
DISSERTATION

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By

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Abstract

The primary question that framed this study was “How can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking?” This source of inquiry was investigated through the practices of arts-based service-learning and participatory action research and was grounded in social interdependence theory. As an artist, teacher and researcher, the author set out to better understand how the processes of collaboration and artmaking could aid in the growth of social consciousness and the development of social responsibility. Working in cooperative learning groups, students from The Ohio State University and Graham Expeditionary Middle School collaboratively created digital art in a joined community space. Through investigations of the big ideas of community and identity, participants worked cooperatively to create meaning in the processes of artmaking and reflection.

The results of this study provide a discourse that uncovers many important issues relevant to social consciousness and social responsibility, the practices of service-learning and participatory action research and the theory of social interdependence. It also raises several questions that will inspire numerous new inquiries that continue this reflexive spiral of meaning-making.
Dedication

For my parents, Mary and Gil Brady, who put my first paint brush in my hand, you knew I was an artist before I understood what the word meant. Thank you for always encouraging me to create and for your unconditional love and unwavering support in my education. For my beautiful sister Anne Brady, who knew many years ago I would someday become a professor of art. Thank you for putting the idea in my head, and for always believing in me. I’m so lucky you are not only my sister, you are my oldest, and dearest friend.

Finally, to my loving, supportive, patient, husband (aka - editor, chef, coach, and counselor), Eric Nelson. Without you in my life this road would have been a lot bumpier and a lot less fun. Thank you for picking up and moving across the country, simply because you believe in me.
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I would also like to thank the people of Graham Expeditionary Middle School. It is because of your school’s dedicated collaborative nature and amazing faculty and students that this research was successful. Finally, I am eternally grateful for the participants of this study. Thank you all for your trust and generosity in sharing your experiences and stories.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

At different points in my life my identity has been that of artist, generalist teacher and art educator. I began my “career” as an artist at a young age and my formal education culminated in a BFA with an emphasis in painting. After working as an artist and then as a non-school based art instructor, my interest in education led me back to school for my teaching certificate and this led into general classroom experience at the elementary level. Through a move across country, from Seattle to Chicago, and into a giant school district with limited resources, I was able to teach art at the elementary and middle school levels despite a lack of an art endorsement or certification. I then built on this experience to become an art specialist and worked through a Masters in Art Education and into the PhD program in Art Education at The Ohio State University.

Working under each of these identities I have witnessed an inequity of social understanding among my classmates, students, and colleagues which in turn has driven me to become and remain an authentic critical educator. “Critical educators often discuss the importance of praxis, which is critical reflection and action with the goal of social change for equity and justice” (Cipolle, 2010, p.7). As stated before, I have operated in a variety of diverse settings in regards to race, culture and most importantly, socio-
economic status. In each circumstance I was provided a different lens with which to see how society views their other. Each community I learned and worked with had their own way of continuing what they have known as normal, with little attempt to reach outside their comfort zones. Kahne and Westheimer (1996) explain that,

The experiential and interpersonal components of service learning activities can achieve the first crucial step toward diminishing the sense of ‘otherness’ that often separates students- particularly privileged students - from those in need. In doing so, the potential to develop caring relationships is created. (p.599)

In my undergrad experience I learned alongside students from a similar background as myself and was never provided an opportunity to work with, or learn from, a community outside of this direct community. Throughout my pre-service teaching courses I was taught lessons that prepared me to work in learning situations just like the ones I had learned in. As with many pre-service teachers, I was never exposed to a learning environment where I could work with, and learn from, what Paulo Freire (1970/2011) refers to as the oppressed. These undergrad experiences left me ill-equipped to work and teach in any other environment than the one I had grown up in, and in turn continued this lack of social understanding in my teachings.

It was in my Masters program at The Ohio State University, during a multicultural course, that I was first challenged to grapple with an understanding of my own social standing in regards to the social issues of race, gender, economic inequity and identity. Working mostly-online in a cooperative learning environment, with students from the both United States and Jamaica, I was exposed to a teaching and learning style
that addresses issues of social awareness, service-learning and more specifically arts-based service-learning. Arts-based service-learning is a mutually empowering process, that brings together the power of the arts, with the essential components of service-learning (Krensky & Steffen, 2008). “Collaborative learning through art can present multiple possibilities for teachers, students, and schools” (p.3, Hutzel, Urban Education with a Vision Proposal, forthcoming). Service-Learning projects create an experiential learning environment where students can explore social issues such as gender, age, race, economic and socio economic status, and from this develop multicultural social meaning and develop critical social understandings (Kahne & Westheimer 1996; Taylor, 2002 & 2004, Taylor & Ballengee-Morris 2004; Hutzel, 2007; Duncan & Kopperud, 2008; Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Cipolle, 2010).

Service-learning represents a mutually empowering process in that all parties serve to teach and all are served knowledge and experiences. This creates a space where all participants are both providers and recipients and therefore equal partners in the exchange (Krensky & Steffen, 2008). Cipolle (2010) states that “Developing a greater awareness and broader perspective of social issues occurs through accurate information, constructive service experiences, and critical reflection” (p.11). Participants in arts-based service-learning projects are part of firsthand cooperative learning experiences, with the intentions of creating reciprocal partnerships among all involved. The collaborative artmaking processes in arts-based service-learning projects can become a site for re-examining identities and social understandings.
Statement of the Problem

As a Graduate Teaching Associate for the department of Art Education at The Ohio State University, I have facilitated five separate arts-based service-learning projects in the general education course of Art Education 252, *A Service Learning Experience with the Computer in the Visual Arts*. This course combines two groups of learners, including undergraduates from a variety of disciplines and middle school aged girls from a nearby neighborhood school. The class follows a service-learning pedagogy, where the two groups of students work and learn collaboratively through the process of making art on the computer using Photoshop and Gimp (an open source version of Photoshop).

The students in this arts-based service-learning course are challenged with the task of deconstructing their own identities in order to conceptualize their place within the community that they share with their classmates and to the larger community shared with their service-learning partners. “Deconstruction begins by identifying the centre of a system, or the privileged term in a violent conceptual hierarchy, and represents an intervention to make that system or hierarchy tremble” (Simons, 2006, p.87). An important building block of successful service-learning is the mapping, and building, of community assets. The meaning making in their collaborative artmaking comes from their cooperative experiences and represents their developed social understandings and awareness of their shared community. While investigating the big idea of community through this service-learning project, social aspects brought to light deal with race, gender, age, privilege and, ultimately, socio-economic status. Through the ten weeks of a
quarter students are continuously deconstructing the meaning of community, their identity, and this identity’s place within a community.

The social aspect of gender is directly dealt with through this course. There is much research suggesting that females in technological learning environments are not as likely to assert themselves when working alongside male classmates (Hug & Jurow, 2010; Selwyn, 2007). This course provides the middle-school girls the chance to learn computer skills and use a digital camera without the pressure of grades. Research suggests that when given the chance to learn without their male peers, they will return to the classroom much more confident and able to assert themselves in their learning environment (Hug & Jurow, 2010; Selwyn, 2007).

The college-aged students are predominately white and middle to upper class. These students are some of the top students in the nation with over 80% of the incoming freshmen graduating in the top 10% of their high school class (Ohio State University, UCAT presentation, 2009). This suggests that this group of students likely grew up in a supportive learning environment, where class size is low and the average amount spent per student is high. Also, the highest percentages of these incoming freshmen have moved to campus from suburban areas where violent crime is low. These students have been provided the opportunity to learn in relatively safe, and well-stocked, classrooms with a high level of materials and technology.

When compared to their college-aged partners, the middle-school aged girls from a nearby neighborhood school are faced with economic inequity. Over 90% of the middle school student population receives free or reduced lunch. This is one indicator
that the economic status of the school’s student community is at, or close to, the poverty level (Toppo, 2008). The school deals with daily violence and has a high rate of gang activity. The class size is higher than the national average, while the amount spent per-student is lower.

Service-learning finds its base in the interaction, and learning between, two groups of learners. It is the binary oppositions within these two groups that make the experience more authentic by giving each group a real way to interact with elements of their identity that are absent and present within the other group. Using the computer labs for my Art Ed 252 as an example, the OSU students represent more-privileged technology resources and the middle-school girls demonstrate a less-privileged environment. The OSU computer lab is a high tech MAC lab, fully stocked with the expensive, and complex program, Photoshop. The community lab is made up of computers rebuilt from donated and recycled parts, and the programs used are Open Source versions of the more well known and expensive programs such as Photoshop and Microsoft Word. The more-privileged and less-privileged opposition is a commonly-explored theme in this class and the computer lab representation is a relatively safe way to start examining some of these potentially distressing socio-economic binary aspects of their identities and communities.

These community partnerships have been forged to focus on, and facilitate, youth empowerment and voice through collaborative artmaking, asset-based mapping (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), photography, and the use of open source software as digital media in the visual arts. After a rigorous review of literature, coupled with the
experience of ten years of teaching art education in various public school and community environments, I have found a need to further investigate how artmaking, specifically the meaning-making processes of collaborative artmaking conducted in an arts-based service-learning project, can provide an environment in which issues of social justice can be embraced and explored.

Primary Research Question and Sub-Questions

For this arts-based service-learning study, my central question is: How can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking? In addition to investigating this primary research question, there are several sub-questions addressed:

1. How can students mutually investigate the big idea of community as a form of social action through critical dialogue and critical reflection?

2. How can the cooperative efforts of service-learning and PAR provide a collaborative venue for the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation to be explored as a means of building student’s social interdependence?

3. How can collaborative artmaking create spaces for students to become critically conscious through the meaning-making processes of artmaking and cooperative learning?
Definition of Terms

Process of Defining the Study’s Primary Focus

When I began the process of creating a conceptual framework for this study, I started by clearly defining the primary focus of this research. In order to fully understand and clearly define social awareness I launched deeply into researching the terms social, awareness, and then social awareness. Along the way, I uncovered many closely related concepts that led me to discover that the concept of ‘growth of social awareness’ did not fully encompass the primary focus of this study. The dictionary states that to be aware is to have knowledge and is the ability to be alert and informed. Awareness does not imply understanding or the making of meaning with the information to which you have been alerted. With this definition of what it means to be aware, I was not satisfied with the use of the term ‘awareness’ in the focus of my study. Through much reading and research, I have replaced ‘social awareness’ with the terms: social consciousness, critical consciousness, and social responsibility, along with understanding, self-concept, personal identity and social identity. I now further explain the definition of these, and other terms, central to this study.

Understanding

I define understanding as a process of acquiring meaning through our ability to transfer both knowledge and skills in order to creatively make sense of a different experience, situation, or problem. Wiggins and McTighe expand on this in their 2005 review of understanding by design: “Understanding involves meeting a challenge for thought. We encounter a mental problem, and experience with puzzling or no meaning.
We use judgement to draw upon our repertoire of skill and knowledge to solve it” (p.39). Therefore to understand something is the ability to use one’s skills and knowledge effectively, and thoughtfully, in order to make sense of new experiences in the world in which we move through.

**Self-Concept**

Identity is a central concept in social psychology, and according to social psychologists, self-concept (also known as self-construction, self-identity or self-perspective) is our own self-image of ourselves. Self-concept is the cognitive representation an individual has of him or herself (Taylor, Davis-Kean & Malanchuk, 2007). Self-concept can also be defined as “the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence” (Purkey, 1988, p.1). There are three major qualities of self-concept which are that it is learned, organized, and dynamic (Purkey, 1988). First, no one is born with a self-concept for it is shaped and reshaped through one’s life by repeated perceived experiences, particularly with significant others. The fact that self-concept is learned is an important implication. Claiming that it is a social product, developed through experience, realizes its potential for continuous development.

Second, self-concept is characterized by being organized and stable. In order for an individual’s personality to be consistent and dependable, it is necessary that he/she resist change due to central beliefs. This stability in one’s own belief system allows an individual to reflect on past events, analyze present perceptions and therefore help to shape future experiences. This forces one to be conscious of self-concepts’ continuous
development. Third, the dynamic nature of self-concept allows it to be a continuous process in which the world and things in it are not just perceived, but perceived in relation to one’s self-concept (Purkey, 1988).

**Personal Identity**

Self-concept consists of both a personal identity and a social identity. “Personal identity is what makes you similar to yourself and different from others - Social identity refers to a feeling of similarity to (some) others; personal identity refers to a feeling of difference in relation to the same others” (Deschamps & Devos, 1998, p.3). Personal identity indicates how an individual is aware of his or her differences with respect to others, while those who have similar positions and common backgrounds have similar social identities (Deschamps & Devos, 1998). Personal identity deals with “questions that arise about ourselves by virtue of our being people” that are “familiar ones that occur to nearly all of us now and again: What am I? When did I begin? What will happen to me when I die?” (Olson, 2010, p.2). Our personal identity is what makes each of us unique as an individual, and is the way we see or define ourselves (Olson, 2010; Purkey, 1988).

**Social Identity**

Henri Tajfel and his colleague John C. Turner developed social identity theory in the 1970/80’s and introduced the concept of social identity as an attempt to explain intergroup behavior, which is the belief that once people are divided into social groups, they tend to favor their own group over another group (Sidanius, Levin, Laar, & Sears, 2008). In Tajfel's own words, social identity is “that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups)
together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (1981, p. 255). According to Tajfel's theory, a crucial feature of the concept of social identity is that when a person identifies with a group, it is in some sense a conscious choice and that “one may accidentally belong to a group, but it is only when being a group member becomes at least partly constitutive of who one is that we can meaningfully talk of social identifications” (1981, p. 255). Social identity theorists propose that people seek both a positive sense of self as individuals (i.e., a positive self-esteem) and also a positive sense of self as members of the groups to which we belong (i.e., a positive group-esteem) (Bicchieri, Christina, Muldoon, & Ryan, 2011).

Self-concept is our own self-image of ourselves. It is composed of both a person’s personal identity, one’s own self-perceptions, and a social identity dealing with how one fits into society. In order to understand how social consciousness and the development of social responsibility can grow through artmaking, self-concept will be explored through the meaning-making process of artmaking.

**Social Consciousness**

I am interested in researching how artmaking can help students make meaning of their self-concept, which is composed of both their personal and social identity, which will be discussed in depth later in this paper. To serve these interests, the primary research question of this study is: How can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking? The dictionary states that to be conscious is to be fully aware and sensitive of one's own existence, sensations, thoughts, and surroundings. In their 2010 article in the
Journal of Consciousness Studies, Schlitz, M. M., Vieten, C., & Miller, E. M. define social consciousness as “to denote conscious awareness of being part of an interrelated community of others” (p.21). They go on to state that at the most expanded level of social consciousness, “people become more explicitly aware of their interdependence with others, and their ability to influence and be influenced by them” (Schlitz et al., 2010, p.22). A large part of my study asks my participants to be mutually dependent on each other to provide opportunities for social consciousness to be explored. I will expand on this further in this paper and in even more depth in my second paper on social interdependence theory.

Critical Consciousness

In the 1960’s, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire coined the term "critical consciousness," which is defined as one’s own ability to perceive social, political, and economic oppression and to take action against these oppressive elements of society (1970/2011). In order for a person to be socially conscious, and in turn socially responsible, they must first become critically conscious, which is to go through a process that Freire (1970/2011) refers to as conscientization, “Conscientizacao is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence” (p. 109). Through a reflective awareness, this process enlightens one to the reality of society’s social inequities, and through the development of becoming critically conscious, one becomes aware of their own responsibility for choices that either maintain or change that reality (Freire, 1970/2011, 1973/2002).
The essence of consciousness is being with the world, and this behavior is permanent and unavoidable. Accordingly, consciousness is in essence a ‘way towards’ something apart from itself, outside itself, which surrounds it and which it apprehends by mean of its ideational capacity. Consciousness is thus by definition a method, in the most general sense of the word. (Alvaro Vieira Pinto, unpublished, cited in Freire, 1970/2011, p. 69)

In their 2009 article, Kumagai and Lypson suggest a process of critical self-reflection, which is not “singular focus on the self, but a stepping back to understand one’s own assumptions, biases, and values, and a shifting of one’s gaze from self to others and conditions of injustice in the world” (p. 783). This process of shifting our gaze outward by reflecting on others allows us to begin to understand what it means to be socially conscious.

In order to investigate if social consciousness and the development of social responsibility can grow through artmaking, students must first go through the Freirian process of conscientization (Freire, 1970/2011). It is this process of becoming critically conscious that “they ‘re-consider’, through the ‘considerations’ of others, their own previous ‘consideration’” (Freire, 1970/2011, p. 112). Thereby reflecting their own assumptions and understandings with their other(s), in order to become mutually interdependent, and in turn, socially responsible citizens.

Social Responsibility

In his 1997 book, Berman describes social responsibility as “the unity of one’s sense of self and one’s morality, the sense of connectedness to others, and the sense of
meaning that one derives from contributing to something larger than oneself” (p. 192).

He goes on to state that

Social responsibility is integrative. It allows us to examine how people make sense of their relationship with society. It allows us to understand how people come to behave in ethical and caring ways on the political and social level - Social responsibility means being personally invested in the well-being of others and the well-being of the planet. (p. 190-191)

Social responsibility has a number of dimensions. First, socially responsible people understand that they are a part of a larger social network that has interlocking communities. They are conscious of the ways in which they can be influenced by others, and in turn, respond by acting with integrity because they are conscious of their influence on the social world. Most importantly, they experience a sense of connectedness and interdependence with others. Socially responsible people understand that their lives are interdependent with the well-being of others and that with the social and political world around them, they can make a difference in their daily lives by their choices and values, and also that diversity can enrich our lives (Berman, 1997).

Through the process of identifying the primary focus of my study, I was able to discover the concepts that most clearly define the purpose of my research which are social consciousness and the development of social responsibility. By defining and understanding these concepts, I was able to draw connections among subtopics, better define them, and conceptualize how each area is interrelated in my quest to understand:
How can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking?

**Significance of the Study**

There is much literature that addresses and advocates the implementation of service-learning to create a mutually-empowering process where participants serve to teach and all are served knowledge and experiences in return (Ballengee-Morris, 2008; Cipolle, 2010; Duncan & Kopperud, 2008; Hutzel, 2007; Kahne & Westheimer, 1996; Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Taylor, 2002; Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2004). Literature also demonstrates how arts-based practices can be utilized and employed as a means to raising consciousness and creating critical social awareness (Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Leavy, 2009). Arts-based practices are visually interactive and can promote dialogue among its creators and viewers. This dialogue is critical to cultivating understanding and knowledge building, and serves as place to challenge and transform outdated beliefs and stereotypes (Leavy, 2009). Furthermore arts-based service-learning projects combine the democratic values of education with the power of the arts to provide students with experiences that challenge, and broaden, their ways of thinking and knowing (Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Leavy, 2009).

Cooperative learning, as defined by D. W. Johnson and Johnson (1994, 1999, 2009), is the instructional use of students in small groups so that they may work together in order to maximize their own and each other’s learning. According to the research (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 1999; D.W. Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000; Slavin, 1995),
cooperative learning offers many potential benefits for students including: increased self-esteem, greater liking for school, enhanced interethnic ties, and improved complex thinking. Grown from cooperative learning is social interdependence theory, which is defined by the accomplishments of each group member’s individual goals being affected by the actions of all members that compose the group (Deutsch 1949, 1962; D. W. Johnson 1970, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson 1989, 2005, 2009). The foundational elements of social interdependence theory, as defined by D. W. Johnson and Johnson (1994, 1999, 2009), are inherently taught by cooperative efforts that make cooperation work. The five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing.

Through a saturation of literature I have found that cooperative learning strategies are not effectively utilized in art education settings (Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Furthermore, there is no research that investigates a connection between the five principles of cooperation from social interdependence theory with the practices of an arts-based service-learning project. Therefore, in this study, it was imperative that I examine, note, analyze and document the challenges and opportunities for learning with digital media through meaning-making in artmaking as productive and empowering tactics in the lives of diverse college students and urban youth. In this proposed arts-based service-learning research study, I have also examined, documented, analyzed, and reflected on the hybrid use of community spaces and diverse classrooms, as well as participants’ benefits from their engagement in effectual cooperative learning strategies, as defined as
the five basic elements of social interdependence theory. Utilizing the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation to facilitate a collaboration with an arts-based service-learning project, I intend to demonstrate through my research findings that this new combination of theory and practice can become a worthy and established praxis in art education.

As a reflexive teacher and critically conscious researcher, I am most interested in engaging in research that deals with life experiences as essential in aiding in the emancipatory growth of social consciousness and social responsibility (Maguire, 1987; McIntyre, 2008). In his 2007 book, Stringer states that action research “is a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems” (p. 8). With this definition of research, participants working collaboratively in an arts-based service-learning project can engage in the participatory action research needed to contribute in creating situations where critical consciousness can be explored. Through participatory action research, I have collected information that confirms the necessity and efficacy of embracing the teaching strategies associated with arts-based service-learning practices and effectual cooperative learning strategies needed to understand how social consciousness and the development of social responsibility can grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking.
Limitations of the Study

This study provides an in-depth qualitative examination of a specific arts-based service-learning project facilitated in the Ohio State University’s community of Columbus, Ohio. The project combines two groups of students, college students who choose to enroll in Art Education 252 and middle school girls from Graham Expeditionary Middle School. Since the course is designated as an arts and humanities general education course, the college students who chose to enroll range from freshman through seniors and are from all departments of study. Though there are some students majoring in art education, most are not. Therefore the results of this study are not directly transferable to pre-service art education, or education teacher practices.

Research Design

The research design is qualitative and through an arts-based service-learning project I attempted to answer the primary research question: How can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking? Utilizing the emancipatory qualities of participatory action research as my method of action this study is informed by cooperative learning strategies and the practices and pedagogies of social interdependence theory. Using the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation (social interdependence theory) as a guide to understanding the following methods were operationalized in this study: observations, reflective writings, photographs, digital artworks and artist statements and interviews. This data provided me
a better understanding of how the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking can lead to the development of both students’ social consciousness and social responsibility.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

“Learning to do qualitative research is like learning to paint. Study the masters, learn techniques and methods, practice them faithfully, and then adapt them to your own persuasions when you know enough to describe the work of those who have influenced you and the ways in which you are contributing new perspectives.” (Glesne, p. 3).

This chapter is an extensive examination of the relevant literature that is the foundation of this research study. My investigation covers the following: meaning-making in artmaking, collaboration, service-learning, Ubuntu philosophy, the teachings of Paulo Freire, participatory action research, social interdependence theory, cooperative learning, and the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation. After these issues have been thoroughly examined I move onto discuss my methodology in Chapter Three.

Meaning-Making through the Process of Artmaking

The process of making art involves a continuous flow between the mind and body, as the process of making art is in itself a process of making meaning. By both thinking and doing artists attempt to explore and express ideas related to emotions and social issues. Arts educator Sydney Walker states, “artmaking is foremost a meaning-making
endeavor” (2001, p. xii). As a meaning-making endeavor, the process of making art can be used to explore a variety of ideas and concepts. When making art as a meaning-making endeavor, an artist starts with a concept with which they feel a strong personal connection, then asks themselves problematizing questions about this concept, developing a knowledge-base full of conceptual tools to use as their motivation for meaning-making in their artmaking. In regards to this type of artmaking process, “the artist’s construction of a conceptual artmaking problem becomes critical in determining the depth at which they pursue meaning and hence the fecundity of meaning in their artworks” (Walker, 2004, p. 9). In this research study, students’ investigated and discussed their own self-concept as a means of reaching critical consciousness, through the meaning-making process of artmaking, both independently and collaboratively. The artmaking processes of this study followed Walker’s (2001) meaning-making design which includes: big ideas, personal connections, knowledge building, problem solving, boundaries, and ways of working.

**Big Ideas**

Walker’s meaning-making approach to the process of artmaking begins with a conceptual framework based on big ideas which are “broad, important human issues - characterized by complexity, ambiguity, contradiction, and multiplicity” which can “engage students in deeper levels of thinking” (2001, p. 1). Meaning-making occurs through both the process of creating art and as the artwork is interpreted. Walker suggests that “an artmaking process structured around big ideas orients students toward the notion that artmaking can be about meaningmaking that has both personal and larger
social consequences” (2004, pp.11-12). Similarly, viewing a visual artwork can also
induce both a physical and emotional reaction that is personal, which by being
understood in regards to larger social consequences, can result in the making of new
meaning. As art educator Kimberly Powell describes, “In the arts, the body is, and
always has been, the place and space of reasoning, knowing, performing, and
learning” (2007, p. 1083). This way of thinking claims that the arts are a process of the
body interacting with the world, as artmaking is a process that merges the body and mind
into one meaningful embodied being. Big ideas allow for these kinds of meaningful,
expansive interpretations while also providing the artist conceptual focus (Walker, 2001).
It is important for artists to become personally connected to a big idea or else “artmaking
can become merely an exercise in problem solving” (Walker, 2001, p. 2). In this study
the big ideas of identity and community are utilized in order for students to become
personally connected to their artmaking, in order to create meaning-making and explore
social consciousness.

Personal Connections

In order for an artist to motivate and sustain their interests in a big idea they must
find and/or make personal connections to the big idea that make this idea worth pursuing
(Walker, 2001). Artists’ must explore their own interests and experiences in order to find
connections that are both personal and meaningful. Arts educators can help encourage
students to make personal connections to their artmaking by asking the following
questions “How does this idea relate to my life? Where am I in this idea? What would I
want to know about this idea?” (Walker, 2001, p. 20). Examining a big idea on a
personal level must include an examination of not only an artist’s personal interests and experiences but also their social concerns. This helps students extend their artmaking from an introverted experience to a meaning-making process that can lead to the growth of social consciousness. Walker (2001) suggests that

Student artmaking can be superficial and shallow because the subject matter or big idea is too far removed from students’ personal lives. This does not mean we should limit art instruction to a narrow range of topics, but instead find ways to link to students’ lives. (p. 27)

This study utilizes the meaning-making practices of PAR and service-learning in order to help the participants’ find personal links in their artmaking within the big ideas of identity and community. By providing students an awareness of themselves through new experiences they are provided a venue to make the rich personal connections needed to meaningful artistic expression.

**Knowledge Building**

Walker (2001) suggests “students need an adequate knowledge for artmaking if their exploration and expression of ideas is to be substantive and complex” (p. 37).

Knowledge building is the process of conducting research in order to fully understand a big idea, method, medium, or process, etc. in order to prepare the artist to be most successful with their artmaking. This artmaking research can be getting to know a person you intend to create a portrait of, making visits to a site in order to get a feel of it before creating a installation there, or perhaps looking at other artwork in galleries to see what is
current (Walker, 2001). In order to help students make connections to prior knowledge in order to build their knowledge for artmaking Walker (2001) suggests the follow:

- Having small groups of students compile all that they know about a subject.
- Holding a class discussion by having each student, in turn, tell one thing he or she knows about a subject, continuing as long as someone can add something new.
- Having students fill out worksheets to answer such questions as: What are the most important visual clues for identifying this subject? What ten descriptive terms best describe this subject? What context do you usually associate with this subject? What is your personal experience with this subject?
- Encouraging students to create a detailed list of the physical traits of the subject.
- Asking students to write a paragraph that describes a personal experience with this subject matter. (p. 39)

Following these guidelines students in this study will be building their knowledge base surrounding the big ideas of identity and community in order to use what they learn to create meaning-making in their artmaking that will help them explore their social consciousness.

**Problem Solving**

Walker (2001) suggests that “artmaking involves problems - technical, aesthetic, stylistic, conceptual, and expressive” (p. 49). While big ideas do provide a conceptual structure for artists, alone they are not enough. In order for artists to thoroughly explore the conceptual concept of a big idea they need to create and solve questions for
themselves in order to “pursue ideas more deeply and to discover new perspectives” (Walker, 2001, p. 51). In the classroom artmaking problems can help students use their knowledge base in insightful and inventive ways as “artmaking problems can create perspectives that push ideas beyond their more obvious aspects” (Walker, 2001, p. 51). Walker suggest the following possible artmaking problems.

- transformation - Visual strategies that alter an object, person, or situation from its usual or normal representation.
- concealment - Visual and conceptual strategies that partially hide or conceal information.
- disruption - Conceptual strategies that alter a viewer’s usual manner of perceiving and understanding specific subject matter. Such strategies might include unexpected juxtapositions of objects, persons, and situations, or new twists on social conventions and commonly accepted ideas.
- illogical combination - A conceptual strategy that is a subcategory of disruption. Objects, persons, and situations are juxtaposed in unusual combinations.
- opposition - A conceptual strategy that utilizes polarities. (2001, p. 51-52)

Teachers should present students with artmaking problems while at the same time encouraging them to reconsider the artmaking problem from a personal perspective as “creativity studies have found that individuals with more sophisticated problem-construction abilities produce more creative solutions” (Walker, 2001, p. 52). Helping students to create problems within their artmaking allows them to explore contradictory
or diverse elements in big ideas. By creating and solving problems in their artmaking
students are challenged to think conceptually beyond big ideas.

**Boundaries**

Artists create personal structures within their artmaking with the choices they
make about media, style, techniques and subject matter. Students should be focused on
exploring their ideas in artmaking and need to gain an understanding that their technical
choices can serve this exploration. Setting boundaries in artmaking in order to engage
students with meaning-making is more than only selecting media or style, creating
conceptual boundaries is also critical. Walker (2001) suggests educators ask the
following questions when boundary setting, “What ideas are students to explore? How
can media, style, and formal boundaries serve the expression and exploration of these
ideas?” (p. 74). By setting aesthetic boundaries teachers can help provide a framework
for their students to make their own decisions as “unlimited options fail to offer the
resistance needed for creation. Boundaries set necessary limits that enable artist to work
productively” (Walker, 2001, p. 73). Arts educators can guide students by setting
limitations in colors, scale and style in order to create boundaries that will enable students
to make meaningful aesthetic decisions that are conceptually expressive. Students are
accustomed to teachers setting guidelines and requirements in school, though students are
rarely informed as to why they have been given such rubric. In order for arts educators to
create boundaries that are meaningful for students they must make the boundaries
purpose transparent. Walker (2001) suggests that the best way to do this is by examining
the boundaries created by professional artists asking questions such as:

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Why, for example, did painter Robert Motherwell limit his palette for Elegies to hues of primarily black and white? Why did sculptor Claes Oldenburg enlarge everyday objects, but not human figures, for monumental sculptures? Why did Lucas Samaras create in multiple kinds of media? (p.75).

Having students ponder such questions will help students understand that artists’ choices are made with thought and meaning and that boundaries are created to further this expressive meaning-making.

**Ways of Working**

Artmaking is an “investigation, exploration, and discovery of meaning” (Walker, 2001, p. 115). Arts educators can learn a lot from the similarities found in artists’ ways of working, as they demonstrate the importance of engaging students in inquiry. Walker (2001) suggests the following practices are critical in order for artmaking to be a meaning-making endeavor: purposeful play, risk taking, experimentation, postponement of final meaning, searching; questioning. Art educators need to both instruct and encourage students to develop a playful attitude, take risks, attempt manipulations, change their mind and ask questions of themselves and their art, as these ways of working do not happen spontaneously (Walker, 2001). Looking at the practices of contemporary artists Sandy Skoglund, Claes Oldenburg, and Keith Haring, can help students understand that purposeful play is an important factor in their work as serious artists. Play encourages the practices of questioning and experimentation and by framing artmaking as play “both professional and student artists psychologically remove threat and are thereby better able to tackle difficult projects, break boundaries, take risks, and become more
inventive” (Walker, 2001, p. 135). Engaging students in the artmaking strategies of transformation, disruption and concealment can also encourage purposeful artmaking. Arts educators must design their instruction to encourage these ways of working in their students in order to successfully teach that artmaking is a journey of both making and discovering meaning.

Service-Learning

Collaboration is defined as a means to cooperatively work together in a joint effort. Building on this idea with the definition of service-learning, participants involved in service-learning projects should strive for an equal exchange of ideas and power among one another which creates more productive partnerships built on trust. Service-learning intends to create a mutually-empowering process where participants serve to teach and all are served knowledge and experiences in return (Ballengee-Morris, 2008; Cipolle, 2010; Duncan & Kopperud, 2008; Hutzel, 2007; Kahne & Westheimer, 1996; Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Taylor, 2002; Taylor, & Ballengee-Morris, 2004). In her 2007 article, Hutzel explores service-learning as a form of experiential education which is based on the ideological educational theories of both John Dewey and Paulo Freire in which real life experiences are the most meaningful learning taking place in education.

Dewey’s (1938/1963) theory of experience is based on the notion that all genuine learning comes about through connective experience. He believed that true education involved knowledge formed through judgments made of observations that are personal and highly subjective (Taylor, 2002), “the essential point is that education grow and take
shape through the process of social intelligence” (Dewey 1938/1963, p. 72). Utilizing an asset-based approach (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Hutzel, 2007, 2010) in service-learning projects ensures practices that focus on the existing positive attributes of the participants involved.

Paulo Freire’s teaching (1970/2011, 1973/2002) surrounds the notion of empowering individuals, or as he calls them, the oppressed, to seek change and freedom from the oppressor through education. Freire’s teachings of co-intentional education represent a commitment to one’s involvement as essential for meaningful experiences to be created during a service-learning project. In this type of project, “doing with”, instead of “doing for” (1970/2011), negotiates an equal relationship of reciprocated power, hence, service-learning provides opportunities for this type of action to take place. Service-learning participants can negotiate an equal relationship of reciprocated power, where together, oppressors and oppressed, can work toward shared goals of personal transformation and social justice (Ballengee-Morris, 2008; Hutzel, 2007; Taylor, 2002; Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2004).

Service-Learning is a critical and experiential approach to education which, when based on the idea of reciprocal learning, can benefit both parties in the learning equation (Hutzel, 2007). Participants share equal responsibility in creating reciprocal partnerships where they are both teachers and learners working collaboratively towards a greater understanding of their own self-concept, and also that of their other(s). All of this occurs, while cooperatively learning what it means to be a critically conscious citizen. Hutzel and Resler suggest that “Service-learning has the potential to promote social justice
through practical experiences” (2010, p. 10). Following the integrity of this collaborative method of action, and as a means of becoming a critically conscious researcher, I will be using participatory action research as my method of research.

**Arts-Based Service-Learning**

Over the last thirty years there has been significant research indicating public and academic discourse in America dealing with issues surrounding the civic engagement demonstrated by college-aged students (Krensky & Steffen, 2008). “Arts participation is failing among younger adults and with it most forms of civic and social engagement” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2006, p.1, cited in Krensky & Steffen, 2008). Arts-based service-learning is one response to society’s call to create engaged, socially responsible young people. Arts-based practices can be utilized and employed as a means to raising consciousness and creating critical social awareness (Leavy, 2009). Visual arts-based research methods are by nature participatory, seeing that it has an audience who interprets and experiences therefore allowing for multiple connections to be made. Arts-based practices are visually interactive and can promote dialogue among its creators and viewers. This dialogue is critical to cultivating understanding and knowledge building, and serves as place to challenge and transform outdated beliefs and stereotypes (Leavy, 2009). Arts-based service-learning projects combine democratic values of education with the power of the arts to provide students with experiences that challenge, and broaden, their ways of thinking and knowing.
Service-Learning in Relation to Space and Place

In her 2004 article, Taylor speaks of how college students rarely acquire a feeling of home or a sense of belonging to the community in which their university is located. How can students be expected to have a sense of pride and respectful responsibility for a community in which they have no ownership? (Taylor, 2004). Service-learning initiatives help its participants develop a sense of place in their campus communities (Hutzel, 2007), and therefore create a space in which students can feel more connected to the place they are calling home. In her 2007 article, Hutzel explains how she challenged the participants of her service-learning project to question the way in which knowledge is constructed, and guided them to investigate inequitable social systems, and their place in such systems. As a democratic educator, she created a space in her participants’ learning environment, that each could learn from and with their local communities.

Service-learning is a Dewey-an word intended to facilitate the folding and unfolding of experiential learning which situates movement between action and reflection, between learning and understanding, between place and space (Jeffers, 2005). The context in which service-learning operates creates a world in which these dynamics can be understood, through the movement between space and place, in that the participants’ are unfolding themselves as basic components of the lived world. In context of the participants’ larger world, place is experienced as security, and space experienced as freedom. The service-learning story, as told and re-told through student experiences, represent their movement between security and freedom and their need to experience both. Service-learning intends to create an environment where both place and space can
be experienced simultaneously thereby creating new experiences where security and freedom are explored together (Taylor, 2004; Hutzel, 2006).

**Ubuntu Philosophy**

Ubuntu is a traditional African concept that comes from the Zulu and Xhola languages and has a rough English translation as “African humanism” or “humanity towards others” (Bonn, 2007). Bhengu (1996) contrasts this with the notion that “to say ‘African Humanism’ means Ubuntu, is just a compromise since there is no equivalent English word for Ubuntu” (p. 4-5) and insists “there are African ideals which are more dear to us (Africans) than life itself, and Ubuntu is one of them” (p. x). Ubuntu is a non-racial philosophy that stands for humanness and is a way of life that positively contributes towards the well-being of others and is concerned with granting human dignity through the humanistic experience of treating all with respect (Bhengu, 1996). Horsthemke (2009) suggests that the philosophy of Ubuntu is an “African principle of human mutual interdependence” (p. 205), which as a cultural world view is “characterized essentially by communalism, collectivism and reference to the common good” (p. 207). As a philosophy, and way of life, Ubuntu encompasses respect, compassion, empathy, understanding and an integrity in living communally with all others.

**Ubuntu’s Relevance for this Research Study**

Brookshire (2009) declares the word ubuntu to represent “humanity to others” or the belief that “I am what I am because of who we all are” (p. 1). As a term that
represents human mutual interdependence, the humanistic philosophy of Ubuntu is focused on the essence of being human and on the relationships we build with others and, therefore, is directly connected to social interdependence theory. Horsthemke (2009), reflects on this as he states that “I am a person (human being) because of other persons (human beings) I am because we are” (p. 206). From this, one can infer that the philosophy of Ubuntu is the foundation of what it means to be socially conscious, and that by definition, is our conscious awareness that we are each part of a community in which we all are interrelated to one another (Schlitz et al, 2010). At the heart of its meaning, Ubuntu is intrinsically linked with, or interdependent of, what it means to be critically conscious and “that the thinking subject does not exist in isolation but, rather, in relationship to others in the world” (Kumagai & Lypson, 2009, p. 783). Freire once wrote that “to be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world” (1973/2002, p. 3). Hence, a person who practices the philosophy of Ubuntu is both a socially conscious and socially responsible individual that has gone through the process Freire refers to as conscientization (1970/2011).

Ubuntu Open Source Software

The Ubuntu operating system was created by Mark Shuttleworth, a South African billionaire entrepreneur whose vision is part social and part economic. A part of the open source community, a community that believes software and operating systems should be available to all, Ubuntu “relies on volunteer software developers from around the world for many of its improvements” (Brookshire, 2009, p. 1). As an open source operating system, the philosophy of Ubuntu “is driven by a belief that software should be free and
accessible to all” (“Ubuntu Our philosophy” n.d.). Free for anyone to use, and/or develop
“the Ubuntu operating system brings the spirit of Ubuntu to the world of
computers” (“The Ubuntu Story” n.d.).

In my proposed research, the participants will work and learn collaboratively
through the process of making art on the computer using both Photoshop and Gimp. This
collaborative artmaking, focused on cooperative experiences is grounded in social
interdependence theory. Socially interdependent participants are cooperatively linked
and intrinsically bound to the efforts and achievements of one another, which mirrors the
cultural worldview of Ubuntu which “highlights the essential unity of humanity and
emphasizes the importance of constantly referring to the principles of empathy, sharing,
and cooperation” (Murithi, 2009, p. 221). The participants will be provided opportunities
to create digital art at two locations, The Ohio State University campus, and at the girl’s
middle school. On The Ohio State University’s campus, the participants will utilize a
Mac computer lab, loaded with Photoshop. Adobe Photoshop, created and owned by
Adobe Systems, is an expensive graphics editing program. On the middle school
campus, the participants will utilize GIMP. The image manipulation program, GIMP, is
an open source version of Photoshop. As an open source software program, GIMP is free
for anyone to access, download and use. Through the process of collaboratively making
art, utilizing both Photoshop and GIMP, participants will be provided experiences that
can lead to deeper social conversations with the hopes of building social consciousness
and developing social responsibility.
Teachings of Paulo Freire

As a form of ideological educational theory, the teachings of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire are grounded in real life experiences as the most meaningful learning that takes place in education (Ballengee-Morris, 2008; Hutzel, 2007). In opposition to the “banking” concept of education, Freire conceptualized the concept of problem-posing education which “affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming--as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with likewise unfinished reality” and goes on to state that “education be an ongoing activity” (Freire, 1970/2011, p. 84).

In regards to myself as a being forever in the process of becoming a researcher, teacher, and participant, this study’s conceptual framework is an ongoing activity, one where all the components of theory, research, and practice, are interacting in a continuous spiral, similar to Springer’s (2007) basic action research routine. Freire believed “that nobody knows everything, and nobody ignores everything. In this world we are all learners” (Freire, 1970/2011, p. 29 as cited in Ballengee-Morris, 2008, p. 61). As a critically conscious researcher, I acknowledge that the meanings of this study’s findings are in a process of becoming, and must remain an ongoing activity involving both learners and educators as equals.

As philosopher, humanitarian, and teacher, Freire used participatory strategies as an approach to learning that enabled both the learner and the teacher to become collaborative partners in the creation of knowledge. In her 2008 article that recounts her time spent talking with Paulo Freire, Ballengee-Morris reflects on this collaboration: “The position of co-learner is in contrast to a position of power-over” and “the teacher’s
position as co-learner fosters the student’s ownership and social action” (p. 60). It is with Freire’s way of knowing [theory], that I have chosen PAR as both a way of doing [practice] and way of reflecting [research]. “Paulo Freire’s influence has touched and inspired many. Freire was his theory. I found his philosophy and actions to be one and the same” (Ballengee-Morris, 2008, p. 68). It is my intentions to honor Freire’s teachings by enacting my philosophy within my actions as a researcher and believe participatory action research can ensure this of happening.

