Teacher Belief Research in Art Education: Analyzing a Church of Christ Christian College Art Educator Beliefs and their Influence on Teaching

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

People are behaviorally and psychologically complex to a point that we cannot separate ourselves from our values, beliefs, and assumptions. In education, beliefs influence what, why, and how something is taught. This qualitative case study analyzed one art education professor who teaches at a Protestant Christian Church of Christ affiliated university. Analyzed was the art educator’s belief system in connection with pedagogical practices of art teaching in the areas of art history, art criticism, and art making. This research utilized literatures from art education, teacher belief research, and Christian theology, analyzing the interconnectedness of personal and professional belief systems in shaping and influencing pedagogical practice in art education.
DEDICATION

I wanted to dedicate this research to my Lord and savior Jesus Christ, my lovely wife
Tamara who is my constant support and my parents who developed my work ethic.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am appreciative to the faculty and staff of the Ohio State University art education department who gave their time to help me be a better student. I wanted to give a special thank you to Dr. Sydney Walker, who as my advisor gave me proper direction and wisdom, allowing me to complete this accomplishment.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

From my earliest years art has always been a part of my life. As my artistic side blossomed through quality art education in school, my spiritual self was equally awakened and nurtured through my Church of Christ church. As I became more attuned to the Church of Christ tradition I realized that the visual arts, in most contexts, were seen in a negative light; art was seen as a selfish frivolity of the sinful desires of humanity. Battle lines seemed to be drawn, with Christian faith and the visual arts on opposing sides. This, of course, has caused internal conflict within me for some time, being that art and faith are significant portions of my identity.

My internal conflict of art and faith spurred me to research Christian history and theology as I transitioned into being an artist and art educator through my bachelor’s degree up to my doctoral program. My inquiries found that most Protestant Christian traditions have historically placed restraints on the arts because of their theological beliefs (Dyrness, 2004; Erie, 1989; Finney, 1999; Garside, 1966; Michalski, 1993). One particular Protestant Christian tradition that is known for its restrictive stance on the arts is the Church of Christ restoration movement (Jorgenson, 1989), the very same faith tradition in which I grew up.

Once in the Ohio State University art education doctoral program, my interest in art and Christian theology transitioned into an academic inquiry of how beliefs influence
teachers’ attitudes, motivations and pedagogy. People are behaviorally and psychologically complex to a point that we cannot separate ourselves from our values, beliefs, and assumptions. In education, beliefs influence what, why, and how something is taught (Kagan, 1992; Kinchin, 2004). The primary reason for this research was to analyze more closely the relationship between a teacher’s beliefs and his or her pedagogical practices.

**Statement of the Problem**

All teachers at any level have professional beliefs dealing with teaching, but they also have personal beliefs spanning beyond their profession that impact their pedagogical practice just as much (Pajares, 1992). This research ventured to analyze one art educator’s belief system in connection with pedagogical practices of art teaching in the areas of art history, art criticism, and art making. Through the process of analyzing personal, professional, and theological beliefs, this study sought to understand the role of a belief system in shaping and influencing pedagogical practice in art education.

While educational research validates and advocates study of teacher beliefs, the difficulty of such research is also recognized in that beliefs must be inferred. Rokeach (1968, cited in Pajares, 1992) argues that in research of this nature all beliefs must be inferred. He further suggests that such inference must be based upon evidences of belief. Thus, the multiple sources of data that informed this study such as interviews, published document, and observations were highly important in making such inferences.

Significantly, Pajares cites Bandura’s (1986) contention that beliefs must be studied as “context specific and relevant to the behavior under investigation (Pajares, 1992,
p. 315).” This perspective represents a primary approach of the study in framing the participant’s beliefs within the educational context in which she practices. The following research questions guided the study in investigating of the participant’s belief system:

**Primary Research Question**

How do personal beliefs impact educational practice?

**Sub-questions**

What are the influences that contribute toward shaping a personal belief system?

What is the import of theological beliefs in a personal belief system?

What is the relationship of theological beliefs and secular beliefs in a personal belief system?

How are institutional influences adapted or rejected from a personal belief system?

What are the consequences when personal beliefs differ from institutional policy?

How do professional fields of practice influence a personal belief system?

How are personal belief systems characterized by internal contradiction and inconsistency?

What causes change in a personal belief system?

**Design of the Study**

Finding out how specific beliefs impact particular educational intentions or outcomes can pave the way for improving the quality of education. A literature called Teacher Belief Research has had a positive impact in helping teachers comprehend their
own belief systems in relation to the many aspects of teaching. Those who study teacher beliefs view it as purposeful toward enhancing teachers’ understanding of how and why their teaching process looks and works the way it does (Clark, 1980, 1988; Deemer, 2004; Evron, 2001; Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Kinchin, 2004; Munby, 1982; Pajares, 1992). By enhancing a teacher’s understanding of his or her own beliefs in relation to their practice, steps can be taken to improve that teacher’s educational quality. Ultimately, for the purpose of improving art education practice, this research documented and analyzed how one art educator’s beliefs impacted her art education professional practice.

The qualitative approach to research, which I have adopted for studying practitioner beliefs, relates to Denzin & Lincoln’s (2000) contention that qualitative research acknowledges “the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (p. 13). The study of a personal belief system demands taking account of social realities that have contributed to shaping particular beliefs; the gathering of data for investigating such realities necessitates qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. Further, the investigation of the role of such beliefs as they occur within educational practice requires an approach that can consider multiple contextual factors and the complexity of the social situation. Finally, as previously noted, the need for studying beliefs through inference insists on research methods that can provide evidence for making such inferences.
To begin the process, in 2006 I completed a six-month pilot study analyzing one Christian art educator’s beliefs at a Christian-affiliated college in Ohio. The pilot study gave me a good sense of how to make needed changes. For the present study I selected a Christian art educator practicing in a Church of Christ affiliated university. The published and unpublished documents I analyzed for this study were collected between 2006 and 2010. Additionally, I conducted observations for the study, observing four class sessions of two of the participant’s art education method courses during the 2008 spring semester. The largest part of data collection was accomplished through telephone interviews. I recorded fifteen such interviews from 2007-2010, with each interview lasting from fifteen minutes to one hour. The voice recorder came with a computer program CD, which allowed me to transfer and save the interviews to my computer. I then personally transcribed all interviews.

The ongoing analysis of the interviews was triangulated through the multiple data sources that included published and unpublished documents from the participant and the university, as well as the previously cited classroom observations. The analysis of the interviews was considerably informed by research from art education and educational philosophy and, since an important aspect of the participant’s belief system related to (a) theological beliefs as a Christian, (b) being a member of the Church of Christ, and (c) being a faculty member in a Church of Christ affiliated university, literature related to Church of Christ theology, educational philosophy, and aesthetic views also informed the analysis. The following section briefly synthesizes this diverse literature and its importance for the present study.
Literature Review

Teacher Belief Research

Sometimes words that are fundamentally basic to a culture can be challenging to define; *belief* is one of those words (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987). The word *belief* can be easily associated or analogous to other words such as attitude, value, axiom, ideology, perception, paradigm, as well as internal mental strategies, personal theories, and conceptual systems (Pajares, 1992).


However, this study chooses to use the term *teacher beliefs*. In educational literature, teacher beliefs refer to the assumptions, images, theories, and knowledge teachers hold (a) about the subject matter to be taught to their students and (b) about their teaching and learning (Brousseau, Book, & Byers, 1988; Brousseau & Freedman, 1988; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Conners, 1978; Deemer, 2004; Ernest, 1989; Fang, 1996; Holt-

Teacher belief research is a literature that not only analyzes teacher beliefs, but also emphasizes the analysis of the research methodologies being used to analyze teacher beliefs. There are some key scholars who have analyzed and written about the methods and techniques used in analyzing teacher beliefs. This research study was particularly informed by an article from M. Frank Pajares (1996), Teachers’ beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. Pajares provides a comprehensive view of the literature on teacher beliefs and the conceptual and methodological issues facing its future. In addition to Pajares, others who contributed to methodology literature for analyzing teacher belief research and influenced this research study are Mumby (1982), Clark & Peterson (1986), Kagan, (1992), Fang (1996) as well as art educators Grauer (1998) and Coden-Evron (2001), who utilized methodological teacher belief research approaches in their research.

Art Education Literature

The areas of art education literature that informed this study were curriculum and pedagogical approaches to art history, art criticism, and art making. Arthur Efland’s (1990), A History of Art Education, contextualized these areas as well as writings from Mary Anne Stankiewicz (1984); Clayton Funk (1990); Elliot Eisner (1992); Arthur

More specifically, theories of teaching art history from Stephan Addiss and Mary Erickson (1993) informed the study providing approaches and purposes for this area. Wolff & George Geahigan’s (1997), *Art Criticism and Education*, served as a key source in articulating art education practices with art criticism. These authors claim that out of the many types of art criticism approaches, four classical models have had a significant influence in the art education field. These are: (a) the Feldman model (Feldman, 1967, 1970), (b) the phenomenological model (Kailen, 1968), (c) the aesthetic scanning model (Broudy, 1972), and (d) the exploratory model (Smith, 1973). If not based on one of these four classic models, Wolff & Geahigan (1997) distinguish it as an alternative model of art criticism. The feminist model of art criticism, which also informs this study, would fall into this category. The feminist model of art criticism is amplified in the study by a discussion of critical pedagogy and most particularly Paulo Freire (1973, 1989).

Pedagogical theories derived from Brown & Korzenik (1993), Walker (2001), and Efland (1990b, 2002) provided a contemporary perspective of art making practices that informed the study. Categories that evolved from these authors include (a) art making for the spirit, (b) a utilitarian approach, (c) a scientific rationalist approach, (d) art making for cultural understanding, (e) art making as study skill, and (f) a cognitive approach to art making.
Art Theory

Art theory, theories of art developed outside the field of art education, also contributed to the present study in three areas: (a) contextual theories of art, (b) philosophical theories of art, and (c) psychological theories of art. Contextual theories of art informed the discussions and analyses related to the practice of art history. The philosophical theories of art also influenced this research in the area of art criticism, such as literary critic Meyer Howard Abrams’ conceptualization of four purposes of art, referenced by Efland; Geaghigan’s (2002) evaluative theories of art informed the discussions and analyses of art criticism as well. Psychological theories of art and the study of creativity informed the present study through Robert Sternberg’s (1999) *Handbook of Creativity*.

Theological Beliefs

A final literature that informed the study was scholarship dealing with theological beliefs pertaining to four areas: (a) Protestant Reformation theologian beliefs and art, (b) Church of Christ theology, (c) Church of Christ theology concerning education, and (d) theological beliefs concerning visual art.

Protestant Reformation theologian’s beliefs toward art were highly informative for the study, demonstrating how particular Protestant Reformation theologians such as Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin influenced the Church of Christ denomination and founder Alexander Campbell’s beliefs toward art. In this research, Charles Garside, Jr’s classic, *Zwingli and the Arts* (1966), documents Zwingli’s theological beliefs toward art and Carl C. Christensen’s (1979) *Art and the Reformation of Germany* and Paul C.
Finney’s (1999) *Seeing Beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition* describe Calvin’s theological beliefs toward art. Additionally, two other books were most helpful. Although Martin Luther did not directly influence the Church of Christ’s theological beliefs of art, his views provided a contrasting context. Fleischer, Ostrem, & Peterson’s (2003) book, *The Arts and the Cultural Heritage of Martin Luther*, served as a source for Luther’s views. Other supporting material dealing with Protestant historical views toward the arts that informed the research for this study includes Auski, 1978; Brown, 2000; Coleman, 1998; Crouch, 1910; Dillenberger, 1986; Dyrness, 2004; Erie, 1989; and Michalski, 1993.

The second research area regarding theological beliefs was Church of Christ theology, specifically emphasizing founder Alexander Campbell’s theology. Historical books which explain his life history and his theological beliefs and were useful to the study include Baker, 2002; Casey & Foster, 2002; Jorgenson, 1989; Meyer, 1961; Noll, 1985, 2003; Verkruyse, 2005; and Wrather, 2007.

The third research area, Church of Christ theology, specifically focuses on Alexander Campbell’s educational legacy. A critical book for the study in understanding the different theological perspectives espoused by Christian denominations concerning education was *Models for Christian Higher Education* (1997). The text includes a chapter specifically devoted to the Church of Christ educational tradition. Another informative book for the study was John M. Imbler’s (1992) book *Beyond Buffalo: Alexander Campbell on Education for Ministry*. These two primary sources were
supported by other resources, including Casey & Foster, 2002; Elias, 2002; Jorgenson, 1989; Mayer, 1961; and Verkruyse, 2005.

A fourth and final research area for this study focused on Church of Christ theology and art; specifically, Alexander Campbell’s beliefs about art. A critical book that informed this research was Jorgenson’s (1989), Theological and Aesthetic Roots in the Stone-Campbell Movement. The research in this area was also supported by biographies of Campbell from Casey & Foster, 2002; Hughes, 1997; Verkruyse, 2005; and Wrather, 2007.

Significance of the Study

The primary reason for this research is that it represents an under-researched area in the field of art education: the study of teacher beliefs. Understanding teachers’ beliefs significantly contributes to enhancing educational effectiveness (Deemer, 2004; Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Kinchin, 2004; Mumby, 1982; Ortin, 1996; Pajares, 1992).

Researchers in art education agree that teachers’ beliefs are important to study because they influence what teachers do, how they interpret what happens in their classrooms, and how they continue to shape their teaching (Coden-Evron, 2001; DiBlasio, 1978; Eisner, 1992; Giffhorn, 1978; Grauer, 1998; Kowalchuk, 1999; McSorley, 1996; Morris, 1975; Smith-Shank, 1992; Wolff; 1990).

Secondly, Christian educational colleges and universities teach a significant percentage of adults in the United States (Pattillo & Mackenzie, 1966). There are currently 321 Protestant Christian-affiliated colleges and universities in the United States, of which 105 give a Bachelor of Art Education degree with teacher certification (Grubbs,
There are currently 204 Catholic Christian affiliated colleges and universities in the United States, of which 48 give a Bachelor of Art Education degree with teacher certification (Grubbs, 2008). In the art education field, only two dissertations have been completed analyzing Christian higher education (Sangren, 1980; Midkiff, 1992). Therefore, the completion of this research made a significant contribution to the field of art education by helping fill a literature gap of documenting art education programs found in Christian colleges and universities.

Finally, research on teachers’ beliefs can generate scholarly dialogue within the field of art education between Christian art educators and other scholars outside of the Christian community. One of my goals for this research is to bring up fundamental issues of art education in such a way that it starts a dialogue between these communities.

**Christian Education**

In regard to Christian education this study can, first and foremost, improve the quality of art education programs at Christian-affiliated colleges and universities by relating prevalent issues and practices to current literature on teaching and learning, art education theory and practice, and art and theological concerns.

This study can also be a first step toward developing a perspective of art education specifically related to meet the theological needs of Christian education. The documentation of a “religious orthodoxy” curriculum, as described in the findings chapter of this dissertation, is one example of how this perspective can be developed.
Finally, this study’s findings can contribute to improving the relationship of a Christian’s faith toward the arts by clarifying the prevalent issues and concerns, hopefully moving toward resolution.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A teacher’s beliefs influence what is taught and the instructional approaches used.

This study is informed by research related to a variety of components that can shape one’s belief system including beliefs about pedagogy, institutional authority, teacher/student roles, art and art education.

**Teacher Beliefs about Pedagogy**

A major premise of this study is that the values and/or beliefs a teacher holds are manifested in their pedagogical practice, but also in their curriculum content (Brent, 1978; Eisner, 1992; Gutek, 2004; Holt-Reynolds, 2000; Klienbard, 1992; Pratte, 1977; Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Watts, 1994). Klienbard (1992) states, “The curriculum in any period can be an invaluable relic of the forms of knowledge, social values, and beliefs that have achieved a special status in a given time and place” (p. 157). Understanding the curriculum types used by teachers offers insight into the teachers’ pedagogical objectives.

Gutek (2004) analyzes a set of different educational theories: Essentialism, Perennialism, Progressivism, Critical Theory and Constructivism. “Theory can refer to a general abstract conceptual frame of reference that can be used to guide practice. Such a frame of reference includes: (1) a set of generalizations or explanations about the subject or field; (2) strategies for how to apply the generalizations as guiding principles in action; (3) hypotheses, conjectures, or expectations about what is likely to happen
when the generalization is applied in a specific instance. . . Still another meaning of theory is our beliefs, ideas, and concepts about phenomenon—the objects, people, and situations—that we observe and interact with. (p. 254)

**Essentialism**

Gutek (2004) defines *essentialism* as, “certain basic ideas, skills, and bodies of knowledge… essential to human culture and civilization” (p. 263). In the 1930s, a group of educators opposed to progressive education coined the term *essentialism*, but the concept of teaching basic essential concepts and its philosophical underpinnings can be traced back to much earlier times (Gutek, 2004). Gutek goes on to say, “Essentialism is more historically than metaphysically grounded, in that it looks to the past, rather than to human nature, to identify the skills and subjects that have contributed to human survival and civilization” (p. 269). A teacher holding this belief would use a curriculum consisting of ideas and content deemed important and essential by expert sources.

**Perennialism**

“Perennialism is defined as an educational theory that proclaims people possess and share a common nature that defines them as human beings” (Gutek, 2004, p. 279). Largely taken from Aristotelian, Realism and Thomism, this educational theory asserts that truth and values are eternal and universal (Gutek, 2004). A teacher holding this belief would look to the traditional content taught by art teachers.
Progressivism

*Progressivism* means to incrementally improve the human situation through education by using a rational democratic process (Gutek, 2004). Most notable in Progressive teaching is John Dewey. In progressive education the school and classroom reflect democratic ideals, meaning children should be given opportunities to formulate their beliefs about life and their personal needs should be respected as central to learning (Spring, 1990; Stone, 2001). Progressivism came to be divided into two groups: (a) child-centered and (b) social-reconstruction (Gutek, 2004). Child-centered progressivism asserts that the curriculum grew out of the individual child’s interests and needs (Gutek, 2004). In creating environments of learning for the *whole child*, students would be seen as social and emotional as well as intellectual (Eisner, 1992).

Social-reconstruction progressivism believes that education should be used as a deliberate agency of social, political, and economic reform (Gutek, 2004). Eisner (1992) states, teaching social needs are stressed over individual needs for the purpose of societal reformation. Some views of this type of pedagogy get students to be active in leadership (Eisner, 1974). A teacher holding a progressive belief would build a curriculum based on the children’s interests and social needs. Additionally, the teacher would want the curriculum to reflect the community in which the child lives.

Critical Theory

“Critical Theory can be defined as a complex set of working assumptions about society, education, and schooling that question and analyze educational aims, institutions, curriculum, instruction, and relationships in order to raise consciousness and bring about
transformative change in society and education” (Gutek, 2004, p. 309). This type of pedagogy is geared toward finding the “implicit” values that are passed on to students through the teachers, school structures, books and other resources; students are asked to discover the power dynamic in each topic discussed (Eisner, 1992). “Critical Theory also includes some critical themes from Postmodern philosophy. It rejects the metaphysical structures of the more traditional philosophies such as Idealism and Realism. It opposes the modernist claims, arising from the Enlightenment, that it is possible to use science and the social science to generate objective knowledge claims” (Gutek, 2004, p. 315).

**Constructivism**

Constructivists suggest the learner is able to use innate intelligence to construct or create knowledge and in so doing understand new concepts and ideas. This view has developed over the last thirty or forty years in education (Efland, 2002) as brain research has informed our understanding of thinking and learning. Eisner (1992) believes a major ability in humans is the capacity to create and manipulate symbols. These symbols occur in all arenas of human experience and, depending on context, can be understood in multiple ways. By using existing symbols and creating others, the learner is able to organize ideas, see relationships, and create personal understanding. In doing this, the learner constructs or builds knowledge rather than accepting or memorizing existing ideas.

Teaching from a constructivist perspective can include the belief that there are multiple forms of intelligence, which are unique to each learner (Gardner, 1982). This impacts what is taught and how it is taught. Therefore, education becomes much more
individualized and contextual. To meet the needs of all students, Eisner (1992) believes teachers must understand the multiple ways in which people learn and match their teaching to the diversity of student learning styles, thus creating an equitable education for all. A teacher holding this belief would provide a wide variety of art activities and encourage students to use what they know to construct new knowledge and understanding about art.

**Teacher Beliefs about Institutional Authority**

A clearer understanding of the process of teaching is not possible without understanding the constraints and opportunities that impact the teaching process (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Teachers work in complex organizations, and many organizational forces can affect the structure of the classroom environment and influence the ways teachers conceptualize it (Deemer, 2004; Nespor, 1984; Pajares, 1992). Sieber’s (1978) study showed that community pressure by organizations along ethnic, religious and class lines might have considerable influence on both the curricular and pedagogical practices of schools (Nespor, 1984). Relevant to this study, Protestant Christianity contains such cultural pressures which could affect pedagogical practices. These include the influence of school administration, church affiliation, community and students, parents, alumni, and faculty.

One particular focus for this research is how teacher pedagogy is influenced by college administration. Nespor (1984) notes two ways in which teacher pedagogy can be influenced by administration. One such way is through hiring. Nespor (1984) states, “particular types of teachers may be hired because of particular qualities and beliefs they
possess” (p. 84). This is supported by the fact that many Protestant Christian colleges specifically state they hire only applicants who profess Christian beliefs (Hughes & Adrian, 1997). A second way relates to evaluative techniques (Nespor, 1984). In a pilot study completed prior to this study, I found that one particular Christian university administration mandated teaching objectives reflecting theological beliefs for all courses. This mandate functions as a monitoring technique that influences pedagogy in a particular direction. Importantly, Nespor (1984) suggests evaluation techniques by administration may influence teachers’ feelings of satisfaction or sense of individual efficacy.

**Teacher Beliefs about Teacher/Student Roles**

Not surprisingly, teachers’ beliefs about their roles as teachers shape their pedagogy (DeKock, Sleegers, & Voeten, 2004; Fang, 1996). Clark & Peterson (1986) state how teachers perceive and define their professional responsibilities is an important area of study. Kelly (1986) discusses four perspectives on teacher’s roles as educator: (a) exclusive neutrality, (b) exclusive partiality, (c) neutral impartiality, and (d) committed impartiality. Having a framework of diverse views of how teachers see their role can help to clarify how one’s conception of what it means to be an educator affects pedagogical practice.

To define Kelly’s frameworks, *exclusive neutrality* requires that teachers refrain from introducing topics that are controversial in the broader community (Kelly, 1986). This view obligates the teacher to prevent discussion of topics of a sensitive nature (Hill,
1982). Often subjects such as religion and politics are left out by teachers holding an exclusive neutral view.

Kelly’s (1986) second perspective of the teacher’s role as educator is *exclusive partiality*. This view conceives the teacher’s role as one of leading students toward a preferable position. This perspective may assume a more authoritarian stance in the classroom, or take a more subtle form in which the teacher would encourage dialogue, but stack the deck in particular ways. Kelly (1986) critiques exclusive partiality as not offering all the sides to an issue, arguing that this approach prevents students from making an informed judgment, therefore undermining the student as a moral agent.

Kelly’s (1986) third perspective of a teacher’s role as educator is *neutral impartiality*. This position promotes an atmosphere of “complex understanding, tolerance for ambiguity, and responsiveness to constructive criticism” (Kelly, 1986, p. 228). Kelly states impartiality in this context refers to teachers remaining silent about their own views. Supportive to this stance of education is liberal pluralism, which supports human diversity. A critique of neutral impartiality has been that, depending on age, students are asked to divulge their views and, without a reciprocal answer from the teacher, will often get a negative response from students. Kelly specifically notes that student teachers dislike this lack of reciprocity. However, Kelly notes that it is impossible to entirely conceal one’s beliefs, thus, honestly noting one’s position reduces student confusion.

Kelly’s (1986) final position for teacher’s role as educator is *committed impartiality*. Committed impartiality has two components: teachers state their views on
issues and competing perspectives receive a fair hearing through critical discourse.
Committed impartiality views the teacher as a collegial mentor, personal witness and
democratic authority (Kelly, 1986).

Teacher Beliefs about Art

Just as teachers’ pedagogical views affect their teaching, how they view their
subject matter also directs the teachers’ work in the classroom. Thus art education
researchers agree that teacher beliefs about art are an important area of study because
they influence what art teachers do, how they interpret what happens in their classes, and
how they continue to shape their teaching (Carroll, 1997; Coden-Evron, 2001; Eisner,
Smith-Shank, 1992).

Theoretical Views of Art

Contextual theories of art.

The scholarship of art educators Addiss and Erickson (1993) and Chanda (1998)
recognizes diverse perspectives of art that reflect (a) iconographical, (b) Marxist, (c)
feminist, (d) psychoanalytic, (e) deconstructive, and (f) semiotic theories.

1. Iconography. “Meaning is derived from the structure or anatomy of an
   object as opposed to its content” (Chanda, 1998, p. 19).

2. Marxist. Considers the “social and economic elements that led to the
   production and dissemination of the art” (Addiss & Erickson, 1993, p. 52).
   Addiss and Erickson (1993) name Nicos Hadjinicolaou as an art historian
who uses a Marxist art history methodology. A criticism of this methodology is that “it tends to ignore our aesthetic response, the sense of beauty that artworks can convey” (Addiss & Erickson, 1993, p. 55).


4. **Psychoanalytic.** “Art is analyzed for its unconscious symbolism” (Addiss & Erickson, 1993, p. 64). Addiss & Erickson (1993) name Adrian Strokes as an art historian who uses a psychoanalytic methodology.


A teacher holding one or more of these views of art would most likely construct their pedagogical practice accordingly.

**Philosophical theories of art.**

Eisner (1973-74) states, “no one should underestimate the power of myths, beliefs, or convictions in shaping one’s view of the world and one’s treatment of new evidence” (p. 7). Efland (1978) states, “what people believe about art and its value is likely to affect whether it is taught or not” (p. 9). Efland (1978, 1990b) has attempted to
clarify these orientations. There are four basic aesthetic theories of art: (a) mimetic, (b) pragmatic, (c) expressive, and (d) objective (Abrams, 1953; Efland, 1978, 1990b; Stewart, 1997).

1. **Mimetic Art.** A mimetic theory of art is the belief that a work of art represents or reflects some aspect of nature (Abrams, 1953; Efland, 1990b). The ancient Greeks sought, above all things mental and physical, perfection through the mimicking of life (Crouch, 1910). The main criteria for judging art was the accuracy of its representation of natural existence (Efland, 1978).

2. **Expressionist Art.** The expressive theory of art is oriented toward the artist, and to the degree to which works of art express the emotions of their maker (Efland, 1978).

3. **Objective Art.** “An objective theory or formalist theory of art is isolated from all external points of reference and it is analyzed and judged based on the works intrinsic consistency” (Efland, 1978, p. 21).

4. **Pragmatic Art.** Through the pragmatic theory of art, “art is viewed as an instrument that achieves certain effects in an audience” (Efland, 1978, p. 21). Stewart (1997) uses contextual or instrumentalist in place of the word pragmatic. It would be within the pragmatic category which Protestant Christians mostly framed their theoretical emphasis of art and life. Many Reformation Protestants, such as Puritans, took their main influence of life and conduct from the Old Testament, while the Jews looked at imitation with suspicion (Crouch, 1910).

Philosophical views of art also include beliefs about making judgments of art. For instance, one might believe that all evaluations are equal, or that some judgments toward art are better informed than others (Barrett, 2001; Croix, Tansey, & Kirkpatrick,
Authority over judgment and meaning also relate to one’s beliefs about the role of the art educator, art historian, art critic and artist. Depending on who is doing the viewing, art can be analyzed and judged based on multiple perspectives and needs (Geaghigan, 2002).

**Evaluative theories of art.**

Additionally, one might draw upon historical art methodology for constructing positions for evaluating art. Croix, Tansey, & Kirkpatrick (1991) argue that art historians have historically led in developing methodologies for art criticism and judging of art. Geaghigan (1997, 2002) identifies four historical purposes for art criticism to be (a) historical, (b) recreative, (c) judicial, and (c) political (p. 91).

1. **Historical.** Concerned with authenticating a work of art and obtaining background information about artists and artwork.

2. **Recreative.** Concerned with the meaning of works of art.

3. **Judicial.** Concerned with determining the value or merit of works of art.

4. **Political.** Concerned with promoting artistic or social causes.

Most often, an art teacher eclectically gathers useful information from artists, art historians, art critics, and other scholars in order to create quality opportunities for students to analyze and judge art.
Psychological theories of art.

Creativity.

Creativity is a topic of wide scope that is important at both the individual and societal levels. Amabile’s (1996) creativity research states that school, family, work and societal environments all influence creativity and that “most can be found in some form in the classroom” (p. 203).

Research on understanding creativity has increased over time, leading to diverse approaches to creativity such as (a) mystical, (b) pragmatic, (c) psychodynamic, (d) psychometric, (e) cognitive, (f) social-personality, and (g) confluence (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

1. **Mystical.** Attempts to understand creativity in terms of some kind of spiritual or other extra-scientific force.

2. **Pragmatic.** Primarily oriented towards developing methods of creativity training that can be used in corporate or other settings.

3. **Psychodynamic.** Seeks to understand creativity in terms of largely unconscious forces, most of which are assumed to have taken root in childhood.

4. **Psychometric.** Attempts to measure creativity and assign scores to creative work for qualities such as novelty and quality of response to various kinds of stimuli.

5. **Cognitive Psychological.** Seeks to understand creativity in terms of underlying mental representations and processes.
6. **Social Psychological.** Attempts to understand the social forces that contribute to or impede creativity.

7. **Confluence.** A combination many of these other approaches to researching creativity.

All of these orientations assume that creative achievement comes about through great leaps of imagination which occur because creative individuals are capable of extraordinary thought processes; many view art as resulting from genius. Weisberg (1986) states our society holds a very romantic view about the origins of creative achievements in the arts and sciences; a view that has been passed down to us from the Greeks, who believed that the gods or the muses breathed creative ideas into artists.

Weisberg (1986) states that “a second assumption of the genius view is that creative individuals posses some indefinable quality which accounts for how they do the great things they do” (p. 2). For the teaching of art, the genius myth denies potential for theoretical and methodological development because there is nothing that can be taught; creativity is simply a gift (Eisner, 1973-74; Jenkins, 2001). In contrast to this view, Weisberg (1986) in his study of behavioral creativity concludes that “all humans are capable of creativity in response to everyday problems, and all posses whatever characteristics underlie creativity; and therefore particularly creative individuals do not uniquely possess a set of characteristics (p. 144).

Thus, there are opposite views of the creative process. From one perspective, ordinary life involves a series of familiar events that can be addressed without resorting to creative thinking. Others believe that the only constant aspect of the world is constant
change; therefore, if humans never produce the same response twice then novelty and creative thinking are the norm (Weisberg, 1986).

**Therapeutic function.**

The idea that art can aid in emotional or physical healing is a commonly accepted view. Sporre (2000), an art historian states, “Art can help treat a variety of illnesses, both physical and mental” (p. 17). Feldman (1996) states that a therapeutic model of art education would assume that each pupil is, in some sense, unwell, and that art can make them whole and well again. For art therapists, the benefits of the art making process are more important than the quality of the work produced (Feldman, 1996). The functional focus of art therapy in healing people would have much in common with Christianity in their goals to help others heal from physical, emotional, and spiritual afflictions. The therapeutic aspect of art has a close relationship to the idea of spiritual worship as a healing and invigorating process (Kandinsky, 1977).

**Teacher Beliefs about Art Education**

Many teacher belief researchers focus on curriculum or the specific subject matter to be taught (Brousseau, Book, & Byers, 1988; Elbaz, 1983; Pajares, 1992). Eisner (1973, 1974) states art education will not grow theoretically or practically if we do not examine educators’ beliefs concerning their teaching. Carroll (1997) states, “Beliefs about art, teacher characteristics, or preparation, affect every day instructional decisions or student learning in art” (p. 180).
Within the history of art education, a number of curriculum approaches have emerged reflecting aesthetic, academic, economic, religious, creative, discipline, socio-cultural, and cognitive views on how art should be taught.

**Aesthetic Concerns**

*An academic approach.* An academic approach to art education is based on the view that art should provide methods to imitate nature and previous western artworks dated from the 17th century to the 19th century (Cohen-Evron, 2001).

*A formalist approach.* A curriculum shift in the early 20th century focused on foundational visual elements and principles of design within a work of art (Efland, 1990a). People like Arthur Wesley Dow tried to develop a universal language by which art could be understood and taught (Efland, 1990b). Decades later, similar elements and principles were reinforced by the German artist group called the Bauhaus (Funk, 1990).

**Economic Concerns**

*An economic approach.* America found itself in a time of economic recession following the Civil War. Boston was particularly vulnerable due to its important textile and show industries (Efland, 1990b). Viewed as an instrument which could correct the defects of society, drawing was added to the curriculum of the Boston common school with the hope that it would improve Boston’s economic downturn and allow the students to compete globally in industry (Efland, 1990b).

The apex of the economic approach was represented by Walter Smith, who came from England in 1871 to be the first art education supervisor for the state of
Massachusetts. Smith eventually founded the Massachusetts Normal Art School, where he trained professional art teachers to educate students in industrial drawing exercises (Chalmers, 2000).

**Religious Concerns**

*A religious orthodox approach.* Elliot Eisner (1992) conceptualized six curriculum models in education. One conceptual model was *religious orthodox curriculum*, which uses “the existence of God and the importance of God’s message in defining the content, aims, and conditions of educational practice” (Eisner, 1992, p. 307). Within American education most Christian-affiliated educational institutions would fit under Eisner’s definition. It is not difficult to find examples of a religious orthodox curriculum within art education history.

Efland (1990b) states that in 1834 Amos Bronson Alcott started a new school which developed education curriculum based on transcendental principles. Their curriculum was organized around three human abilities: (a) rational, (b) imaginative, and (c) spiritual (Efland, 1990b, p. 118). Even though drawing was taught, Alcott’s transcendentalist education was best seen in his elaborate classroom environments which were filled with the most beautiful arts and crafts, so as to spark the children’s imagination and inner awareness of God (Efland, 1990b).

Another art education example which fit a religious orthodoxy definition was the teaching of William Torrey Harris in 1868 (Siegesmund, 1998). Even though Harris was friends with Amos Bronson Alcott, Harris chose to adopt Hegel’s *absolute idealist* philosophy, integrating it into his educational philosophy (Efland, 1990b). Harris
believed art was important because it was one of the three ways in which human thought reached toward the divine; likewise, teaching art was important so that men could appreciate and produce the beautiful (Efland, 1990b).

Two other examples of art education which fit the definition of religious orthodoxy are the “Schoolroom Decoration” and “Picture Study” movements. Both could easily be seen as one movement because of their similar influences and close proximity in history. Lasting from the late 1890s to around WWI, both the Schoolroom Decoration and Picture Study groups adopted the aesthetic theory of John Ruskins, who helped to create a cultural climate in which art education came to be considered a kind of moral education (Stankiewicz, 1984). The beautification of the school and the use of pictures in education were recommended for the purpose of developing spiritual and practical virtues in students (Efland, 1990b; Stankiewicz, 1984). “Learning to understand the moral truths embodied in masterpieces of art and to appreciate the fine character of the great artist was a first step toward improving one’s own moral faculty” (Stankiewicz, 1984, p. 53).

**Student Centered Concerns**

A creative self-expressive approach. In the early- to mid-twentieth century another change in art education curriculum developed: the creative self-expression approach. The creative self-expression model of art education views children’s art as a direct expression of their perception or emotional response to the world (Cohen-Evron, 2001). Victor Lowenfeld (1947), who was heavily influenced by psychology, would be the main leader of this type of art education. The purpose of creative self-expressive
pedagogy was to foster the individual child’s expressive development by providing appropriate materials and protecting them from inappropriate social influences.

**Knowledge Concerns**

*Art as a discipline approach.* Next to develop in art education practice was art conceptualized as a discipline. Lead by Manuel Barkan, those with this idea looked to science as a model for pedagogy (Efland, 1990b). Conceptualized so that it could be theoretically developed and improved like other disciplines, aesthetics, art criticism, art making, and art history became the four pillars of Barkan’s discipline of art (Dorn, 1994).

Walker (2001) developed a curriculum approach called “Big Ideas.” The Big Ideas concept extends beyond the comprehensive approach with art history, aesthetics, and art criticism, but takes more of an interdisciplinary focus. Walker’s Big Ideas was influenced in some way by the TETAC project, which Walker and many others within The Ohio State University Art Education Department participated in (The Ohio State University TETAC Mentors, 2002). The TETAC research project emphasized integrated curriculum based on Heidi Hayes Jacobs’s ideas of “Essential Questions” (P. Stuhr, personal communication, September 1, 2010). The concept of the Big Ideas method is based on the belief that students, like professional artists, conceptualize their art making from a larger conceptual framework which can inform the culture as a whole (Stewart & Walker, 2005).
**Socio-cultural Concerns**

An intercultural education approach. As a result of the 1960s civil rights movement, the United States of America began to address its own racial diversity and inequality. The term *multicultural education* developed to address the needs of a racially diverse nation. As research on education addressing culture increased through the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, terms like *Global* and *community-based education* emerged as well.

Davenport, (2000) states that there has been great confusion as to the actual meaning of *multicultural education* within art education literature; therefore, she chose to use *intercultural education* as a term suitable to house all other types of education which focuses on culture. Today, research and scholarship on intercultural art education curriculum abound.

A postmodern approach. The term *postmodernism* became fashionable in the 1970s, but it was not until Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr (1996) published their book, *Postmodern Art Education*, that postmodern theory became an art education curriculum model. This curriculum model adopted critical pedagogy as its teaching platform, and then proceeded to deconstruct all aspects of human existence for the purpose of uniting art and life.

A visual culture art education approach. Visual culture art education is a recent method of art education to develop and is still developing through scholarly discourse. Visual culture is not so much an expansion or broadening of old art education techniques, but an entirely new way of teaching art. Heavily focused on art found in our American popular culture, VCAE curriculum has been influenced by critical pedagogy, cognitive
theory, and advances in mass communication technology (Duncum, 2001b, 2006; Freedman & Stuhr, 2003; Tavin, 2003a).

Teacher Beliefs and Art History

Addiss & Erickson (1993) clarify six purposes or approaches for teaching art history content: (a) information, (b) inquiry, (c) aesthetic, (d) humanities, (e) cross-disciplinary, and (f) cultural approach. A teacher’s beliefs may consist of one or more of these purposes. The following briefly identifies these purposes, as well as those of other art educators.

1. **Information Approach.** Art history is taught for its own relevant purpose; students should have knowledge about the many artworks, artists, media, periods, movements, styles, and techniques that have documented and influenced world history (Addiss & Erickson, 1993).

2. **Inquiry Approach.** Art history is taught for the purpose helping students improve their critical thinking skills (Addiss & Erickson, 1993; Chanda, 1998; Erickson, 1983; Geahigan, 1998b).

3. **Aesthetic Approach.** Art history is taught for the purpose of increasing student’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable students to experience artworks for the sake of those experiences alone (Addiss & Erickson, 1993).

4. **Humanities Approach.** Art history is taught for the purpose of helping students understand and appreciate what it means to be human (Addiss & Erickson, 1993).

5. **Cross-disciplinary Approach.** Art history is taught for the purpose of helping students interconnect other disciplines and subjects (Addiss & Erickson, 1993).
6. **Cultural Education Approach.** Art history is taught for the purpose of informing students of how and why other ethnic groups have produced significant and meaningful artworks (Addiss & Erickson, 1993).

Addiss & Erickson (1993) further describe (a) chronological and (b) thematic as approaches to teaching art history:

1. **Chronological.** Content is structured around a historical timeline. Most likely, art history is taught chronologically being that professional historians believe time sequence is an important variable to historiography (Momigliano, 1990).

2. **Thematic.** Content is structured around general themes. The thematic approach could have the content placed chronologically, but most likely themes could simply be new ways of conceptualizing content which is better served when separate from chronologic time. The Art 21 series, edited by Susan Sollins and Marybeth Sollins (2001), is a good example of a thematic approach to art history; it chooses themes that are addressed by the artist’s work. Some other themes besides topics or issues could be art movements or periods, artists, art media, and art styles.

**Teacher Beliefs and Art Criticism**

McSorley (1996) says a greater understanding of teachers’ conceptions of the teaching of art criticism could serve as a useful tool in the preparation of art teachers. She suggests that a clearer understanding will help teachers avoid problems and pitfalls with implementing art criticism.

Viewed as an “ill-structured domain of knowledge,” works of art represent many complex ideas, and comprehending them requires deeper understandings of that domain of knowledge (Barrett 1994; Efland, 1995; Short, 1995). Geahigan (2002) states that
after forty years unresolved conceptual problems continue in the teaching of art criticism. He blames it on confusing language which uses the term *criticism* in many different ways; language that is over-simplified and not fully clarifying the connection to art history and aesthetics (Geahigan, 1996, 1998c, 2002).

Most methods of art criticism currently used in art education have their roots in the method developed during the early part of the century, delineated by Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801-1887) in his book *Vorschule der Aesthetik*. Thomas Munro’s later 1928 model has art criticism rising out of the Barnes Foundation gestation and codifying ideas also expressed by Dewey in 1934. Munro’s model continues to serve as a touchstone for many empirically-oriented models of today (Anderson, 1991). Wolff & Geahigan (1997) claim that out of all the many types of art criticism there are four classical models which have had significant influence in the field of art education. These are (a) the Feldman model (Feldman, 1967, 1970), (b) the phenomenological model (Kailen, 1968), (c) the aesthetic scanning model (Broudy, 1972), and (d) the exploratory model (Smith, 1973). If it is not based on one of these four classic models, Wolff & Geahigan (1997) call it an alternative model of art criticism.

**Teacher Beliefs and Art Making**

Art making is fundamentally a social process which affects the viewer and impacts meaning within the culture as a whole. Feldman (1996) confirms this when he states, “the images we make do not end their lives in school corridor walls; they find their way into human minds, into the language of civic discourse, and into the building blocks of culture” (p. 18).
Art educators who have contributed to a contemporary view of art making in art education include Walker (2001), *Teaching Meaning in Art Making*; Brown & Korzenik (1993), *Art Making and Education*; Efland (1990b) *A History of Art Education* and Efland (2002), *Art and Cognition*. In synthesizing these writings, the following categories were evolved: (a) art making for the spirit, (b) a utilitarian approach to art making, (c) art making for cultural understanding, (d) art making as study skill, and (e) a cognitive approach to art making.

**Art Making for the Spirit**

Through this approach, art making is oriented to the student’s inner life. “Lessons are predicated on the importance of recognizing and activating the student’s inner emotional and spiritual experience” (Brown & Korzenik, 1993, p. 161). A major leader in this approach was Victor Lowenfeld, who was heavily influenced by psychology. This approach focuses on developing creativity within the student. Lowenfeld’s work would later lead to art therapy, a functional form of the creative self-expressive approach which uses art making to diagnose child abnormality (Dunn-Snow & D’Amelio, 2000).

**A Utilitarian Approach to Art Making**

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, art education was used to prepare students for jobs in an industrial field (Brown & Korzenik, 1993; Efland, 1990b). Walter Smith was a leading historical figure who developed an art making curriculum which he called *technical drawing* (Brown, Korzenik, 1993; Efland, 1990b). A utilitarian approach to art making has continued under the larger term of *design* (Funk, 1990).
**Art Making for Cultural Understanding**

Brown & Korzenik’s (1993) documented that art was created for the purpose of cultural understanding. Brown & Korzenik’s (1993) definition was, “Art making organized around issues of community, group socialization, and intergroup relations” (p. 179). This could lead to a clearer and deeper appreciation of all types of culture (Freedman, 2003b).

**Art Making as a Study Skill**

Brown & Korzenik’s (1993) suggest this category focuses on art making as a tool for children’s learning of other subjects. Similar to the term that Brown & Korzenik’s (1993) call “Art Making as Study Skill,” Walker (2001) termed “Big Ideas.” Walker’s Big Ideas concept extends beyond the comprehensive approach, with its art history, aesthetics, and art criticism, taking more of an interdisciplinary focus. Originating from the TETAC project, the concept of the big idea method is based on the belief that students, like professional artists, conceptualize their art making from a larger conceptual framework which can inform the culture as a whole (Stewart & Walker, 2005). The final goal is not to create professional artists, but to help art making in the classroom be more meaningful to everyday life.

**A Cognitive Approach to Art Making**

systems of representation, their presence can be justified in terms of the cognitive abilities they nurture” (p. 155). Brown & Korzenik (1993) confirm this concept but term it “Disciplinarian approach.” Their definition states, “Art making to help the child develop intelligence, exercise perception, judgment and imagination” (Brown & Korzenik, 1993 p. 121). Efland, (2002) states, “A work of art is an expression of the artist’s vision made possible by the actions of his or her imagination” (p. 164). Therefore, the act of making art should be supported and required in educational environments. The following identifies two current cognitive approaches to art making which are scientific rationalism and a constructivist perspective through Big Ideas.

Siegesmund (1998) references Efland (1990b) when terming scientific rationalism as one of the three main art educational traditions in art education history. “Scientific rationalists seek an empirical base for art education. They claim art education is a discipline with distinct methods for conducting inquiry and forming judgments”(Siegesmund, 1998 p. 204). In other words, art making is taught because there is relevant content in the making which students need to learn. Siegesmund (1998) claims that Elliot Eisner represents a scientific rationalist tradition building off of the Gestalt psychology of Rudolf Arnheim, aesthetic theory of Susanne Langer and the experiential philosophy of John Dewey. Siegesmund (1998) supports and carries on this scientific rationalist tradition saying that, “unless art education is perceived as providing a body of knowledge worth knowing, it will remain marginalized”(p.209).

Walker (2001) developed a curriculum approach called “Big Ideas.” The “Big Ideas” concept extends beyond the comprehensive approach, with art history, aesthetics
and art criticism, but takes more of an interdisciplinary focus. Originating from the TETAC project, the concept of the big idea method is based on the belief that students like professional artists conceptualize their art making from a larger conceptual framework which can inform the culture as a whole (Stewart & Walker, 2005).

**Teacher Beliefs and Intercultural Art Education**

Although there is tremendous potential in connecting teacher belief research and art education curriculum which focuses on socio-cultural content, little has been written to connect these two areas. Tatto (1996) is a rare exception. One issue is the lack of clarity in defining terminology. Many teachers may be more familiar with the term *multicultural education*. Davenport (2000) points out terminology confusion: “Recent literature has exposed educators’ confusion about various lenses through which we consider the intersection of education and culture” (p. 361). Her article goes into detail explaining specific types of education which focus on culture and place these different types under a larger umbrella, which she refers to as *intercultural education*.

Davenport’s (2000) term intercultural education involves a framework of three models, (a) community-based, (b) global, and (c) multicultural education, which is then extended further to address subtype approaches of community-based, global and multicultural education curriculum. Art educator Roger Tomhave (1992) clarified and defined six different approaches to teaching socio-cultural content in the art classroom. This present research will overlay Davenport’s (2000) and Tomhave’s (1992) theories to depict a comprehensive image of intercultural art education curriculum.
This research will not adopt a comparative-international category because it is not so much a curriculum as a comparative lens by which administrators can compare educational systems from other countries. Davenport (2000) herself states this concept “focuses on the big picture, discerning patterns and trends in education worldwide, rather than developing curriculum for particular cultural contexts” (p. 362). Therefore, for this research study the comparative-international approach would not be relevant.

Community-Based Education


Culturally relevant education has strong connections with community-based education in art education (Condgon, 2004; Davenport, 2000). Community-based education has two main objectives which it works to achieve: (a) cultural understanding of one’s community and (b) cultural appreciation of one’s community. Art educators who have developed community-based curriculum have a well established history (Blandy, 1993; Clark & Zimmerman, 2000; Condgon, 2004; Davenport, 2000; Francis,
Cultural separatism.

In his discussion of intercultural education, Tomhave (1992) identified cultural separatism as a possible category. This form entails separating a specific culture from the general population. This is often seen in the development of schools which focus on maintaining the traditions and beliefs of a given culture. Cultural separatism is a relevant issue for community-based curriculum because if a school is attempting to keep their cultural value from outside infiltration, then they have chosen their own cultural values and beliefs as their curriculum. This is an extreme version of community-based education, but none the less fits the definition.

Cultural understanding.

Obviously not all educators who advocate community-based curriculum are cultural separatists. Many art educators choose community-based curriculum because they believe starting with the students’ community creates intrinsic motivation for learning. Another of Tomhave’s (1992) categories, *cultural understanding*, addresses the accommodation of the concerns of various ethnic groups and the gaining of an appreciation, respect, and acceptance of diverse cultural contributions to the human condition (p. 53). Among his descriptors of cultural understanding, Tomhave includes the term *appreciation* which, depending upon one’s interpretation, may go beyond understanding. The view of the present researcher is that appreciation does extend
beyond understanding, although others may consider understanding and appreciation as being synonymous.
Global Education

Davenport (2000) states that global education “focuses on the socialization of students into international citizenry, or as a process of acquiring appreciation of human diversity and cultures, and of the complexities of the international system” (p. 364). Global education can be placed in the middle of the continuum because it focuses on all students in the classroom. Global education, like community-based education, has the objectives of cultural understanding and cultural appreciation, but while a community-based approach is focused on understanding and appreciating their own community traditions and values, global education aims toward understanding and appreciating cultures other than one’s own.
Within the spectrum of global education, art education literature identifies categories that are consistent with the socialization of students into what Davenport (2000) recognizes as international citizenry. Tomhave (1992), for instance, provides the following categories:

1. **Cross-Cultural.** Cross-cultural education educational objectives include cultural understanding and cultural appreciation of cultures different than one’s own.

2. **Acculturation/Assimilation.** Tomhave (1992) notes cultural acculturation and assimilation as one category. He defines acculturation / assimilation as “generated for mainstreaming the ‘other’ students into mainstream society. The goal is to develop a democratic society that could be governed by a majority vote of rational, enlightened citizenry who have equal access to achievement within society” (Tomhave, 1992 p. 50). WordIQ Dictionary defines acculturation as “Having one’s foreign culture added and mixed with that of his or her already existing one acquired since birth” (www.WordIQ.com). Webster’s New World College Dictionary (2001) defines assimilation as, “the cultural absorption of a minority group into the main cultural body.” These definitions suggest the two categories should be separated.
Multicultural Education

Davenport (2000) describes two objectives for multicultural education: (a) It addresses the needs of students representing minority cultures, traditionally underserved by the educational system; and (b) it works to foster tolerance and appreciation for diversity among all students, especially students representative of the dominant culture. Multicultural education is focused on minorities rather than the majority population.

Tomhave (1992) confirms Davenport’s (2000) multicultural definition, which he terms social reconstructionist education and defines as “concerned not only with ethnic and racial perspectives but also with matters of Eurocentrism, sexism, and classism. This
approach challenges social structural inequities, promotes cultural diversity, and advocates that students take action against social structural inequities” (Collins & Sandell, 1992).

Teacher Beliefs and Visual Culture Art Education

Visual culture art education is new and still developing. In defining visual culture art education, Duncum (2001a) refers to “a society of the spectacle” (p. 106). Duncum (2001a) states, “The society of the spectacle refers to our tendency to turn our attitudes, beliefs, and values into images” (p. 106). Duncum has made the vital connection that our images are connected to the artist’s beliefs; therefore, analyzing the image’s message and beliefs in a critical way represents pedagogical relevance for art education. Visual culture art education moves in the direction of teacher belief research in that visual culture art education connects beliefs, values, and attitudes to artworks and art making.

According to James Elkins (2003) visual culture, influenced by cultural studies, came to America from Britain in the 1980s. Much younger than cultural studies, visual culture did not appear as an academic discipline until the 1990s. Again, according to Elkins, visual culture draws on nearly two dozen fields in the humanities and is based in the theoretical writings of Barthes, Benjamin, Foucault, and Lacan (2003, pp. 25 & 33).

It is somewhat difficult to pin down an exact definition of visual culture from visual culture art educators. Paul Duncum tentatively adopts Malcolm Barnard’s definition of visual culture. Barnard defined visual culture as, “Anything visual produced, interpreted or created by humans, which has, or is given, functional, communicative and/or aesthetic intent” (Duncum, 2000, p. 23). At the same time
Duncum adopts Barnard’s definition, he declares Barnard’s visual culture definition to be too expansive, and thus has no boundaries of exclusion. To narrow this definition for art educators, Duncum suggests a curriculum focusing on “a society of the spectacle” versus a “society of surveillance” (2001a, p. 106). The following discussion considers key factors, which have helped bring about visual culture art education.

**Socio-cultural shift in art education.**

The early 1960s Penn State Conferences has often been cited as the influence on the development of a knowledge-based curriculum, but scholars also pushed for a more socio-cultural direction during the late 1950s early 1960s. In *A Foundation for Art Education* (1955), Manuel Barkan drew heavily on concepts from psychology and social science (Efland, 1990b, p. 236). Barkan was influence by John Dewey and wanted students to interact with the social environment, while Herbert Read and Victor Lowenfeld wanted to shelter students from corrupt influence of the social environment (Efland, 1990b). Barkan said, “We still need, however, a more basic understanding of experience in the arts. Such an understanding must incorporate current concepts from psychology, sociology, anthropology, cultural history, philosophy, and the arts” (1955, p. vi).

At the 1965 Penn State Conference, Barkan assembled a diverse group of over fifty scholars, including artist Allen Kaprow, critic Harold Rosenberg, psychologist Dale Harris, and sociologist Melvin Tumin. It was a diverse and yet credible gathering of scholars of the time. Barkan wanted to use these different academic perspectives to construct a more structured pedagogy for the arts based on a science model. At that same
conference, art educator June King McFee gave a speech placing an emphasis on the socio-cultural perspective in art education influenced from anthropology. McFee understood cultural human diversity to be complex and thus required further study to create a pedagogy incorporating cultural diversity. Graeme Chalmers remarks, “McFee has worked hard to help art educators see their field in terms of anthropological and sociological principles” (1990, p. 196).

McFee’s unique desire for art education to evaluate individual culture with students has its influence in cognitive psychology and anthropology. McFee’s (1957) dissertation, *Psychological Implications of Individual Differences in the Perception-Delineation Process*, researched how people see and process information differently. Influences in both cognitive psychology and anthropology would culminate into her 1961 book, *Preparing for Art*.

In reading the *Seminar in Art Education for Research and Curriculum Development* (1966), a conference held at Pennsylvania State University in 1965, it seems clear that June King McFee had clearly developed a contrasting view of art education practice than was being suggested by other leading art educators at the time. McFee stated, “Recent research in psychology and anthropology indicates that we must consider many factors to understand the complex process of a child as he responds to his environment…” (1961, p. 37). She adopted the anthropological definition of art which states, “Cultural anthropologists tend to identify most examples of visual symbolism and embellishment as art” (McFee, 1966 p. 122). In adopting this larger definition of art she argued:
Art has varying functions in the lives of mankind which need to be considered as we develop curriculum in art for students from various subcultures as they in turn are affected by social change. We need other concepts and criteria for evaluating all the visual arts, fine, commercial, applied, to identify and evaluate their quality—integrity, impact, improvisation, organization or design quality and use of media. (1966, p. 123)

Instead of simplifying a curriculum into universal attributes, McFee maintained, “A symbol may have many meanings depending upon its variation. People with different backgrounds bring somewhat different sets of concepts into play when seeing it” (McFee 1966, p. 123). Her concern was that art education needed to be aware of the cultural diversity within their classroom. She advocated that the United States was in a tremendous time of change, and that to teach art, teachers would need to increase understanding of the many cultures and subcultures within the classroom and in the society at large. She advocated placing the student in more a central role of learning, starting with understanding of self. She also advocated for teaching students a broader range of art; art that was more a part of the child’s everyday experience. McFee argued that students were being disconnected from art, not because they did not have art all around their life world, but because Modernism had defined art so narrowly. McFee continues:

If we believe that art is to be produced and enjoyed only by an aesthetic and intellectual elite or subculture of our total society, then we might have reason for believing in social isolation of the arts. If, on the other hand, we consider art as a phenomenon of human behavior to be found wherever…then art is related in some degree to all of society. If we accept this definition we, as art educators, become involved in problems of society and social change; we recognize art as one of the major communication systems of social interaction and of society in transition…. Teachers who attempt this will need to be prepared to understand cultural, economic, and personal differences among groups of children so that the
initial comparisons are with things that have meaning to them. (1966, pp. 122 & 134)

But in 1957, as Sputnik went into space, national education objectives shifted, placing pressure on art education leaders to justify their existence. So art modeled itself after science as Manuel Barkan followed the lead of Jerome Bruner. The socio-cultural direction in art education was not yet ready to be fully realized, but McFee’s socio-cultural focus would inspire many others later to take up the socio-cultural shift through multiculturalism and visual culture.

**Socio-political shift in art education.**

Kerry Freedman states, “To the 1930s, American public school art responded to various issues of labor selection, urbanization, and socialization” (1987, p. 17). She continues, “But as World War II came, art education shifted from a local focus to international politics.”

“But during the war art education was seen as a means of preserving and defending democracy and, indeed, western civilization itself” (Efland 1990b, p. 230). After the war effort, Herbert Read, Trever Thomas and Edwin Ziegfeld worked to establish a peace movement in art education (Efland, 1990b). Politics were thus intertwined in art education, but were not really challenged or analyzed as such. June King McFee, who is credited with influencing the art education field toward a cultural direction, also had an interest in critical pedagogy. Kevin Tavin (2003a) has explained critical pedagogy as “primarily concerned with challenging individuals to investigate, understand, and intervene in the matrix of connections between schooling, ideology, power, and culture”
Influenced by cognitive science and anthropology, McFee’s pedagogical perspective developed as she researched how people are different physically and culturally. McFee (1966) argued, “We need to tell them that package design is talking to them when they go through a grocery store—that when a television advertisement or program comes on, they are being communicated to through all kinds of subtle visual cues” (p. 137). Concerning the socio-political shift in art education, McFee would be a transitional figure. She called for art education to engage popular culture, while writers such as Vincent Lanier would write influential articles calling for art education to instigate social change. Multicultural education was introduced to general education by Henry Giroux in the late 1970s and early 1980s, while Graeme Chalmers began multicultural art education soon after. Graeme Chalmers (1974) wrote that June King McFee, Bernard Forman, Eugene Grigsby, and Vincent Lanier were among the few art educators who realized “social values inherent in the art experience are largely overlooked” in art education (p. 21).

Developing a Ph.D. program at the University of Oregon in 1969, Chalmers stated that he was influenced by McFee and Vincent Lanier. In the 1974 Journal of Art Education, Chalmers wrote the article, A Cultural Foundation for Art Education in the Arts. In writing that article, he looked for older references that confirmed a socio-political component in his multicultural approach to art education. Some of the earliest
references he cited were McFee’s 1961 *Preparing for Art* book and Lanier’s 1969 article, *The Teaching of Art as Social Revolution*, as well as Edmund Feldman’s 1953 dissertation, *Art and Democratic Culture*. Chalmers, being a student of McFee and Lanier, would be influenced by both these art educators. He thus advocated for social change in his multicultural art education writings. “Students need to see art as having a communicative role by which it helps maintain, perpetuate, and change culture. They need to be helped to realize that they themselves, as well as the spokesmen for social institutions, criticize art in terms of their own needs” (Chalmers, 1974, p. 22).

