

As Brown (2004) noted, significant differences between traditional schools and the mainstream public school system needed to be evident in order for parents to enroll their child. While the proposal indicated that "The school is not elitist, not strict authoritarian, not private nor based on religion" (Np.) the implicit message delivered through repetitious phrasing of parents, home, values, and family, defined that only certain children from certain families should attend this school. The creation of traditional as different from mainstream public school was located in the common sense message that only families who valued traditions would chose to send their child to that school. Those parents, who did not value tradition, would send their child to mainstream public. This binary of values is a message that is consistent throughout the official traditional literature, providing the difference as one of values and morals. The Principal of the secondary school described how the consistency of values of the students was maintained by the school:

> because of our reputation, because of the kids and the parents who had the interest to be in a traditional system from the beginning, we obviously attract parents who feel that the structure – a little more structure that you would see than in a regular high school – is important for them. We have a high emphasis on respect as far as behaviour and how… you know, what's appropriate, behaviour expectations. So, like I say, both, that helps encourage and reinforce that with the students, but it also draws parents who feel that's important, which probably has a natural tendency to bring in kids that are more from that kind of a structured background. (Principal, personal communication, February 18, 2009)

The objectives outlined in the original proposal included using "proven teaching techniques emphasizing direct instruction" and a "detailed school policy [which] would not only cover teaching methods, curriculum and materials, but also deportment, appearance, subject and homework" (Np.). The Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) consisting of parents, teachers, and the principal would also develop a dress code for teachers and students. As part of the objectives, parents called for a school that "will model and support the traditional values of home and society, and will adhere to the traditional roles of parents, teachers, and administration" (n.p.). The discourse of choice constructed the mainstream as lacking in standards and morals and that the traditional philosophy would provide 'proven' techniques of instruction, parental control, and teachers' who would maintain the transmission of authority structures from home to school.

ii.   **The Defining of Difference**

a.   <u>"Key Visuals" and "The Ten Tenets of Traditional": Symbolic Acts of Respect and Integrity</u>

The Secondary Traditional School opened eight years after the founding of the middle years' school. A continuum of the traditional values in the middle school proposal formed the secondary school's philosophy. The secondary school's official philosophy is similar to the elementary and middle school traditional philosophy, yet the Principal acknowledges that there are some significant differences between expected behaviours of elementary and secondary students:

> I mean elementary school, you have the markers, like, you know, emphasis on phonetics and the homework emphasis and some of that. When you get to the high school, some of those things drop away because they're no longer issues or things to consider. (Principal, personal communication, April 23rd, 2009)

Official literature used to educate potential and current staff, students, and parents about secondary traditional philosophy rely on two primary documents, 'Key Visuals', and the 'Ten Tenets of Traditional'. The 'Key Visuals' define the difference between traditional schools and mainstream public.

> So, traditional practices. We call them key visuals, things that people would walk in and see quickly. The uniform is one – an obvious one. More of a casual dress code part of uniform. We do the standing when visitors come into the classrooms out of respect. I mean, that's part of what we do that's unique. In a formal questioning period, students stand to answer or respond to questions or to ask questions. That doesn't happen all the time, but in a typical sense, we try to focus on teacher-centered instruction. And by that, I don't mean teacher standing up at the front and speaking or lecturing the whole time, but simply when we do cooperative learning experiences or a variety of different classroom activities, that the teacher is firmly in charge of directing and choreographing, if you wish, and is directly responsible for the results and the achievements that the students have in that context. (Principal, personal communication, February 18, 2009)

The 'Key Visuals' described in all official school material primarily conveys the behaviours of the student, as guided by teachers, as respect for authority. The coalition of traditional schools' website defines the 'Key Visuals' as: the dress code, known as "Dress for Success"; Parents as Partners; Respect for Country and its institutions; Students standing to greet and standing to address the class; and a higher standard for student behaviour. These acts are symbolic in nature, in that in and of themselves, they do not promote respect. They do serve to create the perception that students are respectful in nature to the defined authority structures of the school. These acts reflect that the school maintains, on a daily basis, the values of respect taught in the home. Each 'visual', provides the defined roles of parent, principal, and teacher, in terms of how they might consistently promote these visuals. The parent handbook reminds that the "observance of this formality provides an ongoing and daily reminder that we are a

community of learners working together to support learning and each other" (Parent Handbook, 2008-2009, pg. 10). The *Ten Tenets of Traditional* included the Key Visuals plus the following:

> a consistent structured approach, which maximizes class time; a strong focus on academics; regular skills assessment; an emphasis on solid literacy skills; a regular homework policy; and a safe environment. (Ten Tenets of Traditional, Parent Information Package, 2009)

b.   Restricted Access

In addition to the Tenets, a document included in the parent package describes the school as a "Small Family School" which will always be one of the smallest schools in the district.

> What I notice is unique here on two fronts, number one is because we are and we claim to be a little bit different, we attract more of a consistent client base. So, we have students in here where the parents understand and accept those kinds of things as important. Like, the structure and the high levels of respect. So, when you deal with students, you have, across the board, a generally consistent supportive parent base. I know just from my own experience on staffs and on administration, you have much more diversity of staff and what they're willing to step out to reinforce outside of their classroom or even inside than what you would have here. Plus, your client base. You have a lot of top students in the other schools, conscientious parents, solid, stable environments and focused kids. And then, you have, you know, everything else in between. And, of course, that makes it much more challenging. (Principal, personal communication, February 18, 2009)

> The access to the school, according to the Principal and the official literature of The Secondary

Traditional School was only restricted because of the first-come, first-served policy and was not exclusive for families based on material conditions and family structure. The official school context marketed access to the school as a self-selective process based on those who did and did not value a traditional approach to learning. As the school's emphasis on manners, and the safer and more orderly environment using uniforms and a closed-campus policy is emphasized, students from troubled backgrounds would opt not to attend, as their value system would not be supported.

> Many of those kids from some of those struggling backgrounds would probably…They wouldn't want to come here because the uniform and some of the other stuff. So, you know, they would go to those regular schools and, of course, that creates much more of a diversity in the type of client base that you have in struggling to deal with students who have behaviour issues. (Principal, personal communication, February 18, 2009)

In October of 2006, an online registration process replaced the practice of parents' lining-up for days, to register their child. Despite the increased access for families unable to physically wait for days, some parents did not support the new form of access.

> The general consensus [was] that that parents would like to maintain past level of commitment from incoming parents by maintaining a registration process that required interested parents to demonstrate their commitment to registering their children in a significant way. (TAC meeting minutes, October 18, 2006)

when they switched to do that, some of our long term or ardent traditional parents didn't like it because they felt that way, when they had to line up, you knew people were committed. Whereas now, going online, they figure people may just kind of like it as an option and… not really committed. So, I don't know how true that is but that was some of the sense of their concern. They didn't like the change. (Principal, personal communication, February 18, 2009)

Despite parent pressure on the board to establish a system that would prevent full and open access, the board continued with the new application process. It is important to note, that once students enrolled, their 'spot' was secure, so the families who were concerned about access already had a confirmed spot. Their concern centered on what type of student would be able to access this public school. To help communicate to the broader community and the world different forms of media were created to communicate what type of family and student would be best suited for The Secondary Traditional School. In addition to the use of media, the school structure, modified to communicate the core traditional values to market the school to international students. These visual representations of the school are discussed further in the next section.

c.   Visual Representations of The Traditional School Philosophy

Information on the World Wide Web

The school has several websites including: the city run site for the marketing of international programs; the school district site; the secondary school site; and the coalition of traditional schools in the district's site. The cities website describes the unique nature of the traditional philosophy through a student's testimonial as:

The Secondary *Traditional School was created and constructed upon a set of standards and timeless principles that seem to have been forgotten in today's era. Traditionally, these concepts were deemed essential for success and consisted of ideas such as respect, honesty, and integrity. Fortunately, these things have all been effectively incorporated into the learning environment at Secondary Traditional School, allowing the students an incredible opportunity not readily available anywhere else. (Student's message, City website, 2009)

The website which is supported by the coalition of traditional skills included testimonials from parents who felt that:

We can drop our children off in the morning with complete confidence that they will be taught in a structured, quiet environment that encourages learning. (Parent Testimonial, Traditional Coalition Website, May 21, 2009)

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* Name of the school has been changed to maintain anonymity.

A list of the schools following the traditional philosophy was posted with images of the administration and teachers mingling with the students. The teachers are dressed formally in dresses and suits, greeting students at the door. The students shown are sitting at their desks, working with heads down or participating in group-work, with hands raised and the teacher at the front of the classroom. On the left border of the webpage are testimonials by parents affirming the school's qualities.

The Secondary Traditional School website echoes these messages as well as the 'Key Visuals" and the "Ten Tenets of Traditional". The school sport teams are advertised, the uniform is made visible, and pictures of the school, students, and school logo alternate in the heading. The school markets itself as progressive, defined by the use of technology; and traditional defined by the emphasis on academics, dress code, and structured learning environments. The three websites market the school as part of the public system, but with characteristics familiar to private schools. The highlighted aspects include the emphasis on structure, the uniform, and safety of the student in a structured environment.

The Physical Ordering of the School Environment

Part of the traditional philosophy is the use of a structured environment to focus student learning. Desks are placed in rows, which face the front of the room. In the Visual Art room, students are seated in desks, which are linked together preventing them from being moved into groupings more conducive to class discussions and critique. The visual environment also serves to enforce the values of honesty, respect, and integrity through displays of patriotism and orderly behaviour. The Canadian flag is centered at the entrance of the school. Displays indicate a unified support of military troops. There is a yellow, 'Support Our Troops' (cardboard) ribbon placed just inside the front door. In the hall on the way to the office, photos of students modeling appropriate school uniforms cover the bulletin boards. These visuals serve to reinforce the ideals of community and are daily reminders of the value of order and authority in the lives of the staff and students.

iii.   Maintaining Difference: Defining the Roles in the School Community

a.   Parent Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, Student Code of Conduct, Teachers' Edition

Throughout the literature, the roles of students, teachers, administration, and parents are well defined. Students and staff adhere to the school rules, enforced by a top-down and bottom-up approach to

identifying infractions. Students, teachers, parents, and administration are equally responsible for identifying infractions. In the middle school proposal, the student was consistently defined through their potential to become successful members in the community. In the secondary school, this construction is achieved with the family's, teachers', and principal's guidance, but an increased emphasis is placed on the student' personal responsibility for actions and how an individual's actions affect the larger community.

> At The Secondary Traditional School we seek to acquire knowledge, develop skills, foster positive attitudes toward learning, build confidence, and instill respect for the rights, beliefs, and property of others. Failure on the part of a member of our community to work toward this common purpose adversely affects everyone. (Parent Handbook, 2008-2009, p. 9)

It is the responsibility of all members of the community and school to support the collective interests by adhering to the rules and philosophy of the school. Students' behaviour, to and from the school, also falls under the discipline guidelines because of community perception. In the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Code of Conduct, Teacher's Edition, retrieved from the school website, the rights and responsibilities of the students are defined through personal and community accountability. Statements throughout both documents emphasized the responsibility of the student to care for their possessions and to be responsible for their actions. Students were to use common sense as a behavioural guide, implying that this was a consistent and homogenous "sense" possessed by students in the school.

> REMEMBER…
> Be respectful and use common sense in all situations. (Student Handbook, 2008-2009, np)

The role of the teacher described in the documents and Principal's interviews was to maintain the school philosophy through strict and consistent application of the rules.

> it's really important for the administrators to support teachers when they call students on that or they work with students. Because as soon as they get a sense that the administration doesn't think this is a big deal, they won't bother. And I know that's just very typical of any school. So, of course, in a role that we have – The Vice-Principal* and, myself – is to ensure that we support teachers when they take those extra steps to encourage and hold students responsible for some of those traditional differences that we have. (Principal, personal communication, February 18, 2009)

When I asked how the philosophy would be at work in the Visual Art room, the Principal replied:

> I don't know. Like, as we look at it too, we're not saying, "Well, we only look at traditional forms of art," whatever that is. "We only look at classic pieces." I mean, art is such a diverse discipline and it has a lot to do with the teacher themselves and what their interests lie in. So, we don't specify. We do clay, we do painting and we do drawing of a certain type, that's up for the art teacher to decide and there's nothing in traditional philosophy that would dictate that. (Principal, personal communication, February 18)

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* Name has been changed to protect anonymity.

The Principal felt that some subjects in art that might conflict with the values of the community but that this would be the case in any moral community.

> that probably because of our clientele, a teacher would need to be a little more sensitive to some of the risqué-er elements of an art kind of thing. If you're talking about kind of art on the edge, I would probably… If I got a sense that that was where the teacher was going, I would certainly talk to the teacher about appropriateness. I'm not sure I would be any different than in a regular classroom, because I know art has all kinds of edges to it and I think some things are simply not appropriate at this kind of an age setting. And obviously, if somebody wants to draw nudes in high school, I think that would be a problem for most parents. And if it isn't, it should be. (Principal, personal communication, February 18)

Ms. Terri agreed with the description of the moral quality of the community and, initially, with the censorship of nudity in the class, but she had a different perspective on how the official context would manifest itself in the Visual Art class. This perception as a context of practice is discussed in the following section.

iv.   Ms. Terri's Perceived Context of Practice

> Well he said that he'll just come do a general one [observation] and then he'd come back and we'd choose. So I'd choose a focus for him and then he'd come in one more time and just observed unannounced and I was like, "You're allowed to do that?" [laughs] So that's what he wants, to work it towards what I need but at the same time he obviously has an agenda. Like he wants to make sure I'm not this floozy art teacher who doesn't like structure and I think he's heard that I'm very structured. I don't know. (Ms. Terri. personal communication, April 25, 2009)

For Ms. Terri, the authoritarian role, which defined teaching The Secondary Traditional School, was a salient aspect in her perceived context of the traditional school. She referenced on several occasions, that administration and parents were aware of her practices, despite the lack of formal observation during the course of the study. She referenced her personal history within a school with similar authority structures, and felt that this system had the potential to restrict learning in the Visual Art. When asked about her choice to teach at the school, she said:

> Normally I might have avoided it [laughs] to be honest but they had Art and I wanted to teach Art and the more I thought about it, I mean … There's always a fear I guess with strictness or fundamental values or structure. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Initially, this fear was set-aside by the support she found in the school's administration. Through them, she was offered resources, which she felt were not available in other schools and she believed that the students would be better behaved, allowing her a better opportunity to teach art the way she wanted to. The school's official position on the benefits of choice pacified her initial concerns about strictness.