**Participatory Action Research**

As a reflexive teacher and critically conscious researcher, I am most interested in engaging in research that deals with life experiences as essential in aiding in the emancipatory growth of social consciousness and social responsibility. Minkler & Wallerstein (2003) expand on my intentions by suggesting that, “Rather than viewing research as neutral, participatory research intellectuals adopted the goals and commitment to critical consciousness, emancipation and social justice as they challenged their own roles” (p. 30). Even though action research and PAR have both contributed significantly in the development of democratic teaching styles (McIntyre, 2008), some continue to distinguish PAR by, “suggesting it is more focused on learning as a vehicle for increasing citizen voice and power in a wide range of contexts” (Taylor et al. 2004 as cited in, Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007, p. 11). In terms this study, in order to best create a platform of “doing with” instead of “doing on, or for,” upon which the research can stand (Freire, 1970/2011), participatory action research was utilized. By challenging my own
role as a researcher, I have come to know and declare that I am most concerned with research that aids people in the co-construction of knowledge through their own real life experiences. PAR can create opportunities to view our lives from different perspectives while providing strategies with which we can communicate these experiences with others (McIntyre, 2008).

In his 2007 book, Stringer states that action based research “is a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems” (p. 8). With this definition of research, participants working collaboratively in service-learning projects can engage in the participatory action research needed to contribute in creating situations where critical consciousness can be explored.

As stated before, in order for a person to be a socially conscious citizen who is also socially responsible, they must first become critically conscious, which is to go through a process that Freire refers to as conscientization (1970/2011). As equal partners in a service-learning project, participants can become participatory action researchers collaboratively working towards enabling relationships that will provide opportunities to explore the process of conscientization (Freire, 1970/2011).

### Social Interdependence Theory

**Brief Background & Theory Validity**

In American social psychology, the study of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic efforts is commonly recognized as the oldest field of research and, in turn,
social interdependence theory “has a long history and has been carefully formulated to explain cooperative and competitive relations among individuals” (D.W. Johnson, 2003, p. 936). D.W. Johnson & Johnson (1997) suggest that there are three general theoretical perspectives that have guided research surrounding cooperation: cognitive-development, behavioral, and social interdependence. The cognitive developmental perspective is grounded in the work of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Piaget’s perspective suggests that when individuals work together, sociocognitive conflict occurs and creates cognitive disequilibrium which then stimulates perspective-taking ability and reasoning. Vygotsky’s theories present knowledge as a societal product (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 1997; D.W. Johnson, Johnson, & E. Holubec, 1998). Behavioral theory perspective focuses on the impact of group reinforcers and rewards productivity. The perspective social interdependence theory takes on cooperative learning suggests that the way social interdependence is structured determines the way persons interact with each other, and D.W. Johnson & Johnson suggest that social interdependence theory “is by far the most important theory dealing with cooperation and competition” (1997, p. 97).

In the late 1800’s, Triplett (1898) conducted a study on competition that dealt with the variables associated with competitive performance. Since that time, “more than 1,200 studies have been conducted on the relative merits of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic efforts and the conditions under which each is appropriate. Many of the research studies have yielded findings with high internal validity, being carefully conducted by skilled investigators under highly controlled laboratory (31%) and field (65%) settings” (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 371). This research has been
conducted over eleven decades by many different researchers each working in diverse settings and has come from a variety of theoretical and practical orientations. The participants in the studies have ranged from three years of age to older adults and the research has been conducted to include numerous cultures in North America (Caucasian, Black American, Native American, and Hispanic populations) and countries from North, Central, and South America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Rim (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009). These numbers demonstrate that the body of research surrounding social interdependence theory is one of the largest within psychology. According to D.W. Johnson (2003) and D.W. Johnson & Johnson (2005, 2009), the diversity of the research findings demonstrates that there is a wide generalizability and considerable external validity rarely found in the social sciences. The foundation from which social interdependence theory has grown out of is cooperative learning. The effects and implications cooperative learning has had on social interdependence theory will be further investigated in the next section.

**Cooperative Learning**

Cooperative learning as defined by D. W. Johnson and Johnson (1994, 1999, 2009) is the instructional use of students in small groups so that they may work together in order to maximize their own and each other’s learning. According to research (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 1999; D.W. Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000; Slavin, 1995), cooperative learning offers many potential benefits for students including increased self-
esteem, greater liking for school, enhanced interethnic ties, and improved complex thinking.

Humans have been learning in small groups since the beginning of time, but in 1966 the modern use of cooperative learning began at the University of Minnesota with the training of teachers in the effective instructional use of small groups (D.W. Johnson, 2003). Since then, cooperative learning has flourished and “is now applied in schools and universities throughout most of the world in every subject area, from preschool through graduate school and adult training programs. Its use so pervades education that it is difficult to find a textbook on instructional methods, a teacher’s journal, or instructional materials that do not discuss cooperative learning” (D.W. Johnson, 2003, p. 934). Such a diverse and widespread implementation of cooperative learning has led to many extensions and modifications regarding the research surrounding social interdependence theory. Furthermore, cooperative learning has had at least four profound effects, and six important implications, on the research surrounding social interdependence theory (D.W. Johnson, 2003). The effects cooperative learning has had on social interdependence theory as well as its implications for existing research will now be discussed in the following section.

**Cooperative Learning’s Effect on Social Interdependence Theory**

In the mid 1960’s, cultural resistance to cooperative learning due to Darwinism (advocating competition in schools) led to a need for a persuasive rationale for cooperative learning. Deutsch's (1949a) formulation of social interdependence theory provided “a rationale for opposing the social Darwinism that dominated thought about
cooperation and competition at the time” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p. 294). The need for a persuasive rational led to comprehensive reviews of the research dealing with social interdependence which helped to move research into real classrooms and out of psychology labs (D.W. Johnson, 2003).

Second, in the 1960’s and 1970’s there was great pressure on schools to increase achievement in basic subject areas such as reading and math and to solve social problems plaguing classrooms. The application of social interdependence theory in classrooms across the nations demonstrated that “cooperation may be used to involve students actively in learning situations and to achieve multiple educational goals simultaneously while accommodating individual differences and addressing a variety of social problems” (D.W. Johnson, 2003, p. 942). This led to many new research studies that have extended the theory of social interdependence.

Third, because researchers wanted to find ways to increase the effectiveness of cooperative learning, they focused on the relationship between positive interdependence and the desired outcomes of increased learning and retention and positive relationships among students. From this emerged new ways to establish, and emphasize individual accountability, interpersonal group skills, and group processing (D.W. Johnson, 2003). In addition, further research was, and continues to be, conducted on the impact these innovations have had on the effectiveness of cooperative learning.

Lastly, due to cooperative learning’s viability, not only has interest in and development of social interdependence theory been fueled, but most importantly society’s confidence in the theory has grown (D.W. Johnson, 2003).
Implications of Cooperative Learning for Social Interdependence Theory

The implementation of cooperative learning has contributed in a number of ways to social interdependence theory. Six of the most important implications are: validation and clarification, five mediating variables, an expansion of outcomes, emphasis on inherent values, focused attention on predispositions for cooperation and competition, and the relationship between cooperation and conflict.

First, the fact that cooperative learning has been used by teachers in a variety of subjects and settings, in all grade and ability levels, with diverse students and cultures, and in many different countries, serves to validate the theory and the clarity of the conceptual definition. “What is most noteworthy is that even after extensive research, with multiple applications of its principles, the original definitions of social interdependence theory have not been adjusted or modified” (D.W. Johnson, 2003, pp. 940-941).

Second, in order for educators to successfully implement cooperative learning they have focused on identifying the theory’s mediating variables. Through examining the internal dynamics of cooperation and the concepts that mediate its effectiveness, the following five variables have been identified: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 1989). These five variables will be further discussed at a later time in this paper. D. W. Johnson suggests that the mediating variables “have been used and refined to structure cooperative learning more effectively, to solve problems students have in working together, and to adapt cooperative learning to different student populations,
subject areas, and conditions” (2003, p. 941). Because of these mediating variables of cooperation, subsequently the theory of social interdependence now includes them.

Third, the outcomes considered by social interdependence theory have grown through the implementation of cooperative learning. The emphasis on solving social problems cooperatively has expanded the “dependent variables to the use of positive peer pressure to increase prosocial and decrease antisocial behavior” (D. W. Johnson, 2003, p. 941), and this has also spawned new research which in turn has led to further validation.

The fourth implementation of cooperative learning has focused attention on the values inherent in social interdependence. The day-to-day life within school classrooms instill the inherent value systems found in cooperative, competitive, and individualistic efforts (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1999). D. W. Johnson expands on this premise by stating that “the values inherently taught by cooperative efforts include a commitment to one’s own and others’ success and well-being, a commitment to the common good, and the view that facilitating and promoting the success of others is a natural way of life” (2003, p. 941). By focusing on cooperative values rather than those of competitive and individualistic nature in instructional teaching methods, the values that students develop are positively influenced.

The fifth implementation focused attention on predispositions for cooperation and competition. Cooperation and competition are usually conceptualized as dualistic opposites. Yet, through cooperative learning, predispositions toward engaging in cooperation or competition may now in fact be somewhat independent of each other, due to the fact that both situations involve interactions with other people. Therefore, Johnson
suggests that a person who is high on both will be a highly social person, while a person who is low on both may tend to avoid others in many situations (D. W. Johnson, 2003).

The final implication cooperative learning has had on social interdependence is that it has directed attention to the relationship between conflict and cooperation. Theorists (Deutsch, 1973; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1995a, 1995b; Tjosvold, 1991) have noted that both positive and negative interdependence can create conflict among individuals working cooperatively. “The research on both programs indicates that conflicts that occur within the context of positive (as opposed to negative) interdependence may result in a wide variety of positive outcomes” (D. W. Johnson, 2003, p. 941). These findings have therefore strengthened social interdependence theory’s relationship with constructive conflict resolution.

When it first came on the scene in the 1960’s, cooperative learning was at first discredited and ignored, though it has steadily progressed and grown into one of the most dominant instructional practices currently utilized by teachers all over the world today. It is successfully used in diverse settings with unique students and can be found in all levels of schools and universities in every subject area. “The success of cooperative learning is largely based on its having a clear theoretical foundation and hundreds of validating research studies that point the way for operational procedures for practitioners such as teachers” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 365-366). The positive effects and implications cooperative learning has had on social interdependence theory are plentiful and fruitful. With that being said, the historical roots of social interdependence theory date back before this time, and will now be discussed further.
Historical Lineage of Social Interdependence Theory

The historical roots of social interdependence theory can be traced back to the early 1900’s when a shift from mechanistic to field theories was occurring at the Gestalt School of Psychology at the University of Berlin (Deutsch, 1968; D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009). Gestalt psychologists focused on the study of perception and behavior and posited that “humans develop organized and meaningful views of their world by perceiving events as integrated wholes rather than as a summation of parts or properties” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 366). One of the founders of the Gestalt School of Psychology, Kurt Koffka, proposed that, similar to psychological fields, groups are composed of dynamic wholes in which the interdependence among the members of such named group can vary (Deutsch, 1968; Deutsch & Krauss, 1965; D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009).

One of his colleagues, Kurt Lewin refined Koffka’s notions in the 1920’s and 1930’s stating that “the essence of a group is the interdependence among members that results in the group being a dynamic whole so that a change in the state of any member or subgroup changes the state of any other member or subgroup” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 366). This suggests that group members are made interdependent through common goals (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009).

Morton Deutsch

In the late 1940’s, one of Lewin’s graduate students, Morton Deutsch, extending Lewin’s reasoning on cooperation and competition, formulated and introduced the basic theory of social interdependence (Deutsch, 1949, 1962, 1968; Deutsch & Krauss, 1965;
D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009) and built on Lewin’s notion of the dynamic whole by “examining how the tension systems of different people may be interrelated” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 366). Deutsch’s contribution to the theory of social interdependence has served as a major conceptual structure for this area of inquiry since 1949.

Deutsch conceptualized of three types of social interdependence: positive, negative, and none (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009). Deutsch’s basic premise was that the type of interdependence that is structured, in any given situation, can influence how individuals interact with each other and in turn largely determines the outcomes. Positive interdependence tends to result in promotive interaction while negative interdependence tends to result in oppositional or congruent interaction, and no interdependence results in an absence of interaction (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009). These unique assumptions of social interdependence will be further reviewed later in the paper.

In 1949, Deutsch declared three psychological processes resulting from social interdependence: substitutability, cathexis, and inducibility (D. W. Johnson, 2003). Substitutability is “the degree to which actions of one person substitutes for the actions of another person” (Deutsch, 1949a); cathexis is “the investment of psychological energy in objects outside of oneself, such as friends, family, and work (Deutsch, 1949a); and inducibility is “the open-ness to being influenced and to influencing others” (Deutsch, 1949a, as found in D. W. Johnson & Johnson 2005). Deutsch (1949a) also posited that positive interdependence results in promotive interaction, whereas negative
interdependence results in oppositional interaction (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009). Positive interdependence occurs when members of a group both encourage, and help to facilitate, the efforts of each other in order to reach their common goals. Opposite of this, negative interdependence is when members of a group both discourage and obstruct the efforts of each other in order to reach their common goals. Depending on whether individuals in a group work to promote, or obstruct, the common goal accomplishments, determines if there is substitutability, cathexis, and inducibility (Deutsch, 1949a, 1962, 1968; Deutsch & Krauss, 1965; D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009). The basic premise of social interdependence theory is that “the structure of the goals of the people in the situation determines how participants interact and the interaction patterns determine the outcomes of the situation” (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p. 292).

In regards to the elements of cooperation, Morton Deutsch (1949a, 1962) focused on three variables: interdependence, interaction pattern, and outcomes. As a result of David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson’s (1970, 1974) research on, and implementation of cooperation, they have presented five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009). The origin of these five variables will be reviewed in the following section followed by each variable’s composition of cooperation, and later, how each of these variables, along with the assumptions of positive, negative, or no interdependence, can affect my research.
The Origin of the Five Variables that Mediate the Effectiveness of Cooperation

Positive and negative interdependence, as defined by Lewin (1935) and Deutsch (1949a), can both result from mutual goals. However, a number of other researchers have demonstrated that positive and negative interdependence may be structured differently through complementary roles (Thomas, 1957), group contingencies (Skinner, 1968), dividing information or other resources into separate pieces (Aronson, E., Blaney, N., Stephan, C., Sikes, J., & Snapp, M. 1978), and simulations involving fantasy situations (D. W. Johnson & Johnson 1992, 2005, 2009). These unique ways of structuring both positive and negative interdependence may each be organized into three categories: outcome, means, and boundary (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009). Outcome interdependence includes rewards and goals, with the goals being real or fantasized. Means interdependence includes the methods of resource and role and task interdependence which are not interdependent from one another. The resources, roles, and tasks can be divided up so that each member of the group is equally responsible for one aspect. Finally, the boundaries existing between individuals and groups, created by environmental factors, similarity, proximity, past history, expectations and differentiation, can define who is interdependent with whom (D. W. Johnson, 2003). These three types of interdependence are overlapping and not independent from each other (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009).

A series of research studies was conducted over three decades with the intent of clarifying the impact of positive interdependence on productivity and achievement (Hagman & Hayes, 1986; Jensen, 1996; Jensen, Johnson, & Johnson, 2002; D.W.)
The results suggested that by structuring positive outcome interdependence with mutual goals or joint rewards, there will be increased achievement and productivity among group members (D. W. Johnson, 2003). Though, there is evidence that group membership alone is not enough to produce high productivity and goal attainment, one must incorporate or consider positive interdependence in order to reach maximum achievement (Hwong, Caswell, D. W. Johnson, & Johnson, 1993). “Knowing that one’s performance affects the success of group mates seems to create responsibility forces that increase one’s efforts to achieve” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 367). D. W. Johnson and Johnson (2009) go on to suggest that there is also evidence supporting the assumption that interpersonal interaction, without positive interaction, is not sufficient alone to increase productivity in that “individuals achieved higher with positive goal interdependence than when they worked individualistically but had the opportunity to interact with classmates” (p. 367).

Each of these numerous studies have continued to pave the way for social interdependence theory with an underlying theme in cooperation. At this time, I will clarify the difference between positive, negative and no interdependence before moving on to discuss the five variables essential to the elements of cooperation.

**Positive (cooperation) Negative (competition) or None & Psychological Processes**

Social interdependence is defined by the accomplishments of each group member’s individual goals being affected by the actions of all members that compose the
Positive interdependence occurs when individuals in a group perceive that they can only reach their goals if, and only if, the other members in their common group, with whom they are cooperatively linked, also reach their goals. Therefore they are intrinsically encouraged to promote each other’s efforts in order to achieve these shared goals.

Negative interdependence exists when group members perceive that they can obtain their goals if the other individuals in their group, with whom they are competitively linked, fail to obtain their goals. Therefore they are driven to obstruct each other’s efforts to achieve these goals. No interdependence results in situations where group members perceive that they can reach their goals no matter if the other individuals in their group attain or do not attain their goals.

Each type of interdependence results in a certain psychological process (substitutability, inducibility, positive cathexis) as defined earlier by Deutsch (1949a, 1962), that affects how one’s own self-interest can become expanded to a mutual interest. Substitutability is the process of allowing the actions of another to substitute for your own by trusting that your purpose and goals are shared. Inducibility is an openness to being influenced and influencing others so your joint goals can be successfully met. Positive cathexis is having an emotional investment in achieving these shared goals and believing that by doing so, your own goals will have been more successfully obtained. These psychological processes help to demonstrate how the transition from one’s self-
interest can be expanded to a shared mutual interest and is “one of the most important aspects of social interdependence theory” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p. 12).

Due to the demonstrated impact of positive interdependence, I will now discuss the ways in which researchers have suggested inducing positive interdependence, along with the other four variables essential to the elements of cooperation; individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing.

**Five Variables that Mediate the Effectiveness of Cooperation**

D. W. Johnson and Johnson claim that “the values inherently taught by cooperative efforts include commitment to one’s own and others’ success and well-being, commitment to the common good, and the view that facilitating and promoting the success of others is a natural way of life” (2009, p. 372). The five basic elements, inherently taught by cooperative efforts that make cooperation work are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing.

**Positive Interdependence**

Positive interdependence occurs when individuals are aware that their performance affects the success of their group-mates and in turn creates an intrinsic responsibility that increases their efforts to achieve. There have been a number of studies conducted on the various ways in which positive interdependence can impact individuals, and group members. One study demonstrated that positive goal interdependence can
promote an overall higher achievement among students (D. W. Johnson, Johnson, Ortiz, & Stanne, 1991). Another study showed that when compared with individualistic efforts, resource interdependence by itself can decrease achievement and productivity (D. W. Johnson, R. T. Johnson, Stanne, & Garibaldi, 1990; Ortiz, D. W. Johnson, & Johnson, 1996). These studies suggest that when individuals need the resources of other group members, but do not share common goals, they focus on obtaining resources from members of their group, without sharing their own resources with these same group members.

Positive interdependence does more than simply motivate individuals to try harder. Through promotive interaction, it facilitates the development of new insights and discoveries (Gabbert, D. W. Johnson, & Johnson, 1986; D. W. Johnson & Johnson 1981b; D. W. Johnson, Skon, & Johnson, 1980; Skon, D.W. Johnson, & Johnson, 1981). Studies involving social dilemmas on identity interdependence have found that when individuals define themselves in terms of their group membership, they take less from common resources and are more willing to contribute toward the public good (Brewer & Kramer 1986; De Cremer & Van Vjugt, 1999; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2008). The stronger a group’s interdependence is aligned with their common goals, common outcomes, interpersonal bonds, and communication, directly reflects how unified the members of the group are bonded together (Gaertner & Schopler, 1998; Lickel, Hamilton, Wieczorkowska, Lewis, Sherman, & Uhles, 2000; Welbourne, 1999). Therefore, positive interdependence creates intrinsic responsibility forces, or what Campbell (1958) calls
entitativity, a term which encompasses a groups’ internal consciousness as they are pledged together as a unified and coherent whole (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

**Individual Accountability**

Positive interdependence intrinsically bonds the members of a group together, resulting in an increase in an individual’s feelings of personal responsibility and accountability. Individual accountability is present when an individual feels responsible for their collaborators’ welfare as well as for his or her own. They both understand and believe that their performance affects the outcomes of their fellow collaborators (Matsui, Kakuyama & Onglatco, 1987). “Failing oneself is bad, but failing others as well as oneself is worse” (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p.368). Furthermore, Wentzel (1994) suggests that the more an individual is liked and respected by their group mates, directly affects an increase in feelings of responsibility towards these same people (as found in D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

**Promotive Interaction**

Positive interdependence results in promotive interaction, and negative interdependence results in oppositional interaction. Promotive interaction can occur as group members encourage and facilitate each other in their collaborative efforts in order to accomplish their common goals. Oppositional interaction is when individuals discourage and obstruct each other’s efforts to achieve goals and no interaction occurs when individuals work independently with no interchange among group members. Promotive interaction can be characterized by: group members acting in trusting and trustworthy ways, exchanging needed resources, such as information and materials,
providing efficient and effective help and assistance to group mates, being motivated to strive for mutual benefit, influencing each other’s efforts to achieve the group’s goals, challenging each other’s reasoning and conclusions in order to promote higher quality decision making and greater creativity, and exploring different points of view (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2008, 2009).

The Appropriate Use of Social Skills

The appropriate use of interpersonal social skills is needed for authentic collaboration and therefore individuals must be both taught and motivated to use them. “Unskilled group members cannot cooperate effectively” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 369). In order for group members to coordinate their efforts in an attempt to achieve mutual goals, participants must “(a) get to know and trust each other; (b) communicate accurately and unambiguously; (c) accept and support each other; and (d) resolve conflicts constructively” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p. 24). The appropriate use of social skills can promote higher achievement and more importantly, serve as a great asset in building stronger relationships that are positive and supportive (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2008, 2009).

Group Processing

Group processing occurs when group members collaboratively reflect on how successfully they are functioning and then make decisions about which actions to continue and which need to be to changed. Group processing clarifies the status of the group’s goals and can increase members’ awareness of the fact that together, they have the assets and resources needed to succeed and in turn can increase the collective efficacy
of the collaborative group, which in turn can increase the involvement of individuals (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Conclusion

Social interdependence occurs when the accomplishments of each group member’s individual goals are affected by the actions of all members that compose the group, thereby creating a venue for communal goals in order to ensure the group’s overall success. Taking this a step further, positive interdependence occurs when individuals are aware that their performance affects the success of their collaborative group members and in turn creates an intrinsic responsibility that increases their efforts to achieve. Utilizing social interdependence theory as my theoretical framework, I have attempt to instill situations where the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation, positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing can occur among my research participants.

In order to create a venue where my research can be explored, the method of action used was service-learning based, and the method of research was participatory action research. Both of these methods are grounded in, and utilize the processes of collaboration and cooperative learning in order to function at their best capacity. As I have just recently discussed, the backbone from which social interdependence theory grew is cooperative learning, as defined by Johnson D. W. and Johnson (1993) as the instructional use of students in small groups so that they may work together in order to maximize their own and each other’s learning. The understanding that social
interdependence theory, service-learning, and participatory action research are each
grounded in collaborative processes suggests a strong triangulation between my
theoretical framework, my practice and my research. This trinity, grounded in
collaboration and cooperative learning, linking theory, practice and research, provides a
platform upon which I have investigated the conceptual issues surrounding the question
of how social consciousness and the development of social responsibility can grow
through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter was an extensive investigation of the literature that is the relevant foundation of this research study. This chapter is a descriptive guide of the qualitative methodology applied in this study. As a white researcher working with non-white participants I start by addressing my researcher identity. I then provide an overview of the research site, the research time and duration, and my methods to maintain ethics in the research. This chapter also highlights participatory action research, the methods of data collection and data analysis.

Addressing My Researcher Identity

To help define, and address my researcher identity, I refer to a statement made by Agyeman (2008): “personal position and interests [that] had to be negotiated within the research process” (p. 77). Due to the sufficiency of Agyeman’s language, I have drawn from her studies as a white researcher working with non-white participants to formulate four sub-questions that have guided me in exploring my own identity as a researcher.

The first question deals with “some of the difficulties, dilemmas and challenges of a white researcher attempting to access the lived realities of ethnic minority children
whose lives are ‘invisible’ in dominant discourses” (Agyeman, 2008, p. 77). To attend to this, I begin by addressing my own white privilege as a part of my identity and as a white-reflexive researcher. The second question is directed at locating sources I refer to for the least biased description of the unique populations of participants involved in my research. I believe the best way to describe my participants is to allow them to describe themselves, by creating opportunities for using ethnographic methods. The third question asks me to discuss what factors I take into account in order to avoid misrepresenting or doing harm to the non-white participants. As a reflexive researcher, who does not want to suppress talk on issues of race, I will attend to the five logics of privilege: colorblindness, selective attribution, avoidance, containment, and whitewashing (Gordon, 2005). For the fourth question, I conceptualize factors to consider as a white researcher with regards to my relationship to the white participants as a researcher and co-group member.

**Challenges of Researching the Marginalized**

Thompson (1998) insists “there is no such thing as racial innocence; there is only racial responsibility or irresponsibility” (p. 524). In order to be racially responsible, I must understand what it means to be marginalized. As a white researcher, Agyeman (2008) insists “accessing the Life Worlds of under-represented and marginalized groups presents a significant challenge for researchers who are not part of these life worlds and who want to be credible in their representation of the Other” (p. 78). As a white researcher attempting to access the lives of others, I have challenged myself to understand how, through a *master narrative* of white male dominance, the voices of non-
white ethnicities have been silenced. Agyeman (2008) discusses that much of the focus of research in the literature on minority ethnic students “has tended to highlight issues around racism, teacher expectations, academic underachievement and identity at the expense of examining the experiences of ethnic minority children at the margins, whose lives and experiences remain ‘invisible’” and furthermore, “much of the literature has focused on ethnic minority children as falling short of the norms for their white counterparts, e.g. in relation to schooling. This perspective has ‘pathologised’ the experience of ‘black’ childhood” (p. 77). In order to battle this deficit model of thinking and honor the stories of the invisible by “‘giving a voice’ to those who would otherwise not be heard” (Agyeman, 2008, p. 79), I first acknowledge the components of privilege that construct my identity as a white researcher.

**Privileges of a White Researcher**

As a white researcher, my race is what Pillow (2003) defines as a privileged absence. This absence affords me both the privilege and option of hiding my identity, as Gordon (2005) states “I can ‘pass’ in ways that colleagues of color cannot” (p. 289). As a white researcher, hiding is one way in which white privilege is perpetuated in a system of preserving the status quo. McIntyre (1997) takes this a step further in her observation that to disavow my race is part of the culture of niceness, by which she means, white researchers avoid confrontation in an attempt to keep relationships pleasant at all costs. This culture of niceness, this neutralization of race, privileges whites and marginalizes non-whites further in that “by making people, cultures and other traditions ‘invisible’, we are trivializing, marginalizing their experiences and contributions” (Agyeman, 2008, p. 59).
78). As a white researcher, I am deliberate in my efforts to include race in my work, and in so doing, interrogate the white norms that privilege me or else I run the risk of reproducing them (Gordon, 2005).

In order to challenge oppression, white researchers must first challenge the omissions made in the dominant discourse that have made marginalized communities invisible (Agyeman, 2008). Gordon suggests that “only by understanding the self-perpetuating nature of White privilege will we be able to begin to dismantle it” (2005, p. 284). In order to give voice to those with whom participate in my research, and stop this cycle of dominate privilege, I am not only aware of the privilege afforded by my white identity, but reflexive in my role as a white researcher. As Gordon (2005) insists, “Until White researchers examine the ways in which we reproduce White privilege, we will continue to perpetuate it. Researchers must consider the roles that their Whiteness plays throughout the research process. Without this consideration, Whiteness continues to be reinscribed.” (p. 300). Furthermore, Gordon (2005) claims that there is not enough attention directed at the re-inscription of racism by white researchers. Thompson then begs the question “How might we learn to listen if we gave up the need to feel like and be seen as good Whites” (p. 21). As a white researcher, who wants to not only listen, but give voice to my participants, I am constantly, and critically, reflexive in my actions and chosen words in order to examine the ways in which I may be perpetuating the privilege of my race.
**Researcher Reflexivity and Subjectivity**

Reflexivity is a process of self-examination in which I must take into account who I am, what I believe, and how this can influence my presence within the research. Nightingale and Cromby (1999) insist that in the process of reflexivity, we are urged to explore the ways in which research can be influenced through our personal involvement within a proposed study. In response to my identity as a white researcher, I must remain reflexive “when researching the Other in the role of an outsider” which also entails “addressing the role of self in research and engaging in critical questioning of one’s own role and scope” (Agyeman, 2008, p. 82). In order to critically understand my subjectivity, I have, and will continuously, address the elements that form my identity as a privileged white researcher with a social justice agenda. Elements such as my race and gender, middle-to-upper-class upbringing and experience as a teacher and an arts educator who holds an advanced degree are all a crucial part of my research. Just as Usher and Edwards (1994) suggest, “even when we have some confidence that our research is useful or even emancipatory, we are still ‘objectifying,’ still speaking for others in the name of doing good by them” (p. 152). Through a thoughtful consideration and investigation of my own subjectivity, reflexivity enables me to interrogate my own practices of research.

Reflexivity benefits not only the researcher but also the participants and possible outside audience members by providing an increase in understanding of how beliefs and experiences help to shape the ways in which stories are formed and told. Gordon (2005) suggests “stories are made, not found, and that we frame stories in ways that are
comprehensible within the larger scope of our own experiences” (p. 280). In order to best understand the subjectivity of my own stories and the stories I hope to share for others through my writing, I must remain reflexive in how I interrogate my own preconceptions in order to reveal my current positionality. It is in this transparent process that I can ensure reliability in my work.

**Ethnographic Methods**

In order to access the least biased descriptions of the unique populations of participants in the study, both college aged students and middle school girls, I provide opportunities for them to describe themselves while utilizing ethnographic methods. Ethnography is the study of people in their own environments through the two major research techniques of participant observation and key informant interviews. Agyeman (2008) suggests that “using ethnographic methods to access the life worlds of others and enabling their voices to be heard, is one way of trying to address the issue of power imbalance in the research process” (p. 82). My research study takes place on a university campus, in the community of the middle school, and in the shared spaces in-between. Observations of all participants are noted in each location and then discussed further with the participants through the processes of interviews and member checking. Some of the key informants in the community context of this study are the leaders of the school, such as the dean of students, principal and classroom teachers. In their 2002 article, Adamson and Donovan reflect on how their own research experiences “have highlighted the importance of key informants, who can be merely informants but also gatekeepers to
further informants, potential interpreters, and assistants in the interpretation of culturally specific issues” (p. 822). These informants, having been interviewed many times while also helping to identify other informants that represent their community, provide a saturation of insider descriptions that can later be discussed at depth with participants in further interviews and focus groups.

Agyeman (2008) insists that the issue “is not whether the researcher or writer is disabled, black or female themselves but rather whether they are writing from that perspective” (p.82). Along with observations and key informant interviews the participants, both college and middle school aged, are provided opportunities to investigate their own identity through the practices of photography, digital artmaking, and writing. As Agyeman suggest, these methods support me in written form, from the perspective of my participants. Though this begs the question of whether or not researchers can ever speak on behalf of their other, Agyeman insists that “justification for this often arises from the fact that disempowered groups may not have access to a public forum where they can be heard, so that social researchers see their role as ‘giving a voice’ to those who would otherwise not be heard” (2008, p. 79). Through artmaking and storytelling, my research includes the first-hand perspectives of the participants. These practices give participants the opportunity to share their own narrative(s), describe their own personal story, and give voice to the least biased descriptions. In order to honor my participants’ narratives, I will now discuss the factors I take into account in order to avoid misrepresenting or doing harm to the non-white participants.
Five Logics of Privilege

In her 2005 article, Jenny Gordon reflects on her role as a white researcher by re-examining her experiences working on a multi-racial research team. Gordon (2005) suggests that “when it comes to reflexivity all of us have our blind spots, and the irony is that it is these very blind spots that reflexivity is meant to address” (Gordon, 2005, p. 281). Reflexively, she analyzed her own blind spots as a researcher and the strategies used to suppress race talk and sustain white privilege. Gordon’s internal examination led to the identification of five logics of privilege that supply the subtext and rationale for the strategies used during her data collection, attributing to reproducing inequity.

As a reflexive researcher who does not want to sustain white privilege or suppress race talk, I attend to the five logics of privilege: colorblindness, selective attribution, avoidance, containment, and whitewashing (Gordon, 2005). Each logic of privilege is manifested and/or justified through interrelated strategies, which I will now attend to in-depth in order to avoid misrepresenting, stereotyping or doing harm to the non-white participants.

Colorblindness

Colorblindness is an ideology in which white people are taught it is impolite to see race, and therefore should ignore race. This stance of being blind, or not noticing one’s race, is, in fact, an act of re-inscribing the power that privileges white people. Gordon (2005) insists “Colorblindness maintains that race does not exist as a meaningful category and posits that the benefits accrued to White people are earned by (gifted) individuals rather than systemically conferred” (p. 281). Colorblindness is not a literal
blindness, it does not declare that white people have an inability to actually see another’s color, rather it is what Gordon (2005) calls “a complex set of refusals” (p. 282), or what Jervis (1996) insists is “White resistance to seeing” (p. 553).

The methods of colorblindness are manifested through a variety of strategies, which Gordon (2005) has named as dismissing, dancing, and coding. Each of the named strategies are based on the premise of colorblindness, in that race is not a meaningful category, and work to re-inscribe white privilege. Dismissing is a strategy white researchers use to reinforce colorblindness by “eliminating the concerns of people of color and subsuming their experiences within White norms” (Gordon, 2005, p. 287). Dancing sustains white privilege through the use of indirect language in an attempt to talk around race instead of clearly naming it. By not bringing race up directly, or by raising other issues associated with race, race becomes contained and unmentionable. Coding is a practice of negatively portraying a person based on their race without even naming race as a category worthy of acknowledging. When a white researcher uses coding as a strategy they do so with an air of political correctness and, in turn, associate people of color with negative issues and characteristics. Gordon (2005) suggests “the association of children of color with the inner city ghetto reveals the violation of the expectation that White children should be going to school with other White children” (p. 294). Gordon discusses how a school in her research was described as an inner-city mountain school. This use of inner city, was used by the community as coding for a racially diverse school.

**Selective Attribution**

Through selective attribution, white people are able to determine when, and for
whom, racial identity will be acknowledged as significant. As Gordon insists, “race is bequeathed and denied to preserve White comfort and privilege” (2005, p. 283). This is different from colorblindness, where white people refuse to see race, “selective attribution recognizes that race exists for some people in some particular contexts” (Gordon, 2005, p. 286). The three related strategies justified by the logic of selective attribution are selecting, diluting, and attributing.

The strategy of selecting provides white people the power to decide when they will see race and for whom they will acknowledge as a racial being. Just as Thompson (1998) suggests, “By failing to take account of systems of oppression, colorblindness ignores the structures of race, class and gender relations that together posit color as a deficit in the first place” (p. 525).

Diluting builds on selecting in that it serves as a manifestation of the logic of selective attribution by only acknowledging race for those who are not present and minimizing the power of race by still denying race for those who are present. Gordon claims that “diluting sustains White privilege by sustaining the pretense that if race does exist, it exists out there and does not pertain to anyone present” (2005, p. 292).

Attributing is a strategy where white people claim that race belongs to others, to people of color, allowing them the privilege of not racially labeling themselves. Attributing “acknowledges the skin color for people of color while disavowing it for White people.” (Gordon, 2005, p. 293). This perpetuates and protects the privileges of white people and attributing situates that white is normal.
Avoidance

As the third logic of privilege, avoidance occurs when white researchers acknowledge race while simultaneously steering away from race to a safer, more comfortable topic. There are three attendant strategies that support the logic of avoidance, *shifting*, *drifting*, and *running (or dismissing)*.

Through shifting, a white researcher deliberately changes the direction of a conversation. By turning away from race, they focus on a topic shared among the participants. This shared ground provides an opportunity of bonding meant to repair the differences race talk has created. Gordon, 2005, suggests that by “shifting the conversation to shared ground, I acknowledge the (perceived) dangers of exploring race with a person of color” therefore “shifting sustains White privilege by shutting down race talk” (p. 293). Drifting offers a second way to avoid acknowledging race by directing the discussion of race to peripheral issues. When shifting, a white researcher leads a conversation to safer, shared, ground and drifting is when a white researcher slides discussions to secondary issues. The most dramatic illustration of the logic of avoidance is running, where “there is no subtlety at all. The conversation is directly and abruptly hijacked and race talk is abandoned” (Gordon, 2005, p. 293). A running white researcher avoids any responsibility or acknowledgment by turning their back on the topic of race. They make no attempt to move a conversation to shared ground or secondary issues and they simply run away from any form of race talk.
Containment

The fourth logic of privilege, containment, provides opportunities for race talk, but these conversations are limited through the efforts of keeping them safe. The one strategy that contains race talk is warning. By issuing a warning, a white researcher is presenting their discomfort with discussing racial issues and is looking to return to safer topics. In her own examination, Gordon (2005) shares a warning she issued to a participant: “I further signal my own discomfort with this conversation by saying, “Let me just be very clear on this because this is heavy-duty stuff.” (p. 296). By issuing this warning, Gordon claims she was signaling that race talk is a dangerous topic and wanted to keep the conversation safe by returning to what McIntrye (1997) deems as a “culture of niceness”.

Whitewashing

The fifth, and final, logic of privilege is whitewashing. This is where the differences among white people are minimized to create a sense of solidarity and allegiance. “If White people appear to be the same then people of color are clearly and identifiably different. This creates a false sense of “us” and makes it evident who “them” is” (Gordon, 2005, p. 289). There are two strategies that accomplish this, hiding, and overlooking. A person who is hiding deliberately disguises aspects of their identity (religion, sexual preference, marital status) that might be offensive to others. Gordon (2005) expands on this by insisting “in a conformist framework in which difference is perceived negatively, hiding results in making race a salient anomaly” (p. 289). A white researcher can also utilize the second strategy of whitewashing by overlooking and
ignoring racist comments made by others, which in turn implies tacit agreement with those comments.

**Co-group Member**

One of the most important factors to consider regarding my relationship to the white participants as a researcher and co-group member is my racial identity. In my research studies, I explain why, and how, participatory action research can be utilized as a form of social action. One emancipatory aspect of this practice is that all participants are considered researchers like me. Though even with the best of intentions, the fact that I, as the facilitating lead researcher am of a privileged race cannot, and is not ignored. As a white researcher, I share the privileges of my race with other white participants and need to ensure that “racial bonding” (Sleeter, 1996) does not occur. Racial bonding is based on the logic of whitewashing “in which White people forge connections with each other through shared privilege” (Gordon, 2005, p. 288). In an effort to preserve white privilege, white people forge a bond through minimizing their own differences and distancing themselves from others of a different skin color (Gordon 2005). In order to not racially bond with other white participants in my study, I am continuously reflecting on the five logics that sustain the privileges of my race. By attending to these strategies, my intentions are to create venues that promote race talk because as Agyeman insists, “As long as racism and hostility are out in the open, they can be addressed” (2008, p. 80).
**Color Receptive (Opposed to Colorblind)**

As a white researcher, I maintain that race is a meaningful category as being blind to color only promotes the privileges of my race. I am cognizant not to dismiss the concerns of others or define the experiences of people of color within white norms. I do not dance around issues of race. I acknowledge race directly in my data collection and clearly name and define race in interviews, focus groups and when analyzing data.

**Unbiased Attributes (Opposed to Selective Attribution)**

As a white researcher, I employ strategies to ensure that I do not select when, or for whom, race can be seen and I acknowledge all participants as racial beings. I do not dilute race under the pretense that race only exists out there in a detached environment and I acknowledge that the power of race exists for all, present or not. I do not attribute race to others as race belongs to all, including white people. As a white researcher, I do not exempt myself from claiming my racial labeling.

**Meeting (Opposed to Avoidance)**

As a white researcher I do not avoid race, I acknowledge race with no attempt to change directions. I do not shift conversations to a safer ground or drift to secondary issues that may be easier to talk about. I meet race head on, and I do not turn and run away hiding behind less meaningful content. As a responsible white researcher, I am cognizant to not avoid race talk in any way and recognize that race talk is needed to promote understanding by honoring the experiences and narratives of all.
**Freedom (Opposed to Containment)**

As a researcher, who is a co-group member with the white participants in the study, I am cognizant to avoid McIntrye’s (1997) culture of niceness. I do not set limits to race talk by issuing warnings that signal this is a dangerous topic. I take responsibility in addressing racial matters by demonstrating I am comfortable and open to conversations and discussions of race talk.

**Revealing (Opposed to Whitewashing)**

I do not minimize the differences of white people in an attempt to create a sense of solidarity and allegiance with other white participants, nor do I minimize the differences of any participants. As a white researcher, I do not hide the aspects of my identity. I set an example by openly sharing that I am a white female from a middle-upper class upbringing who deals with learning disabilities and holds an advanced degree. As a white researcher committed to revealing our differences instead of whitewashing them, I do not overlook or ignore racist comments made by others. I address them at the moment they occur, providing venues for further discussion, in order to clearly demonstrate that I am not in agreement with such comments.

As a white researcher, I share the privileges of my race with other white participants. By continuously attending to the five logics of privilege, I reflexively work to ensure that “racial bonding” (Sleeter, 1996) does not occur within my research studies.
Restatement of the Questions

For this arts-based service-learning study, my central question is: How can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking? In addition to investigating this primary research question, there are several sub-questions addressed:

1. How can students mutually investigate the big idea of community as a form of social action through critical dialogue and critical reflection?

2. How can the cooperative efforts of service-learning and PAR, provide a collaborative venue for the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation to be explored as a means of building student’s social interdependence?

3. How can collaborative artmaking create spaces for students to become critically conscious through the meaning-making processes of artmaking and cooperative learning?