To better understand the evolution of critical pedagogy within art education, a position eventually adopted by visual culture art educators, it is important to take into account how society has been differently theorized. Art educator Paul Duncum (1987) identifies four key social theories: (a) liberal humanism, (b) liberal pluralism with a democratic perspective, (c) liberal pluralism with a critical perspective, and (d) neo-Marxism. Duncum’s article, “A Review of Proposals for Studying the Popular Arts”, also sheds light on many early art educators who used critical pedagogy in their teaching.

Duncum states Liberal Humanism “studied popular culture as part of a moral agenda…[and] is a way of demonstrating what is wrong with popular culture” (Duncum, 1987, pp. 6-7). People such as Edmund Feldman (1982) and Dan Nadaner (1984) exemplify this position. Liberal Pluralism with a democratic perspective “argues for cultural democracy without explicit value-laden preconceptions” (Duncum, 1987, p. 6). Duncum cites Graeme Chalmers (1974) and Laura Chapman (1978) as its leading examples. Liberal Pluralism with a critical perspective “assumes that power resides with
elites which, while they allow some participation … extend enormous influence over people’s lives” (Duncum, 1987, p. 9). Duncum identifies Vincent Lanier (1975) and Jan Jagodzinski (1983) as leading examples. Finally, Duncum explains that neo-Marxist theory assumes society is essentially about conflict as found in social structures related to class and economics. Neo-Marxism, concerned with social reconstruction, resides in a critical position located outside dominant social institutions, including schools and cultural production (1987, p. 10). Duncum categorizes art educators such as Landon E. Beyer (1977), Robert Bersson (1981), and Duncum (1987) himself, as examples. Recognizing the influence of neo-Marxist theory in art education is significant as leading visual culture art education scholars such as Duncum, Tavin and Freedman are a part of this camp. Further, since the late 1970s, other art education scholars have adopted this view as well.

**Technology.**

Technology has shrunk the world to a global village, bringing about the visual age. Visual culture art education advocates recognize how present day technology has revolutionized communication and culture. Duncum states, “We appear to be entering a new phase of human relatedness. New social formations are developing, and massively disruptive new technologies are appearing on the horizon” (2001b p. 118).

It is our increasing ability to distribute images through mass media that has changed society’s sense of visuality. W.J.T. Mitchell (2002) called this phenomenon the *pictorial turn*. Duncum (1999) continues, “A concern for everyday aesthetics arises from the societal turn towards the cultural and the simultaneous turn of the cultural towards the
visual. These simultaneous shifts lie at the heart of cultural postmodernism” (p. 295).
Rifkin similarly says, “A new human archetype is being born. [They] think more in terms of images than words” (2000, p. 186).

Technology such as the internet gives people access to a plethora of images whenever they want them, allowing mass crosspollination of culture never before possible. “Globally produced images circulate in an electric informational hyperspace, and interactive multi-media is set to become the basis of a new information economy” (Duncum, 1997, p. 72). As images invade our spaces, a need to understand the phenomena becomes more urgent.

**VCAE themes.**

In analyzing the writings of Freedman, Duncum, and Tavin about VCAE, I have identified the following themes: (a) trans-disciplinary, (b) new media, (c) popular culture, (d) visual literacy, (e) image contextualization, (f) situated knowledge, and (g) art and power.

**Trans-disciplinary.**

Similar to terms like *interdisciplinary* or *cross-disciplinary*, trans-disciplinary brings up the fact that VCAE is interested in gathering knowledge from many different and diverse disciplines.
**Teaching new media and popular culture.**

Duncum clearly advocates teaching popular culture in art education. One reason for his stated position is that new media has pushed its way into our world, not through the fine art world, but through popular media found on television, the internet and movies, transforming art in many ways. Duncum (1999) believes popular culture images derived from every day experiences provide a more significant experience for students than that of high art. He states, “Studying an advertisement for Coke as a strategy of corporate capitalism is a long way from contemplating Monet as the insight of an individual sensibility” (Duncum, 2003, p. 20). Freeman & Wood (1999) also comment:

> Students may also feel more comfortable interpreting meaning from popular culture images than fine art because they usually have greater experience with the content of the images. If this is the case, curriculum should include ways in which students can interpret fine art through association, and build on their previous knowledge about popular culture. (p. 140)

If art education is to relate to students, shifting the curriculum toward familiar images becomes key.

**Visual literacy.**

The ability to read visual images equips students to critically think in an image-saturated culture. Duncum (1997) states, “We are saturated by visual images just as we are saturated by language, and for art education to engage seriously with students’ own cultural preferences, a broad semiotic conception of visual images is necessary” (p. 69). Duncum also commented, “It is the curious eye we need to develop, not only in our students but as informing principles for
our field” (2001a, p. 110), and, “Most young people have little or no knowledge of how images form part of social pressures and political processes” (2002, p. 1).

In using a music video clip of Madonna for an example to be studied in the classroom, Duncum mentions that the video has “dramatic and contradictory images, a rich layering of symbols and references to art as well as lyrics, when taken together, are both mesmerizing and challenging to meaningful communication” (2003, p. 20). He mentions that the class would then deconstruct the images through questions such as:

What does the video mean? What symbols did they see and where they thought the ideas came from. The advantage of this approach is that it starts from and deals directly with the cultural sites with which students are engaged as part of their daily lives. (Duncum, 2003, p. 20)

Duncum’s choice to analyze a Madonna video is a good example of how VCAE supporters teach visual literacy skill development through popular culture.

**Image contextualization.**

An additional theme found in VCAE writing is image contextualization. Art education practices of the past, assuming a Modernist perspective, has been criticized as ignoring the context for the sake of the formal (Duncum, 1999). Contextualizing images means analyzing and interpreting artworks in their original historical or present context (Freedman, 2003a). Considering the postmodern influence in art education; knowledge is understood to be highly cultural and constructed (Efland, Stuhr, & Freedman, 1996). Thus, art education needs to not only be aware of the original meanings of an image, but also how artworks and images might be interpreted within different cultures. Freedman states:
In a real sense, contexts make art worth studying as an academic subject. Sociologists have long understood that the contexts of cultural artifacts contribute to their symbolic, attached meanings. To ignore the contextual bases of production and interpretation in curriculum presents art as less a part of human existence than it actually is. (2000a, p. 41)

Duncum agrees with art historians Norman Bryson, Keith Holly, and Michael Ann Moxey (1995) who have adapted a postmodern perspective that emphasizes contextualizing artworks. Duncum states:

It is a shift, as they see it, away from a record of aesthetic masterpieces. They seek instead a broader understanding of the cultural significance of both the original historical circumstances of artifacts and their potential meaning for today. In place of a laudatory framework, they employ a socially leveled semiotic notion of representation. Instead of limiting discussion to circumstances of production and to speculations about the alleged, extraordinary impulse that characterize artists, they seek to examine work in terms of the ongoing ‘life of culture’. Instead of seeing aesthetics as an intrinsic character of the work itself that is capable of being perceived by all human beings regardless of context, they see aesthetic value dependent upon prevailing social conditions. (2000, p. 31)

Tavin comments, “Interpretations and meanings would be articulated in specific contexts, specific historical moments, and within multiple discourses. In this sense, students knowledge is always unfolding and responding to changing historical and political conditions” (2000b, p. 38). Tavin (2002) exemplifies contextualizing images in, Engaging Advertisements: Looking for Meaning in and Through Art Education. In this writing, he presents an advertisement which he calls the “Diesel Advertisement”. After showing the advertisement to the class he asks:

Have you seen this image or any part of this image before? If so, where? What does it remind you of? What other images, sounds, and smells does it call to mind? What does this image say about the world and your experience of it? (2002, p. 42)
Tavin’s example supports visual culture art education’s interest in contextualizing images. Tavin helps the students contextually examine the origin of the images and then focuses the students on their personal interpretation of the images and whether or not they have previously encountered them. Tavin’s pedagogy distinctly contrasts with a Modernist approach, which would consider information only accessible within the artwork itself. Duncum, Tavin, and Freedman all adopt a postmodern paradigm that knowledge is constructed and thus to understand works of art they must be seen in their past and present context.

**Situated knowledge.**

The term situated knowledge has its theoretical roots in the work of cognitive scientist Lev Vygotsky (Efland, 2002). “As Vygotsky’s ideas became more widespread in the 1970s and 1980s, they began to have an impact on educational research” (Efland, 2002, p. 36). Other cognitive theorists would adapt Vygotsky’s ideas. Jerome Bruner, a constructivist, took up Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development” and greatly influenced educational theory and practice. The term *situated knowledge* was taken up by John Brown, Allan Collins, and Paul Duguid in 1989 (Efland, 1990b). Visual culture art education, through the writings of Duncum, Freedman, and Tavin, has adopted a postmodern perspective of situated knowledge.

Duncum (2000) observes, “The view that meaning is a social construct, created from discourse, and neither intrinsic nor universal is foundational for a definition of visual culture” (p. 32). Freedman further remarks:
When we study visual culture of the past, we look at it in at least two ways. One way is through our own past. That is, we look at it through our perspective of an object coming to us from the past through our interests in learning, collecting, being challenged, being entertained, and so on. The second way we look at visual culture is through the eyes of historians and other professionals who create the culture of history. (2003a, pp. 54-55)

And Tavin states,

Art education informed by and through visual culture would require a shift toward self-reflexive discourse and situated knowledge. In other words, the viewer, as well as the object (or text), becomes the center of analysis and in turn, questions and issues are determined by the cultural conditions and texture of everyday experience. (2000b, p. 38)

Situated knowledge is a consistent pedagogical theme with these three scholars. To teach visual culture in the classroom within a postmodern framework, teachers will need to help students understand knowledge as situated in reference to the context of art objects and their own personal positions.

Art and power.

In regard to power relationships as they operate through visual images, Tavin remarks:

By focusing on everyday experiences, students see how popular practices and beliefs wield power in ways that seem invisible, natural, or unproblematic. This process becomes a tool for social reconstruction by challenging and offering alternatives to traditional frameworks and processes. (2000b, p. 39)

Tavin further argues:

Of course, all forms of art education are political through commission or omission in the curriculum, through the choice of methods and materials, and for the simple fact that much of art education takes place in institutions that are designed and operated by those in power. In addition, arguments against the politics of visual culture rely on the presupposition
that other paradigms in art education are either less political or altogether apolitical. (2005, p. 112)

Duncum (1990) remarks, “Judgments of value are always subject to the political and social context in which they are made” (p. 212). He additionally recommends, “Meaning does not reside in images themselves, but in the way they are used by people in different situations” (Duncum, 1997, p. 71). And Duncum further notes, “Visual culture studies adopts a critical view of society, seeing society as structured in power relationships that are unequal and unfair” (2003, p. 22).

Freedman suggests:

This culture is rapidly shifting from text-based communications to image saturation and the fragmentation and recycling of visual culture in new combinations. These images are highly seductive and widely distributed through technology capable of reproducing sophisticated aesthetics that are intricately tied to socio-political meaning. (2001, p. 34)

Freedman summarizes, “If we view art and art education as aids to making life meaningful, as reflections of liberty, and as means through which people might pursue constructive forms of happiness, art education is a sociopolitical act” (2000b, p. 315).

**Cultural Milieu and Beliefs**

The final category conceptualized within this study concerns how a particular milieu or cultural context can influence beliefs. In this particular study it is the impact of Church of Christ theological beliefs on educational practice, both institutionally and individually, that is of interest.

In teacher belief research, Brousseau, Book, & Byers (1988) and Elbaz (1983) conceptualize teacher beliefs around the theme of “Milieu”. Milieu is explained by
Nespor (1984) as “including information about the basic setting of the classroom, relations with other teachers and administration and the political context of teaching” (p. 14).

Pajares (1992) says beliefs are instrumental in defining behavior and organizing knowledge and information. Mumby (1982) states that the earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter. Pajares (1992) confirms this view, stating, “beliefs are formed early and tend to self-perpetuate, preserving even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience” (p. 324). Religion in general and Protestant Christianity in particular are good examples of cultural belief that get passed on early in a child’s life and can eventually influence their practice as an educator.

This is confirmed by numerous educational scholars representing Christian perspectives. Kagan (1992) points out that after entering the education field, teachers continue solving instructional problems, but mainly rely on their personal beliefs and experiences which function as a filter and a foundation for new knowledge. In the context of religious beliefs, Hill (1982) similarly explains, “When a Christian becomes a professional teacher, he needs to take all that has been taught about the performance of this role and critique it from the perspective of his or her Christian belief and testimony” (p. vii).

**Church of Christ Theology**

Starting around the turn of the 19th century the Church of Christ Christian tradition, also known as the “Restoration Movement”, was the largest church body
indigenous to America (Casey & Foster, 2002; Mayer, 1961). Almost at once four distinct movements merged to become the Restoration Movement (Jorgenson, 1989; Mayer, 1961). This movement drew followers from Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist backgrounds (Baker, 2002). The main Church of Christ influence and patriarch would be Alexander Campbell (Imbler, 1992; Verkruyse, 2005). Campbell was a rationalist, deeply influenced by the British Enlightenment. Campbell read the Bible through a scientific lens, believing the Bible could be understood with scientific precision (Hughes, 1997; Imbler, 1992). This enlightenment pragmatism combined with his prolific writing and apologetically-sound preaching held together a volatile denomination that embraced separatism and restoration unity (Casey & Foster, 2002; Jorgenson, 1989; Verkruyse, 2005; Wrath, 2007).

Mayer (1961), in his classic and extensive book, *The Religious Bodies of America*, identifies the key theological issues which distinguish the Restoration Movement from any other Christian movement. First, the Church of Christ believes the Bible to be a perfect revelation from God and that it is the key to understanding faithfulness to God (Casey & Foster, 2002). The Church of Christ theology rejects all creeds created by man and only accepts that which Biblical revelation proclaims. This focus on theological purity can be heard today in a common phrase: Where the Bible speaks we speak, where the Bible lays silent we are silent (Hughes & Adrain, 1997).

Second, Church of Christ theology declares Christ to be the head of the Church and that we communicate and are lead by Him directly (Mayer, 1961). With this view
comes an independent attitude of being autonomous from other churches or hierarchical structures of leadership that are common to other denominations (Baker, 2002).

Third, Church of Christ theology teaches that the Restoration Movement is the restored church of the New Testament. This belief reveals itself in that they do not reflect on their historical roots and specifically do not teach them (Hughes & Adrian, 1997).

Fourth, separating sects or divisions in Christ’s universal church are unbiblical and unacceptable behavior (Mayer, 1961). One of the key goals of the Restoration Movement was to restore the universal church unified in one mind and heart rather than splintered into diverse sects (Wrather, 2007).

Fifth, the Church of Christ theology teaches that total body immersion is what the Bible teaches in regards to being baptized (Mayer, 1961). Emphasis on salvation is placed on the moment that the convert is obedient to Christ, following His command to be immersed in baptism and receive the Holy Spirit (Baker, 2002).

**Theology and Education**

The second theme of importance in considering a Church of Christ milieu is Church of Christ educational philosophy. Eisner (1992) says all Religious Orthodox curriculum shares, “the existence of God and the importance of God’s message in defining the content, aims, and conditions of educational practice” (p. 307). Within American education, Protestant Christianity would be an example of Religious Orthodox curriculum because of the importance of God’s message as a defining component of their educational content (Eisner, 1992; Ringenberg, 1984).
Church of Christ educational philosophy.

Influenced by his Calvinist heritage, Alexander Campbell had a rare and lofty goal for a comprehensive plan of education encompassing the family, elementary schools, colleges, and the church (Jorgenson, 1989). The Church of Christ still pursues these educational emphases today in their thirteen colleges and twelve universities. In *Models for Christian Higher Education* (1997), Hughes specifically explains some of the key principles of a Church of Christ philosophy for post-secondary education. First, Hughes identifies emphasis on the Bible as an educational text. Imbler (1992) similarly quotes Alexander Campbell as stating,

> The Bible contains more real learning than all the volumes of men. It instructs us all in our natural, moral, political, and religious relations. Though it teaches us not astronomy, medicine, chemistry, mathematics, architecture, it gives us all that knowledge which adorns and dignifies our moral nature and fits us for happiness. (p. 14)

Secondly, Hughes points to an emphasis on rational inquiry and the belief that believers should question their own traditions and presuppositions in comparison with the Biblical standard. Hughes (1997) says, “Because of their 18th century Enlightenment roots, Churches of Christ have a strong intellectual tradition and have consistently prized reason over emotion and logic over speculation and thus leading to a long tradition of church of Christ scholars in the highest most respected colleges and universities in America” (p. 405). Campbell read the Bible through a scientific lens, believing the Bible could be understood with scientific precision (Hughes, 1997; Imbler, 1992). Campbell’s goal was to study the Bible, discovering its true answer, and restore the unity of the church.
Hughes (1997) also documents a few drawbacks to the Church of Christ educational heritage, stating that they often fail to see how they themselves are products of the very history they study. Ulrich Zwingli, the Reformation theologian, in many ways stands as the spiritual influence of the Church of Christ’s historical amnesia (Hughes, 1997). Theologically, Zwingli had a reductive view of the Bible which can be paraphrased as: whatever the Bible said, he did, and whatever the Bible did not say, he taught not to participate (Garside, 1966). A major part of this reductive theology is a lack of personal history for the Restoration Movement, creating the illusion of having no founder and tracing their tradition back to the Bible itself (Hughes, 1997). Their commitment to a nondenominational tradition perpetuates their lack of teaching church history (Hughes, 1997).

Church of Christ Theology and Visual Art

The final theme of importance in dealing a Church of Christ theology and milieu is the Church of Christ theological stance on visual art. To understand the Church of Christ Restoration Movement’s stance on visual art, a discussion of the Reformation Movement, and specifically the theology of Urich Zwingli and John Calvin, is necessary. Thus, the following is offered as background to the Church of Christ’s beliefs regarding the visual arts.

Protestant Reformation theology and art.

Primarily, the chief aesthetic concern for Reformation theologians was elevating the mind and soul toward the perfection of beauty, which they conceived as experiencing
and living for Christ (Auksi, 1978; Brown, 2000). In other words, theologians had a pragmatic focus which has been specifically termed a *theological aesthetic* (Viladesau, 1999). For many Reformers, maintaining a correct relationship with this type of spiritual beauty demanded the destruction of art inside or outside the church environment (Eire, 1989; Michalski, 1993).

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century had many players which could be a focus, but this research only focuses on those few who have had a strong influence on Protestant Christians in the United States such as Martin Luther, Uriach Zwingli, and John Calvin. Generally speaking, within Protestantism at the time of the Reformation there were two basic positions one took; moderate iconoclast or extreme iconoclast.

Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli all left recognizable theological marks on present Protestant denominations in the United States, with many Protestant denominations specifically building on their views. It is then logical to suggest that theological views on the arts, and on visual art specifically, could also have lasted to this very day and are still being taught in subtle—and some not so subtle ways—within the Protestant Christian community.

**Martin Luther.**

Luther would fit into the moderate iconoclast category. Luther’s early statements revealed certain skepticism about the value of art for religious worship on the basis that he was uncomfortable supporting a lavish artistic adornment in the church, which he suggested might constitute poor Christian stewardship (Christensen, 1979). Luther stated, “I approached the task of destroying images by first tearing them out of the heart
through God’s Word and making them worthless and despised” (Christensen, p. 45). He believed it would be better to melt down those silver and gold pieces and help the poor. Only when the last needy person was cared for could they dedicate money for church 
ornaments and altars (Christensen, 1979). Luther states:

It would be much better if we did not have them at all… it should have been preached that images were nothing and that no service is done to God by erecting them; then they would have fallen of themselves… because of the abuses they give rise to, I wish they were everywhere abolished. (Christensen, p. 46)

Statements such as these had a specific agenda to stop incorrect worship, either because of direct idolatrous practices or because of those who called attention to their gifts to the church through having their family crest displayed in the church (Christensen, 1979). Often the middle class laity in Luther’s day gave money for the creation of art, believing that these purchases counted as good deeds toward heaven (Christensen, 1979). It was these church practices which generated such a strong reaction from Reformers all across Europe.

Luther, however, was unique in his position concerning art. He laid a theological foundation for the creation of an important tradition of Protestant religious art (Christensen, 1979). By 1522, “Luther had begun to outline a somewhat more positive position with respect to religious imagery” (Christensen, p. 45). This would set him apart from Zwingli, Calvin and many others who radically restricted the arts usage in the church.

Luther viewed the extremists as legalists (Christensen, 1979). He stated that just because a practice of art is misused, this does not invalidate the practice itself.
(Christensen, 1979). Luther’s basic argument was that the problem lay in the hearts of the faithful, not in the artworks themselves. Destroying pictures and sculptures will not change the hearts of man (Fleischer, Ostrem, & Peterson, 2003). Luther, nevertheless, was unwilling to condemn those who, in an orderly fashion, were destroying art in the churches (Christensen, 1979). In 1522 he stated, “If there is to be any iconoclasm it must be carried out only by duly constituted authority, not by mob violence” (Christensen, p. 49). Luther believed that the transforming power of the Word of God would show these images ineffective (Hardy, 1999). Luther stated, “Abuses must be met as abuses, not as occasions for removing that which gives offense” (Dillenberger, 1986, p. 62).

In contrast to Zwingli and others, Luther’s theological stance is that, “God has given neither commands nor prohibitions to the effect that we may or may not have images, churches, or altars. There is to be freedom of choice in everything that God has not clearly taught in the New Testament” (Christensen, pp. 50-51). Throughout his life the issue of art and the church would gradually become more positive in stature (Christensen, 1979). If art is not involved in idolatry, Luther supported it, especially music. He stated, “Images for memorial and witness…are not only to be tolerated, but for the sake of the memorial and the witness they are praiseworthy and honorable” (Christensen, p. 52). Luther’s moderate iconoclastic stance has specific relevance for this study. For Lutheran churches and colleges that bear his name and teachings, art should be given more freedom than others.
Urich Zwingli.

The same year Martin Luther posted his 95 thesis, Ulrich Zwingli became the priest at Great Minister Church in Zurich Germany (Christensen, 1979). In 1523, Zwingli published for the first time a full-scale program for the reform of the church, attacking at length current ecclesiastical practices (Garside, 1966). Zwingli was focused on promoting prayer to God (Hardy, 1999). Zwingli followed the Bible even more stringently than Martin Luther (Christensen, 1979). Zwingli would be the most extreme example of iconoclasm in the Reformation period and through Zwingli’s leadership Switzerland in the sixteenth century would become the first area in Europe where iconoclasm became a consistent policy (Eire, 1989). Luther would allow whatever the Bible specifically did not prohibit, but Zwingli, in contrast, rejected whatever the Bible specifically did not prescribe (Garside, 1966).

From his earliest days, Zwingli seemed to be musically gifted and was a pupil of the best music composers in Europe (Garside, 1966). He had a passion for music composition, and he played multiple instruments as well as taught music. It seems paradoxical that a theologian who was an avid composer and musician would demand that all arts be completely prohibited from public worship.

Particular influences on Zwingli’s iconoclasm were the slightly more conservative Andreas Bondenstein von Karlstadt and Erasmus, who looked at the issue of art and the church from outside the church context (Garside, 1966). He ultimately concluded that he needed to radically change the outward façade of church worship in order to get
Christians to reconnect to the true purpose of worshiping God which was internal and personal communion with the Lord.

Zwingli wrote more about art and its problems in the church than any other Reformation theologian (Christensen, 1979). He wrote eighteen theses on iconoclasm and the church (Garside, 1966). Zwingli states specifically that he did not have much need for the visual arts due to his bad eyesight. Garside (1966) quotes Zwingli as saying, “Images are able to delight me less since I cannot see them well” (Garside, p. 77). Zwingli said, “Images are good for nothing; wherefore such expense should be no longer wasted on images of wood and stone, but bestowed upon the living” (Garside, p. 144).

Garside (1966) discloses what was for Zwingli one of the most important and urgent reasons for the removal of images, namely that they constitute a barrier to the proper religious education. Zwingli came to the conviction that scripture alone was to be the norm for an outward authentic expression of Christianity, and he nailed the coffin on the use of the arts in the church with three particular scriptural teachings. First, art in worship is not explicitly commanded by God in either the Old or New Testament. Second, Christ instructed people to pray to God individually and in private. Third, the apostle Paul urged believers to worship God and pray to Him in their hearts (Garside, 1966). The form of worship he taught focused on a New Testament apostolic style, mainly the telling of scripture.

Zwingli was focused on a spiritual war described in the Bible as a battle of flesh and spirit. The word flesh is representing sinful human desires, but the spirit, which the Bible says is from God, can resist the earthly quagmire of the flesh. A specific way this
flesh and spirit battle worked itself out in Zwingli’s teachings was form and content (Hardy, 1999). Form and flesh are associated with sensual, sinful desires; content—the “Word” and Spirit—are associated with rejecting the sensual (Michalski, 1993). It is this complex theology which eventually turns out to represent a bias for accepting the written or spoken word over visual images (Auksi, 1978; Eire, 1989). The battle between form and content eventually became one of the assumptions controlling Zwingli’s systematic commentary on music in worship as well as his later critique of images (Garside, 1966).

**John Calvin.**

“Calvin’s organization and executive abilities have allowed him to build on the work of Zwingli” (Shelly, p. 257). Calvin focused on the glory of the one true God and how He might be known and worshipped (Hardy, 1999). Douglass (1999) states Calvin had four basic convictions: God alone is Lord, simplicity of life style, doctrine of vocation, and love of creation.

First, God alone is Lord and God alone is to be worshipped and adored, with the knowledge of God necessary for proper worship being found in Scripture (Douglas, 1999). Calvin taught that in the search for truth, humanity was entirely dependent on God's initiative in his Word and that images can only be a substitute for the Word (Hardy, 1999). It is helpful to remember Calvin’s first point because it helps explain why Protestants prioritize the printed word over the image.

Art is then placed in a negative light in Calvin’s eyes for two reasons. He believes art takes away from the adoration of God. Images draw attention downward to humanity as the focus, rather than upward in admiration to God. This in turn means
images undermine God’s self-witness and, as clearly implied in the second commandment, are wrong (Hardy, 1999). Also, Calvin believes images do not aid in Christian devotion to God (Hardy, 1999). Therefore, if art cannot be useful at all to Godly worship, there is no need for it.

Calvin’s second teaching is simplicity of lifestyle. The church and its leaders were expected to model simplicity of life in an effort to reform the broader society by caring for the poor (Douglass, 1999). Calvin said, “Those who seek in scholarship nothing more than an honored occupation with which to beguile the tedium of idleness, I would compare to those who pass their lives looking at paintings” (Benedict, 1999). This quote supports his belief in modeling a simple life as reverentially honoring to God.

Third, Calvin’s doctrine of vocation calls Christians to work faithfully in their job in the world as a shining witness. Calvin believed vocations, other than church related, could honor God. But the original sin nature caused humanity to be impaired, corrupting natural gifts and removing spiritual gifts (Eire, 1989). Calvin, therefore, considered art as corrupt as well. In Calvin’s perspective art could not be trusted and therefore was useless in worshiping God in any form.

Calvin loved creation and its beauty. He taught people to admire God’s creation, not just in its usefulness, but as a source of delight (Douglass, 1999). He asserted, “There is a ‘true’ art, but it consists only of the portrayal of sensible—not imagined—things or events, whether present or remembered. Calvin, therefore, “provides a very restricted place for the arts, and a very limited view of what they may attempt” (Hardy, 1999, p. 13). In summary, “Calvin’s notorious disinterest in the arts is based on twin
theological premises—that the arts are not interesting to those concerned for the truth as God is known in God’s Word, and that in themselves they are legitimate only within strictly defined limits” (Hardy, 1999, p. 12).

Summary.

Hughes (1997) claims that Ulrich Zwingli in many ways stands as the spiritual father of the Church of Christ denomination. Zwingli virtually banished aesthetics from the sacred domain (Garside, 1966). As earlier recognized, Zwingli came to the conviction that scripture alone was to be the norm for an outward authentic expression of Christianity and he rejected whatever the Bible specifically did not prescribe (Garside, 1966). This doctrinal view could be heard in Church of Christ theology as “Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent” (Hughes, 1997). Unfortunately, the arts in the Church of Christ places art within a Biblical area of silence. For areas where the Bible does not give much information, the Restoration Movement would avoid it or even restrict it. Thus many artists and musicians who belong to Churches of Christ congregations have to pursue their creative endeavors outside the boundaries of their church relationship (Hughes, 1997). This reductivism of art can even be seen in Church of Christ architecture, which was mandated through Campbell’s Millennial Harbinger national publication (Jorgenson, 1989).

But John Calvin has also had a deep impact on Church of Christ theology. Growing up attending a Presbyterian Calvinist church, Alexander Campbell, the main patriarch of the Restoration Movement, would be directly influenced by Calvin’s theology (Jorgenson, 1989). Hardy, (1999) states that Calvin focused on the glory of the
one true God and how He might be known and worshipped. For Calvin, the desire to please God in all actions indirectly developed a cultural emphasis on restricting individual freedoms due to fears of losing one’s salvation (Mayer, 1961). Also, Calvin’s work ethic and avoidance of indulgences is accepted by Campbell (Jorgenson, 1989).

Campbell’s gift was in speaking and writing (Verkruyse, 2005). Even in Campbell’s writing he took a strict literalism, resisting the alternative world of metaphor (Jorgenson, 1989). This philosophy of art as utility was made public in a speech at one of Campbell’s colleges. He said, “And what is art? Art is the application of science…” (Jorgenson, 1989). This quote not only references Calvin’s teachings, but reveals Campbell’s Lockean rationalism within which “art for art sake”, those things that live in the world of opinion and choice, could not be comprehended (Baker, 2002).

This does not mean that colleges and universities associated with the Church of Christ refuse to teach and nurture the aesthetic life. But aesthetics typically have been pushed outside the bounds of the church and therefore outside the sphere of the sacred. Hughes (1997) says, “Fine arts programs in colleges and universities related to Church of Christ seldom foster artistic creativity in ways that invite serious theological reflection… Churches of Christ have never had much interest in nurturing the imagination” (p. 410). Artists often find little support for their concern to integrate their passion for aesthetics within their Christian faith.
CHAPTER 3
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Qualitative Research

Within the world of academic research there are generally two main types of research: quantitative and qualitative. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), qualitative research stresses “the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (p. 13). People are socially and psychologically complex. Thus, it takes a qualitative type of research, which emphasizes how social experience is created, rather than quantitative, which emphasizes the measurement and analysis of causal relationships (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 13).

Valerie Janesick (2003) states that, “the essence of good qualitative research design turns on the use of a set of procedures that are simultaneously open-ended and rigorous and that do justice to the complexity of the social setting under study” (p. 379). This present research employs qualitative research to investigate the role of beliefs in the pedagogical practice of a single art educator who teaches at a Church of Christ Protestant Christian-affiliated University.
Case Study Research

Case studies have become one of the most common ways to generate qualitative research (Stake, 2000). Stake (1995) states that a case is a bound system drawing focused attention to itself as an object rather than a process. Stake (2000) identifies three types of case studies: (a) intrinsic, (b) instrumental, and (c) collective (p. 437). This present research has chosen an instrumental case study. Stake (1995) explains that an instrumental case study is usually chosen because the case accomplishes something other than simply understanding that particular case. To clarify, I have chosen a single art education professor as the case for my research, but it is defined as an instrumental case study because of this professor’s strong affiliation with a particularly conservative Christian university that has historically restricted the arts. Thus, through this particular case study, my research seeks to elucidate understandings regarding the relationship of teacher beliefs and art education pedagogical practices within a Christian University setting. My primary research question, “How do personal beliefs impact educational practice?” broadly reflects this focus while the following sub-questions more specifically inform the study:

1. What are the influences that contribute toward shaping a personal belief system?

What is the import of theological beliefs in a personal belief system?

What is the relationship of theological beliefs and secular beliefs in a personal belief system?
How are institutional influences adapted or rejected from a personal belief system?

What are the consequences when personal beliefs differ from institutional policy?

How do professional fields of practice influence a personal belief system?

How are personal belief systems characterized by internal contradiction and inconsistency?

What causes change in a personal belief system?

**Participant and Site Criteria**

The research for this study is based on a single art education professor. The appropriate case study needed to be highly qualified in the field of art education and able to understand and articulate important curriculum and pedagogical issues which concern this field. In choosing a strong participant to fulfill my research objectives, I utilized the following criteria.

1. The participant is a professor who has received a Ph.D. in the field of Art Education. Though many terminally degreed art education professors hold a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in Education or a Ph.D. in Art History or an MFA in studio art, I chose to interview a candidate who holds a Ph.D. in art education. My choice related to the fact that degrees outside the field of art education may have different emphases other than art teaching. This is not to say that degrees in art education would represent homogeneity, but consistency concerning the issues and theories which hold import for the field is more likely to be found in programs specifically focused on art education. My choice of a university professor also relates to the likelihood that a
practitioner at this level would be more knowledgeable and prepared to respond to issues from a theoretical perspective.

2. Since an important aspect of the study relates to theological beliefs, choosing a participant who identifies themselves as a Christian and a member of a Protestant denomination was considered essential to the study. One could not assume that being a member of the faculty at a Christian university would necessarily indicate that Christian beliefs were a part of a personal belief system.

3. The participant should be a full-time professor at the university. A full-time professor would mostly be a richer source of data than a part-time professor.

4. The participant should be responsible for teaching core art education methods courses that prepare students to receive a Bachelor of Art Education degree licensure to teach in K-12 public school settings.

5. The participant should have professional experience teaching at the K-12 public school level. Choosing a professor who has experience teaching in a public school is important in that they could relate to complex public education issues which are significant in contextualizing academic theory.

**Participant**

My participant for this qualitative case study, who we will call Susan, is a full-time associate professor of art education at a Church of Christ affiliated university. Susan double-majored as an undergraduate, receiving a Bachelors of Science in Secondary Education and a Bachelors of Arts in Art in 1990. While pursuing a graduate degree, Susan taught in the public school system. In 1995 Susan received a Masters of
Art in Art Education, and in 2001 she received a Ph.D. in Art Education. Susan has been an instructor at the Church of Christ affiliated university since 1994.

**Research Site**

Susan, the participant for this study, currently teaches at a Protestant Christian-affiliated university located in what has been informally designated as the “Bible Belt” of the Southern United States. Established in 1957, this university is evangelical (restoration movement) in nature and affiliated with the Church of Christ denomination. Academically, the university is organized with a Liberal Arts model. The university annually awards ca. 35 Bachelor Degrees and nine Master Degrees, and enrolls over 1,700 undergraduates. The university has five basic academic departments, one of which is the visual art and communication department. The visual art and communication department consists of two professors: Susan, the participant in this study, and one other professor who has a Masters of Fine Arts in graphic design. To receive a Bachelors of Arts in art education from this university, a student must acquire 130 credit hours consisting of 48 credits in art education methods, art history, and art studio.

**Data Collection**

The purpose of this research was to document and analyze the relationship of personal beliefs, including theological beliefs, and art education practice. Because beliefs are intangible and must be inferred (Pajares, 1992), a qualitative case study emphasizing many interviews, multiple documents, and selected observations offered a plausible and credible approach. As remarked, qualitative research emphasizes how social experience
is created, rather than measuring and analyzing causal relationships. It was not the intent of this research to identify causal relationships between the participant’s beliefs and art education practice, but rather to manifest possible connections between belief and practice based upon patterns of practice and belief. As research into beliefs asserts, all personal beliefs are fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies (Nisbett and Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992).

Interviews

Kvale (1996) notes that in recent decades qualitative interviews have become employed as a research method in their own right. “There is a move… toward an understanding by means of conversations with the human beings to be understood” (Kvale, p. 11). Interviews in this study are “semi-structured” (Morse & Richards, 2002). As Morse & Richards (2002) explain, a semi-structured interview, “calls for open-ended questions developed in advance, along with prepared probes” (p. 91). This style of interview allowed for freely flowing conversational dialogue and greater depth of detail (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Participant interviews were recorded phone interviews.

Michael Patton (1990) states that, “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study” (p. 169). In selecting an information-rich case, I analyzed over 150 Christian Colleges, Universities, and Bible College websites, searching for the best example that fit the participant criteria. Patton (1990) clarifies 16 types of sampling techniques, out of which I chose “Intensity Sampling” for this study. Intensity sampling, “consists of information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely but not extremely” (Patton, p. 172).
Each interview was different only in the fact that follow-up interview questions were based upon the participant’s answers to a group of focused questions. This research completed fifteen interviews, each lasting from fifteen minutes to an hour. After transcribing each interview, I reviewed the data to decide on follow-up questions that needed to be addressed in a later interview. To get a sense of the questioning procedure, below is a short list of questions that were asked over the course of many interviews and pertain to only one of many topics analyzed. This list of example questions represents the gradual data collection from epistemological beliefs, to perennialist pedagogical beliefs, to content specific art education beliefs.

- Do you believe in an absolute Truth? How do you define that?
- How do you access Truth?
- Can humans fully know reality?
- Do you think being a Christian changes your view of knowledge?
- Do you want to integrate your Christian belief into your art education teaching?
- So in your teaching are you trying to discover and educate your students on this ultimate Truth?
- But if we can’t ultimately know the Truth how can we teach it?
- Could we as human beings search for universal Truths but go about that in different cultural ways?
- What are the ways humanity can be in contact with that ultimate Truth?
- You often hear the word fundamentals of art. If I change the words absolute truths with fundamentals does that seem interchangeable to you?
- So, who cares; why do we even need art history?
- Are their fundamental Truths for Art history?
- Can you teach art history out of time order?
- Do you have any problems with the art history text books which you use or have read?
- Would you be critical of someone who did not use a text book?
- Is western art the apex of the world’s artistic expression?
- So why not just teach western modern painting to your students?
- To put that question in a different way, do you believe in a manifest destiny concept of western art?
- The question is, do you have to defend yourself against that? I know our culture today says you have to teach other cultures. Do you?
- Because we live in America we should be learning American art, right?
- What do you think of the “new art history” or the “new history”?
- In your Art and Children’s class you set aside two hours devoted to student’s art history presentations. Can you explain specifically those history presentations, and why do you do them in that course?

**Document Data**

Prior (2003) states that, “a document serves to constitute an event or phenomenon of which it is itself part” (p. 68), and that “document content is usually thought to contain insight into people’s thoughts, ideas and beliefs” (Prior, p. 122). Document analysis was especially appropriate in this study because most post-secondary education institutions and employees author specialized documents, revealing their values, beliefs, and objectives.
There were several documents collected for this research. One category was documents including books and articles that describe past and present art education practice. A second category included books and articles that explain the Church of Christ’s theological positions on education and art. A third category included explanations of Reformation and contemporary theological perspectives on art, aesthetics, and education. A fourth category relates to participant documents. This included course syllabi, articles authored by the participant, faith and philosophy of art education statements, and vita. A fifth category was the university website.

Data Analysis

Validity in Qualitative Research

The qualitative researcher focuses on socially constructed reality, searching the relationship between researcher and those being researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Qualitative researchers have historically caused controversy concerning validity in the world of research. Therefore, procedures of validity have been developed to generate trustworthiness (Stake, 2000).

Triangulation

Data Analysis

The data was organized into four main categories: (a) teaching and learning, (b) art, (c) art education, and (d) art and theology. These four categories did not change and were lenses by which data sets were analyzed. The data sets included:

- Data Set 1: Fifteen participant interviews
- Data Set 2: Documents including course syllabi, university website, participant authored articles, statements of faith and educational philosophy
- Data Set 3: Documents concerning past and present art and art education theory and practice, its philosophies and methodologies
- Data Set 4: Documents concerning past and present views of art and Protestant Christian theology, specifically, Church of Christ Christian theology and contemporary Protestant theological literature
- Data Set 5: Documents concerning past and present theories and practices of Christian education

The data was analyzed according to the four previously identified categories: (a) teaching and learning, (b) art, (c) art education, and (d) art and theology. As remarked, research into personal beliefs asserts that beliefs must be inferred (Pajares, 1992). For instance, Pajares observes that Rokeach (1968) cautions that “making inferences about individuals' underlying states, inferences fraught with difficulty because individuals are often unable or unwilling, for many reasons, to accurately represent their beliefs. For this reason, beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do…” (p. 314). To address the difficulties of identifying the participant’s personal beliefs and drawing connections to her pedagogical practice, the
researcher searched for recurring themes in the interviews as patterns of behavior that could support inferences about beliefs. These themes were analyzed with theoretical lenses, including Gutek’s (2004) five philosophical categories of education: (a) perennialism, (b) essentialism, (c) progressivism, (d) critical theory pedagogy, and (e) constructivism.

In the area of art history, an inquiry approach was identified as an appropriate lens for analyzing the participant’s practice and beliefs. Further, the participant’s knowledge of critical pedagogy provided another theoretical lens for analyzing her practices and beliefs in the art of art history through feminist, Marxism, semiotic, and psychoanalytic methodologies. In the area of art criticism two art education models, the Feldman (1996) model and a feminist model, provided a theoretical lens for analyzing the participant’s practices and beliefs. In the area of art making two approaches, a scientific rationalist approach (Siegesmund, 1998, Efland, 1990b) and a cognitive approach (Efland, 2002), served as theoretical lenses for analyzing the participant’s practices and beliefs.

Statements of belief from the participant were analyzed in the context of the above theoretical lenses, but also from the perspective of specific pedagogical practices that the participant described, were observed, or were explained in the course syllabi. Most importantly, the participant’s statements of belief were analyzed from a holistic perspective. That is, the analysis considered the participant’s remarks in regard to repetitions, contradictions, and inconsistencies.

To put the participant’s beliefs and pedagogical practices in a theological perspective, the analysis considered theological views of education, art, and aesthetics.
from the participant, the university, and the Church of Christ, (Hughes, 1997; Imbler, 1992), as well as John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli’s influences on Alexander Campbell (Casey & Foster, 2002; Garside, 1966; Jorgenson, 1989; Verkruyse, 2005; Wrather, 2007).

While educational research values teacher belief research, as previously remarked, such research admits to an inescapable dependence upon inference. Pajares (1992), for instance, observes:

> It is unavoidable that, for purposes of investigation, beliefs must be inferred. Rokeach (1968) suggested that this inference must take into account the ways that individuals give evidence of belief: belief statements, intentionality to behave in a predisposed manner, and behavior related to the belief in question. (p. 315)

The present analysis has strived to maintain sensitivity to the inferential nature of research into beliefs and to attend to the factors that Pajares recounts. That is, as explained, the participant’s statements of belief rather than being taken at face value have been considered relationally regarding classroom practices, stated intentions, institutional beliefs and pressures, and attitudes and values that exceed the educational context. Further, educational researchers in the area of teacher beliefs recommend the types of research practices that are included as part of the design of this study such as open-ended interview, observations, responses to problems, and scenarios which they argue makes for richer and more accurate analysis (Munby 1982, 1984; and Wilson, 1990, cited in Pajares, 1992).

**Researcher Bias**

Historically the *self* of the social science researcher was seen as a contaminant
needing to be sanitized out of the final text; this is, of course, impossible being that the researcher is never absent from our final written research texts (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2003). These authors continue that it is now acknowledged that critical ethnographers have a responsibility to talk about our identities and how that has influenced their research process. The researcher’s self is more inclusive than just behavior. *Self* implies being aware of how feelings and perceptions, as well as actions, are heavily influenced by our unique biographies (Roberts & McGinty, 1995, p. 119). The implication from these researchers is that I, like any other researcher, bring certain experiences and thus potential insights and biases to the completed research. But to overcome this I, like other researchers, must self-reflect and try to bring these biases to consciousness so as to overcome them. It is in fact similar to researching teacher beliefs because it also requires the teacher to bring their beliefs to consciousness in order to change their teaching.

One of my lenses that I brought to this study was that I come from an art education degree background and bring with me particular pedagogical and philosophical beliefs of art education. I was taught a Discipline Based Art Education curriculum model as an art education student. Although the participant in the research is also deeply influenced by a DBAE philosophy, my own background in this perspective most likely had an influence on why the areas of art education research in this study are art history, art criticism, and art making.

Another lens or bias that I brought to this study is that I am a professed Christian who holds Christian beliefs. Many of my theological beliefs come from the Church of
Christ tradition, being that I grew up in that particular denomination. I specifically chose my participant to be from the Church of Christ denomination. I did this knowing that Christian theologies are complicatedly different and believing that if I chose a participant who had the same denominational background it could make it easier to understand my participant’s theological statements.

A third lens I brought to this research is the fact that since working on this study I have been employed full-time at a Protestant Christian-affiliated college. This, I believe, gave me unique insight into some of the issues that my informant faced working at a Christian-affiliated institution.

This leads to my fourth lens; the researcher-informant relationship bias. I at times did identify with my informant. This study was based on one person who allowed me to probe very deep into some sensitive personal and professional beliefs. I believe the length of time the study took, as well as recoding interviews by phone, helped distance me from my informant for the better.
CHAPTER 4
ART EDUCATION PRACTICES

The main purpose for this research is to contribute to the field of art education by demonstrating a relationship between teacher beliefs and educational practice. The findings in this chapter represent an analysis of Susan’s art education practice in the areas of art history, art criticism and art making. Embedded within these three areas of art education content are beliefs concerning teaching and learning, beliefs about pedagogy, university administrative influence, and teacher/learner roles. For the sake of clarity, analysis of Susan’s teaching in relation to her Church of Christ cultural milieu is addressed in Chapter 5.

Art History

This section analyzes Susan’s beliefs and how these beliefs influence her pedagogy with art history. The study of artists and their creations through time dates back to 19th century German education (Efland, 1990b). In the field of art education, art history has taken on different levels of emphasis depending on that art educator’s theories and writings. The National Art Education Association has endorsed art history as important content for future art educators trying to receive licensure (NAEA, 2009).
The teaching of art history can take on different forms as well as a diversity of purposes (Addiss & Erickson, 1993; Chanda, 1998). Susan greatly enjoys teaching art history, so much so that it was nearly her area of study for her Ph.D. She admitted:

I am an art history geek. I love it. I love to look at those past works. In teaching a class it is not like I would do realism all these three weeks and we would move to self-expression, I think we would go back and forth a little bit because they are intertwined. And then beyond that looking at what is going on around them; understanding context. Understanding what has gone on before. What has gone on now and what symbols and what metaphors and things you can use to convey this idea and affectively take it to another layer.

Susan teaches two art history courses, but this research specifically analyzes her art education methods courses which are, in part, designed to prepare future art teachers to teach art history content to k-12 students. Susan designed the art education teacher licensure program, which has three art education method courses: Art and Children, Teaching Art to Adolescence, and Art Theory and Criticism. Art history content is presented in some form within all three of these method courses. This research does not consider the two art history courses which Susan teaches outside of art education.

The Art and Children syllabus (2008) states that its goals are “to prepare the general elementary classroom teacher and future art educator to teach art to their students and to provide a foundation of knowledge and ideas toward this end.” This same syllabus reveals that art history content is given two class periods of time throughout the semester. Students are given an art history assignment in which they must work outside of class, researching and preparing to teach their findings to the rest of the class near the conclusion of the semester.
The *Art for Adolescence* syllabus (2008) states that this course “presents concepts and strategies for teaching in the secondary art classroom and addresses current art education and teaching practices for a diverse student population.” This class devotes an entire class period, one hour and twenty-five minutes, to discussing issues and concepts about teaching art history. Similar to the *Art and Children* class, students are given a history research assignment which is then presented to the class at the end of the semester.

Susan’s third art education method course is *Art Theory and Criticism*. According to her syllabus (2008) this course “deals with explorations in criticism and the theories that have shaped and/or responded to Modern and Post-Modern art.” This class immerses the students into the world of art history from beginning to end. Art history content is central even though this course does not claim to be an art history course; it deals with artists, art movements, and the philosophical issues that art brings to light. This course would seem to compensate for the lack of art history content taught in the other two art education method courses.

**Theme: University Administrative Influence on Art History Content**

Susan’s approach to teaching art history has been influenced by the administration’s push for a campus-wide plan implementing critical thinking objectives into campus courses. This inquiry purpose for teaching art history has been endorsed and reinforced by university administrative policies in conjunction with regional accreditation. Susan explained her university’s push for improved critical thinking skills through writing, stating:
As part of the university we have a QEP Quality Enhancement Plan. The university decides what they want to work on in terms of their quality enhancement plan. For our university it was critical thinking through writing. There are certain grants and fellowships that a professor can apply for to improve critical thinking through writing in those courses. There are two levels.

The university has chosen to focus on critical thinking as a part of their quality enhancement plan. According to Susan, each professor, in trying to comply, has two options for integrating critical thinking into their course structure. She explained the first option, saying:

You can either do a critical thinking intensive class. That means you become a faculty fellow, receiving a course load reduction. I received one of these fellowships for the *Art and Adolescence* class. You do certain other things like workshops. You are still teaching your own classes but you get together with other faculty fellows and do presentations, faculty development type things…it really was time consuming with a lot of the outside test grading, critical thinking test grading, collaborative test grading sessions…

Susan then continued, explaining the second choice:

The other way to do it is just developing a critical thinking class. These are typically classes that professors believe they have been teaching critical thinking all along. They are also given some different criteria. We help out with grading some critical thinking tests. They reflect about how to consciously shape one’s class around those critical thinking types of aspects. So, for instance, I am teaching the *Art Theory and Criticism* course again it easily could have been defined as a critical thinking course but I chose not to have it identified that way because it really was time consuming…I just did not have the time this time around.
“Is the Art and Children course set up as a critical thinking course?” I asked. She responded, saying:

I believe it could be critical thinking intensive even though it may not be categorized that way by the university. I think it would be easy to identify that class as a critical thinking course because they have to make connections and even those students who are not typically used to art making I think it is a revelation to some of them.

University policy along with regional accreditation played an influential role in shaping Susan’s art history content, moving its objectives even more toward critical thinking than it had been over the years. Susan’s Art and Adolescence course was administratively identified as “critical thinking intensive,” earning her a campus fellowship. Susan acknowledged that both her Art and Children and Art Theory and Criticism courses could easily be identified as meeting the critical thinking goals, but she did not push to have them identified that way due to the extensive time involved.

**Theme: Inquiry Art History Approach**

This section examines Susan’s purpose of teaching art history as a way to develop inquiry skills. Burbules & Berk (1999) state, “The prime tools of critical thinking are the skills of formal and informal logic, conceptual analysis, and epistemology. The primary preoccupation of critical thinking is to supplant sloppy or distorted thinking with thinking based upon reliable procedures of inquiry” (Burbules & Berk, 1999, retrieved May 12, 2010). Literature discussing an inquiry approach to teaching art history is sparse in our field. Erickson (1983), Addiss and Erickson (1993), and Chanda (1998) are the exceptions, with strong support for approaching art history as a process of inquiry rather
one of recall and knowledge reproduction. George Geahigan is also worth noting for his many writings on critical inquiry (1980, 1998b, 1998c).

In her art education method courses Susan implements two different types of inquiry-based art history approaches: (a) critical thinking and (b) critical pedagogy. The art history assignment given in the *Art and Children* course reveals critical thinking and inquiry-based teaching. Susan explained:

For the art history presentations there are several different things I have them bring in. They have to bring in a little bit of the context of the period. They have to talk a little bit about how this art movement moved out of what was happening around it. Then they have to explore different artists and show examples of the work that they did. They also have to look at other disciplines and what was going on. So I give them choices of what is going on in fashion, film, literature, music and they must bring in two or three of those into their presentations. So they have a little bit of introduction with the context. They have to bring in what specifically was happening in history that spurred on this movement. It depends on the movement but I ask them to research 2-D, 3-D and architecture of that art movement so they can really see what was really going on around it. Then they have to present an idea of how they would use this information in an art class. It is not a specific lesson plan but they what a lesson surrounding this movement might look like in an art lesson. And then I have them bring in two other disciplines besides art.

The critical thinking component of this assignment is found in the students’ interdisciplinary research, which makes connections between fields of knowledge as well as connections to the time period.

The second inquiry approach Susan employs in teaching students about art history methodology emphasizes critical theory pedagogy. “Critical theory can defined as a complex set of working assumptions about society, education, and schooling that question and analyze educational aims, institutions, curriculum, instruction, and relationships in order to raise consciousness and bring about transformative change in
society and education” (Gutek, 2004, p. 309). This assignment is given in the *Art for Adolescences* course. Susan describes this type of art history inquiry in her assignment, which involves students examining theories outside of art that have impacted contemporary art, such as feminist, gender, ecological, Marxist and semiotic theories. She remarks that her purpose is “to show them a little bit more about what is happening currently in art, and give them an opportunity to dive more deeply into these ideas.” This assignment is more fully explicated in Chapter 5 as part of the discussion about the relationship between Susan’s teaching practices and the Church of Christ’s theological beliefs and educational philosophies.

In her *Art for Adolescences* course, Susan layers art history movements with multiple philosophical theories relevant to each artist. She then asks the students to reflect on their own views of these philosophies with the goal of creating art that questions these same issues. After teaching this course with an inquiry focus for a few years, Susan reflectively realized that the student’s artwork had developed greater conceptual complexity by implementing curriculum from a critical theory pedagogical lens.

One of Richard Paul’s thirty-five dimensions of critical thought is “clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives” (Harrigan & Vincenti, 2004). Susan’s *Art for Adolescence* art history assignment is a good example of an assignment which gets students to “clarify and question beliefs, theories or perspectives.” For Susan, the catalyst for the students’ radical paradigm shift is discussing art history and art theory from multiple angles such as the feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytic, and semiotic lenses.
An interactive introduction to these different theoretical viewpoints opens up moments of discussion, enabling the students to begin to situate themselves among these different opinions.

**Theme: Implementing a New Historiography**

Susan implements a revisionist historiography, teaching students art history methodologies that critique more established views. A revisionist history is an idea that there are multiple views of history and that these versions are in fact ideological (Foner, 2002; Jenkins, 2003). Geahigan (1998b) states, “In critical inquiry there is a focus on searching and finding… as opposed to the presentation of critical findings through speech or writing” (p. 12). Chanda (1998) states, “Social art history can provide a gateway into discussions that cause students to think critically about social/cultural issues” (p. 23).

Teaching a revisionist history exposes students to multiple perspectives on an issue, ultimately positioning students in what John Dewey called a “problematic situation” (Geahigan, 1998c). Students are required to reconcile their schema to revisionist perspectives. I sought to clarify Susan’s opinion of the revisionist history when I asked, “What do you think of the ‘new art history’ or the ‘new history’?” She answered:

> When you are talking about the “new history” are you talking about the relativism and the ideas that there are histories? And even more of that critical analysis type of approach that comes with it that has come with Postmodernism. I think it has been healthy.
Susan’s belief that a revisionist history is healthy reflects her attitude that the students should be exposed to a diversity of ideas, ultimately allowing them to think for themselves.

Revisionist history came about because post-structuralism opened up new ways to critique issues of art and culture. Susan implements many of these perspectives in both her *Art and Adolescence* and *Art Theory and Criticism* courses. By exposing students to the fact that there are different interpretive theories of art history, it requires students to reconcile that history is couched in a haze of human perception and that one must take ownership to evolve one’s own understanding of art and its relevance in their lives. The following section examines Susan’s use of these perspectives in her teaching, beginning with a Marxist methodology.

Werckmeister (1991) states, “The Marxist challenge to conservative art history came to insist on a history of art as a product of society, subject to its economic conditions and political organization” (p. 84). Susan explained how she teaches Marxist methodology in her *Art for Adolescence* course, stating:

I called it a theory to practice presentation and they had to explore some type of realm of art theory. Theories that seem to be very important to art education and we looked art history through that lens. So example, one group of students looked at Marxist theory… And then they had to look at art history which was for them typically 20 and 21st century art history, through the lens of the theory. They had to choose which theory that they wanted to use first, then go back and look at how that theory affected art making. For example the student who chose the Marxist theory, in their presentation first had to introduce us to Marxist theory then focused on Diego Rivera and the Mexican Muralists. She end up bringing in the art of Diego Rivera and the Mexican muralists but could have chosen to go a number of different directions.
The Marxist methodology of art history is taught also in the Art Theory and Criticism course. In one of my observations of Susan’s Art Theory and Criticism course I watched her teach from a Marxist perspective. In my observation notes I wrote:

Susan analyzed Manet’s painting *Bar in den Folies Bergere*. Through focused questions, Susan brought up “alienation” as a common concept discussed in Marxist analysis. She asked students to relate the Marxist concept of “alienation” to Manet’s painting. The class transitioned to propaganda art and totalitarianism. Susan for the first few minutes tried to give context to such an idea. She mainly focused on Russian Art comparing Social Realism and Abstraction. She referenced the Berlin Wall in 1989. She tried to give cultural and political history of Russian propaganda art. She showed a slide of the Russian architect who built the modernist model of a utopian building. Michelle went over the four elements of Social Realist art under Stalin. She then transitioned to capitalism and art. She mentioned this section as “Art as Commodity”. She mentioned that art and commodity issue is a postmodern issue of today. She talked about Van Gogh’s paintings selling for Millions of dollars. She then asked the students, “what could be the ethical and moral issues of art and commodity?”

This observation strongly evidences Susan’s use of critical thinking in teaching art history, as well as the value she places on having students consider artworks from a critical perspective.

Susan also introduces her students to a revisionist perspective through a critique of the power and politics embedded in art history. As part of that perspective Susan uses a feminist critique of art history. Since the early 1970s, research has documented gender-related bias in many disciplines (Hagaman, 1990). Martin (1985) clarifies gender bias in academia, claiming that it can be observed in three ways: (a) exclusion of women from disciplinary subject matters, (b) distortion of the female image according to the male image of her within disciplinary confines, and (c) denial of value to the disciplines of characteristics perceived as feminine. Nochlin (1988) states, “The contrast between the welcome given to feminist production in the fields of literary history and criticism, as
well as in historical studies, and its marginalization in that of art history is striking and worthy of further analysis" (p. xvi). Feminist art historians challenge the structure of art history itself, investigating the roles of representation and ideology in gender difference (Hagaman, 1990).

In a published article Susan describes why she employs a feminist approach. She explains:

In one of those articles that I wrote, the one on aesthetics, one of my students did a Marxist versus a feminist reading of Degas “Glass of Absinthe”. I think that that is a worthwhile activity because it helps them to put the shoe on the other foot; to think of a point of view that they have not thought of before.

She states that by having her students look at art through different art methodologies, it helps them think deeper about issues, themselves, and others in new ways.

In addition to a feminist perspective of art history, Susan’s Art Theory and Criticism course provides significant time for critiquing the institution of the art museum. Susan has the students read the text, Art with a Difference: Looking at Difficult and Unfamiliar Art (Diepeveen & Laar, 2001). This text critiques the museum through a lens of power and equality. Susan’s class then takes a field trip to a local museum, critiquing specific rooms for their assumptions and biases. She explained why she uses this text:

Then we get into the book Art with a Difference by Van Laar which I really do like as far as her postmodern approach. I like that we examine the politics. We examine how the museum is set up. So we discuss those things. I like the book for that.

Susan not only teaches her students to critically analyze the art museums, but also the art history text purchased for their art history course. Susan stated:
I think it is always healthy to sit back and recognize how things get to be in an art history book. The idea of who gets to decide who is in the cannon and that one person’s view of history may not be the same as another. Where they come from and what is omitted and to look back into art history books and look what is no longer in there. And then there is the question that comes up, who is in charge and who determines what gets to be part of the cannon later. I teach those things and I want my students to have an understanding and appreciation of where they are coming from. So it is interesting to look over the years what gets chosen and what gets dropped from one addition or another…. for lack of a better word, politics in those decisions.