> And because it's a "choice" school students, or at least students' parents, [laughs] are choosing to take part in that and so I think it can be beneficial because everyone's in agreement it's not nothing that forced on someone, they've chosen to come to the school or their parents have chosen for them. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

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The official benefits of choice, which included a respectful student body with less behavioural issues, informed her perceived context of practice. Her initial perception of choice was that it provided equality and fairness, and that the philosophy and organization of the school presented an agreed upon agenda of beliefs and values:

> And so I think its parents... because it's a "choice" school, parents seem to have more sway or affect (sic.) with the school or how it's run or support for the school. I mean if there wasn't a demand or appreciation for a traditional school I don't know if it would exist. So, I think admin wants to please or to be receptive towards parents' wishes and desires and so if they choose to not expose their children to certain concepts or ideas then I think they're allowed. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Over the course of the study, this perception of equality and unity transitioned from the perceived context based on the official philosophy tempered by personal history to one informed by her practical teaching experience at the school. Initially, a consistent component of her perceived context was the belief that the collective of students and parents agreed to and supported the principles and rules of the philosophy:

> It's clearly defined expectations of behaviour and dress code. But what I've noticed or at least what I can assume is that those do prevent more classroom management issues and it's school-wide supported so I think it's just a collective set of agreements. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

In the final interview, Ms. Terri expressed that her initial belief in the harmony of values of the parents, students, and the traditional philosophy had shifted. Over the course of the study, she developed a more critical stance in terms of the homogeneous nature of the learner at The Secondary Traditional School and began to recognize that some parents were choosing the traditional philosophy, not out of support of the values, but because of their negative perceptions of the mainstream public school system:

> Her son, he wasn't doing well and he's very visual I was going, "Well, this is a very structured school, have you thought about putting him somewhere else? And she's like, "Yeah, he's been asking and we're just worried about... we want to shelter him." That's basically what she was saying. "We worry about different crowds he might get in to." And he's a good kid, like I can tell he's a decent kid, he's not looking for trouble but it was the fear of change I guess that was preventing them and I guess the traditional school, it's more strict, there's uniforms so in a way they feel like their kids are going to be sheltered and taken care of by going there. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, April 25, 2009)

Her beliefs about the simplicity of 'the choice' became altered by her emerging critical awareness of how choice was being framed and offered, based on the parents' perceptions of the traditional and

mainstream public systems. Ms. Terri's personal history of attending a private school with a traditional or fundamental philosophy, informed her formation of context.

> I mean I went to a private high school as well for my first 3 years and then I went to a public high school after that for the last 2 years because I found it too restricting in a lot of ways. I struggled under, I guess, the harshness I found there of the understanding of teachers. I found the public school much more accepting. And that was private school. So that has the religious aspect to it as well and I think that had something to do with it. Where Traditional school is a public school but it's more strict in a lot of ways so I'm learning to differentiate because it feels like it's a private school [laughs] but in fact it is a public school with more restrictions. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Her memories of being a student within a similar system, which, in part, informed her concept of the student in The Secondary Traditional School, also influenced her context of practice.

> I definitely find so far, and I've only been teaching here for a few weeks so I can't say for sure, but there does seem to be more sheltering of students here and I experienced that. Well, I experienced that with the schools that I went to. Life is full of controversy and I don't believe in sheltering but I also don't believe in using shock just for shock value either so I think they're coming into they're fragile beings [laughs] I mean, we all are but they're a little bit more new and less jaded and more vulnerable in that degree. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

The perceived context of Ms. Terri's practice was constructed by the official context but was mediated through her personal experience and history in schools she identified as having a similar philosophy. From this, Ms. Terri constructed the roles of the parents, administration, students and teachers, which formed a context within which she would situate her practice as a Visual Art teacher.

v.   Conclusion to Research Question 1

a.   Maintaining Difference

The discursive practices established the official curricula by generating both an explicit and implicit perception of the public system, the traditional community, and the traditional student. The construction of these groups allowed differences and similarities to justify the polarization of the traditionalists from mainstream public. Of primary significance is that difference is maintained, not taught in the traditional school. This is an important distinction as the morality difference between those who do and do not attend traditional schools forms an initial concept of the student body as morally homogenous.

The official curriculum of the school defines difference through the enforcement of symbolic representations of respect, honesty, and integrity. The analysis of data revealed that the traditional

philosophy defined itself through visible behaviours and authority structures. The official curriculum formed by 'The Ten Tenets of Traditional' and 'Key Visuals' guided protocols relating to curriculum content, pedagogical practices, and expectation of behaviours of the parents, the principal, the teachers, and the students. The explicit philosophy of the traditional school served to establish a construct of value difference between The Secondary Traditional School's families and mainstream public school families. The primary role of the school was to sustain this construct through the enforcement of visible cues and behaviours, which symbolically represented a respectful student. These behaviours included: students standing to address class, the uniform, teacher-centered approaches, and an emphasis on respectful behaviour.

These behaviours coupled with the discursive formation of a morally homogenous student body present a uniform image of students, contrasted by the implicit construction of the mainstream public school students and families. According to the Principal, the rational process of self-selection of attendees agreeing to the school philosophy eliminates difference. The visible nature of the embodied school philosophy served two purposes. It indicated, to the larger traditional community that the values and rules were being translated from home to school. In addition to this, these behaviours served to dissuade non-traditionalist from attending the school.

As Deal and Peterson (1999) suggested, school culture as an immersed experience alters the practice of teaching from an autonomous activity to a distributed activity. The organization of the school environment allowed for the maintenance of a morally homogenous student body through teaching practices that conformed student learning to the accepted official curriculum. The highly visible nature of the official curriculum ensured the recognition of compliance and as such, teacher practices that enforced and maintained difference were observable as were those that did not.

b.   Protecting the Child in Transition

The official nature of the child as 'becoming' delineated roles of the parent, teacher, and Principal. The liminal state created opportunities for guiding secondary students suspended in transition from child to adult. In this state, students were given more opportunities to make decisions, guided by the common sense instilled in the childhood state. The hierarchical structure of authority, modeling the

familial structure, served to safely transition students to early adulthood. The physical segregation of traditional students from mainstream public students removed opportunities for traditional students to become side tracked by the diversity in public schools. Embedded in the traditional system, "guised" as a community of practice, is a structure of surveillance, of both self and others, to promote conformity to the traditional philosophy.

The implicit context manifested in the organization of the school, centered on the continuum of and compliance to socially constructed roles from home to school, presented as an uninterrupted process of cultural and familial knowledge transmission. This continuum is achieved by the physical segregation of traditional students from mainstream public students, restricted access based on moral agreement, a hierarchical structure modeled after traditional parental authority, and the promotion of individual and community responsibility for the adherence to traditional principles. While the school website announces that traditional values and progressive education are equal partners in the learning within the school, the implicit context reflects that the values of progressive education including individualism, critical self-awareness, and freedom of thought and expression, are restricted in this context.

4.4   Research Question 2

How does the Visual Art Teacher's Perceived Context Guide her Curriculum and Pedagogical Decisions?

> Yeah. And you'd think that public schools would want to better equip their students to handle discussions about such nature rather than shelter them from it. I think there's a lot of fear. I think it's based on – and this is my personal opinion – but it's based on the fear of something and I think education empowers an individual to have critical reasoning and judgment based on knowledge of the area. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

According to Goodlad, et al (1979), by asking teachers questions about their perception of the official curriculum, one can find the extent to which there is a correspondence between the perceived and the operational curriculum.

i.   Preparing the Traditional Learner in Visual Art

Ms. Terri believed that the value of learning in Visual Art in The Secondary Traditional School was about preparing the child to be critically aware. She designed the curriculum around artistic experiences, which would build their critical thinking skills. Ms. Terri defined critical thinking as a

heightened awareness gained through contemplation and questioning. She felt this would be achieved in part, through conceptual art practice, which would require students to move from simply the aesthetics of work to include an emphasis on ideas or concepts derived from social commentary and social justice.

> to expand their notion of art not just as something to produce to put on your mantle, but something actually empowering and thought-provoking. And then they can cause change. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, March 9, 2009)

This model of learning as experiential knowledge closely modeled her experiences in becoming an artist. Unlike the process of 'becoming' as defined in the official traditional philosophy, the preparing of the student allowed for a range of possible outcomes based on a range of possible experiences. Ms. Terri interpreted the preparation of students as fundamentally challenging the outcome of the liminal state, prescribed by the notion of becoming, which she felt offered a limited set of outcomes.

Ms. Terri perceived learning as understanding difference versus understanding similarity. While the traditional philosophy sought to segregate the learner from difference, Ms. Terri felt that in this liminal state she had an opportunity to transform students to active versus passive participants by confronting difference. This transformation would mimic the one she experienced moving from a fundamentalist school to public school. While a multitude of outcomes were seen as possible, she did not prepare for a possibility that the outcome would not reflect a transformation but an adherence to passive qualities.

> [One Student] really likes landscapes, and things like that, and she wanted to do a vintage poster, just a vintage poster. And I thought, yeah, that'd be great, that could be visually stunning, that's great, but could you make it conceptual, as well? Could you have, like, a message in there? And she seemed really like, "No, I don't want to do that." And I thought, okay. Like, I was trying to push her, because she had already created something that was... like her tulips.... And um... and I wanted to push her past safeness into something that was a little less safe, and she doesn't like that. You know,... she likes safe, beauty landscapes, controllable, yeah, so. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, March 9, 2009)

She understood learning in Visual Art as a progression based on critical thinking and artistic technical skill development gained through practice and experience. She viewed critical thinking in Visual Art as visual literacy and conceptual skills that would help prepare students to be perceptive individuals able to make a change for the better in society.

> And for me Visual Art is very important because, to the individual as far as life skills go, because we live in a very visually bombarded environment. So in society images are used and we're exposed to them, hundreds daily, and we're manipulated by them and if we're ill-equipped to read

them or to understand how they affect us then it can definitely decrease our value of life or our ways of living and interpreting the world and participating in it. For example, advertisements, right, they advertise that you'll be cool or you'll have happiness by buying... I guess materialism. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

While she believed in the liberating experience created through independent thinking in Visual Art, she also believed in structured stages of learning in Visual Art. She felt that once students formed foundation skills structured around the principles and elements of design, reflected in the technical attributes of the work, they would be able to independently and freely design work. She conceptualized independent learning as a stage in student development, advanced to once students achieved a certain level of technical and conceptual skills.

I think as long as they've received foundation skills. Sometimes because of the lack of the funding for the Arts, Art isn't really offered until Grade 11 and 12 and so then at Grade 11 and 12 you're teaching the foundations and so what I've had to do is teach more basic skills in Art 11 and then I provide –if they've taken Art 11 – and their a Grade 12 student, then I allow them to have a more independent experience. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Ms. Terri linked her beliefs about learning in Visual Art to her beliefs about the value of learning in school and in life outside the school walls. Learning technical skills required diligence, effort, and perseverance in the face of difficulty, which she defined as important life skills. At this stage, she felt the role of the teacher was to guide development through structured assignments emphasizing aesthetic skill development and the conceptual process.

I think the major thing that I learned studying Art was that it can be learned. For me it was something I always had to work at even though I was naturally creative and prone to the Arts, drawing I had to learn. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Referring to her experience in post-secondary studio courses, Ms. Terri based her assessment of student work on the formative process and summative product. She encouraged students to develop foundation skills and hoped to see student work that reflected diligence and creativity. The attainment of foundational skills would reflect a work ethic required to meet the challenges of the conceptual processes. She believed that pedagogical orientations should transition from a centralized to decentralized model based on the development of the student. To assist in the process, she emphasized role of the critique and community of practice as a central focus in learning in Visual Art.

Art is about the process and the final outcome and then the sharing with the community. So I'll require them to have a critique and a self-evaluation and evaluation by classmates...not evaluation but like a critique, a group critique and then to share it with the community. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

The critique functioned as a tool for assessment, as a community for sharing, and as an arena for peer influence of appropriate methods and practice.

> I'm hoping that, even just through the critique, that she... after seeing each others' work, that she'll say, "Okay, you know, maybe I need to step up a little bit and push myself a little bit farther. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, March 9, 2009)

Once students had developed technical skills, Ms. Terri felt the role of the teacher was to provide increased opportunities for the students to be independent learners. She explored the aims of critical thinking in terms of raised consciousness through visual literacy. She felt that a curriculum in art needed to prepare students to be visually perceptive about media messages.

> …I don't know, yeah, maybe, maybe it's more preparing the soul to interact with the world around them or to be protected in certain ways from that. From being taken advantage of through images. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

While there is a consistency in pedagogical practices between Ms. Terri's perception of preparing and the traditional philosophy's construction of becoming, the fundamental differences are the perceived outcomes of these practices. Her expectation of students at certain stages directed her conceptualization of the design of the Visual Art curriculum as well as her practice as a teacher. Throughout the study, tension developed between her initial beliefs about learning and teaching in Visual Art and her experience within the classroom. The negotiation of the official curriculum and the way the students experienced the curriculum, confronted her image of the learner and teacher. As the tension developed, she attempted to maintain her original goals for learning, despite her perception of resistance from the students.

ii. Perception of the Traditional Philosophy in Visual Art

The teacher, students, and Principal could not clearly express how the integration of traditional values in Visual Art education would take place. Within her construction of the context of The Secondary Traditional School, Ms. Terri was hesitant to incorporate curriculum content that she felt might conflict with the views of the community and families and ultimately the administration. Ms. Terri indicated that her role as a teacher required maintaining traditional values through censoring certain subjects in art, primarily nudity. She identified several additional areas which she would be required to implement the traditional philosophy, including teacher-centered approaches to instruction, students being directed to speak, and through rigorous assessment.