Overview of the Study

Conducted as an arts-based service-learning project this participatory action research study was intended to investigate the challenges and opportunities for learning through digital collaborative artmaking. Grounded in social interdependence theory (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009), this study further investigates students’ critical social understandings of inequity issues dealing with gender, race, and socio-economic status through the collaborative processes of exploring meaning-making in their artmaking.

Over a four month period, spanning two different quarters of instruction and two service-learning projects, I collected data through various, diverse methods. Primarily, I
kept a research journal that recorded my observations and field notes. Both groups of participants, the college and middle school aged, participated in weekly group discussions, along with personal and group written reflections. Participants also collaboratively created digital artwork dealing with the big idea of community, while each independent participant simultaneously created digital art dealing with their own personal identity. These artworks, with their corresponding artist statements, serve as data. Also, my personal reflections of the experiences and understanding of the research are analyzed as relevant data. The data obtained from all these sources were considered and analyzed.

Setting of the Study

The Ohio State University and Graham Expeditionary Middle School

The research was conducted at both The Ohio State University and Graham Expeditionary Middle School, where participants from both schools participated in an arts-based service-learning project. At the Ohio State University, the research was conducted through an Art Education course, specifically 252 a digital artmaking course called A Service-Learning Experience with the Computer in the Visual Arts. The university participants range from freshman through senior and represent a diverse demographic in race, ethnicity, ability and class. At Graham Expeditionary Middle School, the research was conducted through a digital arts based course, during the school’s extension period. The middle school participants also represent a diverse demographic in race, ethnicity, ability and class. Graham Expeditionary Middle School
is located four blocks off The Ohio State University campus. Participants share their schools’ community, and it was this close proximity that provided a meaningful collaboration dealing with the big idea of community.

**Time and Duration of the Study**

The study began in November 2011 and ended March 2012. The arts-based service-learning participants and I met every Monday and Wednesday for two hour sessions. Mondays were held on The Ohio State University campus, and included only the college age participants. Wednesdays were held at Graham Expeditionary Middle School and included both sets of participants. I also met with only the middle school participants a few times to hold discussions without the college aged participants. In December and in March there were celebration exhibitions event held at Graham Expeditionary Middle School where the collaborative artwork and artist statements were displayed and explained to community members. These events also became a source of data collection, as people from the college, middle school and community were able to reflect on the overall experiences and artwork. At the end of each collaboration the college students submitted a final reflection paper; follow up interviews were then completed as a way of conducting member checks and ensuring accuracy.

**Ethics and Politics of the Study**

In November 2011, my application to Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at The Ohio State University was approved (Appendix A). The application attended to issues such as protocol for obtaining consent, potential harm to
subjects and the overall research agenda. I was required to gain signed consent forms from a parent or guardian of the middle school aged participants and signed consent forms from the college aged participants. The consent forms included detailed accounts of the research, including participant responsibility and potential risks to participants. The forms outlined their right to discontinue participation at any time and their right not to participate in the research study at all. If a participant did not want to participate in the research study they were still aloud to participate in the service-learning project. The potential harm to participants included possible discomfort during certain discussions pertaining to some cultural, social and/or personal issues. The overall risk was nothing beyond what is encountered during the performance of art activities in a school or community art classroom.

**Research Foundations**

**Qualitative Research**

In academic research there are two unique approaches to inquiry, quantitative and qualitative. Denzin and Lincoln, the editors of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* reflect on both,

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry...They seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal
relationships between variables, not processes...Their work is done from within a value-free framework. (2000, p. 8)

Each of these approaches effectively acquire knowledge, quantitative studies depend on numerical comparisons while qualitative research relies on interpretive understandings as a means of deconstructing meanings (Thorne 2000). “The qualitative researcher studies things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). Therefore qualitative inquiry seeks to illuminate and describe the ways in which people make meaning from their experiences within the world around them. Since I seek to illuminate the ways in which people make meaning of their social identities and social understandings qualitative inquiry appropriately fits this research study.

**Participatory Action Research**

In this section, I explain in detail why I have chosen Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a methodology that is both emancipatory and participatory in nature, and Freirian-inspired. Using three characteristics of PAR I demonstrate the foundations for how this study is an example of PAR. Finally, I describe how PAR supports my theoretical framework of social interdependence theory using the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation (D. W. Johnson and Johnson, 1994, 1999, 2009) and the recursive spiral process of PAR (McIntyre, 2008) in support of one another.

**Why Participatory Action Research**

In the proposal for this dissertation, I stated that I viewed PAR and action research as interchangeable due to the fact that the participants of the service-learning projects I
work with are researchers working alongside me. Through extensive reading and research, I am now aware of the characteristics that distinguish these unique forms of action research and believe that PAR best suits this study and my interests and intentions as a researcher. As a reflexive teacher and critically conscious researcher, negotiating my role as an active participant in both the service-learning project and the action research taking place, I am most interested in engaging in research that deals with life experiences as essential in aiding in the emancipatory growth of social consciousness and social responsibility. In 2005, Herr & Anderson, suggest that PAR is most in-line with these interests by stating that “Most PAR has an emancipatory knowledge interest, whereas, for instance, much action research aimed at organizational development has some combination of a technical and practical knowledge interest” (p. 84). Even though action research and PAR have both contributed significantly to the development of democratic teaching styles (McIntyre, 2008), other authors continue to distinguish PAR by “suggesting it is more focused on learning as a vehicle for increasing citizen voice and power in a wide range of contexts” (Taylor et al. 2004 as cited in, Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007, p. 11). As stated in chapter one, I have revised the primary focus of my study by replacing social awareness with the terms social consciousness, critical consciousness, and social responsibility. To be aware is to be alert and informed, whereas being conscious is to be sensitive of one's own existence, sensations, thoughts, and surroundings. This shift in focus parallels a better consciousness of myself as a researcher which Minkler & Wallerstein (2003) expand on by suggesting that “Rather than viewing research as neutral, participatory research intellectuals adopted the goals
and commitment to critical consciousness, emancipation and social justice as they challenged their own roles” (p. 30). By challenging my own role as a researcher, I have come to know and declare that I am most concerned with research that aids people in the co-construction of knowledge, through their own real life experiences. It is PAR that can create opportunities to view our lives from different perspectives while providing strategies onto which we can communicate these experiences with others (McIntyre, 2008).

**Freire Inspired Participatory Research**

In chapter one, I declared that I hope to honor the teachings of Paulo Freire by clearly demonstrating my intentions of having my *philosophy and actions to be one and the same*. Paulo Freire’s teaching (1970/2011, 1973/2002) surrounds the notion of empowering individuals, or as he calls them, the oppressed, to seek change and freedom from the oppressor through education. Freire’s theory of conscientization, which is his belief in critical reflection as essential in an individual’s path towards becoming socially responsible, has been a major influence in the field of PAR. In addition, “his commitment to the democratic dialectical unification of theory and practice have contributed significantly to the field of participatory action research” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 3). My philosophy, as stated above, is concerned with providing opportunities for students/participants to investigate their own social consciousness through a collaboratively braided process of exploring, reflecting, and acting on new knowledge. As a critically conscious researcher, the emancipatory processes of PAR provide a
method of inquiry that supports this Freirean-inspired participation and philosophy which are congruent with empowerment and social justice.

**How Participatory Action Research**

McIntyre suggests that there are three characteristics of PAR, first “the active participation of researchers and participants in the co-construction of knowledge”, second, “the promotion of self-critical awareness that leads to individual, collective, and/or social change” and third, “the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning implementation, and dissemination of the research process” (2008, p. ix). These three characteristics provide the foundation that supports my study as an example of PAR. First, its co-construction of knowledge through the actions of service-learning, second, the overarching promotion of Freire’s process of conscientization (1970/2011), and third, the collaborative construction of interdependence through the research process. An important aspect of PAR is to acknowledge and address the active participation of researchers and participants in the planning and implementation. McIntyre (1997a) similarly reflects “Whereas some PAR projects involve joint research designs between the participants and the researcher, the very fact that this was a dissertation proposal initiated by me and that it was contingent on institutional approval- prior to investigation and action- make that specific step problematic. Notwithstanding, I pursued the project because of my belief in the underlying tenants of PAR: (1) am emphasis on the lived experiences of human beings, (2) the subjectivity and activist stance of the researcher, and (3) am emphasis on social
change” (McIntyre, 1997a, p. 21). As such, it is my stance that the actions taken in this study comply with the facets of PAR.

Freire’s teachings of co-intentional education represent a commitment to one’s involvement as essential for meaningful experiences to be created during a service-learning project. In this study, “doing with”, instead of “doing for” (1970/2011), negotiates an equal relationship of reciprocated power; hence, service-learning provides opportunities for the actions of PAR to take place. Furthermore, the actions associated within a service-learning project allow both researchers and participants to be engaged in the co-construction of knowledge.

In service-learning, participants negotiate an equal relationship of reciprocated power, where together as the roles of oppressors and oppressed, they can work toward shared goals of personal transformation and social justice (Ballengee-Morris, 2008; Hutzel, 2007; Taylor, 2002; Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2004). This distribution of responsibility within a PAR project creates reciprocal partnerships where researchers and participants are both teachers and learners working collaboratively while cooperatively learning what it means to be critically conscious citizens.

The collective actions associated with PAR can help to build alliances between participants and researchers. Through PAR’s spiral of reflection, investigation and action, collaborating group members are provided opportunities to acknowledge that their own accomplishments are, in fact, influenced by each group member’s individual accomplishments which are the direct result of the actions of all group members.
Therefore, this suggests that the construction of social interdependence among participants can aid in a more successful negotiation of a PAR project.

**Social Interdependence Theory and PAR**

Social interdependence is defined by the accomplishments of each group member’s individual goals being affected by the actions of all members that compose the group (Deutsch 1949a, 1962; D. W. Johnson 1970, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson 1989, 2005, 2009). The underlying tenets of PAR include its collective commitment to investigation, a desire to engage in self-and collective reflection, joint decision making that engages in collective action, and the building of alliances (McIntyre, 2008). Grounding both definitions of social interdependence and PAR, is the definition and practice of cooperative learning, which, as defined by D. W. Johnson and Johnson (1994, 1999, 2009), is the instructional use of students [participants] in small groups so that they may work together in order to maximize their own, and each other’s, learning. This collaborative unit of individual learning and success, intrinsically linked to the learning and success of all group members, suggests that social interdependence among group PAR members is crucial for a successful spiral-like PAR project. To further explain the connection between social interdependence theory and PAR, I will now discuss how the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation (D. W. Johnson and Johnson, 1994, 1999, 2009) can support the recursive spiral process of PAR (McIntyre, 2008).

D. W. Johnson and Johnson claim that “the values inherently taught by cooperative efforts include commitment to one’s own and others’ success and well-being, commitment to the common good, and the view that facilitating and promoting the
success of others is a natural way of life” (2009, p. 372). The five basic elements, inherently taught by cooperative efforts that make cooperation work are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing. Positive interdependence occurs when individuals are aware that their performance affects the success of their group-mates and, in turn, creates an intrinsic responsibility that increases their efforts to achieve. Individual accountability is present when an individual feels responsible for their collaborators’ welfare as well as for his or her own. A result of positive interdependence is promotive interaction, which occurs as group members encourage each other in their collaborative efforts in order to accomplish their common goals. The interpersonal social skills, seen as assets in building stronger relationships that are positive and supportive, that constitute authentic collaboration are “(a) get to know and trust each other; (b) communicate accurately and unambiguously; (c) accept and support each other; and (d) resolve conflicts constructively” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p. 24). Finally, group processing occurs when group members collaboratively reflect on how successfully they are functioning and then make decisions about which actions to continue and which need to be changed. These five variables of collaboration, that inherently make cooperation work, can, and should, be found in the functioning pattern of PAR’s self-reflecting recursive process.

McIntyre (2008) suggests that the “various aspects of the PAR process are fluidly braided within one another in a spiral of reflection, investigation, and action” and that this process of “questioning, reflecting, dialoguing, and decision making resists linearity” (p. 82).
6). As such, PAR is what McIntyre (2008) calls a “recursive process” involving a spiral of adaptable steps that include: “questioning a particular issue, reflecting upon and investigating the issues, developing an action plan, implementing and refining said plan” (p. 6). For this recursive process of PAR to happen successfully, all members of the PAR group need to become positively interdependent of one another, meaning, each group member needs to feel intrinsically responsible for each PAR-mate’s achievements and for the overall success of the project. From this, participants will be individually accountable through the recursive steps of PAR, aiding in the project’s overall growth and development. In order to ensure that critical dialogue and collective reflection can occur in PAR, the appropriate use of social skills are needed. These interpersonal skills help PAR participants to build both the listening skills and self-confidence needed to share and interpret through dialogue and reflection. Finally, through the collaborative process of group processing, PAR members are able to refine the actions they will take next and plans of implementation.

Now that I have discussed both why and how my study is participatory action research, and demonstrated that PAR and social interdependence can support one another, I will move on to describe the design of this research study.

**Research Design**

For this study I implemented participatory action research within an arts-based service-learning study in order to better understand how social consciousness and the development of social responsibility can grow through the meaning-making processes of
collaboration and artmaking. As a participant in the service-learning project and PAR I aimed to collaborate with the students in order to facilitate the process of collaborative digital artmaking. Following the tenets of social interdependence theory, participants worked cooperatively in order to utilize their collaborative experiences as a means of making meaning within their artmaking.

The study took place on The Ohio State University Campus with the college age students and at Graham Expeditionary Middle School with the collaborative groups. The population of participants were diverse in age, ability, race, gender and socio-economic status. The collaborative environment created at Graham Expeditionary Middle School was through an arts-based service-learning project and was conductive to cooperative learning in which the collaborative artworks were created and exhibited.

Throughout the study participants participated in reflective group discussions and personal written reflections. These writings were used as data and to formulate new questions for group discussions. I also conducted separate focus groups with the college and middle school aged students, along with follow up individual interviews. Finally, there was a celebration exhibition that allowed the participants to take ownership of their collaborative artwork by presenting it to the larger community audience. This audience included other students from both schools, parents, siblings, teachers and staff from Graham Expeditionary Middle School, professors and staff from The Ohio University and other outside community members. A celebration flyer (Appendix J) was created and distributed to advertise that all community members were invited to the collaborative art exhibition.
School Demographics

Graham Expeditionary Middle School Demographics:
Source - James Kutnow, Principal of School

- 147 students total
- 83 female, 64 male
- 37 in 6th grade, 45 in 7th grade, 65 in 8th grade
- 42 white, 97 black, 2 Hispanic, 1 Native American, 5 multi-racial/other
- 82 students on free/reduced lunch
- 19 with IEPs
- 0 ELL

The Ohio State University Demographics:
Source - http://www.osu.edu/osutoday/stuinfo.php#enr_min
(Autumn 2011)

- Columbus Campus Enrollment - Total: 56,867 with 42,916 undergrads
- Men: 29,259
- Women: 27,608
- Total minorities: 8,187 - 14.4% of total
- African Americans: 3,274 - 5.8% of total
- Asian Americans: 3,033 - 5.3% of total
- Hispanics: 1,738 - 3.1% of total
- American Indians: 142 - 0.2% of total

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process of self-examination, in which I must take into account my identity, my beliefs and my presence within the research. Watt (2007) suggests that as a researcher, I am “the primary “instrument” of data collection and analysis” and it is “through reflection researchers may become aware of what allows them to see, as well as what may inhibit their seeing” (p. 82). As a PAR researcher concerned with
emancipatory knowledge, I am conscious of my own contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process. Reflexivity urges us "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research." (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999, p. 228). Having acknowledged the impossibility of remaining outside of my research, I explore the process of reflexivity deeper with regards to my own subjectivity as a researcher.

**Researcher Subjectivity**

Herr & Anderson (2005) suggest “that this complexity of roles be brought into the research from the beginning and acknowledged rather than being rendered invisible” (p. 77). My identity, as a white, middle-to-upper-class, female, teacher and arts educator, who holds an advanced degree, is a crucial part of this study, as it is my identity that forms my subjectivity. Fine, Weis, Weseen & Wong (2000) insist that,

> We have a responsibility to talk about our identities, why we interrogate what we do, what we choose not to report, how we frame our data, on whom we shed our scholarly gaze, who is protected and not protected as we do our work. (p. 123)

My researcher subjectivity was explored in depth in chapter three as a means of best preparing for my role as the arts-based service-learning and PAR facilitator and researcher. Torre (2008) reflects on this thinking by asking,

> What does it mean for us as researchers to be implicated in each others’ lives?
> How does it impact the design of our studies? How does it shift the knowledge we produce? How does it influence the products, actions or social policy recommendations that result from our research? (p. 107)
As a co-member of PAR and the service-learning project it was crucial that I recognize my own positionality and impact within and on the study. Utilizing social interdependence theory as my study’s foundation helped to ensure that these collaborative methods of thinking and doing were embraced and balanced.

**Data Collection Procedures**

In order to articulate my efforts as an ethical researcher, attempting to address issues of validity, a triangulation of methods was utilized. “Triangulation reflects an attempt to secure in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). As a PAR research study this methodology was continually developing and shifting through what Herr & Anderson (2005) refer to as a spiral process. The methods utilized were: photos interpreted in groups with a photovoice framework, artworks and correlating artist statements, group reflective discussions, reflection writings, observations and field notes recorded in my research journal, and interviews and focus groups. In order to triangulate the methods, I collected data through a combination of participant observations during the process of photovoice and collaborative artmaking, document analysis of reflective writings, and conducting in depth semi-structured interviews along with subsequent focus group interviews. The triangulation of methods worked to ensure validity in data collection ensuring to elicit multiple experiences, stories, and understandings.
Photovoice

Developed by Wang, Burris and colleagues in the healthcare field, Photovoice is based on three major theoretical understandings: Paulo Freire’s approach to critical education, Feminist theory, and a community-based approach to photography. “Freire contended that every human being, no matter how ‘ignorant’ or submerged in the ‘culture of silence’, is capable of looking critically at the world in a dialogical encounter with others. With the proper tools, anyone can gradually perceive his or her personal and social reality as well as contradictions within it, become conscious of those personal perceptions, and deal critically with them” (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001, p. 561). As a data collection method, photovoice is a process of collecting information that can assist in expressing issues and concerns through photos that are both visual and poly-vocal.

Photovoice was utilized as a photographic, asset-based mapping technique, that enabled participants to record and reflect upon their individual social consciousness and social responsibility in their community. Photovoice’s mnemonic of SHOWeD, assisted in collecting data by promoting critical dialogue about personal and community issues through large and small group discussions of photographs. SHOWeD stands for, What do you See here? What is really Happening? How does this relate to Our lives? Why does this problem or strength exist? What can we Do about it? (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). The SHOWeD format of questioning and discussing social issues found in photographs worked to elicit multiple stories from participants and is a method of data collection surrounding Freire’s critical consciousness.
Artworks and Correlating Artist Statements

Through the data collection method of photovoice, participants used cameras to asset-map their shared communities. They documented social issues as a method of better understanding the big idea of community. Participants then collaboratively used the computer programs of Photoshop and Gimp to manipulate these photographs as a meaning-making process of artmaking. These collaborative artworks and artist statements can be found in Appendix B. The college-aged students also created artworks independently as a meaning-making process investigating issues dealing with the big ideas of personal identity and social issues. The personal identity artworks and artist statements can be found in Appendix C, and the social issue artworks and artist statements can be found in Appendix D. These artworks created by students, both collaboratively and independently, provided visual representations of the social issues investigated. Participants also wrote artist statements, after being provided with guided questions, that explain their thinking and decision making in the meaning-making process of making art. These artist statements provide validity to the meaning of the artworks and were also used as data to help analyze the research questions.

Reflections

Along with writing artist statements that reflect on the experience of meaning-making in artmaking, participants were offered opportunities to reflect through journaling in the form of written responses on OSU’s online learning tool, Carmen, that were shared with classmates as well as private reflection papers. Participants also participated in weekly group discussions that were led with questions meant to guide an overall group
reflective discourse. These unique reflection opportunities provided participants multiple ways in which they were able to share the narrative of their experiences, and express both ideas and concerns, through storytelling. As it is, the powerful nature of narratives can influence meaning-making about ourselves and others. (Stuhr, Ballengee-Morris, Daniel, 2008). Incorporating this visual aspect through photovoice will allow participants to reflect through imagery while providing them with the choice to use images as a means to better express their thoughts surrounding social issues. Following PAR’s spiral process (Herr & Anderson, 2005), the data collected through these various areas of reflection helped to guide the formation of new questions asked in group discussions, interviews and focus groups.

**Research Journal: Observations and Field Notes**

As many participatory action researchers do, I used a research journal for autobiographical data. Herr and Anderson (2005) write, “If a researcher is the facilitator or instigator of a change process, part of the research documentation is the researcher’s roles, actions and decisions” (p. 77). This journal acted as a record of my research decisions and my thoughts and feelings about the research process as Herr and Anderson (2005) insist, “it is important to keep track of ethical decisions made throughout the research process” (p. 77). In addition, I also chronicled group discussions, participant observations and my impressions of growth of understanding in regards to the research questions. This process of keeping a research journal helped to make sense of my own understandings of what was happening and, in turn, serves as relevant data to analyze. As Watt suggests, “getting ideas down when they occur is actually the beginning of
Throughout this process, the information recorded through observations and journaling was coded in order to protect the privacy of research participants.

**Interviews and Focus Groups**

Building on the data collected through observations and participant reflections, interviews with the college aged arts-based service-learning participants were conducted throughout the duration of this study. Interviews with the middle school aged participants were not conducted due to limitations in time and accessibility. Complete transcripts from interviews can be found in Appendix E. The data collected through the interview process provided an in-depth account of participants’ experiences and growth in social consciousness and social responsibility. The questions were formulated to investigate my research questions and are exploratory in nature with a focus on meaning-making. These questions are grounded in social interdependence theory, and are both answerable, and worth answering. In my first series of class discussions, focus groups and interviews, the questions I asked were broad and open, in order to allow for the participants to share descriptions and narratives that explore social issues experiences related to my research questions. These questions were given to the college aged participants beforehand so they would have time to digest what I was asking and reflect on their answer. The following rounds of focus groups and interviews investigated the emergent themes which presented themselves, and these questions were asked in a more informal manner. Class discussions continued to be led with open ended questions, as means of continuing reflection, with more focused questions meant to guide closer inquiry within the group. I
was interested in exploring in greater depth issues that were relevant from the class discussions, focus groups and interviews, as well as my observations and the participant’s written reflections. Final interviews were conducted as a method of member checking.

Focus groups were conducted with the college students, and with the middle school aged girls, at separate times. This provided opportunities for the different participant groups to speak freely without their collaborative partner present. Flores (2008) suggests “Instead of trying to capture the view of each individual person within the group, the purpose of the focus group is to capture the views and dialogue of the entire group” (p. 103). Along with providing the perspective of the collaborative group, the process of conducting focus groups helped to promote the five variables of cooperation within social interdependence theory. In order for a focus group to be successful, the appropriate social skills need to be taught and enforced. By promoting an understanding of the ways in which we influence and are influenced by one another, trust can be built among group members, creating individual accountability and positive interdependence. Focus groups provided participants with opportunities to talk and think more deeply about social issues and also acted as a venue for participants to reflect upon ways of thinking unlike their own as they explore their identity and social critical consciousness.

Methods of Analyzing Data

In order to clearly and critically identify information that informed my research questions, my method of analyzing data will included the following processes:
categorizing and coding, emergent themes, member checks and mentor debriefing. From my research questions, I was interested in investigating the subtopics of: the growth of social consciousness and social responsibility through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking, along with how the five variables that mediate cooperation (social interdependence theory) can build social interdependence among participants working collaboratively on an arts-based service-learning and as participatory action researchers.

**Categorizing and Coding**

After collecting data through photovoice, artmaking, reflections, observations, interviews, and focus groups, I began the process of defining what the data was telling me. Categorizing and coding is a “procedure that identifies units of meaning (experience/perception) within the data and organizes them into a set of categories that typify or summarize the experiences and perspectives of the participants” (Stringer, p. 98, 2007). According to Stringer (2007), the procedures for categorizing and coding are “Reviewing the collected data, unitizing the data, categorizing and coding, identifying themes, organizing a category system, and developing a report framework” (p. 99). Since this is a qualitative study, and not quantitative, where the codes are planned out before research begins, I created the codes while reading and annotating the data, after it was collected (Charmaz, 2000).

**Emergent Themes**

Stringer (2007) suggests that once categories have been established within the research, the next step is to compare these categories and subcategories, watching for
areas of interests such as issues, key experiences, and transformational moments. These areas of interest, that can unexpectedly present themselves through the process of categorizing and coding the collected data, are called emergent themes (Wong & Blandford, 2002). In order to best represent her research participants Agyeman (2008), used “ethnographic methods to access the life worlds of others” (p. 82), and enabled these “invisible voices” to be heard by adopting an approach to analysis “based on themes which emerge from the descriptions and recounted experiences of the participants. They are not imposed themes but reflect the emphasis given by participants to areas of their lives” (p. 81). In order to analyze my data in the least biased way I looked for and was open to exploring, themes that emerged from the artworks and their correlating artist statements, participants stories in group discussions and reflections and interviews and focus groups.

**Member Checks**

Once the data has been coded, and interpretations and conclusions are starting to form, researchers can present their findings to the participants involved. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe these member checks are a critical step in the research process of establishing credibility. As a researcher concerned with social consciousness, and following PAR’s spiral methodology, I conducted member checks throughout the research process and not only at the very end once conclusions were already being made. Herr and Anderson (2005) suggest that member checks are “easily folded into the ongoing reflective component of action research, where one is assessing where the efforts thus far have taken the research” (p. 85). In interviews with participants, I provided them the
opportunity to review the data I collected. This gave participants the opportunity to reflect on their thoughts and actions and help to ensure the data reported correctly represents them. I also asked them to volunteer any additional information they may wish to add after reviewing the data.

**Mentor Debriefing**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that peer debriefing is “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind” (p. 308). In order to ensure validity within this study, I used peer debriefing as a mechanism for discussion and reflection with someone outside this research process. Due to issues of confidentiality, it was best to only debrief with my co-advisor, and IRB principal investigator, Dr. Karen Hutzel. As a mentor to this study, Dr. Hutzel is both knowledgeable and experienced in conducting PAR and service-learning projects, and is well informed of this research study. Mentor debriefing provided a venue in which I was able to reflect on interpretations and understandings from this research experience, and helped to ensure that my role as a researcher continues to honor the voices of my participants.

**Summary**

This research study was an opportunity for me as an artist, teacher, arts educator and participatory action researcher to better understand how the processes of collaboration and artmaking can help build social consciousness and develop social
responsibility. Because my research was an exploratory PAR study conducted through an art-based service-learning project, my overarching goal was to allow the participants to guide much of the research. Therefore by grounding this study in social interdependence theory and by following PAR’s spiral process of inquiry (Herr and Anderson, 2005) I was able to allow an emergent theme approach, which was pivotal in ensuring this study’s integrity.
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

In Chapter Three, I presented the methodology that was used in this research study. I discussed Social Interdependence Theory as a way of embracing collaborative methods of thinking and PAR as a collaborative research methodology. I introduced the research methods and processes used to collect and analyze data, which included both content analysis and the identification of emergent themes. This chapter is dedicated to presenting the data and in the following chapter I discuss the interpretations of the data. Social Interdependence Theory and PAR provided important framing for the research as the data was presented to me.

I begin by describing the research site as a joined community space that includes students from The Ohio State University and Graham Expeditionary Middle School and then discuss my point of view as a researcher and teacher facilitating the arts-based service-learning project. I discuss my intentions of embracing Social Interdependence Theory as a PAR researcher and then describe the creation of the course curriculum for Art Education 252: A Service-Learning Experience with the Computer in the Visual Arts. This preliminary background information is significant to understanding the data.
presentation because it provides a framework of the experiences and circumstances with which this research occurred.

The complete summary of data is presented in the timeline of its execution and is organized by the methods of collection: research journal, reflective writings, artworks and correlating artist statements and interviews and focus groups. The research journal includes data such as the daily agenda for each class session and corresponding observations and reflections on the experiences of each session. As a critically conscious researcher and educator, I was continuously reflecting on “what [was] happening in [my] classroom: the responses of students, the results of data collection, informal observations and comments by students…critical incidents, [and] how students demonstrated (or didn’t demonstrate) their learning” (Phillips & Carr, 2006, p. 111). The information from my research journal is presented in narrative form as it describes my personal account of not only my evolution as a researcher but also as a teacher, facilitator and participant observing the experiences of working cooperatively to create collaborative art. The data from participants’ reflective writings, artworks and artist statements is presented as a retelling from the eyes of their teacher and service-learning facilitator with the best intentions of presenting their thoughts and not my own interpretations. The complete collection of data is too large to be placed in this chapter and therefore can be found in the corresponding appendices as indicated throughout this chapter.
Joined Community Space

This research is composed of students’ collaborative experiences on the campus of The Ohio State University (OSU), Graham Expeditionary Middle School (GEMS), and the spaces in-between that create a joined community space. Both campuses are part of a greater community called the University District. The University District, also known as the University Area, is a two point eight square mile area located two miles north of downtown Columbus, Ohio. The district is Columbus’ most densely populated area containing more than six hundred and fifty businesses, human service agencies, churches and schools.

Below is a detailed map marking the points of interest for this research study.
The Ohio State University

The Ohio State University (OSU) is a public research university located in Columbus Ohio. Founded in 1870 as a land-grant university it has since grown into the third largest university campus in the United States. The main campus, encompassing 1,764 acres, is approximately two and a half miles north of downtown Columbus. Anchoring the heart of the campus is a student common area referred to as The Oval. On the western end of this grassy common area is the William Oxley Thompson Memorial Library, on the eastern end, The Wexner Center for the Arts and a block off the southeastern end is the new Ohio Student Union Building. The Thompson Library, as commonly referred to by students, underwent a hundred million dollar renovation in 2006 and is now the 18th largest university research library in North America with a combined collection of over 5.8 million volumes. The Wexner Center of the Arts opened in November 1989 with financing from Ohio State alumnus Leslie Wexner and a donation of twenty-five million dollars. It was conceived of as a research laboratory for the exploration and advancement of the arts and claims to balance a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation while affirming the university’s mission of education, research and community service. The Ohio Union, opened on March 29, 2010, is a student activity center providing facilities for student organizations and events and serves as a general meeting space for campus and community interaction. These places represent unique communities of campus life and each was visited by the collaborative groups through the exploration and artmaking process.
About a quarter mile North West of The Oval is the Ohio Stadium, home of the Ohio State University Football team. It is popularly known as The Horseshoe due to its open south end and horseshoe appearance from an aerial view. The stadium was added to the National Register of Historic Places on March 22, 1974 and with a capacity of 102,329, is the fourth largest football stadium in the United States and the seventh largest non-racing stadium in the world. The Horseshoe is also the temporary home of The Department of Art Education, where the Art Ed course of 252, A Service-Learning Experience with the Computer in the Visual Arts was taught. The farthest east border of The Ohio State University is High Street. High street runs north and south, traveling through the heart of Columbus, from downtown through Columbus’s hip area known as the Short North, along campus, then into a neighborhood just north of campus called Clintonville and on. The city of Columbus is encircled by the beltway loop freeway, interstate 270. High Street cuts down the middle of this entire freeway, almost dividing Columbus in half. Community members of the University District commonly refer to High Street as the great divide, as it draws a clear line between the University and neighboring community. This street is an important marking for this study as the research participants, composed of students from both sides of High Street, together crossed the divide into each others’ school’s community, solidifying this space as a joined community.

Graham Expeditionary Middle School

Graham Expeditionary Middle School (GEMS) is across this great divide, about four blocks east from OSU’s eastern campus border, High Street. In the Fall of 2011,
GEMS moved into the Indianola Junior High School building, which was the first junior high in the United States. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places on June 30, 1980.

GEMS mission states, “As a member of The Graham Family of Schools, the Graham Expeditionary Middle School (GEMS) prepares students for academic success, self-direction, life-long learning, and commitment to community by providing intentional learning experiences that foster imagination, discovery, problem-solving skills, and growing independence. With a particular mission to serve urban students, GEMS is a supportive community where students learn to care for themselves, each other and the natural world. As a school that values generosity, stewardship, and service, GEMS nurtures not only students’ academic growth and confidence but also their development as compassionate citizens of a global world” (http://www.gemschool.org).

Defined as a charter school, GEMS is a member of The Graham Family of Schools in partnership with Expeditionary Learning. The Graham Family of Schools includes The Charles School and The Graham School, both charter high schools in Columbus Ohio, The Center For Experiential Learning, Leadership and Technology (CELLT), Graham Expeditionary Middle School (GEMS), and Graham Primary School (GPS) which will open in the Indianola Middle school where GEMS is housed in the Fall of 2012. Expeditionary Learning, based out of New York City, partners with schools, districts, and charter boards to open new schools and transform existing schools. They provide school leaders and teachers with professional development, curriculum planning resources, and new school structures to boost student engagement, character, and
achievement. Expeditionary Learning works with over one hundred and fifty schools and forty thousand students nationwide, and claims that their “model for teaching and learning challenges students to think critically and take active roles in their classrooms and communities, resulting in higher achievement and greater engagement in school.” (Expeditionary Learning, 2012).

Expeditionary Learning was created from eighteen years of research and practice and has created Core Practice Benchmarks, which are similar to national and state educational standards. There are five Core Practices, each with a number of Benchmarks, the Core Practices are: learning expeditions, active pedagogy, culture and character, leadership and school improvement, and structures. For this research study, the following Core Practice Benchmarks were incorporated and or met: 1.4, 2.6, 3.1, 3.5, 4.2.

Core Practice one, Learning Expeditions, benchmark number four: Incorporating Fieldwork, Local Expertise, and Service-Learning. Benchmark 1.4 states, “Service learning is an integral part of many of learning expedition’s investigations and products, and meets and authentic community need” (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, p. 15, 2003). They claim by having students conduct research outside the school, students can engage in the real world through service-learning and that these types of experiences maximize students’ motivation to learn (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, 2003).

Core Practice two, Active Pedagogy, benchmark six, Learning in and Through the Arts. This benchmark includes structures for teaching the arts, teaching through the arts, teaching the arts, documenting students learning and creating an aesthetic environment and culture, equity, diversity and character. “In Expeditionary Learning schools, art is an
important vehicle for learning and for representing learning through products” (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, 2003, p. 23).

Core Practice three, benchmark one, Building School Culture and Fostering Character, which is met through service and service-learning. “An Expeditionary Learning school culture is developed and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become crew not passengers” (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, p. 32, 2003).

Core Practice three, benchmark five, Developing a Professional Community, which is met through practices and protocols for effective collaboration. The professionals who work at Expeditionary Learning schools are members of a community of learners who both teach and model collaborative learning for students (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, 2003).

Core Practice four, benchmark two, Sharing Leadership and Building Partnerships. The leaders at each Expeditionary Learning school are encouraged to build and sustain partnerships with both community organizations and cultural institutions by building a broad constituency within the community in an attempt to advocate for both the school and community (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, 2003).

As a member of Expeditionary Learning, GEMS strives to develop and sustain a school culture in which students are taught to take responsibility for their own learning while also learning to care for the welfare of themselves, their fellow classmates, their school and wider community (Graham Expeditionary Middle School, 2003). This
research was fully supported by the GEMS community, including faculty and staff, students and families. I have just briefly discussed some of the core practice benchmarks that this research incorporated, and/or met, and this will become more transparent when I present the curriculum for the art education 252 course.

Reflecting on this research study’s placement in a joined community space, it is important to know that both groups of students have applied to attend either OSU or GEMS, making all the research participants transplants to the University area. Neither groups of students consider the University district their home community, but it is their school’s home community. The OSU students have come to study and live in Columbus, Ohio from a range of areas, some from Ohio, some from as far as China, and everywhere in-between. The GEMS students have each applied to study at the charter school for different reasons, each looking for a better school community, and each traveling from their own neighborhood community to attend GEMS. This unique combination of students, each attending school in the University District for personal reasons, have each contributed to the formation of this joined community space.

**Point of View of the Researcher**

I recognize that my position as a teacher of the Art Education 252 course, and facilitator and participant of the Arts-Based Service-Learning experience guides the interpretations of my data. I also acknowledge that a study investigating collaborative processes and social consciousness and responsibility in regards to cultural topics such as
race, gender, age and socio-economic status requires that I share my own status as a well-educated, White female in her early thirties.

As a reflexive teacher and critically conscious researcher utilizing PAR, I facilitated a learning environment that fostered critical listening and thinking skills within my students and challenged these students to share opinions, ask questions of myself and of one another. Through a combination of PAR and social interdependence theory, I was able to conduct this research in a way that not only improved my own practices as a teacher and researcher but also improved the learning experiences of my students. Utilizing the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009), my students were challenged to grow further by becoming collaborators in the learning and research process. Fostering active cooperative learning and participatory social and emotional learning, I strived to create spaces that stimulated intellectual exchange.

By creating a layered process of meaning-making in the arts-based service-learning project, I challenged students to experience issues of access and equality with the involved curriculum and technology. Through promotive interactions within their learning environments, these students were provided the opportunity to transfer their learning forward and outside of the classroom. As a critically conscious researcher, and facilitator and participant utilizing PAR, I created situations to empower students to critically analyze social issues while providing them opportunities to extend their learning from meaning-making in artmaking into a relationship with the larger world.
around them. I acknowledge my positionality as a teacher and researcher who intended to challenge my students to grow as critically informed and active citizens of their communities in order to grapple with issues of social inequality and conceptualize new ideas through collaborative artmaking. Acknowledging my positionality as a researcher I have, however, taken great strides to stay objective in the presentation of this data.

**Embracing Social Interdependence Theory as a PAR Researcher**

As stated in Chapter Three, PAR can create opportunities to view our lives from different perspectives while providing strategies onto which we can communicate these experiences with others (McIntyre, 2008). As an active participant of PAR, working alongside my student co-researchers, it was my intention to display both trust and respect of their valued participation. McIntyre states, “it is by actively engaging in critical dialogue and collective reflection that the participants of PAR recognize that they have a stake in the overall project” (2008, p. 1).

In order to create an environment in which PAR could flourish, the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation were applied in the creation of the Art Education 252 syllabus and, in turn, the research conducted. These five basic elements, inherently taught by cooperative efforts, are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills and group processing (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2009). McIntyre, 2008, claims that PAR is a recursive process that involves a fluidly braided spiral of questioning, reflecting, dialoguing and decision-making. As a PAR researcher, embracing Social Interdependence Theory, I incorporated the five variables that mediate
cooperative efforts within the braided recursive spiral of PAR. It was through this combination of theory and practice that I was best able to investigate how social consciousness and social responsibility can grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking.

Art Education 252 Course Curriculum

In the Spring of 2009, I received notification of my acceptance to the Doctorate program in Art Education at The Ohio State University. Soon after, I was contacted by Dr. Karen Hutzel asking if I would be interested in teaching a new section of a course offered by the Department of Art Education as a Graduate Teaching Associate. I had worked on service-learning projects previously with Dr. Hutzel and it was because of this experience that she nominated me to collaboratively create the course syllabus with her in the Fall of 2009 and ultimately teach the course starting in Winter 2010. Dr. Hutzel supervises five sections of 252, The Computer in the Visual Arts, in the Department of Art Education. The new version of this course we developed is the only one taught with a service-learning emphasis. This section of 252 is therefore the only one titled, A Service Learning Experience with The Computer in the Visual Arts. Each of the five sections of 252 are a General Education Course (GEC) at OSU and therefore meet The Ohio State University’s GEC goals and objectives. The Arts and Humanities goals and objectives are: (a) students evaluate significant writing and works of art; (b) students develop abilities to be informed or active participants in the visual, spatial, performing, spoken, or literary arts; (c) students describe and interpret creative work, and/or movements in the
arts and literature; (d) students explain how works of art and writings explore the human condition. The Art Education 252 course fulfills these goals and objectives through active participation in artmaking using the computer as the art tool and medium; using the big idea strategy to develop conceptual frameworks relating social and cultural ideas in their artwork; reading literature about computer art and artists and viewing artwork; participating in dialogue about the literature, artists, and artworks; participating in critiques of student artwork; and reflecting on their experiences of using the computer as a tool to make art.

**A Service Learning Experience with the Computer in the Visual Arts**

Art Education 252, *A Service Learning Experience with the Computer in the Visual Arts*, met over a ten-week quarter every Monday and Wednesday from 2:30-4:18. Every Monday, the college students met in our computer lab in The Stadium at OSU to independently create and on Wednesdays we met at GEMS to collaboratively create art. The college students who registered for the course range from freshman to seniors and have declared majors from all over the University. As this is a GEC course that fulfills students’ art elective, most students who have registered for this course are not from arts disciplines. Most students who register for this course do so because they believe the course to be an un-messy art elective and one that they can use the computer lab as their art medium keeping their hands away from paint or clay. This course is also required as a pre-requisite for students interested in applying to enter the pre-service teacher program in Art Education and so student enrollment in the course represents students from across the University.
Unit Rational

There is much literature that addresses and advocates the implementation of service-learning to create a mutually-empowering process where participants serve to teach and all are served knowledge and experiences in return (Ballengee-Morris, 2008; Cipolle, 2010; Duncan & Kopperud, 2008; Hutzel, 2007; Kahne & Westheimer, 1996; Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Taylor, 2002; Taylor, & Ballengee-Morris, 2004). Taylor and Ballengee-Morris expand on this: “Service-learning involves students using what they learn in their formal study to work with others and make a beneficial difference in the world. The service provided is never charity, because it is not only the community (as is the case in so many community projects) benefitting from the gift being given. The student also learns something from the experience” (p. 7, 2004). Literature also demonstrates how arts-based practices can be utilized and employed as a means toward raising consciousness and creating critical social awareness (Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Leavy, 2009). Arts-based practices are visually interactive and can promote dialogue among its creators and viewers. This dialogue is critical to cultivating understanding and knowledge building, and serves as place to challenge and transform outdated beliefs and stereotypes (Leavy, 2009). Furthermore arts-based service-learning projects combine the democratic values of education with the power of the arts to provide students with experiences that challenge and broaden their ways of thinking and knowing (Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Leavy, 2009).