This critique of the politics of the art history text particularly draws students’ attention to a feminist perspective. Scholars such as Linda Nochlin (1988) have argued for decades that there are not enough women in the museums and textbooks.

This view of art history textbooks showed up when I asked Susan, “Do you have any problems with the art history textbooks which you use or have read?” She responded, saying:

I have noticed some problems with them. I took a class which I really enjoyed with Karen Keifer-Boyd called Women and Their Art. Basically it was a class about women in art history. It was a nice focus for a class; to learn about art that I have never learned about. You have probably heard about the Jansen art history text and how they historically had omitted women. And now they are making strides to be more inclusive in that way. In that women’s art history course we did a text analysis as a part of that. So that is what made me aware of those things in art history texts. We looked at instances in which these women’s art was described; how words like “charming” and “fashionable” were applied to women’s reputations and their art within these art history texts, which would not apply to men. I have noticed things like that. Having said that we use one of the biggies, we use Gardeners Art Through the Ages art history textbook. We only offer the two art history survey courses.

Susan acknowledges that she was greatly influenced by her Women and Their Art class in graduate school. Her voice has a slight ring of embarrassment as she acknowledges that the art department’s two art history survey courses use Gardner’s Art Through the Ages
textbook; the very book she has her students critique for bias in her art education method courses.

**Theme: Commitment to an Inquiry Approach**

The inquiry approach of teaching art history means that art history content is significantly reduced. Most art history courses focus on content and are primarily structured through lectures (Addiss & Erickson, 1993). Lecture-formatted teaching is very efficient in time, allowing a class period to be mainly the delivery of new content (McKeachie, 2002). A lecture format is time-efficient simply because the teacher is not expected to have interactive discourse with the students in class. In contrast to the lecture format, Susan develops her class around time-consuming discussions which require all students to interact with the issues in class. She discussed this type of teaching, saying,

> But sometimes I am just a facilitator that helps students explore their own ideas. What I really do a lot is play devil’s advocate. My goal is not to get them to a specific answer but to consider angles they have not considered before. To get them to stretch a little bit more. It is not to get them to one specific one answer but to get them to consider all the implications to what they just said. But in the end it really is a true statement that it is ultimately up to the student to decide what they believe and they need to search as many different texts and experiences to formulate that.

For Susan, art history content is equal to—maybe even secondary to—the critical thinking growth which takes place in students during her art education method courses. Structuring class for discourse ultimately reduces the amount of art history content able to be presented.
Art Criticism

Over time, the discourse of looking at art has been given the name of *art criticism*. Art criticism is a practice which has been endorsed by the National Art Education Association as one of the content areas important for future art educators to receive licensure (NAEA, 2009). This section analyzes Susan’s pedagogical practices with art criticism.

Susan teaches the techniques and theories of art criticism mainly in her *Art Theory and Criticism* course. Her course description (2008 syllabus) states, “This course deals with explorations in criticism and the theories that have shaped and/or responded to Modern and Post-Modern art.” Required of art education majors, the course is an advanced course open to all majors on campus and has two main texts: *Aesthetic: the Classical Readings* (Cooper, 1997) and *Art with a Difference* (Diepeveen & Laar, 2001).

The *Art and Children* course also includes art criticism, but not as in-depth. The syllabus states that its goals are “to prepare the general elementary classroom teacher and future art educator to teach art to their students and to provide a foundation of knowledge and ideas toward this end.” The first reading about art criticism in this course is the chapter *Art Criticism: from Classroom to Museum* from *Children and their Art: Methods for the Elementary School* (Hurwitz & Day, 2007). The second reading dealing with art criticism for this course is an article from *Art Education, Questioning the Assumptions Behind Art Criticism* (Venable, 1998). A third book which Susan utilizes is *Art for Life: Authentic Instruction in Art Education* (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005). Within the *Art
and Children course Susan allots one and a half class periods to teaching techniques of art criticism, a time period of two hours and fifteen minutes per semester.

The following section analyzes the two different models of art criticism that Susan chooses to implement in her teaching and the different beliefs that undergird these models. The first to be analyzed is the feminist model of art criticism, which evidences a Postmodernist influence that focuses on the viewer and contextual possibilities along with an emphasis on critical thinking. The second type of art criticism model to be analyzed is the Feldman model, which is Modernist in influence and heavily focuses on the art object, formal qualities, and final judgments of artistic quality.

**Theme: Feminist Model**

This section discusses Susan’s beliefs in choosing to use alternative models of art criticism, specifically her choice to use the feminist approach in addition to the more Formalist Feldman model. The feminist model of art criticism manifests three particular characteristics: (a) A focus on the viewer for the interpretation process, (b) the placing of contextual background in the foreground, and (c) the reinforcement of critical discourse in the classroom.

I asked Susan where she learned about a feminist approach to art criticism. She said:

Probably a little bit from the classes I took with Karen Keifer-Boyd and probably the Anderson text. I took a class…with Karen Keifer-Boyd called *Women and Their Art*. Basically it was a class about women in art history. It was a nice focus for a class; to learn about art that I have never learned about.
She acknowledges Tom Anderson and Melody Milbrant’s text, *Art for Life*, as useful for modeling a feminist approach to art criticism, but her main influence was Karen Keifer-Boyd, who first modeled a feminist approach to art criticism and art history in her women’s art history course.

Keifer-Boyd (2003) explains a feminist approach to art criticism in the following manner. She states, “Feminist pedagogies commonly value personal experience, process over content, emotions, non-hierarchical classrooms and assessment strategies, multiple perspectives, diversity in ways of producing knowledge, and social action” (p. 317).

Thus, the first reason Susan uses this model is that she believes the viewer of the work should be more of a participant and finds the feminist model supportive for that purpose. Susan stated:

I like the more collaborative open ended feminist model of art criticism, were you acknowledge the viewer and the baggage that the viewer brings with him or her when they approach a work of art. What may be the most comfortable way for me to approach art criticism is when the viewer is allowed; okay we acknowledged all the baggage that we bring to a work of art and that may influence the way we look at the artwork.

Susan is in agreement with other art educators who find that a feminist model of art criticism places greater emphasis on the viewer’s involvement in the interpretation process (Garber, 1990; Hagaman, 1990; Hicks, 1992; Keifer-Boyd, 2003; Sandell, 1991).

A second reason Susan uses a feminist model is because this model takes great care to keep the art’s contextual background at the forefront of the art criticism process, rather than placing an overemphasis on formal techniques and processes. She revealed this when she said:
I do believe the meaning may shift and change over time… Just like we can’t look at the Mona Lisa the same way who lived in the early fifteen hundreds. She comes with too much baggage; which has changed the meaning over time.

Susan’s reference to interpreting the *Mona Lisa* demonstrates that she is very much aware of how interpretations can change due to the culture of the viewer as well as time itself.

Susan explained that philosopher Alexander Nehamas helped her define her beliefs about the importance of context in art criticism. She stated:

One person I have adopted as my theoretical framework was a person I had to read in one of my philosophy classes, his last name was Nehamas. He came up with the idea of the postulated author. So what I like about what he says is meaning continues to develop and may shift and change over time but that we get closer and closer to the correct meaning. He is not a person who believes in Relativism; any reading is as good as any other, that sort of thing. I do believe that the meaning that is the most truthful when your critiquing a work of art, if you’re looking for meaning, is the one that makes the most sense given everything you have. Not something that is way off base. But you have to look at the thing itself. You have to look at the clues within it. He said the best meaning will be the one that answers the most questions about the work.

Here Susan reveals Alexander Nehamas as an influence of her beliefs of art criticism. She adopts Nehamas because he believes interpretive meaning continues to develop and shift over time.

This quote also reveals Susan’s adoption of rationalism. Despite her belief that art has multiple interpretations, her choice of words suggests that one best interpretation is possible. Susan’s use of the word *truthful*, as well as her use of the phrases “makes the most sense” and “we get closer and closer to the correct [emphasis added] meaning,” all reveal Susan’s belief in rationalism.
The third reason Susan uses this model is because it reinforces critical discourse in the classroom. This was made clear when Susan stated:

Well, I think the end by product in the feminist model is more coming to the explanation of the meaning… elaborative, conversational, open ended, not necessarily going to come to a final judgment on the work… it brings the viewer in more and they have a role.

Susan employs a feminist approach because it invites students into an interactive process that allows for debate and collaborative discourse.

**Theme: Feldman Model.**

This section analyzes Susan’s beliefs concerning her use of Edmund Feldman’s (1970) model of art criticism, known in art education as “The Feldman Model”. The data revealed three reasons why Susan uses the Feldman model of art criticism: (a) Susan believes it is structurally easier for students who are novices to use when analyzing art, (b) it focuses on the art object as the main variable in gathering evidence for the interpretation, and (c) it emphasizes judging the artwork’s quality and artistic merit.

Susan revealed in our many interviews that Edmund Feldman’s art criticism model is useful for her as a beginning stage for teaching art criticism because it has a simple, predicable structure. The art criticism model put forth by Edmund Feldman has been one of the most commonly used models since its beginning in the early 1970s (Cromer, 1990; Prater, 2002; Wolff & Geahigan, 1997). Susan begins teaching art criticism by using the Edmund Feldman model. She said:

I do that four-step Edmund Feldman thing, where we do description, analysis, interpretation and judgment. That is where we begin. I like the analytical linear model of art criticism, and I really see a use for it in terms of building the concrete to the abstract and bringing in issues of design.
Susan finds Feldman’s model useful as a place to begin because it is conceptually simple, enabling students to easily develop a structure in which to look at art. This same simple structure in Feldman’s model has been critiqued over the past several decades as overly simplified and heavily weighted toward the critique of the visual object rather than the sociological or historical context in which art was made or what the viewer brings to the interpretation (Cromer, 1990; Geahigan, 1999; Nadaner, 1985; Prater, 2002; Sandell, 2006). Prater (2002) critiqued Feldman’s model, calling it the art educator’s old trusty hammer which is so commonly used for every job. He continues his critique, saying, “The Feldman/Mittler method is concerned only with the intrinsic or visible aspects of artworks. It does not require any external information, or facts about the artwork that cannot be viewed in the artwork itself” (Prater, 2002, p. 13). Prater comments that Feldman’s model, being so formulaic, does not requiring prior knowledge on the part of the viewer.

Due to this extreme simplicity, students have instant accessibility to a procedure which walks them through looking at art. It is this simplicity or concreteness that draws Susan to Feldman’s model. She said, “I really see a use for it in terms of building the concrete to the abstract.” This statement reveals her deliberate choice to use Feldman’s model first because it is concrete and easy to follow in format.

The second reason Susan uses Feldman’s model is because the art object is the most important variable in the art criticism process. During one interview I repeated back to Susan what I believed she was saying: “So what I am hearing you say is that the feminist art criticism technique emphasizes both the object and viewer in a dialogue.”
She responded, “Yes”.

I further clarified, “And Feldman focuses on just the object in his criticism technique.”

She answered, “Yes, I would think it is much more object. And I am not opposed to that. I almost want, like, 60% to 70% work of art and 30% to 40% other idiosyncrasies that may come into play.” She then continued, saying:

There is perhaps one best meaning for an artwork. But you have to look at the thing itself. You have to look at the clues within it. And it is the one that makes the most sense when you are given that artwork. So to some extent meaning is inherent within the artwork.

Susan’s quote reveals her heavily weighted belief that meaning primarily comes from the art object itself. The object has historically been the central focus for art criticism in art education (Ament, 1998; Cromer, 1990).

A third reason Susan chooses to use the Feldman model is because of its emphasis on judging visual quality. Susan stated, “That Feldman model is more design based and definitely more Modernist, in the time that it spends looking at how the piece is designed and composed. And that is one of the markers or indicators for success.” Clearly she is aware that the Feldman model focuses heavily on the formal qualities found in the work and downplays the conceptual. She even identifies it as Modernist. Susan embraces this formal emphasis for the purpose of requiring students to visually give evidence for their opinions while interpreting works:

You know for the analytical [Feldman] model you have to take a stand. You have to judge the work. And they have to support that judgment, and it is harder. And I want them to have to take a stand. And I want them to come to a judgment and support it. It is important to me in art criticism, but it is also important to me in the world now days where people say, “I
am the consumer and I want to do it that way and you can’t make me”. Or they say, “I know as much about this as you do”. Even though they have been in college for two semesters and you have been in college for 12 years; that my opinion is just as valid as yours. So I want them to come to a place where they have to support that a little bit. And I do believe that the meaning that is the most truthful when your critiquing a work of art, if you’re looking for meaning, is the one that makes the most sense given everything you have. Not something that is way off-base.

Here Susan is venting about the culturally relativistic times we live in, where students increasingly believe that anything is good art and that all opinions are equal. This reflects a more rationalist worldview consistent with the Church of Christ educational philosophy discussed in the following chapter.

Art educator Candace Stout’s (1995) views of art criticism support Susan’s belief that one’s opinion in interpreting artwork must be supported by evidence when she stated:

It is essential to clarify, however, that this perspective does not imply the belief that any interpretation will do, that pure relativism is acceptable. Part of learning to be critical thinkers means understanding the difference between unsubstantiated opinion and substantiated or reasoned opinion. (p. 177)

Stout (1995) makes an important distinction which can help those who implement art criticism deal with cultural relativism. She notes that relevant intelligent opinions when analyzing art demand internal or external evidence which can be supported in the work.

We might further point out that Susan’s use of the Feldman model is to challenge students to respect not only good art, but the scholars who have studied art. Susan’s perspective thus evidences a belief in authority. This belief is further discussed in the following chapter as part of her theological values and beliefs.
Theme: Conflicting Beliefs and Art Criticism

It is important to note that Susan is consciously aware that she implements two opposing models of art criticism, both of which significantly differ from one another. This research has already established the major ways the Feldman model differs from the feminist model. Philosophically, they differ on what and who should be given authority to inform a quality interpretation. Pedagogically, they have different learning outcomes, with one emphasizing the criticism process while the other focuses on the final product. One must conclude that despite the distinct differences between these models, Susan sees a worthwhile benefit in using both.

Susan chooses to use both the feminist model and Feldman model of art criticism in her teaching. Some art education scholars view the two models as incompatible (Kiefer-Boyd, 2003; Sandell, 2006; Stout, 2000). Utilizing both models reveals conflicting pedagogical beliefs in Susan’s teaching; this is a conflict that she is not fully aware of. Susan is conflicted between allowing multiple interpretations in art criticism, while at the same time wanting to arrive at the “correct” interpretation. In analyzing the feminist and Feldman models of art criticism, this research has found them to be in conflict in two ways: (a) philosophically they disagree with what and who should have authority to inform a quality interpretation, and (b) pedagogically they have different learning outcomes, one emphasizing the criticism process while the other focuses on the final product.

Philosophically, the feminist and Feldman models of art criticism differ significantly on what and who should be given authority to inform a quality
interpretation. Susan stated that she is most comfortable when using the feminist model of art criticism in the classroom:

I like the more collaborative open ended feminist model of art criticism, were you acknowledge the viewer and the baggage that the viewer brings with him or her when they approach a work of art. What may be the most comfortable way for me to approach art criticism is when the viewer is allowed; okay we acknowledged all the baggage that we bring to a work of art and that may influence the way we look at the artwork.

Susan knows what a feminist model is, and by using the feminist model she is allowing the student to take the lead role as authority in the interpretation process. Feminist pedagogues argue for the diminishment of teacher authority in the classroom (Crabtree & Sapp, 2003). Susan was a former student of Karen Kiefer-Boyd, an art education professor who herself uses and teaches feminist art criticism. Feminist art criticism emphasizes personal experience, non-hierarchical classrooms, multiple perspectives, and diversity in ways of producing knowledge (Kiefer-Boyd, 2003; Stout, 2000). All of this adds up to a feminist art criticism approach which down plays authority in the classroom.

However, in a separate interview Susan revealed that she struggles to give up her authority position in the interpretation process:

I do think some education and aspects of it should be child centered. But children are not necessarily the best...because they are there to learn; they are not necessarily the best person to say in what way they should be educated.

Susan still believes in teacher authority, and that students come to school to learn and be mentored by teachers. Another quote gives us insight into Susan’s conflict on when to be the classroom authority and when to let the students lead. She said,

I feel like I am an odd mix, I think everybody is...I feel like sometimes I am the person who is the authority and deposits information to the brains
of the students, and is like that clean slate thing, just waiting to be written on. But sometimes I am just a facilitator that helps students explore their own ideas.

Susan revealed the tension she feels during the art criticism process; a tension between needing to be the authority for the sake of the students’ edification, and needing to be a facilitator who allows the students direct their own learning.

Susan’s current perception of students needing teacher authority in the classroom has been informed by student comments in class and on teacher evaluation forms. Frustration was shown when she said:

You know for the analytical [Feldman] model you have to take a stand. You have to judge the work. So I want them to come to a place where they have to support that a little bit. It is important to me in art criticism but it is also important to me in the world now where people say, “I am the consumer and I want to do it that way and you can’t make me.” Or they say, “I know as much about this as you do.” Even though they have been in college for two semesters and you have been in college for 12 years; that my opinion is just as valid as yours. When you receive course evaluations; it is funny to have a sophomore tell you what should and should not be the content in the classroom that you are teaching because their scope of understanding, and for them to say “this will be irrelevant in my career”; and then you say well how do you know. You don’t know that, that is why you are here.

Susan believes that the world of art, including the art education field, continues to decline in cultural respect because of America’s adoption of consumerism and cultural relativism. Even though Susan sees benefits to a feminist approach, she is conflicted in her desire to be more authoritative in the classroom because of the lack of respect by students. She often chooses to use the Feldman model for its structure and emphasis on judging artistic quality. Feldman’s basic structure and emphasis on judgment relates to Susan’s need for
teacher authority because Feldman’s model is set up like a simple equation; a logical four-step procedure which can be logically followed and analyzed.

Pedagogically, the feminist and Feldman models differ significantly on their learning outcomes; the feminist model emphasizes the criticism process while Feldman focuses on the final product. DeKock, Sleegers, & Voeten (2004) state that, “Within the aspect of learning goals, a distinction may be made between learning-product goals (goals for the acquisition of content knowledge) and learning-process goals (goals for the acquisition of metacognitive learning functions)” (p. 142). The end result for the feminist model is focused on instigating a discourse in which the students are exposed to a plurality of perspectives (Gerber, 1990; Kiefer-Boyd, 2003; Stout, 2000). In contrast, the Feldman model’s end result is on content; that is, on judging the quality and status of the artwork (Prater, 2002).

Susan explained her purpose for using the Feldman model, saying, “I think the end byproduct in the… Feldman model, the last section is Judgment. And I want them to come to a judgment and support it.” Susan reveals that she is aware that the Feldman model is focused on the end product, and in fact she wants the students to judge the work as an end product.

Susan also confirmed her use of the feminist model, explaining why she implements this model in her courses:

I like the more collaborative open ended feminist model of art criticism, were you acknowledge the viewer and the baggage that the viewer brings with him or her when they approach a work of art. What may be the most comfortable way for me to approach art criticism is when the viewer is allowed; okay we acknowledged all the baggage that we bring to a work of art and that may influence the way we look at the artwork.
A feminist art criticism values personal experience, multiple perspectives, and diversity in knowledge production (Kiefer-Boyd, 2003). Stout (2000) says that a feminist art criticism emphasizes open conversation about possibilities for mutual consideration, understanding, and respect. In the above quote Susan reveals a preference for the feminist model, which focuses on the process of discourse. She likes that the students can bring their “baggage” into the interpretation process.

Susan is aware that there are differences between the two art criticism models:

Well, I think the end by product in the Feminist model is more coming to the explanation of the meaning, where the Feldman model, the last section is Judgment. Is the work successful in what it is trying to convey? Was the artist affective in what the artist was trying to do and how so or how not? So it may be more on the end product, but the Feldman’s model, the linear model, judgment is the last step. But I have not seen judgment so much emphasized in the feminist model; it has been more looking for the meaning.

According to Susan’s interpretation of the two art criticism models, the Feldman model ends with judgment while the feminist model is about looking for meaning. The conclusion is that she is not fully aware of the irreconcilable differences between the feminist and Feldman models. This lack of awareness leads to contradictions in her pedagogy of art criticism.

**Art Making**

The creation of art is an unavoidable part of being an artist and has historically been the main content area taught in the art classroom (Brown & Korzenik, 1993). The National Art Education Association has endorsed art making as important content for
future art educators trying to receive licensure (NAEA, 2009). This section analyzes Susan’s pedagogical practices with art making.

This research is specifically analyzing the art education method courses, which are designed to prepare future professional art teachers how to teach art content to K-12 students. During the interview process I asked Susan if she does art making in all of her art education method courses. She replied, “I do it in Art Theory and Criticism as their art capstone project.” Art Theory and Criticism is an upper-level course that is open to all majors on campus. Most of the students enrolled in this course, however, are art studio majors and art education majors.

The Art and Children syllabus (2008) states that its goals are “to prepare the general elementary classroom teacher and future art educators to teach art to their students and to provide a foundation of knowledge and ideas toward this end.” The same syllabus reveals that art making projects are spread throughout the semester. The projects take up about half of the class time during the semester. The nine project titles, as outlined in the syllabus, are: texture collage, stained glass windows, color wheel and value scale, painted compositions, clay masks / glazing techniques, Styrofoam printmaking, oil pastel watercolor resists, cardboard animal sculptures, and technology collage. The students are to keep all of their finished art in a portfolio to be reviewed at the end of the course.

Susan has chosen two distinct approaches for teaching art making in her art education methods courses: scientific rationalist art making and cognitive art making. She seems to have chosen these two approaches because each serves different learning
goals for teaching art making in the two very distinct courses, *Art and Children* and *Art Theory and Criticism*

**Theme: Scientific Rationalist Art Making Approach**

Siegesmund (1998) references Efland (1990b) when terming scientific rationalism as one of the three main traditions in art education history. “Scientific rationalists seek an empirical base for art education. They claim art education is a discipline with distinct methods for conducting inquiry and forming judgments” (Siegesmund, 1998, p. 204). Siegesmund cites Discipline-based Art Education (DBAE), a specific type of art education curriculum that emerged during the 1980’s, as exhibiting scientific rationalist tendencies. DBAE curriculum advocates for a fundamental content delivered through hierarchical sequences (Clark, Day, & Greer, 1987; Delacruz & Dunn, 1996; Stankiewicz, 2000). Siegesmund further recognizes art educator Elliot Eisner as representing a scientific rationalist tradition derived from the Gestalt psychology of Rudolf Arnheim, the aesthetic theory of Susanne Langer, and the experiential philosophy of John Dewey. Siegesmund thus supports a scientific rationalist tradition and concludes that “unless art education is perceived as providing a body of knowledge worth knowing, it will remain marginalized” (p. 209).

Susan’s approach to art making aligns best with scientific rationalism. Although art education literature does not generally recognize art making in such terms, this terminology will be used in this analysis since it most accurately portrays Susan’s approach and reflects the Church of Christ educational philosophy.
Susan’s scientific rationalist approach to art making is most clearly found in her *Art and Children* course. Here she adopts a scientific rationalist approach in two ways: (a) by teaching that there are fundamentals of art making and (b) by organizing the course in a sequential manner.

During one interview Susan revealed her belief that there are fundamental aspects of art making that students must learn if they are to improve. I said, “If you can, give five of the most important things related to art making; that you would not be satisfied without those important ideas of art making being covered in your class.” Susan responded by listing the top five things which she believes students need to learn in art making: (a) understanding of composition; (b) developing rendering skills; (c) understanding of art materials, techniques and process; (d) developing a visual repertoire; and (e) developing individualized artistic expression.

Dorn, Madeja, & Sabol (2004), in their qualitative research of art teachers, students, and artists, asked what criteria they used to assess artwork. Susan’s top five criteria for art making are similar to Dorn, Madeja, & Sabol’s (2004) findings. Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan (2007), in their qualitative research of art educators, came up with eight consistent habits which they called “Studio Habits of Mind.” Four out of five of Susan’s points (understanding of art materials, techniques and process, developing rendering skills, and developing individualized artistic expression) were similar to categories which Hetland, et al. considered important to studio practice, although their terminology was somewhat different. Incidentally, Hetland, et al. also found four
additional themes of art making: (a) engage and persist, (b) reflect, (c) stretch and explore, and (d) understand the art world.

The first and most important thing Susan believes students should learn in art making is composition. Susan explained her interest in composition, saying, “If they were beginners I would want them to know good composition and point of view.” When teaching composition, the elements and principles are most likely part of that discussion, as the *Art & Children* course allocates a significant amount of time to explaining elements and principles and having the students create small art examples based on those design concepts.

Art educators are influenced by ideas and scholarship from the larger art world. The strong influence of the Bauhaus School is readily evident in art education pedagogy (Phelan, 1981). The prominence of the elements and principles of design in art textbooks also evidences this influence (Fitchner-Rathus, 2004; Lauer & Pentak, 2008; Ocvirk, Stinson, Wigg, Bone, & Cayton, 2009; Zelanski & Fisher, 2007). In their text, *Universal Principles of Design*, Lidwell, Holden, & Bulter (2003) not only support the elements and principles, but maintain that these design concepts can be backed up by natural laws, human biology, and other universal guidelines of the visual. Other art educators who support teaching the elements and principles of art would include Feldman (1970); Rush (1987); and Herberholz & Herberholz (2002). In the eighth edition of *Children and Their Art*, Hurwitz & Day (2007) state, “One function of art education is to develop a child’s awareness of design” (p. 184). They then devote an entire chapter to explaining the relevance of the elements and principles of design.
There are, however, art educators who either reject or minimize teaching the elements and principles of design, such as Forest (1984); Leeds (1986); Gude (2000); Walker (2001); Freedman (2003); and Duncum (2004). Leeds (1986) believes the elements and principles arbitrarily separate meaning making from the context of the child’s life experience by forcing an abstracted concept, such as rhythm, in the middle of process. Forest (1984) argues that visual art is not compatible to language and grammar constructs and therefore cannot be used to conceptualize hierarchies of art knowledge such as elements and principles of design. Anderson & Milbrandt (2005), in *Art for Life*, support a *contextualist* view of art making which maintains that “the meaning and worth of art can only be determined in the context in which it is made and used” (p. 140). Anderson & Milbrandt continue, stating that even though they take this contextualist position they believe that the teaching of the visual elements and principles of design have educational relevance and need not be at odds with the contextualists. They come to this conclusion because they reject Forest’s (1984) argument. Anderson & Milbrandt (2005) counter Forest (1984), stating, “If we think of artistic activity as communication, we can make an analogy with written communication: the elements are analogous to words, and the principles are analogous to sentences, or the way words are put together” (p. 140). Ultimately, there are many sides and opinions to the debate over whether the elements and principles of art are useful or appropriate to teach in art education.

As mentioned earlier, Susan supports and implements teaching the elements and principles of design in art making. In her *Art and Children* course, she usually takes half of the hour-and-a-half class time having students create art. All of these art making
events revolve around teaching students the elements and principles of design, followed by a quiz to assess their knowledge of the design concepts.

In an interview I asked Susan, “Have you ever used that phrasing, ‘fundamentals’, or ‘basic knowledge that needs to be taught’?” She responded:

Yes, I think I have, especially in regards to design. I can’t help but consider the elements and principles as I make art. For instance, if I have a classroom full of the 3306 class which is not coming from an artistic background we will discuss those things. And look at their works and say this does not have balance did you do this on purpose, and what are you trying to get across by doing that. So I may ask some questions like that. For my art majors I expect them to know it all. I expect them to know good design; why you may want to do it and why you may not want to do that. And then have a reason…to have context. I think it is important for student to know design and if they choose not to create a piece that is well designed then they will need a reason for doing it, not just laziness. So I am one of those people who believe in having that foundational background whether it is in the media or design functions.

Susan thus views knowledge of composition as foundational to her student’s development.

For Susan, the second most important concept that students need to learn in art making is to develop rendering skills. Susan stated during an interview, “I would want them to know about rendering skills.” When asked to clarify, she said, “I mean, when you are working on a two dimensional piece of paper; how to make it look 3-D. For them to see the shape and then articulate it on paper is important.”

“So drawing from life?” I asked.

Susan answered, “Right.”

Through other interviews Susan made it clear that she begins a course with drawing realistically, teaching students to mimic reality by adopting characteristics of
Renaissance art. Siegesmund (1998) states, “Reasoned perception is the application of reason to create a meaningful and developed sense of perception” (p. 209). Siegesmund further cites Martin Heidegger, Theodore Adorno, John Dewey, and Maxine Greene as advocates for reasoned perception, preserving the scientific rationalist tradition which Siegesmund supports. Susan’s use of reasoned perception in teaching rendering skills would also place her in the tradition of scientific rationalism.

The third concept that Susan wants her students to learn in art making involves materials, processes and techniques. She said:

If you try to deconstruct how you throw a pot on the wheel...there are certain things you must do. So in art you see those things happening and you can’t say I am going to throw a pot but I am not going to center my clay first. That is where students have to learn those foundational techniques. And what is going to happen if you leave a bunch of air bubbles in you pot.

Creating a wheel-thrown ceramic piece requires the artist to deal with the physical laws of nature. Susan goes further, giving an example of postmodern architecture, how formally these buildings do not follow their function, yet they can’t get away from the physics of laying a structurally sound foundation or the science of electricity or plumbing. In other words, art media is bound by the physical chemistry of its makeup and the laws of nature. Susan continued, saying:

...you absolutely have to know about materials, for instance, in order to make them work well. Da Vinci tried it with his frescos and sometimes it worked out fine and sometimes it failed miserably. He could not have done that without the fresco technique; and he would not know that his technique was ground breaking and different. So in terms of art making there are some things you have to know. There are some foundational things that we may call “truths”.
Here Susan uses “foundational” to refer to knowledge of art materials, process and techniques. Susan’s *Art and Children* syllabus demonstrates that she takes up many hours of the course to teach art media, techniques, and processes. In the class she teaches a diversity of media, including ceramics, collage, oil pastels, watercolor, cardboard, Styrofoam, printmaking, and computer-generated art, striving for a comprehensive knowledge of media. Susan’s emphasis on art media as knowable and teachable is consistent with a scientific rationalist curriculum.

The fourth key area for her art making content is developing a visual repertoire. Susan said, “I would want them to know about different visual possibilities.” She then explained why knowledge of visual possibilities is important:

> You can’t do the art making without some history and aesthetic theory. You can do it but it just may or may not be very strong. What has gone on now and what symbols and what metaphors and things you can use to convey this idea and affectively take it to another layer. And then bleeding over into popular culture and what goes on there, depending on what they want to say with their art. They may dip into those iconic images and techniques. They may dip into what they see in the news media or in fashion or whatever. They may dip into all of these different areas to convey what is meaningful to them.

Susan suggests that if artistic style is to develop, the artist will need to be exposed to other art, either high art or popular culture creations. Having a visual repertoire is important, Susan says, because it gives the artist examples of symbols and metaphors that they can potentially use in their own work. Rush (1987) confirms Susan’s belief, saying, “Discipline-based art education teaches children to understand a language of visual imagery that is common to many styles of adult art made in a variety of media” (p. 206).
The fifth key area of art making content is developing an individualized artistic expression. This is related to her fourth key area in its emphasis on the development of style. Susan links the development of an individualized artistic expression to the knowledge of media. She stated in one interview, “I would want them to know about different materials to convey.” She then explained how art media knowledge can improve artistic expression, saying:

So if I create this work with pen and ink, how is that going to work and how is that going to affect mood and viewer response as opposed to pastel. I am one of those people who believe you need to learn some of the rules; and then once you learn them and know them well then you are free to break them. But once you know what that material can or can’t do or what others say it can or can’t do then that gives you the opportunity to stretch it. Would I do this or that?

For Susan, an artist’s expression has the best chance to develop if the artist learns how to manipulate art media to the point that they understand how to bend those rules.

I then said, “Okay, I am trying to split a hair between the chemistry issues concerned with the oil lithography of printmaking or the pen and ink which I dropped my cup of water on and it smeared, versus design concepts.” Susan responded:

To me it is more of the design and composition of design concerns; knowing color theory; and knowing those basic things about balance. And with materials it is more of how these materials behave and how do you use it right and then why you would want to use it for one particular drawing or painting or whatever. This material over this material considering this is what you want to convey. So with the materials it is all most like mechanical aspects of the materials but then how it ties into what you want to express. And then beyond that I would want them to understand the role of self expression; and once you have all the rendering and you know how to say what you want to say. Then to do it in a way that is individualized, that is self expressive.
Susan’s remarks are consistent with the previous characterization of her approach to art making, continuing to suggest the implementation of scientific rationalism. That is, she expresses a belief in self-expression, but is firm that it must be supported by foundational knowledge of design and media.

Theme: Art versus Exercise.

As previously observed, Susan organizes her course content for art making in a sequential manner that mirrors scientific rationalism. Gutek (2004) explains sequencing as an essentialist pedagogical belief. He remarks, “Sequencing also means that instruction in a particular subject area is organized according to its order of complexity, abstraction, and difficulty” (p. 272). This essentialist pedagogical influence on a scientific rationalist art making approach can be observed in the art curriculum as a focus on exercises, which are sequenced to gradually progress to the creation of artwork.

Susan talked about her practice of this approach:

These are usually stronger pieces than the exercises we do in the beginning. But that is because they have the exercises behind them, they know how to use those techniques but there is room for self expression and that interpretation. So in a way how I teach studio classes is similar, where we start out learning the foundational stuff and then I give them opportunities to work in an open ended way.

I followed up on this remark, saying, “I thought I heard you say, ‘some exercises,’ but I’m not sure if you used that word”.

Susan said, “Yes I don’t use that word, but that is probably pretty accurate”.

“Would you agree there is an exercise and artwork?” I asked.
Susan answered, “Yes, but I would not to students because to them everything is art. But you could look at a room full of art and see which ones are the exercises and which ones are the art.”

“So in your mind what is the difference between an exercise and finished artwork?” I asked.

Susan then gave clear defined differences between art and exercise, stating:

For an exercise the objectives are probably a little more closed ended and specific. The parameters are a little more rigid because they are skill oriented. I want you to learn this specific skill and this is how we are going to go about it, and this is what I am going to look for when I evaluate it. With the artworks, I give them some parameters and this is what I do expect to see in your artwork but it is more, but it is more open ended. It may change and evolve as you go.

Susan continued with an example:

And then the second half of the semester we do something called artist choice assignments. Where I give them a list or open ended problems and they are open to interpret those problems. There are probably eight different things. They probably have time to do three or four of those eight. And they can choose the one theme and do it three different way or three completely different things. They are very open ended so the students have room for that interpretation. These are usually stronger pieces than the exercises we do in the beginning. But that is because they have the exercises behind them, they know how to use those techniques but there open ended so there is room for self expression and that interpretation. So in a way how I teach studio classes is similar, where we start out learning the foundational stuff and then I give them opportunities to work in an open ended way.

Susan distinguishes between exercises and artworks, and then organizes her courses along this line. The first half of the course is devoted to exercises and the second half focuses on more open-ended assignments that allow the students to create artworks.
Theme: Cognitive Approach to Art Making

Susan has adopted a cognitive approach to teaching art making in her Art Theory and Criticism course. She chooses this approach because this is an advanced junior and senior level course which emphasizes critical thinking in its learning objectives. Arthur Efland (2002) in his book, “Art and Cognition,” argues that there is a cognitive purpose for all students to make art. “Each of the arts offers unique ways of representing ideas and feelings, which cannot be matched by other systems of representation, their presence can be justified in terms of the cognitive abilities they nurture” (Efland, 2002, p. 155).

Brown & Korzenik (1993) develop a similar definition of art consistent with Efland’s (2002) approach, which is described as “art making to help the child develop intelligence, exercise perception, judgment and imagination” (p. 121). Hobbs (1993) also points out that art education at the university level does not focus enough on thinking. He states, “…students [are] encouraged to manipulate forms rather than ideas…thereby confirming and reinforcing the studio bias” (p. 103).

Susan’s teaching evidences a cognitive approach to art making in emphasizing critical thinking and dialogic feedback. Susan relates that she structures her Art Theory and Criticism art making assignments to develop higher-order thinking, requiring the students to think more critically, perceptively, and make deeper connections between their beliefs and the theories discussed in class. This position was made evident when she remarked:

So for what goes for critical thinking also goes for creativity in art making, when they start making connections. What I want my students to see is that there is a connection between the theory and the practice. And for them to be able to identify that art does not happen in a vacuum. When
you look at current art, which seems to be so weird; and the students to see that the artists work is developed from a specific theory in mind. And it is this information that informs what they do. This allows the student to see the theory and see its practice and then think about how to bring that depth, background, that conceptual aspect into their own art making. And I have probably mentioned to you that since the beginning of teaching this course I have really seen how the nature of these senior exhibits have changed now that these students are informed about these theories. The student’s art is much more cohesive and much more theoretically deep than they were before.

Susan’s final art making assignment for the Art Theory and Criticism course is open-ended, yet also structured in that the students are required to address specific theories that had been taught in the class.

Susan uses dialogic feedback with her students to nurture a deeper process of art making. The dialogic process might be considered in terms of Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development. Susan and the students work together on a task that the learner could not perform independently because of the difficulty of the task (Schunk, 2004).

This approach was made evident when Susan remarked:

There are some ideas and solutions that are cliché and obvious. You may not necessarily know the answer, but you know the student is not there yet. And it takes that brainstorming session together, that question and answer thing. I love helping students on their senior exhibit because that process is so fluid. And I will make students plan out a clearly defined syllabus, where they have to come up with twelve to fifteen different artworks. And they have to be pretty confident about the artworks they want to create. And then I tell them the complete list you just made, with all the dimensions, media and even the title, it is all subject to change. And if I have a couple of students working on their senior exhibits and we can all talk together; because if you get that many heads together it is better than one or two heads. It is exciting to see the way they critique each other’s works, and talk about each other’s works, and the way things may change and change direction. It is not just the creative process but that dialogue and that discussion and that trial and error that occurs through the creative process. So I think critique plays a pretty important role in that. In helping students see... just because students go through
making something; they could make something and it could not be creative. So it is a constant dialogue.

Susan’s teacher-student dialogic allows for intimate awareness of the student’s knowledge of their current problem. For Susan, this best takes place in one-on-one dialogue about the student’s work. Throughout the interview Susan continued to explain what she is doing through this dialogue:

And to some extent I feel the art teacher is there to help students stretch beyond were they would not normally go on their own. And I want them to verbalize and articulate what they did and why they did them and to say the work is weak in this way because if I had taken it this direction it would have been stronger. In process critiques; not just summative critiques, but formative critiques that may be group or individual as the student is working, we are constantly looking at what they are doing and if that is the idea you want to convey then how can you do it in a stronger way. And even when I think of students in their senior exhibitions when they get to choose what that they want to work with and the media they want to work with, we still get together once a week to talk about what they are doing. And I have seen students completely change direction because of those conversations. Sometimes when we get more heads in the room you come up with better ideas than if there was just one person. That constant dialoguing process making, looking, and discussing is important.

Susan then gave an example of her use of the dialogic process, explaining a time when she and a student worked through conceptualizing his senior show:

A student was now just getting started on his exhibit. He wants to work on it over the summer. And it is going to be something to do with violence, and the history of violence, and how there are some things that are not new; and how we are confronted with it. I asked him, “do you want the viewer coming away thinking “oooh Roger is scary”? What do you want them to come away with? “Well I want there to be something in there that spoke about hope,” he said. And then we started talking about audience interaction and he talked about wanting to have a piece that talked about Pilot washing his hands before the crucifixion; and how it was the ultimate cop-out. And then I said “okaaayyy”. And then we talked some more and then we got around to the idea of what is the viewer. That the viewer would, at sometime through the exhibition, they
would go through the act of washing their hands. What if you had a bowl, what if you had two towels. Then we started discussing how one towel could be clean and light and the other could be red with the red he wiped on them. So these ideas started snow balling. And the viewers’ act of washing their hands as they walk through this show. You know that kind of dialogue and that kind of thing is exciting when you see someone come up with an idea and it just builds and builds and builds until it gets to where you want it to be.

Susan, aware of the student’s current understanding of the problem, begins with a simple dialogue. She asks the student questions and then introduces new perspectives to the problem in order to help the student create a stronger artwork.

One particular challenge to teaching from a cognitive approach in art making is the fact that students are self directive, advancing their own learning, but at times the artwork that is being created is very poor and unacceptable. The challenge is to stand back and allow the students to learn for themselves through the process of art making. Susan struggles with this at times. Susan’s remarks demonstrated this internal conflict when she stated:

One of the strongest things to me about the studio experience is that you are in an environment where we are made to work in volume. Studio projects you learn more by doing. And you want them to learn that creative self expression, but you want to guide them along because as a teacher you would always want to stretch your students. You know, don’t stop there, what if you did this, how would that change the meaning.

Susan says that when it comes to studio projects, students learn by doing. But she also reveals that she views the teacher as the catalyst that gets students to stretch further. Clearly she falls somewhere in the middle. The following remarks from Susan reflect this dilemma. The first quote, earlier cited in the art criticism discussion, explains how she likes to be very involved in teaching content. She stated:
I feel like sometimes I am the person who is the authority and deposits information to the brains of the students, and is like that clean slate thing, just waiting to be written on. I feel the art teacher is there to help students stretch beyond were they would not normally go on their own.

However, this following quote reveals that Susan does respect student’s independence and that the art making process is a big part of learning:

I think the strongest education will be the type when the students take ownership. And for that to happen they need to have some input into it; students coming to their own understanding of why this is relevant. Learning should not be confined to teacher-centered instruction, with the student passively involved in the process. Rather, the student should be allowed opportunity to contribute and to make choices (and take responsibility for those choices) in his/her educative process. I think it is important that the students explore who they are and explore their belief systems and to recognize those differences.

The following discussion addresses this and other conflicts in Susan’s pedagogical approach to art making.

Conflicting Approaches to Art Making

Theme: Content

Susan constructs a hierarchic approach to knowledge that reflects a scientific rationalist view. For example, she designed the Art and Children course as a beginning-level course for art education majors as well as earlier childhood majors. Because of the student population and the level of their art knowledge, Susan emphasized fundamental media and visual design knowledge. Susan stated:

I can’t help but consider the elements and principles as I make art. For instance, if I have a classroom full of the 3306 [Art and Children] class which is not coming from an artistic background we will discuss those things. So I am one of those people who believe in having that foundational background, whether it is in the media or design functions.
Susan makes it clear that she places great emphasis on media and visual design knowledge for that class because of the student’s lack of art knowledge.

Constructivism, which also informs Susan’s practice, seems to be at odds with the assumptions of learning hierarchies. Schunk (2004) comments that skills with less-defined structures, such as creative writing, may be more difficult to develop learning hierarchies. Efland (2003) points out that visual art is an ill-structured domain of knowledge. Forest (1984) argues that visual art is not compatible to language and grammar constructs and cannot be used as a model to conceptualize hierarchies of art knowledge such as the elements and principles of design.

Susan gave a constructivist example of art making from her *Art Theory and Criticism* course. She explained the assignment, saying:

I don’t know if you have ever looked at her [Karen Kieffer-Boyd] website for that project I used for my *Art Theory and Criticism* class. It says “four inch binding unbound,” which was a book project. And I really like that metaphor. They have created a book, but the pages could be rearranged. We could add to it and adjust it. She has a website kind of devoted to that. And I have my students do a project in conjunction with that. But that notion of book is that it is still being written; all the pages are still there… and all the pages before are still there but we can rearrange them. We can add to them, we can keep building that book. It is our responsibility to keep building that book. So I kind of like that idea.

This project is constructivist because the book is always in constant creation. The book content can be re-conceptualized depending on the viewer. The emphasis is on the student’s process, not on particular art knowledge or content such as with a specific media or design concept.
Theme: Teacher Role

The second theme which reveals the conflict between a scientific rationalist approach to art making and a cognitive approach to art making is the role of the teacher in the learning process. Scientific rationalism emphasizes content knowledge, while a cognitive approach is based on a psychological view of art making as self-expression. Between these approaches to art making, the emphasis of content versus student reflexivity is distinct. In teaching art making, a scientific rationalist approach might focus on acquisition of knowledge, while, in contrast, a constructivist approach might view art making as a tool for the students’ self actualization.

The contrasting focuses of knowledge acquisition versus student reflexivity manifests itself in how Susan views and initiates her role as teacher. As Susan has previously stated:

I feel like sometimes I am the person who is the authority and deposits information to the brains of the students, and is like that clean slate thing, just waiting to be written on. I feel the art teacher is there to help students stretch beyond were they would not normally go on their own.

This quote represents a scientific rationalist epistemology, which places Susan as an authority of art making knowledge. The quote reveals that she looks at herself as the main dispenser of information. It adopts an epistemology which views knowledge as accessible and knowable.

The following quotes from Susan manifest the conflict that exists in her practice as she adopts a constructivist view that assumes active learning and knowledge construction (Efland, 2002). First Susan remarked:
I think the strongest education will be the type when the students take ownership… coming to their own understanding of why this is relevant.

She further commented:

Studio projects you learn more by doing. And you want them to learn that creative self expression, but you want to guide them along because as a teacher you would always want to stretch your students. You know, don’t stop there, what if you did this, how would that change the meaning.

Susan’s statements reveal her struggle. She wants to push her student’s technical knowledge and conceptual ideas of their art, yet at the same time she wants her students to develop their own expressive communication.

In conclusion, adopting a scientific rationalist approach and cognitive approach to art making produces dissonance in Susan’s practice, epistemologically as well as pragmatically. The following chapter considers Susan’s practice in relation to theological beliefs that inform her university as a Church of Christ educational institution and those beliefs that shape her own personal faith.
Church of Christ Beliefs and Pedagogy

Teachers work in complex bureaucracies and many organizational forces can affect the structure of the classroom environment, influencing the way teachers conceptualize their content (Nespor, 1984; Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Nespor defines milieu as “including information about the basic setting of the classroom, relations with other teachers and administration and the political context of teaching” (1984, p. 14). Sieber’s (1978) study showed that community pressure by organizations along ethnic, religious and class lines might have considerable influence on both the curricular and pedagogical practices of schools (Nespor, 1984). This final analysis focuses on the milieu that exists in Susan’s Church of Christ affiliated university and how the faith-focused beliefs impact Susan’s pedagogy.

Theme: Alexander Campbell’s Educational Legacy and Its Pedagogical Impact

Throughout American history Protestantism has upheld education as a major cultural and theological objective (Ringenberg, 1984). This was particularly emphasized by Alexander Campbell, the Church of Christ founder, in his nationally distributed Church of Christ magazine, *The Millennial Harbinger*. Through this publication in 1839, Campbell explained the educational and theological beliefs that informed and shaped his
movement, clarifying his rare and lofty goals for a comprehensive educational plan that encompassed the family, elementary schools, church, and colleges (Jorgenson, 1989).

Campbell’s four spheres of education are still being pursued today by the Church of Christ denominational movement. Richard Hughes (1997), one of the leading scholars analyzing Church of Christ beliefs and theological history, claims that there are two key principles that inform Church of Christ philosophy of post-secondary education: (a) an emphasis on the Bible as an educational text and (b) an emphasis on rational inquiry and the scientific method to guide believers in questioning their own traditions and suppositions with comparisons to a Biblical standard. Campbell’s dual educational philosophy would be a guiding rudder that would steer his twenty-five higher educational institutions through the challenging waters of American educational history.

Campbell’s first principle that informs Church of Christ philosophy of post-secondary education is an emphasis on the Bible as an educational text. The Church of Christ educational philosophy best aligns with a perennialist pedagogy. The educational theory of perennialism states that people possess and share a common nature which defines them as human beings. The Church of Christ denomination believes that all people are created by God in his image, having a common nature (Mayer, 1961). Gutek (2004) explains from a perennialist pedagogical perspective that “this common human nature… is the same at all times and in all places. Possession of this commonly shared rationality makes it possible for individuals to search for and find universal truth and live the values based on it” (p. 279). The Church of Christ denomination believes that God created all things and that He created them with logical and rational order (Mayer, 1961).
It is important to make a distinction between perennialist and essentialist pedagogies due to their similarities. Gutek (2004) states:

The essentialists argue that the school’s purpose and its curriculum is largely a product of history in that it emphasizes the skills and subjects that have contributed to human survival, productivity, and civility. Perennialists look to the metaphysical, especially to human nature, so they see the purpose of education, the role of the school, and the organization of the curriculum as coming from humanity’s enduring and universal characteristics. (p. 281)

Gutek seems to be clarifying an important difference between perennialism and essentialism, which is that essentialists adopt a more humanist argument of their universal school curriculum. Their argument for foundational knowledge is grounded by human history and has been proven through the test of time. Humanity is the standard. In contrast, the perennialist argument for universal knowledge is based upon a metaphysical influence, that there is someone or something that fits the term creator god. When one adopts Christian perennialism it implies that the God of the Bible is equated with universal knowledge. Susan views God’s universal truth as being the same as universal knowledge; they come from the same source: the Alpha and Omega God of the Bible. During an interview Susan stated:

I do believe there is an absolute Truth and I believe that Truth is God. That God created everything; God is master of the universe. I think it is an underlying current; its there… and I bring all the ideas from all courses because there are certain things in common themes, whether it literature or Bible course or your art course. What is true of God is what answers the most questions…it is a continual process, and we continue to get closer and closer to Truth. All things are not revealed to us, I don’t think. So I believe if we keep working and striving, I believe we will get closer to that Truth. That is the kind of foundation I would want to build with them. And continue to build upon it and to get closer and closer; Truth armed with all of the knowledge from all of the disciplines.
The belief that there is universal knowledge and that it is synonymous with universal truth should not be surprising to a Christian perennalist. The Bible itself claims that God – or Elohim, which is Hebrew for “Almighty Creator” – created the universe and all existence and knowledge stems from Him (Grudem, 2000).

**Epistemology: Integration of belief and knowledge.**

In 1809 while attending the University of Glasgow in Scotland, Alexander Campbell worked out his epistemology by studying Thomas Reid, John Locke, Francis Bacon, David Hume, Isaac Newton and others (Baker, 2002; Hughes, 1997; Noll, 2003; Richardson, 2005). Largely it was John Locke’s conclusions on empiricism that caused Campbell to outline his own philosophy on attaining knowledge. Campbell listed four powers of attaining knowledge which formed his assumptions to his preaching and teaching philosophy: (a) instinct, (b) sensation, (c) reason, and (d) faith (Imbler, 1992).

**Bible as sacred knowledge.**

In most cultures there is a literature that is considered sacred, or at least wise and deeply philosophical. For the Christian culture, this sacred literature is the Bible. Many Christians place their belief in God’s revealed Word through the Bible to give them authoritative knowledge. Church history attests to the fact that many Christians believe in the Bible as God’s revealed knowledge to humanity, and that it is useful for instruction in our daily lives (Mayer, 1961; Noll, 2003).

However, even within Christianity there are divergent views on the Bible’s authority. Some denominations view the Bible as the inspired, perfect Word of God that
is the main source by which humanity should seek knowledge (Mohler, 1997). Other
denominations view the Bible as no more authoritative than any other book or personal
experience (Grider, 1994).

For the Church of Christ community the Bible is God-inspired and perfect.

Campbell’s belief in the Bible is clear when he writes:

The Bible is an essential textbook for all schools and colleges. The Bible
contains more real learning than all the volumes of men. It instructs us all
in our natural, moral, political, and religious relations. Though it teaches
us not astronomy, medicine, chemistry, mathematics, architecture, it gives
us all that knowledge which adorns and dignifies our moral nature and fits
us for happiness. (Imbler, 1992, p. 14)

Campbell placed the Bible as a key resource for students who attended his schools. Here
acknowledges that there are many areas of content that the Bible does not teach, but
insists that it guides humanity in ways that others studies cannot.

The role of belief in the pursuit of knowledge is an important issue when
discussing Christian perennialist pedagogy. Penelhum (1995) states, “It is a matter of
controversy in epistemology whether knowledge includes belief or whether it is a
completely different state of affairs” (p. 65). Perennialists believe there are sacred texts
that house profound wisdom (Gutek, 2004). Therefore, many perennialists view
knowledge as containing some form of belief, and to them it is inaccurate to place belief
and knowledge in opposite corners (Hoitenga, 1991; Penelhum, 1995; Tiles & Tiles,
1993). They would say that we all have the ability to find evidence and reason our way
to a strong conclusion; we do this daily.

Within academia, absolute certainty of knowledge will always be in question;
therefore, belief will be a constant variable in the human search for knowledge (Hoitenga,
For a perennialist the question is not whether knowledge and belief should be associated, but who or what they place this belief in as an authority to answer life’s questions. In the case of Christian perennialist pedagogy, it is belief—or faith, as Campbell would term it—in the Bible as God’s revealed Word. In emphasizing the Bible as an educational source of authoritative knowledge, the Church of Christ schools place belief alongside knowledge.

If the history of higher education teaches us anything, it is that many colleges and universities began with Christian religious affiliations only to drop them and significantly shift their founding principles (Ringenberg, 1984). Therefore, it is important to consider whether or not there is evidence of Campbell’s educational principles at Susan’s university.

Campbell’s first principle was an emphasis on the Bible as an educational text. This principle appears strongly represented in the visitor’s page of the university’s website:

The values that guide ______________ University are based on our belief in God and allegiance to scripture and it is the university's belief that those attributes are essential to maintaining an environment in which the needs of each individual are important.

Susan’s university’s emphasis on the Bible as an educational text is further reinforced by the fact that those who want to be hired as full-time faculty and staff must be members of a Church of Christ church. Additionally, the university requires all students to have a minimum of nine Bible credits as part of their core general education requirements.

In order to discover Susan’s epistemology, she was asked, “How do you access truth?” She answered, “The absolute Truth of God…the only way to access that is
through reading the Bible and through prayer”. In a separate interview she was asked, “What are the ways humanity can be in contact with that ultimate Truth?” She stated:

All things are not revealed to us I don’t think. I have a lot of questions that I would like answered but that is were the faith comes in, because you can’t necessarily reason God; that is were the faith comes in. I think He wants us to try and fathom Him. And He has even created a world that we can experiment and discover things about the world we live in. I think He wants us to draw closer to Him, and discover in that way. But I don’t think we will ever get there until the end of time. To me the only way to do it is to spend time in scripture and to spend time in prayer and to spend time meditating on what you read. I think we learn too when we put it into practice. So those life experiences play into that too, and those interactions we have with one another play into that. So to me those are the only ways to get closer to that Truth.

Susan starts off by mentioning that she believes humanity cannot fully know all things; that, no matter the source, we are not God and we will never fully understand all of reality. She then states that, for her, the only way to be in contact with ultimate truth is personal experience and the Bible. When later asked if the Bible was a more important epistemological source than reason, church tradition, or personal experience, Susan answered:

As a Christian, yes; because I feel the Bible is God’s word and that it holds ultimate Truth. The Bible has everything we need to know about salvation and how to treat each other. Jesus said loving God and loving your neighbors as the two most important commandments. The Bible sums up those two main commandments. The Bible reflects Gods will and it is inherent and perfect.

In her answers Susan is consistent with Campbell as well as her university’s faith statement. But I wanted to further understand how Susan reads and analyzes the Bible. In order to do that I asked, “How do you determine that something in the
Bible should be read literally, or metaphorically, or any other way the Bible should be interpreted?” She answered:

I would use literary style to determine that. For the most part I take the Bible literally. There are some things that are metaphorical, like Revelation. I prefer the New American Standard; it is closer to the original Greek and Hebrew text, as well as it is more approachable. To help me I also read from other theologian scholar commentaries. I think that there are different interpretations of the Bible and these differences all hinge on language. The writers were inspired but they were writing within a cultural context within a certain time period. And I think that if there is an error, it is how humanity interprets it; it is more like we are the error. We are constantly interpreting with the best equipment and new knowledge that comes to light. I would hope that we are getting closer and closer to the truth. The Bible does not give us everything we want to know. It gives us everything we need to know.

Susan’s belief in the Bible as the main epistemological source of knowledge is very consistent to her Church of Christ denomination. The restoration movement has often been linked to the phrase, “The Bible Alone.” “Restorationists sought to recover the pristine purity of ‘Bible alone’ Christianity… that a rigorously scientific approach to the Bible would yield the one true Christian theology” (Noll, 2003, p. 237). Susan confirms this history when she states, “I know they [the Church of Christ denomination] like to view themselves as believing the Bible is the final authority.”

**Bible as an educational tool.**

This section takes a more detailed look at Susan’s epistemology and reveals her focus on experience, reason, and a heavy emphasis on the Christian Bible. The section also considers how a Christian perennialist might integrate Biblical content into their teaching.
The degree to which a Christian educator believes in the Bible as an authoritative source of knowledge affects the chances of the Bible being integrated into that educator’s pedagogy. A Protestant Christian educator who believes that the Bible is God’s authoritative knowledge given to humanity will, to some degree, integrate the Bible into their pedagogy. Conversely, a Protestant Christian educator does not believe that the Bible is authoritative knowledge is less likely to integrate Biblical content into their pedagogy. The diagram below can help clarify this continuum of belief.

Figure 3: Trust versus Mistrust in the Bible as a Source of Knowledge

In a Christian perennialist Church of Christ pedagogy, where trust in the Bible as authoritative knowledge is greatest, mistrust in humanity as having the answers is
diminished, and vice versa. When asked if she thought theology could or should be informing her art education pedagogy, Susan answered:

   I would say absolutely I do. If I am going to work here then yes I really think it should. And if you believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. And if you believe God is who He says he is, then there are certain things that are and are not right. And it comes through in your teaching.

In another interview Susan was asked, “Do you want to integrate your Christian belief into your art education teaching?” She replied, “Into my art education practice? Yes”.

Later in that same interview she was pushed to give any type of details as to how she may be integrating her Christian beliefs into her teaching:

   In regards to overtly doing that in the art education classroom in my pedagogical practices I don’t know that I do it. I don’t know if I do it as part of pedagogy in an overt way. It comes down more to more of the example I give in class. It shows up more in the way we treat each other. It shows up more in what I choose to present and not choose to present in the classroom.

Susan believes that the Bible is a trusted, sacred source of knowledge from God. Her belief in the Bible as an educational tool motivates her to bring her Christian faith into her art education classroom. If Susan were to fully integrate her theology into her art education pedagogy, then it rightfully would be termed a theological art education.

However, to practice theological art education she must consciously connect specific theological beliefs with specific art education content knowledge. Susan is generally unaware of how her Christian beliefs are integrated into her pedagogy. Therefore, the evidence shows that she is mainly doing an Incarnational type of education (Smith & Shortt, 2003). Smith & Shortt (2003) define Incarnational Christian education as:

   Drawing upon the central Christian affirmation that God has ultimately revealed himself… in the person of Jesus Christ. The Christian teacher
should aspire to ‘incarnate’ the biblical vision, living it out in the day to day interaction of the classroom. (pp. 37-38)

Through Susan’s own words we see that this Incarnational education is what she practices in her classroom.