> Like am I going to be expected to teach up there, to lecture, to do that style? I don't think that's very suitable to the Arts. I think the Arts is very student centered and the teacher provides instruction and guidance but it's should not all, definitely not all, be teacher-centered. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

More that restricting curriculum content, the Principal and Ms. Terri felt that traditional meant controlling student behaviour and maintaining the hierarchy of authority in the classroom. Ms. Terri had mixed feelings with this role. Posted in her room was an article entitled, "We Teach Who We Are" and she frequently cited this during the formal interview period. While there is a deterministic sense to this belief, she tempered it with views that reflected a person's ability to change.

> So I think for myself to be... to stand up or to have integrity with my teaching and the context that I'm teaching it in, I'm more conscious of it. But no matter what, I'm going to lean towards what I'm comfortable with right. That's going to be my tendency. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Ms. Terri was aware that the philosophy was explicit about behaviours that students were expected to exhibit in class. While she was resistant to enforcing many of these behaviours, she did feel that these behaviors would facilitate her creation of a strong art program.

> And so I find that I can teach them more than I would at a less traditional school because behaviour [there] is a lot more casual. ...a lot more allowed which is great in some ways but a lot of behavioral issues, I guess, do arise from [being] lax on I guess, strictness, as far as behaviour and things like that go. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

iii. Initial Perception of Traditional Students in Visual Art

Ms. Terri had a broad perspective of the students in The Secondary Traditional School as she taught several courses including Social Studies. Her perception of the student in Visual Art was informed by this broader concept of the student. She found consistencies across the subject areas that she taught, relating particularly to the students difficulty with courses which required them learn in a less structured, more independent classroom. In her Social Studies class she noticed:

> it was more open – there was criteria but the criteria was not what they were expecting – so I actually had a whole bunch of students drop out... or switch classes because they weren't comfortable with more creative approach I was asking them. Be it, they still had things that they could choose from. So it's not like they were forced into anything but it was different than what they had expected or what they had experienced previously in the school so that was interesting. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, Feb 20, 2009)

This experience was consistent with her perception of many students in Visual Art. During the formal interview, we discussed students' selection of contemporary artists as preliminary research for

their studio project on cardboard sculpture. Ms. Terri reflected that despite student compliance with the assignment outlines, some students had left the course because of the unstructured format.

> ... that student has dropped [the course]... I think it was Jenny[*] and I think she was dropping out. She does more with structure she says. Not that the class doesn't provide structure but I think she doesn't feel... she finds it hard. That's not what she's comfortable with naturally, having to build and create so she's switching to become a peer tutor. And then I have one more student who just told me that, the day after... so I have two students now switching out of Ceramics and Sculpture which is too bad.... (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Based on her experience as a student in a conservative learning environment and the official and perceived context of the school, Ms. Terri imagined the student as sheltered, a state generated by the community and family and one that was supported by the school.

> ...I went to private elementary school so I wore uniforms from Grades 1 to Grade 7 and although there are benefits, definitely, to the school I went to but there was a lot of negative experiences surrounding the traditional approach as well so I guess that had partly to do with my general distrust. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Her views of typical (non-traditional) secondary students' learning attributes included: a willingness to actively and critically engaged in learning; and a receptiveness to processes that required them to be critical and conceptual learners. She felt that if she provided the traditional students with the opportunity to critically explore in a less structured, student-centered format, their natural tendency to critically engage would prevail. Through her teaching practice, she began to reform her conception of the student. She considered the extent to which the community and student structured learning in Visual Art versus the school structuring learning in Visual Art.

> I think they're less willing to take risks and I think they're just, "We have to get it right." And I don't think it's the traditional philosophy, I think it's the environment of the school and parent influence and the pressures. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, April 25, 2009)

As students began to complete work for critique, Ms. Terri considered the impact of their learning style on the work that they completed:

> Yeah, I'm finding not a lot of, I guess, edgy art is coming out of the students. I find it's all very... not conformist, but just... I don't know how to say it. Just kind of relaxed and traditional, so...It's not necessarily what I've observed, but I know students that will turn in, like, a picture of a unicorn, for example. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, March 9, 2009)

Ms. Terri did not see the criticality she desired reflected in the students' work, despite an emphasis on conceptual work. She began incorporating more controversial topics into class discussions, to evoke a response from the students. The students' passive behaviour, stemming from an adherence to

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[*] Name changed to protect confidentiality.

the symbolic acts of respect, conflicted with the behaviours associated with critical engagement, including a participation in dialogue. The perception of resistance to critical engagement confronted Ms. Terri's initial image of the student. As the students adhered to the behaviours prescribed by the official curriculum, Ms. Terri's perception of their experience in the class shifted the way she designed her practice. Her response to the modified perception of the learner is examined next.

iv. Perceptions of Practice in Response to Official Curriculum and Student Experience

Based on her initial perceptions of the student, Ms. Terri visualized her practice as creating opportunities for critically engagement and independent thinking through conceptual art practices.

> Right. And that's what I'm really pushing them to do, because art is not just about creating pretty things. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, March 9, 2009)

Her perception of students, based on their resistance to critical engagement in the course, started to limit the extent to which she felt students should work independently. She initially identified that her role as a teacher was to extend learning opportunities to students and to push them as a process of development and growth, both in technical and critical thinking skills.

> Well I think some structure is necessary but room for creativity and exploration is also necessary so I think some structure but also some openness, areas where students can take ownership of their learning and invent… I think that's where students are motivated and where students are motivated more art will be made and the more art will be made the more results will show out of the program. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Over the course of the study, she began to question the nature of the learner, as she perceived their learning style and passive behaviour as more entrenched. The resistance students presented in the conceptual process challenged her perception of the way she felt the students would experience a subject, which allowed for an expanded opportunity to question and to learn. While students rarely actively resisted the emphasis on critical thinking, the passive resistance, reflected in respectful behaviour, to the process caused her to re-conceptualize her pedagogical practices.

> I'm finding I can't be as independent as I had originally intended. I'm still... I mean, I introduced the development, the image development strategies, and now I'm saying that they have to choose one of those for each assignment, so it's still open. I'm still expecting them, stretching them to experiment with different mediums and styles. I have one girl who really likes art for the sake of beauty, just wants to do landscapes and things like that. And so how do I encourage her to follow through with her interests but stretch her at the same time, and expose her to stuff that she might not be exposed to? (Ms. Terri, personal communication, March 9, 2009)

v. Conclusion to Research Question 2

Ms. Terri's perceived context of practice, while stable, shifted during the course of the study based on the ways the students' experienced the Visual Art class. Ms. Terri's personal experience with traditional education mediated her initial perceived context of practice, including her discomfort with the negative impact of traditional philosophy on student individuality and progressive education. The interpretation of the official curriculum, constructed by her own unsatisfying experience in a conservative learning environment, allowed her to view herself as separate from traditionalists, including the administration, based on the values of education she perceived traditional supporting and the values, which she supported. Her experience as an artist most significantly shaped her beliefs about teacher and student practice in Visual Art, including the ideals of individualism and creative self-expression through critical awareness. These beliefs conflicted with her perception of the official curriculum of the traditional school.

Ms. Terri initially perceived the traditional learner to be sheltered and naïve, a condition generated by the controlled access to knowledge granted from the home and the school. She felt that once students were able to experience learning that challenged their normative patterns and topics of learning that they, like herself as a student, would actively engage in the process. She constructed this image from her understanding of the discursive formation of the student in the official traditional philosophy and from her characterization of herself as a learner in a conservative school. She perceived learning in art as confronting these characteristics, by developing critical awareness. As experience began to inform Ms. Terri's understanding of the official context, her belief in the official context as supported by informed group consent changed to a belief that the official context was supported by fear or mistrust of the public system. As her perception of the official curriculum transitioned in the study, so did her perceptions of the nature of her practice and the nature of the students.

In terms of the value of art in a traditional school, she perceived the pedagogy as emancipatory, freeing students from a sheltered existence, created by both the families and the school. This freeing would allow them to develop skills as perceptive critical thinkers. She viewed her role as a teacher as designing studio work that would develop their technical skills, critical thinking, and visual literacy skills,

by strengthening their skills to perceive and respond to the visual world around them. As the student's skills in these areas increased, she saw her role as transitioning to a more decentralized model.

Ms. Terri's perceived context guided her views on curriculum and pedagogy in Visual Art by defining the roles and attributes of the teacher and student. Her perceived context, informed by her personal history and the official context, formed the learner as a sheltered individual in a liminal space. She understood the nature of traditional students as secluded from the 'real world' (Personal communication, February 20, 2009) by their community, home, and traditional education. She constructed her role as a teacher as a provider of opportunities for critical engagement, based on her perception of the traditional student as sheltered.

She felt that students would value the opportunity and engage in process to develop an increased awareness through conceptual work. She felt that this experience would independently motivate their own learning through an awakening of critical thinking skills. She felt the Visual Art curriculum needed to compensate for a lack of critical engagement elsewhere in the students' lives and education. While she did conceptualize her practice as implementing the official traditional philosophy, the manifestation of familial knowledge in the learning patterns of students and the symbolic acts of respect, interpreted as passive resistance to critical thinking, frequently formed and reformed her pedagogical practices. She initially perceived her role as a teacher as removed from students' conceptual process, but situated in their technical skill acquisition. As her practice was reformed, she entrenched her role as a teacher in the conceptual process, through both curriculum design and pedagogical practice and as such, her practice became more in keeping with the traditional teacher-centered model.

4.5   Research Question 3:

What are the Curriculum and Pedagogical Practices of the Visual Art Teacher?

Ms. Terri's perceived aims and goals for Visual Art in The Secondary Traditional School focused on critical thinking skills, conceptual art practice, technical skills based on elements and principles of design and aesthetics. She felt these aims were achievable through: studio practice; a student-centered model of instruction; independent learning opportunities for students; and a rigorous critique process. The following section provides a description of Ms. Teri's practices and assignments as the ideal and

operationalized curriculum. Analysis examines the extent to which Ms. Terri's pedagogical practices supported her democratic aims and how the various contexts shaped her practice.

i. Curriculum, Pedagogy, and the Structure of Class

a. Operationalized Curriculum

Ms. Terri began each class by standing front and center in the classroom. The content of her talk at the beginning of each class focused on due dates, procedures for each of the courses in the class, where the students should be, in terms of the steps towards completion, and reminders about materials that they needed to bring to class for their studio work. This process would generally consume 5-10 minutes of class.

From this point, she would introduce an article generally from Robert Genn, a BC artist who provided a twice-weekly article to those who signed up on his website. These articles typically focused on behaviours of artists based on the interpretation of Genn, and addressed issues such as: daily drawing; work ethic; artistic techniques which would engage the viewer; genres of painting; and material usage. Her intended purpose of including articles from practicing artists was to introduce students to contemporary issues faced by artists. She felt that these articles reflected current dilemmas or ideas in the art world and that the students would respond to the topics generated as relevant to their own artistic production. Several articles approached controversy, including censorship, and she felt that the students would respond to this topic through active class discussion. While the students sat silently, she would read the article and then ask for responses. She would begin with broad open-ended questions, trying to engage the students in the reading, yet the extreme non-responsive nature of the students would shift her questioning style to narrowed, specific questions, directed at individual students. The one-word responses that students subsequently supplied were generally vague and quiet, often needing repeating. Over the course of the study, she began leaving long pauses after her questions, sometimes 8-10 seconds, in an effort to draw the students out. During the class discussion, counter to the behaviours prescribed by the official curricula, Ms. Terri did not ask the students to stand as she felt this would inhibit a dialogue. In the final interview, Ms. Terri indicated that initially, she felt that my presence influenced her practice in her heightened portrayal of practices that she felt were 'good teacher' practices.

Adrienne: So do you think that my presence in your classroom has affected your practice?

Ms. Terri: I think it's been positive.

Adrienne: Okay.

Ms. Terri: Yeah. I mean, I got used to you. I forgot you were there at times which was good because you could truly observe...I find the students, not that I give them more credibility but the fact that someone else was there viewing, I think during those times they might have taken more seriously what I was asking of them.

Adrienne: Oh, okay.

Ms. Terri: Or at least when I was engaging them to answer questions and stuff, I think having anyone else in the classroom, also when there's someone else viewing you, and so you're under pressure or... I don't know. I don't think it was a bad thing. I think they got used to you as well. At first it was really awkward. I sensed that.

Adrienne: Oh, okay.

Ms. Terri: For the students because they're just like, "Well who is this person?"

Adrienne::   Yeah.

Ms. Terri: 'And why are they here?' [laughs] But I think just when you started moving around and talking to them more and you weren't just off in the corner I think that they got used to you and they felt comfortable with you.

Adrienne::   Okay.

Ms. Terri: And then they also enjoyed their exchanges with you because I saw you talking with students and I was like, "Oh, I wish I could hear what they're talking about but I'm over here having to do this."

Adrienne: Okay good. [laughs] So do you think that there are differences in your teaching practices on say Tuesday than Monday? When I wasn't there.

Ms. Terri: Oh, when you're there and when you're not there. At first...

Adrienne: Yeah.

Ms. Terri: Yeah, I'd be like, "Okay, I have to mentally prepare myself for this."

Adrienne: Yeah.

Ms. Terri: "How can I tell her, how can show her I'm a good teacher?" It's like I would if the principal was coming in.

Adrienne: Right.