Cooperative learning, as defined by D. W. Johnson and Johnson (1994, 1999, 2009), is the instructional use of students in small groups so that they may work together
in order to maximize their own and each other’s learning. According to the research (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 1999; D.W. Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000; Slavin, 1995), cooperative learning offers many potential benefits for students including; increased self-esteem, greater liking for school, enhanced interethnic ties, and improved complex thinking. Grown from cooperative learning is social interdependence theory, which is defined by the accomplishments of each group member’s individual goals being affected by the actions of all members that compose the group (Deutsch 1949, 1962; D. W. Johnson 1970, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson 1989, 2005, 2009).

Course Description

This is a service-learning course in which college students work collaboratively with middle school students to learn and apply computer skills (Photoshop & GIMP) to produce collaborative art. The computer is used as a tool to create collaborative digital art through photo-manipulation and digital alteration. Classroom partnerships across race, class, gender, and privilege provide the foundation from which personal, cultural, and community assets are explored. Local and national artists’ work are also analyzed and criticized through socio-cultural discussions and personal reflections. The personalization of these cultural discussions highlights the contributions all participants have to offer to the class and signify an important process for attending to local socio-cultural needs and interests. As a service-learning course, the ultimate goal is to highlight local voices, which includes both groups of students, through the use of the computer to create collaborative art.
As a service-learning course, collaboration is a major component of this learning and artmaking. Collaborative artmaking is characterized by the process of collaboration, which “creates educational value all by itself. It requires skills in conversation, negotiation, problem-solving, and listening” (Cooper & Sjostrom, 2006, p. 65). Partnering with youth from a Columbus neighborhood provides a unique experience for considering the abilities, gifts, and assets of children and their underserved community and for utilizing the computer as a tool to produce collaborative art. This component of the course is not an add-on. It is integral to our learning about computer art concepts and skills as we consider how we can interact with each other and the computer as an artmaking tool.

Service in this course is practiced and considered through a two-way exchange of knowledge and abilities. In this way, it is assumed that we all have assets we bring to the experience. The service activity is not volunteerism nor is it charity. It is a collaborative engagement with the goal to create understanding through the development of relationships and art. Collaborative artmaking contributes to that goal because it requires personal reflection and an attention to developing meaning. The visual aspect of artmaking provides a method for communicating thoughts, ideas, and opinions, which requires negotiation, consensus-building, and compromise. The service benefits the community partner, as they leave with an art piece that reflects them and their community. The service benefits the students, as they leave with new knowledge and experiences.
Critical Issues and Big Ideas Explored

In this course, college and middle school students investigated their own critical social understandings of inequity issues dealing with gender, race, culture, and socio-economic status through the collaborative processes of cooperative learning and exploring meaning-making in artmaking. Conducted as an arts-based service-learning project, students investigated challenges and opportunities for learning through digital artmaking both collaboratively and independently. The big ideas explored included identity, community, power, gender, race, culture, memories, and home.

Artmaking Lessons

Each project was composed of multiple lessons that took place over a ten-week quarter, with the final week reserved for a celebration event. Reflective writings and discussions were woven throughout the whole experience. The objectives of the artmaking lessons included digital artmaking skills, an introduction to big ideas, the presentation of contemporary artists along with examples of artists’ processes and artwork created from big ideas along with supporting theories. Even though the objectives for each of the lessons were defined, they were not scaffolded by day or time on the course calendar, as they are independent of sequence. Instructed within an arts-based service-learning course, these experiences were intended to help students become more socially conscious through the process of creating meaning-making in their artmaking, and as every service-learning project is unique to the group(s) of individuals that compose it, the scheduling of these lessons remained malleable. Each artwork created in this experience was accompanied by an artist statement that describes not only
the artist’s intentions with the visual aspect of their artwork but most importantly their process of creating meaning through the investigation of the selected big idea.

**Personal Identity Artwork**

Over a nine-week period college students were introduced to the basics of Photoshop on The Ohio State University campus. These skills ranged from the Photoshop basics of layers and selections to more complex work with repairs and retouching of images. Utilizing these new digital artmaking skills in Photoshop, the college students then collected images to create an artwork that represents their own identity. Simultaneously, at their own school campus, the middle school students used the Open Source Photoshop equivalent GIMP to individually investigate their own identity.

Students were also introduced to contemporary artists from the PBS documentary series Art 21, who are working and producing art dealing with the big idea of Identity. Since this was their first time utilizing their computer artmaking skills, and their first time making art from a big idea, students were encouraged to have fun interpreting the meaning of identity. They were able to produce their first digital artwork free of strict guidelines but were given boundaries that enabled them to be confident with their artmaking skills. In order to create boundaries I guided students toward developing a theme from the big idea of identity and they then interpreted images through an investigation of their own identity. Before submitting this project, students worked in small groups sharing and critiquing their work and were provided critique guidelines for
this interaction. This peer feedback not only gave students experience with the critique process but also built their group processing skills and cooperative learning strategies.

Finally, students wrote an artist statement describing their artmaking process, using the following questions as a guideline:

- Working with the Big Idea of Identity, what is your artworks theme?

- Why did you choose that theme to develop the big idea of identity, or did the theme develop from your choices, either way, describe?

- How did you design your artwork, and what Photoshop skills did you play with?

- What images and/or pictures did you use to make your artwork, and where did you discover these?

- How do these images represent your understanding of your identity?

- If time were no issue, what would be your next step(s) in this artwork?

- What else would you like me, or the viewer, to know about your artwork?

- Are there any questions you wish your viewer would ask when looking at your artwork?

**Collaborative Community Artwork**

Over the same nine week period, college and middle school students worked together to create a collaborative digital artwork to represent their joined community space. Students were first introduced to the concept of a big idea, and then the big idea of community. As a whole group, students brainstormed what a community might be composed of, thinking about their own personal collage of images that represent their personal understanding of the big idea of community. Through a class discussion, students discussed how artists work from big ideas in order to create meaning in their
artworks, and the process of defining and or refining a big idea through a theme was also demonstrated and discussed.

Students learned the basics of using a camera to capture an image and practiced this artmaking skill with view-finders and physical exercises. The class discussed assets we each bring to our different communities and assets that work together to compose our joined community. The assets listed in this collaborative brainstorming ranged from family, friends, buildings, schools, churches, homes, neighbors, organizations, streets, sidewalks, signs, animals, art, nature, parks, libraries, restaurants, shops and transportation. Students were then divided into smaller cooperative groups and given digital cameras to take on a sidewalk tour encompassing the space between their two schools as a means to encounter and capture images that represent assets of their shared community. This asset-mapping provided the pictures used in the collaborative artmaking and in turn, the collaborative artworks created reflect the many assets this joined community space has to offer, including the natural, human and social issues discovered during these sidewalk encounters (Hutzel & Resler, 2010).

After the collaborative groups asset-mapped their joined community space, students were then introduced to the basics of GIMP, an Open Source equivalent to Photoshop. Utilizing these new artmaking skills, students worked in cooperative groups to create a digital artwork that represents their collaborative understanding of their shared community. Throughout the nine-week collaboration, students were also introduced to contemporary artists who work and produce art within their communities. This provided students the opportunity to see artists in the process of creating artworks from a big idea.
Towards the end of the artmaking process, the cooperative groups came together to find a way to display their artwork together in a quilt-like fashion. This large piece remains displayed at the middle school to encourage other students to participate in upcoming collaborations and each individual student takes home a copy of their own work and artist statement. I also worked with the students to plan a celebration event where all members from the community were invited to celebrate their artmaking collaboration. This included faculty and staff from the college and middle school, family members and friends and any others interested. At the event, students displayed their cooperative group’s artwork and the whole group’s collaborative piece. They made presentations to community members and were able to hear about and discuss other groups’ artmaking processes. This celebration event is an important part of the meaning-making process as it gives students the experience of not only sharing their art and artmaking process with community members but is also another step in the reflection process of PAR.

When collaboratively writing the artist statements that were displayed at the celebration event, the cooperative groups used the following questions as a guideline for describing their artmaking process:

- What theme did your cooperative group use to investigate the big idea of community?

- How did your group come to choose that theme to develop the big idea of community, or did it develop as you were working?

- Describe your artworks design and what GIMP skills did your group play with in order to create your artwork?
- What pictures did your group use from our photography field trip? What other images did your group need to locate?

- How do both sets of images represent your collaborative understanding of community?

- If time were no issue, what would be your group’s next step(s) in this artwork?

- What else would you like your viewer to know about your artwork?

- Are there any questions you wish your viewer would ask when looking at your artwork?

**Social Understanding Artwork**

After the college students completed their first digital artwork exploring the big idea of identity, and while continuing to collaboratively work with their middle school partners on Wednesdays, they were challenged to select a big idea they felt would help them further explore their critical social understandings. At this point in their digital artmaking experience, students had much practice with both Photoshop and GIMP and were ready to further explore their meaning-making skills within their artmaking. I explained that they were selecting a big idea that would help them explore an issue-based theme, and that an issue is a topic that has opposing view points. Students were also exposed to readings on meaning-making in artmaking and critical social understandings. I will discuss these readings and the students’ responses in the next few sections.

Utilizing their digital artmaking skills to create meaning through their artmaking process, students were able to further explore their own critical social understandings surrounding big ideas such as power, gender, race, culture, socio-economic status, etc. Using images that visually represented their selected big idea, students worked through
the process of defining a theme that displays the meaning behind their social views and critical understandings. Students also participated in small group critiques to share and discuss their current social consciousness as it related to their artmaking process. Once they felt their artwork was reaching completion, students composed an artist statement and were invited to present their work in front of the class. These presentations created new areas of inquiry and platforms for investigation through discussion.

Below are questions students asked themselves when writing their artist statement:

- What big idea did you select to investigate your own critical social understandings?
- What is your artwork’s theme?
- Why did you choose that theme to develop the big idea and how did it help you to investigate your own social consciousness?
- How did you design your artwork, what Photoshop skills did you play with?
- What images or pictures did you use to make your artwork? What words or phrases did you use to search for images and why?
- How do those images represent your social understanding of the big idea you choose?
- If time were no issue, what would be your next step(s) in this artwork?
- What else would you like your viewer to know about your artwork?
- Are there any questions you wish your viewer would ask when looking at your artwork?

**Weekly Readings & Reflective Writings**

Throughout the artmaking process, students were simultaneously reflecting on their community and collaborative experiences. From this they wrote reflective
statements in the OSU online learning space called Carmen. The college students were provided weekly readings with corresponding questions used to guide this process of reflection, along with being able to openly reflect on their current collaborative experiences cooperatively making art in a joined community space.

Below are the weekly readings, in the order they were assigned and corresponding questions provided to guide their reflections:

- What are Big Ideas?
- Why are they important in artmaking?
- What big ideas do you think could be incorporated or guide our artmaking this quarter?

- In your own words, what do you feel are the most important aspects to keep in mind when working on a collaborative art-making project?
- Please refer to page 75 in the reading; reflecting on your experience so far with your community partner, answer 2-3 of the sample reflection questions.

Kretzmann, J., & McKnight, J. (1993). Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a communities assets. Evanston, IL, Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research.
- In your own words, what is "Asset-Based Community Development"?
- What assets to you see in the different communities you belong to?

- Describe your ‘sidewalk encounters’ experience in our class.
- How is our class an example of a community-based action research example?
- How has artmaking influenced your experience in this class and working with the girls?
- What are some important components of Service-Learning?
- What communities do you belong do?
- What are some important things to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners?

Ch 3. Becoming Good Citizens:
- What are some important things to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners?
- In your own words, what ethics do you believe you should practice when working with and communicating with others? Or - Refer to page 52, create a personal manifesto.

- In your own words, what is Visual Culture? Why is it important to be aware of, and decipher, the many messages in the images and objects of visual culture?

- What are the important aspects of participatory action research (PAR)?
- In your own words, what is asset-based community development?
- Do you believe we are utilizing this in our service-learning project, and if so, why?

- In your own words, how does arts-based service-learning differ from other service-learning projects?
- Do you feel universities should require all students complete a service-learning project?

- In your own words and from your own experiences, what do you believe the meaning of 'democratic education' is?
- Reflect on your experience throughout this course; what do you feel you have learned, that you may not have, if this course was not taught through a service-learning framework?
Reflection Papers

The college students enrolled in the course completed mid-term and final reflection papers. In these papers, students reflect on their interactions with the computers as an artmaking tool, the process creating meaning-making through artmaking both independently and cooperatively, and their collaborative experience with their community partner(s).

The following questions were used to guide the midterm reflection paper:

- Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking.

- How has working with the big idea of identity and/or community helped you to explore social issues such as gender, age, race, socio economic status?

- How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

- Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.

- What experiences so far have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the arts-based service-learning element in the class? Imagine the course only consisted of independent artmaking on the computer.

- What do you hope to get out of the class in the remaining five weeks? How can you challenge yourself to ensure this happens?

The following questions were used to guide the final reflection paper:

- Describe in your own words what Service-Learning is. What are the advantages/disadvantages (of service-learning) for college students and for public school students?

- What did you learn that wouldn’t have been possible without the Service-Learning element?

- Describe your artmaking experiences. What was it like using the computer as an
art medium?

- Describe your experience making collaborative art? How is making collaborative art different from making art alone, what are the advantages and disadvantages to both.

- Describe your experience with your community partner. What did you learn from working with the community? What challenges did you encounter? What surprised you?

- What are the advantages and disadvantages to working and learning in cooperative groups?

**Curriculum Summary**

As a Graduate Teaching Associate at The Ohio State University I have taught the Art Education Course 252, A Service-Learning Experience with the Computer in the Visuals Arts for seven quarters, and have collaborated with a total of three community schools. My collaboration with GEMS began in the Fall of 2011 and will continue into the Fall of the 2012 school year and, hopefully successfully for many years after I leave. My involvement with this course and its service-learning element began when I entered the PhD program at OSU in the Fall of 2009, and with the collaborative construction of the course and its syllabus with Dr. Karen Hutzel. Even though I have taught this course for seven quarters, I conducted this research study primarily in the Fall of 2011 and Winter of 2012. Though I was not conducting this research study in the Fall of 2009 through Summer 2011, it is important to understand the ever evolving creation of this course’s service-learning curriculum because it was created with a PAR framework incorporating values of Social Interdependence Theory.
A Narrative Picture of the Research Process: Research Journal

Throughout this research study, I kept a journal in which I recorded my observations, field notes and the activities of the day. In presenting the narrative, I have woven it throughout the complete summaries of data so that my observations, field notes and detailed account of the day’s activities are placed in the timeline as the data was gathered and are disclosed throughout the remaining portion of the chapter. By weaving my narrative within the summaries of data, it is my intention to create a complete picture of the research process and to do so by describing the conditions in which the data was collected and my thoughts as a researcher at that current moment. I have made every attempt to maintain the original content of the research participants’ quotes and data, which I address my analysis of the data in the next chapter.

Research Participants

There are two groups of research participants in this study: youth from the Graham Expeditionary Middle School (GEMS) and college students enrolled in Art Education 252 at The Ohio State University (OSU). The more than fifty participants from Fall quarter 2011 and Winter quarter 2012 who decided to participate in the research study had a choice of being named or remaining anonymous. The middle school aged girls from GEMS are under the age of eighteen and decided this with their parents or guardians. Those names that have an asterisk in front of them are names that have been changed to protect their identities. In the process of changing participant’s names, I attempted to rename them in a way that respectfully represents their gender and cultural
identity. This was not a decision I came to easily, and I am still not sure I made the correct decision in this matter so I am disclosing this information as part of the data.

Other participants include James Kutnow, the Dean of Academics at GEMS, and Rachelle Smith, the art teacher at GEMS.

As stated in the previous sections, the collaborative groups were composed of both OSU and GEMS students. In completing the day one identity writing, which I will discuss further in the next section, the OSU students were asked to disclose their comfort level working with middle school aged girls. Those that had experience working with youth were paired with a GEMS girl on their own and those that expressed nervousness were paired with an OSU and a GEMS girl. These groups were not perfectly created, but this was done to help foster successful partnerships. The collaborative groups are listed below with the OSU participants listed first and GEMS listed second.

**Fall 2011**
- Beydan & *Rihanna
- Richard & Kyra
- Wil, *Lily & Laticsha
- Sarah & *Mercedes
- Ian & Aviona
- Michelle & Ashley
- Seth & *Israel
- Molly & *Dasanique
- *Andrew & *Magdah
- *Twicheng, *Mary & *Niesha
- *Brody, *Song & Ariel

**Winter 2012**
- Shantae, *Jeff & *Mia
- Morgan & *Katlyn

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1 Names with asterisk have been changed to protect participants privacy, those without an asterisk chose to be named in this research study.
Day One Identity Writing

On the first day of both the Fall and Winter Quarters, I met with the OSU students enrolled in Art Ed 252 in our assigned classroom which is located in The Stadium. After introducing myself, I began by reviewing the course syllabus and calendar. When I read the course title, I asked the students if anyone had heard of Service-Learning and was not surprised when no hands went up in affirmation. After giving the students a brief background on service-learning, I explained that our course is similar to the other four sections of 252 in that we will use the computer program of Photoshop as our medium in artmaking. I then went on to explain that our class will also use the Open Source equivalent of GIMP to collaboratively make art with a community partner, middle school aged girls from GEMS. I also reviewed the calendar with the students to ensure they understood that on Mondays we were to meet at The Stadium and Wednesdays at GEMS. At this point in the class about half an hour had gone by, and I asked if anyone had any questions. The students were quiet, but I could see in their faces that many of them were unsure as to what they had signed up for. I told them that even though this may seem like
a lot of information on the first day, as things move along, each step in the process will be explained. I also reinforced with the students that the service-learning element is not an add-on to the course, it is the way in which the course will be taught, and working alongside other students may prove to be a unique experience in their college career. I then went on to stress that they need not feel overwhelmed and that I will make myself and service-learning resources available to increase their comfort levels.

Now that the syllabus, calendar and course curriculum were reviewed, I handed out the day one identity writing. This sheet consists of basic identifying information such as name, email, department of study and asks four questions (a) what experiences, if any, do you have with Photoshop or Gimp, Service-Learning and/or working with school aged students; (b) why did you take this course, and what do you hope to get out of this course; (c) what initial thoughts and/or questions do you have about Service-Learning; (d) any other questions of information you want to share.

I explained to the students that these sheets would be for only me to read, therefore providing a safe space for students to privately communicate their initial response to the proposed class structure. The students were also asked to login to Carmen, OSU’s online learning tool that night and post this information, so that the class can start to get to know one another. This space is a class community space, viewed by all enrolled in the course, so some students did not disclose personal information they had shared with me on the written responses. After the students filled out the writings we went around the room introducing ourselves, addressing what department of study we come from, why we took this course and anything else they felt like sharing.
The complete collection of the OSU participants’ first day writing responses can be viewed in Appendix F. The students ranged from freshmen to seniors studying everything from exploration, engineering, business, math, finance, accounting, physical sciences, law, human ecology, fashion retail studies, health professions, medicine, and nutrition. Most students said they took this class because it is a general education course (GEC) that fulfills their art elective. Only a handful of students took the class because a friend suggested it, and even then only a few took this specific section because a friend had been in a previous section of mine. Some students had experience with Photoshop while others had none, only a few had heard of Open Source and not one participant had ever heard of service-learning. Familiarity with school aged students ranged from experiences working as tutors and camp counselors, having younger brothers and sisters, and participants’ declarations that the idea of working with school aged students would be new and made some participants very nervous. Some students shared that this was their first quarter attending school in America and with English as their second language they were concerned how this would affect the service-learning process. Other students wrote that they were excited to work with the girls and loved the idea of getting off campus to learn in a new environment. Their questions for me ranged from not having any, to being curious about how they would be graded if one of the projects was collaborative, to not understanding why service-learning is part of this course and what service they are supposed to serve their community partner.

The GEMS girls also completed a written questionnaire in which they answered the following questions about themselves.
Tell me about yourself. What do you like most & least about school? What do you like to do with your free time?

What is something unique about yourself?

What do others like about you?

What do you want to study in college?

Why did you take this elective and what do you hope to learn?

The complete collection of their first day written responses can be viewed in Appendix G. The girls ranged from sixth to eighth grade and most took the class because their teacher or principal suggested it. They told me that what they like most about school is learning along with specific subjects, their teacher and the social aspect; that they get to hang out and talk with friends. Their least favorite thing about school reflected some of the same specific subjects other liked most, that some of their classmates are loud and don’t care about learning like they do, and social issues related to bullying and gossip. The girls’ unique qualities ranged from being an optimistic person to helping stray animals, to physical characteristics such as having purple hair. They told me that others like how friendly and kind they are, how funny they can be and one told me that she doesn’t know or care what others like about her. Reflecting on the future they hope to become CIA and FBI agents, veterinarians, doctors, lawyers and study every thing from fashion and cooking to art and French.

Collaborative Introduction Interviews

On the first Wednesday of the quarter the OSU students met me at the Wexner Center for the Arts and together we walked to GEMS. For this first meeting of the
collaborative partners, I prepared a questionnaire that the students used to get to know one another. The students did not have to use complete sentences to answer the questions as this was more of a brainstorming exercise and a way to break the ice among the groups.

Below are the questions students collaboratively answered:

- What are our experiences with computers; what do we like most about working with computers?

- What are our experiences with art and making art; what do we enjoy most about making art?

- What do we think the definition of a community is? What different communities do we belong to?

- What are some things found in a community? What are some things we could take photographs off to use in our artwork?

The complete collection of the groups written responses to the collaborative introduction interviews can be viewed in Appendix H. The groups’ experiences working with computers included looking things up for school or work, emailing, communication such as Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter, searching the web for school and or fun, entertainment, music, reading articles and playing games. The groups’ experiences with making art ranged from painting, sculpture, dancing, being creative and expressive people, to reflecting that that art can make you feel better about yourself. The students collaboratively defined community as somewhere you belong, people coming together, people with similarities, people who protect each other, coming together for a common goal, a group of people who work together to complete a specific goal of and anything
your a part of or where you live. Some things found in a community that the students
planned to photograph were people, nature, buildings, houses, patterns, designs, schools,
houses, cars, friends, weather, organizations, symbolic signs and the environment.

**Reflective Writings Posted on Carmen**

The OSU students were provided an article to read each week. These articles are
listed in the first half of this chapter, along with the corresponding reflection questions
provided to guide students’ written responses. The articles discuss many of the
components that composed the experiences in Art Ed 252; big ideas in artmaking,
service-learning, asset-mapping, collaborative artmaking, community, communication,
equity, and citizenship.

Below are some of the questions students’ reflected on:

- What are some important things to keep in mind when communicating with our
  community partners?

- In your own words, what do you feel are the most important aspects to keep in
  mind when working on a collaborative art-making project?

- Describe your ‘sidewalk encounters’ experience in our class.

- In your own words and from your own experiences, what do you believe the
  meaning of 'democratic education' is? Reflect on your experience throughout
  this course; what do you feel you have learned, that you may not have, if this
  course was not taught through a service-learning framework?

The complete collection of the participants reflective writings posted on Carmen can be
viewed in Appendix I. Some of the important things students wanted to keep in mind
when communicating with our community partners were that when interacting with the
girls they are not only teaching but learning as well and the girls have just as much to
offer to the collaboration as they do. They thought they should keep in mind that this experience is meant to be mutually beneficial and when communicating with our community partners, it is important to remember that members of other communities deserve to be treated in the same way that we treat members of the communities to which we personally belong. The students also thought it was important to keep an open mind, stay positive, be supportive and good listeners and be respectful when trying to communicate.

The students felt the most important aspects to keep in mind when working on a collaborative art-making project were effective communication, mutual contribution, patience, trust and respectful teamwork. The students suggested that in order to successfully create a collaborative artwork they needed to recognize both their own strengths and their weaknesses and shortcomings. As a group they could capitalize on each others’ artmaking strengths, thereby making each other stronger working as a collaborative group.

Describing their sidewalk encounter experiences students reflecting on learning in an environment different from what they were used to, observing and feeling the nature of the community, interacting with unfamiliar people, getting to know the girls outside the wall of school and realizing that their college and school campus is not the home they grew up in therefore not having as strong an emotional connection to the place.

The students believe the meaning of 'democratic education' to be a mix of traditional classroom learning and real world experience and takes place when an educator builds connections outside of the classroom and encourages students to explore
the community and world around them. They reflected that democratic education is being able to learn through doing and applying social skills and creativity to their own and others’ lives. One student stated that it is a type of education designed by those being educated and believes it could be defined as community or public based education. Another student felt democratic education represents a sincere exchange of ideas through unlimited communication one that creates a balanced connection between teachers and students as well as theoretical knowledge and real life practice.

**Identity Artworks and Corresponding Artist Statements**

Every Monday, over a nine week period, the OSU students were introduced to the basics of Photoshop. Utilizing their new digital artmaking skills in Photoshop they collected images to create an artwork that represents their own identity. Since this was their first time using the computer to make art and their first time making art from a big idea, students were able to produce the digital artwork free of strict guidelines, though they were given boundaries that enabled them to be confident with their artmaking skills. In order to create boundaries I navigated students to develop a theme from the big idea of identity, and they were able to interpret images through an investigation of their own identity. Before submitting their identity project, students wrote an artist statement describing their artmaking process.

Below are the questions that asked students to discuss their artwork’s meaning.

- Working with the big idea of identity, what is your artworks theme?
- Why did you choose that theme to develop the big idea of identity?
- How do these images represent your understanding of your identity?
The identity artworks (Appendix C) displayed not only a range of digital artmaking skills in their visual presentation, but also demonstrated the depth of which theme students’ investigated. The themes ranged from time, loss, family and friends, place and home, to patriotism and pride. These artworks, when accompanied with the artist statement provided an opportunity to better understand each of the research participants personal story. By challenging the students to investigate their own identity through the meaning making process of creating a digital artwork that represents them, they had to make artmaking decisions in order to construct a visual that best presents their identity to the outside world. Working through the big idea artmaking process was intimidating and frustrating at times for participants, but this artmaking experience prepared participants to discuss social issues surrounding the big idea of identity and this identity’s relationship with the big idea of community.

**Social Issue Artworks & Corresponding Artist Statements**

After the students had completed their artworks that investigated their own identity, and while continuing their collaborative work with their GEMS partners on the big idea of community, students were challenged to investigate a big idea dealing with a social issue. Social issues included the following topics gender, race, privilege, education, socio-economic status, etc. The students were directed to investigate social issues that they have interacted with because of this service-learning experience. The meaning-making in the artworks were directly related to the learning happening in the cooperative and collaborative interactions among students.
Students were also asked to write an artist statement that reflected on the following questions:

- What is your artwork’s big idea & theme?
- Why did you choose that theme to develop the big idea?
- What images, pictures did you use to make your artwork and why do they represent your big idea?
- What statement is your artwork making in connection to the social issue?
- What else would you like me to know about your artwork?

The social issue artworks and correlating artist statements (Appendix D) represent big ideas and themes ranging from power and oppression, privilege and equality, stories and emotions, power and immigration, fantasy and age, age and power of media, power and war, power and gender. The artist statements describe the students’ process of selecting and defining a big idea and their critical understanding of the theme used to investigate their own social understandings.

**Collaborative Artworks Corresponding Artist Statements**

In both Fall and Winter quarter the college and middle school students worked in cooperative groups to create a digital artwork that represents their collaborative understanding of their joined community space. I first introduced students to big ideas, and how artists use them in artmaking. I then focused the cooperative groups on the big idea of community and had the students brainstorm what a community is composed of, and more specifically what assets we each bring to our different communities, and what assets compose our joined community. Some of the assets the students talked about
were: family, friends, neighbors, animals, schools, community buildings, churches, public art, murals, transportation, sidewalks, libraries, stores, etc. One of the middle school girls defined an asset as “something special that is in a unique place”, I thought this was a great definition of an asset, and it helped the other students understand what they were looking for.

After learning the basics of using a digital camera, the cooperative groups went on a sidewalk tour encompassing the space betweens their schools to capture images that represent the assets of their shared community. I then introduced the groups to the basics of using GIMP, an Open Source equivalent to Photoshop, as an artmaking tool. Utilizing these new artmaking skills, the cooperative groups created a digital artwork that represents their collaborative understanding of their shared community. GIMP was not an easy program to use, the groups were frustrated for the first few sessions, the college students were especially frustrated, as they were learning to use Photoshop on Monday’s and learning about GIMP on Wednesdays. They found Photoshop to be much easier to understand, thought this became an interesting area of conversation about Open source software. No matter the students’ frustration level, each group was successful in creating their collaborative artwork. The students were surprised with how much they were able to accomplish in such a short amount of time and were happy with the art they created.

As the groups were close to finished with their artwork they collaboratively wrote artist statements that described their cooperative groups process of making meaning in their artwork.
The following questions were used as a guideline for describing this artmaking process:

- What theme did your cooperative group use to investigate the big idea of community?

- How did your group come to choose that theme to develop the big idea of community, or did it develop as you were working?

- Describe your artworks design. What GIMP skills did your group play with in order to create your artwork?

- What pictures did your group use from our photography field trip? What other images did your group need to locate?

- How do both sets of images represent your collaborative understanding of community?
- If time were no issue, what would be your groups next step(s) in this artwork?

- What else would you like your viewer to know about your artwork?

- Are there any questions you wish your viewer would ask when looking at your artwork?

The collaborative artworks and correlating artist statements (Appendix B) represent themes of family, friendship, pathways, interconnection, strength, imagination, inspiration, signs and communication. The artist statements describe the cooperative groups’ journey of collaboratively creating a digital artwork and how this meaning-making process of working together is represented in the artwork. It is in these artist statements that the groups describe their process of becoming socially interdependent of one another. They reflect on the negotiation process of making group decisions and how they decided on a theme to collaboratively investigate the big idea of community.
Community Celebration

At the end of the quarters, Fall 2011 and Winter 2012, I worked with the students to plan a celebration event where all members from the community were invited to come celebrate this artmaking collaboration. The flyer created and distributed for this event, along with photographs of the celebration can be found in Appendix J. Both the OSU and GEMS students invited friends, family, teachers, professors, students and other members of their joined community to accompany them as they displayed their collaborative artworks and discussed the process of making art in a cooperative group. This celebration event was an important part of the meaning-making process as it gave students the experience of not only sharing their art and artmaking process with community members, but is also another step in the reflection process of PAR.

Reflection Papers & Interviews

The college students wrote reflection papers at both the mid-term and at the end of the quarter. These papers were guided with reflective questions that served as a jumping off point for the interviews and focus groups conducted. The transcripts for these interviews can be viewed in Appendix E. Halfway through the research process, after the OSU students had completed their identity artworks and artist statements, I conducted interviews and focus groups to find out a bit more about the participant’s experiences so far. At this point in the quarter five weeks had passed, meaning that the students had been working with their community partners for five Wednesdays, totaling a little more than five hours with their partners. They had begun to get to know each other with the interview questionnaire, asset-mapped their shared community with cameras,
developed a theme within the big idea of community, had created a plan for their digital artwork and had begun working on the computer utilizing GIMP. Following PAR guidelines, the focus groups gave me better insight to the participants’ experiences while also providing the group a time of reflection through discussion. Following the recursive process of PAR, questioning, reflecting, investigating, developing a plan, implementing, refining and back to questioning (McIntrye, 2008) this was a time for us to stop and reflect on our interactions within the community so far. In this, we could ask new questions that would help guide our further investigations.

These interviews began in week five and continued through the end of the quarter. The college participants had completed their reflection papers attending to the questions listed earlier in this chapter.

The questions asked in the interviews were:

- Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

- How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

- What is a big idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

- How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

- Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.

- What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the service-learning element in the class.
Students were able to first reflect on these questions through the practice of reflective writing. The research participants were then able to expand on these questions verbally during the interview. In order to ensure that I was correctly representing each participant’s voice, I conducted member checks, allowing them to review their responses and make changes accordingly. Herr and Anderson (2005) suggest that member checks are “easily folded into the ongoing reflective component of action research, where one is assessing where the efforts thus far have taken the research” (p. 85). Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe these member checks are a critical step in the research process of establishing credibility.

In response to question one, the participants felt that the process of collaboration and collaborative artmaking requires patience, trust and respectful communication and requires you to learn how to compromise while also speaking up for yourself. Others felt that working cooperatively provides the opportunity to build on your own artmaking knowledge, and provides the unique opportunity to see things through another’s eyes. The participants reflected on the fact that as a student and an artist they each learn and create differently. By sharing these experiences and collaboratively working through informed decision making they were able to cooperatively build their knowledge and creative practice and therefore were able to achieve more than they could alone.

When asked to reflect on how working in a cooperative learning group has helped to better understand their own identity, the participants responded with statements surrounding topics of understanding and appreciating differences, learning about their own strengths and weakness to becoming aware of how their actions affect others. Being
challenged to make collaborative art helped the participants explore the role of their identity in the cooperative process while beginning to understand how diversity can promote the growth of their own social interdependence.

Working through the process of creating art about the big idea of identity and community helped participants to better understand their identity as a community member in multiple ways. One student reflected on her sense of belonging and a growing awareness of responsibility for her actions within a community. Another stated that the process of making art about the big idea of identity and community helped them to understand and distinguish what things are crucial to their life. Some told me they learned how the formation of their identity is shaped by the members of their communities, thus realizing their influence on others and the responsibility that comes with this power.

When asked how working with a community partner is challenging and/or rewarding participants shared examples of both. Working with a community partner was challenging because they were forced to think differently, and in order to learn the art of negotiation had to improve their communication skills. This was especially challenging for the international students who speak English as their second language. The participants expressed times when they were frustrated with their partner’s point of view or ways of doing, but by realizing their partners’ perspectives are important and should be valued, they were able to gain a much larger knowledge base and a broaden overall experience. Some other rewards from working with a community partner were experiences that provided them opportunities to practice communicating with others
different than they are. Experimenting with another’s innovative and inspiring ideas increased their knowledge and provided experiences that demonstrated a growth of respect and understanding of their partner’s age, race, gender and socioeconomic status.

By asking the participants to describe their experiences, both physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar the answers ranged from responses discussing the technical aspects of using GIMP to the emotional journey of being an international student. One student called the experience of learning in an unfamiliar place bittersweet. She told me that she loved the new experiences working with the girls but also wished there was more time to learn about the computer programs because she was nervous about not knowing enough about GIMP before working with her partner. It made her both excited and anxious to be working in a new school with a new person with a new computer program. Another student responded in the casual way of expressing that because she has changed classes every ten weeks at OSU she has grown accustomed to learning in new spaces and places; therefore this part of the process was very comfortable for her. Among the students who claim to be international students, for whom learning in America is a new experience, responses focused on English as their second language. Some of these students were quite nervous to work in an unfamiliar space and shared an unsettling fear that their language skills would hinder the project, and possible success of their partner. Others reflected that the whole OSU college experience is unfamiliar for them and they were excited to have the opportunity to journey off campus to a community space to learn with others. They saw this as an
experience different from their other college experiences so far and enjoyed being led out of their comfort zone.

The final question asked participants to reflect on what experiences they encountered that wouldn’t have been possible without the Service-Learning element. This prompted a vast number of answers. One participant stated that the service-learning element provided a chance to work with students of a different age group and because of this experience he stepped out of their comfort zone and dealt with feelings of struggling, refreshing and satisfaction. Some discussed their experiences with GIMP and learning to understand what Open Source is, why it exists and who can benefit from it. Participants discussed their experiences of making collaborative art, and working cooperatively with others from their community. They felt that these collaborative experiences were unique because of the service-learning project and without it they would have never been challenged and then rewarded through learning to work cooperatively. The international students described how the service-learning element provided them hands-on experience within and an understanding of American public schools. Finally, one student stated that these experiences taught him how to become a reflective thinker, one that has learned to ask himself is there another, possibly better way to express the ideas that I am grappling with.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the data collected through the community and arts-based service-learning project I facilitated in Fall 2011 and Winter 2012. I described
the research sites of The Ohio State University and Graham Expeditionary Middle School as a joined community space. I discussed my intentions of embracing Social Interdependence Theory as a PAR researcher utilizing the data collection methods of my research journal, participants’ reflective writings, artworks and correlating artist statements and interviews. I also described the creation and contents of the course curriculum for the section of Art Education 252 that I taught: *A Service-Learning Experience with the Computer in the Visual Arts*. This is the framework with which the data was collected and presented here. Finally, I described the complete summaries of data beginning with a narrative of the research process, a description of the research participants, the writings, artworks, and artist statements, ending with the reflection papers and interviews.

In the next chapter, I analyze the data I have presented in this chapter. Through analysis and interpretation I discuss implications that form assertions attending to my primary and sub-research questions through the identification of emergent themes. I also discuss conclusions and implications for further research initiatives and the field of art education.
Chapter 5: Interpretations and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter attends to the interpretations of, and conclusions drawn, from the data presented in Chapter Four. My analysis is based on this relevant data that I have seen, heard, and read throughout this research process, with a purpose of discussing the results in relationship to the questions and frameworks that have informed this study. Phillips and Carr (2010) discuss the importance of recognizing that the interpretation of any data is situated in a specific context and place because data interpretation is “personal meaning making” and “our meaning making is always partial and influenced by our own values and beliefs” (p.106). From this subjectivity it is important to remember that this study was conducted as a participatory action research study; therefore the data constructed is situated in this specific context and place. McIntrye (2008) suggests that “one aspect of PAR that makes it significant to social science research is that it is a research approach that is a theory of possibility rather than a theory of predictability” (p.67). Working within this context of possibility as a reflexive teacher and critically conscious researcher involved with PAR, I am one who “regards their research practices
as a matter of borrowing, constructing, and reconstructing research methods and
techniques to throw light on the nature, processes, and consequences of the particular
object they are studying” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p.575 as found in McIntrye,
2008, p.67). Phillips and Carr (2010) expand on this by suggesting that “research has
never been about ‘proving’ anything right, good, wrong, bad or otherwise” (p.105),
therefore my interpretations of the results of this study are not meant to prove anything,
instead, I intend to throw light on the meaning of the research questions.

The overarching question considered throughout this research process was: How
can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the
meaning making processes of collaboration and artmaking? In order to fully investigate
and offer a thoughtful response to this primary question the follow three sub-questions
were also explored.

1. How can students mutually investigate the big idea of community as a form of
social action through critical dialogue and critical reflection?

2. How can the cooperative efforts of service-learning and PAR, provide a
collaborative venue for the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of
cooperation to be explored as a means of building student’s social
interdependence?

3. How can collaborative artmaking create spaces for students to become critically
conscious through the meaning-making processes of artmaking and cooperative
learning?

I begin by attending to the primary research question of this study through a systematic
analysis of the data that investigates privilege, educational equity, socio-economic status,
race, gender, and age. Second, I discuss cooperative learning and the evidence it
provides for social consciousness through a systematic analysis of the data using the five
variables that mediate cooperation: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, group processing. I then analyze the data related to the artmaking in this study, looking for evidence for social consciousness by utilizing parts of the artmaking process: personal connections, knowledge, problem finding, boundaries, ways of working as defined by Walker (2001). I then identify and describe the emergent themes of disparity of educational norms and technology frustrations. In order to do this, I utilize data that is relevant while providing literature that supports my claims. This chapter also considers successes and challenges as an educator and implications for Graham Expeditionary Middle School, the Department of Art Education at OSU, the field of Art Education and future research initiatives.

**Answering the Primary Research Question**

The primary research question for this study, *how can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking*, was investigated over a five month participatory action research study where I facilitated two arts-based service-learning projects in a joined community space. I collected data through observations, reflective writings, artworks, artist statements, class discussions, focus groups and interviews with the college participants. Through a systematic analysis of the data I analyzed the following cultural identifiers: privilege, educational equity, socio-economic status, race, gender, and age. I looked for signifiers in the data demonstrating students’ questioning, reflecting and
understanding in regards to these identifiers and will now discuss this evidence of awareness and change as it relates to critical consciousness.

Privilege

Freire (2011) is well documented in suggesting that for the oppressed to take the liberating action of becoming more socially responsible, “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (p. 51) is necessary. In this study, participants were provided opportunities to reflect on their world and took collaborative action with their partners in order to cooperatively create art about these shared experiences. Freire (1970/2011) suggested the “world and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction” (p. 50). Through constant interaction within the world of a joined-community space, participants became conscious of the social issues they are in constant interaction with. In these spaces students were learning about social issues that affect them individually and as members of a community. One of these issues is privilege. Privilege is defined in the dictionary as a right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed only by a person beyond the advantages of most. In his interview, Richard, a junior majoring in physics and engineering at OSU, reflected on his own privilege growing up.

Working with Kyra at the middle school taught me a few things about our community and about life in general. For example, when we got to walk around with our partners to take pictures for the second time we decided to take pictures inside the school that related to our themes (music, nature, and personality). We were taking pictures of the paintings on the walls in the gym and I suggested we should go explore the music room to find pictures relating to our music theme.
She then told me that they did not have a music room in the school. This is when I realized how different the socio-economic status is here than where I grew up and what I am used to seeing. The lack of a music room in a school to me is like the lack of textbooks or a cafeteria. This was such a foreign thing to me that it made me see how different the opportunities are in different communities.

(Appendix E)

For Richard, the lack of a music room at GEMS represented an under privileged school in his mind. In a follow up conversation I asked him if there was anything at GEMS he had seen or heard about that was new to him, or perhaps he didn’t experience in school growing up. Richard told me he was surprised how often the students went on field trips around their community. His experience with field trips as a middle school student were rare special events that usually happened at the end of the school year and always included a bus ride somewhere outside his school’s community. The GEMS students go on walking field trips to different sites in their community about once a month or more. He told me that the area he grew up in would be considered suburban and even though his school had a lot of money and could afford music class there wasn’t much to walk to in his school’s community, just homes where he and his classmates lived. I asked him what he thought of GEMS location in an urban environment, blocks away from one of the largest Universities in the nation. Richard’s response was that at first you would think it would be a negative thing, that the college students would run down the neighborhood but in fact its kind of a privilege for GEMS. The school does a good job of taking advantage of what surrounds them. They’re able to walk to community centers, libraries,
public parks and OSU’s campus. Richard continued to tell me that our class was one example of this privilege. OSU was paying for me to teach Art Ed 252 as a GTA and since it was a service-learning class, it meant GEMS got all the benefits without having the extra funds to pay for it. His GEMS partner had told him that her homeroom class had visited OSU a couple times for events, presentations and workshops. Originally Richard had assumed GEMS to be an underprivileged school when compared to the school he attended growing up, due to the fact that there was no music classroom. When I asked him to think about what assets GEMS had he then considered other ways in which GEMS is privileged. He reflected on the fact that privilege doesn’t always have to have a direct correlation to money, and in the end felt that GEMS was privileged in their community location.