**Human reason and guarded skepticism.**

After the Bible, the second key principle that informs the Church of Christ philosophy of post-secondary education is an emphasis on rational inquiry and the scientific method. It is this rational inquiry that guides believers in questioning their own traditions and suppositions against a Biblical standard. Campbell’s emphasis on rationalism implies that he accepted human reason as a key epistemological knowledge source. Jorgenson (1989) supports this claim, stating that the Church of Christ churches and schools “have a heritage which is an American blend of Lockean philosophy and a serious biblical authoritarianism” (p. 64).

Some Christians believe humanity should be free to use their reasoning abilities to obtain as much knowledge as possible. Others say humanity should be cautious, even skeptical, of our ability to reason about reality and truth, fearful they may lose their faith in the process. This trust and mistrust of human reason is illustrated through the continuum below. Christians are positioned all along the continuum.
Figure 4: Trust versus Mistrust of Humanity

The two extreme ends of the continuum can best be represented by John Locke and John Calvin. Locke best represents the Trust in Humanity end of the spectrum because of the influence of his Enlightenment philosophies on Christianity in the United States (Axtell, 1968; Ulich, 1945), and the prevalence of his educational theories in American education (Elias, 2002), and his belief that humanity is good by nature (Axtell, 1968). In contrast, Calvin best represents the Mistrust in Humanity end because of the influence of his theology on Protestant American Christians (Noll, 2003) and his view of human nature as innately sinful; a view that continues into his education curriculum (Nixon, 1960; Paul, 1987; Ulich, 1968). Calvin is also relevant for this research because Alexander Campbell, the main founder and spiritual leader of the Restoration Church of Christ movement, came from a Calvinist Reformed church background before starting a new protestant church branch in the United States (Richardson, 2005; Wrather, 2007).

At the time of the restoration movement (Founded 1832) the Enlightenment loomed large, and most of the leading thinkers in American Protestant churches, including Alexander Campbell, embraced some variety of common-sense reasoning. It was common for Protestant churches to express optimism about the ability of all human minds to be drawn to faith by logically compelling arguments (Baker, 2002; Carey &
Foster, 2002; Verkruyse, 2005; Wrather, 2007). Many Christians at the time were convinced that scientific reasoning could be repeated in epistemology, jurisprudence, politics, social ethics, Christian apologetics, and other fields to ultimately ensure political peace, social morality, and even Christian orthodoxy (Noll, 2003).

Inspired by John Locke, who applied Francis Bacon’s inductive, scientific method, Alexander Campbell adopted common sense reasoning for Biblical apologetics (Hughes, 1997; Mayer, 1961; Wrather, 2007). Campbell “assured his public that he would prove all things to them by ‘evidence from reason and revelation’” (Wrather, 2007, p. 10). He not only adopted reason in his apologetic theological teachings, but was considered one of the greatest Christian orators (Verkruyse, 2005).

Alexander Campbell stood indebted to John Locke and to Scottish common sense realism, often known as *Baconianism*, which sought to apply the scientific method to the larger world of things and ideas (Hughes, 1997). This combination of a rationalist logic with an unbreakable faith in God and his Word effectively coexisted only due to Campbell’s skeptical view that humanity has a tendency to deceive itself with its own wisdom. His skepticism of humanity can be seen in Campbell’s own words:

> The Bible contains more real learning than all the volumes of men. It instructs us all in our natural, moral, political, and religious relations. Though it teaches us not astronomy, medicine, chemistry, mathematics, architecture, it gives us all that knowledge which adorns and dignifies our moral nature and fits us for happiness. (Imbler 1992, p.14)

Even as some Christians believed that it would lead to a weakening or denial of religious faith, Campbell did not fear the embracing of rationalism (Morgan, 1986; Wrather, 2007). But Campbell was suspicious of human reason, and supported reason
only with other sources of knowledge. A key point of distinction between Campbell and Locke was that Campbell emphatically rejected the belief of latent knowledge, ideas dormant in the mind from past lives (Wrather, 2007). In other words, he rejected Locke’s belief that unaided human reason using empirical data can arrive at the idea of God. For Campbell, knowledge of spiritual things comes only from divine revelation (Carey & Foster, 2002). He has been quoted as saying, “The witness of scripture is primary to spiritual ideas, and reason plays a subsequent, supporting role. Moreover, the Spirit convicts human souls only through the mediation of scripture” (Carey & Foster, 2002, p. 114). Alexander Campbell is clearly indicating that faith in God’s Word informs humanity in spiritual matters; spiritual understanding cannot come through human reasoning alone. Campbell supported the concept of human reason, but believed that only faith in God’s guidance through the Bible could help to reason out spiritual truths. Again, Campbell accepted reason, but had a mistrust of human reason when unaided by the Bible.

Susan’s university seems to align with Campbell’s support of human reason. Their website even has a page devoted to critical thinking goals and resources. She acknowledges that her university supports an inquiry-based, critical thinking focus on learning:

As part of the university we have a QEP Quality Enhancement Plan. We have a QEP director and every university in the SACS program has a QEP director. This is with the new SACS accreditation standards. The university decides what they want to work on in terms of their quality enhancement plan. For our university it was critical thinking through writing.

Susan herself supports an inquiry-based education that emphasizes critical thinking:
I think it is important that the students explore who they are and explore their belief systems and to recognize those differences. I think the strongest education will be the type when the students take ownership. And for that to happen they need to have some input into it; students coming to their own understanding of why this is relevant.

Susan implements a type of teaching that moves students from passive learning to active learning by requiring the student to synthesize class content and personal beliefs. When asked what she thought of placing reason alongside the Bible and experience as worthy epistemological sources, Susan answered:

It would be wrong to not use reason. God has given us that ability but I don’t think you can reason faith. I believe reason will get you to a certain point and then after that comes a leap of faith. But if you are using reason within the context of faith…As you gather information from the scriptures and as you reason; okay I am looking at this context and that context, then I think you can reason through that and reason can serve you well there.

Susan seems similar to Alexander Campbell in that she accepts reason and knows that she uses it every day, but mistrusts unaided reason. She states that reason is acceptable and affective if placed in conjunction with faith in the Bible. Susan demonstrates that she places faith as a component of her epistemology, placing her strongly within perennialist pedagogy. Like Campbell, Susan requires the Bible to be a guiding lens to hold her reasoning ability accountable.

Why are Church of Christ Christians skeptical of human reason? Why not take a perspective that humanity is free to reason? Why should a person be concerned about or mistrust this natural human ability? One important variable provides insight toward an answer, and may even determine where a person sits on this trust versus mistrust continuum. That variable is the belief that humanity is corrupted by an innate sin nature.
In other words, many Christians believe that humanity is, by very nature, corrupt (Mayer, 1961).

This issue has often been termed a doctrine of original sin. The theological idea of original sin is a Christian doctrine which is believed to be clearly taught in the Bible (Grudem, 2000). Calvin’s teachings of original sin influenced his educational philosophy (Nixon, 1960). Locke, by contrast, believed that man was good by nature; a belief that influenced his educational philosophy (Axtell, 1968).

Like Calvin, Alexander Campbell adopted the concept of original sin. He believed that when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, humanity lost three things: union with God, original righteousness, and original holiness (Richardson, 2005).

Susan is in alignment with Calvin and Campbell in their mistrusts of humanity, but would not entirely adopt the doctrine of original sin:

No I don’t believe that. I believe that humanity is born into a sinful world and therefore we sin. But you kind of grow into it. I believe babies are not sinful. Somewhere through childhood there comes that point were you acquire that from being exposed to it. And I do believe we grow into our nature of being sinful individuals. I would have to believe that it would be possible to sin on a desert island without any awareness of God. But then the all over arching point is that thank goodness there is grace to cover that up.

Figure 5: Continuum of Reason
What matters is not the technical issue surrounding an age of accountability (that is, when a child is old enough to comprehend their sinful thoughts and actions), but the fact that she believes all people will be acculturated into sin early in childhood. Because of this belief, Susan has a skeptical view of humanity similar to Alexander Campbell and John Calvin. On the continuum, Susan would fall left of Calvin because of her disagreement with the doctrine of original sin.

**Experience as a knowledge source.**

The third source of epistemology is personal experience. Campbell’s epistemology includes scientific words, sensations, and instinct as valid sources of knowledge. Susan accepts these ideas as relevant epistemological sources:

> I think we learn too when we put things it into practice. There are things I understand much more deeply now after my dad died, than I was not attuned to before. So those life experiences play into that too, and those interactions we have with one another play into that. An example I can think of was now experiencing suffering, plus my dad died in his car accident three weeks after 911. So to have all of that suffering right there in the forefront in my life and to see what happened out there in society all at one time, I am much more attuned to this notion of human suffering that I ever was before that.

In several interviews Susan brought up the importance of relational interactive learning; how these interactions change us. In this way she has some similarity to Campbell. Imbler (1992) states that Campbell, “while not considered a disciple of Locke… was attracted to Locke’s notions of sensory and experiential learning” (p. 13). As evidenced here, as well as in the art making section of Chapter 4, Susan adds to sensory learning social interactive experience for gaining knowledge.
Church tradition as a knowledge source.

The fourth epistemological source is church tradition. The idea of tradition as a source of knowledge was borrowed from John Wesley’s epistemology (Grider, 1994). Susan did not originally mention church tradition in her answer to how she accesses truth or reality. When questioned about her view of tradition, she answered:

I think tradition is important. In some ways it can be very important and I don’t think you can poo poo it away all together. But in some ways it also can cause you to make some things doctrinal that are not scriptural. I think if you look at Acts and the development of the first century church, they came up with things that they debated different issues, and had to break with tradition if they start bring gentiles into Christianity. So I think if you get too rooted in tradition it can make you blind to areas that need to change. So there is a place for tradition but you can’t become crippled by it.

Susan’s concern that God’s commands would be overshadowed by unnecessary church tradition is well documented in Restoration Church of Christ history.

The restoration movement lead by spiritual leader Alexander Campbell was a nineteenth-century spiritual revolution which tried to restore the church to a primitive, non-creed Christianity. It also attempted to unify the church on a nondenominational basis, marching to the cadence of the phrase “Liberty, Unity, Simplicity” (Mayer, 1961; Wrath, 2007). “Restorationists sought to recover the pristine purity of ‘Bible alone’ Christianity… that a rigorously scientific approach to the Bible would yield the one true Christian theology” (Noll, 2003, p. 237). Campbell’s application of common sense reasoning to Biblical apologetics provided the epistemological foundation for his conviction that the restoration of a primitive Christianity would unite all Christians.
(Hughes, 1997). This primitive Christianity is seen in Susan’s comment on Church of Christ tradition:

I think if you ask a member of the Church of Christ, do you have a doctrine? They will say no. The Bible is my doctrine. Do what the Bible says. If it does not say anything about it then I am mute on that point. And yet I can think of so many issues in which the Church of Christ does have a bit of a doctrine. Where it is not explicitly stated in the Bible, so we have gone ahead and interpreted. You know, there may be this specific interpretation which may be hanging by a thread, really when you look at the Bible text. But it becomes a doctrine in a way.

Hughes (1997) points out that Church of Christ believers create the illusion of having no founder and trace their tradition back to the Bible itself, convincing themselves that they are immune to the power of history and culture. “For this reason colleges and universities related to Church of Christ seldom developed systematic theological understandings of the qualities and characteristics that ideally might characterize higher education” (Hughes 1997, p. 404). Susan is aware to some degree of her denomination’s traditions. However, even as a university scholar there is much denominational history and theology that she is not aware of. Her quotes confirm Hughes’s (1997) accusation that Church of Christ believers deny themselves a historical tradition. Even if this denial is on theological grounds, it ultimately denies these believers a lens in which to critically analyze their theological beliefs and relate them to educational goals and methods.

Summary

Susan adopts all of the views of Perennialism. She adopts the idea that all humans share a common nature that defines them as human beings. She accepts that there is one reality and universal truth, and that all humanity has been given the same
intellectual power to grasp it. She also accepts that there are sacred epistemological sources of knowledge. In this case Susan is consistent with the Church of Christ denomination in viewing the Christian Bible as that sacred source and in accepting faith as a part of an intellectual pursuit of knowledge. Finally, Susan believes that there is a universal ethic that all humanity is aware of and has the freewill to choose or reject.

Alexander Campbell’s two educational principles were (a) an emphasis on the Bible as an educational text, and (b) an emphasis on rational inquiry and the scientific method in guiding believers to question their own traditions and suppositions with comparisons to a Biblical standard. Susan is intellectually in agreement with Campbell on both principles, but is inconsistent in implementing them in her pedagogy.

Susan believes that the Bible is a key epistemological source of wisdom that could be used as a key educational tool. However, when asked to explain how the Bible, or theology in general, finds its way into her art education pedagogy, she was not able to give an answer. In interviews Susan admitted that she left theology up to the university-required Bible courses. A more common integration of her Christian belief into her pedagogy would be her observable actions and attitudes toward students and faculty on campus. This Incarnational education approach of mimicking the lifestyle of Jesus Christ in the classroom has the potential to be unique in the field of teacher education.

Susan has more curricular success in integrating Campbell’s second principle, which is an emphasis on rational inquiry and the scientific method to guide believers in questioning their own traditions and suppositions with comparisons to a Biblical standard. She does adopt an inquiry approach within many of her course assignments.
She also structures discourse with the goal of creating opportunities for students to question their own traditions. The main difference between Susan and Campbell would be that Campbell expected students to self-reflect and question their own beliefs in relation to the Bible. Campbell would often develop inquiry-based teaching which placed the Bible as central to the students’ contemplation. While Susan would not hesitate to address scripture in class, any discussion centered on the Bible would most likely be instigated by a student.

Church of Christ Beliefs about Art

**Theme: Alexander Campbell’s Theological and Educational Beliefs toward Art**

Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) is noted as the most influential leader of the Church of Christ restoration movement (Founded 1832). It was his vision and his guiding principles for Christian education that led to the development of Church of Christ educational institutions at all levels. These guiding principles have both direct and indirect biases against the arts. There are four separate influences that explain why the arts have been restricted by varying degrees in Church of Christ affiliated colleges and universities: (a) Ulrich Zwingli’s strict interpretation of the Bible; (b) John Calvin’s strong emphasis on losing one’s salvation, conditioning life toward censorship rather than creative freedom; (c) Alexander Campbell’s emphasis on reason and logic over emotion and speculation; and (d) Alexander Campbell’s rejection of classical literature from the Ancient Greeks and Romans.
Ulrich Zwingli.

The first influence of Church of Christ theology on the arts is Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531). A theologian from Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli came to the conviction that scripture alone should be the guide for an outward, authentic expression of Christianity. Because of this conviction he rejected anything that the Bible did not specifically prescribe, ultimately banishing aesthetics from the sacred domain (Garside, 1966). Zwingli’s belief in “Bible alone” was adopted into the Restoration Church of Christ movement. This belief is expressed in the statement, “Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent,” which is a common creed within the Church of Christ (Hughes, 1997). Regarding areas where the Bible does not give much information, the Church of Christ restoration movement either avoids or restricts it. Unfortunately, the visual arts are one of those areas of Biblical silence (Jorgenson, 1989).

John Calvin.

The second influence of Church of Christ theology on the arts is John Calvin. Alexander Campbell attended a Presbyterian Calvinist church through his childhood and youth. Through this church he was directly influenced by John Calvin’s theology (Jorgenson, 1989). For Calvin, the desire to please God in all areas of life, as well as a fear of losing one’s salvation, indirectly developed a cultural emphasis on restricting individual freedoms (Mayer, 1961). In addition, Calvin’s work ethic and avoidance of indulgences was adopted by Alexander Campbell and the Church of Christ denominational as a whole (Jorgenson, 1989).
Alexander Campbell’s emphasis on reason.

The third influence of Church of Christ theology on the arts is Alexander Campbell’s emphasis on reason and logic over emotion and speculation. Hughes (1997) states, “Because of their 18th century Enlightenment roots, Churches of Christ have a strong intellectual tradition and have consistently prized reason over emotion and logic over speculation” (p. 405). This emphasis eventually shaped art pedagogy for his many higher education institutions.

Alexander Campbell’s gift was in speaking and writing (Verkruyse, 2005). Even in Campbell’s writing he took a strict literalism, resisting the alternative world of metaphor (Jorgenson, 1989). This philosophy of art as utility was made public in a speech at one of Campbell’s colleges. He said, “And what is art? Art is the application of science…” (Jorgenson, 1989). This quote not only references Calvin’s teachings, but reveals Campbell’s rationalism. Within this rationalist, “art for art sake” and those things that live in the world of opinion and choice cannot be comprehended and therefore are less important academically (Baker, 2002).

Alexander Campbell’s rejection of classical literature.

The fourth influence of Church of Christ theology on the arts is Alexander Campbell’s rejection of the ancient classical literature of the Greeks and Romans. In a series of essays on education written in 1835, Campbell criticized the stronghold of Aristotelianism on medieval scholasticism and, by implication, American higher education. Campbell thus worked to replace ancient classics with modern sciences and
social sciences (Jorgenson, 1989). Campbell addressed this issue in his national Church of Christ publication, the *Millennial Harbinger*:

> Classical literature and classic antiquity, the natural, political, moral, and social philosophy of Greece and Rome... have so bewitched and infatuated literati of the West, that all of our literary institutions have been enslaved to the idolatry of Grecian and Roman models as were the Catholic laity to the See of Rome in the long dark night of papalistical supremacy. (Jorgenson, 1989)

One cannot overlook the significance of Campbell’s views toward ancient Greece and Rome and the implications of these views on the arts in his higher education institutions. Campbell perceived the Ancient Greek and Roman cultures as evil, having nothing worthy of academic merit. Being that all of art history is traced, to a large extent, back to the great exemplars within these civilizations, art in Campbell’s view is secular and not worthy of a place in his educational institutions.

This does not mean that colleges and universities associated with the Church of Christ do not teach aesthetic life. But aesthetics, typically, have been pushed outside the bounds of the church and therefore outside the sphere of the sacred. Hughes (1997) gives a scathing critique of the fact that Church of Christ education does not nurture creativity when he states, “Fine arts programs in colleges and universities related to Church of Christ seldom foster artistic creativity in ways that invite serious theological reflection... Churches of Christ have never had much interest in nurturing the imagination” (p. 410). Thus, artists often find little support in Church of Christ education for integrating their passion for aesthetics within their Christian faith.
Theme: Susan’s University Community Norms and their Impact on Art

During an interview Susan was asked to describe what she believed to be the Bible’s perspective toward art, as well as the Church of Christ’s perspective. She responded:

You know visual art does not come up like instrumental music does in the Church of Christ. As far as a Church Doctrine on art I really don’t know of one. So I can speak to that more than any sort of doctrine or Church of Christ philosophy on art and its role. From a Church of Christ background we don’t use instrumental music in worship. Some students who may not come from that background will question this. They may say, “You will let some regular rock and roll band come and play regular rock and roll music but you will not let a Christian group play. What gives?” But you know we found most students when we explained to them the heritage and where we are coming from and why that is, they are okay with it.

Susan relates that music is censored more than visual art by her university administration. Within the Church of Christ Restoration heritage, the Disciples of Christ denomination has had a long theological struggle over the acceptability of instruments in worship.

Susan’s university has chosen to stay in line with the more conservative, non-instrumental tradition which restricts all musical instruments from participating in campus worship; the only acceptable form of worship is sung acappella.

Susan may be correct in believing that her university censors music more than visual art, but that does not negate the campus pressure for her to censor presented art images. Susan was asked, “As a Church of Christ representative, who is an art specialist, have you seen a clash of beliefs or have you opened new doors for this denomination toward the arts?” She answered:

I can remember silly little things. Like when students want to display something and it may be, you know, okay here we go, thanks for doing this to me kind of thing. But you want to support that. But you first check
with your dean and see if he is going to stand behind you. Are you going
to support me on this? There are instances like that which come up every
once and awhile.

This administrative censorship issue seems to be driven by the fact that Christian
universities, being private, are highly sensitive to negative publicity, particularly in the
way that it could affect financial support coming from their denominational churches.
Susan revealed this sensitivity, saying, “When you’re at a private university you are
constantly thinking of your constituencies because you do not receive state funding. It is
an interesting political dynamic.” Of course, nonreligious, publicly funded colleges and
universities also are subject to pressures tied to funding issues. But Susan’s university,
being affiliated with one of the most conservative fundamentalist faiths in Christianity, is
particularly vulnerable to denominational pressure. As Susan revealed during an
interview, approximately half of the university’s student population comes from a
Christian background, and many of those specifically from the Church of Christ
denomination.

Even as a respected professor and friend to the university administration, Susan
still hesitates when displaying certain artwork. She must take into consideration the
reaction of the administration and university trustees to any artwork that pushes the
bounds of artistic freedom. However, her quote also reveals that even though the
worrisome thought of administration reaction may enter her mind, she still tries hard to
support the student’s right to exhibit their art.
Theme: Susan’s Beliefs about Art

This section analyses how Susan’s beliefs about art are informed by her Christian faith. Through extensive interviews it was discovered that Susan adopts seven Christian theological beliefs which impact her beliefs about art.

Viladesau (1999) defines theological aesthetics as “interpreting the objects of aesthetics—sensations, the beautiful, and art—from the properly theological point of religious conversion and in the light of theological methods” (p. 23). All seven of Susan’s beliefs are consistent with ideas commonly discussed in theological aesthetic literature. These seven beliefs are: (a) The universe was created by God; (b) God created the universe with a rational order and design; (c) humanity is designed to create; (d) because we are created in God’s image we innately enjoy, recognize and long for an organized and beautiful world; (e) art making is a way to understand God and our relationship to God; (f) art making can be an act worship to God; and (g) there is an ethical standard for art.

Regarding the first belief that God created the universe, Susan states, “But there is to me the ultimate Truth of God. That God created everything; that God is master of the universe.” Susan’s quote reveals that she has adopted the Christian belief of a monotheistic deity; that Yahweh, the one and only God, has created all things and God’s rules govern the universe. When a person chooses to adopt the belief that there is one all-powerful creator God of the universe, this has potential ramifications on beliefs about art because it consciously—or subconsciously—places the artist’s creative act in relationship to God. In other words, if the artist believes that God rules everything, then the artist
must, to some degree, acknowledge God as playing a role in art making. God’s role can be viewed as maker of the materials that the artist is using; the artists may recognize that God gave them the ability to think and manipulate those materials; or the artist who is inspired by nature may acknowledge that God created the very mountain, person, or situation which inspires them.

The second Christian theological belief that Susan adopts is that God created the universe with a rational order and design:

God can create whatever He wants, but He chose to create things in such a way, in a specific way, in a way that would function together. God apparently appreciates beauty because of the way He created the world. It could have functioned just fine without being beautiful.

Theological aesthetic literature would support Susan’s belief that God created an aesthetically pleasing and orderly universe (Rookmakker, 1994; Viladesau, 1999; Wolterstorff, 1980).

Believing that God chose to design all of creation to be beautiful as well as functional could impact beliefs about art as well as art instruction. First, it could influence aesthetic values that prioritize beauty and order in art making. Second, the teacher would most likely teach the students to look for beauty and order in creation. It should be noted that Susan’s belief is a commonly held belief for those who adopt a perennialist educational pedagogy. Gutek (2004) says, “Perennialists assert that the universe itself is governed by rational and spiritual principles… according to a rational design” (pp. 281-282).

Because Susan adopts the belief that the universe is purposeful and rationally ordered, she also finds this order in specific ways of art making, which she then teaches
to her students. This is made evident when she states, “So in terms of art making there are some things you have to know. There are some foundational things that we may call ‘truths’”. When asked if she ever used the term “fundamentals” or the phrase “basic knowledge that needs to be taught,” she responded:

Yes, I think I have, especially in regards to design. I can’t help but consider the elements and principles as I make art. So I am one of those people who believe in having that foundational background whether it is in the media or design functions.

For many art educators the word “foundation” often refers directly to the teaching of art media and design concepts. For Susan specifically, she teaches design concepts because she sees them in God’s universe through its visual order, functionality and beauty.

This view of a universal order or design is further used to justify teaching knowledge of art making practices. When asked if there is an absolute Truth to discover in art making, Susan answered:

If you try to deconstruct how you throw a pot on the wheel… there are certain things you must do. One thing I was thinking after our last conversation was Postmodern architecture. Frank Ghery and others where the form no longer has to follow the function. And one thing they can’t vary from is how you lay a foundation. How electricity works; how you wire a building. Those are not things you can deconstruct. Those are foundational things that stay the same no matter what form the building takes. So in art you see those things happening and you can’t say I am going to through a pot but I am not going to center my clay first. That is where students have to learn those foundational techniques. And what is going to happen if you leave a bunch of air bubbles in you pot.

Susan also mentions how Postmodern architecture chooses to not follow function as a form any longer, but Postmodernist can’t get away from the physics of laying a building foundation or the science of wiring up the electricity to that building. One might extend
her remarks to her belief that there is a God who created an orderly universe, and this
order must be recognized in art making and how we teach art making.

Third, Susan believes that humanity was designed in God’s image; because He
creates, we also have a nature to create:

If we are created in the image of God. And God is the creator, then I do
think we have within us that ability and that desire to create, and it finds
its manifestation in so many different ways. And we are doing it through
creative means because that is imbedded within us. I think people have
been creating ever since people were created.

Susan believes that human beings, having been created in the image of God, are imbued
with the ability to create. Theological aesthetic literature would support Susan’s belief
that humanity was designed in God’s image, an image that includes His creative nature
(Balthasar, 2002).

Nahm (1947, 1956) points out that the Hebraic-Christian tradition of creation
places human creativity equal with God’s creativity, allowing human creativity to go
beyond the real; beyond simply imitating, we can imagine something new out of nothing.
This is a significant theory which has been partially lost, or at least overshadowed by the
Greek influence on western aesthetics (Boorstin, 1992). It does need to be noted that
Susan does not agree with Nahm’s view of human creativity as equal to God’s. Rather,
she views human creation as lesser than God’s: “I think art is a lesser form of creation
than what God undertakes.”

Fourth, Susan believes that God created us to innately recognize, enjoy, and long
for a beautifully ordered world. Theological aesthetic literature would support this belief
(Begbie, 2003). As Susan expressed it:
We do in some way seek order and try to categorize and make order of things. And we should thank God when we notice beauty because He has put that within us to notice beauty. We crave order and we crave harmony. God apparently appreciates beauty because of the way He created the world. It could have functioned just fine without being beautiful.

Susan makes it clear that she believes God has wired humanity to seek out order and beauty in the universe. She states that God did not have to make it beautiful; that creation could have been made just to be functional.

The adoption of this belief could have ramifications for art making because the artist or art teacher would emphasize beauty as a theme in their work or their teaching. So, for example, aesthetics may become an important content area that is emphasized in an art teacher’s classroom.

Fifth, Susan sees art making as a way to seek and connect to God:

I mentioned the idea before that if we are created individuals and created in God’s image then we are creative individuals because God was creative. Then in a way I may think art making is an exploration of a way to try and get closer to Truth. Just like philosophical thought is. It is more of an active way to do it. And in a way art making may be a way to get closer and closer to God; whether we realize that is what is going on or not.

Susan is saying that in a conscious or unconscious way every act of creation, whether by a Christian believer or not, is a way of trying to understand God and our human relationship to Him. Theological aesthetic literature supports Susan’s belief that art making is a way to seek and connect to God (Brown, 2000; Gaebelein, 1985). Coleman (1998) says, “Art, like nature, can serve as a vehicle by which humans reach for the divine” (p. xvii). Coleman (1998) also states that, “art and religion, however different, are complimentary responses to the quest for self-realization” (p. xiv).
Six, art making can be an act of exulted worship to God. *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* 4th Edition (2001) defines exultation as the act of rejoicing, jubilation, or triumph (p. 505). In the context of art making in Susan’s class, exultation means rejoicing, communing, or worshiping God through the act of making art. Theological aesthetics supports Susan’s belief that art making can be an act of worship to God (Baumgarten, 1995).

Susan believes that the act of creation can be a time in which the Christian and God can commune, allowing the person opportunities to praise, exult, rejoice, request and thank God:

> I think we worship all throughout the day, in various aspects of our lives and that is not confined strictly to that formal church setting. So I think the act of creation can be the act of worship. But I think that is a conscious thing though, I don’t think that everyone who is creating is worshiping.

Susan gave one example of a student who chose to exult God through their art making:

> I can remember a student who wanted to do a very spiritual exploration for her senior show. And all of her work was abstract. And I said to her during her senior show exhibition, you know you realize you came here thinking you did not want to do abstraction. I am sitting here looking at your senior exhibition. Your final articulation of who you are in art, and all I see is abstraction. She said I know that. She said I just got to the point that I wanted to express spirituality and I just could not do that objectively or representationally. I felt good that she had come to that place and found that she did have a use for abstraction and she did use it.

Susan does not force her students to combine art and faith, but she is supportive of these type of explorations in art making. Susan pointed out that many of her students choose to make art dealing with their own spirituality: “So many of them create art of their
spirituality. I have seen many senior shows that it has been about that struggle, and to find them selves spiritually.” If a person chooses to use art for an exultation focus, then there most likely will be an impact on that person’s belief toward art.

The seventh of Susan’s theological beliefs concerning art is that there is an ethical standard for art making. When asked, “If God has created us to be creative, did He create us with free reign to create whatever we want,” Susan responded:

I think there is a boundary and a line you can cross… Again if we are created in His image it is not a free for all, it is not anything goes. So I think there are better and more responsible ways to create.

Susan states that she does have an ethical standard in art making. This comes through in her choice to not show some particular artworks in her *Art, Theory and Criticism* course. During the interview process she was asked to clarify this stance with the question, “So you go through every topic but you guard your students’ eyes from certain particularly egregious works?” She answered:

And not just my students; my eyes too. There are some things I don’t want to see either. There are some works that are offensive to the point and the shock value is so strong that it is hard to get the message. I have never been fond of art, even if it came from ancient Greece or 2002 that showed people engaged in sexual acts. We talk about why people would want to portray that.

Susan has an ethical standard that compels her to not show certain images to her adult, college-age students. She states that she does not even want to expose herself to them. However, she mentions she will discuss the issues that surrounded her choice to not expose the class to such images. This would naturally lead to a discussion of artistic ethics in her classroom.
Summary

This section looked at beliefs about art from three separate entities, all claiming the Church of Christ faith. The section began with the historical background of Alexander Campbell’s beliefs toward art, moved to Susan’s university’s beliefs toward art, and concluded with Susan’s belief toward art. The goal was to find similarities and differences.

Alexander Campbell and Susan’s university are consistent in adopting Zwingli’s strict interpretation of scripture, ultimately restricting the arts. Susan confirmed this by mentioning how music is overtly censored in campus worship. While visual art censorship was more subtle, Susan also confirmed pressures on her to censor student’s artwork when exhibiting it on campus.

In contrast to Campbell or her university, Susan does not adopt Zwingli’s reductionist way of interpreting scripture. Two of Susan’s seven beliefs about art view art as a necessary expression of humanity, by which we explore our relationship to God. This belief then places art as a spiritual imperative, not because God demands us to create, but because humanity cannot help but create as a part of spiritual exploration.

A key belief which is consistent between Campbell, Susan’s university, and Susan is a belief that there is an ethical standard in art. The ethical standard for art is equally restrictive for Campbell and Susan’s university, but less so for Susan. She has an ethical standard for art, but is more willing to support artistic freedom. She believes that all people have free will and should be graciously trusted in their creativity.
Church of Christ Beliefs about Art Education

**Theme: Art History, Critical Pedagogy and Feminist Theology**

This section addresses an inquiry approach to art history that reflects a pedagogical perspective from critical theory. More specifically, this section analyzes Susan’s adoption of feminist theological beliefs, ultimately creating a unique inquiry approach to teaching art history content.

Those who are best representative of critical pedagogy are Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, and Ira Shor (Burbules & Berk, 1999). To reiterate from Chapter 4, Gutek (2004) explains the premise of Critical Pedagogy, saying:

Critical Theory can be defined as a complex set of working assumptions about society, education, and schooling that question and analyze educational aims, institutions, curriculum, instruction, and relationships in order to raise consciousness and bring about transformative change in society and education. (p. 309)

Susan describes such a perspective through an art history assignment given in her *Art for Adolescences* course:

The presentations require looking at different theories that are outside of art that have impacted art, like the Feminist/gender and the other ones, the environmental stuff. That is to show them a little bit more about what is happening currently in art, and give them an opportunity to dive more deeply into these ideas. So that the final third of the class can begin and have them put these concepts into practice. So I just began the final exam project. How their presentations are going to dovetail into that project. They have to take all that they learned and do something with it, demonstrate how artists work from these different viewpoints. This is for them to see that art is not just making stuff but is making stuff from within a context. And I have probably mentioned to you that since the beginning of teaching this course I have really seen how the nature of these senior exhibits have changed now that these students are informed about these theories. The student’s art is much more cohesive and much more theoretically deep than they were before.
In this assignment, Susan moves toward critical pedagogy in raising the students’ consciousness about the relationship between art and current social issues. Further remarks by Susan provide insight into why Susan uses an approach that moves toward critical pedagogy:

Well I think so many times we have these little ideas that are just little tickles in the back of our brains. And it is not until we have some kind of catalyst that focus us and makes us think about it and makes us articulate it…we did kind of take a look at the way we learn and the way we believe and I encouraged them to look at moments in their lives when they had a paradigm shift. And how we respond to that and how that makes us who we are.

For Susan, the catalyst for the students’ paradigm shift is exposing them to feminism, psychoanalytic, semiotic and Marxist theory in order to create purposeful class discourse. By getting students involved in discussions of these different theoretical viewpoints, students can begin to situate themselves among these different opinions, ultimately a precursor to empowering them to make cultural change. Gutek (2004) explains Paulo Freire’s model of discourse, termed “Freirean dialogue”:

Teachers should encourage students to voice their beliefs and concerns about what they hold to be correct and what they prize. This helps students understand how their peers feel about what is right and wrong. Hearing the different voices raised in the shared discourse, they will come to value the idea that there is a pluralism of values, not just the officially imposed set of values. Such ethical discourse aims to help students find their voice, learn how to articulate their beliefs and feelings, learn to value the opinions of others, and become aware of those who would interfere with or close off the dialogue. Teachers should guide the ethical discussion so that it gradually enlarges so that students see the injustice of the silencing of those who are at the margins. (p. 317)

Susan revealed the use of this Freirean dialogue during an interview:

One student for instance would consider himself to be politically a very liberal person. He loved our University but he saw some conflict between
his own biases and beliefs and where our University seems to be. So we talked about being the other. Asking, “having you ever been in a situation of the other?” His situation was coming from Africa he was very comfortable, but then coming to the U.S., even though he is Anglo, he did things that were weird to the other people here because he had done them in Africa. So even though he was an Anglo in an Anglo environment, he felt like he was the “other” because he was washing his feet in the drinking fountain.

Susan brings up in this quote that the class had discourse about being the other, and that this student’s story was central to class discussion. Susan mentions that they “talked about being the other” in class and that she encouraged the students to reflect about if they have been the other before.

In several instances during the interviews Susan made it clear that she calls herself a Christian feminist. Compared to many other beliefs of Susan, her theological beliefs concerning feminist theology have taken on conscious solidification; she claims to be a Christian feminist and she wants to bring these issues into her teaching.

In 2008, Susan published an article in an art education journal titled, Saying the F(eminism)-Word at a Christian University. In this article she distinguished the difference between Christian feminism and non-Christian feminism:

Simply put, a female or male feminist acts to restore political, social, and economic justice between men and women; Christian feminism adds to this the dimension that all people are made in the image of God and are therefore deserving of respect and dignity. Feminist interpretations of the Bible support the liberation of all people, including women, through the many descriptions of female leadership and friendship within scripture. In short, the differences between feminism and Christian feminism may lie less in the “what” of feminism than in the “why.”

The provocative title of that 2008 article perfectly captures her struggle to counter the Christian tradition, and more specifically her fundamentalist university, on feminist
issues. In the same article Susan identifies with the words of June Steffenson Hagen, quoting her as saying:

Those of us in Christian higher education, especially those struggling for a holistic vision of learning and faith, find the subtle academic limitations placed upon women doubly difficult to counter because women also carry a burden that the Christian community, unable or unwilling to perceive the full meaning of freedom in Christ, imposes on them.

This quote is representative of Susan’s views. One can thus conclude that Susan has experienced limitations as a Christian woman and as a female academic administrator.

Based on this article as well as several statements during her interview sessions, it seems logical to suggest that Susan feels called, or driven, to be an example of feminist theology in her life and her teaching, empowering men and women to live out equality.

One particular statement made this clear:

With this large number of colleges educating a vast population of students, the role of Christian art educator in preparing a citizenry sensitive to social justice concerns—including feminism—within the context of these college settings cannot be minimized. Feminist concerns, coupled with Biblical interpretation, may reveal previously overlooked points of view.

Susan is basically saying that a Christian feminist perspective taught in Christian education is vitally important, and that this perspective may bring key insight to cultural issues that are rarely considered.

In one interview Susan told a story revealing how she has become a leader of feminism on her campus:

I wrote that Feminist article. Then through that CEP initiative we had several round table discussions with faculty and staff on the role of women in the church and the role of women in higher education. And then last fall we taught the first women studies type course at our university. It was a humanities class and it was inter-disciplinary. The four lead teachers were me, someone from education, English and nursing. The class was called
her story vocation and voice. The common thread was personal story and personal narrative and how women had impacted these disciplines but also how women had impacted our personal lives. So that was pretty new for our university.

Susan reveals that writing the feminist article was the catalyst for her becoming one of the leaders of feminist issues on her campus. Her quote reveals that the new campus critical thinking initiative played perfectly into creating campus discourse about issues of gender and power among other campus professors, which developed into team-teaching the first women studies course on campus.

In Susan’s educational and theological beliefs, philosopher and educator Paulo Freire is a key figure linking feminism, critical pedagogy and feminist theology. During an interview Susan specifically mentioned Paulo Freire when the topic of Critical Pedagogy was raised. Paulo Freire is considered the founder of Critical Pedagogy. In addition, feminist theory has been influenced by Freirean critical pedagogy (McLaren, 1999).

Schipani (1984) points out that Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy ideas have deep influences from his Catholic faith. He quotes Freire, saying:

Christianity is for me a wonderful doctrine. Even though it is said that I am a communist leader… I have never been tempted to cease being a Catholic. I just feel passionately, corporately, physically, with all my being, that my stance is a Christian one because it is 100 percent revolutionary and human and liberating, and hence committed and utopian. (Schipani, 1984, p. 54)

Paulo Freire’s assimilation of Marxism is closely correlated to theological developments in Latin America, especially with Catholics emphasizing liberation theology. Tristao de Atayde, Jacques Martain and Emmanuel Mounier are among the
religious influences to his theories (Schipani, 1984). Schipani (1984) states Freire’s key theological beliefs that influenced his education teachings: (a) The Judeo-Christian God actively engages in the development of humanity in the course of historical events; (b) Jesus Christ is radical transformer or liberator who calls people to realize human life in a community of freedom and love; and (c) The church is called to be effective living witnesses of liberation, an agent of hope for all oppressed and alienated. Paulo Freire often used the word “humanization” throughout his writings. “The assumption is that there is an underlying human nature—or ‘lost humanity’ that—that is to be actualized, recaptured, or restored” (Schipani, 1984, p. 21). It is clear that in Paulo Freire’s mind, Christ was the liberator who could restore humanity completing the process of humanization.

McLaren (1999) states that for “Freire, pedagogy has as much to do with the teachable heart as the teachable mind, and as much to do with efforts to change the world as it does with rethinking the categories that we use to analyze our current condition within history” (p. 50). Susan’s teaching emphasizes developing the mind as well as the heart. In her article, Susan gives us a clear look at how pervasive her feminist theology is throughout her pedagogy. We can also see how she is setting the stage for Freirean dialogue by requesting her students to research and present themes of gender, power and equality.

While issues related to feminist theory arise naturally in my art history, Survey and Art Theory and Criticism classes, I include them just as easily in my studio courses. For instance, in all of my classes—studio and theory—we discuss feminist pedagogical issues, such as gaze theory, the role of (and restrictions upon) women in art history, critical readings of imagery in visual culture, and how our understanding of these issues
inform art practice. These three students demonstrate their own background with this pedagogy through their use of such language as “marginalized,” “gaze,” and “woman as Other” in the discussion of their own artworks. The fact that these students chose to explore these ideas, with open-ended assignments in such a wide variety of classes (and felt free and comfortable in doing so), is indicative of the pervasiveness with which the concepts come through in my pedagogy. These classes—while all very different in nature—are all shaped and informed by my own beliefs in critical inquiry, social justice, and feminist pedagogies.

This quote reveals many things. First, Susan is aware and deliberate in teaching Christian feminism through critical pedagogy. She explains themes like the “other,” the historical and visual marginalization of women, and gaze theory. This quote also reveals how pervasive critical pedagogy is in her courses, as it is utilized in art history, studio as well as art education method courses.

In conclusion, Susan utilizes a type of critical pedagogy informed by her Christian feminist theological beliefs which emphasizes Christ’s support and compassion for women. Consistent with Susan’s feminist theological beliefs are Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogical which also focuses on Christ, viewing him as the great liberator. For Susan placing Christ as central to her critical pedagogy teaching certainly distinguishes it from other feminist philosophies.

Susan’s university as well as Alexander Campbell would not be supportive of Susan’s usage of Critical Pedagogy, especially a Christian feminist version of it. She wrote and published a journal article expressing her frustration about her university’s conservative stance of feminism. She also held roundtable discussions on campus about feminist issues and co-taught the first feminist studies course on campus. All of this demonstrates a clear contrast between Susan, her university, and the Church of Christ
denominational stance on feminist issues. Ultimately, this is the one place in which Susan’s actions are a very overt example of how her personal beliefs consciously inform her teaching practice.

**Theme: Art History, Critical Thinking, and Church of Christ Epistemology**

In all three of her art education method courses Susan implements an inquiry-based art history assignment that focuses on critical thinking. As noted in Chapter 4, Burbules & Berk (1999) state, “The prime tools of critical thinking are the skills of formal and informal logic, conceptual analysis, and epistemology. The primary preoccupation of critical thinking is to supplant sloppy or distorted thinking with thinking based upon reliable procedures of inquiry” (Burbules & Berk, 1999, retrieved May 20, 2010).

As explained earlier in this chapter, an emphasis on critical thinking is consistent with Alexander Campbell’s epistemology and educational beliefs, both being strongly influenced by Scottish common sense realism, (Hughes, 1997; Jorgenson, 1989; Verkruyse, 2005; Wrather, 2007). Common sense realism believes that the human mind is structured in such a way that it is impossible not to act and think as if our perceptions reveal the real world directly to us (Noll, 1985). Susan’s university, as earlier asserted, supports critical thinking and inquiry-based learning. As also earlier contended, historically, Church of Christ educational institutions are known for having strong intellectual traditions, consistently placing reason over emotion and logic over speculation (Hughes, 1997).
Chapter 4 described Susan’s approach to inquiry-based teaching in her *Art and Children* course. Critical thinking is part of these assignments in that students have to assimilate data and make meaningful connections across several disciplines and artistic genres. If the primary goal of critical thinking is to supplant sloppy or distorted thinking with thinking based upon reliable procedures of inquiry, then her assignment has similar rationalistic epistemological underpinnings which are consistent with Alexander Campbell’s educational goals.

**Theme: Art Criticism and Rationalism**

It has already been established that the Church of Christ church, along with Susan’s university, has adopted rationalistic views of the world. This belief of rationalism finds its way into Susan’s art criticism process. Susan’s rationalistic philosophy can be documented in two ways: (a) adoption of the Edmund Feldman art criticism model, and (b) the use of language consistent with rationalist belief.

It has already been established that Susan implements the Edmund Feldman model of art criticism. In an interview, Susan mentioned that she uses the Feldman model because students first need a foundation and structure for engaging art criticism. Rationalism would support that there are foundational basics to content, and this would logically lead to teaching sequentially. Susan believes using Feldman’s sequential structure is beneficial, especially for people less familiar with analyzing art. Supporting a structure for art criticism is content-centered teaching rather than student-centered and reveals a belief that all students are generally the same, capable of logically moving through the four stages of Feldman’s criticism process.
In choosing the Feldman’s model, Susan also emphasizes the art object and not the subjectivity of the viewer. An emphasis on the art object fits with rationalism because clear conclusions can be logically determined. This is in contrast to the subjectivity of placing the viewer of the artwork as the central variable of the interpretation.

The second way rationalism is documented to be an influence on Susan’s art criticism process is through the words she uses when talking about art criticism. Examples includes her use of the word “truthful” and the phrase “we get closer and closer to the correct [emphasis added] meaning.” This language clearly suggests that Susan does look at an interpretation of an artwork as having one best meaning. Susan also uses the phrase “makes the most sense” when talking about developing interpretations. This language is consistent with Rationalism because it suggests that a rational and logical evaluation of the visual evidence would lead all people to the same interpretation.

**Theme: Art Criticism and Christian Ethics**

This section focuses on the milieu which exists in Susan’s Church of Christ affiliated university, and how the beliefs of this faith-focused school impact Susan’s pedagogy of art criticism. The milieu of Susan’s Church of Christ university has influenced her to avoid analyzing certain artworks in her teaching. This has occurred for two reasons: (a) Susan empathizes with the innocence of students, and (b) Susan wants to spiritually protect students.

The first reason why the milieu of Susan’s university has influenced her to avoid analyzing certain artworks in her teaching is because she empathizes with the innocence
of students. A key core value of the university can be found on their website: “People are the heart of the University.” Susan clearly adopts this university belief system:

So many art educators will tell you this too, that when you decide what you teach and how you go about teaching, you have to have to have some awareness of the community of which you are teaching in and respond to that community. So if I was going to teach at the inner city in Houston. I would not look at Michelangelo to the extent or the same way as I would if I was teaching at an affluent school district in Houston. And, for instance, we might look at the Houston art car parade, taking more time looking at Chicano art; and perhaps how it extracts from other art history traditions, than I would if was teaching at a farm community in the Texas pan handle or up in Kansas or something.

Susan believes it is important for her to understand and identify with the student community in whom she is so passionately trying to build an appreciation of creative images.

Susan herself came from a mixed background of religious and non-religious educational experiences, so she must continually remind herself of the contrasting experiences that her students bring to class:

Sometimes I forget where my students may be coming from… every once and a while I will get some students who are pretty sheltered and even though I see these things all the time, I have to be sympathetic; sympathetic to the fact that sometimes it is shocking for students to see a painting of a nude woman. That does not mean we will not look at them.

Susan reveals some information about Christian culture in this quote. Generally speaking, nudity is not something appreciated within a Christian culture. Most likely, nudity will be viewed as having sexual overtones, even if this was not the original intent. It is also likely that many of Susan’s Christian students have little exposure to nudes in art.
She also reveals her cultural empathy for young adults who are new to the experience of an art school. During an interview Susan told a story which demonstrates how much she can identify with these young Christian students:

I remember the very first class I took in my Ph.D. work. The art professor who was aware of where I was coming from… It was a team taught class. He put up a Mapplethorpe photograph. It was basically a penis with an erection. And it was a photograph and he left it up there while and he talk about whatever issue was that he talked about. He left that up on the screen for an inordinate amount of time. I could not help but think, “Okay, let’s move on, we have all seen it”. But that thing probably sat up there for some five to ten minutes while he discussed whatever point he was trying to make. He knew it was up there. I could not help but think, “This was for the girl from the Christian college down the street.”

This quote really clarifies a moment in Susan’s life in which the ethics of analyzing images was solidified. Even though it was a Ph.D. level course, it did not matter. For Susan’s taste, an erect penis, formally well done or not, does not need to be placed on the screen for any length of time. She holds on to this memory as a defining moment when empathizing with students.

A second factor influencing Susan’s decisions to avoid analyzing certain art works relates to a desire to spiritually protect her students. In our first interview I asked the question, “Do you think theology could or should be informing your educational theory or pedagogy of art education?”

She answered, “I would say absolutely I do. If I am going to work here then yes I really think it should.”

In our twelfth interview I asked, “Do you want to integrate your Christian belief into your art education teaching?”

Susan responded, “Into my art education practice? Yes.”
I pushed for a deeper answer, asking, “How do you believe you have accomplished that?”

Susan said:

In regards to overtly doing that in the art education classroom in my pedagogical practices I don’t know that I do it. It comes down more of the example I give in class. It shows up more in the way we treat each other. It shows up more in what I choose to present and not choose to present in the classroom. But what I am really there for is to teach my students good art education pedagogy practices.

Susan was asked very directly if she wanted to integrate theological beliefs into her art education teaching. She admitted that she did want to do just that. In regards to looking and discussing art imagery, Susan states that her faith helps her determine what she chooses to present in the classroom. She then elaborated further on the ethical line she draws in choosing to expose her student to images, bringing up the text *Interpreting Art* by Terry Barrett (2003):

I went through his [Terry Barrett’s] text and we seem to be aligned in most places. And honestly I have wanted to use his text in my class, and the reason I have not is because he gets into some things that I just would not want to deal with in a Christian University.

I said, “I have read the book you are refereeing to. He goes after some controversial places on purpose.”

Susan responded, saying, “It is not so much talking about the issues that bothers me but the imagery that he has used.”

I then said:

In one direction someone is going to say, and Terry Barrett would most likely say this because I believe this is why he wrote the book, if that work is going to be out there he would rather help a student go through the work
and engage it in a constructive positive way to appreciate it rather than not at all.

Susan responded, saying:

And I completely agree with that if he were to say that. I would take it a step further saying yes. And in the context of a Christian University there is whole other layer of issues that we have to work with. So we are going to talk about things and issues like the queer experience to some extent. And we are going to talk about issues that had been controversial in art but we are going to do it within… it is almost the same thing he is saying but more so; if you know what I mean.

To be accurate in my documentation of Susan’s teaching, she does deal with some controversial artworks in her classroom, such as Chris Offili’s *The Holy Mary Virgin* (1996). She also mentioned that she talks about Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano.

Concerning her procedure to get to deeper meaning in these works, she said:

Okay here is something that the general public thought was shocking. The artist may or may not have known going into it that the general public would have thought that this was shocking. I get them to ask the question… “why would he do it?” Look beyond that initial shock value and say why would he choose to go about doing it this way? And then the next question would be, is that a valid reason to you? So I present it that way. So we do look at controversial work, we are just not going to look at every single one of them.

I then asked her if she did not mind talking about some of the artworks which she avoided. She obliged by answering:

Photographs are even more visceral and tougher to deal with. And then when it is not just nudity but when it is people engaged in sexual acts. You know that is something that is a can of worms I don’t want to open. And I don’t think that what is being said has to be said with that right there. I think we can talk about some of those things in the classroom and look at some of those issues to the extent that we are going to without having to look at that imagery.
I asked Susan the question, “So you go through every topic, but you guard your students’ eyes from certain particularly egregious works?” She answered:

And not just my students; my eyes too. There are some things I don’t want to see either. There are some works that are offensive to the point and the shock value is so strong that it is hard to get the message. I have never been fond of art, even if it came from ancient Greece or 2002 that showed people engaged in sexual acts. We talk about why people would want to portray that.

After lengthy discussion Susan revealed the one main type of work which she would never consider worthy to make, interpret, or use in class discussion: art dealing with graphic sexual nudity. She said:

So part of that is the response to the community that I am working with. And laying a good foundation for them and then enabling them to go out and find out on their own. Also that responsibility that you mentioned about Terry Barrett might say about doing these things and looking at art in a constructive environment so you are not blindsided when you get out there and don’t know what to do with it. I agree with that statement but I also have to temper that with where I teach and also what my views are too; about art and about what is important to see and what can perhaps wait till later.

Basically Susan pushes this conservative community about as far as it could go without drawing unnecessary attention from the administration or the university’s trustees. I believe she stated it well when she said:

I definitely think there are ways I could present this information not within a Christian framework. I think it is done all the time at other universities. But I would not want to do anything to diminish what our university is about. I really try to present a number of different viewpoints; and some of those viewpoints are dicey. I could imagine some of our board of trustees if they were in the class, would have a hard time with some of the stuff we look at.

Through her quotes Susan reveals a pressure of responsibility—or conviction—that she can’t avoid. This stems largely from the fact that she is teaching in a conservative
Fundamentalist Christian University which has a denominational legacy of iconoclasm and censorship toward all forms of art.

On a final note, when dealing with the most visually shocking images, Susan seems to be more sensitive when visually introducing controversial content in class rather than verbally introducing controversial content. This distinction reveals an influence of her conservative Christian heritage in regards to art criticism. Susan will not show the shocking image, but will talk about the issues surrounding why that particular image is considered controversial. To talk about the controversy without the image suggest that Susan’s students are not being kept in the dark on an issue just because Susan will not show that image. For Susan, the issue or idea being addressed in the artwork is what helps her determine if she is going to discuss it in class. If she can replace it with another work which addresses the same issue, then she will do just that; if no other work can be used as a substitute, then Susan will at least talk about the idea without an image.

This section documented two ways Susan’s university Church of Christ milieu has influence her to avoid analyzing certain artworks in her teaching: (a) Susan empathizes with the innocence of students, and (b) Susan wants to spiritually protect students. For Susan, the challenge is to balance her respect for the Christian university, of which she is a part, while also leading her students to a more complex understand and appreciation of art. It is the challenge of teaching a subject deemed secular within a community which demands everything to be sacred.
Theme: Scientific Rationalist approach to Art Making and Church of Christ Belief

It has already been established that Alexander Campbell, deeply influenced by the Enlightenment, adopted a rationalist view of the world. Hughes (1997) has found rationalism to be a consistent intellectual tradition within Church of Christ churches, but even more so in their colleges and universities.

Susan is consistent with her denomination in adopting a rationalist view of the world, and this is documented in her teaching of art making. Susan’s rationalist beliefs merge with her art education pedagogical beliefs when she adopts a scientific rationalist approach to art making. Scientific rationalism is one of the three main art educational traditions in art education history (Efland, 1990b). Siegesmund (1998) claims, “Scientific rationalists seek an empirical base for art education. They claim art education is a discipline with distinct methods for conducting inquiry and forming judgments” (p. 204).

In teaching art making, a scientific rationalist approach might focus on knowledge acquisition. Susan’s focus on knowledge acquisition is seen in her hierarchy of content knowledge and curricular sequencing. For example, Susan reveals that she differentiates between art and exercise. She assigns exercises earlier in the semester so that students can build off that basic knowledge, moving toward more complex levels of art making knowledge at the end of the semester. Content sequencing reveals a belief in essentials, or basics, which take precedence.

Susan develops a sequence of content for her students to learn in art making. They are (a) Understanding of Composition; (b) Developing Rendering Skills; (c)
Understanding of Art Materials, Techniques and Process; (d) Developing a Visual Repertoire; and (e) Developing individualized artistic expression. For further details see Chapter 4 art making.

As added support, even stronger connections between Susan’s teaching of art making and rationalism have come from theological statements made by Susan. Susan believes that God created the universe with a rational order and design. This theological belief finds its way into Susan’s teaching of elements and principles of design. Susan also believes that art making is a way to understand God and our relationship to God. Finally, she believes art making can be an act of worship to God. If Susan views art making as an integral part of the Christian faith, then this could be a motivating factor for Susan to continue teaching art education at her conservative Christian affiliated university for the last fifteen year.

Pedagogical and Theological Conflicts

Theme: Conflicting Educational Pedagogies

This section analyses how Susan’s beliefs differ from the Church of Christ tradition and how these differences may distinguish her teaching practices from those advocated by her university.

One major distinction between Susan’s educational and theological beliefs is that she adopts a feminist theology which adopts a critical pedagogical lens. Susan’s Church of Christ affiliated university, as well as Church of Christ founder Alexander Campbell, would not be supportive of feminist theology or critical pedagogy teaching. Susan’s
critical pedagogy shows up both in her use of a feminist model of art criticism and her use of a feminist methodology when teaching art history, specifically in her *Art for Adolescence* and *Art, Theory and Criticism* courses.

It is important to further analyze how Susan and the Church of Christ denomination differ over feminist theological issues, but first we must understand differing views of feminist theology. Susan’s article gives us a spectrum of positions where the Christian church stands on feminism, explaining three types of Christian feminism and two non-feminist options. These include (a) post-Christian/revolutionary feminism, (b) mainline feminism, and (c) biblical/evangelical feminism, as well as two non-feminist positions (d) liberated traditionalist, and (e) traditionalist/Strict Hierarchalist.

In her article, Susan gives the details of a post-Christian / revolutionary feminist position:

Post-Christian and revolutionary feminisms hold that patriarchalism is so pervasive in scripture that the Bible cannot hold divine revelation. Those who fall under the category of “post-Christian” feminist believe that women should seek out a religious experience devoid of the male experience, abandoning a “male” God in favor of a “Mother Goddess.” Revolutionary—or radical—Christian feminists, similarly, believe that an experience of “women-church” was prevalent during the earliest Christian churches but has been destroyed through traditionally patriarchal approaches (both in writing and interpretation) to Biblical text. Both the Christian and post-Christian stances to radical feminism demonstrate revolutionary views in their approaches to Christianity.

She then explains the mainline/reformist feminist viewpoint, saying:

This viewpoint includes the idea that the Bible represents the will of God but is not the infallible word of God. In as much as the Bible advocates redemptive themes and opposes oppression, it represents God’s will, for
instance; but those aspects that demonstrate patriarchy do not represent God’s will.

The most conservative Christian feminist position is the biblical, evangelical feminist perspective. Susan describes this view, saying:

This philosophy maintains that the Bible is the infallible word of God but that it does not teach patriarchal hierarchy as a part of God’s divine plan. While God revealed Himself through means of a patriarchal culture, He progressively worked toward the abolishment of any hierarchy among males and females. Likewise, Paul taught equality and mutual support/submission of the sexes to one another.

Susan then describes the liberated traditionalist position, also known as moderate hierarchalist:

The Bible is the infallible word of God and does demonstrate a moderate hierarchy of man over woman. This group is, however, sympathetic to feminist concerns in that it understands that Christ’s attitude toward women demonstrated a radical and ground-breaking departure from the rabbinical hierarchy taught at the time.

The final, most conservative theological stance on Christian feminism is the traditionalist / strict hierarchalist position:

This approach also holds that the Bible is the infallible word of God and that the hierarchy of man as head of woman, which is described within, is ordained by God. While women may hold service roles within the church, only men may hold positions of authority.

What needs to be answered concerning these three pro-feminist theological positions and two non-feminist positions is which one best represents the Church of Christ denominational stance. The Church of Christ churches have historically viewed the Bible as the inspired word of God, entirely inerrant and perfect (Hughes, 1997; Imbler, 1992; Mayer, 1961). This eliminates the post-Christian/revolutionary feminist
and the mainline/reformist feminist positions being that neither views the Bible as inerrant.

Susan provided a perspective of the Church of Christ churches in her community during one interview:

In our conservative city… I can say there are two Church of Christ churches that definitely fall into that [strict hierarchalist]. But because the Churches of Christ churches are so autonomous that I would say the others are liberated traditionalist. You start to see more praise teams with women standing up. There is even a church that women can help with communion. Which is still a service role and that is not earth shattering but that is big in the Churches of Christ. A lot of people are uncomfortable with that.

This provides a perspective on the Church of Christ denominational stance. However, being that Susan’s university is not a church, there could be different positions on this issue. In order to clarify the university’s stance I asked Susan, “Which category most accurately categorizes the Church of Christ’s theology, and is that the same category as your Church of Christ University?” She answered:

I think among the universities related toward the Churches of Christ, I think none of them are comfortable with the word feminist. For the most part people at our university will be in the biblical / evangelical feminism up to the mainline feminism.