Ms. Terri: But not to the greatest extent probably. Even at this point I'm just like, "Yeah, the principal's going to come in and he's obviously going to find something that I need to do so why not start him off less impressed and then I can show him how I've improved because of his guidance." [laughs] So I'm like, "Oh, maybe I can... I don't know. I'm just so overworked at this point that I'm just like, "I don't care." [laughs]. (Personal communication, April 25, 2009)

The pattern used to begin each class, repeated itself in almost every class, although she began varying the topics for class discussion in order to draw students out. She brought in articles, which she felt would incite discussion, including articles about nudity and censorship in art. When this did not elicit a response, she began relaying personal information that related to the topics as a way to model the development a personal connection between the articles' topics and their own work as artists.

Ms. Terri: There's also... and I mean patience right. I think when you ask the class a question for example, if they don't answer right way you don't just launch into answering for them, you can actually wait and allow that space of silence and to be comfortable with that space of silence. So I'm...

Adrienne: It's tough.

Ms. Terri: Yeah, it is tough and more and more I realize, especially with Art, it's a process. Learning is a process. (Personal communication, March 9, 2009)

This process took an additional 8-10 minutes of class time and typically, Ms. Terri would supply her own conclusions about what the article was saying. Throughout the ten weeks of the study, the students remained passively respectful. The teacher did not invite the students to bring in work to present and she did not explore alternative class discussion formats. This style of teaching suggested a teacher-centered approach by transmitting information from teacher to student. Her attempts at engaging the students through discussion incorporating critical thinking and independent application of meaning consistently did not meet her expectations.

Once this process was completed, students would begin working on their studio work. Typically, each section (Painting and Drawing 11; Painting and Drawing 12; Ceramics and Sculpture 11/12) had roughly 2-3 weeks to complete a studio project. The students generally moved through the prescribed studio work stages at a uniform rate, primarily because they were required to submit work for assessment at each stage. During her previous teaching position, she allowed students greater creative license through a less structured approach to studio work but found that assessment was difficult without clear expectations and an ordered process. She perceived a staged process as a fair process, which allowed for consistency and fairness in the evaluation process.

> And the buzz right, these younger students were just like... the classroom was crazy. It looked like ants. Not just following a trail but just running around frantically right. [laughs]And so as a teacher it's challenging because you have know, "Okay, are they on task or how do I assess them at this point?" And what I'm struggling with is art assessment that is formative. It is process oriented but you can only really tell by the final project in some ways. So my challenge is, "How do I assess them?" Well, are they participating? Are they using class time wisely? Have they planned? Do they have their three sketchbook images? Are they invested in their learning? And so to sit back and just observe and see who's floundering, who's not motivated. Yeah, I actually have one student who appeared to be working but then he never got anything handed in. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009)

Despite three courses within the same Visual Art class, her attention was not as divided as one might suspect. When she chose a direction for her attention and interaction, she typically remained focused. This focus was achievable primarily because of the passive and quiet behaviour of the students.

They did not ask frequent questions nor did the studio work require significant movement in the classroom for retrieval of materials. The work was typically straightforward and somewhat teacher prescribed, so students were able to remain in their organized space working quietly on their projects. When students did require assistance, they would stand next to the teacher, quietly waiting for her to acknowledge them and then they would ask their questions.

If the teacher was not involved in a critique with one of the groups, she divided her time between working at her desk at the back of the room or offering one-on-one instruction to students. Typically, her responses to students focused on technical aspects and image development. A significant component of her discussions with students focused on connecting difficulties that they were having with similar experiences she had as a student and artist. This rapport with students did function to draw them out and to increase their level of participation. She brought in her own artist journal to share and this technique significantly increased students' interaction and depth of response.

Disruptive behaviour was typically not a problem, although during group critiques, she diverted her attention to disruptive students. The volume level though did not interrupt the critique process. Behaviour that was consistently addressed included talking too loud during class time, not being prepared for class, and assignments not turned in. Either she would speak with students individually or she would address the noise level by addressing the entire class. She typically avoided engaging in 'calling out' a student in front of the class.

Two students, who were distracted and routinely talked more, situated themselves on the perimeter of the room, moving away from the other students to work on the outer counter space. These students had higher rates of absenteeism and typically did not complete their work. They exhibited more demonstrative behavior than the students who remained seated in the interior space of the classroom. Although Ms. Terri was aware of their disruptive behaviour, she generally left these students to work, without addressing their behaviour. She generally asked for updates on progress by the students on the perimeter, but engaged more with the students on the interior.

Ms. Terri was very conscious of the official curriculum and learning outcomes, which she included in her course outline and referenced in her assignment outlines. The critique, which was a

primary component of Ms. Terri's program, was not documented in Gray & MacGregor's (1991) study as a technique that was frequently used in secondary art classrooms. Those that did use this method favored Feldman (1969) formalist approach[28], while Ms. Terri preferred a conceptual with some formalist qualities in critique. The lecture format, which Ms. Terri used, was not a typical instructional strategy documented in Gray and MacGregor's (1991) study. While her teaching style reflected idiosyncrasy, the use of lecture format, increased rates of assessment, and increased levels of discipline of behaviour, indicated that the school philosophy and rule structure influenced her program.

b.   The Ideal Curriculum

The following categories represent ways in which, Ms. Terri structured or compartmentalized the curriculum in the Visual Art class. Because Visual Art in BC does not have prescribed texts, Ms. Terri's adaptation of typical practices and materials reflects her beliefs and values about learning in Visual Art, more so than implementing a mandated text.

Studio work

Adrienne: Can you discuss the sources that you use to design the studio work for the students? Where do you get your ideas from and your work from?

Ms. Terri: My own experience obviously, what my interests are, what I know and so I don't teach landscape drawing [laughs] because I don't do that, I'm not good at them and I don't enjoy the process. And so I would give them the opportunity if they showed the interest but... so I think that's what that comes from. I bought that book that I really appreciated, the different structure. There were two books that I looked at that stood out to me. This one, which was teaching about creativity and then having assignments based on that, so it's not just talking about theory, it actually has concrete examples for me to use in the classroom. So I've been borrowing assignments from that, the Mandalas came from that. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, April 25, 2009)

The process of assigning a studio project involved the distribution of the assignment outline and an explanation of the assignment by Ms. Terri. The assignment outlines included a title page, an assignment outline, a self-evaluation sheet using a 5-point likert scale, completed prior to critique so that is could be referenced during critique, and submitted as part of the assessment. Self-assessment sheets explicitly outlined expectations for evaluation. The assignments were typically photocopied from another source and included title headlines such as 'sources for inspiration', 'materials', 'starting procedures',

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[28] Formalism is the concept that an artwork's value is in the way it is made, its visual qualities, and the medium used. The use of formal qualities such as color, line, shape and texture rather than context and content is valued during the critique process.

'processes', and black and white visual examples. Most assignment outlines included the teacher's modification, typically structured around the stages of completion for assessment. The modifications were designed to broaden student perspectives in art through the exploration of how other contemporary, conceptual artists implemented the materials and process that they were expected to use. She did not demonstrate material usage, nor visually stage the classroom with examples of work from students or professional artists.

The assignment, '3-D Art from Recycled Materials' was the second studio project assigned by Ms. Terri, and the first assignment I observed from introduction to completion. The first, 'Design Dictionary' required students to examine the principles and elements of design and to develop the vocabulary and technical skills by studying the definitions and by depicting the elements and principles with skill. The ordering of these projects reflected an agreement between Ms. Terri's beliefs about the transition from the structure of learning technical skills to more independent work. In the second project, students were required to use recycled cardboard to create a 3-Dimensional project. She brought in a boot she had made as an example to show them ways in which to manipulate cardboard. Students needed to research artists who used recycled/reclaimed objects in their artwork and then discuss them with the class. The stages in the initial assignment were explicit and structured the process from beginning to end. This structure was evident in the following projects, but was less evident in the second project than in the first or third.

During the ten-week study, two of which were school holidays, the Ceramics and Sculpture students completed two projects and began a third. The Painting and Drawing 11 class completed three projects and began a fourth and the Painting and Drawing 12 students completed two and began a third. The students have roughly 375 minutes to 443 minutes of instruction per week in Visual Art and depending on when the critique is scheduled, they would have 200-285 minutes of class time to work strictly on studio each week. If the section were involved in a critique during the week, they might receive 80-165 minutes of studio time, as the critique process typically took two hours. Very often, students worked at home on the studio projects and brought them to class for critique.

The projects introduced and completed during the study by Ceramics and Sculpture 11/12 included: 3D sculpture from recycled cardboard; and a diorama/room, which mimicked a dream like state or a room, which attracted or repelled the viewer. Students were to find their own materials for these projects. The 3D sculpture assignment generated by the teacher was an assignment that she used in her previous teaching experience. For this particular class, she structured their work around stages of project development and used these stages as formal assessment periods.

Ms. Terri photocopied the second assignment from a book she purchased, *The Creative Artist*. She had not done this studio work before and used the guidelines in the assignment to structure the students' studio process. Painting and Drawing 11 students worked on hand drawings using exaggerated light source and Mandalas to explore abstraction. An examination of the focus group's work in Ceramics and Sculpture is in later sections.

The Critique

The critique of studio work functioned in part as a summative assessment process, following the completion of studio work. The teacher and the students would gather in a group and each student would present their work and discuss it with use of two evaluation sheets, which they needed to fill out before the critique. The first sheet was the self-evaluation sheet, based on five criteria: Evidence of idea and image research and development in preliminary drawings; Implementation of design strategies, elements and principles of design used correctly to achieve thematic and technical goals; Craftsmanship; Personal Voice; and respect and responsibility. The purpose of the second sheet was to, reflect on the project and to evaluate it. This sheet provided the space for the student to design the project yet this generally remained the responsibility of the teacher. This sheet required the students to develop an idea, design materials, to consider the research required, to predict learning outcomes, and to establish a timeline. The students typically filled in these areas with the prescribed components of the assignment, although the post-creation reflection section required independent thought. While the sheets she used were less about formalism and more about the ideas in the work, the students still typically focused on the formalist elements of their work.

The critique was an elaborate process with students sometimes receiving 10-20 minutes each to discuss work. As the students were extremely non-responsive, the critique became a dialogue, of sorts, between the teacher and the student presenting work. Typically, the teacher had to draw the group response to the student's work, by asking the same question, in multiple ways. The students presenting rarely elaborated on their work and simply responded to the verbal cues from the teacher. Peer responses to the work included praise, polish, and questions raised by the work. Frequently there were no questions raised by the work and the praise centered on one of the basic elements, such as color. The polish was generally a suggestion about material usage, but not about conceptual extensions.

Towards the end of the study, students engaged a bit further. The teacher stayed with the process because:

Ms. Terri: I mean the critique forces reflection and so I think that's important. It's important to stand back and then work through that process but I don't think they always are aware. And so critique, I think, is very important because they're forced to become aware, at least if they don't know, they get feedback from their other classmates and then they're told from them what their piece connotates.

Adrienne: Do you find that they're getting better at the feedback process as it goes along?

Ms Terri: Definitely. They're getting more comfortable with it and they know that I'm not out to get them. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, April 25, 2009)

Assessment:

Assessment was a significant component in the structure of the class. Ms. Terri combined stages of artistic production with assessment, including work ethic/practices, preliminary research and sketches, final product, and critique. The course outline identified and described the three physical components for assessment: the sketchbook worth 30%; Projects worth 60%; and the portfolio worth 10%. The sketchbook was to be used for planning, independent drawing (nine entries for Term 3 and fifteen for Term 4), seven projects were to be completed over the course of the semester, and the portfolio was to be a professional presentation of their studio work. Ms. Terri assigned behavioural work ethic marks to students each class and students submitted self-evaluations for each project. The teacher, though, calculated the final grade. When asked about the self-evaluation the teacher answered:

Let's have open communication of it because only truly you know your process and that's why I give self-evaluations is because it gives me insight because I'm disconnected from that. I'm disconnected from how hard it was for you to do. What do you feel are your successes? How far have you traveled in this piece? Just by looking at it, I don't know that. (Ms. Teri, personal communication, April 25, 2009)

For the specific students, the self-assessment created difficulty for the teacher:

Ms. Terri: And I don't know how I feel about the marking for the Painting and Drawing 11, the self-evaluation. I wouldn't mind varying it to suit each assignment again. I mean it's been easy and fast but I'm finding they either do well or they don't.

Adrienne: Do you feel like they're fairly assessing themselves or do they give themselves really high or really low grades?

Ms. Terri: It's all over the board. I mean Michelle[*] will give herself a 5 out of 5 every time [laughs] right.

Adrienne: That seems about right actually. [laughs]

Ms. Teri: Yeah, yeah. And same with Phoebe and I mean you know you work hard. I mean I think with Michelle she knows that she's good. She knows she has the drive and she's very, very motivated and so she's got good ego but it's learning how to have good ego and still gain things and learn from people. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, April 25, 2009)

Ms. Terri continued to struggle with assessment. Students were extremely concerned about

marks, yet she did not feel as though they accepted what it took to receive high grades. Students often

focused on work ethic and felt they should receive a high grade, despite the work not meeting the

prescribed outcomes. They viewed grading as punitive when they did not receive an A. Grades were the

most significant topic in student-generated discussions with the teacher, more so than technical, aesthetic,

or conceptual difficulties. Ms. Terri felt the critique process would help instill the expectations for better

grades.

Adrienne: Do you feel that it's supporting their learning in Visual Art?