In their 2007 article, *Unpacking Privilege*, Karen Keifer-Boyd, Patricia M. Amburgy, and Wanda B. Knight suggest that “gaining knowledge of both the positions we occupy and the positions from which we speak enables us to take responsibility for and transform our beliefs and actions” (p. 24). In my interview and follow up conversation with Richard he showed signs of beginning to understand the position from which he speaks, and by questioning this position was starting to transform his own beliefs about what it means to be privileged.

**Educational Equity**

Trevor Cobbold (2011) suggested: “Equity in education outcomes should be seen as a dual objective incorporating both individual and social equity” (p. 4). He defined this further, suggesting,
from an individual perspective, equity in education outcomes should mean that all children receive an adequate education. From a social perspective, equity in education should mean that children from different social groups achieve similar average results. However, equity in education outcomes does not mean that all children should be expected to achieve the same results (p. 1).

Deschamps and Devos (1998) suggest, “social identity refers to a feeling of similarity to (some) others; personal identity refers to a feeling of difference in relation to the same others” (p. 3). Together students explored the components of their shared community while gaining an understanding of their partner’s educational identity in relation to their own educational identity. The participants were able to see in what ways their education is both similar and different to their others. Cipolle (2010) suggest for students that, gaining a deeper awareness and broader perspective of others often occurs as a result of working with populations from different backgrounds. Students are out of their comfort zones and see injustice and inequity for the first time. As they interact with the people they are serving, they hear people telling their stories. Putting a face on poverty breaks down stereotypes, and statistics become meaningful. (p. 11)

Working collaboratively with students who share different educational backgrounds provided participants the opportunity to gain an awareness of educational equity. In an interview with Andrew, a white male freshman OSU student, he described how his experience learning off campus, with a demographic of students unlike himself, helped him to question educational equity.
One of the social issues apparent to me throughout exploring the big idea of identity and community was the disparity of education. The fact that we could walk to this school from our gorgeous campus and enter into a partially run down and underprivileged school was very apparent to me. This fact is based on the wealth of the surrounding area which is degraded partially by the fact that so many college students live off campus and devalue the area by running down houses by partying or not taking care of them. Therefore, the rest of the non-student population is generally of lower income and this fact is apparent in the school itself. In addition to this economic issue, the fact of the matter is that almost every girl in the class was African-American. This is another issue in which the minority population of the area is most likely also in a lower economic status in a disproportional rate to that of white Americans and the OSU class was predominantly white showing also that it seems that many of us at OSU have had better opportunities as far as education and possibly even in wealth. (Appendix E)

In this statement Andrew is questioning whether his education is equitable to that of his cooperative partner. He describes his experience of walking from his OSU campus to the GEMS campus and the images that have led him to believe the two campuses are not equal. Andrew suggested that one reason the GEMS neighborhood is run down is due to the fact that college students, like himself, live around the school and do not take care of their property. This is an interesting comment, because I later found out that Andrew lives in the nearby area. He told me that before this class he never even thought that there were schools or maybe families in the area, and it made him realize that just
because he’s in college doesn’t mean he has the right to drag down another person’s school by throwing beer cans on his lawn. Andrew told me that after getting to know his GEMS partner Magdah he felt bad for the times he walked by a house that had obviously had a party, due to all the trash on the front lawn and street, because the house was only a short distance from Magdah’s school.

I asked Andrew to tell me a little more about what he meant when said that every girl in the class was African-American. He told me that he was surprised because he’s never walked into a class at OSU that wasn’t mostly all white. I asked if he thought other classes at OSU were the same, or maybe there were classes where White students are the minority. He didn’t think so, because since he’s been in this class (Art Ed 252) he’s noticed when he walks around campus that OSU doesn’t have a high percentage of African-American students. Andrew told me he could be wrong, but walking into GEMS and seeing that the greater University community was mostly African-American made him think about the fact that OSU was opposite, and he found that odd. I asked what was odd about that, and he told me it didn’t make sense that there wasn’t a higher percentage of African American students at OSU, since there is such a high number living only minutes from campus. I asked Andrew why he thought that was the case. He pondered this for a minute and then told me that it wasn’t easy to get into OSU. He said he knew from his freshman year of high school that he had to get good grades, play sports and be involved in other activities if he wanted to go to college. He said that at his high school everyone knew they were going to college, and his teachers supported that, they helped him and his friends prepare for college. He told me that his parents even got him a tutor
to help him score higher on the SAT. I asked if he thought this was the same at GEMS. Andrew told me he didn’t know, but from what he had seen so far, he didn’t think the school had the money to provide all the help he got. He also said he had no idea what kind of high school Magdah will end up going to, but he thinks the school will play a big part in deciding if she gets into college or not.

In my follow up conversation with Andrew he demonstrated the start of awareness in regards to educational equity. Because of this service-learning experience he became socially conscious of his college’s community and learned that he shares the space with other schools and families. With an understanding that he shares this joined community with other students he showed signs of developing a social responsibility for how his actions can affect others. Andrew also told me that since taking Art Ed 252 he noticed a racial disparity among the students at GEMS and OSU. He didn’t know why this was, but for the first time in his education he was becoming aware of this fact and was questioning it.

**Socio-Economic Status**

Socio-economic status is the measure of an individual's or family’s economic and social position in relation to others, based on their income, education and occupation (Committee on Pediatric Research, 2000). Crnic and Lamberty (1994) suggested the impact of socio-economic status on children's readiness for school.

The segregating nature of social class, ethnicity, and race may well reduce the variety of enriching experiences thought to be prerequisite for creating readiness...
to learn among children. Social class, ethnicity, and race entail a set of 'contextual
givens' that dictate neighborhood, housing, and access to resources that affect
enrichment or deprivation as well as the acquisition of specific value systems.
(p.102)

In the following statement Andrew reflects on the socio-economic status of the people
who make up the University community of OSU.

When walking around N. High St., the area seemed to be very outdated and run
down which surprised me for being so close to such a beautiful campus.
However, I began to think and realize that the people that live in the area around
and beyond the street are low income individuals since they are full time students
that do not have high paying jobs. Similarly, there were other types of lower
income individuals such as homeless who might have a very different view of the
community than us students might have. In fact, it is most likely to be much more
dismal view of their surroundings possibly affected by their life experiences and
the way they got to where they are today. (Appendix E)

In a follow up conversation with Andrew, that occurred towards the end of the quarter, I
asked Andrew if he felt that these two groups of lower income individuals, students and
homeless, are viewed the same by society. He told me that he didn’t think they were.
That even though he is broke and in debt due to being a student, society deems that
acceptable, but to be on the streets because you don’t have a job isn’t given the same
respect. He went on to say that he always thought one’s socio-economic standing was a
direct reflection of how hard you work in school and in your job, but now he’s not so
sure. After being exposed to students that don’t have all the resources he did at their age he wonders if perhaps our socio-economic standing as a kid has a greater influence on our socio-economic standing as an adult. Andrew told me that he now believes that even if someone wants to work really hard in school, or at a job, if you don’t have the same resources as others with higher economic status, you can’t get as far in life. He said it doesn’t seem fair, and that when you hear amazing stories of people who have defined the odds, like Chris Gardner, who Will Smith played in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*, it’s an awesome story because it doesn’t happen very often. For reference, the movie Andrew refers to was based on Gardner's bestselling autobiography portraying his personal struggle of establishing himself as a stockbroker, with no college degree, while managing fatherhood and homelessness. Gardner is now the CEO of his own stockbrokerage firm, Gardner Rich & Company. I asked Andrew why he thought Chris Gardner’s story was so special. What made Chris Gardner different from other success stories like the recent movie, *The Social Network*, about Facebook’s creator Mark Zuckerberg. He told me that Gardner was an African American man who had an abusive father, ended up in foster care, never got a college degree and was homeless on the streets with kids. Zuckerberg was a rich white kid who went to good schools growing up and graduated from Harvard. Andrew’s final statement was that one had every advantage and the other had none, and that’s why society deems his debt as acceptable, because its expected that with his education he will be able to get a good job and get himself out of debt. These comments display Andrew’s awareness of the elements that compose socio-
economic status, income, education and occupation, and his social consciousness of his and others placement within these defining standards.

In my interview with Richard he also reflected on how working through the processes of collaboration and artmaking helped him to explore his identity in relation to his socio-economic status.

Through working with the big idea of identity I have been able to get a better grasp of who I am and how I fit into society. When working with the big idea of community it adds onto this and shows me how my identity compares to others and how to build on our unique ideas and personalities and has helped me explore certain social issues in the community around me. One example is the socio-economic differences of the community on campus that I am a part of. When working on the theme of community with Kyra I got to see how different it was to be in an environment where some things I take for granted on a daily basis are absent. (Appendix E)

I asked Richard to tell me more about what socio-economic differences in the community he was referring to, or what things he took for granted on a daily basis. Richard told me he still couldn’t believe the girls didn’t have a music room and music teacher. He assumed that every school in the nation had music classes, just like they have reading, writing and math. Richard continued to explain that he understands if a school doesn’t have enough money for everything, then they’re not going to cancel math or reading in order to have music class, he just never thought of it before. I asked if he really liked music class as a kid, as I was curious to know why he noticed the absence of music at
GEMS, he told me no, not at first. He said he used to hate going to music in elementary school, but in fifth grade he had a to choose an instrument to play and discovered he really liked playing the saxophone. Richard told me he played the saxophone all the way through middle school and joined the marching band in high school. He even considered joining the marching band here at OSU and thinks his experience in the marching band was great to have on his college application. He told me that was the point, if his elementary school hadn’t have had a music class, he would have never been forced to play an instrument and he would have missed out on learning how much he liked playing the saxophone and marching in the band in high school. He felt bad for his partner Kyra, because her school didn’t have the money to buy instruments or hire a music teacher; she was missing out on music class, something he had taken for granted his whole life.

I found my conversations with Andrew and Richard to be extremely rewarding. Due to his experiences in a joined community space Andrew, was questioning how a fortunate socio-economic standing as a kid can have a positive influence on your socio-economic standing as an adult. Andrew was becoming socially conscious of the fact that socio-economic status is not always a direct result of hard work, but also has to do with the luck of your upbringing and how this influences your advantages in regards to opportunities in education and occupations. His comment that a low income student and low income homeless person are not respected the same by society demonstrated his awareness that there are other factors beside money that determine a persons success. As a result of his interactions with his middle school partner Kyra at GEMS, Richard was questioning how socio-economics had played a part in forming his identity. Because
Richard grew up in an area that could afford music class in his schools, he considers music to be a part of who he is. Richard’s awareness of how socio-economic status has affected him lead to a critical consciousness of how socio-economic status affects others including his GEMS partner Kyra.

Race

In chapter three I discuss my privileges of being a White researcher, otherwise defined as a privileged absence (Pillow, 2003), an absence that affords me both the privilege and option of hiding my identity in ways that colleagues of color cannot (Gordon, 2005). When I first taught the service-learning section of the Art Ed 252 course, I was not comfortable talking about race with my students. This was recently pointed out to me by my advisor and course supervisor, Dr. Karen Hutzel. Hutzel commented that in a class she visited, early on in my teaching at OSU, a student commented on the race of their collaborative partner and instead of me addressing this comment I redirected the conversation, in an attempt to keep it safe. But safe for who? Probably myself. After teaching Art Ed 252 for three consecutive years I am now conscious of my early attempts to be part of what McIntyre (1997) declares to be the culture of niceness, by which she means, white researchers avoid confrontation in an attempt to keep relationships pleasant at all costs.

This culture of niceness, this neutralization of race, privileges whites and marginalizes non-whites further by making others’ cultures and traditions invisible, trivializing their experiences and contributions (Agyeman, 2008). Thompson (1998) insists “there is no such thing as racial innocence; there is only racial responsibility or
irresponsibility” (p. 524). In my continuous attempts of becoming a racially responsible academic, researcher and educator I have analyzed the data from this study looking for areas where race was addressed and possible areas where I was racially irresponsible.

In this study the collaborative artmaking was centered and guided through the big idea of community. Together students formed a theme of community to guide the meaning-making in their artwork. In Molly and Dasanique’s collaborative artist statement they state: “These images represent our collaborative idea of community by showing our community is made up of all different colors, the colors in nature or the different races that come together and make us a community” (Figure 15). When Molly and Dasanique presented their artwork to the class I asked them to say a bit more about what they meant when they said our community is made up of all different colors. Dasanique explained that they wanted to show that communities are full of lots of colors, different colors in nature, buildings, clothing, cars and people. I again asked what she meant by colors when talking about people. She looked at Molly and said, she’s White and I’m Black. We wanted to show that a community is full of different colors in every way, even in the color of peoples’ skin. At this time the girls had been standing in front of the class a bit longer than other groups had, and with no questions from the class and no other questions from me the class clapped and they sat down. In this example I feel that I brought attention to race, but didn’t do anything with it. As an educator looking for ways to become more racially responsible I am still unclear as to how I could have handled this moment better. Could I have asked the girls or class more questions, and if so, what questions? At the moment it didn’t feel right putting the girls on the spot when
they were standing in front of their peers, but then I’m left to wonder if this feeling of discomfort was only my own? Did I only assume the girls wanted to sit down, or did I want them to sit down because I didn’t know how to continue the discussion at the time? Should I have pushed on with this discussion, did I miss an opportunity to talk about race with students?

In an interview with Wil, an OSU senior majoring in finance and business, I asked him how working in a cooperative learning group has pushed him to better understand his own identity?

Working with the idea of community has helped me to learn more about the culture of a demographic – middle- to lower-class African-American girls – that I have never interacted with before. As a twenty year-old Caucasian male, questions would quickly arise if I proactively spent time around teenage African-American girls. This fact alone represents not only how poorly our society has developed, but how far we have to go if we are to return to a state of comfort and understanding among one another. Anytime a male attempts to interact with a female, no matter how good his intentions, he is looked at with intense scrutiny. This is exacerbated when the issue of race is added to the equation. If it were not for this service-learning element of class, I would not have had the opportunity to interact with and learn about this particular demographic of society in such an in-depth way. Because this activity was conducted in a controlled environment without a judgmental or negative attitude, I was able to focus on learning from my community partner, rather than ensuring that my actions could not be
misinterpreted. Once I look past the stereotypes traditionally levied on young, African-American females, I have begun to learn a great deal more. For example, my community partner enjoys all types of music, not just rap, as one may be quick to stereotype. Additionally, she is very family oriented, and has a sound relationship with her mother (rather than a rebellious one, as most people expect of teenagers). Therefore, this collaborative experience has helped to shatter some stereotypes that I had previously encountered (although not necessarily subscribed to). At the same time, I believe that interacting with me has helped to provide my community partner with experiences that she otherwise might not have enjoyed. For example, I hope she has learned that not all college-aged males are sex-driven drunks who only worry about their next beer and view females as objects. Rather, there are many of us who are educated and cultured, and take a more moral-based approach to life. As a result, I hope this experience will help to break down some of the barriers that she may see in older Caucasian males. This would result in a mutually beneficial experience. (Appendix E)

In this statement Wil makes many powerful comments regarding not only race, but also how gender, age and race have led to stereotypes that he has encountered but not subscribed to. He discusses how this service-learning experience provided a controlled environment in which it was safe for an older Caucasian male to interact with a younger African-American female. Each time I read over the transcript of Wil’s interview I am plagued with questions I could have asked him, but did not. Wil’s interview clearly
demonstrates that this type of experience is an area to further investigate students’ notions of race, an area I now feel I could have addressed further and in more depth.

The Committee on Pediatric Research (2000) suggests: “Although race historically has been viewed as a biological construct, it is now known to be more accurately characterized as a social category that has changed over time and varies across societies and cultures” (p.1349). In their 2007 article, Keifer-Boyd, Amburgy, and Knight outline an activity that invites participants to reflect on race as a social category as they suggest “race is a social construction that affects every aspect of our lives [West, 2001] (p.23). In the race privilege activity participants make a list of things they do during the course of a typical week, then are to imagine they have awakened one morning to find they are a different race. Through a series of questions asked, the participants are challenged to think through their unacknowledged privilege. The activity concluded by having participants “consider the ways in which cultural practices create, maintain, and perpetuate racial privilege” (Keifer-Boyd, Amburgy, & Knight, 2007, p. 21). The questions asked were: examine your identity in terms of race, picture yourself as a one of a different race, as a person of a dissimilar race, consider how your life might be different, reflect on racial privilege, and then probes for participants to take action. In my future service-learning experiences, and courses taught as an assistant professor, I intend to incorporate this activity, utilizing the questions they asked of participants, in order to better guide reflections on race as a social category.
Gender

In the second half of the quarter I had the college students create an artwork that investigated a social issue they have encountered through working and learning cooperatively with their community partner. I explained to them that an issue is an idea or concept that has opposing views, or is “an idea about which at least two distinct points of view can be held and articulated” (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002, p.1, as found in Chang, Lim & Kim, 2012, p. 22). In order to help guide the students to understand how to create meaning in these artworks we accessed the PBS Art 21 documentary series. Students investigated some of the social issues contemporary artists were dealing with through the big ideas of power, change, history, consumption, systems, spirituality, stories, etc. Using a big idea to investigate their social issue provided students with boundaries and in turn helped them to make meaning within their artmaking (Walker, 2001).

Molly, a female sophomore majoring in biology at OSU, was struck with the fact that we were only working with girls from the middle school due to funding from research stating that young females are not as assertive with their learning in regards to technology. She found it interesting that her cooperative group only included middle school girls and not middle school boys in response to the social issue of gender equality. In her artist statement Molly states, “my artworks big idea is power and the theme is equality. The social issue I am investigating with this artwork is the equality of genders” (Figure 48). Her artwork visually represents young females attempting to break through “the hypothetical glass ceiling” while underwater. Molly explains this further in her artist statement.
When you are underwater it is easier to sink then it is to swim upward. We cannot breathe underwater so we must hold our breath until we reach the top. Just like it is easier to give up than it is to make a difference and fight for equality. The women are reaching up with what appears to be a torch of light that shatters the glass ceiling, which bursts the bubble that women are trapped in. I felt women being underwater was a better metaphor then the glass ceiling because it is easier to relate to the feeling of drowning or being underwater. The light that breaks the glass represents the empowerment of women speaking out against inequality and gaining some of that power. (Figure 48)

In my interview with Molly I asked her to explain how this artwork expanded her knowledge on the social issue she dealt with in her cooperative group.

In my artwork I explored power, specifically the equality of men and women.

Sexism in the business world still exists. There are still barriers due to prejudice on the basis of age, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation, and/or sex.

Although generally illegal, these practices are prevalent in most countries. I thought it was important to look into this because I will be graduating in a few years and going out in the business world to start a career. In my major now which is math and science based, it is male dominated. So this issue is very close to home for me; I need to be aware of the issues I most likely will have to face. In order for me to be successful I need to be educated about the issue because the first step to change is education. (Appendix E)
In my interview with Molly she describes how working in a cooperative learning group helped to deepen her awareness of the social issues she and others are affected by and reflects on the possibility that she could be an agent of change. By investigating the big idea of power in relation to gender equality, Molly demonstrated that she is making attempts to become more critically conscious of the social issues affecting herself and her cooperative partners.

Age

Finally, the last key term I will discuss in this section is age and this begs the question of whether or not age is truly a factor when thinking of maturity and knowledge base. The college participants were entering freshmen through returning seniors, with ages ranging from seventeen through what one student described as old enough for her own children to also be attending college. The GEMS’s girls ranged from sixth through eighth grade and ten through fourteen years old. This means that there was only a three year age gap between some of the participants but, even so, some of the college students expressed a feeling of seniority because they were old enough to be attending college. When this study began, many of the college students felt that they would need to be the teacher, mentor the girls, and the one in charge of the learning taking place due to the fact that they were older. In preparation for their collaborative work, I asked the college students to write reflections on Carmen that answered: What are some important things to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners? Stephanie expressed the following,
Some important things to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners are their age, gender, and knowledge. They are younger girls, so their interests may be quite different than ours. Also, we have to understand that they might not know anything about computers or digital cameras so we may have to be more patient with them. (Appendix I)

Throughout this study, similar comments were made by the OSU participants that expressed a feeling of responsibility for their GEMS’s partner due to the fact that they were older and this, they felt, naturally made them mentors. Seeing this as a recurring theme, I held a class discussion with the college students to discuss the importance of age. I started by explaining my observations having noticed that some people feel responsible for the girls’ learning because they are older and asked how they felt about this. One student shared that he did feel responsible for his partner in the beginning of this project, that he thought he needed to be a good role model and help his partner learn how to use a computer. I asked if he still felt that way. He said yes, he still wanted to be a good role model, but no, not responsible for her learning anymore. After working with his partner for a few weeks he realized that his GEMS’s partner knew just as much about computers as he did and was picking up GIMP faster than he was.

A different student agreed, she was surprised how quickly her GEM’s partner learned GIMP, but she still needed to make sure her group’s artwork had a strong message and meaning and was not just about something simple. Another student asked what is wrong with simple; she told the class that she thought some of the most meaningful concepts are simple and direct so not to assume all our artworks have to be
complex in order to be successful. Another student agreed with this and continued by stating he didn’t think age was a factor when it came to maturity or knowledge, he believed it had to do with life experiences. He told the class that his partner was much more mature than he was at her age. His partner had experienced some things in life that he never had, such as dealing with her parents’ divorce and as the oldest child helping to raise her little siblings since she was twelve. He told the class that his partner was responsible for taking her brothers and sisters home after school, feeding them and helping them with homework and that she was basically acting as the second parent and wasn’t even a teenager yet. He went on that as a twenty-one year old he had never been responsible for caring for anyone else other than himself, so who was he to say that just because his GEMS’s partner was younger meant she knew less or was less mature. A different student agreed with this and shared a similar story of her partner dealing with what she defined as some heavy things for a ten-year old. She also felt that age wasn’t as strong a factor as education and life experiences. I asked her what she meant when she said education. She expanded on her statement that perhaps age doesn’t matter at all, that what matters is what you have been exposed to and taught in life. She said that there are people who don’t learn to read, don’t attend school, but are taught through doing, stories and hands-on experience. She said that just because we’ve all been lucky enough to go to school and are in college doesn’t mean we are necessarily smarter than those who don’t. A different student agreed and laughed when he told the class to just rent the movie “Good Will Hunting”, a movie about a young janitor at a prestigious college, who had not attended college, who solved math equations that only a genius could.
This discourse surrounding age proved to be a very interesting area within this study. At the end of the service-learning project I met with the GEM’s girls to discuss their experiences with the collaboration. Their answers followed patterns of enjoyment from working with their OSU partners to sharing similar technology frustrations. One of the most interesting comments reflected on age as a recurring theme. She stated that she thought because her OSU partner was older than her she expected him to know a lot more than her. I asked what she meant by knowing a lot more, and she explained that she figured since he was in college he would know everything about computers and the art they were supposed to be making. But, since he wasn’t studying art or had ever heard of GIMP she knew more than him. Another girl agreed with her, saying that she really liked her partner, but wished she spoke her mind more. She felt that her partner was really nice but didn’t disagree with her at all, like she was worried she was going to hurt her feelings. The girl told us that at GEMS they were used to people disagreeing and fighting for what they thought was a good idea. I commented that perhaps her partner was trying to be respectful and didn’t want to take control of their artwork. She said it would have been more respectful for her to treat her normal, not like a little kid who couldn’t handle herself. I asked why she didn’t tell her partner this and she said she didn’t want to hurt her feelings, which I pointed out was the same way she thought her partner felt, that they both were worried about hurting each other’s feelings. She agreed with this and then said that when she goes to college she’s going to remember to treat kids like adults, because that is how they want to be treated. I asked the other girls if they wanted to go to college
and others said yes and that by working with their OSU partners they realized they were just as smart as them and that maybe college wasn’t as hard as they thought.

Through these areas of discourse with both groups of participants the topic of age became a very interesting social debate. For some participants age was not a factor they had considered as important when beginning this study; for others who had made assumptions about age, these assumptions and their understandings had been challenged. From these experiences, I believe age to be an important issue worthy of further investigation in the future. Art education is concerned with reaching all ages of students and needs to devote time and effort in order to better understand how age is relevant in the field of art education.

Summary

In order to attend to the primary research question for this study, how can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking, I systematically analyzed the data through the lens of cultural identifiers, including privilege, educational equity, socio-economic status, race, gender, and age. I found signifiers in the data that demonstrated students’ questioning, reflecting and understanding in regards to these key terms and have described how this evidence of awareness and change relates to a growth in critical consciousness.

When one is becoming socially conscious they are “developing a more accurate understanding of the world” (Cipolle, 2010, p. 156). The implications stated in this section are that students can achieve this heightened understanding of their world by
developing a deeper awareness of self and others while developing a broader perspective of others and social issues. Participants in this study demonstrated that they were able to explore their own critical social consciousness by working through the meaning-making processes of artmaking and cooperative learning. It was in these meaning-making spaces that I observed the socially conscious behavior of participants reflecting their own assumptions and understandings with their other(s), or as Freire (1970/2011) suggests, “they ‘re-consider’, through the ‘considerations’ of others, their own previous ‘consideration’” (p. 112). I will now discuss cooperative learning and the evidence it provides for social consciousness.

Cooperative Learning: Evidence for Social Consciousness

Cooperative learning as defined by D. W. Johnson and Johnson (1994, 1999, 2009) is the instructional use of students in small groups so that they may work together in order to maximize their own and each other’s learning. In this study cooperative learning was facilitated through practices of participatory action research and service-learning. Utilizing the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation from Social Interdependence Theory I systematically analyzed the data looking for signifiers in students’ actions, writings, discussions, and artworks that provide evidence of growth of social consciousness. Attending to this site of inquiry, I first review the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation from Social Interdependence Theory. I then use each of the five variables to analyze and interpret how the cooperative processes within service-learning and PAR enhanced these components of cooperation and
ultimately built social interdependence among students. Finally, I discuss how cooperative learning contributed to social consciousness.

**Five Variables that Mediate the Effectiveness of Cooperation**

D. W. Johnson and Johnson claim that “the values inherently taught by cooperative efforts include commitment to one’s own and others’ success and well-being, commitment to the common good, and the view that facilitating and promoting the success of others is a natural way of life” (2009, p. 372). The five variables, inherently taught by cooperative efforts that make cooperation work are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing. Positive interdependence occurs when individuals are aware that their performance affects the success of their group-mates and in turn creates an intrinsic responsibility that increases their efforts to achieve. Positive interdependence intrinsically bonds the members of a group together, resulting in an increase in an individual’s feelings of personal responsibility and accountability. Individual accountability is present when an individual feels responsible for their collaborators’ welfare as well as for his or her own. Participants understand and believe that their performance affects the outcomes of their fellow collaborators (Matsui, Kakuyama & Onglatco, 1987). Positive interdependence results in promotive interaction, and negative interdependence results in oppositional interaction. Promotive interaction occurs as group members encourage and facilitate each other in their collaborative efforts in order to accomplish their common goals. Also, positive interdependence does more than simply motivate individuals to try harder; through promotive interaction, it facilitates the
development of new insights and discoveries (Gabbert, Johnson, & Johnson, 1986; D. W. Johnson & Johnson 1981b; D. W. Johnson, Skon, & Johnson, 1980; Skon, Johnson, & Johnson, 1981). The appropriate use of interpersonal social skills is needed for authentic collaboration and therefore individuals must be both taught and motivated to use them. “Unskilled group members cannot cooperate effectively” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 369). Group processing occurs when group members collaboratively reflect on how successfully they are functioning and then make decisions about which actions to continue and which need to be changed. I now use these five variables to systematically analyze the data looking for evidence of social consciousness within the cooperative learning processes of collaboration, service-learning, and PAR.

**Positive Interdependence**

Positive interdependence, when individuals are aware that their performance affects the success of their group-mates, does more than simply motivate individuals to try harder; it creates intrinsic responsibility forces, or what Campbell (1958) calls “entitativity”, a term which encompasses a group’s internal consciousness as they are pledged together as a unified and coherent whole (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Building on the definition of entitativity, one of the underlining tenets of PAR, as described by McIntrye (2008), is its collective commitment to investigation. In service-learning, participants share equal responsibility in creating reciprocal partnerships where they are both teachers and learners working collaboratively. In Chuan’s midterm interview he expressed the following.
Everyone in a cooperative group has his or her own function that is irreplaceable. A cooperative group is just like a body system and each person has his or her duties to work individually. But since it’s a body system, each one’s function should be connected together then it will work vividly. Everyone has his or her own position and different value considering which part you have made contribution to. (Appendix E)

Many of the participants shared similar comments with me. Reflecting on an understanding that by working collaboratively they felt they were not only supporting their group members, but were themselves supported. In my observations, participants’ awareness that their performance affected the success of their group-mates grew stronger and more apparent throughout the study. Hence, the mutually-empowering processes of service-learning and the collective commitments of PAR built intrinsic responsibility forces that helped create the collaborative environments needed to foster positive interdependence among participants.

In my interview with Molly she describes how working in a cooperative learning group created intrinsic responsibility forces within herself. Over the course of this project I learned some things about myself. I already knew that I would rather work on a project by myself than in a group. I thought I was more of the laid back person, meaning I don’t like to take charge in group situations. Both my middle school partner and my college student partner were both more shy than I was, so I had to step up and take the lead in the first few weeks. I found out that I like doing that. I liked knowing that others were
counting on me, I felt like I was able to be more involved in the project because of this which made me want to give one hundred percent each time. I like bouncing ideas off other people. This was the first class that I wanted to help others do their best as well, so I wanted to hear what my partners had to share. It taught me not to be so close minded, and as bad as it sounds, it taught me that sometimes my ideas are not always the best. I think our artwork was better because there were three very different people working on it, making it more relatable to a wider audience. This experience taught me that I can be a leader in a group, and that I need to be more open minded. It will not only better my art, but it will better me as a person as well. (Appendix E)

In this statement Molly expressed that she liked knowing others were counting on her and that this feeling made her want to try her best because others were counting on her. I asked Molly if this feeling of responsibility of others was new for her. She told me that she has been in college for over a year and this is the first time she was ever motivated to care about a classmate’s success. Molly expressed that this feeling made her want to help her partners do as well as they could and she knew that since they were more shy than her, it meant she needed to get the ball rolling. I asked her if she had to take charge and be the leader every class. She told me no, that after the first couple weeks they were more comfortable with each other and they were all motivated to do their best.

In my interview and conversation with Molly she displays and describes the intrinsic responsibility forces of positive interdependence. Molly tells her story of how
she became aware that her performance affects the success of her group-mates and how this growth in social consciousness intrinsically motivated her to try harder.

**Individual Accountability**

D.W. Johnson & Johnson (2009) suggest that “failing oneself is bad, but failing others as well as oneself is worse” (p. 368), thereby creating feelings of responsibility and accountability among group members. Over the two ten week sessions this study took place, I observed an almost perfect attendance of participants. There were only a few times a participant was absent and those absences were due to severe illness or family emergencies. In my interview with Shantae, I asked her to describe how working in a cooperative learning group helped her to better understand her identity. She told me:

I learned what it felt like to be responsible for someone else. If I didn’t show up I wasn’t just skipping class, I was skipping out on my partner and that felt worse. I didn’t feel well one day, and normally I would have just stayed home, but knowing Mia would be there and I would let her down made me get out of bed and go to GEMS. (Appendix E)

In this statement Shantae demonstrates feelings of responsibility and accountability for her GEMS partner. I asked Shantae if she felt these feelings toward her other classes at OSU—guilty feelings if she skipped or missed class. Shantae told me that she kind of did, but she could quickly get over it. She said that her minor guilty feelings of missing class were because of the professor, and if she didn’t like the professor, she didn’t feel guilty at all. Shantae told me that she has never felt guilty for missing class when she is sick, even if she really liked the teacher. If she was sick she always stayed home and
never thought twice about it, it was normal for her and her friends. Shantae said this experience was different because she knew Mia was counting on her she wanted to be in class, even if she had a cold. And since she didn’t have a fever she wasn’t going to get Mia sick, so staying home wouldn’t be the right thing to do.

The GEMS principal also mentioned to me that he noticed the girls’ attendance was better on the days we were going to be working with them. He told me some students had asked their parents to change appointments after school to ensure they would be able to be present and working with their partners. Through my observations of my participants’ attendance, and discussions with students and the principal, it is clear that attendance in this study demonstrates individual accountability among participants.

**Promotive Interaction**

Promotive interaction can be characterized by: group members acting in trusting and trustworthy ways, exchanging needed resources, such as information and materials, providing efficient and effective help and assistance to group mates, being motivated to strive for mutual benefit, influencing each other’s efforts to achieve the group’s goals, challenging each other’s reasoning and conclusions in order to promote higher quality decision making and greater creativity, and exploring different points of view (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2008, 2009). In order to better understand where promotive interaction occurred within this study’s cooperative learning, I asked participants to describe their experiences working collaboratively with their partners. In an interview with Chuan, he states:
By having attended a cooperative learning group, I would like to say I really get an understanding of the old saying, two minds are better than one. Things can go more smoothly and vividly via sharing different ideas, joining hands to coping with difficulties, frequently coming up with new constructive suggestions and then make a new map. (Appendix E)

In my interview with Bao he told me:

As a learner and artist, I’ve learned that when we have different ideas, we can talk about them and explain to each other why we think the way we do, and then we can make a more informed decision together. (Appendix E)

When reflecting on the cooperative experience Lily stated:

Each artist has their own unique style and the art is not truly collaborative unless everyone’s individuality is expressed. This point was emphasized while working with the middle school girls. Because my partners and I have many differences I learned that we need to be respectful and listen to one another’s ideas before reaching a decision rather than focusing on our own opinions. Although this may be frustrating to some, I think that collaboration pays off in the end because so many original ideas are brought to the table and combined to create a unique piece. (Appendix E)

In each of these students’ statements they demonstrate characteristics of how the cooperative learning built promotive interaction among students. Chuan, Bao, and Lily describe similar experiences of being motivated to strive for mutual benefit and by acting in trustworthy ways, they were able to challenge each other’s cooperative group
members’ reasoning while exploring each other’s different points of view. In my interview with Richard, he expands on this type of promotive interaction found in cooperative learning.

The process of doing this project together creates many opportunities to teach, as well as learn, for both Kyra and I. The collaborative art making aspect of the service-learning can be challenging at times because we will both want to do something that interferes with what the other had in mind. But I think that is kind of the point because you end up having to make a compromise or a sacrifice to make the piece represent both your personalities instead of just one. It ends up containing different qualities that make it unique because neither person would have made it that way on their own. This is the entire purpose of collaboration: to build off of each other’s thoughts and ideas to create something new that portrays a part of everyone involved, and in the end, the work is better because of the multiple minds that were involved in the creation. (Appendix E)

In this one statement Richard touches on how cooperative learning is not always easy; it is in fact challenging at times. He goes on to say that he thinks this is the point, that in cooperative learning you have to compromise. In a follow up conversation, I asked Richard if he could tell me a bit more about what he meant about compromise and sacrifice in cooperative learning. He told me that when working in a group everyone can’t always have the best idea, and that you have to find a way to actually listen and trust that your partner is listening to you. He said it was hard at first to admit that his idea may not be the best and that’s what he meant by sacrifice; like you have to swallow your
pride in order to create something better than you could on your own. He told me that if you can give into this cooperative process he feels you end up with a richer piece of work because of the combination of many unique people’s ideas. Richard continued to tell me that in his physics engineering classes at OSU, it can get somewhat competitive, and that they don’t do a lot of cooperative learning. I asked him his opinion on this. He thought for a moment, then told me that it’s funny, once he’s out in the real world working he will have to be collaborative in his job if he wants to be successful, especially if he wants to run a company some day. He said the stories of really successful people always talk about how well they work with others and how the best bosses are those that have confidence in the people they hire, and trust them to share their newest creative ideas. I asked him if he thought he could benefit from cooperative learning in his physics engineering classes. Richard told me yes, that after this experience he thinks he’d like to give it a try, because he’s curious to find out how cooperative learning could help him better understand these intense things he’s learning about.

From my dialog with Richard I believe he demonstrated a growth in awareness of the benefits of cooperative learning. He describes his process of learning to understand that his ideas may not always be the best and by cooperatively sharing his thoughts with others he can build something better than on his own. He progressed from thinking this way of learning was a sacrifice, to a compromise, and explained that perhaps cooperative methods of learning could benefit him in his physics engineering classes at OSU. Through these types of negotiations in cooperative learning, participants, including Richard were able to promote higher quality decision making, greater creativity and took
a step further in becoming critically conscious by gaining an awareness of how their actions can mutually benefit their own, and others learning.

**The Appropriate Use of Social Skills**

In order for group members to coordinate their efforts in an attempt to achieve mutual goals, participants must “(a) get to know and trust each other; (b) communicate accurately and unambiguously; (c) accept and support each other; and (d) resolve conflicts constructively” (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p. 24). The appropriate use of social skills can promote higher achievement and more importantly, serve as a great asset in building stronger relationships that are positive and supportive (D. W. Johnson, 2003; D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 2005, 2008, 2009). As a form of cooperative learning, service-learning is a critical and experiential approach to education which, when based on the idea of reciprocal learning, can benefit both parties in the learning equation (Hutzel, 2007). In order for this reciprocal partnership to be beneficial, the appropriate use of social skills was enforced at the beginning of this PAR study.

On the first day of the study, it was explained to participants that in order to be successful when working collaboratively they needed to be aware of, and practice improving, their social skills in conversation, negotiation, problem-solving and listening.

In my interview with Andrew he describes the process he and his partner Magdah experienced in order to coordinate their efforts and fine-tune their social skills.

> Working in a cooperative learning group to make a collaborative artwork was a little challenging at first for a variety of reasons. The first of which stemmed from the partner I was selected to work with, as she is a very introverted
individual with a very artistic focus while I am a very extroverted personality with a stout disinterest in art. This personality combination proved to be difficult the first day and slightly awkward up until the second day we worked together and she became frustrated with the laptop we were working with. Out of her frustration she began to make some comments about the computer and her dislike in Mac’s operating system in which I shared the same sentiment as we both had been advocates of PC for our entire lives. From then on she began to be more open to responding to questions and is now more likely to speak freely while working with our artwork. Even though we’re very different people we’ve been able to work well together and I think we do a good job of giving each other ideas and help and the few times we’ve disagreed on things we’ve been able to work it out. (Appendix E)

In Andrew’s statement he talks about each of the four components of social skill building D. W. Johnson & Johnson (2008) claim group members need in order to coordinate their efforts: “(a) getting to know and trust each other; (b) communicate accurately and unambiguously; (c) accept and support each other; and (d) resolve conflicts constructively” (p. 24). Andrew told me that when he and Magdah were first getting to know one another it was both challenging and awkward because of how different their personalities were. He then described how through a shared frustration of using a MAC they began to communicate better and less ambiguously. Andrew said that even though they are very different people, they grew to accept one another and supported each other
and finally stated that the few times they disagreed they were able to resolve their conflicts constructively.

Even though Andrew described how he and Magdah were successfully able to use their social skills in their cooperative learning group, he expressed in his interview that he wasn’t sure it was the best experience to make art.

While working with another partner can be beneficial personally, I am not sure I am convinced it is a very effective way for art to be created. I found that when different personalities such as mine and my partner’s are combined, it is difficult to find the place where you contribute to the process as well as there being a difference in interests. (Appendix E)

Towards the end of the quarter, around five weeks after I conducted my interview with Andrew I asked him if he still felt this way. He told me yes, he’s still not a huge fan of making collaborative art, and maybe it’s because he still doesn’t consider himself an artist, but that he doesn’t think this experience was only about the artmaking. I asked what he thinks the experience was about then. He said he focused on the other parts of the class and thinks the important parts of class were the times they got to explore the community and GEMS. Looking back to my interview transcript I re-read Andrews comments to him.

Through this service-learning experience, I honestly do not believe I have encountered anything that I would not have without it beside one thing. I doubt that I would have ever gone into the community for the sole purpose of finding defining characteristics of our community in the small things. I anticipated a
difference based on the fact that women tend to find things interesting that men find quite insignificant, but I began to notice that it was more or less her artistic personality that had different interests rather than it being solely her gender. Also, I was surprised that similar to her gender, her age had little to do with her choice of pictures and points of interest when we walked around. One thing I can definitely take from this experience is an appreciation for slowing down and being amazed by the nuances of the world around me whether it be nature or the many things that comprise my community that I take for granted daily. (Appendix E)

I asked Andrew if any of these experiences he found valuable could have happened if he was working alone, without Magdah in a cooperative learning group. He said probably not, it was because he and Magdah were so different, different races, genders and ages, and still able to get along that he got to see the community through her eyes.

In my interview and follow up conversation with Andrew he demonstrates how, through a successful coordination of his and Magdah’s efforts, the appropriate use of social skills promoted a growth in his social consciousness. If he and Magdah had not been successful in building the appropriate use of social skills, as defined by D. W. Johnson & Johnson (2008), he wouldn’t have been challenged to grapple with issues dealing with race, gender and age. It was because Andrew respected the cooperative learning process he was able to learn about Magdah and about the community from Magdah’s perspective.
Group Processing

Group processing clarifies the status of the group’s goals and can increase members’ awareness of the fact that together, they have the assets and resources needed to succeed and, in turn, can increase the collective efficacy of the collaborative group, which in turn can increase the involvement of individuals (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2009). McIntyre (2008) suggests that the “various aspects of the PAR process are fluidly braided within one another in a spiral of reflection, investigation, and action” and that this process of “questioning, reflecting, dialoguing, and decision making resists linearity” (p. 6). As such, PAR’s group processing is what McIntyre (2008) calls a “recursive process” involving a spiral of adaptable steps that include: “questioning a particular issue, reflecting upon and investigating the issues, developing an action plan, implementing and refining said plan” (p. 6). Within this group processing, the participants in this study worked cooperatively to help build the collective efficacy of the cooperative group.