Susan is suggesting that within her university most people would be supporters of feminist theology. However, other evidence seems to suggest that her university is uncomfortable with feminist issues. During the interview she discussed other Church of Christ colleges and universities:

You have some universities that are much more conservative, where you will never have a woman on the Bible faculty. And probably for similar reasons you would not see a women faculty member on the Bible area. If Bible is housed within another college you will not see a women dean at
that college, nor will you see a woman president of the university. However, there are other institutions in our sisterhood who do have women faculty on the Biblical studies in those areas, and see a need for women in those roles.

Susan’s examples are interesting because she points out a battleground still being fought for gender equality. Those who lead the colleges or universities in Biblical scholarship still tend to be men; a female dean over a Biblical Studies department would be rare and a female president over the college even more-so. Susan’s statement seems to confirm that Church of Christ colleges and universities are, overall, fairly consistent with the Church of Christ history in the fact that they do not support feminism or Christian feminist theology.

Susan seems to align most with the category of biblical / evangelical feminism:

The Bible reflects God’s will and it is inerrant and perfect. I think that there are different interpretations of the Bible and these differences all hinge on language. The writers were inspired but they were writing within a cultural context within a certain time period. And I think that if there is an error, it is how humanity interprets it; it is more like we are the error.

Susan’s belief that the Bible is inerrant and perfect clearly places her within the biblical, evangelical feminist stance since the other two positions which support feminism see the Bible as a human, cultural construction open to human error.

Ultimately, acceptance or rejection of feminism within Susan’s university administration reveals a pedagogical difference between Susan and her university and the Church of Christ denomination historically. Susan, in passionately teaching feminist pedagogy to her students, is implementing critical pedagogy. Multiple times within the research it has been explained that Alexander Campbell and the Church of Christ epistemologically have a rationalist view of the world. This rationalist view allows for an
acceptance of critical thinking and inquiry, but it does not extend to accepting critical
teachy as a pedagogical lens. Thus, the Church of Christ university and the denomination
as a whole do not support the feminist theology which Susan embraces.

Theme: Liberal Arts Generalists versus Specialized Degrees

The university policy requires all degree programs to have a liberal arts core,
including specialized professional degree programs. Liberal arts education as we
know it today is both philosophical and oratorical, forming the mind and training the
citizen. This combination is reflected in the higher education of the monastic
educational systems of the 12th century Middle Ages. Seven specific subjects were
taught in medieval institutions: grammar, rhetoric, and logic (the trivium), geometry,
arithmetic, music, and astronomy (the quadrivium). Later, theology as well as classic
authors within all of the subjects and sciences became part of liberal arts curriculum.
Today liberal arts education usually comprises studies in the natural and social
sciences as well as the humanities and languages (Mannoia, 2000).

In 1835, in a series of essays on education, Alexander Campbell criticized the
stronghold of Aristotelianism on medieval scholasticism, and by implication American
higher education institutions. Within his schools he worked to replace ancient classics
with modern sciences and social sciences (Jorgenson, 1989). Campbell’s rejection of the
scholarship of ancient Greece and the Roman Empire has a direct influence on the
teaching of visual art.

Campbell’s liberal arts model emphasizing the natural sciences and social
sciences can be observed in Susan’s university through their heavy financial commitment
to full-time teaching faculty in the natural and social sciences. The university website reveals that 29% of the full-time professors are in the natural and social science division. Full-time arts faculty (visual arts, theater, and music) make up only 4% of all university teaching faculty. This would be consistent with Alexander Campbell’s liberal arts educational philosophy.

Within Susan’s university, the tension over Campbell’s vision of a liberal arts core has manifested itself in a struggle between liberal arts degree programs and specialized professional degree programs. Some professors at Susan’s university see quality education as liberal arts education, while others believe in preparing people for specific employment. This internal struggle is revealed through Susan’s own words:

You almost have two camps at our university. There are those who are professionally oriented and trying to prepare their students for whatever graduate program, professional program or whatever employment they want to get into. And then you have those lofty Idealists who believe in a Liberal Arts education. It is an Idealism about education in general, wanting to create a well rounded person. When you add the Christian dimension too, it would be the idea that our students, we hope, will go out and have a mission based focus. What I mean by that they will go out and do good things in the name of Jesus Christ. In whatever field they choose. But a Liberal Arts education can build a broader foundation which will allow them to function in a variety of different levels with a variety of different people in a variety of different contacts. And increase their understanding of different people, in a way that vocationally minded programs perhaps may not achieve.

Susan’s statement reveals that her university is having an internal struggle to stay focused on liberal arts. Degree programs have been developed which place a strain on the liberal arts education structure for the sake of specialized, technical knowledge and employment. Susan’s views are supported by data collected from the university website. It reveals that
half of the degree programs offered are professional programs, and 42% of the full-time faculty teaches in those professional programs.

I asked Susan, “You are the perfect person to ask about this because your art education program is a professional degree. So where do you fall in this conflict?”

She responded:

I want both worlds. I have a duty to my students to prepare them to take their certification exam and to pass it because unless they pass it and can get out there and teach what they went to school for then I have not done my job. I do not teach to the test, but I am mindful of the test. And we have a one hundred percent pass rate on that certification exam, even though our program is small. We don’t have a B.F.A program we have a B.A. program. There are many universities that have B.F.A programs having many more studio classes than we do who’s students still struggle to pass that state teacher certification exam. So I have a duty to my students to prepare them for that, but I don’t believe these two things have to be mutually exclusive. I believe you can teach them rich broad contextual people oriented experiences, and bring in that Liberal Arts focus. When I design this art education degree, it has a lot of humanities in it. I believe in that human condition that is taught through these humanities courses; through the literature and through the history and theatre and all these things. So when I designed the degree I purposefully designed it with a large humanities Liberal Arts focus. So I believe you can do both and I work to do both even down to the way I teach my classes.

Art education is a professional program, placing Susan in the middle of this cultural struggle within the university. The question at stake seems to be, do we focus on specialization, emphasizing employment, or prepare students to develop a broad knowledge base so that they can become well-rounded and informed citizens? Susan wants to have both, and stated that she is trying to do both by structuring her art education degree with less art making courses and more liberal arts courses. Susan is
convinced that her students will become better art teachers than those graduating from a B.F.A program.

**Theme: Conflicting Visions over the Arts**

As earlier stated, art in the eyes of Alexander Campbell was frivolous since it does not fit into the realm of logic and reason. Thus, he advanced a philosophy of art as utility. In a public speech at one of his colleges Campbell said, “And what is art? Art is the application of science” (Jorgenson, 1989). This quote not only stands on Calvin’s teachings, but reveals Campbell’s Lockean Rationalism. Within Lockean rationalist, “art for art’s sake” and those things that live in the world of opinion and choice cannot be comprehended and are therefore less academically important (Baker, 2002). Campbell’s negative view of art is further reinforced by his rejection of ancient classical scholasticism. Campbell states,

> Classical literature and classic antiquity, the natural, political, moral, and social philosophy of Greece and Rome…have so bewitched and infatuated literati of the West, that all of our literary institutions have been enslaved to the idolatry of Grecian and Roman models as were the Catholic laity to the See of Rome in the long dark night of papistical supremacy. (Jorgenson, 1989)

Campbell’s distain for the ancient “Pagan” classics is easily heard. In contrast, Susan’s places an emphasis on classical writings of antiquity:

> In my aesthetics course we almost do more a historical approach to aesthetics. And what was important to art in any given period. You have my syllabus so you can see we start with Plato. One thing that really struck me was when someone gave the book The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas to read; in reading it I saw that from Plato to Thomas Aquinas to Kant there is a common thread running. So it may be difficult to look at Plato and to see what is going on now in advertising and draw a thread… but there is a thread there. This is stuff I never read ‘till graduate school.
This quote not only shows Susan’s use of the classics in her teaching, but explains that she first came into contact with the classics in graduate school and deciding to bring them into her teaching at the undergraduate level.

My first aesthetics course that I had was when I did my masters degree. That was the first time I really sat in an art theory class at all besides art history. You know looking at the background ideas behind the thoughts behind art history. I liked it. I thought it was really interesting. Then I took some aesthetic philosophy courses at ____. So I took them from art historians at _____ but also from the philosophy department. And I had a really great teacher…. He was good at explaining to us what we just read. Because this was the type of thing you could read three times and just begin to understand what you read. At times it was infuriating because it tried to split philosophical hairs. But I really did enjoy it and enjoyed thinking that way. And I think we and our students included do not have enough opportunity to think. We don’t get those opportunities very often so it is probably why I like that. But I wanted my students to read and spend some time with these things because for me it opened up a whole world that I never knew was out there. I said to myself how come nobody told me about this.

Susan’s graduate school experience was from a large public university without religious affiliation. She took many courses which exposed her to the classics. Susan explained that she enjoyed these readings very much and wondered why no one taught them to her earlier.

Susan is slowly changing her Church of Christ affiliated university to understand art and to appreciate it. She is not accomplishing this by ignoring the Church of Christ faith, but is embracing that faith and forcing the community to re-think its beliefs and re-envision its faith traditions as intertwined with the arts.

Susan pointed out, “When you’re at a private university you are constantly thinking of your constituencies because you do not receive state funding. It is an interesting
political dynamic.” This type of atmosphere ultimately has an impact on the context of how something is presented. She explained further, saying:

I will let them [students] research and do their own investigating. And they will come back and do presentations. But even some of the artwork that they bring in and that we talk about, in all honesty…and with our academic context surrounding it, it is not like I would ever do a lecture and invite the outside public. Or do it at my church or something; because they would not understand if I took this one little thing out of its larger context.

Susan confirms that her community still has the many biases that Campbell and other Church of Christ leaders had toward the arts. These biases are significant and pervasive enough that she would not feel comfortable explaining what they discuss in class to those not in the course. Ultimately, art history, art criticism, and art making pedagogies are thought through carefully. Susan knows her community well enough to know how to maneuver around the theological pressures and prejudices toward art. Despite living among a conservative community, which is uncomfortable within the art world, she has worked tirelessly to be a bridge of understanding, helping them reconcile Christian faith and art.
CHAPTER 6
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter considers the findings from the previous analyses of Susan’s educational practices and her theological beliefs. The chapter contextualizes these findings with a discussion of the institutional and professional influences that have shaped Susan’s belief system.

People are behaviorally and psychologically complex to a point that we cannot separate ourselves from our values, beliefs and assumptions; they affect every part of our lives. In education, beliefs influence what, why, and how something is taught. Teacher Belief Research has deepened our understandings of the complexity of this phenomenon. The primary reason for this present study was to contribute to this research in the analysis of one art teacher’s beliefs and pedagogy. Learning more about the impact of specific beliefs represents a significant factor in advancing educational practice.

Research Findings

The following research questions guided the following discussion of the findings from the analysis of the data in the study:

Primary Research Question

How do personal beliefs impact educational practice?
Sub-questions

1. What are the influences that contribute toward shaping a personal belief system?

What is the import of theological beliefs in a personal belief system?

What is the relationship of theological beliefs and secular beliefs in a personal belief system?

How are institutional influences adapted or rejected from a personal belief system?

What are the consequences when personal beliefs differ from institutional policy?

How do professional fields of practice influence a personal belief system?

How are personal belief systems characterized by internal contradiction and inconsistency?

What causes change in a personal belief system?

This research analyzed the belief system of the participant, called Susan, who is an art educator practicing within the context of a Christian university. The primary focus of this research is on three areas: (a) teacher beliefs about art education, (b) teacher beliefs about art, and (c) teacher beliefs about art and theology. To contextualize Susan’s beliefs, the following section considers them within Gutek’s (2004) construct of educational pedagogical philosophies.
Educational Pedagogies

Most teachers have conflicting beliefs concerning their teaching philosophies. Susan is no different; in fact, she agrees with and implements all five of Gutek’s pedagogies: Perennalism, Essentialism, Progressivism, Critical Theory Pedagogy, and Constructivism.

Perennialism

It is important to note that there are many other Perennialist traditions of pedagogy besides Christianity. Susan adopts a Perennialist epistemology, believing all people possess a commonly shared rationality that makes it possible for individuals to search for and find universal truth and live out the values based on that truth. Perennials believe in universal truth and classic sources of knowledge. With a background stemming from the Church of Christ Restoration tradition, Susan accepts the Bible as a sacred source of knowledge. It was the belief that the Bible should be the key educational resource which drove Alexander Campbell (the Restoration founder) to found many Christian Colleges across the United States. Susan accepts the Bible as an educational influence, but allows students to receive theological teaching mostly from the required Bible courses on campus. More specifically in regard to Church of Christ Restoration history as a classic source of knowledge, Susan had some knowledge, but not enough to align it with curriculum.

In summary, Perennalism views human values as universal and spanning time, place, situation and circumstance. It also views human beings as having free will to construct and choose between alternative patterns of action, with behavior being most
humane and civil when it is based on knowledge and reason. The analysis of Susan’s educational practices with art criticism, art making, and art history would suggest that she generally adopts these assumptions, particularly in regard to knowledge and reason and respect for free will.

**Essentialism**

Essentialism believes that schooling, instruction, teaching, and learning need to focus on the basics—on what is really necessary to become an educated, productive, effective, and capable individual citizen. This type of teaching is content centered. Those subjects that are viewed as essential knowledge are given that title because they have endured as disciplines throughout human history. The Liberal Arts tradition aligns closely with Essentialist pedagogy. Susan’s university is organized according to a Liberal Arts model, which Susan supports. Susan developed her art education certification program, emphasizing a broad range of course requirements rather than remaining specialized. Susan adopted many of her beliefs from what one would consider an Essentialist perspective. That is, she considers art as an essential or foundational knowledge for all students.

In Susan’s view, art education has teachable content which should be wisely structured and sequenced. Susan’s Essentialist beliefs direct her to emphasize the basic foundational knowledge such as the elements and principles of design, the use of the Feldman model for art criticism, and technical knowledge for art making. To some degree Susan also reflects Essentialist beliefs in regard to the authoritative role of teacher; that teacher is central to instigating academic growth from the student.
Progressivism

Progressive education acknowledges that students have not just academic needs, but physical, psychological and spiritual as well, and that the school should be part of teaching the whole child. Progressive curriculum grows out of the individual child’s interests and needs, rather than being imposed as the prescribed, pre-established skills and subjects of the traditional curriculum. In this way Susan does not fit Progressivism, more strongly reflecting the essentialist model just discussed. However, aspects of Susan’s teaching suggest that she is attuned to students’ cultural and societal interests. This is reflected in the assignments that allow students to make individual choices. Susan disagrees with Progressivism’s advocacy for the teaching of values as a teacher’s responsibility; rather, Susan considers this to be the parent’s role, acknowledging that the school systems have assumed this responsibility by default.

Progressivism has expanded in two differing directions, student-centered and Social Reconstructivist (Efland, 1990b; Gutek, 2004). The Social Reconstructionist track emphasizes schools as democratic and social equalizers. Susan acknowledges there are educational inequalities in our society and would like to see that change, but she ultimately views the activism side of social reconstruction as a choice made by students. However, the following Critical Theory Pedagogy section does evidence a measure of openness to such ideas as part of Susan’s belief system.

Critical Theory

Evolved from Social Reconstructionist Progressivism, Critical Theory pedagogy views schools as deliberate agents of social, political, and economical change for the
equality of people. Susan acknowledges that to some degree she supports this and could do a better job in following through with these beliefs. In some of her courses, Susan focuses on developing dialogue within the classroom. In some instances, this discourse focuses on raising the consciousness of marginal and subordinate social positions. Susan seems to be familiar with Freirean educational philosophy and public discourse, encouraging students to voice their beliefs and concerns to develop an awareness and appreciation of others’ views and positions. Susan implemented a Freirean type dialogue approach in the feminist art criticism process, raising issues of power and inequality. Additionally, Susan critically analyzed issues of power in art textbooks and museum practices.

**Constructivism**

Constructivists believe individuals form or construct much of what they learn and understand, requiring contextual knowledge and much of human learning in a social environment. Similar to the student-centered approach of Progressivism, Constructivism advises teachers to interact with students by seeking their questions and points of view and delivering instruction so that learners become actively involved with content through manipulation of materials and social interaction. Susan’s practice does at times move to a teacher as facilitator mode with students taking more of the lead. This shows up more in feminist art criticism. Her art history assignment, or her assignment for creating a book that is still being written and reconstructed based on who is involved, also exemplify a constructivist approach. Teaching multiple perspectives is also supported by
Constructivism. Susan achieves this by implementing multiple art history methodologies such as semiotic, feminist, psychoanalytic, and Marxist perspectives.

As earlier noted, most teachers exhibit a range of beliefs that can often be in conflict. The examination of Susan’s beliefs in the context of Gutek’s construct of five philosophical positions evidenced such inconsistency. As found in the analysis of Susan’s practices with art criticism, art making, and art history, Susan fluctuates from an essentialist position, acting as an authority over content and delivery of that content, to a constructivist position, functioning as a facilitator. Further, the analysis demonstrated that as an essentialist Susan holds a strong belief in foundational knowledge, yet in some instances she also takes position aligned with critical pedagogy, staunchly believing in presenting less mainstream content, particularly as it relates to feminist perspectives.

Art Education

Art History

This research documented six approaches to teaching art history found within art education literature. They are: Information Approach, Inquiry Approach, Aesthetic Approach, Humanities Approach, Cross-disciplinary Approach, and Cultural Education Approach. Among these approaches, Susan implements an inquiry approach. An inquiry approach to art history is taught for the purpose of helping students improve their critical thinking skills. Susan’s inquiry approach to teaching art history has been influenced by her administration’s push for a campus-wide plan implementing critical thinking objectives into campus courses. This represents an instance of how institutional belief
systems can influence individual beliefs and practice. However, in addition to the institutional pressure for including critical thinking, the analysis of Susan’s beliefs revealed a personal belief and investment as well.

Critical pedagogy and feminist, Marxist, semiotic, and psychoanalytic methodologies also emerged in analyzing Susan’s pedagogical practices with art history. A significant influence on Susan’s beliefs toward teaching art history is Karen Kiefer-Boyd. Susan took a course with Karen Kiefer-Boyd while earning her doctoral degree. This course looked at art from a perspective of Critical Pedagogy, analyzing issues related to gender and power. Kiefer-Boyd modeled a feminist model of art criticism, which Susan adopted and implements in her courses. Similar to Susan’s practice, Kiefer-Boyd’s course critiqued art museums and art history textbooks for gender bias. It is very likely that Susan learned art history methodologies such as Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytic and semiotic analysis through this course as well.

Susan’s academic interests in which Critical Pedagogy—emphasizing art, gender and power—connect with her theological beliefs of gender equality, ultimately moved her to pursue cultural change for feminist causes in her campus community. This research found that she took feminist action on campus by publishing an article about feminism and her teaching at a Christian university. Susan also led university campus roundtable discussions where faculty could talk through feminist issues, and team-taught the first women studies course on her campus.
Art Criticism

Geahigan (1997) claims that of all the many types of art criticism methodologies, there are four classical models that have had a significant influence in the field of art education. These four models are: (a) the Feldman model (Feldman, 1967, 1970), (b) phenomenological model (Kailen, 1968), (c) aesthetic scanning model (Broudy, 1972), and (d) exploratory model (Smith, 1973).

The analysis revealed that Susan used both the Feldman model and an alternative feminist model, a combination that offers very diverse ways of conducting art criticism. The feminist model of art criticism, for instance, has three defining characteristics which (a) focus on the viewer for the interpretation process, (b) maintain the contextual background at the forefront of the art criticism process, and (c) reinforce critical discourse in the classroom. On the other hand, the Feldman model of art criticism, which is Modernist in influence, (a) focuses on the art object rather than the viewer, (b) emphasizes formal qualities over historical context, and (c) emphasizes final judgment of the artistic quality of the artwork.

In their research, DeKock, Sleegers, & Voeten (2004) emphasize the importance of analyzing classroom learning goals, along with teacher and learner roles, for the purpose of understanding aspects of the learning environment that influence the performance of students and stimulate new forms of learning. From the perspective of DeKock, Sleegers, & Voeten (2004), the analysis concluded that Susan implements the very different Feldman and feminist models of art criticism because they emphasize different learning goals. The Feldman model emphasizes a learning product goal while
the feminist model emphasizes a learning process goal. In talking about her use of a Feldman model Susan mentions building sequential art knowledge, helping students develop basic concepts for critiquing art. While discussing the feminist model Susan mentions the process of talking about art, calling it collaborative and emphasizing the active role of the viewer.

Teachers are often unaware of their own belief systems to the point that they cannot detect that some of them conflict. This is the case for Susan regarding her use of both the Feldman and feminist model of art criticism. The Feldman model is much older and more established in the field of art education. I would suggest that Susan learned Feldman’s model while in undergraduate school or while working on her masters. The literature on art criticism in art education at the time Susan was in undergraduate school was at the height of Feldman’s influence in our field. Susan’s interviews suggest that she learned the feminist model of art criticism in her doctoral program while taking a course with Karen Kiefer-Boyd.

Pajares (1992) states we tend to be eclectic and add new beliefs to already accepted beliefs rather than eliminate them. This seems to be what happened to Susan, adding her support of the feminist model of art criticism along with her older and more established belief in the Feldman’s model. She gives ample reasons why she believes both models are useful. However, the literature in art education as well as the findings in this study suggests these two models do not agree philosophically or pedagogically. The question then becomes, what firmly held beliefs are influencing Susan to keep using both models in class?
The underlying belief which reinforces Susan’s use of the Feldman model of art criticism is a rationalist view of knowledge and an essentialist view of education. Rationalism and essentialism share certain similarities, one being the belief that all human beings have a common ability to reason and process reality; this reasoned reality can then be understood as foundational knowledge. Rationalism and essentialism also both view knowledge as obtainable, and encourage sequenced teaching. Susan’s Essentialist beliefs motivate her emphasis on basic foundational knowledge.

In regard to Susan’s belief in the feminist model of art criticism, feminist art criticism literature in our field has become more common, including a key article by Kiefer-Boyd in 2003 which Susan has referenced in her own published articles. The opportunity to observe a professor such as Kiefer-Boyd model feminist art criticism was most likely a motivating factor in adopting this perspective.

**Art Making**

This research documented six approaches to art making in art education literature: (a) art making for the spirit, (b) a utilitarian approach, (c) a scientific rationalist approach, (d) art making for cultural understanding, (e) art making as a study skill, and (f) a cognitive approach. This research found that Susan implements two of these approaches in teaching art making, a scientific rationalist approach and a cognitive approach.

Art education literature does not specifically identify a scientific rationalist approach for art making. Rather, Siegesmund (1998), in referencing Efland (1990b), identified scientific rationalism as one of the three main art educational traditions in art education history. He remarks, “Scientific rationalists seek an empirical base for art
education. They claim art education is a discipline with distinct methods for conducting inquiry and forming judgments” (Siegesmund, 1998, p. 204). The analysis thus identified aspects of Susan’s practice with art making with scientific rationalist beliefs.

In the analysis, evidence of a scientific rationalist approach to art making was found in her belief that art making is grounded in fundamentals and her belief that art making should be taught sequentially. When dealing with the fundamentals of art making, Susan easily identified her top five things which students need to learn in art making: (a) understanding compositional design; (b) developing rendering skills; (c) understanding art media, techniques, and processes; (d) developing a visual repertoire; and (e) developing individualized artistic expression. The first four of these fundamentals strongly relate to an essentialist pedagogical perspective. The final requirement, Susan’s belief in developing individualized artistic expression, reflects a belief in a student-centered pedagogy, again demonstrating the inconsistencies that most often inform individual beliefs.

The second approach that emerged from the analysis of Susan’s practice with teaching art making can be linked to a Cognitive approach. Efland (2002), in Art and Cognition, argues for a cognitive purpose for student art making. The analysis of Susan’s practice with teaching art making revealed evidence of a cognitive emphasis on critical thinking and dialogic feedback. Susan’s art making assignments, which emphasized critical thinking, were open-ended allowing students to address specific theories and themes and connect them to the student’s personal beliefs. The cognitive approach to art
making was evidenced in Susan’s use of dialogic feedback to facilitate students in evolving a deeper process with art making.

Similar to art criticism, rationalism and essentialism show up again as key beliefs which inform Susan’s teaching of art making. The rationalist emphasis on a knowable reality fits with her approach to media, where the science of chemistry and physics inform art learning as an engagement with media that has particular properties and characteristics.

The other approach to art making which Susan adopts is a cognitive approach through constructivism. This approach focuses on the conceptual aspects of art making. It is more difficult to trace how constructivist beliefs found their way into Susan’s belief system. Susan most likely learned about cognitive theory through her three degree programs. In our interviews, Susan did mention an influential NAEA presenter who kept referencing constructivist theories.

**Summary**

This study analyzed Susan’s beliefs pertaining to her art educational practice, specifically her teaching of art history, art criticism and art making. This section found that Susan’s overall belief system was developed from various sources and influences that fit within an institutional influence or professional influence. Institutional influences, including an educational policy from her university with an emphasis on Liberal Arts and critical thinking, informed her educational beliefs and practices. In addition, while she was not very knowledgeable of Church of Christ history and its educational philosophy, her rationalist beliefs were very much in sync with these views.
Professional influences which informed her educational beliefs included the influence of art educator Karen Kiefer-Boyd and author Alexander Nehamas.

**Church of Christ Educational and Theological Beliefs**

Chapter 5 analyzed the similarities and differences in the theological beliefs of Susan, the Church of Christ affiliated university where she teaches, and the primary founder of the Church of Christ denomination, Alexander Campbell. Ultimately, the goal was to understand the relationship of Susan’s theology and her pedagogical practice with art education.

**Church Of Christ Educational Beliefs**

Alexander Campbell is known as the main influential founder of the Church of Christ Restoration Movement (Founded 1832). In 1809, while attending the University of Glasgow in Scotland, Alexander Campbell studied ideas from John Locke, Thomas Reid, Francis Bacon, Hume, Newton and others. Through these influences he ultimately worked out his epistemology by listing four powers of attaining knowledge: instinct, sensation, reason, and faith. This epistemology formed his assumptions to his preaching and teaching philosophies (Imbler, 1992). Campbell believed that the Bible was the inspired, infallible word of God. But he also believed in the theological concept of original sin, which gave him pause to fully trust human reason on its own.

Particularly influential on Campbell was Scottish common sense realism (Jorgenson, 1989; Hughes, 1997; Verkruyse, 2005; Wrather, 2007). Developed by Thomas Reid (1710-1796), common sense realism had three emphases: (a)
epistemological common sense, (b) methodological common sense, and (c) ethical common sense (Noll, 1985). To Campbell, God created the mind in such a way that it is impossible not to act and think as if our perceptions revealed the real world to us directly. Methodological common sense basically brings together the willingness to empirically look at experience and merge that with a rational, inductive thought process. Finally, Campbell adopted ethical common sense believing that humans know by the nature of their own being certain foundational principles of morality.

In the age of Enlightenment Campbell was a unique person, fully combining faith with reason. Alexander Campbell would bring this unique epistemology to the United States of America, interjecting it into the Church of Christ Restoration movement—the first Christian faith native to the United States in American history (Mayer, 1961).

Assuring his influence over his newly started denomination, Campbell started the national Church of Christ publication called The Millennial Harbinger. In this journal Campbell communicated his educational and theological beliefs that informed and shaped his movement. In 1839, Campbell clarified his rare and lofty goals for a comprehensive educational plan, which encompassed the family, elementary schools, church and colleges (Jorgenson, 1989). Campbell’s four spheres of education are still being pursued today by the Church of Christ denominational movement.

Deeply influenced by Campbell’s educational philosophies, Hughes (1997) claims there are two key principles that inform Church of Christ philosophy of post-secondary education: an emphasis on the Bible as an educational text, and an emphasis on rational inquiry and the scientific method that guides believers in questioning their own traditions
and suppositions with comparisons to a Biblical standard. Campbell’s dual educational philosophy would be a guiding rudder that would steer his twenty-five higher educational institutions through the challenging waters of American educational history.

Consistent with Campbell, Susan, as well as the university in which she is a full-time professor, adopts the belief that the Bible is the inspired word of God. Both also advocate Biblical truths as part of their educational curriculum. Although Susan relies on the university’s required Bible courses to teach students basic Christian theology, she adopts many of the same perennialist beliefs that form the university’s educational philosophy.

**Church Of Christ Cultural Beliefs and Art**

This section reviews the findings from Chapter 5 pertaining to the Church of Christ, the university, and Susan’s beliefs toward art.

**Theological beliefs about art.**

There are four separate influences that explain why the arts have been restricted in varying degrees in Church of Christ affiliated colleges and universities: (a) Ulrich Zwingli’s strict interpretation of the Bible, (b) John Calvin’s strong emphasis on losing one’s salvation, conditioning life toward censorship rather than creative freedom, (c) Alexander Campbell’s emphasis on reason and logic over emotion and speculation, and (d) Alexander Campbell’s rejection of classical literature from the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Some of these views linger in Susan’s university policy while others do not. Susan ultimately disagrees with these views and has found a way to teach art without
attracting too much negative attention by the administration and the college’s Church of Christ trustees. Susan’s comments during the interviews indicate, however, that some of her beliefs about art are informed by theology.

In regard to the Church of Christ’s adoption of Ulrich Zwingli’s “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent were the Bible is silent,” Susan’s university clearly adopts the more conservative and restrictive beliefs toward the arts in the Church of Christ tradition. This is layered on top of the fact that the Church of Christ tradition is one of the more conservative theologies toward the arts within Christianity.

Both Zwingli and Calvin’s influence can be observed most directly in regard to music instruments being restricted from campus worship services. Susan’s university has created an odd contradiction of general academic support for visual art on the one hand while blatantly censoring music on the other.

Alexander Campbell’s emphasis on reason and logic over emotion and speculation, ultimately creating a biased university against the arts, is a cultural tradition followed by Susan’s university. Susan’s university is not as negative toward the arts as Campbell himself was, but there are still obvious administrative choices which favor the sciences over the arts. Susan’s university website states that 19% of all full-time university staff teaches in the natural sciences, increasing to 29% when the natural science full-time faculty is added with the social sciences of the university. This is in contrast to the 4% full-time arts faculty (visual arts, theater, and music) in Susan’s university. This uneven departmental growth, however, is consistent with Alexander
Campbell’s social and natural sciences passion which supports reason and logic while rejecting the emotion and speculation so common in the arts.

Finally, in regard to Alexander Campbell’s rejection of Ancient Greek and Roman classical literature, Susan’s university does not seem to agree, or at least is not sufficiently aware of it to enforce restrictions on art history. What appears to have happened is that Campbell’s version of Liberal Arts education was slowly forgotten, replaced by a more common Liberal Arts tradition that reaches back to the Catholic monastic founding which placed all knowledge, including Roman and Greek, as relevant.

**University beliefs about art.**

In regard to Susan’s university’s stance on art, it is more subtle than the views of the Church of Christ. Nespor (1984) notes two ways in which teacher pedagogy can be influenced by administration. One way an administration can influence teaching is through hiring. A second way administration can influence teaching is by evaluation and monitoring techniques.

Susan’s university only hires faculty who claim Church of Christ Christian faith and can prove that claim by being a member of such a denominational church congregation. Susan does fit that qualification. This policy directly impacts all pedagogy taught on campus, being that all professors share a general core of beliefs typical of the Church of Christ denomination. The application process for Susan’s university requires a faith statement and teaching philosophy. A faith statement is an opportunity for the applicant to explain what they believe in regard to Christianity. As part of my document analysis I collected both of these documents from Susan. Susan’s faith statement did not
comment on anything related to art or teaching, while her teaching philosophy did not mention anything about Christian beliefs. This fact could possibly be seen as a separation between Susan’s Christian beliefs and her professional pedagogical beliefs.

The administration also oversees course content, of which I did not find evidence of the administration giving Susan any negative reviews. Susan has had a few conversations with the administration about censoring artwork on campus. These conversations ended harmoniously, but it was obvious that Susan felt the administrative pressure not to draw negative attention to the university. This is important because the school is private and most of the fund-raisers and student body are from their denominational churches.

The university’s bias against visual art tends to reveal itself indirectly in administrative policy. It is more subtle than music, which is apparent in the prohibition of instruments for use in campus worship due to theological views. Susan’s university has adopted a liberal arts educational philosophy. This is seen in the broad general education course requirements. Theoretically, this structure should potentially increase departmental growth for the arts, being that students in other majors would be required to take art requirements. But on the university website only 4% are full-time arts faculty (visual arts, theater, and music), while 29% of the full-time faculty work in the natural and social sciences of the university.

Susan’s beliefs about art.

This research cites six theological beliefs which are all interrelated and ultimately influence Susan’s beliefs toward art. The first two beliefs do not directly relate to art, but
provide a foundation for the others. First, the universe was created by God. If the artist believes that God created everything then the artist, to some degree, must acknowledge God as playing a role in the creative process. This theological belief can be observed in Susan’s adoption of acceptable and unacceptable standards of creation based on her personal theological beliefs.

The second theological belief Susan adopts is that God created the universe with a rational order and design. In our interviews she mentions God’s orderly creation in the same context of discussing formal elements and principles. This belief manifests itself in her teaching of formal elements and principles of art not only in art making but in implementing art criticism.

The third theological belief relates directly to art. Susan believes humanity is designed to create. In an interview with Susan, she stated that because God created humanity to be creative we should strive toward excellence in that creativity. Susan’s push for excellence in creative work thus has theological roots and obligations. This theological belief manifests itself in Susan’s high expectations for artistic work in her courses.

Susan’s fourth theological belief is related to a recognition, enjoyment and longing for an organized and beautiful world. This study did not specifically focus on the teaching of aesthetics, yet many interviews posed questions pertaining to her views on aesthetics. Her aesthetic views and teaching appear to be influenced by her theological belief that humanity intuitively recognizes, enjoys, and desires beauty in the world.
Susan’s fifth theological belief related to art is that art making can be an act of worship to God. Susan acknowledges that creating art can be worship, but also realizes how personal worship can be. This research did not find Susan teaching specific aspects of artful worship in class.

Susan’s sixth theological belief related to art is that there is an ethical standard for art. Susan demonstrated this in her avoidance of certain artwork dealing with sexual overtones and connotations.

**Church Of Christ and Art History**

This research discovered ways in which Susan’s practice is consistent with the Church of Christ and the university’s beliefs, and other ways in which she contrasts with these beliefs. She reflects Church of Christ and the university beliefs in her design of the art education degree as a liberal arts degree, and in her emphasis on teaching art history from a perspective of critical thinking. Susan does not reflect the Church of Christ beliefs when she includes the classics, teaching Greek and Roman cultures in her art history curriculum, nor when she implements feminist theology and critical pedagogy as a platform for teaching art history.

**Pedagogical and theological differences between Susan and the university.**

One major distinction between Susan’s educational and theological beliefs from the university’s is her adoption of a critical pedagogy, through which she implements art history methodologies such as feminist, psychoanalytic, semiotic and Marxist to explain
how these views inform perspectives of art history. One purpose of this approach is to
raises students’ consciousness of power inequalities and biases.

Susan also disagrees with Church of Christ theology when implementing feminist
theology. The closest Susan comes to consciously documenting the relationship between
her theological beliefs and her pedagogical practice is with a feminist theological
perspective. Susan claims a distinct Christian feminism, even separate from nonreligious
feminism, based on Christ as liberator and his teachings. For Susan, this Christian
feminism has strong theoretical foundations in critical pedagogy with her ideas informed
by Paulo Freire, who himself was a Catholic Christian inspired by Jesus’ liberating
teachings (Schipani, 1984). She has authored an article about her beliefs in this area and
also brings it into her classroom practice.

Susan seems to be closest to a “Biblical/Evangelical Feminist” position. These
concepts come into her teaching through a feminist methodology for art history content
and her use of a feminist model of art criticism. The Church of Christ affiliated
university and Alexander Campbell would not be supportive of feminism or the feminist
theology which informs her teaching.

In addition to Kiefer-Boyd’s feminist mentorship and Susan’s personal
experiences as a woman who may have experienced gender bias in her professional life
as a public school teacher, as a member of the Church of Christ Church, and among her
university community, the Bible and specifically Jesus provide a support for her feminist
beliefs in gender equality. Research about personal belief systems argues that
connectivity among beliefs strengthens these beliefs (Rokeach, 1968, cited in Pajares
1992). This is seen in Susan’s feminist beliefs. Parjares further states, “It is important to think in terms of connections among beliefs instead of beliefs as independent subsystems” (p. 327).

Rokeach also recognizes different intensities of beliefs and the power of connectivity in beliefs that are shared with others, as in Susan’s relationships with Kiefer-Boyd and her efforts to collaborate with other faculty at her university who hold similar feminist views. The strength of these connected beliefs is evidenced in Susan’s publication of an article describing her beliefs about Christian feminism and how she integrates feminist issues into her courses. It might be argued that church tradition for the Church of Christ faith does not usurp the Bible and, if Susan finds credible support from scripture, then she has a valid stance even if it opposes church history. The Church of Christ denomination has a long history of independent actions rejecting church tradition because of the Bible. Susan’s public actions in clear contrast to her university’s theology does evidence university support for academic freedom among their faculty.

**Church Of Christ and Art Criticism**

This research discovered ways in which Susan’s art criticism practice is interconnected with the Church of Christ and the university belief systems. Both Susan and the Church of Christ affiliated university adopt rationalist beliefs of reality. Rationalism finds its way into Susan’s art criticism process through the Feldman model as well the rationalist language she employs in describing art criticism. In choosing the Feldman model, Susan emphasizes the art object as well as the formal art elements and principles, which fits with a rationalist perspective that allows for judgments of quality...
and interpretation to be produced in a sequential and logical manner. Further, Susan’s language, such as the use of terms such as “truthful” and “we get closer and closer to the correct [emphasis added] meaning,” connotes a rationalist viewpoint.

For Susan, the challenge is trying to balance her respect for her university of which she is a part, but also leading her students to more complex understandings and appreciation of art. Susan mentioned the university trustees and the fact it is a privately funded Christian institution. It is thus a challenge teaching a subject deemed secular in a community which views everything through a sacred lens. The university Church of Christ milieu has influenced Susan to avoid analyzing particular artworks in her teaching.

There are not many areas where Susan would censor art. But there is one area in which she may censor or avoid all together; that is when art deals with sexual imagery. She teaches and discusses art that deals with traditional nudes in art history; however, if the images are sexually graphic and shocking, Susan will censor them to protect the students as well as herself. She asserts that she wants to spiritually protect the students. Susan makes a distinction between photography and other types of art, viewing photography as having more of a visceral presence. She may discuss such an image in her classroom, but would not present the image.

Susan believes it is important for her to understand and identify with the student community. She is aware that most people at her university are Christians from a very conservative fundamental tradition. Generally speaking, in this tradition nudity is often viewed as having sexual overtones, even if not intended, and thus is not appreciated.
Church Of Christ and Art Making

As previously recognized, Alexander Campbell, was deeply influenced by the Scottish Common Sense Realism. Susan also adopts “Common Sense Realist” beliefs which influence her practice of teaching art making. The epistemological Common Sense belief is evident in Susan’s emphasis on teaching students skills for rendering. As an important part of her curriculum, still life objects are gathered and Susan asks students to render the object as realistically as possible. This assignment suggests an epistemology in which humans can observe reality and be confident in their perception of the world.

One who holds a belief in “Methodological Common Sense” brings together the willingness to empirically look at experience and merge that with a rational inductive thought process. In addition to teaching students rendering skills, Methodological Common Sense beliefs are evident in Susan’s teaching practice in having students learn about art media and processes. Susan views art media as having a natural order, which is logically understandable and teachable. This Methodological Common Sense belief aligns with Susan’s Christian theological belief that God created the universe and that it is orderly, art materials included. Susan’s Methodological Common Sense belief is also evident in the teaching of elements and principles of design. Finally, Susan adopts the “Ethical Common Realist” belief that humans know by the nature of their own being certain foundational principles of morality. She thus believes that there are ethical standards for art and making art.
Studying Teacher Beliefs

As a final way of characterizing the findings from this present study, the following section positions the research within topics that have relevance in teacher belief research such as inference and implicit beliefs, epistemology and beliefs, and personal beliefs as a system.

Inference of Implied Beliefs

Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning (2004) identify implicit beliefs which are defined as personal, unconscious beliefs about the world which have slowly evolved over time. They remark, “Implicit beliefs significantly affect the way we view ourselves as learners and how we operate in the classroom” (Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning, 2004, p. 138). A main focus of this research was to uncover Susan’s implicit and more overt beliefs as a means of understanding how they influence her teaching. The identification of Susan’s beliefs required making inferences from course syllabi, teaching philosophy and faith statements, interviews, and published articles. Rokeach (1968, cited in Pajares, 1992) argues that in research of this nature, all beliefs must be inferred. He further suggests that such inference must be based upon evidences of belief. Thus the multiple sources of data that informed this study, such as the aforementioned, were highly important in making such inferences. Significantly, Pajares cites Bandura’s (1986) contention that beliefs must be studied as “context specific and relevant to the behavior under investigation” (Pajares, 1992, p. 315). This perspective represents a primary approach of this study in considering Susan’s stated beliefs from interviews and written documents in relation to her teaching practices.
Epistemology and Beliefs

Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning, (2004) state that the most consistent findings in the teacher belief literature is that teachers plan and implement instruction in ways that are consistent with their personal epistemologies. “Researchers have discovered that students’ beliefs about the nature of knowledge have important consequences for academic performance and critical thinking (De Jong & Ferguson-Hessier, 1996). The fifteen interviews conducted for this study were instrumental in characterizing Susan’s epistemology and beliefs toward art, art education, and theology. Susan’s epistemology and beliefs in these areas were evidenced in the implementation of her teaching practices. Further, the study often found connections between these areas of epistemology and beliefs, which reinforced their strength. As previously noted, research finds connections among beliefs to be a significant factor. For instance, in the research what Susan believes about how humans obtain knowledge became an important finding. It was fruitful and made visible the connections between Susan’s professional pedagogical beliefs and her theological Christian beliefs.

Another area related to beliefs about knowledge is domain knowledge. Domain knowledge is the realm of knowledge that an individual has about a particular field of study (Alexander, 1992). Knowledge domains are typically subject areas, art being an example, but could also represent areas of activity like gardening. “Teachers often teach the content of a course according to the values held of the content itself” (Pajares, 1992, pp. 309-310). This research study focused on domain knowledge, analyzing Susan’s specific beliefs related to art education. Chapter 4 focused on Susan’s domain knowledge
regarding the teaching of art history, art criticism, and art making. Art researchers agree that teacher beliefs about art are important to study because they influence what teachers do, how they interpret what happens in their classes, and how they continue to shape their teaching (Carrol, 1997; Coden-Evron, 2001; Eisner, 1973-74, 1979, 1992; Grauer, 1998; Kowalchuk, 1999; McSorely, 1996; Morris, 1975; Smith-Shank, 1992). Carroll (1997) states, “Beliefs about art, teacher characteristics, or preparation, affect everyday instructional decisions or student learning in art” (p.180). The analyses of Susan’s classroom practices with art criticism, art history, and art making demonstrated that domain knowledge played a strong role in shaping the beliefs that informed these practices.

**A Systematic Approach to Personal Beliefs**

This section discusses three characteristics of a systematic approach to analyzing personal beliefs: (a) beliefs differ in intensity and influence, (b) beliefs are interconnected, and (c) beliefs often contradict themselves.

The first characteristic of a systematic approach to personal beliefs is that beliefs differ in intensity and power, with some beliefs taking a more central role as core beliefs while other beliefs assume a more peripheral role. Pajares’s (1992) remarks that, “Human beings have differing beliefs of differing intensity and complex connections that determine their importance” (p. 318), as has been validated in the analyses of Susan’s belief system. Not all of her beliefs hold equal importance for her or affect her practice with the same intensity.
One particularly strong core belief of Susan is her rationalist epistemological view of knowledge as logical and obtainable. This study found Susan’s core rationalist belief to influence pedagogical practices regarding art making and implementing art criticism. An equally powerful core belief is Susan’s views of essentialist pedagogy. Susan’s adoption of essentialism, emphasizing sequenced foundational content, ultimately impacted her art making and art criticism teaching. A third core belief of Susan was her view of teacher as authority. Susan’s belief that the teacher should be viewed by learners as having authoritative knowledge is most obvious when the content taught is viewed by Susan to be particularly important. Still another core belief of Susan was her passion for social justice. Susan’s belief that people are born into this world free and equal manifests itself in critical pedagogy, found in her inquiry approach to art history and her feminist art criticism process. An additional core belief was Susan’s views of critical thinking. Susan’s critical thinking belief was strong enough to move her to implement an inquiry approach to art history, cognitive approach to art making, and a feminist model of art criticism; all three of which had some form of critical thinking initiative. A final core belief of Susan was that God created humanity and longs to be engaged in their lives.

A second characteristic of a systematic approach to analyzing personal beliefs is that beliefs are interconnected. Pajares (1992) cites research which argues that cognitive tasks are very much driven by beliefs and will invariably connect in some way. Pajares (1992) contends that, according to Rokeach (1968), the greater the connections, the more powerful the strength of the belief. This was quite apparent in the analyses which demonstrated strong connections between Susan’s educational practices, how she
structured teaching and learning, and her beliefs. Nespor (1987) maintains that one’s beliefs influence how a task is defined as well as how that task is carried out (Pajares, 1992). The connectivity of beliefs can extend like a web to various areas involving attitudes toward the nature of society, the community, religion, family and so forth. The analyses revealed such connections in Susan’s belief system with attitudes and beliefs toward society and religion intertwined with beliefs and values about teaching and learning.

One example of connectivity for Susan’s beliefs is her rationalist epistemology, which views knowledge as logical and obtainable. Her rationalist belief has connectivity to her Church of Christ theology which believes that there is one truth, which in turn is reinforced by Susan’s belief in the Bible as an inspired epistemological source of such knowledge. To further demonstrate this connectivity, Susan’s rationalist epistemological belief is discussed again but this time our analysis addresses another part of her belief web, connecting her rationalism to her professional domain knowledge. Susan’s rationalist belief has connectivity to her professional domain knowledge in that she chooses to use Feldman’s model of art criticism because it also has rationalist assumptions embedded in its procedure.

Another example of connectivity is Susan’s unique belief in critical pedagogy. This study found that Susan’s critical pedagogy was informed by a number of influences. Informing part of Susan’s critical pedagogy web of belief is her feminist beliefs. Susan’s feminist beliefs were partly influenced by her feminist mentor Karen Kiefer-Boyd. Also influencing her feminist belief was her theological belief of social justice, which was
informed by her readings of Paulo Freire and her interpretation of the Biblical teachings of Jesus. Ultimately Susan calls herself a Christian feminist. This Christian feminist belief informed Susan’s critical pedagogy and her professional domain knowledge of art history and art criticism; which was implemented in her feminist art criticism process and her teaching of art history.

A third characteristic in developing a systematic approach for studying personal beliefs is that a belief system is most often contradictory. This research found a number of Susan’s beliefs to conflict with each other. Core beliefs are more resistant to change, which helps explain why new beliefs can become part of the belief system without changing core beliefs even though they are contradictory (Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968).

It was documented that Susan had a strong belief in teacher authority while wanting to help her students gain more autonomy. This conflict was documented in her implementation of a cognitive approach to art making, emphasizing student self-actualization and dialogic feedback, while also implementing a scientific rationalist approach to art making which focused on skill acquisition. Ultimately Susan wanted students to take a leadership role in their own construction of knowledge while at the same time look to her as a key dispenser of knowledge.

Another example of belief conflict was in Susan’s belief in rationalism and critical pedagogy, ultimately manifesting in two conflicting approaches to art criticism. Susan adopted a rationalist belief which looked at reality as logical and knowable; this was manifested in her choice to use Edmund Feldman’s art criticism model, also adopting rationalist belief. Susan also believes in critical pedagogy, which adopts the stance that
truth is subject to ones bias. Susan’s critical pedagogy belief materialized in adopting a feminist art criticism process. Even though the Feldman and feminist art criticism model conflict philosophically and pedagogically, Susan still openly supports and uses both models.

A final contradiction for Susan was over her support of personal expression of art making while simultaneously pushing for an essentialist pedagogy, which supports acquiring technical knowledge and skills. Susan constructs a hierarchical approach to knowledge represented in her scientific rationalist approach to art making while also adopting a constructivist approach to art making which resists knowledge hierarchies and emphasizes the process of creative expression.

This research concludes that the analysis of Susan’s beliefs appeared to validate much of what can be found in the research on teacher beliefs, the intensity and hierarchical influence of beliefs, the interconnectedness of beliefs, and the contradictive nature found in belief systems.

Implications for Art Education

Those reading this study may be asking themselves how this research can be used to help improve the educational quality for our field of art education. This is a good question; one that ultimately invokes the issue of generalizability of a single qualitative case-study.

Robert Donmoyer’s (1990) classic chapter Generalizability and the Single-Case Study points out that a single qualitative case study thick with contextual description is generalizable to the reader because it has the potential to give the reader accessibility to a
place not usually possible, thus allowing the reader to live vicariously through that unique case narrative. Living through a character in a story is a common and expected experience in literature. Why, then, has it been questioned in qualitative case study research? Donmoyer goes on to say that case study stories can serve as a half-way house between tacit personal knowledge and formal propositional thought, allowing the reader to assimilate different things and to process differently things already understood (1990). Living vicariously through a case study ultimately allows associative construction of meaning to happen for the reader, thus allowing the qualitative single-case study to have levels of generalizable relevance beyond that case.

Ercikan & Roth (2006) support Donmoyer’s theories of generalizability, arguing for the elimination of the quantitative/qualitative terminology as well as the objective/subjective myth. They proposed a new construct of generalizability for educational research based on a continuous scale moving from the lived experience of people (low inference) on one end to idealized patterns of human experience (high inference) on the other. Donmoyer’s (1990) argument that a single qualitative case study is a story that the reader can live vicariously through is consistent with Ercikan & Roth’s (2006) term low inference research where a thick-description case study emphasizes the “lived experience of people.”

**Christian Art Educators**

This research study would fall nearer to the “low inference” side of Ercikan & Roth’s scale. The generalizability of Susan’s beliefs are contextually tied to Susan and the context of her statements. Other art educators who come from a Church of Christ
Christian background, having similar beliefs as Susan, would be best positioned for generalizing her narrative. As was stated earlier, the reader can live vicariously through the specific story told, gaining new insight into one’s own teaching.

As far as future implications of this research for other Christian art educators, this research is a rarely documented example of an art educator who wanted to integrate her Christian faith into her pedagogical practice. Having such a detailed example of the interaction of how personal religious beliefs intertwine with other professional beliefs could guide others in better understanding these complicated and complex issues.

**Outside a Theological Setting**

This study also has important generalizable possibilities concerning the field of art education in the structure of how teacher beliefs can be researched. Influenced by a number of teacher belief research studies, the structure used in this study could be a model for others to follow. In developing a research structure that can uncover teacher beliefs in personal and professional contexts, key categories are recognized that offer a useful structure for understanding the interrelations among various types of beliefs that impact teaching practice. The diagram below shows four main belief areas that all teachers have which can be analyzed: epistemology, teaching and learning, domain knowledge, and milieu. The upside down triangle in the diagram represents these beliefs from the broader scope, like epistemology, down to specifically individualized beliefs, such as milieu.
The first and most broad category is epistemological beliefs. All people have epistemological beliefs and these beliefs influence their teaching in some way (Pajares, 1992). *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* (2001) defines epistemology as “the study or the theory of the nature, source, and limitations of knowledge” (479). A number of researchers analyzing teacher beliefs suggest epistemological beliefs as an important starting point (Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning, 2004; De Jong & Ferguson-Hessier, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Pratt, 1977; Smith, 1983).

The second research category suggested is teaching and learning. Within this category there are many subcategories that could be relevant areas to analyze. One important subcategory is pedagogy, which addresses questions concerning how content is
being taught. This research study utilized Gerald Gutek’s (2004) research as a key resource to analyzing pedagogy types. Some other relevant subcategories under teaching and learning could be teacher role, learner role, motivation, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. All these areas, as demonstrated in the case study, are impacted by personal and professional beliefs.

A third category suggested is domain knowledge. Domain knowledge is the realm of knowledge that an individual has about a particular field of study (Alexander, 1992). Within the category of domain knowledge, curriculum is an important subcategory for studying teacher beliefs. The present case study evidenced this significance in relation to personal and professional beliefs in addressing the areas of art history, art criticism, and art making.

The last category a researcher should address is milieu. All teachers have beliefs about matters beyond their profession (Pajares, 1992). Webster’s New World College Dictionary (2001) defines milieu as a setting, whether environmental, social, or cultural. A teacher’s milieu will be very circumstantial to the person being researched; this of course should not be a reason to leave it out of the research design. In fact, milieu is one of the key areas of teacher beliefs which will reap the most rewarding data. The many subcategories which fall under milieu are also often overlooked in research, even among some in teacher belief research. The first and most obvious would be educational community; for example other teachers, administration, past teacher mentors, students, parents, legislators, or legislation. A second subcategory of milieu is cultural or religious community; this could be the teacher’s personal faith or ethic identity. In the present case
study, the theological nature of the university being studied created a community that was simultaneously religious and educational.

A third subcategory of milieu could be geographical community. As an example, there have been many studies comparing urban and suburban school environments and the way the geography of the school environment can play a role in a teacher’s beliefs.

In choosing to structure one’s teacher belief research study around the four areas of epistemology, teaching and learning, domain knowledge, and milieu the present research demonstrates the richness that multiple perspectives can bring to the study of teacher beliefs. Such an approach allows for recognition of the relational nature of beliefs characterized by linkage and connectivity.

As suggested, the present study evidences the relevance of researching art education practice from the view of personal beliefs in a two-fold manner. First, most specifically, the study can inform other Christian art educators in negotiating theological and professional beliefs within art education practice and, more generally, the research offers an approach that could inform studying teacher beliefs in non-theological art education settings.
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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interview #1
JG: Could you give us a short biographical history of yourself?

S: I grew up mostly in _______. My elementary years were spent in _______. We moved there so my dad
could go to school at the University of ________. He majored in art. But he also worked as an X-ray
technician, which was his occupation even after he finished his bachelor’s degree in art. I graduated from
__________ in 1985. I stayed the extra year to get the teacher certification, but studied art while I was
there. I taught at _______ high school here in ________, for four years. The building was then switched to
a junior high, so I stayed there for one year teaching junior high. I did my masters at ___________
University, which is in ________, just south of ________. I went the M.A. route with a thesis, but I knew that
someday I would be doing the Ph.D. route. I then did my Ph.D. at ____________ between 1996 and 2001.

JG: Were you working full time?

S: By then I was. I had to coordinate my teaching schedule with my graduate school schedule. It was not
unusual to have nine hours at the university and 12 to sometimes 15 hours at the Christian college. So it
was pretty challenging, but I was determined to finish as soon as I could. I did not want it to drag on for a
decade or something. I finished in 2001. Then I became department chair here at the Christian college. It
is a department of communication and fine arts. Under that umbrella, we have music, theater and art,
Spanish, communications and visual communications - which has more of our graphics degree. I was chair
for four years. 2007 is the first year out of my 13 years at this Christian college in which I was just
teaching, so it is kind of exciting this year.

JG: So you came to this Christian college. Tell me about that opportunity.

S: I loved my high school experience, but the first year teaching junior high was such a huge change. And
it was particularly challenging… It was a challenging generation and a challenging place to be. It was
mostly a Hispanic and African American school, and the gang thing was really big there. At the high
school level there were students who took art as an elective, so things were easier, but at the middle school
level students are much more volatile. It was a tougher atmosphere to be in. I was probably getting a little
bit burned out by that time when I got a call from the former Christian college department chair. She said,
‘Have you started your masters yet, because we may have an instructor position opening over here at our
Christian college?’ There was 18 hours minimum of graduate hours required to teach at the Christian
college. I had taken a few courses beforehand, so I had to work hard that summer to be where I needed to
be. I don’t know. If all things stayed the same, how long would I have stayed in teaching if I had not done
that? I was already having thoughts about staying one more year and then leaving. Something had to
change. I started as an instructor at the Christian college as I finished up my masters degree. And I was
told that if I wanted to be here full time that I would need to finish a Ph.D. at some point in the future. So I
took a year off from my masters and plunged into the Ph.D. program.

JG: Who was saying that? Who in power was saying you need to get your PH.D?
S: The Dean and the Chair of the art department; the women who called me originally. The Dean planted that in my head early on because they were searching for more terminal degrees. And at that time at their Christian college they were doing a heavy push for more Ph.D.’s. They even had a large proportion of Education Doctorates (Ed.D’s). And just for accreditation purposes the university wanted to go this direction with terminal degrees. So it was clearly stated that if I wanted to come full time it would not be with an M.A. route, it would be a Ph.D. route.

JG: Does your University have a hiring policy?

S: Yes, they do. Within the school’s charter it does say that full time faculty must be active members of a Church of Christ church.

JG: This was what I wanted to know. Did they only hire Christians? Did they only hire Protestant Christians or a specific denomination of Christian?

S: It is very specific. Now, for adjuncts it is not necessary to be a Christian.

JG: Why did you choose to teach at a Protestant Christian college?

S: At the time, I had been doing a lot of praying about where I was teaching at _____ high school, and what I needed to do, if anything. You know, to be placed where I needed to be. And so it fell in my lap. The transformation from getting the job and going through the doctoral program… my viewpoint changed, in terms of what I wanted to do at the Christian college. At first I thought I just liked teaching at the College environment. It is great and I don’t have to send people to the office. And it was great. So at first I wanted to do this so that I don’t have to do that. And I loved my experience at the high school. It shaped me so much, but the thought of going back to junior high gave me nightmares. There are some things that I love, but there are some things that are really tough. So it fell in my lap. So, I will do whatever they want me to do, jump through whatever hoops they want so I could stay at the Christian college, because I like the environment and I like to teach here. But as I started going through the doctoral work and learned a little bit more about what I was doing, I just became more determined…we have a great education department here [at the college]. It is so strong and so highly respected, and as I worked through my own graduate school work, I just thought…we can fill a real niche here…for Christian art education. And I think we can serve a unique segment of the population. You know, so when principles want to hire an art teacher they think of us. So it became a much more focused mission than when I started [the doctoral program]. I came because it fell into my lap, but I stayed because I became more interested in what I was doing. It became much more of a mission in a way.

JG: You gave it a specific term. You called it ‘Christian art education program’.

S: Yes

JG: Could you define Christian art education for me?

S: Oh gee wizz. Now you’re making me think of what I am saying.

JG: You have called it that. What defines that as different in your mind?

S: I want to say just briefly…I don’t want our students to live in a bubble, and then get outside of the bubble and start teaching in the real world and think ‘oh my goodness, what is going on here’. I don’t want them to be uninformed. What I am able to do here is teach things that are tough sometimes and Christians—if they stay in that Christian context—they may not confront these things. I can still teach them and we can discuss them, but we can do that through the lens of Christianity. So, I don’t want to
shelter them from the tough issues; issues that they're going to have to deal with in the real world. But I want to do that within a Christian context.

JG: I hear you saying that in your mind this is a Christian art education program. That is how you define it. Is that correct?