Ms. Terri: Definitely, yeah. And I explained it to them at the very beginning, that you learn by seeing, and then by doing as well, and by talking... learning to talk about art, and not just say, "I like it," but say why it's a successful piece, and learning to talk about the elements and principles of design, definitely. Like I did have, in a sense, two critique sheets, the self-evaluation, and the one I had originally had before, for the cardboard unit. And I really like the other one, the one that... the self-evaluation, because they talk about image development and how they incorporated that in there. (Ms. Teri, personal communication, March 9, 2009)

ii.   Conclusion to Research Question 3

While Ms. Terri's perception of practice indicated a resistance to the authoritarian, teacher-

centered model promoted by the traditional school, over the course of the study, her pedagogical style

became more and more in-line with this approach. Her beliefs about the benefits of critical thinking

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[*] Name changed to protect anonymity.

fostered through conceptual art practice and critique were maintained, but her practice was altered based on her perceptions of the students' ability and desire to develop an increased awareness of conceptual and contemporary art practices, communicated in the ways they experienced learning in Visual Art. Her conception of the student transitioned from sheltered to resistant. She initially located the students' lack of critical awareness and engagement in the process as a lack of experience in this form of learning. When she made these learning experiences available and the students appeared to not engage in the process, Ms. Terri interpreted this behaviour as resistant. Her pedagogical approaches changed to further incorporate the teacher-centered perspective, yet her original goals for learning in Visual Art, based on her values of learning remained the same. She felt that her increased presence in the learning process would overcome the students' resistance to her program, eventually achieving compliance tp the aims she identified for the students. Ms. Terri was somewhat aware of the contradiction in respecting individualized learning and artistic styles yet compelling conceptual art practice, but she felt the end benefits to conceptual practice justified the means.

Ms. Terri initially constructed the learner from her own experience in a religious private school. She saw herself in many of the students suggested by her consistent personal references to artistic dilemmas as a source of resolution and as a learning opportunity. She believed that Visual Art offered emancipation from a traditional and sheltered learning environment, by challenging students to critically engage with their beliefs and values. Accordingly, her beliefs about teaching favored approaches, which would allow for independent learning.

While she felt that over-prescription and structure could potentially limit creativity and independent thought, she also felt that students would benefit from some structure. Her theory of the learner within a structured format formulated both her curricular design and pedagogical practice, which linked her perception of learning life-skills. She believed that independence in studio design was a later stage in artistic production, which followed technical skill development, guided by a teacher-centered approach to instruction and studio design.

Testing this theory in the traditional setting indicated that the students did not effectively communicate a perspective or idea in their conceptual work. They were non- responsive to controversial

subjects, and they remained passively respectful during critique. While the students' technical skills developed, she became dissatisfied with their conceptual skills, expressed in class discussions, artistic production and during critique. Consequently, she did not feel that their work reflected the values of critical thinking with which she centered her program on. Ultimately, her pedagogical practices came to more closely mirror the practices promoted through the traditional philosophy. Her aims for Visual Art continued to reflect her initial beliefs, yet the ways in which she performed as a teacher changed to compel certain learning outcomes.

4.6   Research Question 4:

How do the Students Experience the Teacher's Curricular and Pedagogical Decisions in Visual Art?

The students understanding of the traditional philosophy was not easy for them to verbalize during the formal interview process. It was a tacit understanding of the philosophy, perpetuated through the process of family, community, and the K-12 education in a traditional setting. When asked to define what traditional meant to them:

Phoebe*:   I don't know. It's kind of a difficult question because personally, I don't really see
              traditional values in any of our classes, necessarily. Or if they are there or aren't there,
              I can't really tell just because…

Piper: Yeah, we've never been to another high school. We're lifers, both of us. So, we have no idea
              what it's like anywhere else. (Personal communication, March 30, 2009)

The three students who participated in this study represent the 'old guard' of traditional schools (Principal, personal communication, February 18, 2009). They have been educated in a traditional school setting or home schooled and their quiet adherence to respectful behaviour is representative of the model of the learner perpetuated by the traditional philosophy (Key Visuals, 2009). Their dedication to the symbolic acts of respect had a significant impact on the way they experienced learning in the Visual Art class. Paige indicated that learning in the traditional setting became less strict as she transitioned from elementary/middle school to secondary school. Primarily, she felt she had a more equitable relationship with her teachers. She indicated that she had more say in decisions made in her life but that she chose to continue in the traditional school because:

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* All names have been changed to protect anonymity.

Paige: For me it's friends too, but also this is kind of something that's kind of safe. I'm familiar with it, kind of the system and a lot of the people I know, even from other grades. And there's a smaller student population comparatively, so you get a chance to kind of know more people because you see them more often. (Paige, personal communication, March 4, 2009)

The other students indicated that there was no choice for them to attend a mainstream public school, as this high school was simply a transition from middle school. There other option for school was a religious private school, which they felt was extremely strict. For the most part, the students identified that respect formed the basis of the traditional philosophy. Paige's response about the traditional philosophy included personal meaning, which differed from others in the group.

Piper: It's kind of like old school, kind of. I don't know. What does it mean for you?

Adrienne: What do you mean by "old school"?

Piper: Well, like we stand up if we're supposed to stand up, you know, like raise your   hand or whatever,… stand up when a teacher or someone walks in the room, like… I don't know. It's kind of based more around respect and stuff.

Phoebe: Yeah. Like the school is kind of trying to base it all on respect and I'm not exactly sure how that translates into traditional, or what it exactly means. Its kind of one of those things where it's kind of hard to define with words.

Adrienne: So is it a positive thing? Like when you hear the words "traditional schooling," is it positive?

Phoebe : I think overall, yeah.

Piper: Yeah.

Phoebe: It's not negative.

Paige: It's just people are different. There's like… There's a lot of…Respect is important and I think there's a lot of emphasis on like positive relationships with your peers and with your teachers. At least from what I've seen and done. (Personal communication, March 4, 2009)

The student's views reflected a tacit acceptance of their traditional education. Attending a traditional secondary school was the rational and logical step in their education. Despite being dissatisfied with the curricular options available, the students continued to attend because their friends attended.

Adrienne: So when you went to come to school here, did your parents explain to you what traditional was, or did you already know?

Piper: I was in Grade 3.

Phoebe: I was in kindergarten.

Paige: I was in Grade 2.

Piper: So it's been pretty straightforward all the way through. You never really got it explained, it just kind of…

Phoebe: It just was.

Piper: …was.

Phoebe: Yeah.

Piper: You know? (Personal communication, March 4, 2009)

When asked about their views and experiences in Visual Art, some responses came quicker and with more depth, while others reflected the resistance observed in class. Phoebe explained that she was going to continue with Visual Art in university the following year and that she was using the class to help build her portfolio for program acceptance. Piper explained that art offered more freedom than other courses and that art would be a 'personal thing' versus a career or course of study after graduation. Paige identified that she did not plan on pursuing art after graduation, but that she would incorporate art as "like a hobby or maybe…my own little business. I'm interested in like graphic design" (Personal communication, March 4, 2009). All three indicated that the freedom in art contributed to their enjoyment and with this enjoyment, came better grade performance.

During the interview process, the student responses were short and they did not elaborate on their opinions. When I asked the students, in numerous ways, what traditional was, what they learned in art, and why someone would or would not choose to take art, they were vague and frequently responded that they did not know. Phoebe, who wanted to continue with art in post-secondary, could not think of a favourite piece of artwork that she had done or identify where her strengths or weaknesses were. Questions that required them to reflect on their learning process typically produced inconclusive answers and Phoebe and Piper would generally become distracted with their belongings or other things in the interview room. Paige was extremely passive and did not offer responses until it appeared that the other two had exhausted their own ideas. When asked about the specific subjects in their work and why they chose them the students' typical response was 'I don't know'. Piper had deliberately included a segment of cardboard with 'Designed for Real Life' written on it (see Figure 1), yet she responded with "I have no idea" when asked why she included it.

Figure 1. Image of Piper's 'Ballerina' skirt (detail).   Figure 2. Image of Piper's Ballerina

When discussing their preference for medium in art, all three indicated that it was photography.

Phoebe: Well for me, it's photography, I really like it, and one of the reasons that I lean to it more than say painting or drawing is that I have that thing where I'm scared of the blank page. So if there's a blank page in front of me, I don't want to touch it because I figure if I make a mistake, I mean, that's it, it's done, and so then I can't actually get myself to start drawing stuff because I figure, "Okay, well, it has to be perfect the first time." And with photographs, it's kind of like, "Well, if it's not perfect, you can take another one," "If it's not perfect, you can edit it on Photoshop," you know? (Personal communication, March 4, 2009)

When I asked how the photography process differed from their sculpture and ceramics process:

Piper: I think the difference is that when you're like physically building something, you start with nothing, but if you're taking a photograph, at least you're starting with something. So it's not like the blank page thing, it's not like you have nothing. Like there was already something there so you can't mess with it more, it can only get better. (Personal communication, March 4, 2009)

Ms. Terri had indicated that the students need to "get it right" was limiting the way they could engage in the conceptual aspects of work. I explored their perceptions of learning in Visual Art with Ms. Terri and found that there was significant resentment towards her style of teaching. The student participants were very resistant to the formal elements of class including: her use of articles to generate discussion; the use of critique; and the use of ideas as the basis for art. All three students felt that this took away from the studio time and they felt a better use of time was their independent studio process. They discussed the previous teachers' methods of teaching, which they described as more one-on-one. The instructions students received included a list of projects comprised of mediums and techniques of which, students needed to complete seven. According to the students, this form of instruction was

better because it took into account the different skill levels of the students and the individualized

process of completing studio work.

Adrienne:	Is there anything else that conflicts with, maybe, the way you even feel art should be taught?
Phoebe:	A little bit, in the sense that with this class, it's very much, you know, art always has a meaning. There's always a deeper meaning. It should be a comment on society. You know, all that, when personally, I don't really like art that's just solely a comment on society or has a deeper meaning. It's kind of like some art just is. There isn't a meaning. You just do it because you can. It's not always tied to an emotion or a feeling. Sometimes it is, but it isn't always. And I think this course really emphasizes that there is an emotional meaning and a deeper meaning and personally, I don't really like that. But it's kind of something you have to learn to deal with anyways because you're going to encounter it in art all the time – having to explain what your meaning is. So…
Piper:	I agree with that. [laughter] (Personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Despite claims of disinterest in conceptual work, Phoebe's work presented a conceptual

link that differed from the literal interpretation of the projects designed by other students. While

the Alice in Wonderland cardboard book (Figure 3) was a literal nod, similar to Piper's film noir

"Room that Repelled" (Figure 9), her diorama room design incorporated visual elements in a way,

which incorporated some complexity in ideas (Figure 5). During the critique for the Wonderland

project, I spoke with Phoebe and asked her about certain elements, such as the positioning of Alice

at the back of the book, which offered an obstructed view of the story. When I asked why she did

this, she indicated that it was a practical decision and that she could not configure a way to put

Alice at the front.

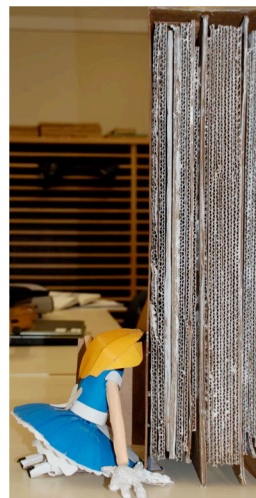Figure 3. Image of Phoebe's 'Alice in Wonderland'   Figure 4. Image of Phoebe's 'Alice' (Detail)
sculpture

Phoebe attempted to take her work past literal representation with her room formed from dreams, which repelled and attracted. The cube, perforated with sharp skewers, dissuading the viewer from reaching in to take the candy men suspended in the box. Delicate webbing stretched from the points of the skewers, presenting an additional barrier to the candy. She used color contrast for aesthetic appeal, but the colors mimicked horror movie connotations of darkness and blood. She incorporated sound into the box, which was a looping track of cellos which she felt repelled and attracted the viewer. The sound required the viewer to draw closer to hear; yet, the actual music added an unsettling element, reminiscent of the genre of horror movie music. Her work, represented in Figure 5 and 6, indicated an increased attention to conceptual practices, yet during critique, she remained focused on discussing the work and the process but not the idea. She mentioned that she kept a dream log, but did not mention how she interpreted the dreams through the piece, during critique.
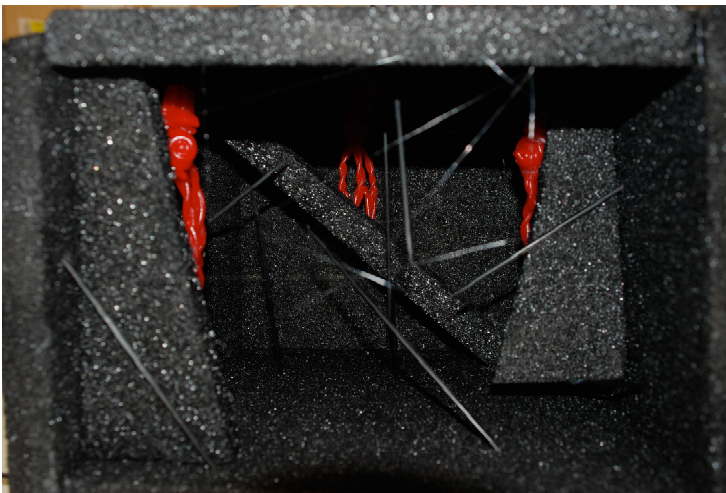
Figure 5. Image of Phoebe's Dream-Like State which Repels and Attracts
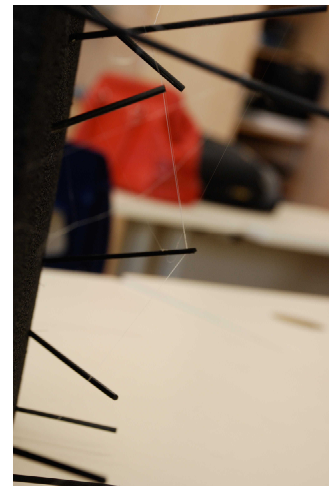
Figure 6. Imager of Phoebe's Skewer detail

During the focus group interview, we discussed the critique, which all three felt was not useful as part of their learning in art. Typically, they felt that others in the critique had not put the time or work ethic into their projects but because they wanted to be respectful, they could only offer non-specific, non-critical responses. Their responses focused on simpler elements such as colour. Piper believed that the critique process was a continuous process and that she critiqued her work at all times during planning and production. She did not feel that the critique of studio work at the end was beneficial as there was no opportunity to incorporate changes. Phoebe felt that she needed to phrase her responses to others' work

so she would not appear rude when she did not like the artwork. Paige felt that her work was, based on

the 'real thing' and not open to interpretation:

Figure 7.Image of Paige's cardboard Violin (detail)   Figure 8. Image of Paige's cardboard Violin

Paige: I thought it was kind of a fun experience but it was really hard for the little details. Like in
                mine, for the, you know, bridge of the violin, I had to re-cut it like five times because
                the knife would slip and it would cut it like right through. So that was a little frustrating,
                but I think it was good for me. (Personal communication, March 4, 2009)

During the critique, the teacher asked Paige to identify her personal voice in the work and she felt

it was that she liked music. The other students in the critique were amazed at the work she had put into it

and Paige discussed the work that she had done. In addition to the detail, the violin met with all the

specifications clearly laid out in the assignment handout. The recycled material, meant to facilitate and

push creativity, was conformed to meet the structural and proportional dimensions of a violin. She

researched violin construction, measured different parts of her violin, created scale patterns which she

overlaid on to the recycled cardboard. She glued them together using practice to develop a technique that

would hide the seams. She then varnished the surface to achieve almost an exact replica of her own

violin. She split string to achieve scale in the strings of the violin, and she replicated a sticker with the

location of production, found in her own violin. In the reflection portion of the evaluation sheet, she did

not address how her ideas evolved, she just strictly discussed the work involved in creating an exact

replica of her own violin. When asked about what she learned, she explained that she had learned how to

make a violin out of cardboard, that she had wanted to learn how to make a violin out of cardboard, and

that she had successfully made a violin out of cardboard. She received 100% as a grade, despite not

meeting Ms. Terri's expectations for a more critical message embedded in the work.