In my interviews with Wil and Lily they both reflect on their experiences working in a cooperative learning group with their GEMS partner Laticsha, and provide examples of how group processing contributed to social consciousness. Lily describes her experience working with Wil and Laticsha.

Because Laticsha was initially shy, Wil and I worked hard to help her feel comfortable in our group setting. We asked for her thoughts and opinions at every step throughout the artmaking process. When she did voice ideas, like her preferred theme, we agreed to incorporate them and commended her creativity in an attempt to show that we valued her input. Because we wanted to respect her
choices, we mostly built off of her ideas, adding our own opinions and tweaks. Our project ended up going in a completely new direction once we got to work. The more we discussed the piece and added new ideas, the more our original theme evolved. Halfway through the process we decided to go in an all new direction and started back from square one. By the time we looked at our finished work, it was totally opposite from our original plans. I ended up liking it more this way, however, because I think it reflects the changes that took place as the dynamic of our group changed and we became more comfortable working with one another. (Appendix E)

In this statement Lily describes the processing of her cooperative learning group. She and Wil wanted to ensure that Laticsha’s voice and assets were recognized, and in doing so, the resources and assets she and Wil offered were brought to light. As a group they continued to clarify where they were in the process, which successfully increased the involvement of each individual and the collective efficacy of the collaborative group. In Wil’s statement he expands on this by describing his personal journey in the process.

Peoples of different communities are truly able to learn about one another when they work collaboratively on a piece of art. Prior to working on this collaborative project, however, I did not have an overly romantic view of collaborative artwork. I saw art as an incredibly personal experience for those who enjoyed it, and a roadblock to graduation for those of us who did not. I enjoy working in teams, and as a lifelong athlete I have extensive experience in this area. However, my lack of natural ability has always hindered my enjoyment of art. I have never
been a creative person; however I find that I am very good at developing others’ ideas. As a result, I typically struggle when it comes to individual artmaking. I am excited to create a piece with others whom can brainstorm ideas that I may not have and that I can develop into a completed piece of artwork. The opportunity to see this creative ability in an individual at such a young age, who presumably comes from a less fortunate socio-economic situation (a stereotype, I admit), has been very rewarding for me. In addition, it has been very rewarding to develop one of the few pieces of artwork that I am truly proud of. Lastly, it has been rewarding to be able to teach our community partner a skill set that, as technology progresses with society, will become not only useful, but quite possibly necessary in the workplace. (Appendix E)

In this reflective statement Wil is transparent about the assets and resources he can and cannot bring to his group. He told me that he does not consider himself an artist and before this experience viewed art as a roadblock to graduation. He describes how his experience working in teams, and enjoyment for team sports makes him a good cooperative learning group member. Wil is honest about the fact that it excites him to create art with others because he knows his assets are being a team player and helping to develop another artist’s ideas. Wil states that because of the combination of his assets with his group members’ assets, he has been rewarded with the development of one of the only artworks he is proud of.
How Cooperative Learning Contributed to Social Consciousness

The five variables, inherently taught by cooperative efforts that make cooperation work are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing. Through a systematic analysis of the data, using these five variables of cooperation from Social Interdependence Theory, I examined the many ways in which cooperative learning contributed to social consciousness.

The students who participated in this study collaboratively worked and created in cooperative learning groups through the practices of service-learning and PAR. The cooperative learning methods of both service-learning and PAR also provided a collaborative venue for students’ to explore their own social consciousness. The underlying tenets of PAR include its collective commitment to investigation, a desire to engage in self and collective reflection, joint decision making that engages in collective action, and the building of alliances (McIntyre, 2008). The service-learning component in this study created a mutually-empowering process where participants cooperatively supported each other’s learning as a form of social consciousness.

The participants in this study demonstrated how cooperative learning contributed to a growth in social consciousness through the evident data presented in their reflective statements. The students’ own words display awareness that by helping others achieve their shared cooperative group goals they were in turn helping themselves achieve their own personal goals. When students worked in cooperative learning groups to mutually investigate a big idea, their individual knowledge base was strengthened through the
social actions of participating in critical dialogue and critical reflection. Creating a
learning environment that incorporated recursive self-reflective cycles contributed to a
meaningful approach to social action and supports Freire’s (1970/2011) claim that,
if students are not able to transform their lived experiences into knowledge and to
use the already acquired knowledge as a process to unveil new knowledge, they
will never be able to participate rigorously in a dialogue as a process of learning
and knowing. (p. 19)

Providing spaces for students to mutually transform their learning into collective
knowledge contributed to a more meaningful form of social action. Working
cooperatively, students gained a deeper awareness of themselves, their partners and the
social issues affecting them as members of a shared community. In turn, they became
socially interdependent with one another through the realization that the social issues that
affect their partners have an impact on them.

I will now continue with my systematic analysis of the data, in relation to the
artmaking in this study, looking for evidence for social consciousness by utilizing parts of
the artmaking process.

**Artmaking: Evidence for Social Consciousness**

The artmaking in this study was intended to creating social consciousness and was
focused through investigating the big ideas of identity and community. Each of the
chapters in Sydney Walker’s (2001) book, *Teaching Meaning in Art Making*, are part of
the artmaking process to develop the big idea toward making meaning in artmaking.
These areas, which I used to systematically analyze the data, include: personal connections, knowledge building, problem finding, boundaries, and ways of working. Using these areas, I looked examined the students’ artmaking process, considering how each area engaged the students with developing critical consciousness. I will now discuss my findings in the areas of personal connections, knowledge building, problem solving, boundaries, ways of working, and finally summarize these findings describing how artmaking contributed to social consciousness.

**Personal Connections**

Walker (2001) suggests that artists can motivate and sustain their interests in artmaking by finding and making personal connections to a big idea worth pursuing. The artmaking in this study centered on investigations of the big ideas of identity, community, and participants’ chosen social issue. As I discussed in chapter two, examining a big idea on a personal level includes an examination of not only an artist’s personal interests and experiences but also their social concerns. In order to help students make personal connections to the big ideas of identity, community, and chosen social issue, I asked the following questions: How does this big idea relate to my life, where am I in this idea and, what would I want to know about this big idea? In my interview with Jen, I asked her how creating art about the big idea of identity and community has helped her to better understand herself. She responded with the following statement.

I feel like creating art about community is helping me better understand my own identity because I realize what I pay attention to and what catches my eye. I also feel more like a community member, especially working with the GEMS girls.
because I feel a sense of belonging and like that I am helping out in a way.

(Appendix E)

I talked with Jen about this statement and asked her what she meant when she said creating art about community was helping her to understand her own identity better. Jen told me that by examining both big ideas at the same time (identity and community) she was able to better understand her identity’s place in her community. She told me that exploring the community with her GEMS partner made her aware of what each of them notices and what she finds personally important to her, and those things her partner found important that she would have missed because they are not as relevant to her life. I asked the same question to Shantae and she responded similarly.

Creating art about the big idea of identity and community has helped me to better understand my own identity as a community member because I can distinguish what things are crucial to my life. (Appendix E)

When I asked Shantae what she meant by “crucial to her life,” she told me that within the greater OSU community she’s realized how unique it is to be an African American female college student. Shantae continued by telling me that working with her GEMS partner, who is also an African American female, and her OSU partner Jeff, a White male, she came to realize that she is proud she is a minority at OSU. She feels that this part of her identity makes her want to be a role model for others who share this identity component. Later in the study, when the students selected a big idea to investigate a social issue, Shantae pursued her personal connections with the big idea of identity further with the theme of history. In this artwork Shantae explored her own social consciousness of
history in relation to her personal connections to her cultural identifiers of race, gender and socio-economic status. (Figure 37)

Other students also pursued their personal connections to the big idea of identity further in their final artwork and chose big ideas that helped them investigate this social consciousness more deeply. In Molly’s social issue artwork she selected the big idea of power and the theme of equality. Molly explains why in her artist statement.

This social issue affects me directly because I am a woman that will be entering the working world in the next three years. The major I chose and the field of work I am interested in is male dominated. I am challenged to find a way to not be a statistic and hopefully move inequality to equality. (Figure 48)

In Wil’s social issue artwork he further explored his own social consciousness through his personal connections to his socio-economic status. Wil explains further in his artist statement.

I am investigating the issues of the distribution of wealth, corporate and social responsibility, and business ethics. I chose this big idea because it is an issue that is constantly on the forefront of the 24-hour news cycle with the Occupy protests, and business ethics is also something that is taught in-depth at the Fisher College of Business [at OSU]. My artwork is making the statement that, while many corporations do act in an unethical manner, there are many more that do good things every day. They represent my identity because, while I am a business-minded person, I do act with ethicality and social-mindedness, as do many wealthy and successful corporations and individuals. (Figure 54)
In Mary’s social issue artwork she chose the big idea of war because of her existing personal connections. She explains further in her artist statement.

I find war a disturbing and childish way to solve disagreements opposed to sitting down like adults and discussing compromise. I chose war as my big idea because I have a personal connection with the effects of war. My boyfriend of one year has chosen to join the army and is leaving for basic training on January 21st and if anything, his decisions to join has made my attitude against the destruction of war even stronger. (Figure 47)

In each of these examples, Shantae, Molly, Wil and Mary each demonstrate how making personal connections to the big idea helped to sustain their interests in artmaking. Each student found components of their identity worth pursuing and in doing so their artmaking became a meaningful venue to investigate their own social consciousness. By providing students an awareness of themselves through new experiences they were provided a venue to make rich personal connections to the big ideas of identity and community and began to understand how meaningful artistic expression occurs.

Knowledge Building

Knowledge building is the process of conducting research in order to better understand and express a big idea. Walker (2001) suggests “students need an adequate knowledge for artmaking if their exploration and expression of ideas is to be substantive and complex” (p. 37). In this study the knowledge building took place in multiple sites. The college students were required to read articles that provided information on collaboration, service-learning, asset-mapping, and social issues. Students also watched
the PBS Art 21 series, which documents contemporary artists’ ways of making meaning in their artmaking. In the collaborative artmaking experience students worked in cooperative groups to create digital art about the big idea of community. In this collaboration, knowledge building for the big idea of community included photographing the community. In this knowledge building activity, the cooperative groups documented community assets with cameras. This experience of photographing the community specifically contributed to developing students’ critical consciousness.

In Morgan and Kalyn’s collaborative artist statement they reflect on their collaborative knowledge building when photographing the assets of their shared community.

We developed our big idea of community by taking pictures and observing the community we share, and litter was a reoccurring image in our pictures. We found that we share a common problem, which is excessive litter and these images of litter help make it known to our community. (Figure 5)

I asked Morgan and Kalyn if they knew on day one they were going to use the theme of litter to develop the big idea of community. They explained that they had no idea what they wanted to create their community artwork about before taking photographs. Once they got back to school and uploaded all the photos they saw all the trash present in their photographs. Morgan and Kalyn told me they had noticed trash when they were walking around, but seeing it in most of their photos made it obvious it was an issue in their shared community, and therefore they wanted to create an artwork that brought it to other community members’ attention. In this conversation, Morgan and Kalyn demonstrated to
me that the experience of photographing the community specifically contributed to developing their social consciousness. This knowledge building activity developed their awareness of litter in the community and the conceptualization of its greater impact on the environment.

The knowledge building activity of photographing the community was a cooperative effort of the OSU and GEMS students, and as such, collected and built collaborative knowledge for the collaborative artwork. Jen and Rihanna reflect on this cooperative knowledge building process of artmaking in their collaborative artist statement.

Many things in a community bring joy to different people and in this art piece, we show our perspective on happiness in our area. We really enjoyed getting out of the classroom and taking pictures of our wonderful community! It was an amazing learning experience and it helped us look deeper into our neighborhood art, plants, buildings, and objects that aren’t as noticeable when taking a first glance. (Figure 4)

In Jen’s interview, in response to a question about cooperative learning, she expressed the following in regards to the knowledge building activity of taking photographs.

I found all the shapes, lines, and patterns interesting. She enjoyed taking pictures of buildings, cars, and people. I liked to move around and see things from different angles and sides, while she preferred a straight-on shot. It is not that I was doing anything wrong or that she was doing anything wrong. We are just
different people with different opinions and I think we both found it interesting to see each other’s perspectives. (Appendix E)

In a follow up conversation Jen explained that because this project was a collaborative artwork, she and Rihanna had to fumble through the artmaking process together. I told Jen I liked how she used the word fumble and asked her to tell me more about what she meant. She told me that they fumbled with how to get to know each other and what information was relevant for their project. She and Rihanna found different things interesting when photographing the community and even took pictures in a different manner. She continued by saying that they fumbled with learning to understand what was important to each other and was important in the artmaking, because it was a collaborative artwork. Jen told me making collaborative art was a different experience for her because she had to take into account another person’s ideas and opinions. In this conversation I believe Jen demonstrated that knowledge building in collaborative artmaking is a cooperative process. If I had given each student a camera and had them individually photograph the community they would not have built the cooperative knowledge needed for a collaborative artwork. Because each group was given only one camera to share they became aware of their partner’s knowledge and in doing so were provided an experience to explore collaborative social consciousness.

**Problem Solving**

In order for artists to conceptually explore a big idea, they need to create and solve questions for themselves that will help them investigate the big idea deeply and in turn help them to discover new perspectives (Walker, 2001). For this study I needed to
find ways to challenge students to use their knowledge base in insightful and inventive ways in order to help them create new perspectives in their artmaking to impact their social consciousness. Walker (2001) suggests transformation, concealment and disruption as possible artmaking strategies to introduce in order to push students beyond their comfort zones. As artmaking problems, transformation is a visual strategy used to alter a component of the artwork from its usual representation, concealment is the visual and conceptual strategy of partially hiding or concealing information in the artwork, and disruption is a conceptual strategy of altering the artwork from what the viewer’s perceives and understands as usual for that specific subject matter (Walker, 2001).

In this study and course, each of these artmaking problem strategies was incorporated in the artmaking process using Photoshop and GIMP. Students were taught different digital artmaking skills to transform, conceal and disrupt their artwork. Photoshop and GIMP skills such as the transformation tool, adjusting the opacity, stacking of the layers, clone stamp, filters, and un-clicking the eye icon on layers are some digital artmaking strategies students were introduced to in order to create and solve problems in their artwork. I then encouraged them to play, in a purposeful way, with these techniques in order to create meaning in their artwork. As opposed to other media such as ceramics or painting, digital artmaking provides a safe and easy way for students to experiment and play with their art with the click of a button. If the artist is not happy with their transformation, concealment or disruption, they can easily click “edit-undo.” Students in this study were taught digital artmaking skills allowing them the opportunity
to focus on conceptual problems by easily being able to experiment with transforming, concealing and disrupting their artwork.

In Lily’s social issue artwork she chose the big idea of oppression because of her personal connections. In her artist statement she reflects on her personal connections to this big idea.

My goal was to highlight the influence of society, the media, and the judgment of our peers, and the pressure they exert on an individual to be something or someone they are not. As a college freshman, these issues play a big part in my life. While exploring my new environment and meeting new people I have faced influence from a variety of sources. I wanted to emphasize that you do not have to be physically contained to feel trapped, sometimes pressure from the elements in your environment is enough. (Figure 46)

In order for Lily to successfully demonstrate these strong personal connections to oppression she experimented with transforming, concealing and disrupting her digital art in Photoshop in order to conceptually create and solve problems in her artwork. Lily read from her artist statement while also describing her artmaking process in detail when presenting her final artwork to the class.

I started my piece by arranging a collage of logos that represent a variety of influential sources from clothing lines to electronic devices and religion. These represent my identity because I incorporated a lot of symbols which are used by groups and companies that I feel target my generation. At first I had a picture of my own head and face in the artwork with everything surrounding me, but then
added a picture of a brain. I played with the eye icon to see which head I liked better in the artwork, and decided the brain got my point across better, since this artwork isn’t only about me, it’s about mental oppression. I also played with the stacking order to see if the brain looked better on top or below and quickly saw that it had to be on top in order to see it. I tried to use a lot of color and make the background seem very busy to give the viewer a sense of the chaos and confusion these industries create for adolescents. I even used the color filters to see what the artwork looked like in black and white and it really showed me that the piece has to be in full color to get the point across. In black and white it doesn’t look quite as chaotic. To make the collage I used the magic wand tool and messed around with rotating, erasing, and filtering pictures. After I was finished with the college of images I didn’t like the picture of the brain as much, it got lost if you changed the opacity and hid the background images if it was at 100%. So on top of the background I pasted a picture of a brain that I drew in black. In the process of creating the brain I tried to use a lot of vertical lines so it looked almost like a jail cell or a trap. I also made it look like a maze. At the center it reads “you are here.” There is no actual exit to the maze which strengthens the idea of being mentally trapped, or, oppressed. (Figure 46)

In this presentation Lily described specific examples of how she used her digital artmaking skills of transformation and concealment to conceptually explore the problems she created in her artwork. Lily told the class that she “played with” and “messed around with” different components of the artwork in order to best represent her understanding of
the big idea of oppression. She describes using the eye icon and stacking order to
conceal the different images of the brain and the filters to disrupt the artwork’s colors.
Lily is only one example of how utilizing her digital artmaking skills provided the
opportunity to reconsider artmaking problems from a personal perspective and enabled
her to focus on her own critical consciousness in relation to the big idea of oppression.
By creating and solving problems in their artwork, students were able to play with their
digital artmaking skills over and over and to think conceptually beyond the big ideas.

**Boundaries**

Setting limitations in color, scale and style in order to create boundaries enables
students to make meaningful aesthetic decisions that are conceptually expressive (Walker,
2001). Though, setting boundaries in artmaking in order to engage students with
meaning-making is more than only selecting media or style, creating conceptual
boundaries is also critical. Students in this study worked within the boundaries of media,
using only cameras and digital manipulation, while dealing with the conceptual boundary
of creating art collaboratively about the big idea of community. The boundaries
associated with digital artmaking provided students the space necessary to focus on
conceptual issues enabling them to further develop their critical consciousness. Because
of the safety provided by the artmaking boundaries, students were able to focus on
personal boundaries related to their social consciousness, within the collaborative
artmaking process. In my interview with Liang, he reflected on the boundary of the
process of creating art in a cooperative group.
Collaborative art making sounded like one of the most ridiculous ideas to me when I first heard about it in class. Not because I usually don't enjoy making something or sharing ideas with others, but I can’t imagine working with kids who are 8 years younger than me. Such an age gap means a lot – it means differences in understanding the concept of art, differences in the skills and knowledge of using technology and more importantly it means a totally different perspective of seeing the world. I doubted if I can work on the same project with the kids sharing the same idea. I had a lot of queries about everything of collaborative art making in this class. Then it came to the first class in the GEMS, the middle school where we would be working at in the following weeks. I met my group mates, a 12 year-old American girl and a Chinese college student. The hard part came as we started our project. I realized that the worlds that we have seen are so different: the framing and angle of the photos that she took were not what I had expected; it was hard for us to generate the theme of the artwork by discussion; it seemed impossible for us to come up with the idea that it is easier for the girl to understand, etc. I thought it was a disaster but when I look back now I disagree. (Appendix E)

I asked Laing what he meant by looking back now and disagreeing. He told me that what he thought to be a limitation, working with a younger girl, actually turned out to be one of the benefits of collaborative artmaking. She had ideas for the artwork that he would have never thought of on his own. He said he was impressed with her thoughts and, because she was younger, she had a different perspective than him and by combining all
their ideas in the artwork he feels he learned more about the big idea of community than had he made art alone.

When I interviewed Stephanie she responded with a similar statement about crossing conceptual boundaries in collaborative artmaking.

Working with a community partner has been both challenging and rewarding. It has been challenging because you have to be able to think differently when working with another person, but my partner has made me look at things in a different way than I normally would. For example - we took a picture of mud, and when you zoom in and change the colors, this ugly picture actually looked cool. She has taught me to take a step back and look at the possibilities of things because there are many ways to look at the same thing. (Appendix E)

In my interview with Andrew he reflects on crossing the conceptual boundaries of gender and age through the process of collaborative artmaking.

I anticipated a difference based on the fact that women tend to find things interesting that men find quite insignificant, but I began to notice that it was more or less her artistic personality that had different interests rather than it being solely her gender. Also, I was surprised that similar to her gender, her age had little to do with her choice of pictures and points of interest when we walked around.

(Appendix E)

In each of these statements, the students have demonstrated that they were challenged to examine their own social consciousness due the boundaries set in collaborative artmaking. By setting the artmaking limitations of cooperative photography and digital
artmaking, participants were able to conceptually focus on the social issues brought to light due to the collaborative processes of making art.

**Ways of Working**

In order to encourage that artmaking is a journey of both making and discovering meaning, the practices of purposeful play, risk taking, experimentation, postponement of final meaning, searching and questioning were incorporated into this study. Walker (2001) suggests that these strategies “encourage deeper levels of thinking and allow students to hold meaning loosely, leave it open, discover it, reconsider it, reinvent it, and develop it” (p. 137). This study was conducted through the only service-learning section of the Art Ed 252 course taught at OSU. Because of this, I would like to add collaboration as an important way of working in artmaking. Collaboration is defined as means to work together in a joint effort (Davis, 1993). Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) base their method of collaboration in art education on the ‘philosophy of art for life’ and they discuss how collaboration can reach many different unique populations of students. Davis (1993) claimed that students learn more when working collaboratively, retain their learning longer, and, on a whole, are more satisfied with their classes. It is possible to enjoy the final art product of a collaborative artmaking experience for simple aesthetic reasons without any background knowledge, but, if one wants to understand what the artwork represents, then one must commit to finding out about the process of the interactions and the collaborative experiences of those who created the artwork (Dewey, 1934).
In my interview with Richard, he states, “In working with Kyra I realized that it is not about the quality of the work but more about how we can communicate each other’s thoughts and feelings using the artwork” (Appendix E). Richard later told me that because he was making art with Kyra he had to mess around with another person’s ideas, which meant he had to make an effort to understand how she envisioned the artwork and then try to figure out how his ideas worked with hers. Through the collaborative way of working, Richard describes here how he had to purposely play, experiment and question with in the artmaking process. In my interview with Andrew, he reflects on his collaborative way of working with Magdah.

When working on a collaborative art-making project, the most important aspect to keep in mind is the idea of mutual contribution. The fact that it is called collaborative art-making indicates a strong emphasis on being able to contribute one's best abilities to a project while recognizing their weaknesses and shortcomings. In addition, when noticing one's weaknesses, it is also necessary to notice other's strengths in the same area and to replace your weakness in the project with their strength. (Appendix E)

Here Andrew describes how collaborative artmaking is a journey of both making and discovering mutual meaning by addressing the strength’s each person brings to the process. In the collaborative artmaking process, participants are experimenting with each others’ ideas and are able to take the risk of playing with these collaborative ideas while searching and questioning for meaning in their artmaking. This collaborative artmaking process provides an open venue for students to explore meaning loosely, encouraging
deeper thinking where they can reconsider, reinvent, discover and develop meaning together in their artmaking.

**How Artmaking Contributed to Social Consciousness**

As the artmaking in this study was focused on creating social consciousness, I utilized each of Walker’s aspects of the artmaking process to systematically analyze the data. The meaning-making processes within artmaking, both collaborative and independent, provided a space where participants could explore their identities, social issues and these identities’ role in relation to said social issues. I observed participants’ deepened sense of self through investigations of the characteristics that make them unique individuals while also understanding and appreciating the qualities of those in their cooperative learning groups. Freire (1970/2011) suggests,

> if students are not able to transform their lived experiences into knowledge and to use the already acquired knowledge as a process to unveil new knowledge, they will never be able to participate rigorously in a dialogue as a process of learning and knowing. (p. 19)

Participants provided support for their cooperative partners as they grew interdependent of one another, hence creating a system of support in which together they were able to further explore their collective social awareness through critical dialogue in the artmaking process.

As I have previously discussed, awareness is the state of having knowledge and being cognizant, where as being conscious is to be aware of one’s own existence, thoughts, surroundings and being sensitive to this knowledge. The participants of this
study demonstrated a growth in social awareness through the tangible evidence of their individual artworks and correlating artist statements while a growth in social consciousness can be found in the participants’ reflective writings and meaningful discourse surrounding their collaborative processes. Creating spaces for collaborative processes, creativity, collective dialogue and social interdependence among participants produced growth in their social consciousness. An example of this is growth in social consciousness is in Andrew’s interview,

I am positive that if we had the girls explore their identity and create a piece as we did in the beginning of the course, theirs would be much different. For example mine was very patriotic for my identity with a strong tie to the nation, whereas I have a feeling that these girls would have a much more negative outlook on the nation which has given them less opportunity due to being an African-American female. Even the theme of community would be entirely different if it were done in my hometown which is a middle class suburb of Cleveland that is predominantly white and has a lot more wealth than the city that these girls live in. These discrepancies are made very clear through the exploration of both of the big ideas we have explored this quarter. (Appendix E)

Andrew discusses his own artmaking process using the big ideas of identity and community, reflecting on his own privilege while also considering his collaborative artmaking partner’s privilege. In a later conversation with Andrew, he told me that it was in the collaborative artmaking process that he began to wonder and question how Magdah could interrupt things differently than he saw them because of her gender and race.
Because of the artmaking process Andrew became aware of what defines himself while taking into consideration the ways in which these big ideas affect others in his community. Even though he is making claims, without using relevant facts about his partners’ race and gender, he has demonstrated an awareness of a growing social consciousness towards others beside himself.

**Emergent Themes**

Once categories have been established within the research, Stringer (2007) suggests the next step is to compare these categories and subcategories watching for areas of interests such as issues, key experiences, and transformational moments. These areas of interest, that can unexpectedly present themselves as the researcher repeatedly explores their data, are called emergent themes (Wong & Blandford, 2002). Agyeman (2008) suggests that this emergent data is “based on themes which emerge from the descriptions and recounted experiences of the participants. They are not imposed themes but reflect the emphasis given by participants to areas of their lives” (p. 81). Hence, the themes uncovered from this study emerged from participants’ reflective writings, reflective dialogue, artwork and artist statements and my observations throughout this research process. There were two prominent themes that emerged throughout this study: disparity of educational norms and technology frustrations. These emergent themes are relevant to the study in that they contribute to answering the primary question concerning how social consciousness and the development of social responsibility can grow through the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking.
Disparity of Educational Norms

During the first sessions of this study I asked participants to complete a reflective writing that described who they are as a student. The responses included discussions of what year they were in school, if they had declared a major and what subjects they are studying, their previous experiences with service-learning, and working collaboratively with students younger than them. These reflections were intended to help me as a teacher and researcher start to understand who the participants were and also help each of them to better understand who their classmates were as they each posted their responses online to share. After students had shared and reviewed these reflective writings, we discussed the procedures associated with working collaboratively. Some students were quite comfortable working in groups and learning with others and had similar experiences in school before. These participants shared stories of teachers grouping them by ability in certain subjects or projects where they were grouped randomly. They remembered being given a role such as leader, secretary, etc. Other students were not accustomed to working with others and were concerned how they would be individually graded if they were going to work collaboratively. For one participant, this was his first time attending school in America. Until now, all of his education had been in China. He told the class that he was taught how to succeed as an individual student and being responsible for another person’s learning was not normal, and made him nervous.

At this point in the class discussion it became clear that we needed to acknowledge what we thought of as normal due to our own experiences within our personal educational history. I shared my story first, telling the participants that my
education began in a private Catholic school where I had to wear a uniform every day and follow strict guidelines and rules enforced by nuns. I then attended public school from 3rd grade until high school graduation, where I participated in sports and was able to take art electives of my choosing. After graduating from three different state universities, I became a teacher and an art teacher. I explained to participants that I was able to teach in a variety of settings starting in an affluent area where there were twenty students or less in every classroom, and where every classroom was provided a smartboard and computers and was full of supplies and teacher support. I then moved to teach in another state and district where I taught art in an urban environment where violence was a daily occurrence and the normal class size averaged thirty-five with limited supplies and teacher support.

The participants then took turns sharing what composed their educational history. Students’ stories ranged from experiences of being home schooled by a family member with only their siblings as classmates, Montessori classrooms where they were grouped with students of other ages, both private and public American schools from rural and urban areas to international experiences. Students shared stories of learning in classrooms where they never talked but only listened to a teacher’s lecture to experiences of classroom interaction that would seem like chaos to outsiders. After sharing our educational histories with one another, I asked the class what we could define as a “normal education.” One student immediately responded with the answer of, nothing, claiming we can’t say anything is normal unless it is our own experience. Others said
that, in each of our stories, teaching and learning was taking place even if the ways in which it was happening were different and unique.

I had not planned on holding a discussion about what participants viewed as normal in education but, afterwards I, now view it as an important area for students to discuss and reflect on the disparity of what each of us considers to be normal when we think of education. This study was centered on the collaborative and cooperative practices associated with service-learning and PAR. In order to create an environment where all participants were treated equal, their histories in relation to learning were both shared and discussed and the term “normal” deemed acceptable for all or none.

**Technology Frustrations**

The artmaking for this study was composed of the mediums of photography and digital manipulation. The college participants were taught how to use Photoshop on the OSU campus in a computer lab supported by University technology staff. The MAC computers in this lab are serviced regularly by the support staff, well stocked with the most current operating systems and programs and, if issues arise, technical support is a phone call away. The computers at OSU are also linked directly to the server, meaning they do not depend on a wireless internet connection, which provided students quick and dependable access to the internet. Carmen, OSU’s online learning space was accessed daily by students with no issues. Students used this space to access everything from the course syllabus, calendar and readings, it also provided a secure space for students weekly writings, reflection papers, artwork and artist statements. In my six years of
attending OSU, Carmen has never faltered in its dependability. It is regularly serviced by
technology staff who also provide support programs for students and teachers.

Both groups of participants from OSU and GEMS were taught how to use GIMP,
an Open Source version of Photoshop, at GEMS. At GEMS the students use laptops that are serviced by a one-person technical support staff, who was wonderfully supportive and knowledgeable, but could only fix things to the best of the technology’s level. The laptops are an older MAC version that have been used for a few years and do not run off the most current operating system. The school runs all the wireless laptops off of one server and requires each student to sign into their account in order to use the laptops. This first step is where the issues began. There were too many computers trying to access the single server and this slowed things down considerably. The technology teacher saw this as a problem early on in the school year and put an order into her school district for another server. She was told it was on its way and would arrive in a few days but that was five weeks ago and, at the time I am writing this, it has not yet arrived. Another issue was that once students were finally able to log on, many of the computers could not run or support GIMP successfully. Some of the computers were overloaded with student work from other classes, some had caught a virus, and some were completely broken. Without the amazing technology support offered from the GEMS’s tech teacher, I would not have been able to facilitate the course. She was able to trouble shoot issues within her control and taught me how to do the same. Between the two of us helping the groups to log on and successfully access GIMP, we were able to use technology as a medium to collaboratively create art. In these times of technical frustration, I observed a different
issue with technology that was specific to the OSU participants. It became apparent when reading the college students’ writings that the OSU students had a much harder time using GIMP than the GEM’s girls. The college students expressed that they felt GIMP was not as user friendly as Photoshop and it was hard learning Photoshop one day and then GIMP the next. Some expressed frustration that they were not prepared to teach the girls how to use GIMP, even though they were not there to teach the girls but were there to learn alongside the girls.

These technology issues became an area of discourse for the OSU participants, as was reflected in their weekly discussions and writings and reflection papers. I brought this issue to light with a class discussion, in an attempt to air frustrations about technology and also redirect the college participants to an understanding that this was a collaborative project where they were to work through the technology issues together and were not solely responsible for the girls’ learning. In this discourse venue, I asked the college students why they thought that Open Source existed, and why we were using GIMP at GEMS. One student responded with the understanding that Open Source software is open to all, meaning it is free. Another student expanded on this, stating that Photoshop is an expensive program that not all school districts can afford. This led a student to ask why didn’t the girls just come to our lab at OSU and avoid the technical difficulties at their school altogether. I explained that in previous quarters when I had facilitated similar service-learning projects, OSU’s Art Education department was housed in a building much closer to High Street and subsequently walking distance to the girls’ school. As Art Education is currently housed in the OSU stadium, it is too far for the
girls to walk. One of the students asked why they didn’t just take a bus to the Stadium. I put this question back towards the class, asking them why. A different student stated that buses cost money and, if the school doesn’t have enough money to buy Photoshop or extra servers, then they most likely don’t have the money to pay for buses. At this point a student stated that it seems that everything comes down to money and as a senior at OSU he has become used to learning in an environment where everything is available and at his fingertips. Yet a different student commented that as a freshman, whose high school was not as fancy as OSU, he still noticed everyday how awesome it was to be here at one of the largest Universities in the world.

Technology was an important area of interest in this study, as it was the medium with which the participants made art. I explained on day one of this study that the Art Ed 252 course was not a Photoshop class but an artmaking course that would utilize the computer in the visual arts. If the medium had instead been painting, I would have taught them how to use their brush with paints but wouldn’t have directed every stroke of color and, certainly wouldn’t have taken the brush from them to fix an area of their painting. They would have struggled with how to mix colors exactly like they wanted and how to create a form they saw in their head, just as they struggled to discover the correct tool to use when manipulating their images. The utilization of both Photoshop and GIMP was a necessity and interesting area of discourse. I had not intended to cause the college participants so much frustration when creating with GIMP, though this frustration led to important discussions about privilege, educational equity and socioeconomic status. The technology was our artmaking tool but it also became an area where issues surrounding
social justice could be discussed in a meaningful manner with a direct reflection and real world experience.

Summary of the Findings

This study has revealed several important findings in response to the overarching question considered throughout this research process: How can social consciousness and the development of social responsibility grow through the meaning making processes of collaboration and artmaking? The components of an arts-based service-learning practice, utilization of Social Interdependence Theory in addition to the processes of PAR’s, plan, act, observe and reflect, all assisted in this study’s success. Freire (1971) suggests, “To be a good [participatory researcher] means above all to have faith in people; to believe in the possibility that they can create and change things” (p. 62, as found in McIntrye, 2008, p. 69). As a PAR researcher, I followed Freire’s teachings and entered this research study with faith in my participants and an open mind to what outcomes I could encounter.

In order to attend to the primary research question I systematically analyzed the data through the lens of cultural identifiers, including privilege, educational equity, socio-economic status, race, gender, and age. I found signifiers in the data that demonstrated students’ questioning, reflecting and understanding in regards to these key terms and described how this evidence of awareness and change relates to a growth in critical consciousness. I discussed the evidence cooperative learning provides for social continuousness through an analysis of the data using the five variables that mediate
cooperation: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, group processing. Through cooperative learning students developed a deeper awareness of themselves, their partners and the social issues affecting them as members of a shared community. Finally, I identified and described the emergent themes of disparity of educational norms and technology frustrations. In each section of analysis I utilized data that is relevant while providing literature that supports my claims.

Providing spaces for participants to work in cooperative learning groups in order to mutually investigate the big idea of community created a fruitful learning environment. Participating in the asset-mapping of their joined community space, students gained a greater understanding of one another and the big idea of community by incorporating recursive self-reflective cycles within areas of discussion. Engaging collaboratively in critical dialogue and critical reflection, participants were able to transform their individual knowledge base into collective knowledge as a form of social action.

Together, the cooperative efforts of service-learning and PAR were instrumental in providing a successful venue for the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation to be explored as a means of building students’ social interdependence. Service-learning and PAR created collaborative spaces for students to coordinate their efforts through the appropriate use of social skills and group processing in order to build promotive interaction and individual accountability. This ultimately led to students becoming positively interdependent of one another.

Collaborative artmaking created spaces for students to explore their own critical consciousness through the meaning-making processes of artmaking and cooperative
learning. Cipolle (2010) suggests that participants are “developing a greater awareness and broader perspective of social issues through accurate information, constructive service experiences, and critical reflection” (p. 11). Artmaking provided a constructive platform on which participants working in these cooperative groups could explore their self-awareness, awareness of others and social issues together. As participants grew interdependent of one another, they were able to further explore their own critical consciousness due to the critical reflection and support received by the members of their cooperative learning groups.

In regards to data collection and interpretation, Phillips & Carr (2010) advise, “seeking multiple perspectives, insights, or ‘voices’ provides for layers of interpretation the teacher-researcher could not attain in isolation” (p. 92). Through a multitude of perspectives there were two emergent themes in this study: disparity of educational norms and technology frustrations. This study was steeped in collaborative and cooperative processes and, in order to uphold these practices, time was taken for all participants to share their personal stories in regards to their educational history. From this, participants agreed that the term of normal was deemed acceptable for all or none. I had not intended to cause technology frustrations, but it became a meaningful area to discuss issues surrounding social justice. These emergent themes are relevant to the study because they contributed to answering the primary question.

In this arts-based service-learning study, the meaning-making processes of collaboration and artmaking created spaces where social consciousness and the development of social responsibility can successfully grow. As a teacher and researcher,
I discovered that providing students the opportunity to take part in collaborative processes, cooperative learning, creativity, and collective dialogue they can explore social consciousness while becoming more socially interdependent of one another. By caring about the success of their partners in order to become mutually interdependent, students realized their own potential to make change and it is in these instances of caring that the development of social responsibility was most realized.

**Considering Successes and Challenges as an Educator**

As I have stated before, this study was conducted in one section of the Art Ed 252 OSU course I facilitate through the practice of service-learning. As an educator my first attempt at facilitating a service-learning project I considered to be a failure. I was teaching art in North Chicago, working on my Masters degree, mostly-online, through OSU’s department of Art education. After I had been a service-learning participant, in a project led by Karen Hutzel in Columbus, Ohio I experienced the many benefits service-learning offers and wanted to help my students experience the same. In the mostly-online program my cohort was comprised of fifteen White women teaching art in the United States. In our multicultural course we were grouped with a cohort of students from Jamaica, composed of both males and females, all Jamaican citizens. I proposed a cross-cultural and cross-national service-learning project with one of the Jamaican students. My intentions with this project were to expose my second grade art students to another group of people through the sharing of artmaking in order to expand their knowledge of people outside their school and community. My students created self-portraits and artist
statements that we sent to our Jamaican friends. The intention was for the Jamaican art students to create the same for us to receive. We also planned to exchange emails where students would be prompted to discuss their artmaking process. My partner teacher in Jamaica and I corresponded through email at length before the project began, working out the details of how we saw this service-learning collaboration happening; things just didn’t work out as planned. My students never received any art in return and the process of emailing each other was not successful. My second grade students were left wondering what they had done wrong, asking me why their Jamaican buddies never sent them their artwork or emailed them back. One student asked if the Jamaicans didn’t like their art, or maybe didn’t want to learn about them. I was left to answer questions I was not prepared for. I also was left wondering if this unsuccessful project had in fact developed negative feelings in my students toward another culture because of poor planning on my part. I had made assumptions about many factors in this collaboration regarding another teacher’s time, money, resources and process, and because of my inexperience as a teacher, my first service-learning project was not a success.

As an educator experiencing the disappointment and frustration failure brings, I could have decided to never attempt a service-learning project again. Instead, I decided I needed to better understand the process in order to facilitate it better, which ultimately led me to pursue my doctoral degree in Art Education. At this time I have facilitated nine service-learning projects and continue to learn something new every time. Each project has produced areas of success and challenge that I am continually working with. As an educator I believe that it is from our mistakes that we are challenged to reconsider our
beliefs and practices in order to strive for success. This project is no different. There are areas I have acknowledged that I will continue to work on as an educator.

Freire conceptualized the concept of problem-posing education which “affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with likewise unfinished reality” and goes on to state that “education be an ongoing activity” (Freire, 1970/2011, p. 84). As a teacher and researcher, I challenged myself in this study to become critically conscious of my own identity within these roles. I investigated the social issues that construct who I am as a white, educated female concerned with research practices and methods associated with social justice. I questioned and reconsidered my considerations of others (my participants) through their critical understandings and my own previous considerations (Freire, 1970/2011). Allowing myself as a researcher, and challenging myself as a teacher, to grow socially conscious alongside my participants, provided me the opportunity to experience what it was I looking for within this research study. I gained empathy for the frustrations participants felt at times and was able to understand the empowering, and at times intimidating, process of growing socially conscious.

Implications

Graham Expeditionary Middle School

The implications for GEMS are significant. This study established a partnership and art curriculum that will benefit GEMS now and in the future. As previously stated, I began this collaboration with GEMS in the Fall of 2011 and have currently facilitated a
service-learning experience with the computer in the visual arts for three quarters. I have worked closely with faculty at GEMS to ensure the program’s overall success for both their students’ needs and those of the college students. Relationships with the principal, art teacher, technology teacher, head secretary and other teachers and staff members have been built and nurtured as a means of sincere willingness to continue this type of collaboration between the University and this charter public school.

Currently, GEMS is expanding their school to include Graham Primary School starting in the Fall of 2012. They are enrolling kindergarten, first and second grade students with future plans of enrollment growing stronger over the next years with hopes of including third, fourth and fifth grade students. The Graham Family of Schools and Expeditionary Learning has intentions of remaining in the University Community, housed in the Indinanola Junior High School building permanently and is seeking to build long lasting relationships with the OSU community. They believe a strong relationship with the greater University community, including Ohio State University, has much to offer their students in meaningful fieldwork and cross-disciplinary curriculum. As Lewis (1991) suggests, “there is no lack of interest in social action among children-its teachers who need more skill and experience to help teach kids to become effective citizens” (p. 47). One of Expeditionary Learning’s Core Practice Benchmarks discusses the importance of providing authentic experiences that build citizenship within their students and school community. They believe that by providing students an arts- and technology-rich learning environment that promotes social consciousness and social responsibility, they can help their students take social action by becoming effective citizens. GEMS
views this collaboration with OSU Art Education to be a very valuable experience for their participating students and teachers and has worked closely with me in order to ensure this collaboration continues into the Fall of 2012 and on.