S: I would think so. I think some of the earlier people associated with this university; and not necessarily associated with starting this university; they look at a university like this and feel it is not going a direction they want it to go. I have actually heard…one of our administrators was asked “how many people have you baptized this year”. I say that to make the point we are not a church. We are an institution of higher learning. We are an academic institution; we are a university. We don’t serve the same function as a church. So there is always that idea…we want to give a quality academic instruction, but then to be able to do that in a Christian environment; and to teach in that context. It’s important. So I would say Christian art education, but I would differentiate between are our mission and the churches mission. Our mission is to educate not necessarily to convert people, because we are a university.

JG: With your Ph.D. in hand and at the top of your game would you ever work for a non-affiliated Christian college?

S: I think I would. Right now, practically speaking my husband and I are rooted here. If the opportunity arose…I would welcome something new and different. I think I would get to the point that I had done everything I am meant to do here, and now it is time to look for something else. I would never be opposed to teaching at a non Christian school or another denomination type of school.

JG: Are there stipulations within that? You might think “I will teach here but I will not teacher there”.

S: It would have to depend on not the university itself but more of just knowing the program and what direction it is headed. And do I feel I fit well in to that. Or if I fit well with the faculty there; would we work well together. ‘We have some of the same ideas,’ or ‘no, that would be really tough’. So, no I don’t think it would be just toward a specific university, but what the program’s focus is and the faculty who are teaching there. I can tell you when my dissertation advisor left _____ and moved to Penn St., she first asked me about teaching one of her classes on technology and art. And for some reason that did not pan out. I can’t remember why, but that would have been like teaching as a visiting professor or an adjunct professor. And then she mentioned to me twice that there was an opening at _____, and why didn’t I apply for that. But that was so early in the stage for me here. I was thinking, ‘there is so much I want to do at my Christian College’. And that was exactly what I said to her. “Gee, thanks so much. I am really flattered by that but I feel I am barely getting started here. I just finished doctorial work and I am finally going to get to work here” (Christian college). So, no, I don’t think I would be opposed to working at any one specific place. I would look at it like any interview situation.

JG: Did you think in your mind, “Before I move on, I want to develop something here? Did that go through your mind at all?

S: Yes, I think that was it exactly. And whether or not I will retire from my Christian College or not, I don’t know. It is too soon to say. But one thing I did like…I have always enjoyed engaging in research and in publishing; and wanting to contribute in that way. But I was adverse to be in this situation a little bit because I love to teach. And even in the situation where the emphasis is research…I wanted to do it but I wanted to do that on my own terms. Rather than be told, ‘you will not get tenure unless you do this and do this to this extent’. Because my passion is teaching and I love doing it. I like that I am in a place where that is the number one expectation of me. But then there are certain rewards, in terms of advancement and tenure when you do things like publishing. I have been able to do that along the way, too. I did not want to be in a ‘publish or perish’ environment, but I still wanted to do that.

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JG: Let’s review something. Your undergraduate degree was a fine art degree?

S: We did not have a BFA at my Christian school. I received a B.A. in Art. And I stayed an extra year to tag on the teaching certification.

JG: Was there another degree entirely for teachers but you chose to do the B.A. in Art with certification? Or was that the only thing they had?

S: Yes, they did have an all-level certification at my Christian college. And I guess I kind of went that way through the back door. But that was not my intention from the beginning. It was probably my junior year. If I had done that all-level degree up front it would have been through our department in conjunction with the department of education, which is how we do it now. But, I was thinking more of secondary. So, if I had gone secondary education from the beginning, I would have been a major in the department of education.

JG: So the undergraduate degree you had was certified k-8?

S: I took the secondary certification exam, so I am certified 6-12. Right now in our state we have all-level certification, but back then I just took the secondary certification.

JG: You had said in a former conversation that you almost got your Ph.D. in art history. So why did you choose to be an art educator? Why didn’t you become a science or English or art history major for that matter?

S: Well, I chose the art first. I probably came to my Christian college as an undergraduate with the idea of spending the first year or two here and then transferring to the larger secular college nearby, for the purpose of doing more of graphic arts degree, working in advertising. But the honest truth is I loved painting so much that I wanted to stay and do more of a fine arts type of thing. So I stayed and did the arts degree. I had a teacher who said to me, ‘If you ever think you want to do education, you should take this class’. I thought, ‘oh my word, I don’t ever want to do that. I never want to be a teacher.’ But somehow my junior year of college I started thinking, ‘You know, I think I had such great high school experiences, and such great teachers…’ Slowly that idea grew into ‘maybe this is something that I would enjoy doing. Maybe I would be good at it.’ And a lot of time in my junior year went toward that. I went ahead and finished everything I needed to do for the art and did a second senior year here doing the education requirements. So it came about sort of oddly and little by little.

JG: When you were little did you know you wanted to be an art person?

S: I don’t think so. I always loved art and I would always be drawing. It was something I did growing up and enjoyed it. I always felt like I did pretty well at it. I did not take art in high school because I thought ‘I already knew how to draw, let me do something else like theatre or French, something I don’t know a thing about’. You know how you write down things in your yearbook. I wrote down that I was going to study English literature. So it probably was right when I got to college that I decided art would be what I would do. I enjoyed it, but it was not a strong focus career-wise until right before I got here.

JG: You would never change it? You would not go back… do anything over again?

S: Oh no, I have loved it. I have had just the best time. I love doing it. I love the studio classes. I love the art history and theory classes. I would never look back.

JG: You’re looking at the larger scope of art education, the field of art education nationally and internationally. You’re thinking of yourself; where do you fit? Do you feel you have something to offer the larger field of art education? Or maybe you feel your program or something else you do is unique?
S: I have enjoyed working with students with disabilities and art. It is something I want to continue looking at. But I see some of those ideas branching out in other ways. I really enjoy working with art theory. And to some extent I gravitate towards things of worth that dovetail into what it means to be a Christian. For example, in my dissertation I chose my theoretical framework because it seemed to me to be Biblical. Basically it was Rutheford Turnboil, who is a biggy in special education and he came up with this communitarian perspective, which says, ‘rather than emphasizing differences, we are going to go ahead and make these modifications for you because you are a little special and different and we have to do that to get you up to par.’ Rather, he recognized the inherent value in ever one. And that we all depend on one another. We are really not independent from one another. And I have as much to learn from someone who is experiencing disabilities as they have to learn from me. So I am gravitating toward things that dovetail toward things I believe to be my Christian worldview. And there are some things because of my Christian worldview that I won’t be as interested in; in terms of theory and in terms of contributing to the field. I consider myself a Christian feminist. And I have other friends who do too. Even attending church, worship and listening to sermons, that there is this idea of what a feminist worldview is.

JG: So basically you are redefining it in a certain way, from a Christian perspective; is that correct? The extreme political left may not understand that.

S: And neither does the extreme political right. I had mentioned to you in an email that you had given me an idea for a study which I wanted to do on a local level; which could be expanded to a larger level. But it would basically be on saying the F-word—‘feminism’—in a Christian university; and how my students have responded when confronted with feminism. How some of them will say ‘I am not a feminist’ and yet the art works they make are very feminist. And the things they say when they critique it, are very feminist. Yet there is this taboo about using that word.

JG: Is your art education program different from say other secular programs or even from other Christian programs?

S: Well, let me think. I can say that I get to teach from this Christian context and present information that a Christian may consider worldly information, but be able to do it through the lens of Christianity. But without a specific example, you may not know what I mean by that. I am trying to think of some specific examples. One of our new courses is art theory and criticism. And even at looking at art education and the things student present on, there are things that…we have the academic freedom in the class and we can go through these things. And there are these things that I would do and talk about in the classroom, within that context, with students that I have been with all semester and who have seen where we started and where we are now. Do you know what I mean? And who have made a progression. That I would get up and say, or hang or do in front of the general public or a church, where they may not know all the context of what we have been talking about all semester. So for instance, we may be able to talk about things of which they may not be familiar. For instance, I may have a student do a presentation on gender studies in art education. There are some examples which I would not honestly show in my class which they may show at the larger secular school in the state in a grad program, for instance, those who are undergraduates who are going to go on into teaching. But we will talk about these things. And I will let them research and do their own investigating. And they will come back and do presentations. But even some of the artwork that they bring in and that we talk about, in all honesty….and with our academic context surrounding it, it is not like I would ever do a lecture and invite the outside public. Or do it at my church or something; because they would not understand if I took this one little thing out of its larger context. Like we have been doing all semester. Is that making sense at all?

JG: Sure, yes.

S: Being able to teach these things in a Christian context does not necessarily mean avoid them. Students need to know that everything is out there, because I want them to be fully informed when they teach and to
know what is going on out there in the outside world. So when they are confronted with something they know what it is and how to address it. But to constantly try to find it within a Christian worldview, then also say this is something you need to decide upon and something you need to work with. Our demographic have changed even since I went to school here at this University; where fifty percent of our students are not from the Church of Christ denomination. So we have had a changing demographic. People come in with different ideas; and they may not be Christian at all.

JG: Do you know of the percentage of students at your school who are non-believers?

S: Who are non-Christians at all?

JG: Yes

S: No, but I could find that out; those who are not affiliated with any church. I know we fill out these surveys and stuff, that I know we could get that information.

JG: I know at Roberts Wesleyan College the same thing is happening. The more that the college is improving its academic reputation in the community, the more local students attend who are not interested in Christian views. I believe we have forty percent of non-Christians on campus. And Roberts is a Wesleyan affiliated school, even within the Christian population at Roberts, specifically the Wesleyan denomination is the smallest denomination represented on campus. That is true of student population as well as staff/faculty. Baptist represents the most followed by Catholic. The student population mirrors the professor population. It is very interesting.

S: Yes, I could find that out and get you that information. When I came to school here as an undergraduate, students who did not probably come from a Church of Christ background would have felt kind of uncomfortable, that it was just an odd environment for them. I think now it is not that way. And it is because we have grown so much, to point we are addressing the community at large. Which I think is a great place to be. There has been discussions here on the campus over the last several years which ask: Who are we? Who do we want to be? You know, reexamining our identity, in light of that shift.

JG: We will get into more of this topic a lot deeper later but I will ask just this one question. Do you believe in artistic genius?

S: I don’t think I do. Well, if I do I probably believe that the potential is there for a lot more people than those who actually realize it. So I am not sure it would be genius, if that is the case. I feel like there are settings that could help cultivate and feed into what a person does artistically to make them greater than those around them or those in a different time or place. But in terms of do I think Michelangelo was some type of God, I think somebody like that…he was at the place that he was at. He definitely had talent. He definitely was intelligent. Definitely he had great mastery of technique that came naturally and through a great deal of experience. And was also within a setting that allowed him to you know. That humanistic Renaissance setting which really allowed him to rise to the top of his game. So I don’t know if that is some sort of inherent gene which you are born with or it is more that it is the drive determination and all of those factors, all those planets lining up that allow you to really shine like that. So I would say my answer falls somewhere between ‘no’ to ‘I do not know’.

JG: Now that you have defined yourself as Church of Christ, explain to me if you have ever or if you are aware of any clashes with the Church of Christian doctrine, which is by and large fundamentalist by definition. Growing up in a Church of Christ Church is one of the reasons why I chose you for my research. Because I know about their theological doctrine.

S: I think the Church of Christ has long been regarded, especially after things that happened in the fifties and sixties…so the attitude of Church of Christ people is that they are the only people going to heaven and
everyone else is going to hell in a hand basket. I think there was that mentality at one point. And I think that it is changing. I think that mentality still exists in some places too. But I think the mentality is changing. I think as a group of believers I think that… It is almost the difference in finding that balance between judgment and grace.

JG: Right

S: And learning a little bit about judgment and what it really is and being judgmental versus learning more and more about this notion of grace. Instead of checking off your checklist. You don’t do this, or this or this; therefore I am going to heaven. You know, having to maintain all those check lists; I think we are learning more and more as a group of believers about what grace is; and how it has been extended to us. And how much in need of it we are; and how in turn we need to extend it to others. So I think that has been some growth in that direction in the Church of Christ. And our students come from so many different places; and come with all different ideas within that spectrum between grace and judgment, all along that continuum. So sometimes we will see discussion in classes or just out talking, and you will see that whole range of ideas expressed. I would like to think that the Church of Christ…I know they like to view themselves as believing the Bible is the final authority and yet we also tend to fill in gaps. I think if you ask a member of the Church of Christ do you have a doctrine? They will say no. The Bible is my doctrine. Do what the Bible says. If it does not say anything about it then I am mute on that point. And yet I can think of so many issues in which the Church of Christ does have a bit of a doctrine. Where it is not explicitly stated in the Bible, so we have gone ahead and interpreted. You know, there may be this specific interpretation which may be hanging by a thread, really when you look at the Bible text. But it becomes a doctrine in a way.

JG: Here is a specific one if you could mold it into that. Describe what you believe to be the Bible’s perspective toward art. If you could place the Church of Christ’s perspective in there as you understand it. Have you run into any of that?

S: You know visual art does not come up like instrumental music does in the Church of Christ. As far as a Church Doctrine on art I really don’t know of one. I could tell you the type of art which church members hang in their homes. And I could tell you some of the discomfort that the students have with looking at “nudes” in art history. It does not come up very often but every once and a while it does. So I can speak to that more than any sort of doctrine or Church of Christ philosophy on art and its role. It’s a lofty modernist sort of idea; not really modernist, but much more of a Renaissance idea. It’s a grand and noble venture. It needs to be realistic. It needs to up lift. Some of those types of ideas.

JG: As a Church of Christ representative who is an art specialist, have you seen a clash of believes or have you opened new doors for this denomination toward the arts?

S: I can remember silly little things. Like when students want to display something and it may be, you know, ‘okay here we go, thanks for doing this to me,’ kind of thing. You want to support that. But you first check with your Dean and see if he is going to stand behind you. Are you going to support me on this? There are instances like that which come up every once and awhile. I have a friend, and she and I have always lamented the fact that the Christian aesthetic. As we would see so many Christians define it, seems to be so syrupy and sentimental. If I say the word Christian art, then it seems to be fuzzy, muted, gaudy pictures of children praying with an angel kneeling next to them at their bedside. That kind of thing. And even sometimes in Christian movies and so called Christian literature, that we need to have such a high standard so that there is a strong aesthetic that is Christian as well but that it is also good and of high quality. And it could be admired on its artistic merit; as well as for its Christian message. And there needs to be quality research, quality art, quality movies, quality novels written from a Christian perspective that are of high quality in and of themselves, even if you took the Christian out of the equation. And so much of what we see when we think of Christian art and movies seems to be syrupy and sweet and not very good quality.
JG: You walked in to my twelfth question which was, is there such a thing as a Christian aesthetic?

S: I think there is and I think we need to reclaim it. The people who are really in the position, and perhaps are not paying attention to it, those working in art professionally and working in music professionally and film professionally need to be cultivating excellence in it. Not just sentimentalism. Not just preaching to the choir and serving that aesthetic. There needs to be this constant striving towards excellence and education. Not on Christianity but on aesthetics. It sounds trite but if God is a creator then He has put within us, if we are made in His image, then we are also creators. And we need to always be striving toward excellence in that creation.

JG: Do you think theology could or should be informing your educational theory or pedagogy of art education?

S: I would say absolutely I do. If I am going to work here then yes I really think it should.

JG: If you were to leave and go to a non-Christian school would you change anything?

S: It would depend on where I was. If I was at a state university, I think I could carry on some of those things, but not all. If I went to another Christian university or even a private university, maybe pretty much all. I have had some students transfer in from some state universities because they stated “over there they made me do abstraction. And that is the only way to do art and I don’t want to do that”. And I would say okay. And we would work along and we would do different things and some of it is abstraction and some of it is not. And then we get to the senior show. I can remember a student who wanted to do a very spiritual exploration for her senior show. And all of her work was abstract. And I said to her during her senior show exhibition, you know you realize you came here thinking you did not want to do abstraction. I am sitting here looking at your senior exhibition. Your final articulation of who you are in art, and all I see is abstraction. She said I know that. She said I just got to the point that I want to express spirituality and I just could not do that objectively or representationally. I felt good that she had come to that place and found that she did have a use for abstraction and she did use it. But I could not tell her coming in to the door as a freshman you don’t have to do any abstraction here. It was a funny reason to come here. And I felt that it was just a reason she was giving me. But it was something she came to her own anyway. It was just sort of ironic. I don’t think abstraction is always excellent, but sometimes students come in with kind of closed mind. And she may have had that aesthetic were it is only good if it is realistic, or if I can tell what it is. But they are willing to grow and stretch beyond that point and find a place to do that. And we can present it to them in a way, because we understand where they are coming from. They may not want to go to a place where all the work is so in your face and so shocking; and if that is what they are encouraged to do then you can find your own aesthetic here. And it is as excellent as you can be.

Interview #2
JG: You come from a Church of Christ background which is a Restoration Fundamentalist background. Do you believe in original sin? Do you know what I mean by that? What do you think that means?

S: Are you asking if I believe humanity is born sinful into the world?

JG: Correct.

S: No, I don’t. Know I don’t really believe that. I believe that humanity is born into a sinful world and therefore we sin. But you kind of grow into it. I believe babies are not sinful. Somewhere through childhood there comes that point where you acquire that from being exposed to it. If one was left alone on a desert island, and did not have that concept of sin…you know that would be a tougher one…I think there
would be ways in which you would sin. It seems most sins are against other people. I suppose on a desert island you would...I suppose the only sin would be against God. I don’t know.

JG: So would that be a sin? So if it is just you can you sin against God?

S: If you had no awareness of God? I would think so. Because I do believe in an ultimate Truth. And I do believe we are...we do grow into our nature of being sinful individuals. So I would have to believe that it would be possible to sin on a desert island without any awareness of God. There is that whole thing in the Bible where Paul talks about the law...it’s that awareness of the law when there was not a law you could not transgress because there was no such thing as the law. Then all of a sudden there is a law and you become aware of what is wrong. And then you do transgress, and then you are breaking the law. But then this all over arching point is that thank goodness there is grace to cover that up.

JG: Do you believe in an absolute Truth? How do you define that?

S: You know that had been such a strange experience going through graduate work and dealing with the relativism of Postmodernism. Because in some ways the way I view...some ways of philosophy and education and art I can be pretty relativistic. But I do believe there is an absolute Truth and I believe that Truth is God. So in that way I am not very relativistic I guess.

JG: How do you access Truth?

S: The absolute Truth of God...the only way to access that is through reading the Bible and through prayer. And meditating upon the things I read. You and I both know that there are aspects of the Bible are laid out pretty easily to read. There is no between the lines type of stuff going on. And then there are others that are widely open to interpretation. That is where I think prayer and meditation come in. I think the important things are laid out. The fact Christ is the son of God and he died for our sins; and he rose again and we are saved by that act of grace. The love that God love us so much that He would create us in the first place and then still want us after the ways we can mess up. So those to me are the truthful things.

JG: Where does the Holy Spirit come into play in this aspect of absolute Truth?

S: I think it is very important. I think that in the Church of Christ which I have been affiliated, we have probably been lacking in our attention to the Holy Spirit in some ways. Maybe we it just our stoic Puritanical background, but we do believe it is part of the Godhead. It is just a part that we historically have neglected, but are getting better to attuning to. You know there places were Paul tells Timothy to fan the flame that is within him. And to pray for that spirit that is within him. I have become more conscious of it since the death of my dad, and that comfort in knowing...another passage in the Bible that says the Spirit intercedes for us. We don’t have the words to say to God. That the Spirit intercedes for us with groans that are too deep for us to even understand. It is within us and I think it is the thing that guides us toward the Truth. And we need to cultivate it.

JG: How does the Holy Spirit help you, even in an educational context? Does He help you?

S: Probably more in a subconscious way than conscious. I am constantly praying about being an encourager and about having the wisdom to deal with day to day situations. And for being a good example to my students. So I pray for those things. And I do feel that it is the Holy Spirit who intercedes for those things. And guides me to do things that I have asked God to do. Probably more in that way than in any other.

JG: How do you think the concept of original sin play out in your teaching of young children?
S: In working with very young children to me one of the most important things in terms of what we do here on earth in this life is wrapped up in how we treat other people. For a variety of reasons. For the reason of being a Christian example. For the reason of the golden rule. For the reason that we may be the only example people see. If we treat each other well. So with working with young children it’s instilling the lessons in the Bible. You know, Bible stories and things like that. Because we teach a lot of Bible class, but also in how we…we emphasis how we treat each other. And by each other I don’t just mean Christians, I mean everybody in the world. And it is a lesson I am constantly teaching myself too because we can get frustrated with people when we work with them all the time. But it is so important how we treat other people. That people see something different in us. That is probably what I emphasis more to children in those Bible lesson is the lesson of being kind.

JG: Can humans fully know reality?

S: I don’t believe they can. I think there are enough scriptures in the Bible. When you look at the Psalms and when you look at different places of just not being able to fathom God. There is no way I can fathom God. I think He wants us to try and fathom Him. And He has even created a world that we can experiment and discover things about the world we live in. I think He wants us to draw closer to Him, and discover in that way. But I don’t think we will ever get there until the end of time.

JG: Do you think being a Christian changes your view of knowledge?

S: I think a Christian’s view of knowledge should be different than a worldly view of knowledge. I think so. In some ways. Like I said, I have that weird schizophrenic understanding relativism, and in some ways how it effects the human experience. But on the other hand, there is this thing in me that says ‘but there is a Truth and this is it’. So it is this weird conversation that goes in me but I think I would not even be having that conversation if it was not for my Christian background. That internal conversation.

JG: You almost want to go to an example. Can you give one?

S: Last year when we went to Turkey. We went with that group on Interfaith Dialogue, and learning the background of Islam that I have not before. Learning first hand by going to the country and by standing there talking with Muslims about their stories of Abraham verses our stories of Abraham. And understanding to, how much religion permeates… you stop everything in certain intervals of the day and are engaged in prayer, you reminded a lot more. It is a lot more in the fore front; your purpose and those types of things. And that affects the ways they live in a way that is completely different than the way I live. That there is a completely different world view, that is cultural. The way people decorate their homes; take off their shoes when they enter a home; the way they serve food and treat guests. That it is all sort of wrapped in together. So I understand that there is a different worldview because of that upbringing than the one I had. But I think ultimately, there is that Truth of who Jesus is. So on the one hand I can understand and see that and learn from that, and that experience of seeing how our belief systems have affected all the subtle nuances of life then understanding to that this what I believe to be the Truth.

JG: In believing in absolute Truth how do you think this affects your teaching of Multicultural education.

S: Teaching within that framework of our University and our mission and that belief system. I do want to present my students with challenging ideas and challenging thoughts. And do perhaps say this is what one camp says and this is what the other camp says. You kind of have to take that and asses it on what you want to keep and what you want to throughout. I want to them to know some ideas of what are going on in various different cultures, whether they are ethnic or gender cultures. Whether they are disability cultures. So I want them to understand those things. So I don’t not discuss it with them. I want them to know it is out there because we have to live in a world. We are commanded to live in a world. Not just to buckle that sort of thing. So I want them to be aware of those things and to respect and love individuals and to treat individuals with love and respect. But at the same time to hold fast to those things that are the core beliefs.
and core missions of the University. A little more or less than half our students may not come from...you can see from the statistics I gave you those most students who come to this University do come from a Judeo Christian background, so they do have those beliefs to some extent but not everyone has the exact same understanding that I do. So they do have to take these things and weight them. And that it part of what a University is for. And this University has that specific unique aspect to it, with its Christian mission. That reminds me. I wanted to qualify something I said earlier in another interview. We talked about how part time adjunct teachers did not need to be Christians in contrast to the full time professors. We’re talking about adjuncts from different background and different belief systems. If you noticed that on my syllabi that we have the University mission statement on it. I feel that if any of those adjuncts were going against the University mission regardless of their background, then they would not be asked back. So I really think that is important and I think those adjunct coming in are made aware of that. What our mission is and not to contradict it.

JG: Is an artist who is a Christian different than a Christian artist?

S: In my mind, no. I know that there are some who easily compartmentalize aspects of their lives. But in my mind, no.

**Interview #3**

JG: Do you consider yourself to be more Modernist or a more Postmodernist in art and why?

S: There are aspects of both that I accept and dismiss. And I know that has to be based in my Christian view point. So for instance, for Postmodernism the idea of who is the artist, I dismiss the Modernist idea that it is always a dead white European male. And that has been traditionally who has been the artist. I do believe there are those who have been marginalized because the type of art they do and because of who they are. Such as quilts and African Women as artists; and needle work. So there are aspects of that. It is that type of Postmodernism; I want to be inclusive in that way artistically. But in terms of art I do feel there are different readings in terms of...in some ways acknowledge the viewers baggage when they approach an artwork. And how there may be different readings of an artwork. But I do believe we can go too far off the deep end with that. There is perhaps one best meaning for an art work. And it is the one that makes the most sense when you are given that artwork. So to some extent meaning is inherent within the artwork. I believe in being surrounded by beauty; and of an aesthetic sense...and to some extent the important of significant form and contributing to that. Plus the importance of good design and contributing to that. So those kinds of things of my schizophrenic nature.

JG: So you have defined postmodernism as basically a multi-inclusive agenda.

S: In some ways. Some things are good to deconstruct toward that end and some are...you know when you deconstruct everything around you there is just nothing left if you don’t replace it with something. You know what I mean. So those are the aspects of postmodernism that I like. That is not all Postmodernism is, though.

JG: So for Modernism formally they often take a lot of elements and principles as major components. Do you adopt those as well?

S: I do personally. I can’t help but consider them as I make art. With my students I do to varying degrees. For instance, if I have a classroom full of the 3306 class which is not coming from an artistic background we will discuss those things. And look at their works and say ‘this does not have balance; did you do this on purpose’, and ‘what are you trying to get across by doing that’. So I may ask some questions like that. But for them I try to show more the importance of context. For my art majors I expect them to know it all. I expect them to know good design; why you may want to do it and why you may not want to do that. And then have a reason. To have context.  

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JG: And underneath that you are looking for or do you feel you are conscious of teaching an aesthetic of beauty?

S: So are you saying am I conscious of an aesthetic as I do that?

JG: Do you think it is more complex than that? There are multiple…I guess when I am looking at Modernism and we are talking about balance. And intrinsically or not I am seeing an aesthetic. I guess a question could be, where does an individual aesthetic come in and where does a universal, if there is such a thing, come in?

S: The modernists like that idea. To some extent that you could do certain things and it could appeal to all people universally because we all share this universal aesthetic in that sort of Carl Jung sort of way. I am not sure I believe that. I would have to think about that some more. I think there are some aesthetics that are culturally constructed. Things that are beautiful in one culture…and even as Modernism said and toted that, it kind of poo-pooed…on the one hand it would bring things in that were non-Western and say see here is geometric shape and here is rhythm but they were still marginalized in a way, those non-Western things as far as showing up in the museums versus the natural history museum. So I don’t believe there is a universal aesthetic but I do believe there is more of a cultural aesthetic. I will have to think about that some more. We do in some way seek order and try to categorize and make order of things. I don’t think that is just a Western thing. The way we go about it may be different.

JG: So it could be both. We as human beings search for universal Truths but go about that in different cultural ways.

S: That is an interesting point because if I believe God is the creator, and we are created in His image, which therefore means we are creative individuals, and God made the world beautiful when it could have functioned just fine without having that beautiful element to it. And He also puts within us things when we recognize beauty, when he also did not have to do that. We could have functioned just fine without it. Maybe there is something there. That there is something we respond to in terms of beauty. That would be if I were from China, Australia, Asia or any number of different places there are some things we would all find beautiful. So yes you may be right about the idea that there are some aspects that are universal and some that are cultural.

Interview #4

JG: What in your opinion is the objective of organized education?

S: To cultivate contributory citizens.

JG: To get you to get to elaborate on such an abstract question as that I have some educational theories. So I will read them and we will discuss if any apply to you. Have you ever used that phrasing, fundamentals, or basic knowledge that needs to be taught?

S: Yes, I think I have, especially in regards to design.

JG: In this particular educational theory (Essentialism); The school is to get back to basic fundamental educational content? There is one universal truth of which there are basic concepts and disciplines of knowledge. The objective of the school is to teach this foundational knowledge. In teaching your art content do you believe there are places where you teach universals?
S: I feel like I teach that more from the context of...certainly we have talked about it outside of our content, that God is the Universal. But if I was just looking at art education that I would that in the context of...like I am thinking of my Art Theory and Criticism class that this is the philosophy that was once very important to Western art. And that even the design things that we teach that they are targeted toward Western art. For instance, Eastern approaches to art would not deal with space the same way we do. But I think there might possibly be some universals. But not as much as I believe there are not. I don't know. That is a tough one because I am trying to think of an example of a place I would say that this is absolutely all of the time in art. And I am having a hard time coming up with that. I can't exactly say there is not. How is that for wishy-washy.

JG: Do you teach to your college art education students to focus on trying to teach specific art content for all kids?

S: No, I would not say that I do. I try to give them a broad enough base of which they can pull from. You have to pay attention to the community to which you are teaching. To the school your teaching and the school you are teaching in. So I want them to have a broad enough base to bring in so called exemplars as well as the things the students are going to be surrounded by that may fall well outside of those exemplars. So I want them to be able to pull from that broad range.

JG: Let me read you another theory of education. (Perennials) To focus on disseminating information which through reason all students can come to discover the universal truths found in the universe. This is then achieved through studying classic accomplishments of knowledge. When I say the word “classic”, you think of Plato or Shakespeare or something like that. Do you teach to your college art education students to teach to their kid’s art classics which speak to universal Truths? In the art world are there “classic art works” that we should be learning?

S: Yes. Some of the current trends, it is not ever where, but some of the current trends of visual culture art education would be that what had happened in the past...some say that that is irrelevant and what’s relevant is what is going on now. And what is now is popular culture and examining that, to the exclusion of what has happened in the past. And I don’t agree with that. I think what has happened in the past helps us realize and better understand what is happening now. Because it has. So it may be difficult to look at Plato and to what is going on now in advertising, and draw a thread...that there is a thread there. One thing that really struck me was someone gave the back called The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas to read. And reading that I saw that from Plato to Thomas Aquinas to Kant there is this common thread running. It is like history repeating itself. Those are the type of things that would not have occurred to me before. I think it is important to draw those parallels. Because if we see that that common thread is still running through, theoretically, maybe that could be getting us closer to what might be a universal. So I don’t agree that what is going on in popular culture as the art of today, to the exclusion of what has happened before.

JG: Well I think art history has been of this theory of education. That there are classic works and the context in which they were made.

S: And I am an art history geek. I love it. I love to look at those past works.

JG: This is a slight side topic. How do you feel about the contemporary works; performance and stuff like that. Are those just as “classical”?

S: Oh, you know there is that test of time will tell sort of idea. And then there is the question that comes up, who is in charge and who determines what gets to be part of the cannon later. You know that type of thing. It is hard for me to say now what will still be around and what we will still be teaching 200 hundred years from now. And the powers that be, dictating that cannon. I teach those things and I want my students to have an understanding and appreciation of where they are coming from. Just like this class I taught in art history this summer, when they start flipping through the chapter ahead of time; of what is
happening in the twentieth and twenty first century, and there common responses is “a four year old could do that”. And I want them to understand that a four year old certainly would not do it for the same reasons. There is the importance of the concept and the importance of the idea. As it is in art right now. To me the most valuable art…because to me I like things that are aesthetically beautiful. I can admire things that don’t have those qualities that are sending a really powerful message. But, boy, if someone has the ability to marry technique, aesthetic and a powerful thought—wow! That is the thing that will be particularly moving to me on a personal level. And I tell my students not all works are beautiful because not all subject matters are beautiful. So work that is more concept oriented than outcome oriented…yes there is a place for that and I think it is important. And I think we will continue to evolve in those different directions. I think some art we will be looking at in two hundred years and some we will not. They will just be lost. Because there are artists I believe who do focus on concepts but have little technique or ability to follow through. And perhaps the concept maybe strong but the viewer looking at it is not equipped…what they need to be equipped with to understand what the artist is saying. In that way a lot of Postmodern art has become just as esoteric and difficult to read as some of the late Modernist art would. It is alienating to the same extent.

JG: So we are back right where we were.

S: Yes

JG: Third theory of education (Progressivism) The school is concerned with the education of the whole child, the school’s aims are intellectual, psychological, moral, social, civic, and economic. Learning is process oriented, allowing children to create their own beliefs and values through reflection on their interactions with the environment. It is not focused on answering ultimate questions of being. Even though we can never know certain knowledge science has provided many techniques to ensure reliability in knowledge. Moral issues of interpersonal relationships are best dealt within a free democratic fashion. Are you particularly child-centered in the way that you teach things?

S: To some extent yes and to a large extent…you know that is a tough one. To some extent yes and to some extent no. In my mind so much of that moral and ethical and religious foundation is the responsibility of the home. And to build towards that citizenship should reinforce that and provide opportunities to cultivate that, but they should not be the primary responsible entity for developing some of those things. They should be able to extent upon what the family is doing. The unfortunate truth is I think that the family across the board has not been able to do that. In recent decades; the last sixty years or so. So it has increasingly fallen to the school to not just be an educational institution but a social institution. I do think some education and aspects of it should be child-centered. But children are not necessarily the best…because they are there to learn they are not necessarily the best person to say in what way they should be educated. You probably have experienced this, too. When you receive course evaluations; it is funny to have a sophomore tell you what should and should not be the content in the classroom that you are teaching because their scope of understanding, and for them to say “this will be irrelevant in my career”; and then you say well how do you know. You don’t know that, that is why you are here. So you learn to look at those course evaluations to take is important and weight that with what you see happening in the classroom. And implement those changes. So I think there is a place for child centered education. Education for the citizen as a whole because that ties into part of the purpose of education; I don’t that is all that it is.

JG: This theory of education has disregarded the last two theories, universality of a truthful knowledge, and basically has said that knowledge is very personalized. So to come to such a consensus on such a thing it is done democratically and through scientific or intellectual reason. What do you think about that?

S: So it sounds like your saying there is a sense of a democratic construction of education. Is that what you’re saying? I think the strongest education will be the type when the students take ownership. And for that to happen they need to have some input into it. And so I buy into that, at least in large part of it being a
collaborative process. Not entirely. Like I said earlier, but it being a collaborative process. And students
coming to their own understanding of why this is relevant. It is hard for me to say I fall into one
philosophy specifically. I can see aspects of Constructivism, and aspects of Empiricism. And I can see
aspects of child-centered Reggio Omelia type of things in myself. So I can see all of those things. It is
hard for me to buy into just anyone.

JG: This is another theory of education. Its concept says education should be used as a deliberate agency of
social, political and economical change for the equality of people. Do you see yourself doing that or do
you agree with that?

S: I believe I agree with that. I some ways I do it and in other ways I could be better at that.

Interview #5

JG: What in your opinion is the objective of organized education?

S: Education is the best way and the most reliable way and the best opportunity to level the playing field;
and to provide for a more equal citizenship.

JG: Why is that? You are saying schools are a great opportunity to equal the playing field. Should that be
the government’s role, the churches role, or the family’s role? Why should we sacrifice schools to do this?

S: I don’t know if it is sacrificing schools to do this, that just becoming educated that is where your best
bet lies in playing that role in being a responsible citizen; and having those opportunities economically. It
is almost a byproduct of education. And tied to what I think the role of education is, which is to produce
responsible citizens. It’s kind of to that end that education does that. But I think we all know what happens
economically of those who are deprived of an education. Or those who chose not to take the opportunity to
be educated; and how limited their opportunities are. And how much broader your opportunities are the
more your able to be educated.

JG: So you’re basically agreeing with the Progressivists in saying, you just can’t just teach one subject or
just be a teacher, we have to be counselors, policemen, nurses etc. We have to be involved with the
multiplicity of the needs of the child.

S: Like I said earlier, to some extent that has become the job of education because the family has broken
down to the extent it has. In my opinion there is not the emphasis of religion, because with that comes an
ethical foundation. And with that comes a moral foundation; a respect that a lot of students are not getting
other places. And so it has fallen to education to do that. If that’s its primary role, oh I don’t know. But I
still think that still being educated and learning a trade, or whatever direction your education takes you.
Whether it is to a vocational school or a university, that that is what is going to provide those economic
opportunities. And opportunities for equality better than anything else you could do. I am one of those
geeks who values education just for the sake of education. I guess that is a type of person who goes to
graduated school. I understand that sometimes there are immediate needs that the students confront. For
instance if you have a student who has a family that is migrant workers, the more immediate need may be
having these children get out there and help you work. It is the short term because those immediate needs,
if you’re talking about Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, is so right in front of their face that has to be taken
care of. And it is hard to envision the long term benefits of encouraging your children to stay in school.

Working here in ______ you see a lot of those types of issues come into play. And it is such an agricultural
region. A region which we do have a large Mexican American immigrant population. Having worked at a
school specifically which with predominantly black and Hispanic, I have seen those struggles with
students. But to me education is so important. You know, staying in school, and continuing in some form
of post high school education; to be able to have those opportunities. So if you are asking me what is the
government role in equalizing the playing field? I don’t know if you’re asking me that or not.
JG: I was just putting out there that schools have a multi-faceted role that some educational theories don’t except or at least did not put into the equation.

S: Well, I think sadly it has come to that. I just so firmly believe that that should be the family’s role. The sad thing is the deterioration of the family. The deterioration of that moral and ethical and respect. Those types of aspects of the family and home life. They have to get it somewhere. I don’t think it’s the schools primary purpose but that it has just become a default.

JG: Is that problem of the church or a lacking in the church’s responsibility?

S: To some extent, but more so I still think the family. There has been some disconnect in the family unit. When you look at divorce statistics and you see that marriage in the church and outside of the church is roughly the same. There is something wrong there. That we are seeing that deterioration and part of it is the generation of children. You have heard probably terminology, like the boomerang generation and things like that. I can across a really good article on teaching art history to what they call the backpack generation. How to make this relevant but it also has some characteristics of to today’s students. The fact they all have in common…well, two things. The experience of the “screen,” that you and I did not grow up with to the same extent. And people of my generation which is a little later than your generation. But then that whole aspect of consumerism and fast food and what type of mentality that has generated in this generation of students. Have it your way, instant gratification sort of thing. So some of those things are coming into play. I taught a freshman seminar course. We had kind of a theme which was supper size me. And I taught this freshmen seminar class in conjunction with a Bible class and a P.E. kind of class. The kinesiology health wellness kind of class. And we had that common theme, so we played around with that theme. And of my first questions was “When was the last time you had to wait for anything”. You had something you wanted really bad, and you had to wait for it. An only one student out of ten or so raised their hand. So those are some of the things we see as a result of the breakdown of the family. As a result of our current materialism. As result of the church possibly changing. I don’t think the churches role should be changing but it has changed for some individuals from one generation to the next. So it is a breakdown of all of those things. As we see in a breakdown in morality, religion. Having some of those foundational, so called universals; I think it is to some extent a result of relativism.

JG: Do you have a metaphor for educating children?

S: I will have to think about that. The first thing that popped into my head when I heard the words metaphor was the *Experimental Methods and Teaching* class that I took from Karen Kefor-Boyd and we started off with a chair. Just the idea of how language binds us and how inadequate the word chair is. And how we all come up with different things. I will have to think of that more. I don’t know if I have ever distilled it down to a specific metaphor. Another thing I think of…I don’t know if you have ever looked at her (Karen Kieffer-Boy) website for that project I used for my *Art Theory and Criticism* class. It says “four-inch binding unbound”, which was a book project. And I really like that metaphor. They have created a book, but the pages could be rearranged. We could add to it and adjust it. She has a website kind of devoted to that. And I have my students do a project in conjunction with that. So that may be one. I could look into it more and see if that is the one. But that notion of book still being written; all the pages are still there…and all the pages before are still there but we can rearrange them. We can add to them, we can keep building that book. It is our responsibility to keep building that book. So I kind of like that idea.

JG: Do all children possess the same intellectual power to grasp the truth and use it to guide their behavior?

S: I believe everyone will grasp things to the same extent or in the same way.

JG: More of human abilities.
S: I think the essence of truth yes. When I say truth my mind automatically goes to issues related to
Christianity and issues related to God and what we are taught in terms of how we treat other people. And
in terms of our love for one another. And in terms of the ultimate good for one another. And towards God
who we should be striving towards. So when you say those things I think we have built within us that
capacity.

JG: To understand and empathize with others.

S: And why we would want to be good to each other. If I believe we are made in the image of God then I
believe those things are within each person. The question is how early or later do we get to those people
before those things are squelched; and how easy or how difficult that task will be.

JG: You mentioned in another interview that you believe there is one absolute Truth. You said this
basically to mean, because we are not God and we are not all knowing. You continued saying that we
cannot fully know all of Truth. Is that true?

S: I agree with that. It sounds like something I said.

JG: So, in your teaching are you trying to discover and educate your students on this ultimate Truth?

S: I think so. I think more in an underlying current than overtly. I don’t think I ever say we are going to
be doing today….I think it is an underlying current; it’s there. Because I do try to present my students with
a variety of ideas and say you know where you are coming form; and you can bring all the ideas from all of
your courses because there are certain things in common themes, whether it’s literature or Bible course or
your art course. And you’re picking up all of these things. And it is your responsibility to go through it a
further to build upon what we are showing you here and to decide. Just take a look at what is going on in
the world and to decide what is valuable. That is the kind of foundation I would want to build with them.
And continue to build upon it and to get closer and closer Truth armed with all of the knowledge from all of
the disciplines.

JG: But if we can’t ultimately know the Truth how can we teach it?

S: One of the things I had to do in my doctoral work was called a core exam because there is a lot of
interdisciplinarity in the degree. So we had to take a philosophical question and approach it; for me mostly
from an art back ground, but also bring in philosophy and perhaps some aspects of music and theatre. One
person I have adopted as my theoretical frame work was a person I had to read in one of my philosophy
classes, his last name was Nihamis. He said we can’t absolutely know the meaning…The one right
meaning of an artwork. He was using literature as his discussed art work that was his thing. But there is
one in there. He is not a person who believes in relativism; any reading is as good as any other type of
thing. But you have to look the thing itself. You have to look at the clues within it. He said the best
meaning will be the one that answers the most questions about the work. He came up with the idea of the
postulated author. For example, he used Socrates as his example and Oedipus the king. You know now we
can’t look at Oedipus without all of the Freudian stuff that we have between us and Socrates. But when
Socrates wrote it he did not have Freud. But he come up this idea of the postulated author so for instance
Socrates on this side of Freud could look back on his own work and say, you know I did not see that that
was there at the time, but given all of this body of knowledge perhaps those things are in there. So what I
like about what he says is meaning continues to develop and may shift and change over time but that we get
closer and closer to “The Correct” meaning. So in a way what I liked about that it is kind of how I think
Truth is. And I kind of think it is like our relationship with God should be. That what is true of God is
what answers the most questions. When we look at His word; when we meditate upon the nature of God.
And it is a continual process, and we continue to get closer and closer to what Truth is. All things are not
revealed to us I don’t think. I have a lot of questions that I would like answered, but that is where the faith
comes in. Because you can’t necessarily reason God. So that is where the faith comes in. So I believe if we keep working and striving I believe we will get closer to that Truth. But we may not know all things to that very end when we have that opportunity to ask those questions.

JG: What are the ways humanity can be in contact with that ultimate Truth?

S: To me the only way to do it is to spend time in Scripture and to spend time in prayer and to spend time meditating on what you read. You know it is easy to read something and then not think about it. So to me those are the only ways to get closer to that Truth. I think we learn to when we put it into practice. And we have experiences with one another. There are things I understand much more deeply now after my dad died, than I was not attuned to before. So those life experiences play into that too, and those interactions we have with one another play into that. An example I can think of was now experiencing suffering, plus my dad died in his car accident three weeks after 9-11. So to have all of that suffering right there in the forefront in my life and to see what happened out there in society all at one time, I am much more attuned to this notion of human suffering that I ever was before that.

JG: I did not want to go into John Wesley’s quadrilateral first. I wanted you to say something first. I don’t know if you are familiar with that. He believed that humanity can interact with Truth through these four ways: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience. What is your view of these four ways of understanding Truth?

S: Well, I mentioned two of the four. The only ones I did not bring up were tradition and reason. Reason is tough; I mentioned this before. I don’t think you can reason faith. I believe reason will get you to a certain point, and then after that comes a leap of faith. It is interesting to set back and watch what is going on right now in the intelligent design movement. I don’t know if you have been following that or not but to see how scientists primarily from Christian backgrounds are using scientific methods…and to really go about it an experimental theoretical sort of way, but it is so rooted in faith. We will see how that plays out. I am not sure how affective that will be. I think reason can take you to a point. But if you are using reason within the context of faith…Let us say for example, that you come up with a problem and you’re looking through scripture to help you sort through what the answer might be to this question you have; then I think reason might take you all the way there. As you gather information from the scriptures and as you reason; okay I am looking at this context and that context, then I think you can reason through that and reason can serve you well there. But if you are comparing spirituality and those beliefs to the world and its beliefs, I don’t think reason can take you all the way there. I think tradition is important. You said you grew up in the church of Christ so you are familiar with what the role of tradition has perhaps been there, and it has been pretty heavy duty. In some ways it can be very important and I don’t think you can poo-poo it away all together. But in some ways it also can cause you to make some things doctrinal that are not scriptural. I think if you look at Acts and the development of the first century church, they came up with things that they debated different issues, and had to break with tradition if they start bring gentiles into Christianity. And some of the things that came up. They had to deal with some very traditional issues that were very important to the Jews. And how were they going to go about working with those. And how they went about debating those in good faith, and came up with what they came up with. So I think you get too rooted in tradition it can make you blind to areas that need to change. For example you think of the Pharisees and how rooted to tradition they became to exclusion of the whole idea behind the law was. So there is a place for tradition but you can’t become crippled by it.

JG: Is there an absolute Truth of which to discover in art making, or art criticism, aesthetics or art history?

S: This is where my Modern and my Postmodern conflict with one another. I would have to think about that some more because I could answer that a can of different ways. I could say from a Christian standpoint… I guess. I don’t know. I am going to have to think about that one. So, if you try to deconstruct how you throw a pot on the wheel…there are certain things you must do. One thing I was thinking after our last conversation was Postmodern architecture. Frank Gary and others where the form no longer has to follow
the function. To me Postmodern architecture looks like Modernist sculpture. And one thing they can’t
vary from is how you lay a foundation. How electricity works; how you wire a building. Those are not
things you can deconstruct. Those are foundational things that stay the same no matter what for the
building takes. So in art you see those things happening and you can’t say I am going to through a pot by I
am not going to center my clay first. That is where students have to learn those foundational techniques.
And what is going to happen if you leave a bunch of air bubbles in you pot. That if you decide to
deconstruct a woodblock.

JG: Could you apply that to art history in some way?

S: I think they have to know those foundational things. And I was one who did not get into art history as
much until I had to teach, and then it became so important for me to provide my students with the context
of why we are learning this or making this or doing it that way. Again I think it is important to have a
foundational art history behind you and to understand...because I really don’t think we can understand
where we are now until you understand where we came from. And Postmodernism when it first started was
one of its basic tenets was we are going to acknowledge what has come before us. I don’t know how well
they are doing that now. That is something we just have to do and acknowledge to really understand what
is going on around us. Part of education is to understand what is going on around us, and you have to know
what has gone on before. I don’t think students understand that. I didn’t, not until I got out and started
Teaching. So I don’t undergrads fully grasp that importance.

Interview #6
JG: We really did not have time to finish the fourth educational theory. This was a concept says education
should be used as a deliberate agency of social, political and economical change for the equality of people.
Do you know of the education theory I am talking about?

S: For being the catalyst for social and economical change?

JG: Yes

S: There are probably slightly different names for it, but that social democracy type of stance that I see.
The caucus for social theory in art education seems to buy into that. It is that type of direction. The Paulo
Freire kind of angle.

JG: It is critical theory, like you said. Paulo Freire type of education.

S: Yes.

JG: Can you give me a clear description of how you would implement this method and how you do may
not do this so well? This came up in an earlier interview. You said you did and at times you said you did
not. How do you think you do critical theory well in your educational college context?

S: I can think of a couple of different ways, and we danced around it; with specific projects. I mentioned
that “four-inch binding unbound” type of experience. In my art theory and criticism class we looked at the
foundational materials. And we did start with Plato like you and I talked about. And we worked are way up
to Postmodern theory. With this “four-inch binding unbound”, we did take a look at the way we learn and
the way we believed and encouraged them to look at moments in their lives when they had a paradigm
shift. We then said, “All my life I was taught this or I believed this and then this happened, and suddenly I
changed direction a little bit. And this is why”. Or did you have an instance where you did this because
you kind of felt this way because this was what you were taught. Then all of a sudden something happened
and that reinforced it in you. And suddenly it was your knowledge. Not just something someone told you.
You know, “this is what we do because you said so.” That sort of thing. Which I think ties in a lot to our Christian background, too. So the students created a page, for that “four-inch binding unbound” book. They were so insightful and so interesting. One student created a page about growing up second generation Mexican American, the second generation to be in the U.S., and that conflict that she felt between her Mexican heritage and what you would call the more European side of her heritage. And even reflecting on experiences in Kindergarten of things people said to her; that she just thought, “wow!” Even at that age she was running into some ideas and some biases. And also some ideas of being a woman, too, in her artwork. So students looked at their own learning and their own upbringing in that way.

JG: How do you think that changed that student’s education or life?

S: I think so many times we have these little ideas that are just little tickles in the back of our brains. And it is not until we have some kind of catalyst that focuses us and makes us think about it and makes us articulate it. Like you’re doing with me now. We really do have to opportunity to articulate those things and to create well formed explorative thoughts in those areas. And I think for a lot of students it was that opportunity to do that. To take something that they have considered, and looking at the examples in “four-inch binding unbound” helped a lot because it allowed them to see that this not a far out completely detached from me sort of idea. This is how other students handled it; this was working from my experience; and nobody knows my experience better than I do. So it gave them an opportunity to look at some of those things. One student for instance would consider himself to be politically a very liberal person; in a scholarly way very liberal. He loved our University but he sees some conflict between his own basis and beliefs and where or University seems to be. So, being in that kind of environment. He is a missionary kid so he grew up in Africa. So we talked about being the other. Asking, “having you ever been in a situation of the other”? His situation was coming from Africa he was very comfortable, but then coming to the US, even though he is Anglo, he did things that were weird to the other people here because he had done them in Africa. So even though he was an Anglo in an Anglo environment, he felt like he was the other because he was washing his feet in the drinking fountain. Or something like that. I think it does get them to think about how some of our experiences are culturally constructed. And how we respond to that and how that makes us who we are. How we handle those and reflect upon those experiences and create an art work about it; and discuss it. It was an interactive exhibition. That when we exhibited these students work. And it is now posted on our website. The students wrote reflective responses to them. It was interesting to read their reflections. Part of their reflection was how others at the exhibition reacted to their work. Because each student had to invite two guests; they had to have a little sign card which asked their guests to ask a question about their artwork and had to discuss the artwork with the guest. Some of the artworks could be manipulated by others. So watching how others manipulated or responded to their artwork was pretty interesting. My painting at the very end of the semester I asked them to select a social issue and create an artwork addressing that social issue. And I was elated at how creative they were. They had to research it and perhaps research and artist who responded to that issue also; and create and art work about it. And kind of critique their artwork and how well they thought that it addressed the problem. And they were so insightful. I had so many come up and tell me how much they loved the opportunity to do that because this generation is so socially conscious. There are many people who have made it very fashionable to be socially conscious. And for whatever reason these students are I think there is something within them that wants to help others. And even in movements like invisible children which was started by their generation. They’re very active in those types of things. They really appreciated the opportunity to research that was something near to their heart and then to create an artwork responding to it. I think that was of their favorite things they did all semester.

JG: This is a type of education in which you are not only implementing it at the college level but you teach your undergraduate art education students to do this. Is that correct?

S: Yes, I suppose I would. And to me art does so many things. And I want it to communicate and I want it to be meaningful. The way to do that is create art work…and you kind of have to find your niche. To do that you have experimented with several different things. And some people want to create beautiful
landscapes and some people want to create artworks that convey a message or educate or insight people to change. And some people want to create artwork that are completely expressive of their own inner world; so allowing them opportunities to experience all of those different aspects art will only equip them with more tools that they will have in their arsenal when they get ready to teach. And I feel like creating art that conveys social issues, especially if that is what is important to the students right know is important; and so many of them create art of their spirituality. I have seen many senior shows that it has been about that struggle, and to find themselves spiritually. I want students to try on all these different ways that art can communicate so that they will be able to better build their repertoire to use symbol and metaphor to communicate ideas. You know don’t just settle for the most campy route to convey ideas; but to try different subtle things. But brainstorming and coming up with list or ideas that might work. To me it is just one of many ways and reasons in which art is done; and things to tap into to increase that repertoire. So I think it is one of the many function of art I don’t think it is the only function of art.

JG: The function of art as being?

S: The social awareness. I don’t think all art to be art needs to be political.

JG: You walked in to my next topic of questions concerning art making. Is there an absolute Truth of which to discover in art making? To learn how to make art where would you start?

S: I am one of those people who believe you need to learn some of the rules; and then once you learn them and know them well then you are free to break them. I don’t think that is true of every aspect of art but as we discussed last time that there are some things you absolutely have to know about materials, for instance, in order to make them work well. But once you know that about this material then once you know about what that material can or can’t do or what others say it can or can’t do then that gives you the opportunity to stretch it. Would I do this or that? De Vinci tried it with his frescos and sometimes it worked out fine and sometimes it failed miserably. He could not have done that without the fresco technique; and he would not know that his technique was ground breaking and different. I think it is important for student to know design and if they choose not to create a piece that is well designed then they will need a reason for doing it, not just laziness. But to say I really going to put this one thing right in the center and really draw attention to it to the exclusion of everything else, and this is why I am going to do it. Or I want to make a piece that is jarring or that is asynchronies; really those the viewer off kilter and this is why I want to do it or this is the rules I am going to break in order to do that. So I am one of those people who believe in having that foundational background whether it is in the media or design functions. I know for me, I took design class as a freshman and I kind of jumped through the hoops and did what I was supposed to do, sometimes more successful than others because I did not quite get it. But it was not until a year or two later when I continue worked in art media that it began to make sense to me. And as a freshman by the first semester I don’t think I fully grasped what the deal was. But as I continue to look at art then it began to make sense. So in terms of art making there are some things you have to know. There are some foundational things that we may call “truths”.

JG: You often hear the word fundamentals of art. If I change the words absolute truths with fundamentals does that seem interchangeable to you?

S: In some ways they are and in some ways the term absolute Truth seems much loftier, noble, and philosophical than a fundamental does.

JG: Try if you can to list five of the most important things related to art making. If you had to teach people who are totally ignorant of art in every way, you would not be satisfied without those important ideas of art making taught being covered in your class.

S: If I started off with new people for an entire semester. If they were beginners I would want them to know good composition and point of view. I would want them to know about rendering skills.
JG: What do you mean by that?

S: I mean, when you are working on a two dimensional piece of paper; how to make it look 3-D. For them to see the shape and then articulate it on paper is important.

JG: Show drawing from life.

S: Right. Once we have those two things down I would want them to know about different materials to convey; different visual possibilities.

JG: Does that go back to the sum what scientific aspect of what materials can do?

S: Probably so. So if I create this work with pen and ink, how is that going to work and how is that going to affect mood and viewer response as opposed to pastel.

JG: Okay I am trying to split hairs here between the chemistry issues concerned with the oil lithography of printmaking or the pen and ink which I dropped my cup of water on and it smeared, versus design concepts. For example, warm colors are thought to visually move to the viewer while cool colors move away.

S: To me it is more of the design and composition of design concerns; knowing color theory; and knowing those basic things about balance. And with materials it is more of how this material behaves, how do you use it right, and why you would want to use it for one particular drawing or painting or whatever. This material over this material considering this is what you want to convey. So with the materials it is all most like mechanical aspects of the materials but then how it ties into what you want to express. And then beyond that I would want them to understand the role of self expression; and once you have all the rendering and you know how to say what you want to say. Then to do it in a way that is individualized, that is self expressive.

JG: So I am hearing you go from realism to expressionist styles of drawing as a second tier.

S: Yes, almost as a progression in a way. And I think it would be a back and forth thing. In teaching a class it is not like I would do realism all these three weeks and we would move to self expression, I think we would go back and forth a little bit because they are intertwined. And then beyond that looking at what is going on around them; understanding context. Understanding what has gone on before. What has gone on now and what symbols and what metaphors and things you can use to convey this idea and affectively take it to another layer.

JG: So we are still in art making. I heard a dip of art history or pop cultural awareness. And again I am trying to separate those out because we are going to get to that another time. And I don’t know if I am being harsh because is it fair to say…because I see what you saying. How could you do anything without having your vocabulary of images from which to work from?

S: Even we have separated those four disciplines in Discipline Based Art Education…and I think that is great, especially for art educators perhaps working in general classrooms to help them with ideas to bring art into their classes. There all so very intertwined. You can’t do the art making without some history and aesthetic theory. You can do it, but it just may or may not be very strong.

JG: So your saying that by trying to expose students to having a symbol structure or an understanding of iconic images…that is going to be a critical next step after they understand these basic art making concepts.

S: And then bleeding over into popular culture and what goes on there, depending on what they want to say with their art. They may dip into those iconic images and techniques. They may dip into what they see
in the news media or in fashion or whatever. They may dip into all of these different areas to convey what is meaningful to them. I had a student that a part of that four in unbound things, she created...she is in a singing group on campus. She created an art work about her experiences about traveling around with her singing group. And you know that some Church of Christ are, uhm...as far as having musical instruments in worship; that is not something the Church of Christ does. And some people are even more uncomfortable with any nuance of instrumental music in a worship setting than others. They kind of have a beat box going from one of the background students, almost a percussive type of sound with his voice. It is all a cappella but it resembles instruments. And her artwork was really about going into a context and singing at a prison. And how well received they were in that prison verses going into a very conservative Church of Christ and seeing people just just down. She could see it in their eyes as their singing and suddenly they feel uncomfortable. Some people even get up and leave because this one guy is sounding like an instrument. And how that feels like a performer and who are you really ministering to. But to convey this idea she used the painting Christ in the house of Levi, and the whole idea of the artist being told by the inquisition; because originally it was a last supper painting, and being told you have to change this painting and he just changed the name. And they did not like the painting because it did not have acceptable figures like dwarfs and clowns, buffoons and harlots. Things like that, the people Christ fraternized with his entire life but the people of the inquisition did not like it. So she was able to draw upon that past experience in art history to convey what she felt she was going through now. So having that ability to stretch in that direction and draw those parallels is something I would students to do in their art making.

JG: You being a professor of art education are trying to teach undergraduate art education majors how to teach art making, do you have any approaches that you these students concerning art making?

S: Can you give me an example?

JG: Okay, students created art from intuitive urges that required little overt instruction. That is type of art making that has been done historically in art education.