For the third project, the students were required to design a room, which needed to attract or repel the viewer, or mimic a dream like state. Piper chose a room, which would repel and based it on film noir and the novel *Great Expectations*.

Figure 9. Image of Piper's Room Which Repelled

Figure 10. Image of Piper's 'Room Which Repelled' Interior detail

During critique, Piper indicated that she had never seen an example of film noir, but that someone had told her about it. Paige chose a room, which mimicked a dream-like state (Figure 11). Part of the process for those choosing to do a dream like state was that they needed to record their dreams for three-four nights. During critique she claimed, "When I sleep, I am too tired to dream" and as such, she did not record any dreams. She based her work, similar to Piper, on imagination and not in experiential knowledge. Both of their rooms presented a literal interpretation of the concept.

Figure 11 Image of Paige's 'Dream Like State'

Figure 12 Image of Paige's 'Dream Like State' butterfly detail

Paige designed a space that mimicked a realistic bedroom on one side and a dream-like state on the other. During observation, I noted that Paige consistently referenced the work and time that went into the project, but rarely addressed the concept or idea behind the work. Unlike the critique with the Violin, other students offered polishes to her work. Paige took the polishes as a question about the work ethic, and re-explained that effort that went into the manipulation of the materials she used. The material for the butterflies, for example, came from recycled candy wrappers that she specifically collected during her spring break. During class, I observed her meticulously press out the wrinkles of each wrapper. From that point, she accordion folded each wrapper and then using needle nose pliers, she twisted metal wire up and around the body to form the antennae (Figure 12). Each butterfly took between 5-8 minutes to create and she included over a dozen butterflies in the dream-like portion so that it would appear to be raining butterflies. In addition to the work ethic, she focused the critique on her use of recycled materials, yet there was no link between the materials she used and the message in the diorama. As in the past, she resisted applying depth of analysis to the meaning or idea behind her work.

The students' perception of the teacher's use of ideas and critique to develop artwork was located in Ms. Terri's university experience. The students felt that she was modelling the way art was taught at a higher level and that it was something done in that space.

Phoebe: I think maybe because it became a fad, almost. Because people started making commentary on society and people thought, "Ooh, that's really witty and new." And so then, it just kind of erupted and it's no longer witty and new. It's kind of overdone, but in some cases, it can be kind of profound as well. So, I think it just kind of, almost, went out of hand because there's too much of it now. (Personal communication, March 30, 2009)

i.   Conclusion to Research Question 4

The symbolic representations of respect and integrity communicated by the passive and polite behavior of the students functioned as Key Visuals confirming that learning in this school, supported the values and beliefs from home. These behaviours had a significant impact on the way the students experienced Ms. Terri's curricula decisions and pedagogical practices in Visual Art. This experienced curriculum in turn, had a significant impact on Ms. Terri's operationalized curriculum. By maintaining

the behaviours prescribed by the official curricula, the students successfully reformed Ms. Terri's practice to more closely mirror those practices supported by the official traditional philosophy.

For the students in the focus group, life experience is limited to their closed community. They have never experienced formal education outside of a traditional atmosphere. Their reflections on their artwork, during critique, frequently referenced subject matter sources, which they had not experienced. Separate from their lived experience, students drew visual references from secondary or tertiary resources. The students resisted the freedom from the normative traditional beliefs perpetuated through critical thinking and idea development. Their studio critique focused on the values of work ethic and maintaining a proper and respectful attitude. The cosmetic maintenance of respect and politeness restricted their ability to fully engage and learn from the critique process. They viewed comments about their own work as invalid as well, assuming others in the group were also performing the critique the same way.

Their work conformed to the assignment outlines, but they avoided placing any weight on the idea behind the work. They viewed conceptual work as a fad and counter to their aims in art, which appeared to be the 'making' of art. They favored photography as a medium because of an anxiety surrounding ownership of the work from the beginning stage of the 'blank page'. The 3-D work that they produced offered only a literal personal voice for the students as they resisted locating meaning and engaging in more depth.

Students passively resisted participation in activities, designed by the teacher to engage the students in critical thinking. When asked about the most important thing that they had learned from Ms. Terri, Phoebe responded 'patience'. Phoebe engaged in patience and endurance, communicated by politely waiting for the teacher to finish articles, critiques, and class discussion, so that she could continue with her studio work. The students perceived the teacher's curricular and pedagogical goals as ones, which conflicted with their conception of individuation in artistic learning. As their education was consistently experienced in the traditional school, the perpetuation of learning styles and preferences of familial behavioural patterns have directed the goals for their learning in Visual Art which persist in the presence of difference.

4.7   Conclusion

The Secondary Traditional School has utilized the term 'traditional' to construct a context of difference within the mainstream public system in their district. The binary of 'us' and 'them' present in the official school documents, juxtaposes the traditional students and families as those who value integrity, honesty, respect, and hard work, against the mainstream public school students and families that do not. The choice, therefore, in traditional schooling is a choice for morality and normative structures of society with delineated and stereotypical roles for students, parents, and teachers. The official literature acknowledges that this school is not a site to instill these values, but a site where like-minded families can send their children to avoid the difference and diversity found in mainstream public schools. The purpose of the school is to shelter their children, it's 'client base' and to market the school as a product designed for moral segregation. The parents support this system and the structures that maintain a homogenous student body.

Within this official context, Ms. Terri formulated the perceived context of the school by attaching her personal experiences and her beliefs about the families, parents, students, and administration to form a context of practice. Within this context, she formulated her practice as a teacher based on her aims for learning in Visual Art and learning for life; her beliefs about learning in the official traditional context; and her construction of the student. Her pedagogical practices and curriculum design situated in her beliefs about the sheltered nature of the traditional learner, formed her perception of practice around the notion of emancipation. This emancipation, achieved by providing opportunities for technical skills and critical thinking through projects, focused on conceptual practices and experiences of engaging in 'real world' artistic practice, debate, and critique. Once students indicated that they had the skills and work ethic to meet these challenges and engage in the learning opportunities, she conceived a shift in her teaching practice from teacher-centered to student-centered model. In this model, her practice would become less about designing opportunities for students to develop skills and more about students creating their own opportunities for critical awareness and visual literacy.

What Ms. Teri did not conceive in her perceived context was that the students would resist, repeatedly, the opportunity to critically engage in the classroom. Her experience of leaving a sheltered

private school and moving to public was freeing on many levels. She wanted this experience for her students, and yet for many in the class, Ms. Teri's views conflicted with their conceptions of what art practice and learning should be. They viewed her goals for the program as counter to their aims, primarily because her aims confronted their fears about the 'blank page' about the responsibility of building something from the ground up, about not only not getting it 'right' but that 'right' could not be defined. Students preferred the model of instruction where the teacher let them work independently. They felt that this style allowed them to design and construct without critically engaging in why they were doing what they were doing. During class discussions, critique, and during the interview process for the study, this resistance was present.

As the students resisted, Ms. Terri questioned her practice, questioned her construct of the context and the nature of the students, but she did not question the aims or value of learning in Visual Art. She began to see the nature of the learning environment as generated not by the school, but by the students themselves. Her initial conception of the official context was that the restrictions imposed on the teaching and learning styles would conflict with those in Visual Art. As her experience in the classroom increased, she found she was working against the nature of her many of her students. This belief manifested itself in her continued use of the teacher-centered approach to art instruction; to guide students until they could indicate that they were willing to design and conceptualize artwork, which reflected diligence and a depth of meaning.

The conceptualization of the students occupying a liminal space is found in the official documents, Ms. Terri's perception of the students, and in the students' perception of their own learning development as age-related. The role of the teacher in the official context was to guide the students in the transition from child to young adult by reflecting consistency between learning in the school and the family values from home. The structure of authority in the school designed to provide the transmission of values and beliefs from the home to the school through surveillance of self and others of the adherence to the principles. Common sense obedience to rules ingrained in their upbringing afforded students with the opportunity to be more responsible. Physical segregation from other students prevented a dilution of

these values. This concept of the child structured the physical elements of the school, the roles of the teacher and the administration, and the construction of the staged learning

Ms. Terri's perception of the value of learning in the arts and her perception of the traditional learner provided an emancipatory agenda for her perceived practice. As her perception of the learner shifted, Ms. Terri's pedagogical practices more closely mirrored those outlined by the traditional school. The students' preferences for learning modeled their stage of learning in the liminal state, and they resisted engaging in criticality. To the students in the focus group, the meaning of things should be evident. While the potential student outcomes of this state differed for Ms. Terri and the traditional philosophy, Ms. Terri did not conceive that the students' learning styles were as entrenched. As she continually experienced student resistance to change, Ms. Terri located the teacher's role more firmly in the process of 'preparing' the student.

CHAPTER 5
Discussion, Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1   Introduction

Reforms began by the *Legacy of Learners* in 1988 introduced the marketplace into the values of education in British Columbia. The needs of the learner were framed through the development of skills and attributes, which would allow them to be more competitive in the work force, thereby making BC's workforce more competitive on the world stage. The concepts of choice-schools and permeable catchments created competition within districts for students and the funding that accompanied them. For schools-of-choice this meant developing a highly visible official context which would highlight the differences offered by their institution in relation to mainstream public. The restricted access to these schools heightened the sense that schools-of-choice offered a better educational experience than the mainstream public system. Assessment strategies designed to standardize learning and regulate teacher practice also served to highlight a differentiation in performance outcomes of schools, through the publication of assessment results. As the province reduced the diversity of learning opportunities offered in schools by eliminating funding and programs, they assisted in the legitimization of the claims made by certain schools-of-choice that the public system was failing students.

Historically in BC, tuition based independent schools represented parental choice in education. While enrollment numbers have dropped in many public schools in the last decade, independent schools have experienced an increase in enrollment. This loss of enrollment in the public system also meant a loss of funding. A drop in enrollment created a smaller operation budget for public schools and so programs not required for graduation were cut. Since the Fine Arts were removed from the graduation requirements of students in BC in 2004, cuts to these programs have been steep. Additionally, the province opened opportunities for students to receive credits for courses offered by private institutions. Those students, who could afford both the time and money to attend, could benefit from the programs offered.

As the marketplace was brought to bear on teaching and learning in the province, an expanded opportunity for the resurgence of conservative values was created. School districts became more

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susceptible to the demands of vocal parents who used the expansion of choice in the public system to frame their values and beliefs as an educational philosophy. With the support of conservative think tanks, such as *The Fraser Institute* and individuals well versed in the idioms of choice and education, parents in the school division of this study presented 'traditional' as a strategy for the school district to maintain enrollment and funding.

These parents developed 'traditional' as a nostalgic and a romantic reference to an era of simplicity that evoked images of children as innocent, respectful, well behaved, and obedient. It is this conception of the child, which has underpinned The Secondary Traditional School' s official philosophy, mission, curricular, and pedagogical practices. It is this conception that has formed the official roles of the student, teacher, and Principal based on the familial structure of the community who initiated school to segregate their children from the mainstream public system. The student in The Secondary Traditional School was constructed as existing in a state of transition. This liminal space, between child and adult, was considered a period where students were highly susceptible to the ideas, beliefs, and values of those around them. As such, the families who initiated the school sought to protect their child from diversity by surrounding them with like-minded individuals.

While the official context defined the school as the curricular and pedagogical embodiment of traditional values, research has shown that the subject of Visual Art resists the homogenizing effects of official school context and culture (Gray and MacGregor, 1991). The link between the values of the teachers and the subject supports practices that emphasize individualism, self-expression, and critical thinking. These practices counter the homogenization of the learner by promoting an awareness of self and others. These beliefs and values were very much shared by Ms. Terri. Her conception of practice sought the experience of emancipation from conformity and passivity. By studying her beliefs and practices, an understanding of the contextual factors impacting teaching and learning in Visual Art was gained.