The Department of Art Education at OSU

The Department of Art Education at OSU shares the same excitement and dedication to continue this collaboration with GEMS. The department has shown unwavering support throughout the three years I have taught this one section of 252 as a service-learning experience and recognizes art education’s greater role in the community as invaluable to their students, faculty and greater art education community. Currently, I have been working closely with my replacement, a Masters student who is also a Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) in The Department of Art Education, who will be entering the PhD program Fall of 2012. This GTA has extensive experience with community-based work and is actively learning the components of this collaboration in order to continue its success. She brings her own set of experiences and a high level of knowledge with regards to diversity, PAR and service-learning. This will not only ensure Art Education’s connection with the community through GEMS remains strong, but will also help to build and expand on this collaboration with her as the next facilitator.

The Field of Art Education

There are many implications from this study for art education and the inclusive field of education. This study is an example of a section of an art education course taught in a non-traditional school environment and, as such, offers a curriculum that could be implemented in a number of typical school situations or a community setting. One of the
most significant implications this study has to offer for teachers and art educators is its ability to demonstrate how Social Interdependence Theory can provide a foundation of evident social constructs that educators of any subject can utilize in order to create meaningful cooperative learning venues. Teachers of all subjects and levels of learning can utilize the five variables that mediate the effectiveness of cooperation within their teaching practices to increase social interdependence among students, thereby improving classroom management to create a stronger class community and an overall increase in student knowledge.

The course I taught for this study was an art education class, filled with non-art education majors, and, though artmaking and collaborative artmaking was part of the curriculum, its instructional benefits and outcomes are not limited to arts education. This study was concerned with the meaning-making processes found within artmaking and cooperative learning and viewed artmaking as a valuable area to better understand how collaborative processes can increase social consciousness. As such, these results are valuable for educators and social theorists concerned with methods of creating a discourse surrounding issues of social justice.

Examples and examinations of collaborative methods have been investigated for many years in both education and in arts education. Though the benefits of Social Interdependence Theory have been thoroughly discussed in the field of education, at this time, this discourse has not found its way into the field of Art Education. Collaborative methods are often used, and referred to, as having many positive impacts within Art Education. As Social Interdependence Theory grew out of cooperative learning, it begs
the question as to why this collaborative theory has not been utilized by arts educators. I believe this study does this by offering a valuable example of a curriculum put into practice that is grounded in Social Interdependence Theory.

Service-learning in the field of art education and education continues to deserve further investigation. This study was an example of an arts-based service-learning experience that was facilitated in a general education course at The Ohio State University. OSU has a service-learning initiative that supports the “development, implementation, and evaluation of sustainable service-learning courses and encourages community-based scholarship across the curricula of The Ohio State University to enhance student learning, develop student civic engagement, and foster ongoing collaboration with local and global communities” (http://service-learning.osu.edu). OSU’s service-learning initiative evaluates courses taught with a service-learning emphasis and grants courses that qualify with an S beside the course number, designating the course as a service-learning class. Right now I am preparing for the Summer 2012 session for Art Ed 252 and this specific class section will receive this designation. This section of 252 is the first art education course at OSU to receive this recognition. Cipolle (2010) suggests that “effective service-learning helps students see their potential to make change. Having many positive service-experiences enhances their feelings of competency and efficacy” (p. 11). As OSU expands their service-learning initiative, wanting to provide more opportunities for students to experience this type of learning, it highlights the need for further research into service-learning and specifically arts-based service learning within the field of art education.
This study took place in a joined community space and it was through the mutual investigation of the big idea of community that participants were able to explore a growth in social consciousness. Art Education, as a field, needs to constantly be working at creating long lasting relationships within their greater community for a variety of reasons. Specific to this study and experience, these partnerships between art education, universities and community are needed in order to build a better curriculum for art educators and future teachers to learn within, and from, their joined communities. Daniel (2010) speaks of The Community Act as a transformative way of bringing various types of knowledge together, and can be responsible for transforming knowledge through action by connecting education to real life experiences. From this, it is critical that art education take a key role in building these types of partnerships and, in this role, will be responsible for building art education’s relevance in the greater education community.

**Future Research Initiatives**

This study investigated the specific site of inquiry dealing with how the meaning-making processes associated with collaboration and artmaking can aid in the growth of social consciousness and the development of social responsibility. Although this research has uncovered several themes and issues related to implications for art education, it has also unveiled many new questions worthy of future research initiatives. Phillips & Carr (2010) suggest that “making sense of a situation is always in part an act of self-understanding on the part of the researcher” (p. 77). As such, my interpretations and discussion surrounding this research study are only one way of interpreting this inquiry.
In this study the interviews were focused on the college aged participants. In future studies I believe the youth’s perspectives could provide invaluable data. I also invite future research initiatives in the areas of service-learning and specifically arts-based service-learning, community-based art education, PAR as a method used within art teacher certification programs, the emergent themes from this study and finally inquiries dealing with student’s social consciousness and social responsibility.

The mutually-empowering process of service-learning has gained increasing attention in academia over the past thirty years. As an example of America’s public University system, OSU’s service-learning initiative is growing and expanding in departments across this campus each year. Some schools now require a service-learning course for degree requirements, demonstrating a commitment to providing students the opportunity to serve while also learn. As Cipolle (2010) suggests, “service-learners must recognize that while they are contributing a service to the community, they are also benefitting from the experience and taking away important knowledge and personal growth from their interactions” (p. 47). Service-learning, and specifically arts-based service-learning deserves further examination. This study was facilitated as an arts-based service-learning project in an effort to combine the democratic values of education with the power of the arts to provide students with experiences that challenge and broaden their ways of thinking and knowing (Krensky & Steffen, 2008; Leavy, 2009). Arts-based service-learning has demonstrated unique characteristics that define it as its own entity that is different from traditional service-learning practices and, as such, can provide a framework for further investigations.
This study was conducted in a joined community space and is one example of community-based art education. Of all my participants, every one of them shared that this was their first college course involving an off-campus element in their learning environment. As a land grant institution, OSU is concerned with connections made with the community. Providing non-traditional learning environments, not only connects students to their community but, when facilitated with care, it can provide community members and groups with University funded opportunities. School communities have knowledge and real life experiences they can offer and both sets of students can greatly benefit from learning beside those with whom they share a home space. It is important that arts education continue its work and research in shared community settings.

McIntrye (2008) states, “one aspect of PAR that makes it significant to social science research is that it is a research approach that is a theory of possibility rather than a theory of predictability” (p. 67). This study is only one example of a PAR framework and, following McIntrye’s words, there are many more possibilities to investigate and explore with PAR. As an arts educator who has also been trained as a general education teacher, I would like to see future research initiatives that introduce PAR as a method used within teacher and art teacher certification programs. Action research, used as a method for continuing improvements in one’s teacher practice has established positive outcomes (Stringer, 2007), though there is a need to examine the possibilities of PAR’s role in art teacher certification programs.

The emergent themes from this study, disparity of educational norms and technology frustrations could also be further studied. Disparity of what is considered to
be normal in education is worthy of discussion in academia, art education and teacher preparation programs. In order to best prepare pre-service teachers, they must learn to discuss issues dealing with socio-economic status and how this has influenced what they consider to be normal within education and how this sense of normalcy can affect their teacher practice. Technology is, and will always be, continuously changing and improving. Frustrations with adapting to these changes will continue to deserve attention from art education and all areas of study. In order for arts education to remain contemporary and relevant, it must initiate future research that uncovers how technology can be used for, with and in arts education.

The final inquiry into social consciousness and social responsibility is the core of this study’s concern and, I believe, is worthy of much future research attention. As an artist, teacher and researcher, I set out to better understand how the processes of collaboration and artmaking could aid in the growth of social consciousness and the development of social responsibility. Though this study provides a discourse that uncovers many important issues relevant to social consciousness and social responsibility, it has also raised several questions that will hopefully inspire numerous new inquiries that continue this reflexive spiral of meaning-making.
References


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Appendix A: IRB Approval
November 14, 2011

Protocol Number: 2011B0433
Protocol Title: HOW SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CAN GROW THROUGH THE MEANING-MAKING PROCESSES OF COLLABORATION AND ART-MAKING, Karen Hutzel, Meaghan Nelson, Art Education

Type of Review: Initial Review—Expedited
IRB Staff Contact: Michael Donovan
Phone: 614-292-6950
Email: donovan.6@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Hutzel,

The Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB APPROVED BY EXPEDITED REVIEW the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for expedited review, as indicated below.

Date of IRB Approval: November 11, 2011
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: November 7, 2012

In addition; the protocol was approved for the inclusion of children (permission of one parent sufficient).

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used.

Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for one year from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378. All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Shari R. Speer, PhD, Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board
Appendix B: Collaborative Artworks and Artist Statements
The theme of our collaboration art project is “friendship”. The reason why we choose this theme is because we think that we can gain true friendship through participating community, just like us, OSU students and GEMS students. First of all, it is not easy for us to use the application of Gimp at the beginning, because it is pretty different from Photoshop. After we got the Gimp Cheat Sheet, which is greatly useful to us, then we learnt many Gimp skills through these weeks. For example, the steps for selection action, there are many short cuts, such as using combination of SHIFT, CTRL, or ALT with other actions. What’s more, we tried Drawing Tools and Clone Tool and so on as well. In this artwork, we used many buildings in this community, as well as school bus, a sign, basketball hoop, a typical sculpture in front of the GEMS building, road, and a dog. Specifically, we want to use buildings represents the assets of the community. The sculpture is a typical representation of GEMS. The lovely dog was the one we met on that photograph field trip, which contains our memories with each other. And also, a dog can greatly represent “friendship”. The school bus represents our identities in this community. A basketball hoop represents happiness and joy in this community. The road and text strongly show the theme, which we want to express that we can find a deep friendship participating in the community.
Our theme for this project is man vs. nature. Our plan is to contrast the natural world and man-made world through this artwork. The main focus of the art is the tree line; these trees coupled with the sun and flying birds represent nature and the buildings represent human society. The city we chose was from New York, the night skyline and the rainbow effect on the trees were to add style or color. The birds represent freedom and the sun represents natural light. The nighttime skyline is lit up by artificial light, which contrasts the natural world below.

It’s upside down because it catches your eye more…I guess you could say it means the world is upside down and backwards. We chose this topic because the natural world is more hidden in the modern society. Through our artwork we are able to portray this natural, and often not seen, world.
Our artwork’s theme is the GEMS school and its surroundings. We chose it because after we walked around the GEMS school, we discovered a lot of elements that can represent our community, such as the Greek houses, trees, buildings, school buses, etc. We used a picture of the school bus as our background, then we added some other pictures we took during our field-trip, finally we drew many other shapes around them. The GIMP skills we used include: cut, paste, free selection, drawing, rotating, free scaling, opacity adjustment, layers, etc. We used pictures of school bus, airplane, squirrel, Greek symbol, tree, and another GEMS girl, and then we drew stars, sun, moon, and some flowers. These images all represent the people and environment of the community, like the school bus and the squirrel. We added those drawings because we want to add more colors to our artwork as well as our community, and we used the squirrel as the driver of the school bus, because it’s more fun that way.
For this project, our theme is happiness in our community. We focused on many different areas, people, and objects in our community that could produce happiness or joy. Happiness, in a community is a major part of a neighborhoods identity. Without happiness, there would be no gardens, friends, or even buildings! Many people are inspired or motivated by happiness, which makes them build and create a lot of artwork, friendships, etc. Without joy in a community, it wouldn’t be much of a community at all.

When creating our digital artwork, we used many applications on a program called GIMP. It has many tools such as the move tool, coloring, resizing, lasso, and cropping. For our project, we used many of these such as saturation, re-coloring, and hues. GIMP, helped us incorporate all of our images into one big picture and gather the meaning of community into an art piece. For images, we focused on people and many little things in the area that would not be easily noticed. We put in many pictures representing friendship, plants, community centers, and things that we like in general. Using these images, it captured the idea of happiness in our community by including things that grabbed our attention as key-monuments of happiness in our area. When looking at this image we would like the viewers to look at the big picture and notice how the colors collaborate and how it shows our view on happiness. Many things in a community bring joy to different people and in this art piece, we show our perspective on happiness in our area. We really enjoyed getting out of the classroom and taking pictures of our wonderful community! It was an amazing learning experience and it helped us look deeper into our neighborhood art, plants, buildings, and objects that aren’t as noticeable when taking a first glance. We will take our knowledge of our community when leaving this service learning program and this was an extremely enjoyable experience! We hope you find our art piece gratifying to look at as it was for us to create.
Our artwork’s theme that deals with the big idea of the community we share together is litter and its impact on our environment. We developed our big idea of community by taking pictures and observing the community we share, and litter was a reoccurring image in our pictures. The GIMP skills that we used were the move tool, the scale tool, the lasso, the rotate tool, and we changed the saturation for our background photo. We used pictures of litter and leaves, and common signs. We manipulated these images to spell out the word litter. We found that we share a common problem, which is excessive litter and these images of litter help make it known to our community. Our project took a lot of effort and hard work, but our final product helps identify the problem our community has with litter and shows the much need for change.
For our artwork, we just want to connect all the things together, which are impressed us most when we go through the whole community. By ‘connecting’ them, we think the communication in the community comes out naturally. Because each of the things exists in the same community must for its certain reason. And these reasons make them related, systematically construct the diversity, the culture even civilization of the community. Because we believe not only does the communication just exists in the form of talking, singing or reading among our human beings, but also transfers information, cultures, spirits or activities in a community. For example, when we entering a community, its styles of buildings, kinds of plants, races of residents, types of schools, numbers of pets etc remind us of how its features and lifestyles. First, we use the ‘sky’ photo as our background. Other photos are related to the objects as followed: big trees, twist trees, long streets, Greek house symbols, animals, etc. Then to express nature in the community, we put all the objects on the background photo ‘sky’. Next, we put some shadow on the background photo to make it more romantic in winter days. By adding some letters, words or sentences on photos to highlight the theme of our artworks, which is to make all the objects looks more connected and show their relationships in our eyes. And these help us get better understanding of how the communication works in the community. Images of flags, trees, roads, boards, school bus, dogs and squirrels. First, I should say that those images taken by us two, definitely represent our feelings of the community. So what does the community impress us most and what we are interested in are all in the images. By joining hands to do the collaborative artwork, the ideas of the community is less personal but sharing minds, feelings and much more broaden. We want to make it looks really cute and vivid, so we add some falling leaves and fresh grass along the streets.
Figure 7: Stephanie and Andrea - Collaborative Artwork

Our artworks theme is Nature. We choose this theme to develop the big idea of community by taking pictures of the community around the GEMS school – which was mostly nature. During one class period, we explored the community around the school and took many pictures. We then choose the pictures we liked the best to incorporate in our project. We used magic eraser tool, quick selection tool, healing brush, and messed with the colors of the pictures. We used a lone chair sitting in front of a dinner that we both found interesting and a random part of nature. We also incorporated a tree, the street with mud tracks, and added two leaves to the tree to represent our exploration through the community together. These images represent our collaborative idea of community because we took these pictures together while exploring the community.
Figure 8: Fangshu and Arielle - Collaborative Artwork

What is your artwork’s theme that deals with the big idea of community? Our theme is about the buildings in the OSU community. We came up with the theme to develop the big idea of community through our photos. We choose an image for our background. Then we took some of our photos and transferred them onto our background. Then we scaled the pictures to fit onto our background image. We used images of OSU fraternity and sorority buildings to create our artwork along with trees and the monument in front of the Graham Expeditionary Middle School. Our images represent our collaborative idea of community because they are what helps make up a community. We would like our viewers to know that our artwork required a team effort.
Our theme is the designs (neighborhood abstractions) that are found in our Columbus community. We chose this theme because we wanted to be able to take pictures of anything we found that might typically get overlooked while walking through a neighborhood. We knew that we wanted to manipulate the pictures we found into layers of images that might seem unrecognizable. We did this by changing the scale of the images by cropping as well as experimenting with the opacity tool, which makes the pictures transparent. We had fun changing the hue, saturation, contrast and brightness of each layer to focus on the areas we thought were interesting of the photographs. We took pictures of street signs, fire hydrants, sewer caps, brick roads, stone paths, address numbers, and trees. These images represent our collaborative idea of community because they are things we found in the community of a Columbus neighborhood. Each image also represents some kind of tool that is used by people in the community. For example, the stop sign and stone path are for safety and the fire hydrant has multiple uses. The street sweeping sign is enforcing the rule of no parking, and this lets us know that our community tries to stay clean. We would like our viewers to know that this project was very fun because we each had an open mind and did not expect a specific outcome of how we wanted the final piece to look. It was exciting to watch the art being made from beginning to end.
The theme of our artwork is signs and symbols. We chose this theme because most of the images on our flash drive were of things that had meaning to them. This meant that when we were actually taking the photos with our camera that was most appealing to us since we had so many of them. They all were taken in our shared community which means that they represent our community. We designed our artwork by first brainstorming the possible themes. We then chose what images would fit those themes. In Gimp, we used the Move Tool a lot, Cut and Paste, and we played with the opacities to create a shear illusion in the artwork. We used a few different images in our artwork. We used the sky which symbolizes the nature of the community as a whole, the heart represents love and caring, the tree branches represent growth, the rainbow and clouds which symbolizes hope, the street intersection sign which symbolizes the location of the community, one butterfly which symbolizes the GEMS students, and the other butterfly represents the OSU students. Each of them represents something else which is why we chose signs as our theme. These images represent our theme because each of them makes up our shared community. Each of the symbolic meanings represents us as human beings.
Our artwork deals with the idea of community through friends, art, and nature. The theme(s) jumped out at us at first, after a brainstorming session with our classmates. Working in GIMP, we utilized scaling, layers, color correction, rotation, and masking tools to arrange our artwork. We used pictures we took with a camera from our community of art, friends, and nature. Friends help shape the community through our everyday interactions, art helps individuals express their ideas, and nature is naturally occurring artwork that provides the surroundings which we need to protect. Some questions to think about:
Do you like our art?
What are your thoughts? What do you think AFN stands for?
Figure 12: Sarah and Mercedes - Collaborative Artwork

Street signs is our artwork’s theme that deals with the big idea of community, we call it ‘Paths of Life’. We chose street signs as our theme because we were interested in taking pictures of all the signs we saw and because there was a variety of signs everywhere we looked in the community. We designed our artwork through GIMP. We used various tools, such as copying and pasting, cropping, scaling, rotating, and color changing. The images we used to make our artwork were all from around our community, except the background image was found from the internet. The images represent our collaborative idea of community because the images are from around the community. We moved the images around to spell the word “life.” The image of street signs spelling out “life” represents that in our community there are many different paths, roads, and directions to take.
The themes that we chose to pursue in this artwork were art and inspiration which make the community appear as it does. It only seemed natural to choose these themes because the visual makeup of the community is the most noticeable and the most obvious but yet also the most interesting. Although we had a plan for themes, there was no true plan to design of the artwork. The images were put together at random where they appeared to be most appealing. In order to create the piece we used the cut and paste, new layers, lasso tool to select images, and the eraser to remove extra pixels of unwanted color around the edges of images. Most of the images used in the project were man-made objects as well as natural elements that contained traces of human interaction. These marks of individuals left in the community for the rest of the community to view truly represent those who live in the community together. The artwork was designed to show the viewers parts of the community and have different meanings to different people so there is nothing additional because we want the artwork to influence people by what they see alone.
When you think about the community, what do you notice first? For our group, it’s the people, and we call our artwork ‘The People Are What Make Ohio’. Our theme is centered around the people of the community because they are who truly create the characteristics of the environment that we live in. We chose to emphasize and use images of the people of the community because we noticed how our specific community contained a variety of individuals with different interests and beliefs yet they all came together and formed “Ohio” as a unit. The GIMP skills we utilized consisted mostly of cutting, pasting, and resizing using the scissor tool often. What we would really like our viewers to recognize about our artwork is that only when the people come together can they really unify in a successful and healthy habitat.
Our artwork theme that deals with the big idea of community is nature and color. We call our artwork ‘Color in our Community’. We chose that theme because we thought nature was an important part of our community. Using GIMP to design our artwork we started with basic nature pictures we took, and later added non-nature pictures to create a focal point. GIMP skills we played with were, the resize, move, scissors, and healing tool. We used pictures we took in the community; the background, the earth, the people, and the bottom row of the flower pyramid. We used google images for the heart cloud, the waterfall, and the flowers. These images represent our collaborative idea of community by showing our community is made up of all different colors, the colors in nature or the different races that come together and make us a community.
Figure 16: Michelle and Ashley - Collaborative Artwork

Home Away from Home

Although there are an abundance of ways to portray the big idea of “Community,” one theme in particular stood out to us. We chose to use the theme of nature and homes because these themes and the idea of community intertwine in so many underlying ways. Community, to us, means a home for not only the people who are a part of it, but also the nature and animals. We feel that the homes that can be discovered in this community withhold beauty and a sense of “togetherness.” Initially, to construct our artwork, we began with a picture that summed up our theme as a whole. While keeping the background photo the main focus, we chose pictures of ours that we thought portrayed nature, beauty, and homes to the best potential. We then began to manipulate the colors, contrast, and opacity of the photos that we took to blend with the background picture better. To do this, we used the colorizing, contrasting, opacity, cropping, erasing, and image sizing tools, and then the smudge tool to smooth out the edges. Collaboratively, we decided upon pictures based on the way in which they accentuated the background photo and big idea of the artwork. We thought about where beings of all species and social class would belong, and selected pictures according to that. We believe that these images represent the part of a community that is normally not thought of. When community is mentioned, most only think of buildings, schools, businesses, and people, while community also includes the natural world, the unconventional homes, and the places in which animals, people of different classes, and other beings call their own. Along with a sense of belonging, we would also like the viewer to get from our artwork our inspiration we received from our background photo. It is as though, with this photo, we are trying to “shed a light” on these themes and this underlying sense of community.
Our artwork’s, called Woodruff Wonders, themes include personality, imagination, and music. Although they do not directly compose community, they are all aspects of a community. Communities all contain, and are shaped by, imagination and personality. In addition, music can be found within communities. We chose these themes at the beginning, but had difficulty portraying them. Our first outing only produced pictures of transportation and street signs, with the occasional tree. However, we found characters on the wall of the library to portray personality. We then pasted them over a photo of our community, adding a microphone to represent music. We designed our artwork using cutting, copy/pasting, erasing, and the magic selection tool. Our definition of community is a group of people who share a commonality among differences. The background of our artwork is a photo from a prominent road in our community on which many people live - Woodruff Ave. On top of this photo we have pasted fictional characters found on the wall of the GEMS Middle School library. Like members of a community, these characters are all from different stories, but they share a common place - they all exist in the community of children’s fairy tales, both historic and modern.
Appendix C: Identity Artworks and Artist Statements
Figure 18: Andrew - Identity Artwork

My artwork’s big idea is my identity and its theme is what comprises a large aspect of my life. This idea is expressed through the theme of patriotism and pride in the military as well as past triumphs alongside modern weapons.

My family has a solid history of servicemen in the 20th century including a great uncle who died in Sicily during World War II, another great uncle that served during World War II, and two grandfathers one served in the Army and the other in the Air Force. From a young age I have had a great military influence from my grandfather on my mother’s side who has taught me how to fire a weapon as well as history of the armed forces. So from the time I was young I have had a deep pride for this nation and the strength and honor of the armed forces.

The modern pictures represent my current fascination with the military and the various weapon systems that are implemented in current conflicts. Uncle Sam and the American flag represent my deep patriotism and pride in both the country and the military as the Uncle Sam used in the artwork is the same one from the recruiting posters in WWII that made him so famous. All of the black and white photos represent my family’s heritage in the military as well as adding to the pride in previous accomplishments of the armed forces.
My artworks big idea & theme is Identity & Structure. When I make art, I tend to make clean, sharp lines. I don’t like messy art. It’s almost ironic, considering my binder for classes is always in disarray, and my room is a mess, but I always have some sort of thing for a degree of order. I figured I could represent this in some way through my art.

Each image represents something I enjoy the most. This isn’t just a haphazard collection of imagery, each one is from a specific media that means something to me. I figure that a person is the sum of their likes, dislikes, and experiences. I can’t say I have a ton of photos of experiences, so I used what I do have: the internet. Each square has a set size. Based on the number of spaces it takes up, shows how much that thing means to me. Pokemon (identified by the yellow Pikachu), has the biggest space, taking up 4 cells. Pokemon defined my childhood, and still remains very dear to me to this day.
The big idea in my artwork was Identity. Within this big idea, I narrowed my theme to Past, Present, and Future. This theme works well with Identity because it illustrates who I am through where I’ve been, where I’m at, and where I want to go in life. In the background of my piece is a skyline of two great cities that I have never been to, but plan on going to: Madrid and Tokyo. In the foreground, I have a picture taken in the late 50’s of my dad and my grandfather back in Somalia. I used this picture because family and heritage is a huge part of my Identity and both my dad and his dad are very inspirational to me when it comes to education and success. Which leads me to the picture of me graduating. This photo represents where I’m at with my life and what I’m focused on currently. It also ties my past and my future because it is the link that will allow me to get to all those wonderful cities in the background. I also have a photo of my niece Nubia playing on a beach in Mogadishu, which she’s never been. I used both the magnetic lasso and move tool to place her on the beach. I did this because, with a civil war going on for over twenty years in Somalia, it is a dream of mine to enjoy my beautiful country someday.
This piece of work explores my identity but more importantly, it displays my friends, family, and art. When prompted to create a piece using the big idea of identity, I tried to decipher what I care about most. Because it is only the beginning of my first year in college, I decided to create a piece that conveys what I miss and love most about home. My friends, family, and art came to mind almost immediately and thus became my theme. To make my artwork more personal, I asked my family to send me a couple of pictures of some of my possessions and high school art back home. A print I made using my name became the background, part of a self-portrait I painted became the focal point, and a picture of a giant collage on the wall of my bedroom became the border. While these components represented my art and friends, I still needed elements that related to my family. Using a map, I marked all of the countries my ancestors originated from. To incorporate my close relationship with my sisters, I added a small cardinal tattoo we all plan to get this winter in honor of each other and our grandmother. Using mostly selection tools, scissors, and erasers, while adjusting opacity, I layered all of these parts to create one piece. Although this artwork may seem somewhat simple, using only a few layers, it seems very complex to me. Each element carries its own value and their significance makes the piece both personal and meaningful. If I had more time I would have tried to incorporate more pictures of my art and family, but given the time frame I worked within I am satisfied with the product.
Figure 22: Mary - Identity Artwork

My big idea behind my art work is not wanting to grow up and staying forever young. I chose this theme because as a freshman in college, I’m faced with multiple important decisions about my future life and it makes me think more and more about how I need to mature and become an adult. One day I’ll have to be one hundred percent responsible for providing for myself. Life was simpler when I was five. I used images I took, an image of my friends and I, and an image from the internet.

Each image represents childhood. The crayons as the background represent how my friends and I still color in coloring books with Crayola. The monkey bars are playground equipment that my friends and I play with still to this day and the photo of the three girls is actually of my friends Kylee, Emily, and myself that my friend Renae took and it shows how we still kick our feet around in water even when we dressed up for special occasions.
My big idea for my artwork is personality. Working within my big idea my theme for my artwork is simply, ME. I chose the theme of ME to develop the big idea of personality because I wanted my artwork to very literally represent me. The best way I knew how to represent me was to put images of my hobbies and things I enjoy, because all those things make me who I am.

The cello is there because it is something that recently became a big chunk of my life. I have been playing since I was 12, but it never has been important to me until recently. It is a huge stress reliever for me and it reminds me that my life is going in a positive direction. The tree of life represents my friends and family. The roots showing are my family, which is where I come from and what keeps me grounded. The top of the tree represents my friends and the important people in my life. The Stephen King novel represents my love for reading. I used a King novel because he happens to be my favorite author. I spend a lot of my time reading in coffee shops, like Starbucks. Which is represented by the Starbucks gold card. I am a huge coffee drinker, the blacker the better, and I am a gold card member. The picture of me with a surfboard represents my athletic side. Sports are the things I enjoy most. I love trying new things; I really like the challenge of learning and mastering a new sport. The picture of me with the head set on is from me actually flying a plane. It represents my love for adventure, and always striving to stretch myself. My background, is a black berry patch at Lynd’s Fruit Farm. That just represents a place I love to spend time with friends and family.
Figure 24: Richard - Identity Artwork

My artwork’s big idea is identity. Its theme encompasses qualities of me as well as my personality. I feel this theme accurately portrays the big idea by expressing myself and my background.

The pictures in the artwork represent my personality, background and future. I chose the background because space has always fascinated me and that fascination has impacted who I am today. The space shuttle is for the same reason but also because I was an aerospace engineering student who recently transferred into physics engineering. The Bears emblem represents me being born in Chicago and rooting for Chicago teams (Bulls and Bears) my entire life. The Liverpool logo is there to represent my favorite sport team. I enjoy playing and watching sports and they have become a big part of my life. The stadium is obviously there to represent my two years here at Ohio State but also my entire childhood. I actually grew up here because my Dad is a professor at the university and would always take me to work with him. The Celtic knot on the left hand side symbolizes my career as a student at Dublin Jerome HS. The knot was an important part of the schools tradition and spirit. Finally the soccer ball represents the biggest impact on my life; my soccer career. Since I was seven years old I have played soccer on various club teams as well as my high school. The experiences and friendships I made throughout those years have shaped the person I am today.
My artwork’s big idea is identity. The theme of my artwork is my life, or my identity as a person. I choose the theme of my life to develop the big idea of identity because I feel my life in general has many different aspects that make up my identity. For example, my family, friends, home, hobbies, and school make up my identity.

These images represent my identity in different ways. Each image somehow relates to my life and me as a person. For example, my project shows the people in my life that are most important to me: my friends, family, and dog. They are the people that have had the biggest influence on me throughout my life and have molded me into the person I am today. The picture of me swimming represents my identity because I love to swim. Swimming has been a big part of my life ever since I was six. It has taught me many life lessons that will help me throughout life, such as how to manage my time, how to have a good work ethic, how to work as a team, and how to set goals. The map of Toledo represents the life I left when I came to Ohio State. Similarly, the Pennsylvania license plate represents where I was born and lived for the first eleven years of my life. Furthermore, the Ohio State image represents my education and pride for my school. Lastly, I chose to use the image of the ocean as the background because I love being in the water and the beach is one of my favorite places to go.
Figure 26: Seth - Identity Artwork

The big idea of my project is personal connections and, of course, identity and the theme is “relationships in the city”. The big idea was there from the start because I wanted to visually display my relationships with the most important people in my life and how they identify me. Thus, the theme “relationships in the city” was born from my love of urban settings and the people in them.

To make my picture, I used the Cutout filter and various Sketch filters from the Filter Gallery to make the pictures I wanted to use into more vector looking graphics (so I could resize them and I liked the simplistic look). Then, I arranged the bottom scene from a picture of Los Angeles, Cedar Point, Myrtle Beach, and another one from Cedar point (respectively). I then arranged the pictures of my family and friends into an order that seemed suitable, and then I used the Color Range to select the main color (there were only two because of the filters) and then I used Fill (from the Edit menu) to change the color to each person’s favorite color (well, to the best of my knowledge, anyway).

Photography is a hobby of mine; mostly because I like to have a large library of photos to choose from when I have a project such as this. So, I used pictures of my friends, family, and vacation locals to piece together my project. These images represent my identity because I took each and every one of them and they all represent something that is important to me. The people are my friends and family, and they are a special, irreplaceable part of who I am. As for the non-organic pictures, I used these pictures because they represent precious memories from exciting trips past.
My artwork’s name is “My Voyage”. From my title, you probably can tell the big idea of my work is travel. Travel is my favorite activity, I love to see new things in a new place. In my opinion, men will feel bored while they’ve been a place for so long time, so they need travel. Because I love to travel, so I think the thing that can identify me is travel, by the way, I love travel alone, feel the place, the city, the country by myself for a period of time.

I separate my artwork into 3 parts, one is my hometown, the big city in front of everything; then it’s the means of transportation, cruise is my favorite way of travel, Airplane is the most common transportation we have to take; the 3rd part is the travel places, I put a lot of famous architecture in my artwork represents the place I’ve been. (America, UK, China, Japan, Korea, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong) I used stroke a lot, besides the background. The reason why I choose to stroke my pictures is that I think travel is a very colorful and happy journey, so I have to use color to define the passionate of the city, the place and the country.

The inspiration of my artwork came from an Advertisement, I forgot the name of it, but they stroke their pictures and motions, makes me feel the happy way they want the audiences to feel, gave me a really deep influence, so this time, I hope you can feel the same way I felt travel, so happy, so wonderful and unforgettable.
My artwork’s theme is THE SIGNIFICANT FACES IN MY LIFE. Further saying, these faces are my best friends. Friendship is the most enjoyable part of my life, excluding family relationship. I treasure my life-long friends and they make my life colorful. This means we always join hands to share happiness and sorrow. After I go abroad in OSU, sometimes I really miss my best friends. I really want to do something for them to express my missing for them. And this identity project particularly offers me a chance to make an artwork about them.

I wanted to make my artwork vivid, romantic and well-organized. So I used pinkish purple, white and yellow flowers to make the whole artwork look warm. What’s more, the whole artwork is mainly in baby blue. I think one of the most romantic part that I want to first mention should be the two big white wings added to the image paper handed in my hand. Then I put all the key images together forming into a big heart shape and to highlight this, I added a red heart lined by myself. Finally, I’m really proud that I come up with an idea that I made the finished background as a jigsaw puzzle. It’s so vividly that just like I finished the whole artwork when completing a jigsaw puzzle.

The facial images of my best friends are really funny and cute. It took me a long time to collect and select them. Because these images should be one hundred percentage to represent their characteristics and also I should first ask their permission to use the images of themselves. I formed these images into a heart shape because I miss them so much and they’ve already filled in my inner heart. And I chose their facial images for the reason that facial expressions can reflect one’s inner world and by seeing them I always feel happy and less stressful.
The theme of my Identity project is things, places, and people that I love. It is a collage of pictures that are important to me and things that I care about. I chose this theme because it is what I am most interested in photographing, it makes me happy, and it is what I like to see. For this collage, I used many of the Photoshop tools. The lasso tool was a huge help for me because I liked to cut around the edges so my photos didn’t look so “blocky” with such sharp edges. I also played with the sizes, colors, rotations, and contrasts. Color is an interesting thing to me so I played around with opacity, tones, and hues. At first, I was going to do a vivid background with opaque pictures blended together. I finally decided on a high contrast collage with vibrant colors that were all auto contrasted.

All of my pictures are my best friends, some of my family, my favorite vacation places, and my puppies. There are even some pictures of my favorite flowers, which are colored daisies, and my favorite pattern, which is a peacock feather. These images definitely represent my identity because they are all a part of me. If I could be doing anything in the world, I would be vacationing, hanging out with my friends, spending time with my family, and playing with my dogs. I love the collage that I made and I can’t wait to put it in my scrapbook.
The theme of my artwork is the best things in my life. This artwork represents a quiet side of my personality. The main elements I used in the artwork are animals and natural environment, which are my favorites. When I’m alone I enjoy appreciating the beauty of the natural environment a lot. I always go out with my cameras to explore and record the awesomeness of nature from my perspective. I used the photos that I took to make the artwork since I feel like it is the best way let the readers enter my world and see the things that I saw. In this project, I used the Move tool, the Magic Eraser Tool, the Magic Wand Tool, the Magnetic Lasso Tool, the Clone Stamp Tool and the Healing Brush Tool to make my project. This tools and Photoshop skills that I have right now helped me a lot to explain my general idea, however, I feel like it is not enough to get the ideal product that I want. I really want to obtain more knowledge about the software.
My artworks theme is the incorporation of different titles and statuses that are important to me and I believe identify who I am. I choose this theme to develop the big idea of identity because the different role statuses/titles I take are important to my life and has influenced who I am today. The pictures I used all contained my friends, my boyfriend, and most importantly my siblings. I also included a picture of my senior art portfolio. Lastly, I used two giraffe images because I love giraffes and I used an image of a book’s title.

These images represent my identity because I take my role as a friend, a girlfriend, and a sister very seriously. I believe these statuses have shaped who I am as a person. The quote I typed, using the text tool, is a Latin quote from the famous Hannibal, who had almost overthrown the Roman Empire, it says: “I will either make a way or I will find a way”. It stands for perseverance, overcoming judgment, and never giving up. I believe these qualities are what makes me successful in my own life and can is a valuable guideline. I love giraffes, so they just represent the love I have for giraffes. Lastly, my senior portfolio was very important to me. I love art, and I know that is beginning to sound repetitive from me, but I love what art represents, the history of art, what art communicate, and making art! I worked really hard throughout my high school career to create it and I think it reflects my hard work and commitment to the project.

All of these representations were all accidental, I didn’t realize that I was placing images of things I love doing and people I enjoy being with until the end product. I really like how it turned out. If I was to recreate this project again I believe I would have made the pictures look more united by making them monocolor, but I also believe the different colors and saturation levels make it easier to identify the different statuses I have in my life.
The theme is to illustrate the chosen two different clothing styles of two dynasties in ancient china, and they are Han Dynasty and Qing Dynasty. At the beginning, I was thinking to make a picture about the Dunhuang Frescoes, which is one of the most famous view spot in china. That is a collection of frescoes about the flying Apsaras about Buddhism, the pictures and the story background are all great, but it is hard to find the best background page, so I changed my idea. The second is the clothing style I also interested in. Since there are so many dynasties in ancient china, I just choose two famous, they are Han Dynasty and Qing Dynasty, their dressing seems largely different. Why the theme attracts me is that the novels writing about these kind of stories in ancient china is so amazing and innovative. The clothing is also fun to be studied and the TV shows about the ancient china also spend great effort to try to present the real ancient culture. So in the end, I choose the second idea to do my identity project.

Most pictures are the clothing of Han and Qing Dynasty, most of them are imperial dressing, and at the top of the picture are two different dressing of emperor in two dynasties, dressing for empress and empress dowager. The headwear and shoes are also placed. The bottom two sides is the normal dress.

The left half is the Han Dynasty that is more elegant with long sleeve; the right half is Qing dynasty that is solemn. These two dynasties all represent the strong power of china, so I’m proud of them and make it as my identity. I want to show the royal spectacular history of China.
Figure 33: Ricardo - Identity Artwork

Originally, I was going for more of an isolation feel with the lone wolf sitting in the snow. I think as time went on, the theme was lost as I added more and more things. By the end, I don’t really think there is a theme, it merely depicts things that interest me or I identify with. The original theme I was going for reflects what I sometimes feel. Thus, it seemed fitting to try and portray that feeling through the artwork.

I used many images, I isolated the wolf and placed him over another image of snow and blended those together. I then used the background image of the trees and faded those out into blackness, which then became the night sky. The moon was another image isolated and placed over the night sky. The coffee spill is a total of 4 images used together. The image of the hammer and sickle as well as the musical notes were made by hand (with some tracing) in Adobe Illustrator. The black and red lines were traced in Illustrator from another image.

The wolf merely represents my love of wolves in general. The black and red lines are taken from the cover of the album, Figure 8, by Elliott Smith, who is one of my favorite artists. The musical notes simply represent my general love of music, I like listening to it and I enjoy playing the drums and keyboard. I identify myself as being socialist, which is represented by the hammer and sickle. The coffee is there simply because I love coffee and drink it regularly. Everything else is pretty much just artistic license and simply there to make the image seem more natural.
The theme of my artwork is my life and everything that makes me, me. I used things that are most important to me and essential to my life to help choose my theme and develop the big idea of identity. Those things are: school (I love my Buckeyes), my family (mother and brother), and fashion. I used a few different Photoshop skills that I’ve learned over this course period. After playing around and learning how to use them I used almost every one at least once. However, the main tools that I incorporated with this project were the move tool, rectangular marquee tool, elliptical marquee tool, magnetic lasso tool, horizontal type tool, and also I changed the opacities of the images. I used photos of my mother and brother, images of some of my favorite retail stores, and other pictures relating to Ohio State. These images represent my identity because they make up me. Without those images I could not create an identity project because it wouldn’t include the things that are most important to me.
Figure 35: Stephanie - Identity Artwork

My artwork's theme is things in my life. Everything incorporated in my artwork has a lot of meaning and significance to me in my life. I choose the theme – my life to help develop the big idea of identity because everything that is important to me in my life helps to explain a lot about my identity and myself.

I designed my artwork in a random way. I choose everything that was important to me and cut out some of the pictures using the magic wand tool, magic eraser, and the quick selection tool. I also changed the brightness and posterized some of my photos.

The images I used to create my artwork all involve me in some way. Brutus the buckeye signifies my time at the Ohio State University and my loyalty to the Buckeyes. Marilyn Monroe represents all the artwork I have created in the past. I painted this specific piece of art two years ago in high school and it helps to signify all of my art I love to create. The birds in my artwork represent my desire to travel and see the world. The people in my photos include my family, my boyfriend, and my friends. All these people have helped to shape me to who I am today, so they are a big part of my identity and my life.
My theme of my artwork is the most important part in my life, which are my friends, my family members, and any other people I met. I choose this theme to develop the big idea of identity because I think my life and the formation of who I am are strong related to them. They influence my moods and change my life and make the person I am now. I designed my artwork by just putting my friends’ and family members’ funny pictures on the center of the work to show their importance. Most of the Photoshop skills I used were quick selection and magnetic lasso to cut people from the photos. I chose to use the photos of my friends and family members with some funny faces or poses, which I thought to be representative. I think if someone wants to know me, they should first see people around me, since you can find many similarities between them and me. I also added some pictures to show my interests like desserts or high heels or some small animals.
Appendix D: Social Issue Artworks and Artist Statements
The theme of my artwork is history and how it has changed over the years. I chose this theme because it is year 2012 and the presidential election is approaching. In 2008, we created history when we elected Barack Obama as president. 100 years ago, this would have never been possible because of slavery and segregation between blacks and whites. I wanted to show how much things have changed over time. Since the Big Idea is history and change, I used a lot of photos that depict slavery and segregation. I chose photos of well-known abolitionist, signs that represent and symbolize hate against Blacks, and protesting. The most important photo I chose is of Barack Obama because it symbolizes our status as African Americans in today’s world. To this day I am still amazed at the fact that we have a Black man as president. If you take a look at the other photos it is obvious that we have come a long way in this country.