S: Probably what I do and I am thinking of the painting classes, which is the studio class I have taught most recently. If you look at that syllabus calendar we spend probably the first third of the semester learning very fundamental things about paint; because virtually all of the students have not worked in paint before, so each one of our assignments is geared toward different aspects. The first assignment is getting to know the paint. There are a few parameters that are probably design parameters more than anything and having to come up with different application techniques. There so many but I kind of let them go at it just to let them get use to the paint. We a do a number study. We look at reflective objects. We look at reflective objects. So we take the first third of the semester just working on those types of techniques; which are probably more rooted in realism. And then the second half of the semester we something called artist choice assignments. Where I give then a list or open ended problems and they are open to interpret those problems. They probably eight different things. They probably have time to do three or four of those eight. And they can choose the one theme and do it three different way or three completely different things. They are very open ended so the students have room for that interpretation. These are usually stronger pieces than the exercises we do in the beginning. But that is because they have the exercises behind them, they know how to use those techniques but there open ended so there is room for self expression and that interpretation. So in a way how I teach studio classes is similar, where we start out learning the foundational stuff and then I give them opportunities to work in an open ended way. And be more interpretive. And I even tell them for these open ended assignments that if you do not see something you like you are welcome to come to me with a proposal of what you would like to do.

JG: So I am hearing a few different things. And this is adult education and you are saying you would do this k-12 also. I heard some exercises I don’t know if you used that word. Yes I don’t use that word but that is probably pretty accurate. Would you agree there is an exercise and art work?
S: Yes, but I would not to students because to them everything is art. But you could look at a room full of art and see which ones are the exercises and which ones are the art.

JG: So in your mind what is the difference between an exercise and finished art work?

S: For an exercise the objectives are probably a little more closed ended and specific. The parameters are a little more rigid because they are skill oriented. I want you to learn this specific skill and this how we are going to go about it, and this is what I am going to look for when I evaluate it. With the artworks, I give them some parameters and this is what I do expect to see in your art work but it is more, but it is more open ended. It may change and evolve as you go. I heard it once defined in this way. The difference between art and craft you know exactly where you are going. You are going to go from here to here and this is how you will do that. And it will be what you envision it to be from the start, but with art it may be more open ended. It may be more of a process. And you may completely change directions and you don’t really know has it is going to end up. I don’t think that is the only thing that defines art from craft but I think that is part of it.

JG: Now that we have kind of discussed how you teach; you do two things at the college level: you’re teaching college students art and at the same time you’re teaching teachers how they would tell their students art. So we need to the art education pedagogy here. We were talking about students doing art from an intuitive urge standpoint that requires little overt instruction. I don’t really see that in what you just said. This Lowenfeld’s method of art making. Do you teach Lowenfeld to some degree to your art education undergraduate students?

S: Not overtly. And I think he is so influential that he is still imbedded. We tend to teach the way we were taught. So I think some of those things are still embedded within art education tradition. He is the father of modern art education. So I think those things are still there. I think that it is more covert and overt. More by example than by, ‘we are going to do a lesson here by Lowenfeld.’ He does show up in some of our text books and we talk about him and his different stages. So when you talk about [something] with no outside input, that free-for-all is what we think of early childhood. Or I think of students that have not had an art experience; that may be their first experience. ‘And now that you have had a chance to do that now we are going to talk about these other thing.’ It is almost a get your feet wet or get warmed up type of thing to give a comfort level. But of that being how I teach art all the time, no. That open ended with little supervision, no. One of the strongest things to me about the studio experience is that you are in an environment where you’re made to work in volume. With studio projects you learn more by doing. But you always have that input of somebody who knows and who has been at it longer. And who knows better than you do. Know what you’re trying to achieve and to help you alone. So as far as teaching Lowenfeld, probably not; it is probably more covert than overt. It is more embedded than it is explicit.

JG: So we know you are not a Lowenfeldian purist.

S: No probably not. I am probably not a purist of any kind.

JG: So to have a student choose their artwork and their media and to go on doing their way and do their art, for you to do little to discuss with them, that is my view of a Lowenfeldian Purist. If you can try to un-embed where we may show up. I can thin k of one which would be the therapy aspect in the classroom. Do you help students consider art therapy or to help them through issues?

S: I see that probably more in that generalist education class, the Art and Children class. Because they are not coming from an art education background, these students they are seeking ways they can put art into their general classroom. We naturally are going to look at various aspects and that is going to be one of them. And we talk about those things to some extent. And we talk about young children’s drawings, and perhaps how the responsibility of the teacher shifts. The art teacher or the general teacher teaching art shifts from that younger grades to the older, and for the younger ages you do want them to feel comfortable
in their creative skins. And you want them to learn that creative self-expression, but you want to guide them along because as a teacher you would always want to stretch your students. You know, ‘don’t stop there’, ‘what if you did this, how would that change the meaning’. And then there is the therapeutic aspect; because we talk about the ability working with children to allow for that creative response and how this is a constructive way to express one’s self. And then some of the things one might want to do as a teacher; even if you did find something as a teacher that was problematic, and how you may want to line this up with other things that are going on and refer that to the proper person if that is something the student needs help with. We do talk about those therapeutic aspects, and we talk about nurturing those young creative spirits…but how that world tends to shift as they get older and how their motor skills get stronger and they are sticking it out in art to learn specific skills…So the Lowenfeldian concepts come in to play for me for the younger children. You know, that Reggio Amelia thing is so hot right now in art education, and working with primary-grades students…I think it has some exciting possibilities, but eventually you would want to move out of that; probably about second or third grade. There comes a time when you have to take it to the next level.

JG: And that level would be?

S: Well, second graders can get frustrated. There are disconnected at times; they start to observe more things around them and how to articulate that and reconcile that on paper or on canvas. But their motor skills have not exactly caught up. They’re seeing things and observing things, but their ability to translate or to really fully comprehend what they are seeing. It has that point when you start to shift. Well you see something is behind this thing and how this thing partially covers it up. I guess you help them home in on observation skills. But you don’t want to squelch that creative self-expression. That is what we see with all the research in child creativity and that U-shaped development, where they are working their way to the bottom of the U, you know, because of the heavy concentration on skills they learn to be much less creative. The trick becomes striking that balance between the two. The nice thing about those theories is that if students keep up with it and work through that preadolescent stage, working with those skills, then the creativity tends to come back if they stay with art. There is that time in those middle grades that they are so concerned with what their peers think about them. I had so many junior high and high school students who would come up to me and say, ‘are you going to teach me how to draw’. And what that really meant was, ‘are you going to teach me a comic book characters and video game characters so that my friends will be jealous of me’. That was what the real question was because they wanted to impress their friends. And if they don’t feel successful they are going to give it up altogether. And they want to do something where they do feel successful. So balancing those skills against those needs for their creative self-expression is the key to working with those younger ages.

JG: Maybe this is your technique of art making. It is less about nurturing the student and more about teaching valid art making concepts at each student’s level. That is something to be taught.

S: Yes I think I believe that. And I believe that first step would be the nurturing step. But then, yes, with each level comes a new fluid thing that they are ready for. So, yes.

JG: That is what we kind of talked about earlier; that if there was any type of basic fundamentals which you would want to teach them first…this would be the comprehensive approach; a master aspect. There is a third technique of art making which states that making art is used to make opportunities to connect relevant meaning for the student in their life and world. It is not about content, it is not about self-expression, it is about creating the opportunities to connect relevant meaning for the student in their life and world.

S: I believe that is one of the aspects of art making and one direction one can go, but it is not the only one and I don’t think art education should only be about that, although it should come into play. We talked about the therapeutic aspect and that is kind of what that it is really, making meaning with what they are
experiencing and exploring it that way. So I think that can be a function of art but it is not the only function.

JG: I am going to split a hair here. I don’t think creative self-expression is exactly like this last one which is called big ideas because the teacher is determining what is a relevant meaning not the student so much. Student-centered seems to be that creative expression, the big ideas is partly student-centered and partly not. In one way the teacher is telling you do this, and this is important. They may say the student could choose a material, but this is the theme we are going to focus our learning around. What do you think of that?

S: I do see the use for that. If I were to think long enough about it and why people make art at all. I mentioned the idea before that if we are created individuals and created in God’s image then we are creative individuals because God was creative. Then in a way I may think art making is an exploration of a way to try and get closer to Truth. Just like philosophical thought is. It is more of an active way to do it. And we are doing it through creative means because that is embedded within us. And in a way art making may be a way to get closer and closer to God; whether we realize that is what is going on or not. So giving a student a big idea and letting them get after it with whatever way they want to, I see the value in that type of thing. To me would bring that in later as we’ve worked on these skills. I see the importance of that and to using art to work out problems and to articulate what is going out into the world. I was going to say I would do that with my upper level grades and not my lower levels, but I would do it with the lower level toward the end of the semester. I like the notion of the big idea. It is like the social issue thing. It is not that I picked the social issue, but I think you learn more about...let say, poverty. If you explore it from several different directions, your research and you explore it from design aspects. Building design like public housing versus economical aspects, versus geographical aspects, versus fashion aspects, versus music and visual art aspects. You learn more about it that way if you have time to explore it. So I think it can be one of the functions of art but not the only one.

JG: Is there anything else?

S: There was but I forget. What was it that you said about splitting a hair?

JG: Big ideas is different in one way at least from self-expression in that the teacher is telling you what theme you will focus your thinking around. They may not tell you what media you will work in, but they pretty much are directing you. Self-expressive art education with Lowenfeld was very open ended; it would be at the end that he would engage students to reflect on their work.

S: And to some extent I feel the art teacher is there to help students stretch beyond where they would not normally go on their own. And I want them to verbalize and articulate what they did and why they did it and to say the work is weak in this are because and if I had taken it in this direction it would have been stronger. In process critiques; not just summative critiques, but formative critiques that may be group or individual as the student is working, we are constantly looking at what they are doing and if that is the idea you want to convey then how can you do it in a stronger way. And even when I think of students in their senior exhibitions when they get to choose the theme that they want to work with and the media they want to work with, we still get together once a week to talk about what they are doing. And I have seen students completely change direction because of those conversations. Sometimes when we get more heads in the room you come up with better ideas than if there was just one person. That constant dialoguing process making, looking and discussing is important.

Interview #7
JG: Do you need to teach art history?

S: Yes, I am the one who does that.
JG: You mean compared to other staff in your department?

S: The only other people on art staff are one adjunct. Actually we will have two in the fall. The one adjunct has taught with me for a year. He teaches drawing and design. The other person teaches a full load of computer based courses. So I am the closest thing to an art historian, which is not saying much.

JG: How many art students do you have total in the art program?

S: We probably have about fourteen students in the art education. And then the communications department which is the graphic design type of degree has probably around thirty but I am not exactly sure.

JG: Those are the only two degrees at this point?

S: We do have a humanities program were students can have an emphasis in art. They take eighteen hours of art but there is a lot of elective wiggle room, that they can get more if they choose to. So we do have that degree. We have had two students who have gone through that program.

JG: Is your art education program a bachelors of science or a bachelors of arts degree?

S: Yes it is a B.A. degree.

JG: So who cares why do we even need art history?

S: Because that is the context of why and what we are doing in art now. That is true of all history. We just have to know our context and were we came from. It is to give us a sense of where we came from and a glimpse of where we may be going later. For instance, don’t you think there has been a trend toward design and the aesthetic thing, and it is starting in popular culture; and possibly it will bleed into fine arts or high arts? Have you noticed that, a trend towards design?

JG: What do you mean by that?

S: It seems that starting with mass popular culture. Take for example Target and their concentration on design. And I recently read an article about big time retailers such as Walmart, Home Depo., how they are moving into certain markets that are refusing to let them build the same way they have built in the past. They have had to start looking at what is going on regionally and culturally in the area they want to build and tailor architecturally toward those markets. There seems to be a little more a trend towards that than we have had in the last few decades. Even in things like I-Pods are designed. The I-Pod is such an iconic design. If you draw a little rectangle with a circle on it and a rectangle for the window; everybody knows what that is. There may be a trend toward design. We may have a neo-Modernism moment were people give attention to design; maybe for different reasons than they had before or maybe they will be as idealistic as they had been before.

JG: It is possible. It could be that consumerism is so rampant that you have people who are highly sensitive to having their cultural needs being usurped by big corporations.

S: It is interesting that it has gone that direction; and I am not sure why.

JG: We discussed if there are fundamental truths concerning art making last interview, are their fundamental truths for art history?

S: I think in a way when you look at why people have done what they did on art; it seems to be for philosophical reasons, but it is a meaning making sort a thing. And how people have chosen to make
meaning of what is going on around them has changed according to what is going on around them. That is why people started creating things like “Happenings”, and why religion is so pervasive in art in the Middle Ages until the Renaissance came along and there is another shift. But it all is about making meaning and responding to what is going on externally. That is why you can’t look at art history without looking at history or Literature. When we defines that degree, the B.A. in Art education I made it pretty heavy in the humanities to give people lots of opportunities to take philosophy and English, and to a certain extent they get it with their required Bible classes; history courses and then theatre history course because that seems to be what impacts art history.

JG: Let’s go down a little bit of a historiography road for a moment. Can you teach art history out of time order?

S: Yes, I think it could be done. I think you could look themes and perhaps in a way those themes would be universals. For instance I have always kicked around classes that I would love to teach in my brain. And one of them would be an artist propaganda class, where we look through art history and see how art has been used. And I would love to team teach it with a history professor; looking at art has been used in a propagandistic sort of way. The more things are different the more they are the same. For an art history survey it is hard to do that with because it is so fast and furious. But it probably could be done but it is probably too much work than I would want to do. I think you could do it and it could be a very rich exploration to look at it thematically.

JG: Do you have any problems with the art history text books which you use or have read?

S: I have noticed some problems with them. I took a class at Texas Tech which I really enjoyed with Karen Keifer Boyd called Women and their Art. Basically it was a class about women in art history. It was a nice focus for a class; to learn about art that I have never learn about. You have probably heard about the big hoopla about the Jansen art history text and how they historically had omitted women. And now they are making strides to be more inclusive in that way. In that women’s art history course we did a text analysis as a part of that. So that is what made me aware of those things in art history texts. We looked at instances in which these women’s art was described; and the types of words like charming and fashionable, they apply to women reputation and their art, within these art history texts which would not apply to men. I have noticed things like that. Having said that we use one of the biggies, we use Gardner’s Art Through the Ages art history text book. We only offer the two art history survey courses. We spend quite a bit of time in western traditions. There is so much nonwestern tradition that is kind of lumped into…like one whole chapter on all the art of Africa. That is kind of the nature of the beast with an art history survey course. We, in the US any way, are most impacted with what had gone on in Europe because of roots and where we have come from. So that is necessarily were a lot of our focus is going to be. Sadly to exclusion of a lot of nonwestern art. The way I have tried to resolve this problem in my art history survey courses is that we take those chapters in the book that are non western is to have the students do presentations on those chapters; so a few people can get a little bit deeper knowledge. And they generally do well with those presentations. But I would love for us to offer more multicultural classes. Of course in the art history text Modern is what they are most exposed to because that is what I teach. So those are just a few of the things I have noticed about the Jansen and the Gardner’s text.

JG: And which text do you use again?

S: Gardner. Again, my real complaint with that text book is that it seems to go to a new addition every two years and it is so expensive for the students; and how much does art history change in two years. But nothing really content wise.

JG: We know you do use a text book. Would you be critical of someone who did not use a textbook?
Absolutely not. I could honestly teach the class without a text book. I think it would be harder on the students. In art history books there are just copious amounts of information. But you know I think you would have to use some type of readings. I have been in art history courses at the grad level were we did not have a text book but the professor put together great reading packets; perhaps where we would be looking up period information written about art from that period. They were more primary sources than those who neatly packaged it into a survey text. I think it is important that students read. But I have been in fabulous history courses where the information was all in the professors head and we just sat there and took notes. It is not like we got aware with not reading because his texts were hard. So not necessarily I would not, but I do think it is important that students read. Sometimes even those primary sources at the undergrad level.

JG: Is western art the apex of the world’s artistic expression?

S: It is the apex of the western world. I am so unfamiliar with non western traditions that I can’t say that it is. That is just a hard thing for me to say. It is what I enjoy being around the most. It is what I am most interested in. And even more narrow than that I am most interested in painting, because that is what I enjoy doing. I am just so unfamiliar with nonwestern tradition that it is hard for me to answer that question.

JG: So why not just teach western modern painting to your students?

S: And largely by default that is probably what I do idealistically. I like to see my students exposed to things beyond because I would like them to understand that. There are artistic non western traditions that even have impacted us in the west. Maybe we have taken them out of context, but they have been an impact. Like Japanese prints from the 17th century, on artists of the 19 hundreds in Europe and African art now. Even seeing what is going on now in western traditions, particular among African American artists; I am think about Faith Ringgold. You have to be exposed to some non western traditions to even understand what is going on in western art, because we just don’t operate in a vacuum. And to appreciate art from other cultures that may be different and they see of the similarities. But they will not know that they do until they respond to it.

JG: Do you think most people are like yourself.

S: What very Eurocentric?

JG: Yes

S: Yes, probably so.

JG: Or ill equipped, not to be harsh, but ill equipped to know what to teach concerning these non western cultures. Do you feel like you’re not alone?

S: I feel that that is probably true, that I am not alone. We have good intentions that we would like to. I think that the very fact that you could flip through the Chronicle of Higher Education, and the positions of art history that you will see advertised are nonwestern traditions. It shows that is what is in demand because that is what is scarce. We are all well intentioned and we would like to spend more time developing that area of ourselves but the problem is there are so many wonderful things to do out there in the world, and we can pick and choose what we want to discuss and we often don’t choose that. So no I don’t think I am odd in that regard. I think that is the position many people are in.

JG: To put that question in a different way. Do you believe in a manifest destiny concept of western art?

S: I kind of thought that was what you were getting at. That is a tough one. I kind of perhaps by a little in the notion that those who are in power get to decide what is part of the cannon of art history; which is why
there have been so many women omitted from art history. When you look at who is in a third world country and who is not a third world country, it going to be the western countries that are not…and whether that is by manifest destiny or just luck of the draw. You know that is how things fell out. That is a hard thing for me to say because the majority of the world is not where we are at in terms of power and material and blessings, but I don’t think that is because God loves us more. In fact, spiritually speaking, that materialism and those types of blessing come with quite a bit of baggage that perhaps can be more of a challenge for a Christian; than if you are in such great need and you realize you are in such great need; and seem to have faith for God, a reliance on God in your life. So I don’t know if we are especially blessed because we are western.

JG: If you look at Hegel. You get a theory that there are strata of cultures that are inferior to others and that is usually wrapped up in power but let’s keep it to the arts. Is there a Hegelian view in you toward their art? Do you see nonwestern art as somehow inferior to western art?

S: I don’t know if it is inferior as it is more of a preference thing. If my upbringing in art, and I am use to seeing has been so based in aesthetics and design, then that is going to be what I naturally prefer and I think it is better on a personal level. It is just what I like; what I like to be around. But that is because I was brought up in a context in which that art was created. And then if we are looking at issues of self expression in art, it may be that there are non western art; let say in an impoverished country created by an artist who sees horrible things going on around him or her and they beautifully express that but not in a way that is beautiful to look at. I can’t necessarily say that that art is inferior. I just prefer the context of which I was brought up. I appreciate that type of art more.

JG: Again do you consider yourself bias toward nonwestern art? Your saying you are trying to put it in there.

S: Yes, in a way I do. It is a survey class where you cover prehistory to postmodernism in two semesters, which pretty daunting. I know so much more about western art also, I want to talk about it more. It tend to be really Modernism and when you get to Postmodernism, that is the stuff I like to spend the most time on. I suppose I try to insert non western art to the extent almost to the extent the text does; like sadly an afterthought, given the time we have. That is probably not the best thing in the world and if we had more upper level art history courses, and when to do that I would like to add more nonwestern art courses. But even then it would not be the first thing I bring in. I would probably bring in an art history course on Renaissance and then a course on Modern art. Then it may come third or fourth down that road.

JG: The question is do you have to defend yourself against that? I know our culture today is like you have to teach other cultures. Do you?

S: I have not had to. One class I would probably bring in other cultures more than in my art history for art majors is my Art Theory and Criticism class that services more a diversity of degrees. In that class we look at the notion of the “primitive” and the idea of the “other”. And probably in that class which is an upper level class, which is not really an art history class but an art theory class, so we look at more nonwestern art traditions in that class than we do in any other. I probably do not feel I need to defend myself any more or less against that than any other stuff which we would like to do and don’t get time to do; like a ceramics program and a weaving program, a sculpture program. There are so many areas, were we are a small institution, that we have not been able to do that. I have in my secondary art education class chosen a multicultural theme for their lessons presentation that they have to do. So I try to bring those things in when I can. So I do not feel I have to defend myself. I think that if I was a graduate student some universities have some wonderful opportunities, like Mayan and pre-Columbian art and they have some wonderful opportunities in non western art, but when you look at the number of those type of nonwestern art courses in comparison to the program on the whole, even at some big universities that is just not the emphasis. And I think that is because we are coming from a western art tradition. You’re studying at this college in a western tradition. If you chose to go to a school in Africa then you would be more immersed in African art
history. If we were to study in Japan then we would be immersed more in Asian art history. I think it is kind of the nature of the beast. Were we are and what we are looking at.

JG: Because we live in America we should be learning American art.

S: Yes to some extent and because we are such a young country that has been, until recently focused in European art.

JG: Could you give me a percentage of non western art to be taught I your program course load could you do that?

S: The entire course load, the percentage that was non western art?

JG: Yes

S: And you’re talking about my pedagogy classes and everything?

JG: Yes

S: In looking at everything. It may between fifteen and twenty percent.

JG: Are you satisfied with that percentage?

S: For our size and for the context for which we are working, I think that is pretty good. But I always urge my students. I say, “You have to have to keep learning; you can’t call what we have done here and call it good”. And go out and teach thinking and think you know everything to teach, you have to keep learning. So I hope they would supplement somewhat. And depending on where they end up, where they go and what their interests are.

JG: What do you think of the “new art history” or the “new history”?

S: When you are talking about the “new history” are you talking about the relativism and the ideas that there are histories?

JG: Yes, it is a movement within recent academic historians.

S: And even more of that critical analysis type of approach that comes with it that has come with Postmodernism. I think it has been healthy. Again I think I am an odd balance between Modernism and Postmodernism, but I think it is always healthy to sit back and recognize how things get to be in an art history book. Where they come from and what is omitted and to look back into art history books and look what is no longer in there. For instance, all of sudden Oskar Kakoshka is no longer in there. Okay then what did they add to push out Oskar Kokoshka. There are some real biggies that are not in there because they had to bring in some other things. So it is interesting to look over the years what gets chosen and what gets dropped from one addition or another and looking at, for lack of a better word, politics in those decisions. I don’t know if it helps the students so much but for me, because I look at the multiple texts and see these changes over a broad spectrum of time I learn more. But I think it is good to reexamine every once and awhile explore these notions of power, modern verses postmodernism. And what were some of the reasons behind these things. The idea of who gets to decide who is in the cannon and that one person’s view of history may not be the same as another.

JG: Do you want to add anything else before we end?
S: I would just say I would not just chuck everything that has gone on in the past of art history. One thing that is so hot right now is visual culture art education. And some people would want to teach visual culture to the exclude of all fine art. Saying that the so called fine art does not impact us today, that is not relevant and so we can omit them. And I completely disagree with that type of notion. I don’t think the only objective of an art teacher is to educate students to be thoughtful consumers. I would never be the type to advocate that we should completely throughout the way we have been teaching art history in the past.

Interview #8
JG: Are there universal concepts in art criticism?

S: Art criticism has been an area where I have really struggled because I like the analytical linear model of art criticism, and I really see a use for it, in terms of building the concrete to the abstract and bringing in issues of design. But I also like the more collaborative open ended feminist model of art criticism, were you acknowledge the viewer and the baggage that the viewer brings with him or her when they approach a work of art. What may be the most comfortable way for me to approach art criticism is when the viewer is allowed; okay we acknowledged all the baggage that we bring to a work of art and that may influence the way we look at the art work. And then we push that aside a little bit and then try to figure out what is going on within the art. Because for my students and I, we know we cannot look at the New York city World Trade Center and pictures and paintings of it in the same way now than we did before September 11th 2001. So meaning has changed for us as we look at a certain type of architecture or painting that depicts a certain type of architecture. I can remember a painting of a recent artist that took a take on a Van Gogh’s style, and he did one work of the twin towers with that starry night sky over the buildings. And the students could not get past that large swirl in the Van Gogh’s sky, and seeing that swirl over the twin towers, even though the work was painted in the early 1980s, they could not get past that idea of an explosion. It meant something different to them than he did when we painted it in 1983. You can only acknowledge that. In another interview I mentioned the example of Oedipus the King. And we can’t possibly look at that particular piece of drama without reading all this Freudian stuff into it, because we are on this side of Freud. So again I have a weird acknowledging that postmodern idiosyncratic possibility of several readings of an art work, verses the one true meaning which is imbedded within the artwork and never changes. And I do believe that the meaning that is the most truthful when your critiquing a work of art, if you’re looking for meaning, is the one that makes the most sense given everything you have. Not something that is way off base.

JG: So when you try to teach someone the basics of art criticism what do you do?

S: I do that four step Edmund Feldman thing, where we do description, analysis, interpretation and judgment. That is where we begin. And we may move outside of that. In fact lately in my Art and Children class, using the Anderson text, we have used that model and then we will use more of a feminist model, elaborative conversational, open ended, not necessarily going to come to a final judgment on the work kind of model. We tried it both ways. And I can tell you the students like the feminist model more it seems. I believe because it brings the viewer in more and they have a role. You know for the analytical model you have to take a stand. You have to judge the work. And they have to support that judgment, and it is harder. So that might be another reason why they prefer the other model. And I want them to have to take a stand. And I want them to come to a judgment and support it. It is important to me in art criticism but it is also important to me in the world now a days were people say, “I am the consumer and I want to do it that way and you can’t make me”. Or they say, “I know as much about this as you do”. Even though they have been in college for two semesters and you have been in college for twelve years…That my opinion is just as valid as yours. So I want them to come to a place where they have to support that a little bit.

JG: Tell me more about this feminist technique. Where did you learn it?
S: Probably a little bit from the classes I took with Karen Kefier Boyd and probably the Anderson text. He goes into it a little bit. It is a little bit nebulous, which I guess is just the nature of that type of criticism. But even in the way it is defined, seems to be kind of nebulous. Probably the only definitions I have seen of it, there may be better ones out there, that it is open ended, collaborative and non linear.

JG: So what is it that makes it a little tougher?

S: The biggest thing that separates it from more Modernist techniques is that you don’t necessarily follow that linear progression were that follows from the preceding step and where there is more acknowledgement of that viewers baggage in response to the artwork. Were in the Modernist criticism you don’t really see that.

JG: And when you are saying Modernist, you are calling Feldman Modernist?

S: Yes, pretty much.

JG: In your article which you had published in the Art Education magazine, you referenced Terry Barrett basically saying there is one correct meaning in an art critique. Does this feminist criticism agree with Barrett or not?

S: I would say that it is not necessarily a contradiction. It would probably depend on whose interpretation you are looking at. But for my purposes whenever I have used it we have discussed you know “your bringing this in and how does that change the meaning and if you changed this”…then we all kind of come to a consensus based on what everybody has brought to the table. And then like I said before it is kind of based on what seems to answer the most questions about the art work. So I don’t think it contradicts. Because I am one that believes there are more correct readings of an artwork than there are incorrect readings. I do believe the meaning may shift and change over time, like the example I discussed earlier about the twin towers painting. I don’t think that is an incorrect meaning to it. Just like we can’t look at the Mona Lisa the same way who lived in the early fifteen hundreds, she comes with too much baggage, which has changed the meaning over time. But I do believe there are more correct meanings for an interpretations…I don’t think there is a free for all.

JG: Now we need to understand how Feldman’s technique of art criticism is different than that?

S: Well, I think the end by product in the feminist model is more coming to the explanation of the meaning, where the Feldman model, the last section is Judgment. Is the work successful in what it is trying to convey? Was the artist affective in what the artist was trying to do and how so or how not? So it may be more on the end product, but the Feldman’s model, the linear model, judgment is the last step. But I have not seen judgment so much emphasized in the feminist model; it has been more looking for the meaning.

JG: So we don’t go as far as to say this is good or bad.

S: Yes it may pop up in conversation but it is more of a byproduct in a way.

JG: So what I am hearing you say is that the feminist art criticism technique emphasizes both the object and viewer in a dialogue.

S: Yes

JG: And Feldman focuses on just the object in his criticism technique
S: Yes, I would think it is much more object. And I am not opposed to that. I almost want like 60% to 70% work of art and 30% to 40% other idiosyncrasies that may come into play.

JG: Including the artist’s personal statements?

S: Yes, definitely the artist’s meaning. I am one of those people who think it is important to look at why the artist did what they did. It is important but I don’t think it is the only thing you should look at. There are some many things that ... we are imbedded within our culture and there are ways we look at things that are going to be different and we can’t see them because we are just too close to it. One example I think of was the person who forged so many Vameer paintings. During that time everybody took them for Vameers but if you look at them now, seventy years later and you compare them to Vameers works, they are obviously similar but they are obviously different. There is sort of that Snow White sort of look that was big in the 20s. If you think about the movie Snow White, they have that type of look to them but you could not see it from that time period. You can only see it when you are backed up several decades and then look back at it.

JG: So if I was to say here is your components. There is the object. There are the artist’s statements about the work. There are the critics and art historians who are all in one; who have searched and researched the work, their commentary. Then there is the viewer. Out of one hundred percent give the break down what percentages should be given to each.

S: Let me put them in order first. I think there is the art work first. The artist and then what others have said about the art work are probably on par with each other. And then the viewer last. So I would say maybe 50% the object itself. Probably about 20% for both the artist says and what the art historians/critics say. Then maybe 10% the viewer. If I had to that is probably were I would have to fall. I may change my mind later but that is where I am today.

JG: Are there any other types of art criticism that you use or read about?

S: Most of what I have read seems to be the way to critique at the time. For instance, when you look back and see how art criticism was done during the Romantic period or Neoclassical period, there seemed to be this notion of recreating the image for the viewer. Because the viewer may not be privy to the image, and some of that may be tied up to what Dewey said in that if you can properly recreate that image, it is kind of like the aesthetic experience, and if you can share that verbally or in writing then you may be able to convey to them the same aesthetic experience you had when you viewed the work. Which I think is kind of corny. I don’t know if I agree with that. But when you read art criticism from that period, it is a very flowery narrative description of what you are looking at. That Feldman model is more design based and definitely more Modernist, in the time that it spends looking at how the piece is designed and composed. And that is one of the markers or indicators for success. So I think we have settled into two camps right now. Which is the Modernist view and the Postmodernist view. Which if you’re not careful can be a kind of free for all; any ones opinion if it is based in anything or not is just as legitimate as the next. But it seems like that when you look at the text that are being used at the undergrad level but for the graduate level that does not seem to be where they come down. There seems to be some standards and there are some gate keepers within the art world, and to some extent they dictate what is going on in art. Then we just have to decide are we going use institutional theory to discuss this piece or the feminist model. Or are we going to use significant form to define this piece. So it just kind of depend on...I don’t know. There are so many models of art criticism and trying to answer the question, what is a work of art. But it seems like those are the two biggies as far as approaches that I have seen.

JG: What is institutional theory? I have not heard you say that before?

S: It is a work of art. It is representative of the art world if the art world deems it to be a work of art. And you can make a mistake in referring it as art. That is a lot of responsibility.
JG: Now that is an aesthetic category and you are claiming it as an art criticism technique?

S: As you are approaching art criticism from that viewpoint how much different would your criticism be if you were coming from the institutional theory viewpoint than if you came from more of significant form Clive Bell kind of place. So aesthetics affect it but is not really an approach to art criticism.

JG: You mentioned Terry Barrett in your article in 2006. Are there some views you tend to use or anything like that?

S: I went through his text and we seem to be aligned in most places. And honestly I have wanted to use his text in my class, and the reason I have not is because he gets into some things that I just would not want to deal with in a Christian University.

JG: If you don’t mind what would be some of those things? I believe I have read the book you are refereeing to. He goes after some controversial places on purpose.

S: It is not so much talking about the issues that bothers me but the imagery that he has used. I think some of them were film stills and some of them were art works that...of course nudity is not an issues with me and art. And sometimes I forget were my students may be coming from, because when we see it so much in starting with prehistory and moving all the way up to today, we can become desensitized to it. And think, okay everybody has seen Botachelli’s Venus or something. But every once and a while I will get some students who are pretty sheltered and even though I see these things all the time, I have to be sympathetic. That does not mean we will not look at them. Sympathetic to the fact that sometimes it is shocking for students to see a painting of a nude woman. Photographs are even more visceral and tougher to deal with. And then when it is not just nudity but when it is people engaged in sexual acts. You know that is something that is a can of worms I don’t want to open. And I don’t think that what is being said has to be said with that right there. I think we can talk about some of those things in the classroom and look at some of those issues to the extent that we are going to without having to look at that imagery.

JG: So Eric Fischl was one of those artists in that text.

Susan: And generally speaking I like Eric Fischl’s work but I know a few things out there that are uncomfortable with that.

JG: In one direction someone is going to say, and Terry Barrett would most likely say this because I believe this is why he wrote the book, if that work is going to be out there then he would rather help a student go through the work and engage it in a constructive positive way to appreciate it rather than not at all.

S: And I completely agree with that if he were to say that. I would take it a step further saying yes, and in the context of a Christian university there is whole other layer of issues that we have to work with. So we are going to talk about things and issues like the queer experience to some extent. And we are going to talk about issues that had been controversial in art but we are going to do it within...it is almost the same thing he is saying but more so. If you know what I mean.

JG: Let’s say I don’t know so.

S: He is saying talking about art in this constructive environment but I would add a dimension to that, so when they are confronted with that outside in the world somewhere they know what is going on and have spent some time with it. I would say the same thing too, but with the constructive environment I would add the word Christian. So for example, we talk about Chris Oflee’s work. You know the big thing at the Brooklyn Museum a few years back; and what happened with his work. And I also got them to ask the
question, okay here is something that the general public thought was shocking. The artist may or may not have known going into it that the general public would have thought that this was shocking. But the question you have to ask is why would he do it? Look beyond that initial shock value and say why would he choose to go about doing it this way? And then the next question would be, is that a valid reason to you? So I present it that way. So we do talk about controversial things; the Mapplethorps the Serono thing that happened quite a few years now. It does not seem to be that long ago but it is. We talk about some of those issues and we talk about why the artist made them. What he may have been trying to say in that case, but try to get past that initial shock and see. So we do look at controversial work, we are just not going to look at every single one of them.

JG: There has to be a few artists in your mind that you are just not going to talk about.

S: As far as art works go?

JG: Yes

S: I remember the very first class I took in my Ph.D. work. The art professor who was aware of where I was coming from...It was a team taught class. He put up a Mapplethorpe photograph. It was basically a penis with an erection. And it was a photograph and he left it up there while he talk about what ever issue it was that he talked about. He left that up on the screen for an inordinate amount of time. I could not help but think, “Okay, let’s move on we have all seen it”. But that thing probably sat up there for some five to ten minutes while he discussed whatever point he was trying to make. He knew it was up there. I could not help but think, “This is for the girl from the Christian college down the street”. Have all those theatre people in there, and they are all there, and then me and the some music people. And I think the theatre people where a lot more comfortable with it than I was. So I don’t think you can teach within a certain community, and this goes for whether you are teaching k-12 or at the University level. Some many art educators will tell you this to that when you decide what you teach and how you go about teaching you have to have some awareness of the community of which your teaching in, and respond to that community. So if was going to teach at the inner city in Houston I would not look at Michelangelo to the extent or the same way as I would if I was teaching at an affluent school district in Houston. And for instance we might look at the Houston art car parade taking more time looking at Chicano art; and perhaps how it extracts from other art history traditions, than I would if was teaching at a farm community in the Texas pan handle or up in Kansas or something. So part of that is the response to the community that I am working with and laying a good foundation for them and then enabling them to go out and find out on their own. Also that responsibility that you mentioned in talking about Terry Barrett...he might support doing these things and looking at art in a constructive environment so you are not blindsided when you get out there and don’t know what to do with it. I agree with that statement but I also have to temper that with where I teach and also what my views are too; about art and about what is important to see and what can perhaps wait till later.

JG: So you may say what percentage of art. If someone going to critique you on this you would say “Look I teach this percentage of art that is out there”.

S: I would say we look at just about everything else that is out there, it is just the visual images they we are examining. So we look at all different types.

JG: So you go through every topic but you guard you student’s eyes from certain particularly egregious works.

S: And not just my students, my eyes too. There are some things I don’t want to see either. There are some works that are offensive to the point and the shock value is so strong that it is hard to get the message. I have never been fond of art, even if it came from ancient Greece or 2002 that showed people engaged in sexual acts. We talk about why people would want to portray that. We talked about that last Mapplethorpe
show that caused a stink with the NEA and everything. We talked about the nature of the pieces there. There is a beautiful piece in Gardner’s text. It basically shows a bunch of skeletons. The name has escaped me. It is a Chezch name. The piece is almost like a statement from a journal, the text in this artwork. And it is about his lover dying of aids. And it really is poignant and sad and anybody who has lost a loved one die of a debilitating long term disease can relate to what he is talking about; even if they do not agree with that homosexual union or the homosexual act.

**Interview #9**

**JG:** First of all what is aesthetics?

**S:** To me or in general?

**JG:** In your mind. What do you think it is?

**S:** Well to me I think it is two different things. I think it is discussions on what is the nature of art and how we respond to art and what makes one thing art and another thing not. Which is a good questions sometimes when you take a student to a museum and they’re looking at something and thinking; “Okay I got this in my dorm room. How come it is art in here?” So that is part of aesthetics. The other part has to do with discussions of our response to beauty, and the notions of beauty and what role that plays in art. And what it is that we respond to when we respond to the beautiful. And that whole idea of the aesthetic experience. Now for some people, that second one may be more irrelevant now a days, with the postmodern thing going on in the world of art. Just like art history it’s important to know, and I just can’t deny that we do have an aesthetic response within us; that we do respond to things that are beautiful. And you have to think of at that when you look at art. So many of the lay people out there and so many of the mainstream think that is the primary purpose of art; to paint beautiful things…So it is worth while talking about that.

**JG:** So you obviously teach aesthetics in art education and why do you do this?

**S:** Well probably the first impact was discipline based art education kind of background, and seeing it as an important discipline of art. I can tell you technically speaking I do it because it is part of our degree. When we brought in that advisory committee in and Karen Kiefor-Boyd was the art education representative. But I think we had another art person if I remember correctly. And that was one of the recommendations of the advisory committee to include a class on art theory and criticism. So from a nuts and bolts perspective that is why it is in the degree plan. I was elated to add it to the degree plan because as an art theory freak I just love that stuff. It’s just important for students to understand that.

**JG:** But you call it art theory and criticism.

**S:** But we probably spend more time dealing with aesthetic theory than anything.

**JG:** I find that interesting that they call it art theory. Is that a new word for aesthetics that we are trying to change it to?

**S:** I think probably it is. I had not really thought about it that way. Maybe because our postmodern sort of place that we are at; it’s that diminishing role of aesthetics within an art work because we associate aesthetics with the beautiful. And that has been so diminished. That maybe we like to call it art theory more. I don’t know. That is an interesting thought that I had not thought about. To me aesthetic theory and art theory is synonymous.

**JG:** Who taught you aesthetics?
S: My first aesthetics course that I had was when I did my masters degree. I am trying to remember the professor’s name. That was the first time I really sat in on art theory class at all besides art history. You know looking at the background ideas behind the thoughts behind art history. I liked it. I thought it was really interesting. Then I took some aesthetic philosophy courses at _______. So I took them from art historians at _____ but also from the philosophy department. He was good at explaining to us what we just read. Because this was the type of thing you could read three times and just begin to understand what you read. So he was very good at talking us through things. At times it was infuriating because he tried to split philosophical hairs. But I really did enjoy it and enjoyed thinking that way. And thinking of things I had never thought about before. And I think we and our students included do not have enough opportunity to think. We don’t get those opportunities very often so it is probably why I like that.

JG: You had mentioned one of the aesthetic theories, institutionalism. What are the other ones you were taught?

S: Symbiotic theory even though it is a linguistic theory has played so much into art theory. The instrumentalist idea that we have this innate thing within us; that we must create art. And to some extent I probably buy into that a bit. In my aesthetic section we almost do more a historical approach to aesthetics. And what was important to art in any given period. You have my syllabus so you can see we start with Plato. We have a little bit of Kant and little bit of Hegel. This is stuff I never read till graduate school. But wanted my students to read and spend some time with because for me it opened up a whole world that I never knew was out there. I said to myself how come nobody told me about this.

JG: So the students in your art theory and criticism class are doing these things?

S: Yes, and so like I said before most of the students are art students. And now I am starting to get more students from philosophy.

JG: So those in this class are art education students, art students and philosophy students?

S: Yes. And I even had a social work student, so you never know who will take the class. When I submitted the plan for this class for the program, this was kind of political move, but I could tell the administration…those who were going to be voting whether or not to implement this degree plan and this new courses I knew that these leaders were more interested in mostly upper level courses that would not have a prerequisite. So even though the art history survey would be a great prerequisite for this class, it does not have one. So what that means is I get a lot of upper level students who are more serious students who are close to graduation, but need an upper level art course of some sort. Or an upper level anything and for some reason it sounded good to them. So the good thing is it is a senior level course. So I am not getting a clueless freshman in there. I have just started teaching this. I have taught it two semesters now and it has worked out great both times. The last time I taught it was mainly students with an art background and philosophy people.

JG: So we have kind of talked about the idea of fundamentals or absolute truths in aesthetics. And you also talked about possibly a cultural move away from aesthetics. Why is that happening do you think?

S: The move away from art centered criticism?

JG: Not art criticism but aesthetics. Why are we moving away from aesthetics?

S: I think a lot of it has to do with the art that is being made now. There are all types of art being made now but stuff at the forefront is more concept oriented rather than object oriented. That you can put a shark in paraldehyde and call it art, that kind of thing. When we use the word aesthetics it is almost like we have the object tied up by definition as a part of that. So it may be a shift in art that is more concept-based and more based in the idea than it is in the final product. That would be one thing. Another thing it could be is
that some art today is truly ugly because it is not trying to serve the purpose of being beautiful. And perhaps its subject matter is not beautiful and the artist chooses that to drive that part home. So to some extent aesthetics is...at least on the level of beauty, omitted from that. And because of that we just omit that word aesthetics from the conversation because it seems to be so closely aligned with media. Aesthetic text will tell you that is not all that aesthetics is; but I think people read it that way.

JG: So do you think art educators at the highest level do not understand aesthetics?

S: I don’t know if they don’t understand it or if the word aesthetics carries to much baggage. So we just choose a different word, they may use art theory instead. It makes us feel better, because we don’t want to get into the area of the role of beauty possibly.

JG: Are you okay with letting that fade into the past?

S: No, and I use the word aesthetics quite a bit. Not in the course title evidently. Again in human beings there is something in us that wants the beautiful. It’s funny though because in the outside world, the world not the art world, they would be quite comfortable with us having aesthetic experiences. I think there is this resurgence to tie the aesthetic experience and beauty to art. And I think it has to do with trying to drive home that separation between modernism and postmodernism.

JG: And the difference between modernism and postmodernism is?

S: For modernism to elicit or get to that aesthetic response by the way you put things together, by that idea of significant form. And a lot of people looking at modernism are not going to get that either but for postmodernism there is such a desire to separate from that thing that happened before. One thing that is funny to me is that both modern and postmodernism will say we want to break from what happened before us. But they both want to say we want to honor traditions of the past. And we blame the other guy for completely turning our back on the past. So it is funny that they both accuse each other of doing the same thing, but that can’t be true. It can’t be both ways. Some bodies not telling the truth.

JG: So when you start teach aesthetics to your art education college students what do you start with? Do you have some basics?

S: In our *Art Criticism and Theory* class we do more of a chronological thing for the first two thirds of the semester. Then we get into the book *Art with a Difference* by Van Laar which I really do like as far as her postmodern approach. I like that we examine the politics. We examine how the museum is set up. So we discuss those things. So I like the book for that. But for my other classes, which is not the aesthetics course I want to bring in aesthetics. I have to say I start with the object. And we start with what makes this art. I asked students to bring things into class. I got this idea from Tom Anderson. Have them bring in an object. One they think is a work of art and one they think is not. I have them examine those objects and decide with one or both or neither is a work of art. And then we discuss the idea of a work of art. I kind of tell them off the bat we have to acknowledge that not everything is art. That art is a special category. The reason we have to agree upon that is because we have a word called art in our vocabulary. So if everything was art why would we need the definition? Then we try to explore what it is that makes it work of art. So we kind of develop an art not art list, and have them come together and try to determine sufficient conditions to support their view. Then we question if they are sufficient or not; so we kind of start there. And I do take a little bit of time talking to them about Dewey and the aesthetic experience. And then talk to them about aesthetic experiences they have had. And have them share experiences of that. And we discuss the difference between aesthetic experience and emotional experience. And I give them an example. I say I am a crier. I go to the symphony orchestra or I hear a piece of music and it is beautifully sung. I am going to cry, I know it. If it really strikes me I will cry. And I am not crying because I am sad or happy. It is not an emotion, it is something else. So then we try to differentiate between an emotional response and an aesthetic response. And then we look for ways we see how aesthetics play in our lives.
This is something that occurs naturally perhaps if we are attune to it or let it, and everything lines up just right. The concept how artists are trying to achieve that? If that is what they are trying to achieve. So that is kind of how we attack it. In those classes especially when we are not going to get much time with it.

JG: I had many things go through my mind as you talked. First you mentioned not everything that is humanly made is art. So what is it? What is your definition of art?

S: I can’t blame the students more relativistic postmodern way in which they were brought up, for the fact most students minds are inclined to say anything is art. What I try to lead the discussion to is anything has the potential to be art and anything can be used to make art, but not everything is art. Some students have really hard time with that because they want to say everything is art. And they also want to say that things in nature are the greatest work of art of all. I would say that art is a human convention, not a divine convention. That in humanity we are trying to imitate the divine but art is a human thing. Art has to be made by a human. So I can’t find a piece of drift wood on the beach and say wow this art God made. I guess I could but I would not do that. Because I think art is lesser form of creation than what God undertakes. I think art is not mass produced even though something that is mass produced can be used to make art. That it does have to be made by human hands. I question institutional theory. The other part of institutional theory is that… I guess I am defining something by what it is not. But there is that notion that lets say, an Elephant makes a painting. The elephant can’t be the artist because the elephant is not a representative of the art world. Let’s say an art curator designated the elephant painting as art. Part of institutional theory would be that the curator would be the author of that art work and to me that does not make sense. They are the artist of the elephant painting because they decided that it is art, and I just don’t buy that. I don’t think something has to be created with the intention of it being art in order to be art. Because I think there are examples of indigenous people who created art when there was no vocabulary for art. And at some point they are moved from the museum of natural history to the museum of art, because we broadened our definition of what art was. I think some of those things are still art. So I’m not sure what the role of intention plays. I do think there needs to be some form of communication or expression and that does not have to be lofty. It could be I want to express this lovely still life that I am looking at. Or it can be something like there is a deep seated meaning and I want to make it tough for the viewer to understand that. But it has to be expressive of something. So there are some conditions and they don’t seem to be sufficient.

JG: You brought up a good description that you do in your aesthetics class. You talked about emotions and how you would cry and from a man’s perspective we don’t do that very often. Is there a possibility that there could be a feminist way of doing aesthetics? Is there something that females can teach males?

S: A female’s aesthetic experience is different than a male’s aesthetics experience is that what you mean?

JG: Yes

S: Gee whiz, Jeff, I don’t know. That is an interesting question. I think that anything is possible.

JG: Aren’t there article that talk about a feminist criticism right?

S: Yes. And if there is one why can’t there be the other. There is a feminist experience, so can’t that carry into art? I think that it is possible.

JG: So we have three of four. Feminist art, feminist history, feminist criticism why not a feminist aesthetic?

S: Why not? I don’t know if anyone has gone that deeply into it. But that sure is an interesting thought. And I don’t know if that would be a feminist or feminine aesthetics.
Interview #10
JG: We are going to go further into multiculturalism today. We talked about your technique of multicultural education and you said quote, Teaching within that framework of our university and our mission and that belief system. I do want to present my students with challenging ideas and challenging thoughts. And do perhaps say this is what one camp says and this is what the other camp says. You kind of have to take that and assess it on what you want to keep and what you want to throughout. I want them to know some ideas of what are going on in various different cultures, whether they are ethnic or gender cultures, whether they are disability cultures. So I want them to understand those things. So I don’t not discuss it with them. I want them to know it is out there because we have to live in a world. We are commanded to live in a world. Not just to buck that sort of thing. So I want them to be aware of those things and to respect and love individuals and to treat individuals with love and respect. But at the same time to hold fast to those things that are the core beliefs and core missions of the university.

JG: Basically you had mentioned you want to present your students with challenging ideas and challenging thoughts. Can you elaborate on that? What exactly do you mean in the context of multiculturalism?

S: I keep coming back to that Art Theory and Criticism class because some of the courses I teach, like the Art History Survey and even Art and Children, are such survey type courses that we do more of a breadth than a depth. So I keep coming back to classes were I get to work with students were we built that trust relationship over several semesters and we get deeper. So I come back to those upper level courses. And we dive into ideas that even make me uncomfortable sometimes; as the students explore them. When you’re at a private university you are constantly thinking of your constituencies because you do not receive state funding. It is an interesting political dynamic. So I try to get them to think about things like…for example, in my Art Theory and Criticism class I try to get them to think about the “other”. And how these things have perhaps impacted their lives in ways they have not taken the time to recognize. Or have noticed, but really have not articulated or formulated. And I think I talked a little bit about that last time, in terms of our own lives. I mentioned to you the student coming from a missionary background and how we had been the other in a situation. And how it has made us feel.

JG: In that situation though it is one thing to understand it, it is another thing to change that culturally or politically.

S: And you can only do that one individually at a time. I have been thinking over some of the questions you have asked me before. The role of education and some of the social responsibilities that education has taken on, and realizing that it had kind of become a default job of education to take care of some many of the social things. But kind of understanding that it is more of an individual thing. It is up to individuals to change things around them. And coming from a Christian point of view, I care of about those social things as an individual because I feel that we as Christians are called to care about other people. That God loves the poor. And when we see things going on at an individual level we need to take care of it. So in terms of even social change…and in terms of how that is related to multiculturalism we can only do that one individual at a time. And then work together as individuals to create any change or address any wrongs. And so much of what we do in terms of that is taking care of our self and how we treat other people. I mentioned before that so much of our job here on this earth is relationships with other people and how we treat other people; and being kind to other people and caring and compassionate to other people. Even the way we look at multiculturalism in the class kind of ties into that and that belief system.
JG: Splitting a hair. There are two kinds of multiculturalism were we just understanding or bring this knowledge to consciousness, but another one is telling the student go make a change culturally or politically. Did you take it as far as change? Telling students to go do that.

S: I don’t know if I overtly did that. I feel in everything we do within a Christian context it is implied in a way. When we talk about issues and when we look at what is going on around us on a campus level, on a church level, at a society at large level. Those issues come up, but as far as me going out and commanding for students to go make these changes I don’t really do that. But I mentioned to you before that this generation of students seems to be…and I don’t know if it is just in fashion right now. I don’t want to belittle it, but my generation was not as socially conscious as this generation, and as attuned and as compassionate to what is going on here and in other parts of the world in terms of the poor and homelessness. I mentioned to you the final exam project at the end of the painting class were they had to research and address a social issues in an art work. Groups could work together or individually, however they wanted to do it. A group of three male students dealt with the issue of homelessness. One of those students was from Brazil and he had seen homelessness on a scale that we here have never seen. But he even told stories of he and some friends going down to the public library and taking hot chocolate to people who are homeless.Passing out blankets and having conversations; and things that he had learned from those people. Of course it is harder for a woman to do things like that but those are things I would never have dreamed of doing at that age. So they are kind of attuned to these kinds of things in a way that I was not.

JG: And maybe if there is a teacher who was your mentor back then who brought you to this consciousness, that you could be a social agent of change.

S: Maybe so. Of course this university has always had mission trips during spring break; were students will go and work all over the U.S. and Mexico. And a large part of what they do know…I don’t know if it was this way when I was in school because I never went on those mission trips, but it seems some much of who they deal with are homeless and children. And they are not necessarily getting out there beating on the Bible type of activities, but they are going out just talking to people and building relationships. You got to have a relationship. And they are recognizing the importance of relationship. You can’t make change until you have a relationship.

JG: Also in that beginning paragraph that I read back to you it was said you are doing multiculturalism within the framework of the university mission statement. How can you teach multiculturalism that would go against ones mission statement?

S: We had talked about the dicey imagery that may come into play when you start exploring some of these issues. Some of the stronger imagery I would argue that most universities are not presenting at the undergraduate level. In your higher level courses perhaps graduate level students are seeing these images when pursing more depth in those areas. Some of it has to do with that type of imagery. Some of it perhaps has to do with presenting ideas but not necessarily advocating them and constantly revisiting that framework. As you look at these things, reminding them of what they already know. And even looking at examples of Christ and how he worked with people, with his compassion, openness and existence that he shown for people, tempered with the value system that comes with Christianity and the study of the Bible. In terms of moral decisions, and always acknowledging that this is up to the student to decide which direction they are going to go in their life. I definitely think there are ways I could present this information not within a Christian framework. I think it is done all the time at other universities. But I would not want to do anything to diminish what our university is about.

JG: Can I push on that issue a bit. I just wanted some scenarios possibly. We have to distinguish what this mission is and how we as a culture teach at these Christian schools; how they conflict. And we are getting to real issues now. We are talking about a real topic. We are talking about multiculturalism, which is very hot. And people don’t want to talk about it.
S: Can’t you tell. Some aspects of gender theory as they deal with homosexuality are going to be issues that are going to be dicey topics to teach at a conservative Christian university. And helping my students recognize that these issues are out there and these points of views are out there. I think one of the things that we have lost in our country is to agree to disagree in a civil manor. It seems we start calling each other names like intolerant, bigoted homophobic. I feel the Bible is fairly clear on the issue. And if you believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. And if you believe God is who He says he is, then there are certain things that are and are not right. And it comes through in your teaching. At the same time, on the flip side of that, just because we disagree with people does not mean we ostracize them. That does not mean we should be unkind. I am sure there are many aspects of my life that others would disagree with, and I am okay with that. It’s that balance between loving individuals and being tolerant and kind to one another, recognizing that we are all lost without the grace of God, but not advocating what the Bible teaches to be sinful. In teaching, there are ways that I can look at gender theory. And look at how others have been treated and persecuted and how we as Christians should treat people, but not necessarily advocate a life style that the Bible does not advocate. An example I can think of was a child in their little neighborhood whose mothers were lesbians. It was a lesbian couple. This child’s experience had been that none of the other neighborhood children would play with her because of her parents. My friend wanted her children to play with her, realizing this situation was terrible. And my friend accepted this child. She wrote an article about this child. My friend’s article pretty much supports what I am saying; that even though we may not disagree with each other we have to love each other in this world. And we need to be kind to each other and tolerant of one another. That is what the Bible teaches. The hate mail campaign that developed once the magazine was posted online…she also got some emails saying “I am a lesbian and I really appreciate what you said”. She got some like that but it was almost a campaign of hate emails. She was teaching tolerance. She was teaching it to her children. So that was the thing that was unbelievable to me. And I think that is what happens more often than not. And it does not just happen on the “worldly” side it happens on the Christian side as well. And I am sure of the number of letters she probably got some from Christians who hated what she was teaching, in terms of being tolerant and kind to one another. And it is a sad situation.

JG: So this is a secular magazine?

S: No it is a Christian magazine. That is the kind of world I don’t want to live in; were we can’t exchange ideas without descending into name calling and anger. And both sides, the left and the right, conservative and the worldly side, the Christian side and the secular side are guilty of that.

JG: If there was no such thing as homosexuality would there be other areas of multiculturalism that would go against your universities policies?

S: I don’t think so. That is the hot topic, within a Christian context. Anytime you get into any topic you can get into issues of experience and look at experience that would be difficult politically at a Christian university, when you look at others experience because it is all made up of individuals and how they choose to present their ideas. They can be tame, they can be shocking, it just depends. So it is not the issue itself so much as the imagery we may look at. Homosexuality stands out because of the teachings in the Bible. Also because they are the only group that claims minority based on actions; based on sexual activity, so that one is a little bit different and because the Bible teaches so specifically about that. It does not talk about the African experience or the Asian experience. So it has less to do with the issue itself and more how it is presented.

JG: Do you have any multicultural methods that you are aware of that you use? Or do you have specific professor’s books that you use or like to trust?

S: Nothing specific really that I can think of. If anything at all the purpose of looking at others experiences and others cultures is to build an understanding of one another. And how our experiences may
vary based upon how we are brought up. And based upon where we live and our socioeconomic level. But imbedded within all of that is the experience of understanding and tolerating one another. And building relationships with one another in such a way that it is not so self-centric. So it all has to do with that understanding and this idea of living with one another and being kind to one another. And then probably understanding art from a different point of view, kind of comes with that as a corollary.

JG: The development of a separate school by which traditions can be maintained from others.

S: Do you mean like a Christian university?

JG: Exactly. It has been called cultural separatism. And you brought up the Christian college. You found the definition I read strikingly similar to a Christian college. Do you see a conflict there, as you discussed your multicultural education and the context of cultural separatism in your college’s existence?

S: No more than I see a cultural separatism in Christianity. As I mentioned in an earlier interview, we are commanded to live in the world. We are commanded to be a light to the world. We are really commanded not to separate ourselves. Honestly when you look at our demographics of our university, yes it is aligned with a Christian mission but it is not just Christians going to school there. And certainly not just Christians from a Church of Christ background. So I think the students that we see here are ones that want to be here…well not all the time. At least half the students are ones who want to be educated in that environment. For some it is just a matter of convenience; just like it would be at any university. So it is a college within a Christian framework but I don’t think ever with the intention of separating ourselves from society at large. It is just our desire to learn from a Christian viewpoint. But so many take classes at state universities in addition to what they are doing here and transfer them in. And some have come from public schools. So it not like they are all coming from home school or something and have never left the bubble. They work in the world. So I don’t see it as a separatist thing so much. I see it as further equipping them to work in the world as a Christian.

JG: So you really don’t see the Christian school as cultural separatist?

S: Not in its basic mission. The university’s mission is to equip Christians to work in the world. In less you are Amish I just don’t think there are many places you can go and keep yourself segregated that way.

JG: Now let’s get back to multiculturalism in regards to cultural separatism. So there are schools or maybe a classroom that is specifically designed…often this is more school but, they just want to focus on their own heritage and thrive in it. And they really don’t worry about other people. They just focus on their own heritage which might be uniquely rare and kind of extinct so they are trying to save it. What do you think about that?