5.2   What insights were gained about the contextual nature of Visual Art teaching and learning in The Secondary Traditional School?

i.   Reforms at Work in the Visual Art Classroom

Stokrocki (1991) tentatively indicated that education could learn from traditional, fundamentalist values and the presence of these schools in the public education system, confirmed a democratic pluralism and an understanding of divergent values. While the framing of traditional values as a minority designation is an opinion echoed by traditional advocates, political reforms in BC are consistently revamping mainstream education through fundamentalist notions of society. These values may reflect a minority position in the overall population, but they reflect a majority position in educational reforms. The philosophy of the traditional school as an ideology functions "as a form of false consciousness which distorts ones picture of social reality and serves the interests of the dominant classes in a society" (Apple, 1990, p. 20).

The reforms to education in the province, which allowed for the existence of the traditional school, also had impact on the day-to-day practices within the Visual Art classroom. When the Fine Arts were part of the graduation requirements in BC, diversity in programs in Visual Art was expansive, including a variety of specializations within the subject area. When the subject lost its compulsory status, the diversity of programs offered was also cut (2004 Graduation Requirements, BC Ministry of Education). Classes in Visual Art, such as Ms. Terri's, now provide three course offerings in one. Characteristics such as these, not reflected in academic courses, reduces the perceived value of learning in the arts, particularly in schools such as The Secondary Traditional School, which have an academic focus.

> On more than one occasion I've had a student tell me their excuse for not handing in an assignment on time was because their parents wanted them to focus on the more academic subjects or the subjects that had more "weight" when the student graduated. [laughs] So I don't know if that reflects the entire parent opinion of students who attend here. I'm sure that there are many parents who do focus on... or support the Arts but I think just the fact that it's assumed to be of more academic standing where the school supports academics and adheres to strict behaviour and achievement goals. (Ms. Terri, personal communication, Feb 20, 2009)

The reforms structured the student as a client of education, a term, which frequented the Principal's references to students, and one repeated throughout the official literature. While this normalized conception is pervasive in schools, the extent to which it is enacted at The Secondary Traditional School further defines the context. As the school focused on academics, many of the

assemblies and the awards ceremonies, documented on the website, defined success only through competitive, academic achievement. The elevated sense of accomplishment through grading did not translate into learning styles in keeping with Ms. Terri's perception of learning or learning styles typical in Visual Art, "because you can't be imaginative when you're stressed out" (Ms, Terri, personal communication, February 20, 2009).

While Ms. Terri's beliefs were congruent with values consistently linked to the subject of Visual Art, personal beliefs about learning, separate from the subject also guided her practice. Her history of developing technical and conceptual skills in her artistic practice suggested that structure and hard work were beneficial and necessary skills needed in life. While these values could be legitimately included in the range of Visual Art subject values, the way in which they were experienced in the Visual Art room reflects the unique way in which the official curriculum was at play in student learning. Ms. Terri perceived her pedagogical practices as preparing the students to be critical, perceptive individuals, through hard work, diligence, and through an emphasis on conceptual art practices. When enacted in the classroom, her pedagogy did more to support the practices and products of the teacher-centered approach, versus a student-centered approach, and served to confirm the school philosophy and student's passive role in knowledge transmission.

Apple (1990) defined the nature of an ideology as a fundamental commitment to certain beliefs and values based on a perceived social reality. The commitment to traditional, based on a tacit understanding of the philosophy, generates passive adherence to symbolic behaviors. While the student testimonial on the city website clearly articulated the value of a traditional education as adhering to values of honesty, integrity, and respect, the students in the focus group were unable to verbalize, in both forms of interview settings, a clear definition of what traditional meant to their learning. While they were sure that respect was involved, they were unsure of how this was taught or supported in instruction or curriculum in any of their classes. They were convinced though, that it was positive for their education.

The Principal was also unsure of how this educational philosophy would translate into the Visual Art class, other than the teacher supporting the Tenets and Visuals. He was not familiar with a body of

research, which identified the teacher-centered approach as a successful model, but when asked if there were any negatives about the teacher-centered approach, he replied assuredly, that there were not.

Students in the focus group were highly resistant to the critique process and while Bullock and Gailbraith (1992) found that dissonance existed between the teacher's aims and the students' aims for Visual Art, the extent to which the students remained passive in any process related to criticality was notable. The critique, designed for critical engagement with work, became a process where students would perform the parts of the critique, but would recede to avoid the perception as disrespectful. The belief that all students were similarly engaged in the process left the focus group with the feeling that function of the critique was useless in their development as an artist. They viewed the critique as something to engage in later in life, perhaps at the university level, but not at the level they were currently in.

The students' application of the common sense principles of respect prevented them from engaging in critique and in discussions requiring them to critically account for their ideas, opinions, and beliefs. The quiet classroom did not support the claims of progressive learning marketed by the official context. The need to supply the correct answers generated by the academic focus, standardized assessment, and the implicit evocation of competition, prevented the students from risk taking. Students' perceived opportunities to think critically about themselves and society as outside of the range of a learning environment designed for their age. These were activities that they believed were engaged in at university and perhaps were more of a fad than a legitimate process in creating art. While neither the administration nor the students could clearly identify the ways in which traditional functioned in Visual Art, for the students, traditional served to limit opportunities to critically engage through a commitment to behaviours reflecting respect of authority. The increase in the teacher-centered approach, coupled with passive resistance, perpetuated the model of hegemonic knowledge transmission. For the teacher, traditional, experienced in the classroom, changed her perception of the nature of the student and as such, her practice did not transition to the student-centered model she had intended.

ii. Teacher Beliefs, Teacher Practice, Subject Values, and the Official Context

Deal and Peterson (1999) examined ways that schools could exact change by considering the whole environment when defining the school culture. The Secondary Traditional School's purpose was defined in discursive practices, but the day-to-day operation of the school was also influenced by the structured environment and the images or lack there of in the public spaces where students interacted. The effect was immersion in the context and in the values of responsibility, patriotism, and community. The official context of The Secondary Traditional School as a continuation from home to school provided an environment where students would be able to make the transition from child to young adult through the authoritative guidance of teachers and administration that supported and entrenched the values of home.

The authoritative guidance used to direct students in transition also conformed teacher practice to the traditional philosophy. The preferential hiring practices in traditional schools began the first steps in staff conformity, followed by multiple levels of administrative assessment, many based on the teacher's adherence to the traditional philosophy, indicated by using a teacher-centered approach, compelling students to stand to speak, and by maintaining a highly structured classroom environment. The official school context constituted by highly visible behaviours, encouraged students to display the symbolic behaviours reflecting respect. This visible nature assures that if students are performing the 'Key Visuals', then the staff must be guiding them and if that is the case, then the principal is correctly performing his duties. This changes the nature of teaching from an autonomous activity to a distributed activity, monitored by an overall visible compliance to the philosophy.

The highly visible nature of the philosophy provided Ms. Terri with the sense that despite infrequent visits from administration, her practices were known. Several aspects of the Tenets and Visuals were consistently not enforced in her class, including standing to speak, standing to acknowledge visitors, standing to respond to questions conforming the official curriculum to values and beliefs consistent with the subject of Visual Art. Areas not conformed to meet the expectations of the school, were the structured classroom environment, the design of the quiet classroom as supporting learning, frequent, and structured assessment, and an emphasis on respect. Confirming what the Principal

discussed during the interviews, the behaviours exhibited by students were not ones that need to be instilled. The students, in the focus group, modeled these traditional behaviours without direction from the Ms. Terri. In many cases, the students continued to model behaviours that worked against the aims of the teacher, despite a strong desire to achieve high grades.

Grossman and Stoldosky (1995) noted that similarities within a subject setting, such as Visual Art, in different institutions were more consistent than were similarities across varied subject settings within the same institution. The aims of the programs within these sites directly reflect the aims of the instructors and their beliefs about the value of learning and teaching in these institutions. These beliefs remained fixed throughout the course of the study despite resistance from the students.

Her beliefs about the students, originally formed in the perceived context, transitioned during her teaching experience. While other beliefs were open to compromise, Ms. Terri remained firm in her beliefs about the value of learning outcomes in Visual Art. Her perception of the process was tempered by her experience with the resistance of the students to critically engage. Coupled with teaching strategies that included multiple levels of assessment, lecture format, and high levels of structure, the students further interpreted learning in art as a practice consistent with the traditional philosophy.

Gray and MacGregor (1991) found that most art rooms in Canada functioned without prescriptive constraints, such as standardized assessment, and that teachers were idiosyncratic in the way they constructed their programs. They noted that like Ms. Terri, new art teachers in BC found considerable support in the provincial curriculum guides. Kowalchuk (1997) found that beginning teachers relied on published lesson plans and books for ideas, but unlike these teachers, Ms. Terri modified the lesson plans by including requirements for students to research artists, to develop the image through formal strategies, and to critically reflect on their process in self-evaluation and critique. Despite this, students resisted engaging in critique.

Ms. Terri altered her beliefs about her role as a teacher in preparing the students for life as critical thinkers. The teacher-centered approach, which she continued to rely on, conflicted with the nature of the subject of Visual Art. Her modification in beliefs and practices were in part altered by her personal belief in the value of hard work and her adherence to the subject value of critical pedagogy and conceptual art

work. Connelly, et al (1997) acknowledge that personal knowledge exists simultaneously with subject practical knowledge, and while most research suggests a congruence between the two, the way in which Ms. Teri structured the class suggested a conflict with both her perception of the role of the teacher and the subject's role of the teacher.

The aims of her beliefs about the purposes of learning in Visual Art ran counter to the aims of learning held by the families, administration, and students. Her pedagogical practices, though, supported the familiar learning structures for the students, including stages in learning, stages in artistic production, frequent assessment, and standardized assignments in studio practice. While Ms. Terri anticipated resistance from the school and families, her initial conceptualization of the student did not include the possibility that they would not engage in criticality. As such, her role as the teacher remained firmly in the process of student learning.

5.3 The Traditional Experience: Implications of the Marketization of Education in the Visual Art Classroom.

Cobb et al (2003) documented how the evolving nature of the official district policy created a tension between subject teachers' agendas for teaching and the reforms put forward. These findings are supported in the nature of the district in which The Secondary Traditional School is located. As a lived organization, this particular district is evolving to meet demands of the parents and the students as 'clients', a role constructed and legitimized through provincial reforms. As parent choice in schooling is increased and sanctioned at the provincial level, some district boards respond by developing schools, which reflect the choices of certain parents in the district. While these schools-of-choice are explicitly compelled to follow a majority of public school provisions, they are adaptable to meet the needs and values of the parent/communities that initiated them. As such, districts are responsible for generating policies and schools that meet the needs of the community by first internalizing provincial reforms and community values and then expressing them in the form of schools-of-choice.

The model of education put forward by the traditional philosophy is counter to the aims of critical pedagogy promoting individualism, self-awareness, and social responsibility. While this philosophy is designed for traditional schools, the growing trend in public education in BC is to accommodate certain

vocal groups in communities to maintain enrollment numbers and funding. The impact is most significantly felt in the loss of diversity as a value of education. The belief that education benefits all society through the democratic ideal of equality is replaced by competition. Choice in schools is structured on inequality. This inequality assumes that some students get into choice programs, while others remain in a depleted and disintegrating system, generated by a loss of funding.

Schools as sites where ideas and beliefs challenge the status quo are dismissed for a model where students are taught to respect and accept. The curriculum and pedagogical practices designed for impact on a market, conditions the public to believe that schools are failing. These clients of education need to be convinced that certain schools can accomplish what mainstream schools cannot. Impressing clients has come to mean high ranking in outcomes at a cost to learning which is less assessable and consequently, less valuable. Teachers, such as Ms. Terri who perceive educational practice as a process of critical awareness, find that the autonomous nature of teaching has been replaced with a distributed model, providing surveillance for conformity to the official context and school culture. The unwarranted benefits of learning in the traditional philosophy suggest that students will be better able to take their rightful role in society, yet societal roles will remain status quo, as students resist processes designed to raise consciousness and critical awareness.

5.4   Recommendations

During the course of this study, a consistent difference in the way certain groups of students engaged in learning in Visual Art was observed. Because of the scope of this study and ethical considerations, these observations could not be fully explored. While the focus group represented a typology of the traditional student from this district, the district demographics are changing. This diversity is reflected in the school through an increased enrollment of students who identify as South Asian or Indo-Canadian.

This provides an opportunity to explore how the vague nature of 'traditional' is understood in educational philosophy, across diverse populations. It also offers an opportunity to see how the traditional philosophy's homogeneous student is impacted. Communities all across BC are exploring the implementation of traditional programs to maintain enrollment in the public system, yet how traditional is

defined is located in the district definition of traditional. In the district of this study, traditional was defined against a construction of the public system as failing students through a loss of traditional values. How might other school divisions define difference as an attempt to bring students back to the public system?

5.5   Conclusion

The restriction of funding by the province is compelling districts to create programs, which will keep or bring back students to the public system. There is a perception by some educational reformists that the reconstruction of education in the province is best served by competition and standardization. This reform has been structured so that courses that resist standardization and assessment, such as Visual Art, are removed from graduation requirements, are outsourced to private companies, and are consistently perceived as less valuable in a student's education. This position in the ordering of school subjects has often provided autonomy for Visual Art teachers to promote learning, which is not readily assessable, including critical thinking and creative expressionism.

Schools though, which design an immersion experience in the school culture, have reformed the autonomous practice of teachers into a distributed activity, so that even courses which are not part of the reported school outcomes, are pressured to conform. As teachers' ability to affect change in their schools and classes become further restricted through legislated reforms to teachers' work, the ability to challenge dominant and hegemonic forms of knowledge is reduced. The learning needs directed by the students, pressured by the need to perform on standardized assessment, often reject individualized and critical learning, as it is not assessed on tests.

The idiom of choice in discursive formation implies that the range of what can be chosen in education is broad and expanding. Choice in education though, is contingent on access and opportunity. The implications of choice within the democratic aims of education are problematized by unequal access and a restriction of choice created by streamlining and efficiency. A restriction of choice is counter to the aims of democracy in education and has impact on the ways teachers teach and students learn. Teaching practices that challenge hegemony create experiences for students that foster and promote critical thinking, critical awareness, social responsibility, and social justice. While Ms. Terri sought these

experiences in her class, the ways in which teaching and learning were directed by life-long students of traditional and by the official school curriculum reduced the possibilities for critical engagement.