S: Well I think I brought up that our own university has reflected about who is going to school here; and how the dynamic has changed over the past decade or two. We are reevaluating our condition and our heritage, were are coming from and who we are. So I don’t want to diminish the importance of that. What we have found is in working with students that don’t come from the same heritage and background, sometimes we do things we take for granted. And example I can think of is musical instruments in chapel; Christian bands playing during chapel. And from a Church of Christ background we don’t use instrumental music in worship. Some students who may not come from that background will question this. They may say, “You will let some regular rock and roll band come and play regular rock and roll music but you will not let a Christian group play. What gives?” But you know we found most students when we explained to them the heritage and were we are coming from and why that is, they are okay with it. So they are very understanding and very tolerant of that different viewpoint when they understand where it came from. So there is a role in tradition and heritage in recognizing that. You are familiar with the Church of Christ. And I think we are at point when we are looking back and reevaluating some of what our heritage has been. I think we where cursed with the mindset of the nineteen fifties when the Church of Christ held that if you
were not a member of the Church of Christ it seemed, I don’t know if they actually wrote it down any place, but if you were not a member of the Church of Christ you were going to hell. And I don’t think that is the mind set now. It is in some regions and in some camps perhaps but generally speaking the Church of Christ sees the foolishness of that idea. But it is our legacy sadly. And a lot of people when they think of the Church of Christ; especially alone here in the Bible belt were it seems to be Church of Christ, Baptist or Methodist. Those seem to be the big three. That seems to be the perception that people have of the Church of Christ. And that is the perception people have had of this university traditionally I would say. And the new president that we have worked with has come a long way. So there where people in our city for example who would think “I am never sending my children there”, because of that type of perception. But I think we are changing that. So it is good to look back every once and a while at tradition and say maybe we need to reevaluate some of the traditions that we had. But I do know that it is important to the university to have in its mind that Church of Christ tradition, and to instill in our students and awareness of that because that is a part of it.

JG: It is complicated stuff really.

S: It is.

JG: Here is another style of multiculturalism. I am not necessarily talking about the university but more about your teaching and what you teach your students. This is a historical style that has been defined. The target audience is the “other” usually minority. This concept was generated for mainstreaming these minority students into mainstream society. What do you think of that type of multiculturalism?

S: I guess I would argue that I don’t see that is tied into the notion of the “other”. That to me this idea of the “other” is more of just understanding that we are from different backgrounds and being tolerant of each other, given that we come from these backgrounds, more so than mainstreaming. It is not like it is the responsibility of the “other” to get it right and align to the dominant culture. It is in some ways the dominant cultures partial responsibility. It is all of our responsibility to look at one another and realize that our experiences are different and we do come from those different backgrounds; and not to require that they diminish their heritage in order to join the dominant culture. I am thinking specifically of the religious freedoms that we enjoy compared to perhaps Europe and so many of those who come from a Muslim background when they think about a western reaction to Islam, think about a Europe reaction. That is the culture closest to them in terms of western culture. For example, in France and other countries not being able to wear a vale, when you study at a university or depending on what your job is...Banning the vale. And they think that in the U.S. we have those same structures and we don’t. But that is because of our recognition of and celebration of the difference and because we are so much of what our country was built upon what this idea of religious freedom. So I don’t necessarily think the point is we do need to live together, so that separatist type of thing sometimes fall out naturally because humanity gravitates toward people who are like us. And If was to move to say Saudi Arabia I would gravitate toward the Americans. I speak their language. So sometimes it naturally falls out that way.

JG: But if you as the “other” went to Saudi Arabia would you be okay with being mainstreamed to learn Saudi Arabian culture?

S: I would. That would be hard. I would want to get along with Saudi people. That would be tough for a western woman to constantly have to wear the head to toe, and to be segregated. You as a woman and your children would have to eat in separate parts of the restaurant from your husband; or perhaps can’t even go out or stay inside the house. That would be a tough thing. To the extent if I could I would try to be respectful. For instance when I went to Turkey I wore vales on our heads when I went to any mosque and took our shoes off out of respect for that culture and that religion. It would be tough to be completely mainstreamed and I don’t know if completely mainstreaming is the goal. I think that getting along with one another is the goal and working together and recognizing that we do share this world.
JG: But isn’t there a point when divergent cultures are so divergent you can tear a culture apart?

S: Yes, I think there are probably examples of that.

JG: I am just trying to defend acculturation as a devil’s advocate. Are you totally against this? Are there moments in multiculturalism education that you may teach to k-12 teachers about this concept?

S: Well, there is the ideal world out there that will never be realized. The ideal that you try to work towards but it doesn’t mean you don’t try. So even that the ideal might be a utopian world in which we could preserve our cultures, and still live and work together in a harmonious way, even though realistically that may not be achievable to preserve those things. And still work together in a fully integrated sort of way. I don’t think we should not try to work towards the best reasonable situation that we can. There are times when what is happening multicultrually, in a very deep way, and many times these are religious, they are antithetical to your religious beliefs. And that is probably when it gets toughest.

JG: We have aspects of Kwanza, Jewish traditions and things like that. Do you say to your students “go teach those things in your classrooms”?

S: No, I am probably more presenting these things and saying to my students, “You have to assess your belief system. You have to look at the community in which you are teaching and what you are teaching. And present how and what you think”. I would not what anybody to go against their conscience. That is sin; to go against something that you believe is consciously wrong and goes against your conscience as a Christian.

JG: Okay I am in the public schools and it is Kwanza day across the entire school. Because next week is going to be Jewish day. And the next week is something else day. And they want you to teach a lesson along with the schools theme. What do you do?

S: I don’t think I would have any problem presenting a certain persons beliefs as this is this people’s belief in Kwanza or Judaism as I would in Christianity or Islam. Because I think we need to understand were other cultures are coming from. So I don’t think I would have a problem presenting it as this is what this group believes. I think were the problem would come in…and honestly I taught in the public schools. I have had students come up and ask me point blank when I taught high school, as a Christian what do I believe about this. And I had no problem sharing that information with them. There is a difference between presenting this information as this is how it is out there in the world; this is history and this is culture and religion. And you need to understand it because we live in this world together. Verses saying, “You need to believe this. This is what you need to do”. I think those are two different things. And if a student comes up to me… I had a student come up to me in a homeroom class…we studied the Bible together in the public school during homeroom. We had a twenty minute homeroom. He would come in. He was coming from a different Christian background than I was. Basically we sat there together and look at a topic. We only did this for a while but we would look at a topic and would look at his Bible, because it was different from my Bible…he would say this and what his beliefs were about this. And I would show what my beliefs were about that. It was just kind of a dialogue. It was not even a convergent thing but more of a dialogue. So even though those are things you are not suppose to do in the public schools…when my students confronted me and asked me questions…because they want to know about the world around them. And they are trying to feel their own way and find out who they are. And they largely base that on observation of people around them. So when they asked questions I was not afraid to answer them. And I thought let the chips fall where they may.

JG: Was that more of a public context or private context when and how they asked those questions?

S: Usually those things were one on one right there in the classroom. You know how the art classroom is kind of free flowing, structured but loose, if students are working on projects. So maybe, as I walk around
class monitoring projects I may have a student ask me a question. And they may be sitting in front of their
peers or it may be one on one after class; what do you think about this? One of the beauties of our
classrooms is that it is so free flowing and it can be conversational. But always I wanted my students to
understand that I recognize that we are different. And certainly I was teaching in a school that was
predominately black and Hispanic. And their experiences growing up culturally and socio economically I
was the “other” in that context. And I had just as much to learn from them as they did about me. And I did
learn so much.

JG: And let’s put this in context, this next multicultural type. You did have Hispanic and African
American in your school and the target audience is all students but this is really dominated by two main
groups probably. And there is a power struggle. So to overcome that, the mission of this type of
multicultural education is to keep the cultural heritage of the “other” strong and encouraged. So in this
situation you may be trying to raise both Hispanic and African American cultures up historically. So you
did not separate those students. So you had African Americans learning about Hispanic cultures and vice
versa. That would be a bicultural or cross-cultural multiculturalism. We have a really diverse group of
people in America. More than most other countries in the world. The question then is, is it a cross-cultural
multiculturalism really possible? Can you really learn about all those different cultures?

S: I think it is possible to understand each other better. Not completely. It does not mean we should not
try. Again, it comes back to looking for that ideal and trying to achieve that ideal, even though it is
something that is impossible to achieve. But I think we can get better. So I have that optimism that I think
it is a worthwhile effort. And at the very worst, if we have a dialogue about our differences and our
different experiences based on our cultural backgrounds, we at least have a relationship, which is
something to start with. You can’t have those discussions without having a relationship with someone. So
that is a start.

Interview #11
JG: What is your role as a teacher?

S: I feel like I am an odd mix, I think everybody is. I feel that they may say this is my role, because this is
what they want their role to be, but I feel like sometimes I am the person who is the authority and deposits
information to the brains of the students, and is like that clean slate thing, just waiting to be written on. But
sometimes I am just a facilitator that helps students explore their own ideas. So when you come and look at
how I teach my classes, sometimes there lecture and sometimes their group activities. Sometimes there all
different things. I have trouble nailing it down to one role and one hat that I wear as a teacher. Am I taking
on a Constructivist role or Empiricist role or whatever. That’s hard.

JG: What is the student’s role then in your mind?

S: To me a classroom is an oddly constructed environment. It is kind of a fake environment. It does not
really reflect the real world. So you are learning inside but it is an environment made for learning. For
example, the whole point of a studio class is to force students to work hours and hours on studio projects
were they would not take the time out to do that in the outside world. So in a way we have this classroom
environment that is some ways is like a real environment and in some ways very artificial. To accomplish
that means setting up a place where students can learn and can focus on learning. The student’s role is to
learn. Sometimes this come in the form of bits of facts and sometimes this comes in the form of
understanding how to assimilate that information into their own belief system. Sometimes it comes in the
role of the paradigm shift; you know changing that belief system.

JG: So do students have a responsibility?
S: Absolutely! If they are there to learn then they have a responsibility to do that. To be open minded. So much of what we see happening with relativism and Postmodernism is that students can come into a subject and say my opinion on this subject is just as worthwhile as yours because they have been taught that. It is the idea of “the customer is always right” type of mentality. This happens more often in art than say biology. It can be hard for students to transition into an educational environment where they have to admit they might not know much about this idea. They do it with art more often because we do have a more visceral response to visual imagery. And in some way art is devalued compared to something say the sciences and the mathematics. So, students feel they feel comfortable dismissing art that is uncomfortable to them. They may say “that is stupid or that did not take skill”. I think it is just a reflection of how art is respected in our world. Just because you have seen pictures all your life does not mean you know necessarily what is going on with art. We need to teach student that there are things you can learn here that are valuable; and can help you come to a greater understanding of the culture you live in and the world at large.

JG: When it comes to controversial issues in the classroom, how do you deal with the ugly head of the term indoctrination?

S: I don’t think it comes up. Naturally you are not going to think it comes up if you don’t think what you are doing is indoctrinating students. I think the students at our university, when they choose to come to our university, sometimes they may not know it until the admissions process or maybe later but at some time they reach an understanding that “Oh I chose to go to go to school here and this is the framework in which these people are teaching”, and they choose to live in that environment and choose to accept that environment to some extent. I really try to present a number of different viewpoints; and some of those view points are dicey. I could imagine some of our board of trustees if they were in the class, would have a hard time with some of the stuff we look at. So I feel like I am not trying to indoctrinate I am trying to leave it open ended. So indoctrination really did not come up. I am thinking of an art work that a student made for an exhibition for art criticism. It was called the “Four inch binding unbound project”, when they each did a book page. This student was coming from a philosophy background. And for our university he may be seen as rather liberal in his beliefs and ideas. He created an art work in which he wanted to insight the viewer to do something to the art work. He wanted the viewer to be involved in finishing the art work out. He invited them to and he left markers and things so people would draw on his art work. He felt the best way of insight the audience would be to write very controversial sayings on the work. And within our Christian university context this could get interesting. He and someone else wrote a little conversation which had homosexual over tones. And then he wrote “Bush equals Satan”. Obviously he wrote things that would get people riled up. I think he was shooting for that the audience would destroy the art work. I am not sure. It was funny on the night of the opening; I did not hear one single negative statement about his work all night. And we did not have just student there but administration, staff and all other kind of people there. One staff member; at the very beginning she was invited to write on the art work. With her pen in hand she was saying how would she respond to this; were the artist wrote “Bush equals Satan”, she wrote equals Santa. He got people to participate but I am not sure he riled them up. I forgot what the original question was.

JG: The original question was about indoctrination. You mention how you kind of guard against that by talking about open ended things. I just want to know where you are when that weird word comes up. And you talked a little about reading the fine print students, as they came to the university.

S: And you are going to get this view point if you choose to come here.

JG: And is that fair to say read the fine print? Or maybe that is different in a Christian College. We put our faith statement out there very clear. What do you think of secular universities?

S: Secular universities could just as easily could be accused of indoctrinating students because the irony is that there are some things I am so much more free to talk about from a Christian point of view in a
Christian University that I could be fired for at a secular university, but on the other hand secular universities say there is academic freedom, and they can teach anything they want. They certainly can’t teach from any religious view point but they do. I have met Gonzarmo Gonzalas this professor at Iowa State, who on his own time, wrote a book on intelligent design. He has a fantastic publication record. His work has been sighed the most of the full professors there, but he was denied tenure. So here is this person who has this outstanding record, who did something on his own time but yet came back to bight him in an institution that would claim to be academically free.

JG: Christian educators are often called indoctrinators by secular university teachers. What is your comment on that?

S: I don’t they are any more or less indoctrination by Christians than anyone else’s view point. Teachers tend to teach from the value system in which they hold. That is their framework for knowing. That is what they are familiar with and that is what they are going to teach and sometimes that is what they strongly advocate. And it becomes very clear to students that that is what the teacher advocates for. And even thought they say there are no right or wrong answers there definitely are, and it is reflected in grades. And that happens just as often at state universities as Christian because we are all made up of fallible individuals.

JG: We are going to go into some areas of how you think you teach. The first one is. You do not share your view because the teacher should not introduce topics that are viewed as controversial in the broader community. So if there is a topic, it could be homosexuality or something else in the broader community, and you just avoid it. What do you think of that?

S: I don’t think there is anything wrong with sharing your view of where you are coming from. I think where it becomes wrong is when you make it clear to a student this is what you are going to be evaluated on in this particular project, and because this student disagrees with you on a personal level you throw that rubric out the window, consciously or unconsciously, and you evaluate them based on their beliefs when you did not tell them you were going to do that in the beginning. That is what I think is wrong.

JG: I have a feeling you are all four of these categories. Is there ever a time you believe you should use this technique? You don’t share your perspective and realize it is a sensitive topic and you just avoid it.

S: I can’t think of a situation. If I choose to not share my opinion on a topic it is only because whatever specific thing we are working on I don’t what to color the way the student views it. I want to really know what they believe. And that just depends on what you are specifically doing in the classroom. So I can’t think of any topic that would be so dicey that I would not share my point of view.

JG: Would you ever advocate this type of teaching style to your students?

S: There are topics when teaching in the public school or any school. I just talked with a graduate education class just a few days ago about this. We talked about how to handle controversial topics and students want to talk about these things sometimes because they are trying to figure out their world around them. We talked about techniques for discussing these in the classroom. I used that Anderson and Milbrandt text. I used some of their types on trying to keep the discussion open ended but staying focused, making sure that it applies to whatever you are studying. I remember having this happen in my public school teaching days. When students would ask me questions and something and I would say I will answer that later. And at the end of class if they asked again maybe I would respond. I would never not tell them really but I would certainly wait until they had aired out their own views first.

JG: The second teaching type is that the teacher allows their view to be known and the teacher leads the student into a preferable position on the topic. What do you think of that? Do you advise your students to teach this way?
S: The most obvious example I can think about that style of teaching would be when I am introducing the idea of aesthetics to one of my students. One of the questions I use is what is art? And in class we explore that question. And I do try to set up things for students. And usually when I do this I am dealing with students who have not had a lot of experience looking or doing art.

JG: You have the outcome basically?

S: Well what I want them to understand is that there certainly must be a difference between art and other things out there in the world. I don’t have an ultimate outcome but I want them to come to a recognition. It is real easy for students to dismiss it all as everything is art. Or they may say art is in the eye of the beholder. There I am done. I want them to think harder than that. So I want them to realize that surely not everything is art or why have the word art? The fact we have that word says we classify some things as art and some things as not art. So that would be as far as I would have that go. That I want them to understand that there is a difference but it is up to us to know what the difference is, so I tell them ahead of time we must agree on these given as we enter into these discussions. And you are not allowed to say that art is in the eye of the beholder or art is what you make it. I want you to think, that is a cop out. Basically they are saying art is not worth thinking about. It is being dismissive. It is like saying I don’t have talent in art therefore I don’t have to learn anything about art; that kind of idea. Art teacher hate that. I want them to think harder about it, so I kind of give them some parameters. And maybe broadcast that there is a certain direction I do what to go to and it is not this direction.

JG: And at the end you tell them your position on this?

S: Sometimes I might if they ask. What I really do a lot is play devil’s advocate. I bring up again that philosophy teacher in which I really enjoyed. My goal is not to get them to a specific answer but to consider angles they have not considered before. To get them to stretch a little bit more. It is not to get them to one specific one answer but to get them to consider all the implications to what they just said.

JG: The next teaching style is the teacher is silent on their views but they promote complex understanding and ambiguity and responsiveness to constructive criticism, given opportunity for all students. And that may be where you are most of the time.

S: In some ways I will be coming from an overtly Christian point of view, like sometimes when I may take pray requests from students at the beginning of class. You certainly are broadcasting a paradigm when you do that. We spend a little time is scripture reading and in prayer at the beginning of a class maybe. I find it a way to get to know what is going on in my community and the student’s lives.

JG: How many times do you do this with in the week?

S: There is one class that I do it with more come than others and that is my first class on Monday mornings. That is when we do it is at the beginning of each week. And I should do it in more classes honestly.

JG: You have read the students and they feel comfortable with that?

S: Yes, and it is the beginning of the week and we rapping our head around the weeks projects, things we need to do, and it seems like a good time to do that. Any and every class is a good time to do it but it is just how it turned out.

JG: The last one is that the teacher should share their views with students but should allow competing perspectives to get fair share. So the difference between the one I said earlier is the fact that the teacher keeps silent on sharing their views. And that is when your devil’s advocate thing plays in. But the other
thing is that you are sharing clearly some time, it may not be first, but you do give your view. The thought
on this concept is that students are going to find out anyway so you might as well tell them. What do you
think of that?

S: I think I definitely do that sometimes. Again depending on what we are working on. We may be
talking about an issue, and I may acknowledge that we all do have a different opinion on this topic and lets
discuss were we are all coming from because you may enlighten me with what I have not thought of. I
think there are important times when we do share all our views, exploring the differences and similarities
with out trying to change any ones views. It may just happen because of the discussion.

JG: But it seems more than not on the controversial topics you tend to go toward the neutral impartiality,
which is keeping silent but you keep a very complex opportunity for discussion. Would you agree with
that?

S: I think that happens often I am not sure that happens most often. In dealing with those controversial
issues I do say to students you have to think of your own background and your own views on Christianity
and were you fall on this. So maybe I do tend to fall in that style on controversial topics. I tend to remind
them of were the college comes from being a Christian university. But in the end it really is a true
statement that it is ultimately up to the student to decide what they believe and they need to search as many
different texts and experiences to formulate that.

JG: I would probably say that when you bring up the universities stance on a topic you may be finding a
weird way to get away with putting an authority statement of truth out there without saying that is what I
the teacher believe.

S: Do you think I am coping out here?

JG: I don’t know about coping out but in a way when you say that the university believes this I think you
are saying this is what I believe.

S: And it is because I would not choose to teach there if I did not. If I did not buy into what was
happening in that university how could I work there. They probably would not let me work there.

JG: Has there ever been a time in which you had to tell your students your point of view

S: I can’t think of an instance unless it is the topic of homosexuality. But I always to place that topic in
relation to how would Jesus treat people. So even in the mitts of teaching what the Bible says on this issue,
and if you believe the Bible is the inspired word of God and if you believe God id who he says he is then
you have to take that seriously. But that does not mean we treat each other hatefully. There is a time to
stand for some time. We don’t just tolerate everything.

Interview #12
JG: Do you want to integrate your Christian belief into your art education teaching?

S: Into my art education practice? Yes

JG: How do you believe you have accomplished that?

S: Most of how I do that is by example. Because you can talk all day long until the cows come home but
if you don’t do it. So I try to do it by example but always acknowledging that I am utterly a mess. One of
the things I realized on the tail end of graduate school and then losing my dad; because those things
happened in the same summer. When you come through a really tough experience with graduate school, and you get a breather then you lose someone close to you, you do a lot of soul searching and a lot of thinking. And I came to the realization at that point there is nothing that I can do that matters without God. And anything that I do without Him does not matter. So constantly bringing myself back to that understanding of that awareness. So even though I try by example by setting up sonorous and role plays and things like that in the classroom. I have the understanding that if students are just looking to me as an example for what is a Christian viewpoint in art education, if that is all they are looking at, then they are going to be sadly disappointed; because I am human. I am going to do things that are wrong and I am going to fall down. So I believe in the idea that we are in this together, attitude is my view. That does not just go for Christians, we are all definitely in this together, and we have to work together. But that also goes for our role in the world. So I think that is where it comes through.

JG: So that is a practice and an attitude that is about having a compassionate heart for others and for service. That is kind of what you’re saying.

S: Yes, I think it is all about relationships to others. There is no other way that the world is going to know that we are Christians. We can say whatever we want. But it is by our actions that we are going to be judged.

JG: If we put attitude aside, what about art education pedagogy?

S: So coming from a Christian standpoint art education pedagogy?

JG: Yes, I am really holding your feet to the fire on this point.

S: Ya, you really are; ha, ha, ha. It is funny that you mention this because our private university deals with constituencies that are from a Church of Christ background, sometimes we have to remind our constituency that we are not a church but a learning institution. We are an institution of higher education. Our administration has been asked “how many students have you baptized this year”? Well, we are not a church; we are an institution of higher education. It is not that I feel our job as a university is to convert individuals and to proselytize individuals. Our job as a university is to give students an education that is valuable, and within the mission of our university of a Christian paradigm. So to that end we have courses in Bible. They teach us a little bit and they use the Bible as a text book. For those introductory Bible course I believe the Bible is the only text book. In the upper level Bible courses they may start using other texts. So it is not like we want you to buy this Bible and this doctrinal manual as your course text book. There is an exploration of heritage and who we are and where we come from. In regards to overtly doing that in the art education classroom in my pedagogical practices I don’t know that I do it. I don’t know if I do it as part of pedagogy in any overt way. It comes down to more of the example I give in class. It shows up more in the way we treat each other. It shows up more in what I choose to present and not choose to present in the classroom. But what I am really there for is to teach my students good art education pedagogy practices. Recognizing that they do not all come from the Christian viewpoint. Or at least the person writing or coming up with that pedagogical theories may not be a Christian.

JG: So you are the student’s ethical accountability in that sense. You are screening these pedagogical practices of art education and saying look at it from the Christian perspective.

S: Perhaps, and I may not even say that because it is not like I really run across a lot of art education pedagogy that conflict with the Christian viewpoint. There is not a lot of it out there. There is some of it out there. I would suppose in general I have not had that problem. Having to say I am going to choose this because it is easier for me to say I am going to present this angle because as Christians this ties in nicely, and I may point that out to my students. I am even thinking of the theoretical framework, that communitarian perspective that stemmed from my dissertation. It could definitely be a pedagogical framework. I very consciously selected it because it tied into what I believed as a Christian.
JG: So how does that play out?

S: What I liked about that communitarian perspective versus other perspectives; like I am thinking of quality. Like that article I published on equality that I wrote. I looked at those different tiers of equality. Equality of access, the idea of putting the cookie on top of the refrigerator so everyone has equal access to it; but if the playing field is not leveled there may not be equal access. If you are in a wheelchair and you have no way to get to the cookie there is not equal access. Then the next tier is compensatory quality. If you are not quite where you should be we would go ahead and compensate for were you fall short and bring you up to par. You know that kind of thing. At face value at first it may look desirable but is in fact not desirable because it is not born out of respect. It is your need which needs fixed and we need to make you better. What I liked about the communitarian perspective is that it is rooted in this mutual respect and that I can learn as much from you as you from me. And I think that is a deeply rooted Christian perspective; to value each other in that way. It is the idea that I am going to do this because I care for you, and you are worthwhile; not just because you need to get pulled up to speed. So that is an example that I can think of because I thought it was a Christian perspective.

JG: It took us a while to finally get that out of you but it is there and that is what I am trying to get at. Are there other places that your faith is a foundational framework to how you teach art education? No one is really going to know that that is Christian so to speak, but as we unpack it, it does come from your Christian world view and in fact could make something be a very different type of art education. It is something that has never been discussed before but that is why we are doing this.

S: I think it happens, I would really have to think more about specific examples other than that one, where I have made that connection. Can I think more about that?

JG: Sure, you will probably have to write it down because it will probably be fairly elaborate. In an earlier interview you had said you adopted postmodern relativism in many ways throughout your teaching. And you said you found an internal conflict in yourself about this. You even called it schizophrenic. Is there any place in your art education teaching that you would not accept relativistic views because it would conflict with your Christian theology?

S: I can say yes to that I think. I think that if something did come down to conflicting with my Christian theology that Christianity would win. I have been thinking about what it means to be a Christian Feminist, and how that is different than other Feminist ideas that are out there? I would have to say that one of the large places in which it would differ in my view point is that if it is conflicted with what I thought to be the Truth in the Bible. The Biblical stance; the Biblical teachings are going to win, and I have no problem with that. It is the same way I might use Relativism in the classroom. To me it is useful in understanding the experiences of others. For example, Multiculturalism and how others may be coming from and understanding others experiences and how their understanding of these things may be different. And it may be their truth. But there is to me the ultimate Truth of God. And there is in my mind no question about that basic saying. So when it comes down to those two things that are wrestling, it is that inherent belief in Truth and that God is all that matters. That God created everything that God is master of the universe. That is the thing that is going to win.

JG: And I know that about you so really we need specifics to see what is happening in art education.

S: Specifically in celebrating diversity may be in conflict with what the Bible says? Well, there are going to be differences in sexual beliefs in religious beliefs where I can understand them. And I can understand the person better, but to tell me I have to celebrate something that inherently conflicts with what I believe as a Christian, I don’t have to celebrate that. You can’t make me. I think it is important in the sense that it helps us understand others but to tell me I have to celebrate something and advocate something that specifically contradicts what the Bible says; I do not. I have a little problem with that.
JG: Aesthetics seems to be where many Christians may go to an absolute but yet Relativism hovers in the air. Do you see any cataclysmic battles between these two in any way in your philosophy?

S: In terms of discussing aesthetics?

JG: Right.

S: To think that there is one correct reading of an art work, I can’t do that. I can acknowledge that different people are going to have different reactions to an art work based on their different backgrounds. I can even buy the idea that an art work’s meaning may change over time, but there are varied multiple readings of one art and all those readings are just as legitimate as the other, I question that. To some extent I believe that can happen. In one of those articles that I wrote, one on aesthetics, one of my students did a Marxist verses Feminist reading of Degas “Glass of Absense” or something like that. I think that that is a worthwhile activity because it helps them to put the shoe on the other foot; to think of a point of view that they have not thought of before. Given everything we know about Degas piece can one reading possibly be stronger and answer more questions? I think yes. I don’t think every reading of an artwork is legitimate as any other. So that may be one place.

JG: I would not call it aesthetics but it is Criticism for sure.

S: Ya, to me they overlap so much. Ya, it is all part of theory.

JG: Just so I understand you right. You really do feel like there is one aesthetic? This is what I have gotten so far from you. For you, there is a universal aesthetic, even design, and beauty plays heavily into your aesthetic view of things; even appreciation. But it seems multiculturalism has thrown a wrench into the concept of beauty. You still use that word and you seem to feel very comfortable using that word coming from a universal context. And I am still trying to figure out at what point Relativism will run into that.

S: You know Relativism is useful to me in that it helps me understand differences among people and build relationships with people. That is where I think Relativism is valuable, because we have to have relationships to have compassion for one another. Beyond that when I think of all the exercises that we may do in the classroom, it is all futility to me when I consider the Truth of God. We can go through all these hoops of cultural understanding and Relativism all we want for the purpose of understanding someone else’s world view, but the moment we lose sight of that ultimate Truth and what we are here for as Christians there is no point to relativism. So to me it only helps us build relationships with one another so we can be compassionate and serve one another. That is how Relativism is beneficial to me as a Christian. And the moment it contradicts that ultimate Truth it is not useful.

JG: Do you have this inner button that goes off in your brain that tells you when something in discussion goes against your values?

S: Yes, I think I do. Yes, I think I have that barometer. So I either stop short of that point or I probably say something to my students at that point. I may say that is what art education pedagogical practice would teach here but you can see how as a Christian I would have a hard time with that. I think that probably happens yes.

JG: Cognitive Pluralism or what some call Constructivism coming from Gardner. Do you have any thoughts about that?

S: I think it is important that the students explore who they are and explore their belief systems and to recognize those differences. It is one of those “know thy self” type of things. You really have to know
yourself and where you are coming from before you teach others. Part of what that does is it helps you recognize where you are coming from and how that influences what you choose to present or omit in your teaching; or even how you present information in your classroom. Until you recognize that you may not know what you are doing in how you are presenting information to your students. So in that regard the Constructivist approach is pretty important. And part of what college should be is that continuation of self realization and exploring your ideas as a Christian and making learning your own. And that means your Christian learning…you may have grown up in a house hold that you believe things because your parents did, and college is when you’re on your own to decide what is important and what you want to keep based on what you’re learning. I think it happens all throughout life but I think it happens in a more intense way in college and in graduate school.

Interview #13
JG: We talked about the four types of epistemological sources of knowledge in past interviews. Do you think that the Bible is the most important epistemological source out of all four?

S: As a Christian, yes; because I feel the Bible is God’s Word and that it hold ultimate Truth.

JG: Is your view of the Bible inherent, that it does not have any errors?

S: For example, if you look at the King James Version of the Bible and you look at the context of which it was interpreted. I think that there are different interpretations of the Bible and these differences all hinge on language; which we must keep in mind that the Bible to some extent was culturally influenced. And I think that if there is an error, it is how humanity interprets it; it is more like we are the error. The Bible does hold the will of God and it is up to us…It is like when legislation is passed. And then you go through a series of court cases to try and determine “okay this is what this says but what does it mean”. It is almost like that. Like we are constantly interpreting with the best equipment that we have and new knowledge comes to light. I would hope that we are getting closer and closer to the Truth. It would be wrong to not use reason. I prefer the New American Standard, it is closer to the original Greek and Hebrew text. As well as it is more approachable. There are times in the Bible, for example Paul says this is his opinion. Paul is an inspired speaker but I then would look at Jesus’ teachings as a cross reference to Paul statement. The Bible reflects Gods will and it is inherent and perfect.

JG: How is it perfect?

S: The Bible has everything we need to know about salvation and how to treat each other. Jesus said love God and Love your neighbors as the two most important commandments. The Bible sums up those two areas main commandments. It does not give us everything we want to know. It gives us everything we need to know. There are many in the Church of Christ that place tradition before the word of God.

JG: Do you take everything in the Bible literally?

S: For the most part I take the Bible literality. There are some things that are metaphorical, like Revelation. The writers are inspired but they are writing within a cultural context within a certain time period.

JG: How do you determine that something in the Bible is poetry, Revelation or should be literal?

S: I would use Literary Style to determine that. I do pull from other theology scholar’s commentaries.

Interview #14
JG: What is your definition of creativity?

S: Remember I had mentioned to you a reading in the book *Art for Life*. And one of the reasons that I mentioned it is because I really like the creativity chapter. We use it in my *Art and Children* course. It defines creativity; it is almost aligned with critical thinking; the ability to make connections where other people may not make connections. I like the notion that the more information you have the more experiences you have and the more flexibility you have to make those connections. So that creativity in that way can be learned. So that it is not this heroic genius like a Michaelangelo-esque sort of thing, that no one else could ever accomplish so why even try.

JG: So I am starting to hear some different variables believed to be a part of creativity. Do you link this to mainly genetic attributes or is it more about the person’s environment?

S: I think some people may have been brought up that way. People have different types of intelligences and even different levels of intelligences. For some people creativity is going to come more easily to them but I would not be teaching art if I thought it could not be taught. Especially in the *Art and Children* course where you have students who may be coming from an art education background or students who are elementary education as a background, and they are in the same class together. And the first thing they want to say is “I am not creative” or “I am not good at art”. I tell them really early on that you can’t say that, because it really is a cop out. It is almost a way to say art is subjective, art is in the eye of the beholder or anything goes and I can’t do it therefore I don’t have to try. That sort of thing, and I really want them to learn something while they are in there. So in terms of making those connections sometimes you have to teach students to loosen up, and to show them that there are places in their lives where they are creative. And it may not have occurred to them that they create in those areas. In invariably I have students at the end of a class like that who come out on the other side, who really surprise themselves. But it is only because they have never had the intensive environment in which to cultivate that connection.

JG: You mentioned environment. What kind of environment do you think they came from?

S: Well, I have not asked them so I don’t know. Some of them will offer examples as we get into discussions of things like aesthetics. They will offer examples of things from themselves or their home where they don’t have pictures or any type of visual stimulus hang in their home. But I know they are confronted with visual stimuli every single day. So even if they don’t have it in the house in which they were brought up, it is still everywhere. The visual confronts us everywhere we go. And some of that visual is more creative than others. The thing that makes me extremely happy is when I am teaching a class like art history and I have a student who is taking world history and geography at the same time. And they start to see all these connections between these classes, and they start offering up those in class, and they start to make those correlations themselves. That is just so exciting to me because I think students even believe their learning occurs in a vacuum. We do compartmentalize their learning and they grow up thinking learning is compartmentalized. So when they have opportunities to stretch out and connect things; and when I start asking them questions a little bit later in the semester they start making those connections on their own. That is when their learning gets exciting for them as well. So for what goes for critical thinking also goes for creativity in art making, when they start making connections. When we say “Did you see how you could do this, you could pull this idea from that? If that is what you intended, and if not how could you change it to pull from what you want”? Those type of discussions.

JG: How do you know someone is creative?

S: As the art teacher in a way you are the gate keeper. There are some ideas and solutions that are cliché and obvious. You may not necessarily know the answer but you know the student is not there yet. And it takes that brainstorming session together, that question and answer thing. I love helping students on their senior exhibit because that process is so fluid. And I will make students plan out a clearly defined syllabus, where they have to come up with twelve to fifteen different artworks. And they have to be pretty about the
artworks they want to create. And then I tell them the complete list you just made, with all the dimensions, media and even the title, it is all subject to change. And if I have a couple of students working on their senior exhibits and we can all talk together, because if you get that many heads together it is better than one or two heads. It is exciting to see the way they critique and talk about each other’s work, and the way things may change direction. An example was just yesterday. A student was now just getting started on his exhibit. He wants to work on it over the summer. And it is going to be something to do with violence, and the history of violence, and how there are some things that are not new; and how we are confronted with it. I asked him, “Do you want the viewer coming away thinking “oooh Roger is scary”? What do you want them to come away with”? He said, “Well I want there to be something in there that spoke about hope”. And then we started talking about audience interaction and he talked about wanting to have a piece that talked about Pilot washing his hands before the crucifixion; and how it was the ultimate cop out. And then I said “okaayaayy”. And then we talked some more and then we got around to the idea of what is the viewer. That the viewer would at sometime through the exhibition go through the act of washing their hands. What if you had a bowl, what if you had two towels? Then we started discussing how one towel could be clean and light and the other could be red with the red he wiped on them. So these ideas started snow balling. And the viewers act of washing their hands as they walk through this show. You know that kind of dialogue and that kind of thing is exciting when you see someone come up with an idea and it just builds and builds and builds until it gets to where you want it to be.

JG: And at times it can drip into cliché and you have to step in?

S: Absolutely! If I have students in the *Art and Children* class draw a landscape, I don’t know how many suns in the corner of the sky I get. Just teaching that those things are cliché, and to think a little harder… reach a little deeper…even those students who are not art majors.

JG: How is God involved in all this creativity stuff?

S: If we are created in the image of God. And God is the creator, then I do think we have within us that ability and that desire to create, and it finds its manifestation in so many different ways. I think people have been creating ever since people were created. There prehistoric paintings in caves; and it may be utilitarian but it is still an act of creation. And even the works that are utilitarian, they have decorated them because they have had that aesthetic sense within them. I think one of the highest compliments we can pay to God is to appreciate creation. And we should thank God when we notice beauty because He has put that within us to notice beauty. So I do think that part of being created in God’s image is being creative beings and aesthetics beings on a certain level. God apparently appreciates beauty because of the way He created the world. It could have functioned just fine without being beautiful.

JG: If God has created us to be creative did He create us with free reign to create whatever we want?

S: God can create whatever He wants, but He chose to create things in such a way, in a specific way, in a way that would function together. You don’t want to create chaos. I think that would go against the nature of God. Again if we are created in His image it is not a free for all, it is not anything goes. We crave order and we crave harmony. So I think there are better and more responsible ways to create. Like I said it is not chaos and a free for all.

JG: Is there anything else you want to add about the Tom Anderson chapter you read in your class?

S: There is a person in there that seems to be the creation guru. I even heard his name pronounced at the NAEA conference but I could not even begin to pronounce it. I went to a few conference speakers on creativity, and they all sighted this same person with a C. There seems to be quite a bit of research in that arena. What I liked in those speakers was they named qualities of creative people. I think there is a little exercise in that book in which students can check off those qualities. I do that in *Art and Children* to show them that they are possessive of those qualities; and we do talk about areas in their lives where they do
exhibit. So again I do it to get them to realize that they are creative and it is not some heroic talent genius thing.

JG: Do you share those kinds of points specifically with your art education majors?

S: In as much as they take that class we do talk about those things. Those coming from an art background usually have no reservations of how creative they are.

JG: Do they know specifically how creativity develops or how it happens?

S: I absolutely think they do because they can see their own journey that culminates in that senior exhibit. And they can look back to their drawing one experience or their painting experience and see how everything comes together in that senior exhibit. By the time they come out of that senior exhibit, they know what they have done is creative and expressive. And we do talk about that ability to make connections a lot along the way. But it is the practice of that that really illustrates to them how that process works.

JG: So for the Art and Children’s course, which is a method course for art education majors, their perception of what creativity is primarily learned through the art making process? I know you have them read one chapter on creativity in the syllabus but do you go through and talk about this quality or that quality, or specify that this quality is what determines a creative person.

S: I think it is a combination. It is not just the creative process but that dialogue and that discussion and that trial and error that occurs through the creative process. So I think critique plays a pretty important role in that. In helping students see…just because students go through making something; they could make something and it may not be creative. So it is a constant dialogue.

JG: How do you influence students to be more creative in your classroom?

S: I think part of it is modeling but part of it is constant Socratic questioning. The students also learn from each other. They watch each other work. And we have opportunity to talk about what they are doing. We do critique pretty often when we do studio classes. And I taught drawing two last spring and I have not taught it in seven or eight years. So that role of critique and seeing each other’s works is important. Studio class meets for such a long time we just ask them to stop what you are doing and walk around the room and see what each other is doing. I think all of those things play a role in getting them to that creative point in students.

JG: Just for a clarification, in all your courses do you have them create art at least a little bit? I know you do it in the Art and Children course.

S: Yes, to some extent we do in every single class. The exception to that would be Introduction to Fine Art which has sixty students in it, and is just an art appreciation class. I don’t do it in Art History Survey. I do it in Art Theory and Criticism as because it relates to their art capstone project. And only in Art and Adolescence to the extent that the students are teachers in that case and lead the other art education majors to create. For that class students already have a studio background so we focus more on pedagogical theory.

JG: So in Art and Adolescence they are creating exemplars from their lesson plans?

S: Yes and they also have us create as something that comes from the lesson plan.

JG: Okay it is a modeling thing. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in creativity?
S: I feel like the church background that I come from, the Church of Christ, we really haven’t done as strong a job as perhaps as we should of cultivating the Holy Spirit. There is that passage in Timothy where Paul tells Timothy to fan that flame that is within you. That flame of the Holy Spirit. And he is telling him in a very specific way that that is something that has to be cultivated. I think we have the notion that at the point of salvation we have the Holy Spirit within us, that it is a promise that we have. That it serves as a protector and a comforter. And I think we tend to see it in that way. I am speaking for myself but I am also speaking from anecdotally of the Bible classes I have sat in on and the sermons I have sat through. I don’t know if we do as strong a job in my church background of tapping into that Holy Spirit in terms of that spirit of boldness that you see talked about in scripture, as a helper to the extent that it is meant to be to us. So that is an area that I am probably a bit remiss. I know in my own prayer and my own thinking of the Holy Spirit, it is mostly that comforter and that intercessory role. So for instance when the Bible talks about the Holy Spirit interceding for you when we groan and we can put our prayer into words, pain or concern, I rely on the Holy Spirit in that way. I just turn it over to the Spirit and know that He will translate to God, what I am feeling right now. But in terms of creativity I am not sure I do a really good job to get students to consider that role of the Holy Spirit as a helper. We do talk about the spiritual, but in terms of explicitly talking about the Holy Spirit in that way I don’t know that I do that very well, and I should but I know that I do.

JG: If you could give the collective Christian “church” some wisdom about arts role in the body of Christ what would that be?

S: You know the same student I was talking about yesterday concerning his senior exhibit has been playing with ideas ever since he took Art Theory and Criticism, of what is a Christian aesthetic. What should it be and what should it do? We have a scholar’s colloquium at our university where scholars and professors present background research and he presented their findings, and I did not get to hear his talk because I was at the NAEA conference. Christians have a tendency if they see something they don’t like in art, or something they don’t like in cinema or theater or music, they have a tendency to boycott, gripe and often times give these things attention more than if they had just shut up about it. I think for instance the Last Temptation of Christ, back in the late eighties. And the Christian boycotted it and here is a movie that from what I hear was not that great and everyone went to go see it because Christians boycotted it. I think that instead Christian need to infiltrate the arts, and do it in such a way that they are doing good quality strong art forms. And that goes for all of the fine arts. I think people tend to associate Christian art with warm fuzzy Thomas Kinkadesque sort of things. Instead of look at things that are intellectually strong and provocative, for instance some paintings of some children kneeling at their bed praying with an angel. Instead a Christian aesthetic needs to be every bit as strong as everything you see out there in art. One could say that if you are a Christian then you should understand and appreciate creativity more so than someone of the world because it comes from God. But I don’t know that we as Christians do a good job at that.

JG: So what is your view of the visual arts in the place of the church worship?

S: Again coming from a Church of Christ background you know they are pretty austere a lot of the time and there are not a lot of references to the visual. With the discomfort of icons for instance, and with the commandment against graven images, the Church of Christ has gone the way of almost stripping bare everything in the church in order to keep from crossing that boundary. And I don’t think we need to be quite so afraid of that. It is almost a utopian sort of view, but I think if we are surrounded by aesthetic beauty, I am one of those crazy people that think it could cultivate good in people. I think there is a boundary and a line you can cross but I don’t think we should be afraid of having visual imagery within a church setting. You know the early church had church in their homes and who is to say their homes were not decorated.

JG: Have you ever had an art education student come and talk to you about their potential interest in art therapy? What did you say?
S: I have and I had it happen more in the late 1990s and the early 2000s; and then the last few years. I had a brief talk with somebody in the area of psychology about looking into a pre-art therapy type program at our university. But it seems to have fallen out of vogue a little bit and I haven’t revisited it so much in terms of a career choice. But I don’t want that to seem like I think there is not some sort of merit to the therapeutic aspect of art. I don’t think it is the only reason for art but I do think art can be therapeutic for sure.

JG: I am trying to make this connection between Christianity and art therapy. Historically art therapy came from the eastern religions. Do think more Christian colleges should start more art therapy programs?

S: In looking at what our sister institutions are doing, some do have the pre-art therapy programs. I don’t know that it has to be a mission of Christianity, although in working with students who are not art majors in that Art & Children class, that may be a good entry point for them. In building that comfort level in art, and their own self expression, and seeing the value of their own self expression. Looking at the communicative therapeutic powers of art can be powerful. So I do think there is a role there. But don’t necessarily know that it should be a mission of Christian art education but I think it could be one strong component. When you said worship earlier I thought of the Church setting specifically but I think we worship all throughout the day in various aspects of our lives and that is not confined strictly to that formal church setting. So I think the act of creation can be the act of worship. But I think that is a conscious thing though; I don’t that everyone who is creating is worshiping. But I think creativity and what we create can be worshiped definitely.

Interview #15

JG: In your Art and Children’s class you set aside two hours devoted to student’s art history presentations. Can you explain specifically those history presentations, and why you do them in that course?

S: A lot of that class has both art education majors and non-majors in it; early Childhood to middle school education majors. So for the art education majors I am trying to increase their ability and confidence in creating a very holistic type of lesson plan in art that is not just studio based but brings in context or historical types of explorations. For the generalist education major this art history presentation assignment is useful to them as well because if it becomes too studio focused then the art that tend to happen in the general elementary classroom is holiday art. What I want them to see is the broader context in which art is made. That art is influenced; that it does not happen in a vacuum. That art takes in what is happening around it historically politically, religiously. So that is the primary reason. And also I am trying to show how multifaceted art education can be beyond just the studio experience.

JG: Are these student presentations their lesson designs or are they strict history presentations?

S: There are two presentations in the semester. There are the teaching presentations which happen toward the very end of the semester and the art history presentations which happen about half way. For the art history presentations there are several different things I have them bring in. They have to bring in a little bit of the context of that period. Let’s say for example a student chose to do Dada art. They have to talk a little bit about how this art movement moved out of what was happening around it. They would have to talk about World War I and Dada as an anti art movement. How and why the movement was born in Switzerland. Things like that. Then they have to explore different artists and show examples of the work that they did. They also have to look at other disciplines and what was going on. So I give them choices of what is going on in fashion, film, literature, music and they must bring in two or three of those into their presentations. So they have a little bit of introduction with the context. They have to bring in what specifically was happening in history that spurred on this movement. It depends on the movement but I ask them to research 2-D, 3-D and architecture of that art movement so they can really see what was really going on around it. Then they have to present an idea of how they would use this information in an art class. It is not a specific lesson plan but I want what a lesson surrounding this movement might look like in
an art lesson. They don’t need to write all the learning objectives but for example Dada art the student teacher might ask their students to create random collages made out of found objects. And then I have them bring in two other disciplines besides art. So they may look at Dada in Poetry and the history of World War I; so it is very interdisciplinary.

JG: So in your Art for Adolescence course do you teach art history or do you leave that up to the art history required courses?

S: No, they do a presentation in there also. This year I did it a little bit differently. I call it a theory to practice presentation, and they had to explore some type of realm of art theory. Theories that seem to be very important to art education and we looked art history through that lens. So example, one group of students looked at Marxist theory and visual culture. So there was some overlap even between those two theories in their presentations. One group looked at technology. I think there was one group that look at linguistic theory. And then they had to look at art history which was for them typically 20th and 21st century art history, through the lens of that theory. So we took it up a notch but we did look at art history. They had to choose which theory that they wanted to use first, then go back and look at how that theory affected art making. For example the student who chose the Marxist theory, in their presentation first had to introduce us to Marxist theory then focused on Diego Rivera and the Mexican Muralists. She ended up bringing in the art of Diego Rivera and the Mexican muralists but could have chosen to go a number of different directions.

JG: I knew that you presented the theories of Marxist, feminist, semiotic and psychoanalytic theory in your Art Theory and Criticism class but are you saying you also teach these methodologies in your Art and Adolescence class also?

S: You know this is the first year that I have done it that way. The reason that I changed was that we have this campus thing call QEP Quality Enhancement Plan under our SACS accreditation. And this class was set aside as a critical thinking course. So I had two assignments that changed because I was coming at it from this critical thinking context. One assignment that changed was that they did a review of someone else’s writing. I gave them some raw manuscripts that I had reviewed for journals and I let them go through and review them; to think critically about what to look for. And I gave them all the same instruments that seem to be used in all the art education journals, as far as review sheets and feedback sheets. So I had them do that and I wanted them to look at “theory into practice” as the second component. So that was reviewing the writing of others and looking for critical thinking in others writings. So for this one it was more about having the students develop critical thinking in constructing their own lessons and writing. So I have not typically done it that way but this year I did.

JG: You said the Art and Adolescence course was categorized by the university as a critical thinking course. In relation to your three methods of art education can you tell me more about your universities goals for critical thinking and its relationship to your accreditation process?

S: As part of the university we have a QEP Quality Enhancement Plan. We have a QEP director and every university in the SACS program has a QEP director. This is with the new SACS accreditation standards. The university decides what they want to work on in terms of their quality enhancement plan. For our university it was critical thinking through writing. So we have a QEP director. There are certain grants and fellowships that a professor can apply for to improve critical thinking through writing in those courses. There are two levels. You can either do a critical thinking intensive class. That means you become a faculty fellow, receiving a course load reduction. I received one of these fellowships for the Art and Adolescence class. You do certain other things like workshops. You are still teaching your own classes but you get together with other faculty fellows and do presentations faculty development type things. The other way to do it is just developing a critical thinking class. These are typically classes that professors believe they have been teaching critical thinking all along. They are also given some different criteria. We help out with grading some critical thinking tests. There are no perks for doing this; you are
doing it for the students. They reflect about how to consciously shape ones class around those critical
thinking types of aspects. So for instance I am teaching the Art Theory and Criticism course again and it
easily could have been defined as a critical thinking course but I chose not to have it identified that way
because it really was time consuming with a lot of the outside test grading, critical thinking test grading,
collaborative test grading sessions and I just did not have the time this time around.

JG: Is the Art and Children course set up as a critical thinking course?

S: The critical thinking initiative came up after I stopped teaching Art and Children. I believe it could be
critical thinking intensive even though it may not be categorized that way by the university. I think it
would be easy to identify that class as a critical thinking course because they have to make connections and
even those students who are not typically use to art making I think it is a revelation to some of them.

JG: Let’s look at the university lens. Do you know why your university is focused on a critical thinking
for their campus?

S: I am pretty close to the QEP director. And as my role as Assistant Dean we have to go to two SACS
conferences. And critical thinking seems to be a reoccurring theme at these conferences. A lot of these
universities are choosing some type of critical thinking emphasis for their QEP for their university. I think
the reason it has become so hot right now in higher education…which the backpack generation article I ask
my students to read partly eludes to…There are things that I am finding and reading about in terms of
university students. For instance when you and I, probably for me more then you. Let’s say our
undergraduate. the hardest part of research was finding the information. It was hard to find. You had to get
a library loan. We did not have access to the internet as students do now, and I did not have it at all. Now
that is the easiest part of doing research. The hardest part for these students seems to be thinking critically
about the information they are confronted with. They are so saturated with information that they don’t
know how to synthesize and pull out what is important; looking for themes. They are so use to receiving
and perceiving information in chunks and snap shots; that how to think critically about the information
which they are confronted with is a challenge for the students now. It shows up in their writing. Also, it
shows up in their ability to think hard about something, and to make connections. So I kind of think those
things we are seeing in today’s students. We talk about critical thinking and how important it is and yes it
is happening in my class, but if we are asked to define it, and what it is, we are bad at that also. So I think
that is why we are seeing that push in critical thinking right now.

JG: This is a totally different topic. Discussing your published feminist article, you brought up five
categories. Which category most accurately categorizes the Church Christ’s theology? And is that the same
category as your Church of Christ university?

S: It is all over the map. But you do see a line of demarcation happening right around the Mississippi
river. Were as you go east of the Mississippi river it becomes much more conservative identifying more
with the lowest rung of the categories, the Traditionalist/Strict Hierarchalist category that is not even a
feminist category. Within most of our sister institutions you have both in the spectrum. You have some
universities that are much more conservative, were you will never see a women on the Bible faculty. And
probably for similar reasons you would not see a women faculty member in the Bible area. If Bible is
housed within another college you will not see a women dean at that college, nor will you see a women
president of the university. However, there are other institutions in our sisterhood who do have women
faculty in the Biblical studies area, and see a need for women in those roles. I wrote that Feminist article.
Then through that CEP initiative we had several round table discussions with faculty and staff on the role
of women in the church and the role of women in higher education. I think there were three round table
discussions with faculty and staff. So that was interesting to bring in all of those different aspects of the
university. And then last fall we taught the first women studies type course at our university. It was a
humanities class and it was inter-disciplinary. The four lead teachers were me, someone from education,
English and nursing. But we brought in men and women faculty from the sciences, psychology, business,
and from several different areas. The class was called *her story vocation and voice*. The common thread was personal story and personal narrative and how women had impacted these disciplines but also how women had impacted our personal lives. So that was pretty new for our university. We had male and female students in the class from across different disciplines. That is a difficult answer because each individual Church of Christ is so autonomous. I think you see these universities respond probably more based on geographical region to this issue.

**JG:** So I am going to read the five categories from most the most pro-feminist to the most conservative ant-feminist view. They are post-Christian/revolutionary feminism, (b) mainline feminism, and (c) Biblical/evangelical feminism and two non-feminist positions (d) liberated traditionalist (e) traditionalist/strict hierarchalist.

**S:** I think among the universities related toward the Churches of Christ, I think none of them are comfortable with the word feminist. But it is out there, which is what I pointed out in that article. And I think we have the spectrum between the three bottom categories, Biblical/evangelical feminism, liberated traditionalist and traditionalist/strict hierarchalist. I don’t think you see the traditionalist/strict hierarchalist in our university so much. But you see individuals teaching at the university that come from that.

**JG:** So I wanted to make sure we address and separate the church of Christ churches from the colleges and universities affiliated with the Church of Christ churches. How do you see the churches?

**S:** In our conservative city I can say there are two Church of Christ churches that definitely fall into that. But because the Churches of Christ churches are so autonomous that I would say the others are liberated traditionalist. You start to see more praise teams with women standing up. There is even a church that women can help with communion. Which is still a service role and that is not earth shattering but that is big in the Churches of Christ church. A lot of people are uncomfortable with that. And because our churches are so autonomous there could be the entire spectrum.

**JG:** But when you get to the university it’s a different situation, you are not a church you’re an educational institution. It would move more to the left in spectrum correct?

**S:** For universities it is some were in the middle, the Biblical/evangelical feminism category I think. You may see the Biblical/evangelical feminism up to the mainline feminism. You may see some mainline feminist faculty but as a university I think you will see people all over the spectrum because they go to these churches; so you are going to see that range even within the university. For the most part people at our university will be in the Biblical/evangelical feminism up to the mainline feminism.

**JG:** So you think the mainline feminism?

**S:** Well, the mainline feminism will be more rare than the Biblical/evangelical feminism.

**JG:** Can you explain to me why all your art education method courses are open to other majors on campus. Is it a class load issue or does it have more to do with liberal arts education?

**S:** I think it has more to do with size and what we are able to support. I still am in the range of twenty or a little more than twenty art education majors. So I think it has more to do with class size load. I would like to say that for the *Art and Adolescence* class, it has typically been and I would typically like it to remain as mainly art education majors, but with one or two students from other areas. But it typically happens in the *Art and Child* class.

**JG:** So your *Art Theory and Criticism* course. Can you explain the specific readings you have the students read concerning the Marxist, semiotic, feminist and psychoanalytic readings of art?
The way I envisioned the class and the way I set the class up is for the beginning half of the semester to provide them with the historical foundation of how we got here now. So the first third of the class is spent dealing with Kant, Hegel, Tolstoy and Plato. Those type of readings. Art history is not a prerequisite for this course. It probably should be. But most students who take it have had art history. So they are able to pick out how art has responded to the theories we are looking at. So that is the part that is really exciting to me. The second half of the class is looking at the transition of Modernism into Postmodernism and how we got to where we are; so our readings change. So we just finished the Krauss reading who talks about the aide of the original in art. And now they are working on those presentations. The presentations require looking at different theories that are outside of art that have impacted art, like the feminist/gender and the other ones, the environmental stuff. That is to show them a little bit more about what is happening currently in art, and give them an opportunity to dive more deeply into these ideas. So that the final third of the class can begin and have them put these concepts into practice. So I just began the final exam project, explaining to them how their presentations are going to dovetail into that project. They have to take all that they learned and do something with it, demonstrate how artists work from these different viewpoints. This is for them to see that art is not just making stuff but is making stuff from within a context. And I have probably mentioned to you that since the beginning of teaching this course I have really seen how the nature of these senior exhibits have changed now that these students are informed about these theories. The student’s art is much more cohesive and much more theoretically deep than they were before.

JG: You have students make art in everyone of your art education method courses. Why do you take up so much time in a theory course to do that?

S: They have a really tough midterm. I would say that public school teachers believe that there is a disconnect between theory and practice for higher education teachers. That those in higher education do not know what it is like in the trenches. Me and Karen Kefier-Boyd just had a book excepted and one reviewers comments clearly came from this perspective. So we had to go back and justify all the years we had spent in the classroom trenches. What I want my students to see is that there is a connection between the theory and the practice. And for them to be able to identify that art does not happen in a vacuum. When you look at current art, which seems to be so weird; and the students to see that the artists work is developed from a specific theory in mind. And it is this information that informs what they do. This allows the student to see the theory and see its practice and then think about how to bring that depth, background, that conceptual aspect into their own art making. Or at least be able to intelligently respond to it in the art of others.

JG: Your university claims itself to be liberal arts education in the way its structures itself, correct?

S: Yes we claim it but there has long been a debate at our university about if we really are liberal arts university or are we just preparing students vocationally. So, two interesting events happed over the last year concerning this issue. We redesigned our “core”. We made the core bigger and aloud for more options, which gives it a more liberal arts foundation. The reason we allowed options was for programs like sports and exercise science or nursing, who have very specific course needs; allowing them to stack the courses as they need so they can get through their programs on time. So, we also just had a college reorganization. We have decided to allow for schools and then we had to examine how to structure them. Are they going to stand outside of the colleges or under the purview of a college? What does all of that look like? And are we going to rearrange of those departments? So we are in the middle of that now. In this restructuring the Liberal Arts aspect keeps coming up.

JG: I am trying to make this connection with Christianity and Liberal Arts education. What do you know about that relationship and why did your university choose it?

S: You almost have two camps at our university. There are those who are professionally oriented and trying to prepare their students for what ever graduate program, professional program or what ever employment they want to get into. And then you have those lofty Idealists who believe in a Liberal Arts
education. It is Idealism about education in general, wanting to create a well rounded person. When you add the Christian dimension to it would be the idea that our students we hope will go out and have a mission based focus. What I mean by that they will go out and do good things in the name of Jesus Christ. In whatever field they choose. But a Liberal Arts education can build a broader foundation which will allow them to function in a variety of different levels with a variety of different people in a variety of different contacts. And increase their understanding of different people, in a way that vocationally minded programs perhaps may not achieve.

JG: You are the perfect person to ask about this because your art education program is a professional degree. So where do you fall in this conflict?

S: I want both worlds. I have a duty to my students to prepare them to take their certification exam and to pass it because unless they pass it and can get out there and teach what they went to school for then I have not done my job. I do not teach to the test, but I am mindful of the test. And we have a one hundred percent pass rate on that certification exam, even though our program is small. We don’t have a B.F.A program we have a B.A. program. There are many universities that have B.F.A programs having many more studio classes than we do who’s students still struggle to pass that state teacher certification exam. So I have a duty to my students to prepare them for that, but I don’t believe these two things have to be mutually exclusive. I believe you can teach them rich broad contextual people oriented experiences, and bring in that Liberal Arts focus. When I design this art education degree, it has a lot of humanities in it. I believe in that human condition that is taught through these humanities courses; through the literature and through the history and theatre and all these things. So when I designed the degree I purposefully designed it with a large humanities liberal arts focus. So I believe you can do both and I work to do both even down to the way I teach my classes.