The contextual effects on Ms. Terri's practice significantly reflect the impact of neoliberal policy in Visual Art and public education in BC. The official curriculum provided a context for teaching and learning that both implicitly and explicitly restricted opportunities for learning that incorporated critical thinking and social justice. Sanctioned practices limited the diversity of teaching staff and student population in the school community and restricted the autonomy and professional judgment of the Visual Art teacher, enforcing the continuum of narrowly defined educational experiences, from home to school. The official context, including the structured physical environment and codes of behaviour created experiences, which did little to broaden or expand a critical perspective of self or society.

Despite a perception of practice that envisioned an interruption of the continuum of learning from home to school, Ms. Terri's practices conformed to those prescribed by the traditional philosophy, emphasizing a teacher-centered approach to curriculum and pedagogy. The lecture format and higher rates of assessment confirmed the authoritative structure in place in the school and implicitly supported the value of learning in a teacher-centered approach. Students' resistance to Ms. Terri's initial curriculum and pedagogical decisions, re-conceptualized Ms. Teri's perception of the official curriculum as one that was enforced through a top-down process. The students more than the administration, conditioned her practice to remain in a teacher-centered pedagogical style as prescribed by the traditional philosophy, creating both a curriculum and instructional style, which did not challenge the life-long learning experience of the student participants.

Schools-of-choice, in particular traditional schools expose the provincial curriculum focus on student-centered pedagogy and social justice curriculum as rhetoric. The broader reforms consistently reduce the possibility that the aims of either this pedagogy or curriculum will be met, as back-to-basic reforms reduce experiences that allow students to challenge dominant forms of knowledge and to envision a society based on equality and access. As educational reforms consistently streamline the inputs and outputs of education, Visual Art as a subject may be less likely to provide students with these experiences.

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Ethics Process and Participant Consent

- **Ethics**

The proposal for this research was developed over the course of a year and was approved by my advisor and committee. I completed the Introductory Tutorial for the Tri-Council policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans on March 2nd, 2008 and received ethics approval from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board on January 26, 2009.

- **Board Approval**

On Friday, January 30th, I spoke with a representative from the district office who informed me that the superintendent of the district had approved my research proposal. I spoke with the assistant-superintendent in charge of the school who informed me he would discuss it with the school principal.

- **Principal Consent**

On Wednesday, February 11, I spoke with the Principal who verbally approved the study and I received signed consent on February 12, 2009. He recommended the Media Arts teacher to participate in the study as the Visual Art 11/12 teacher was new to her position and was somewhat overwhelmed.

- **Teacher Consent**

After the first (Media Arts) teacher declined participation in the study on Friday 13th, I spoke with the Visual Art 11/12t teacher who verbally approved and I received a signed consent form from her on Monday, February 16th, the first full day of research on the school site.

- **Student Assent/Parent Consent**

On the first day of the study, February 16th, Ms. Terri introduced me to the class. From that I point I explained the purpose of the research and outlined their potential participation in the research process including confidentiality, consent/assent, time commitments, and the right to withdraw. I explained that we would work as a focus group so that I could understand their interpretation of learning Visual Art in a Traditional school. Three students eventually returned forms signed by both themselves (assent) and consent forms from parents.

The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road,
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - FULL BOARD

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT:	UBC BREB NUMBER:
Donal O'Donoghue	UBC/Education/Curriculum Studies	H08-00570

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:	
Institution	**Site**
N/A	N/A
Other locations where the research will be conducted: ██████████████████████████	

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
Adrienne Rae Boulton-Funke

SPONSORING AGENCIES:
N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
Visual Art and Traditional Schooling in British Columbia: A Case Study of Context in the Classroom

REB MEETING DATE:	CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE:
December 11, 2008	December 11, 2009

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:	DATE APPROVED: January 26, 2009

Document Name	Version	Date
Protocol:		
Research Proposal	N/A	October 25, 2008
Consent Forms:		
Informed Teacher Consent Form	N/A	October 25, 2008
Informed Administration Consent Form	N/A	October 25, 2008
Parent Consent Form	N/A	January 8, 2009
Assent Forms:		
Student Assent Form	N/A	October 25, 2008
Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:		
Interview Protocol	N/A	October 25, 2008

<u>Letter of Initial Contact:</u>

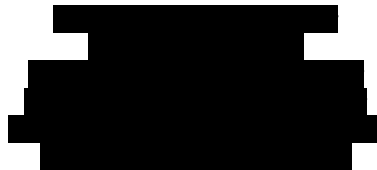| Superintendent Initial Contact Letter	N/A	October 25, 2008

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board
and signed electronically by one of the following:

Interview Protocol
First Focus Group Meeting
Monday, March 3

1.   Can you describe in your own words, what Traditional means?

2.   How do you think a traditional education differs from an education you would receive in a

      typical public high school?

3.   Why did you decide to attend a Traditional High School?

4.   How long have you gone to high school here?

5.   Have you ever attended a school, which was not traditional?

6.   How many years have you taken Visual Art in school?

7.   Do you study art outside of school?

8.   What parts of art do you like the best?

9.   How would you describe your skills in art?

10.   What do you feel your strengths are in art?

11.   What areas would you like to improve?

12.   In what ways is the traditional philosophy of the school taught in art?

Second Focus Group Meeting
Monday, March 23

Paige, Phoebe, Piper

1.   Tell me about your recycled sculpture. How did the sculpture you make come about?

2.   Can you describe the process you went through in developing the sculpture?

3.   What will you do with it now that it is done?

4.   What would you say is the most important thing you should learn in art?

5.   What is the most important thing that you have learned in art thus far?

6.   What have you learned in art conflicted with what you believe?

7.   Could you potentially see where learning in art could conflict with the traditional values of the school?

8.   How does what you learn in art support traditional values?

9.   If you had a friend or a sibling coming to this school, would you tell them to take art?

10.   What would you tell them you learned in art?

11.   Do you know any practicing artist?

12.   Do you have a favorite artist?

13.   Do you learn about art in any other classes?

14.   What do you think of the critique process that you did for your sculpture project?

15.   What is the best part of the process?

16.   What do you think you learn?

17.   What is the most difficult?

18.   Did anyone say anything that bothered you?

19.   Did you say anything that might have bothered someone during the process?

20.   Would you change anything about the critique process?

21.   Have you always done a critique in art?

22.   Why do you think your teacher does the critique process with you?

23.   What do you think of the artwork that is up in the school right now?

24. Do you think artwork reflects who you are?

25. Does your artwork reflect part of your identity?

26. Can you describe your favorite piece of artwork, which you have produced?

27. Do you think the idea in an artwork (social justice) is important?

28. Do you think that art class is important to your role as a citizen? A friend? A student? A daughter?

First Visual Art Teacher Interview
Friday, February 20, 2009

1. Can you describe your educational background as a Visual Art Teacher?

2. Were you/are you a practicing artist?

3. Can you describe your teaching experience in Visual Art, prior to coming to the Traditional School?

4. Why did you choose to teach at a Traditional School?

5. During the interview process were you given any information, which related to your teaching practice and Traditional Values?

6. Can you describe, in your own words, what the Traditional philosophy is?

7. What do you feel is the primary aim of the Traditional philosophy?

8. What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of teaching in a Traditional School?

9. What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of learning in a Traditional School?

10. What do you think makes a Visual Art program successful in a senior school?

11. Can you describe how your classroom teaching practices/methods would support a successful Visual Art program?

12. What influences you when designing the curriculum for your senior Visual Art students?

13. Where do you feel the Traditional philosophy is best implemented: during classroom instruction (pedagogical practices); during one-on-one interaction with students (pedagogical practices); during project design (curriculum)?

14. How do you feel the Traditional philosophy affects your practice as a Visual Art teacher?

15. How do you feel the Traditional philosophy affects your curriculum planning as a Visual Art teacher?

16. Who do you feel is most influential in encouraging you to implement Traditional aims in your classroom: The administration; The parents; The students; Teaching staff; Yourself; A combination; none of these.

17. How do you feel this influence is carried out?

1.   What factors do you feel are most affecting how you teach in the classroom right now?

2.   How do you feel about your teaching at this point, in the VA class?

3.   Can you describe anything, which you have found unexpected or surprising about teaching in a Traditional School?

4.   Now that you have been here for about 5(?) weeks, do you "feel" as though you are teaching in a Traditional school?

5.   Can you describe your interaction with the other staff?

6.   Do you have much interaction with administration?

7.   Have you received any feedback from the parents about Visual Art?

8.   Have you received any feedback from the students about Visual Art, your instruction, and/or project choices?

9.   Do you feel students want or expect your guidance more than they want to develop their own work or opinion?

10. Do you have a sense of what the students want from you as their teacher?

11. You are introducing articles and issues related to visual art to the students. Can you describe your choices and what made you select those issues and/or artists?

12. Can you describe the students' response to the articles? Were you expecting their response?

13. How do you feel the students' response to instruction, discussion, art etc. helps direct your teaching style?

14. Do you feel the students' response supports learning in Visual Art?

15. What were your thoughts on the critique process with the 11/12 sculpture and ceramics' group?

16. How do you feel the critique process relates to their learning in Visual Art?

17. How effective do you feel the group critique process is in developing artistic skills?

18. Part of the students' self-evaluation includes respect and responsibility. Can you explain how these qualities relate to their learning in art?

19. How did you feel about the work that the students' produced in class?

20. In terms of assessment, what are the components that make up the final mark on their project?

21. Have you received any feedback about the work, which you have put up in the school?

22. You are taking the students on a field trip to the Vancouver Art Gallery. How do you feel Contemporary Art relates to the students learning in art?

23. You are getting docents/guides for the students. Are you going to provide any instructions to the coordinator about your group? (What you would like the tour to focus on, etc).

24. How do you think the students will respond in a gallery setting? What do you think their strengths/weaknesses will be?

25. To your knowledge, has the class gone on a field trip to an art gallery before?

26. Why did you select the Vancouver Art Gallery?

Third and Final Visual Art Teacher Interview
April 25th, 2009 1:00 pm

1. What factors do you feel are most affecting how you teach in the classroom right now?

2. How do you feel about your teaching at this point, in the Visual Art class?

3. What do you feel your strengths are?

4. How would you describe the Traditional Philosophy now that you have been at the school 13 (?) weeks?

5. How do you feel the students are doing in art?

6. How do you feel the Traditional ethos/philosophy relates to their work in your class?

7. How do you feel they are doing in terms of working through the critique process?

8. How do you feel that you have adjusted your teaching to meet the needs of your students?

9. How do you feel that you have adjusted the way you teach to meet Traditional expectations?

10. Do you feel that you have adjusted the curriculum or projects to meet Traditional expectations?

11. What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of learning in a Traditional School?

12. Can you discuss the sources that you use to design the studio work for the students?

13. Do you feel the students challenge themselves in the course?

14. How do you feel the students communicate their 'personal voice' in their artwork?

15. How was the response to the field trip to the Vancouver Art Gallery?

16. How do you think the students responded during the tour?

17. What did you think of the work that they produced during the tour?

18. What was their response after the field trip? Did they enjoy it?

19. Did you have any concerns voiced by the parents about the field trip?

20. In what ways do you think my presence in your classroom affected your practice?

21. What differences were there in your teaching practice during the days that I was there and the days I was not?

22. In what ways do you think the students were affected by my presence?

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1. Why did you choose to become a principal at a traditional school?

2. In terms of the traditional philosophy, how would you describe your role in supporting teaching, which implements this philosophy?

3. What professional support is offered to you in terms of your practice as a principal in a traditional school?

4. How would you visualize the implementation of the traditional philosophy in the classroom?

5. Can you identify how instructional practices in senior visual art could specifically support the traditional philosophy?

6. Can you describe ways in which the curriculum decisions made in Visual Art would support the traditional philosophy?

7. What do you feel are the goals or hallmarks of a successful Visual Art program?

8. In terms of academics, how do you feel Visual Arts contributes to student performance?

9. Can you describe the benefits and potential difficulties of teaching in a Traditional School, compared to other public schools?

10. When making staffing decisions, what characteristics are of primary importance?

11. What characteristics do you look for which reflect that the candidate would support the traditional philosophy in the classroom?

12. Are there specific professional development activities designed to educate the staff on the traditional philosophy?

Second Principal Interview
Principal
Thursday, April 23 9:00 am

1. Can you describe the hiring process for the current Visual Art position?

2. Does attendance at Trinity Western University help to indicate support of Traditional values?

3. In terms of a teacher's tool kit, which would provide for the most success in a Traditional School: subject knowledge, teaching experience, or a fit Traditional philosophy?

4. Can you explain the significance of the symbol of Titians in Traditional schooling?

5. Dan Brown wrote that schools of choice must represent a real difference from mainstream public schools in order to draw students. Can you identify the clear difference between this school and a mainstream public school, which would encourage parents to send their child here?

6. In a study of King Traditional Elementary school in 2004, Gibson discussed how many Mennonite families were being brought back to the public system through Traditional Schools. Many families from the Indo Canadian community are also choosing to send their children here. Does this represent a tension in the school in terms of how Traditional education is interpreted by the students and/or parents?

7. Have you observed differences between the two communities in terms of learning styles?

8. If students did not attend this school, where do you think they would receive their education?

9. Is it important that the students understand what Traditional means and how this relates to their education?

10. I have noticed during my observation that students reflect respect for teachers, in part, by listening attentively in class and by working extremely diligently on their artwork. Can you identify how the Traditional philosophy encourages student work ethic?

11. In terms of your observation of the art teacher, how do you see her instructional practices relating to Traditional Schools?

12. Do you feel there are areas, which she needs to strengthen in order to properly address the Traditional philosophy?

13. What areas do you feel are her strengths as a Visual Art teacher?

14. Did any parents express concerns over my presence in the school?