These images represent my identity because I am an African American female. 100 years ago I would not have had the opportunity to attend school, work, dine, or befriend Whites. Today, I can do any of that. It gives me a great feeling inside knowing that we overcame white supremacy and I am blessed to be able to do the things that I desire freely without having to receive consent from a slave master like then. I used a lot of photos from then and only one from now (Barack Obama). The reason for that is because I want history to be the main focus. I can use more photos from now but I want people to be able to look at my art piece and understand our struggle. Today, we are considered people. Everyone is equal and has the same opportunities. Back then, we were considered property. The image of Barack Obama represents us as Americans.
Working from the big idea of social issue, the theme of my artwork is equality. I choose this theme to develop the big idea of social issue is because fighting for equal rights for all human beings is still a controversial issue in society today. And there are amounts of people who are still oppressed by others who have privileges. Working with this artwork, I aim to present to the public that equal rights for all, special privileges for none, using my small piece of artwork to appeal that no matter old or young, man or woman, black, white or yellow, minority or not, celebrity or not, we are human beings living in the earth.

Before working on with this artwork, I took a lot of time searching these pictures which meet my expectation. What pictures I was looking for should have the ability to present different identities, including gender, age, race, and minority of human beings.

In this artwork, there are mainly six pictures and text. These pictures are selective carefully, including a black little boy, a black and a white woman with youth and vigor, an old male minority, a middle-age man, and a yellow celebrity. These pictures are representing five strands: 1) male and female; 2) young and old; 3) white, black, and yellow; 4) minority and non-minority; 5) celebrities and average people. Also, with an attachment of text equal rights for all, special privileges for none, this artwork function is kind of like public poster.
I chose big idea of home and them of traveling, I want to remind everyone of that wherever we go, home is always warmest place. I selected some pictures that taken by me while traveling to different places. The places that I have travelled are where I want to spend my life in. During traveling to different places, my hometown is always kept in my mind and it is always my favorite place. I use some pictures that I took when I travelled to different places globally. I took those pictures and they were chosen by me due to my own taste. I want to let you think about the places you have travelled and compare each of them, including cultures, and compare them to your hometown.
“My big idea is Poverty. Through this project I want to emphasize this serious social issue. Nowadays, there are still a lot of people still live in poverty; they need food, they need clean water, they need clothes, they need our helps. While a lot of people are spending million dollars on luxury goods, all those people in the poor area asking for are just the basic needs. I used pictures of children who are suffering from poverty in different areas to make this artwork since I think it would be more touching when I express the idea using the element of children. I didn't put any word to explain the theme but focus on using the children’s eyes to delivery the message that we should care. When viewing this piece of art, readers can look through every kid's eyes and read their helplessness. The framing that I used in this project, I believe, can give the readers shocks while delivering the message at the same time.
Figure 41: Bao - Social Issue Artwork

My artworks theme is ecology; I chose it because pollution is a huge problem now all around the world, and the ecological balance of the earth has been greatly impacted. I designed my artwork by putting several pictures of pollution together on a background picture of beautiful blue sky and grass. I used a background picture of blue sky and green grass, which represents the beautiful earth we live in without all the pollution; two pictures of severely polluted air in a city center, a picture of waste water pollution, a picture of dead fish in a polluted river, two pictures of industrial chimney air pollution, a picture of car emission pollution, and a picture of the earth saying “Help”. These pictures all represent the pollution that is happening around the world, and they form a sharp contrast to the beautiful background picture, which conveyed my deep concern and anger towards such pollution behaviors. Our mother earth has suffered enough that she’s yelling out “help” to human beings, and hopefully more and more people can hear it.
The artwork theme is the homosexual equality. The love of homosexual is never wrong. The homosexual issue is a controversial discussion recently. More and more people found them are homosexual and they are accepted by more and more countries. I want to support them with my little effort. I want to show two parts of the homosexual, they are Gay and Lesbian. I want to find out some signals to stand for them. And I want to find some pictures to stand for their sincere love. Finally I want to use the national flags of those who accepted homosexual marriage to be the background, and during that process, I find a more representative flag which stands for the homosexual organization.

To represent the gay, I choose the signal “♂” which stands for male and two man stand together in heart to stand for the love between male. In the same way, I choose the female signal “♀” and heart with 2 female to represent the lesbian. And I use the rings specialized for homosexual to present their forever love. And the homosexual rainbow flag consists of six colors. They are red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. The rainbow flag is sometimes called “freedom flag”, was popularized as a symbol of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pride and diversity by San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker in 1978. The different colors symbolize diversity in the gay community, and the flag is used predominantly at gay pride events and in gay villages worldwide in various forms including banners, clothing and jewelry. It sometimes represents the peace.
My artworks big idea is the power of protest and I worked with the theme freedom of speech. I choose the theme – freedom of speech to help develop the big idea of power because so many citizens have exercised this right to demonstrate that they have some kind of power when protesting.

I wanted to have a collage of people demonstrating my big idea and theme. I did this in photo shop by I cutting out some of the pictures using the magic wand tool, magic eraser, and the quick selection tool. I also added text and painted the banner to declare “freedom” – meaning freedom of speech. I changed the opacity of the background photo to add depth to the artwork.

I used images that all symbolize protest in some way. Some of the photos are people yelling, others are people standing with signs – all of them represent the power they have and the freedom of speech they have. These images represent the power of protest because they are all specifically dealing with protesters. People protest in order to gain some kind of freedom and to get their voice out there.
Figure 44: Xiaolin - Social Issue Artwork

The theme of my artwork is Internet. I choose this theme to develop the big idea because Internet, especially Social Network has nowadays influenced people immensely. People cannot live without Internet, and Social Network has helped people to know more about the world. I design the artwork by showing the popularity and usefulness of Internet, and I used Photoshop of cutting and pasting to develop the work. I used the image of a computer to represent that almost everyone is using the computer; a person with a tree on his head to show that Internet helps him develop more knowledge. With a computer, people are able to have a ‘tree head’ like wire to connect to the world. I also use an image of world map to show the connection and the pink lines are the connection wires.
The big idea is “Social Issues”. The theme is the issue I chose to work with, Marginalization. Originally, I didn’t really know what social idea to explore, as it’s not something I think of regularly. I consulted Wikipedia, and the word Marginalization stood out to me. The idea of pushing things off to the side as a way of not dealing with them, ostracizing them always bugged me. The sad part is, it’s something we do regularly whether we think about it or not. In line with the title, “Choices”, it’s showing how with great wealth, there are two options. One, to help the people that truly could use the disposable money you have, or you can spend it on something extravagant. In line with marginalization, the problems (homelessness, food shortages, third-world-esque things) are off to the side, and take up considerably less space. When you look at it, your eyes instinctively go to the side that has more space, more focus.

On the left side, we have an image of a “Saleen S7”, price tag $499,000; an image of a “Motor Yacht Navetta 26 Crescendo”, a custom Yacht, exact price unlisted; and the Villard Mansion, which is now the courtyard of The New York Palace Hotel. On the right side is a photo of a homeless person (stock photography), and a small child from Somalia, courtesy of Unicef. These images represent the choices people could make as for what to use their money on. They could either do something extravagant, or be modest and donate to help a cause.
For this project I decided to work with the big idea of oppression. Rather than focusing on the idea of physically being oppressed, however, I wanted to examine the mental state. My goal was to highlight the influence of society, the media, and the judgement of our peers, and the pressure they exert on an individual to be something or someone they are not. As a college freshman, these issues play a big part in my life. While exploring my new environment and meeting new people I have faced influence from a variety of sources. I wanted to emphasize that you do not have to be physically contained to feel trapped, sometimes pressure from the elements in your environment is enough.

I started my piece by arranging a collage of logos that represent a variety of influential sources from clothing lines to electronic devices and religion. These represent my identity because I incorporated a lot of symbols which are used by groups and companies that I feel target my generation. I tried to use a lot of color and make the background seem very busy to give the viewer a sense of the chaos and confusion these industries create for adolescents. To make the collage I used the magic wand tool and messed around with rotating, erasing, and filtering pictures. Over top of the background I pasted a picture of a brain that I drew. Although I initially attempted to create it using the pen tool, I opted out due to time restraints. In the process of creating the brain I tried to use a lot of vertical lines so it looked almost like a jail cell or a trap. I also made it look like a maze. At the center it reads “you are here.” There is no actual exit to the maze which strengthens the idea of being mentally trapped, or, oppressed.
My art works big idea and theme is war and the negative aspects of it. War has been a social issue for years now and controversial debates about it continue to this day. I find war a disturbing and childish way to solve disagreements opposed to sitting down like adults and discussing compromise. I chose war as my big idea because I have a personal connection with the effects of war. My boyfriend of one year has chosen to join the army and is leaving for basic training on January 21st and if anything, his decision to join has made my attitude against the destruction of war even stronger. The statement my artwork is portraying is that wars negative aspects outweigh the positive ones. War equals death and destruction for both sides. Since when has killing the most people and demolishing the most towns become something to be proud of? I don’t see winning a war as a win at all. When starting this project, I had an entirely different vision of what my artwork would look like, but as I researched my big idea, that vision changed. I wanted to show real images of the damages of war over the years. To express this, I grabbed images from different time periods show the negative outcome of war. To emphasize my central point with Uncle Sam I wanted the pictures in the background to be all black and white. I used the clone stamp tool to get rid of some of the words below the original Uncle Sam poster so that I could add a more powerful statement underneath him that would get my point across.
My artworks’ big idea is power and the theme is equality. The social issue I am investigating with this artwork is the equality of genders, specifically women in the workforce. I chose power and equality to investigate the social issue of sexism in employment. Still today men and women do not receive the same pay, and even benefits. It isn’t because women work less skilled jobs, or are less qualified because that is not always the case anymore. This is where the equality comes in; genders in the working world are not equal among people who have the same education and the same skills. The big idea of power helped me look at the big reason why equality is still happening. It is the golden rule, “he who has the gold, makes the rules”. Typically that is what power is the person or in the case the “gender” on top makes it so they stay on top. The person or people in power remain in power by not having equality. This social issue affects me directly because I am a woman that will be entering the working world in the next three years. The major I chose and the field of work I am interested in is male dominated. I am challenged to find a way to not be a statistic and hopefully move inequality to equality.

The statement in my artwork is more about empowering women to break the inequality. A term used a lot in the women’s movement or even in business is the “glass ceiling”. According to the business dictionary, the glass ceiling term is used to describe an invisible but real barrier through which the next stage or level of advancement can be seen, but cannot be reached by qualified and deserving employees. This barrier exists due
to prejudice on the basis of age, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation, and/or sex. Although generally illegal, such practices are prevalent in most countries. Women in the business field can go so high until they reach that glass ceiling and men are not affected at all. I wanted my artwork to show women breaking through the hypothetical glass ceiling.

The women represent all women with careers who are treated the same at their job because of their gender. I wanted the background to give an underwater feel, because I wanted it to represent a struggling environment. I thought of it as a bubble or like inside a drop of water. When you are underwater it is easier to sink then it is to swim upward. We cannot breath underwater so we must hold our breath until we reach the top. Just like it is easier to give up then it is to make a difference and fight for equality. The women are reaching up with what appears to be a torch of light that shatters the glass ceiling, which bursts the bubble that women are trapped in. I felt women being underwater was a better metaphor then the glass ceiling because it is easier to relate to the feeling of drowning or being underwater. The light that breaks the glass represents the empowerment of women speaking out against inequality and gaining some of that power.
My artwork’s big idea is power and the theme is immigration. The social issue investigated with this piece of art is illegal immigration between Mexico and the United States. I chose the big idea of power and the theme of immigration because it is currently a big controversy within our country. It also interests me. My artwork has an objective statement about illegal immigration. It does not suggest that illegal immigration is a positive or negative occurrence. However, it does state that the United States has power over Mexico when it comes to illegal immigration. These images represent illegal immigration because they are a collage of images that involve signs, banners, symbols, and pictures that show different aspects of illegal immigration. In the middle of the art piece, the borderline between Mexico and the United States can be seen. Above the borderline, where the United States would be found, are all images against illegal immigration. On the other hand, under the borderline are all images that support illegal immigration. The image of the American flag in the background of the entire image symbolizes that the United States has power over Mexican illegal immigration. The flag image spreads over the entire project, even under the Mexican border, which shows that the United States has power over the issue. Specifically, the United States holds the power in the issue because they regulate immigration and have border police. My artwork is a collage of many different images that represent both sides of illegal immigration.
The big idea of the artwork is Memory with the theme being Hometown Nostalgia. The social issue that I am investigating with this artwork is homesickness. I chose this theme because I feel like it appeals to feelings of being in college or out in the real world, but still having those precious memories that tie you to the places where you were once from. The main statement my artwork is making in relation to the homesickness issue is the way I used picture from my hometown to recreate a familiar scene that invokes a strong emotional reaction within me as I hope it does for the viewer as well.

Continuing the theme from Identity Project, I used pictures that I had taken myself throughout the years. I used a picture of a building on Front Street in Marietta, Ohio to make the buildings in the picture. For the smokestacks, I used a picture of the smokestacks that you can see from practically anywhere in Marietta. They’re not very pretty, but they represent an identifying piece of my hometown. These pictures represent my identity because they are all pictures that I have taken myself and they all represent emotional bonds and memories that I have for my hometown of Marietta.
Big idea is the broad, important human issues. Hence, I decided to work with something that I’m familiar with, such as my hometown. To be more specific, I choose to use images and effects to show the power of the 56 nations. There are 56 nations in China, and every nation has their own characteristics, which made themselves very unique. It is very critical to have the national unity in China, within our big community. Hence, I choose the picture of the 56 nations, and make them dancing in front of the Tian'anmen Square hand in hand, in order to reflect the theme of national unity.

After having the idea of national unity in my mind, I feel like to use picture of people and the most representative architecture in China to show the theme. I used the shadow effect, coloring effect and text effect to create my artwork. I used about five layers to finish the artwork, including photo of 56 nations, Tian’anmen Square, Chinese flag, pigeons to make up different layers. The sunlight effect that added to sky give my artwork a bright and positive feeling of power, the pigeons reflect for peaceful and the words in the flag emphasize the theme “unity is strength” again.
Figure 52: Shanshu - Social Issue Artwork

My artwork is mainly describe about the losses and desires from the children who living in the war. The social issues investing with this artwork focus on the life of those children. The picture of my artwork presents what happened on those children and what life they are living at. The reason why I choose this theme is that sometimes people only concern about the children who living in a normal life, but no one really cares about those children who living in those horrible war and grown up in poor and hunger. In my artwork, I cut out some pictures of children who all suffering in the war world. For example, I have a picture of a boy who is sitting in ruins and crying. This little boy lives in the war of Iraq and he loses his home. Also, there is another horrible picture that a soldier is pointing a gun an innocent boy. The pictures of my artwork all show those children are fighting hunger, danger, terroristic Threats everyday. And they all desires love, protection, safety, family, food and even just a safe place to sleep. Therefore, I put a heart inside of those picture which presents that if we really a human with a beating heart, we should try our best to love those children and do our best to keep those poor children away from the war. And also, I put a sun flower in my artwork to show that those children still have hopes to living in a better live. In my artwork, I use the tool of lass, move, filter, eraser to make my artwork.
The big idea of this artwork is peace. Our peace we’ve got now is not easy to get, because in World War II, and I so many people dead for peace. Even now, some people are still fight for freedom and peace. The social issue that investigated in this artwork is Against Wars. We only have one world, but we have enough weapons to destroy our motherland. Wars can destroy any life. Human beings like to destroy what they’ve created and then rebuild it. Some people in the world are willing to have wars, so they can get advantage from other countries, or other places.

In my artwork, all of the pictures are come from World War II, all around the world. Included China, France, England, and the lands where they had destroyed in the World War II. Now we can hardly see those buildings, but the pain, we still can feel. The main color of the artwork is black, white and red. The black is because I think in the war, the world is colorless, it’s just black, and white. Red means blood. We use blood to get our freedom today, so we say that: Freedom is not free.

The image all came from the war, why I put them together is I want to show that how war can destroy our world and life. In the war, there were no human rights, no freedom. People had nothing but pain. Homes has been destroyed, homelands has been occupied. The only things people could felt were worry and danger. The art work also indicated we still have some people who suffered in wars, like some African countries, middle east and some confliction areas, I hope we could stand up and against wars, give the people who from those area freedom. The need homeland, not endless wars and danger.
Figure 54: Wil - Social Issue Artwork

Dollars and Sense

My artwork’s Big Idea & Theme has to do with the recognition of corporate greed while at the same time attempting to break down the stereotype that all wealthy individuals and large corporations are bad. I am investigating the issues of the distribution of wealth, corporate and social responsibility, and business ethics. I chose this big idea because this is an issue that is constantly on the forefront of the 24-hour news cycle with the Occupy protests, and business ethics is also something that is taught in-depth at the Fisher College of Business. My artwork is making the statement that, while many corporations do act in an unethical manner, there are many more that do good things every day. I used the Photoshop skills of layering, copy/pasting, the magic selection tool, and the add text tool. I used images from Google that represent corporations, individuals, government, and charity organizations. They represent my identity because, while I am a business-minded person, I do act with ethicality and social-mindedness, as do many wealthy and successful corporations and individuals.
Interview Transcript: Jen

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“When it comes to collaboration, I think I work well with others. However, I prefer to work independently so I can take my time, make my own decisions, and not have to commit right away. I also feel like artwork is a way to express yourself and so collaborating sometimes requires you to settle for things or ideas you wouldn’t necessarily prefer, or choose on your own. It also requires a lot of patience and communication.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“Working in a cooperative learning group does push me to understand my own identity because I can see it is different than others. For example, when my partner, Rihanna, and I were taking pictures of the community we had different ideas and perspectives. I found all the shapes, lines, and patterns interesting. She enjoyed taking pictures of buildings, cars, and people. I liked to move around and see things from different angles and sides, while she preferred a straight-on shot. It is not that I was doing anything wrong or that she was doing anything wrong. We are just different people with different opinions and I think we both found it interesting to see each other’s perspectives.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Big Ideas are basically issues that make you think outside the box, basically, they help an artist connect with his/her work instead of allowing it to become an exercise in problem solving, like Walker says. They also can tell about an artist's beliefs and/or wishes. They are sort of a gateway into finding more about the artist. I feel like creating art about the community is helping me better understand my own identity because I realize what I pay attention to and what catches my eye. I also feel more like a community member, especially working with the GEMS because I feel a sense of belonging and like I am helping out in a way.”
Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

“Working with Rihanna is definitely challenging and rewarding at the same time. On one hand, I feel honored to get to work with her because she seems to look up to me and is genuinely interested in artwork. On the other hand, some of it is challenging because she is very opinionated and pretty much has the project set in her mind. I think we started with very different ideas of how we wanted the final identity project to look like. I feel that since I am there to help her and work with her, I have to give up a lot of my ideas and meet her not halfway, but more towards her side.”

Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.

“My experience so far learning in an unfamiliar place is bittersweet. I do enjoy new experiences and I definitely love working with kids. However, I sort of wish we had more class time learning more about Photoshop and the tools and tutorials. The first day we went to meet the GEMS, I was a little anxious, excited, and nervous. I didn’t know how they would act, if they would even be interested, or it they would cooperate. Now, I don’t get nervous at all but I still get a little anxious just because I am very unfamiliar with their laptops and not that great at GIMP. I would like to be more prepared and know more about it before I try to help and explain it to someone else.”

Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“The entire experience with the girls is something I wouldn’t take back. I work with kids often in different activities and volunteer opportunities, but never with artwork. It is definitely an experience I will remember and be happy that I had. I feel that I am learning a lot about my partner, not only about herself and artwork, but also about the community. She knows a lot more about Columbus than I do, since it is not my hometown. I appreciate this experience.”
Interview Transcript: Shantae

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?
“I love the fact that we have the option to work in a collaborative group because it allowed me to learn more than I would have learned on my own. Working with others is helpful because everyone has their own ideas and opinions and when we share them with one another it builds our knowledge on art making.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?
“Working in a cooperative learning group pushed me to better understand my own identity because I saw that everyone has something different about them and it allowed me to recognize the things that are most important to me and use them for the project. Also I learned what it felt like to be responsibly for someone else, if I didn’t show up I wasn’t just skipping class, I was skipping out on my partner and that felt worse. I didn’t feel well one day, and normally I would have just stayed home, but knowing Mia would be there and I would let her down made me get out of bed.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?
“A Big Idea is the main idea of the piece of art. It is the overall concept or theme that the artist was trying to get across when they were creating the art piece. Artists work from big ideas because they add interest. The big idea may not be obvious at first, but after analyzing the art piece it will become easier to explain the big idea. Creating art about the big idea of identity and community has helped me to better understand my own identity as a community member because I can distinguish what things are crucial to my life.”

Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?
“Some things that is most important when working with a community partner is being able to properly communicate with them, no matter what age, race, or gender they are. This is the most challenging part because of those things mentioned above, everyone does not have the same knowledge, views, and opinions on certain subjects. You have to be able to respect others and their opinions or else there could possibly be conflict. The rewarding part is that when working with a community part you are able to increase your knowledge and grow even more respect for others no matter their age, race, or gender because now you actually understand them.”
Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.
“Being asked to learn in a place that is unfamiliar is nothing new to me. Being a college student, things are always changing. We change class locations every 10 weeks so I am always learning in new places. Also, outside of college, even in grade school and past jobs, I am asked to learn in places that are unfamiliar. However, I don’t have any physical or emotional feelings about it because I have grown accustomed to it.”

Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.
“With Service-Learning I learned how to work with Gimp. I think without the Service-Learning element we would have only learned how to work with Photoshop. The best part about using Gimp with collaborative working is everyone sharing what they know about the application. Another thing I may not have learned is how to collaborate with a middle school student and create a project cohesively.”
Interview Transcript: Xiaolin

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“Collaborative art making is a process in which we finish an artwork with someone else. During this process, we need to learn how to share our ideas and combine them in to the artwork without affect the expression of its theme. Also, most importantly, we need to learn how to work with others. Collaboration means to show all members’ minds in a work. Everyone needs to try their best to work for the group and have a good relationship with others. To achieve a good relationship, I found that respect and patience are key points a make a successful collaboration. Only when everyone feel be respected, they will be willing to corporate with us. And we need to be patient enough to solve problems when we get troubles and listen to others’ ideas when work with them.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“Form this experience, I understand that it’s important to know each other first before starting the work. I usually directly work with my group members when start a new group work without knowing others deeply. But this time when I first met with my partners, we get to know each other by asking some questions about our own, like interests, families. After that, I felt easy to talk with them and work with them. Furthermore, I feel that we are responsible for making contributions for our society. Even though we are just students now, all efforts and time we paid are not only for our own future lives, but also for the construction of a better living environment. From the schools the society built and the utility the society offered, I found that we should be thankful to the things we have and learn to pay back for others’ contributions.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Big ideas are some general concepts in art making that have strong connections with artists and can bring profound meanings to the artwork. Different from subjects, big ideas are the main purpose of the artwork, which can be represented by some specific subjects, like sunflowers can represent an optimistic emotions. Themes are also different but I cannot really define it correctly. I think themes can be a part of the big ideas like the conflicts between couples can be part of the big idea of the family. Big ideas are important in art making because it directs artists in art making and give the artists the ways of representing their minds, instead of just making the work beautifully. Big ideas make the artwork to be meaningful.”
Creating art about the big idea of identity and community has helped me better understand that the most important part in my life is the people around me. Among different people, I have different identity and different obligations. I play different roles in my life and this helps me better understand how to be acceptable by others. Although I may change their lives in some ways, the formation of my identity is depended on them. I found that even if their life and mine are not strongly related, they have influenced me a lot, not only on my moods, but also on my personality. I should cherish the people around me, especially my friends and my family members.”

**Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?**

“I think working with my community partner is really fun and make me feel relaxed. She is much younger than me but her ideas are innovative and inspiring. She doesn’t think too much about the purpose of her artwork, only creates something that is fun or something that suddenly comes out from her mind. This makes the service learning be an interesting process. Also, I think my partner is very active and positive, which is good for our group work, cause this makes our corporation much more easier and can make us to be more energetic about our work.”

**Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.**

“I think an unfamiliar learning experience should be the first time when I study in an English environment. I still remembered that this was my first English class when I came to the primary school. I had English class before but those were taught in Chinese and most teachers only teach us grammars or the spell of words, which was boring. But my primary school English teacher is different. We can only speak English in her class and the ways she taught were like games. She brought much fun to my life of my primary school and made me feel interested about English.”

**Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.**

“I think every subjects or majors need the Service-Learning element. For example, Business, which definitely requires students to have internship experience. Also, students need enough contact with community to know how to handle problems with people and how to work and communicate with others appropriately.”
Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?
“The process of collaboration and collaborative art making involves obtaining ideas from other people, and incorporating these ideas into one center piece of art. It is not only your partner’s ideas, but also your own. Communication is very important for the success of collaboration – both sides need to both speak their ideas and listen about the others ideas. Working in a collaborative group has helped me grow as a learner by I have learned to communicate better. I also have learned some things about GIMP from my partner. In addition, my partner has made me look at things in a different way than I normally would. For example – we took a picture of mud, and when you zoom in and change the colors, this ugly picture actually looked cool. She has taught me to take a step back and look at the possibilities of things because there are many ways to look at the same thing.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?
“Working in a cooperative learning group has pushed me to better understand my own identity because it has shown me that I do like to work with people. I have worked with children before, but this just reassured me that I do love it. I love the experience getting to work with kids and communicating with them. In the future, I would love to find a job where I don’t just sit at a desk alone, but do get to communicate with other people a lot – adults and/or children.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?
“Big Ideas are broad, yet complex understandings of a piece of artwork. It is not the subject matter of the piece, but what the artist is trying to portray through his/her art. You can have many different subject matters in many different pieces of art, while still having the same central big idea. The big idea allows an artist to depict his emotions. Big ideas are important in art making and artists work with them because big ideas create deeper levels of thinking. Rather than just the crafting of the product, the art maker not only thinks about technical artistic skills, but about manipulating the mediums into something meaningful. If the artist doesn’t have any emotions or intended meaning towards his/her artwork, then the audience is likely not to understand it as well. Creating art about identity and community has helped me to better understand my own identity as a community member because it makes me think about myself and the communities I am involved in. I realize that I am involved in many communities and my input in each of
these communities is what makes me who I am and shapes the communities I am apart of.”

**Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?**

“Working with a community partner has been both challenging and rewarding. It has been challenging because you have to be able to think differently when working with another person. It is important to get your partners input, but also incorporate your own. Working with community partners have been rewarding because it gives me more experience working and communicating with other people. Normal classes, communicating is normally not required, so having this experience definitely helps. It is also rewarding because it reassures me that I do enjoy working and communicating with other people and would love to incorporate that in my future job.”

**Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.**

“My experience with working in a space that is unfamiliar to me is very rewarding. This has been the first class yet in college that I have had the experience to do something I am not use to doing. I may have been a little shy at first with my partner, but I realized quickly that these girls were excited to be able to be a part of this as well. On the first day, when I found out what service-learning actually was, I was initially really excited. However, when it came time to actually doing something I am unfamiliar with, I was a little worried. Despite my worries, this class has definitely helped me understand a lot about myself.”

**Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.**

“Experiences so far that I have encountered, that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning elements in this class are viewing things in a different way and actually enjoying a class. My partner has helped me view things in a different way. Like I said above, – we took a picture of mud, and when you zoom in and change the colors, this ugly picture actually looked cool. She has taught me to take a step back and look at the possibilities of things because there are many ways to look at the same thing. Also, since I have only taken science/math/GEC/nutrition classes yet in college, having this experience to get out of the normal lecture/recitation schedule has been very nice and a good change. Additionally, I experienced first hand communication with others. This is definitely a good skill to have and this experience only helped me more with communication.”
Interview Transcript: Chuan

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“Collaboration is one hundred-percent NOT oneself’s business. Two or more people join hands together doing the same business while sharing different ideas and making constructive suggestions. It highlights the team-ship involving so many group works’ skills, like communicating, service-learning, eye-contacting, creation and so on. When doing one project, in most time, I would prefer collaborative work. Take the collaborative artmaking in our class for example, this artmaking project was with the girls in nearby middle school but we never met each other before. So at the beginning of our artmaking, we should know each other first by making friend by finishing a question paper together. This kind of survey paved most direct and efficient way for we guys to get better understanding between you and your partners. Then the most wonderful part I enjoyed most was going outside with my girl partner to shoot pictures of the surrounding community. Since I and my girl decided the theme of our artworking as The Eye of Nature of Community, we tried very hard to find out beautiful views of the community. Working in a collaborative group makes me pay more attention to others’ opinions, reflections and interactions. Since you are not the only person who decides everything and your minds may be limited, you have to listen carefully, analyze repeatedly and accept politely. It’s just like a learner in a group that earn more and more knowledge in many other kinds of fields not only in finishing artworkings.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“By having attended a cooperative learning group, I would like to say I really get a understanding of the old saying, two minds are better than one. Things can go more smoothly and vividly via sharing different ideas, joining hands to coping with difficulties, frequently coming up with new constructive suggestions and then make a new map, etc. So one’s own identity in a cooperative learning group always pushes one get much more involved in communication among group members which means to bravely express yourself, to organize your viewpoints well, to politely accept constructive suggestions, to know how to settle with arguments during discussions, to patently listen to others’ speaking, to select the key points when facing with piles and piles of conductive plans, etc. These pave the direct way for one to process expanding and deepening one’s own identity. What’s more, everyone in a cooperative group has his or her own function that is irreplaceable. Depending on what I said in the last passage above, we can conclude that a cooperative group is just like a body system and each person has his or her duties to work individually. But since it’s a body system, each one’s function should be connected
Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Big ideas involve profound objects which vary from single terms or phrases to complicated themes, subject matters or significance. Big ideas are just like the spirits of the artmaking and the soul of the art makers. And big ideas help art makers not only aim at making art products, but also deeply think about what their artmaking represents or why they make in this way. So the big idea plays an essential role in artmaking. Additionally, themes and subject matters are the main points of big ideas for artists to form artmaking. But themes can be different from artists' big ideas, which amazingly interest me, and this make the artmaking much more profound and mysteristic. So artists work from/with them for the reason perfectly showing the specific thing they want to express to themselves or others. It’s the key point of artworkings that makes them more significant and vivid. I would like to incorporate some big ideas, which are how to use artmaking to reflect some social situations, to get better communication with patients with autism and to appeal human to protect our environment. Because these big ideas are faced critical situations in our daily lives as a member of any possible community”

Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

“It’s most challenging when first meeting with a strange partner. Because you never knew each other before, both of you and your partner may feel uneasy or nervous about the future cooperation. So you have to continue the artworking while making friends with each other from the start and this may lead some disagreement and take a little bit more time. The reward can be that you not only finish the artworking but also make a new friend. This reminds me of the situation that one earns more through the process of doing things instead of merely aiming at the final goals. And always people get rewarded because of the courage of challenging themselves.”

Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.

“Just take the service-learning class with the middle school girls for example, this is the experience that I never had before. From where I stand, the interacting speed was really quick and once the girl was being relaxing when talking with me, I also felt comfortable in the new unfamiliar place. Sometimes, I was anxious to express myself because I wanted to use the most native English to make my partner be interested in our communication.”
Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“Making a new friend in such a short time and immediately joining hands to make an artworking project. The relationship between me and my partner is always changing. Sometimes we are sisters, sometimes we are colleagues and sometimes we are teacher and student. Playing different roles is really a challenge in human normal life, so I believe I am much more experienced in settling with the public and private relationships.”
Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“I think the most important things to keep in mind when working on a collaborative art-making project are collaboration, democracy, equal contribution, and self-reflection. As a team or a group, we need to realize that we are working together, everybody has to contribute, and everybody has a say in the decision-making process. When working with Linda, my GEM partner, we all took pictures of the neighborhood, and we’ve decided to use at least one of each person’s pictures in our artwork. As a learner and artist, I’ve learned that when we have different ideas, we can talk about them and explain to each other why we think the way we do, and then we can make a more informed decision. In the end, self-reflecting can consolidate the feeling of pride and ownership of the work being done together.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“When we are working with Lydia, we get to know each other more every week. When we first met though, I was “forced” to look into my own identity and tell her who I am and why I’m here as an introduction of myself. This process made me understand my own identity better. After that, when we get to work on our art project together, I have to keep looking into myself to figure out what I want to express in the artwork that’s different from Linda’s and my other OSU partner, Xiaolin’s, and that can represent my own identity, as well as why I want to express that. This is another reason that working in a cooperate learning group has been pushing me to better understand my own identity.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“In my opinion, a big idea is what the artist is trying to convey or express through his/her artwork. It's not just one specific idea, but a feeling or emotion that the artist hopes the viewers can have about that idea. Artists work with big ideas because they are basically the reason why they are creating any art; they must have something they want the world to know from their art. So the big idea is what makes art different from just random painting or other crafting skills. Creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped me better understand both my own identity and my role in the communities I live in, it made me realize that sometimes we have different roles in different communities. For example, in the GEM community, I may be considered as just a college student from OSU, but in the OSU community, I am considered as an international undergraduate student major in Engineering Physics.”
Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

“Working with a community partner, a middle school aged girl more specifically, was at first a little intimidating for me, because I have basically no experience on working or talking with younger girls before, and I was afraid it might get embarrassing if we don’t have anything to talk about. But after the first meeting with Lydia, I was a lot more relieved. She is a very lovely girl with a delightful personality, she is not very shy to talk to new people, and she’s always excited about new things, which makes it so much easier to work with her. I feel like the most rewarding part of this is that I realized the girls are not different than other people and students we meet every day, so just treat them like you do to everybody else will be fine. Also, as we are getting closer every time, this “working” relationship has become a “friendship” that I know I will cherish and remember in the future.”

Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.

“When asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to me, I would feel a little unsettling at first. Physically, I might feel a little constrained and may act quieter and less active as I usually am. But after getting acquainted with the new environment, I’ll be back to my “normal” state, and this usually doesn’t take so long.”

Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“If this weren’t a Service-Learning class, I wouldn’t be able to meet my community partner, Linda from GEM and work with her every week now. Also, I wouldn’t be able to explore my own identity as a community member as deep as I do now. Every time I go to GEM, I would always come back feeling good, because I feel like truly belonging to the community that I live in and that I’m actually doing something for it.”
Interview Transcript: Ricardo

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“Collaboration is based on communication and listening. In order to properly create a piece of artwork with my partner, I need to suggest ideas but also listen to new ones. It requires that I work closely with my partner to construct something together. Working collaboratively has given me a new perspective on art. It has brought new ideas and opinions from both my partner as well as my fellow classmate. Collaboration is a great skill; however I have always been much more independent of others. I do prefer to create my own artwork by myself and occasionally seek advice or input from others either on my finished work or during the process. That being said, the collaboration with my partner is a new and interesting experience. Because she is so much younger and grew up in a different place, she has had many different influences on her life. This means that we may have vastly different ideas or approaches to problems.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“Working together in a group has taught me some new things about myself. I have found that I have more leader-like qualities than I previously thought. I am able to suggest new ideas but also take in opinions and help my partner really shape her own ideas. At the same time, I recognize that I may not necessarily like being the leader. In the past I have always worked alone, and in many ways working alone is much easier. While do like not having to come up with all of the ideas on my own, I feel limited in what I can do because the work needs to be agreed upon.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“A big idea is a concept within a piece of artwork that conveys meaning. A big idea is what gives artwork meaning and purpose. An artist will create a big idea in order to get across a message and actually say something with their artwork. Big ideas can give an artist a reason to create artwork; rather than just creating something that looks nice, an artist can create artwork that has a message and speaks to a particular audience. Creating art based around the big idea of identity has made me think of things that I may normally not. I had to really comprehend and look inside myself to create something meaningful and something that reflects my true identity.”
Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

“Working with my partner has been rewarding in teaching me things about myself. Because I am so used to working alone with no one else to really judge my work or give opinions, I find it interesting to work with someone else to create artwork. I now have someone to bounce ideas off of and work closely with to create a piece of work. In a similar sense however, it is challenging because of this; having to share ideas means I cannot just go and do whatever I want. While I am not entirely restrained, I sometimes feel that I may need to seek “approval” or at least discuss an idea before really doing anything. At the same time I sometimes feel as though I need to take on a leadership role and then make decisions accordingly. This is something I do not want to happen. I do not want to take control and then make my partner feel as though she has no control or say in what we are doing. I may feel limited or restrained, at the same time I do not want to do the same to her.”

Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.

“I have taken courses in high school for computer graphical art whether in 3D or 2D art. Thus, I have learned in different classrooms and on different computers. One of my biggest problems is working on Mac computers. I have always used PCs and am accustomed to Windows operating systems. This has made it somewhat difficult to perform certain tasks. For this reason, I prefer to work at home. This is due partly because I am accustomed to my computer so I know where everything is, and also that my computer is simply more powerful and faster than any other computer I have ever used.”

Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“The experience of talking with community members would not be possible without the service-learning element of our class. Without it, I would not be able to have conversations with the girls and would not have the opportunity to collaborate with them. Talking with the girls offers me the opportunity to learn more about the community and gain new perspectives. The service-learning aspect has given me more insight into myself and offered me the chance to reflect on myself as well as the community and my surrounding world.
Interview Transcript: Yuko

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“According to my understanding and feelings, from the macro perspective, there are mainly three steps in the process of collaboration, knowing the background, getting started, and accomplishment. Specifically, before getting started, knowing and understanding each others background is very important, because we have different identities and culture. We can avoid many unnecessary conflicts due to different backgrounds. Also, to be honest is very significant for a successful collaboration. I believe a good collaboration is based on trust. When getting started, we need to share personal ideas, because each personal idea might be valuable. If not sharing, there are likely to miss some brilliant ideas, which can contribute to collaboration. Especially for collaborative artmaking, brain storm is of critical importance. Working in a collaborative group helps me to improve my patience, being humble, and knowing the importance of respect in collaboration, as well as communication skills. What’s more, my partner let me realize there are different angles of one object. We can see different meanings from a same object. After sharing our own thoughts, both of us actually benefit from the collaboration.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“Working in a cooperative learning group helps me to understand my own identity much better. First of all, the significant difference of identity would be age, thus, our life experiences are much different. Second of all, we are from different country, which means we have different background and we are likely to have different customs. Moreover, even though we are all students studying in Columbus, what knowledge we have are different as well. What’s more, there are also difference of identity such as class race and religion. Thus, working with a cooperative learning group would make all of us think about more about our own identities and have the consciousness that we have difference of identity. Usually, from my perspective, having this consciousness would make cooperative communication much better.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Big ideas are broad, multiple, unspecific issues which usually host many specific concepts, such as power, life, rules and systems, etc. Big Ideas are not only restricted to single terms, but also could be phrases or complete statements. Also, in many situations, personal interest would probably influences choosing big ideas. Working on the big idea of identity and community projects make me think deeply about my own identities as a
community member. First of all, it makes me really experience that we have different identities in the community. And then it allows me to think more deeply about my own identities, not only identity of gender, nationality, and age, but also identity of knowledge, social status, role as a community member, and title. Actually, I have never thought so deeply before, and then working on these projects really makes me to open my mind and think deeply about my own identities.”

**Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?**

“I think working with a community partner is a great opportunity for us to understand our own identities better and to improve our communication skills. First of all, challenging thing is not bad, because we can overcome many difficulties and learnt from it together, which is also helpful to establishing a good relationship. The most challenging one is difference of background, especially for international students. Letting them know what I am talking about and understand my thought process would be not smooth at the beginning of communication. But both of us are patient and respectful to each other. What’s more, I was impressive by my little partners view angle. For example, while taking pictures, we are standing in front of a building, and then she pointed at two-hill-like lawn and said *Look, that curve is beautiful.* And that’s true! Then it let me think about why I didn’t notice that. So in other words, I did learn something from my partner. She is a lovely and talented girl.

**Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.**

“Actually, when knowing we would collaborate with twelve middle school girls in GEMS, I felt excited. Even though working in an unfamiliar place would, to some extent, make me a little bit nervous, because of low sense of security, I still expected to be there because there could be with all of the different possibilities. No one would know what finally we would gain from it. And the truth is that I did gain much, such as different perspectives, friendship, and experiences.”

**Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.**

“If there was no Service-Learning element in the class, we would only make art projects alone, no photograph field trips, and no connections with these middle school girls in GEMS. First of all, making collaborative artmaking brings funs and valuable experience rather than working alone. Also, I enjoyed brain storms with other community members, if we were not work together and share ideas, there would be limitations of our thoughts, which is no good for our artmaking. Second of all, taking photos with my little partner is a very interesting and beneficial activity for us. It must be memorable experience for my future study and life. Lastly, if there was no Service-Learning element, I wouldn’t have met my lovely partner and get friendship with her.”
Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“In my dictionary, art making is different from making a product that can be sold for a profit, or solving a math calculation problem; there is neither a best solution nor an only answer. The idea can be the craziest, the most ridiculous one. I regard myself as a person who always comes out with the best ideas in the world.

Collaborative art making sounded like one of the most ridiculous ideas to me when I first heard about it in class. Not because I usually don't enjoy making something sharing ideas with others but I can’t imagine working with kids who are 8 years younger than me. Such an age gap means a lot – it means differences in understanding the concept of art, differences in the skills and knowledge of using technology and more importantly it means a totally different perspective of seeing the world. I doubted if I can work on the same project with the kids sharing the same idea. I had a lot of queries about everything of collaborative art making in this class.

Then it came to the first class in the GEMS, the middle school where we would be working at in the following weeks. I met my group mates, a 12 year-old American girl and a Chinese college student. The hard part came as we started our project. I realized that the worlds that we have seen are so different: the framing and angle of the photos that she took were not what I had expected; it was hard for us to generate the theme of the artwork by discussion; it seemed impossible for us to come up with the idea that it is easier for the girl to understand, etc. I thought it was a disaster but when I look back now I disagree.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“I found that I’ve earned a lot in the classes working with the girl. I’ve learnt to be patient, be respectful to others and be considered. The experience of collaborating with kids makes me a better learner – sharing ideas as a part of the group rather than observing as an outsider. I don't identify myself as a college student who has more knowledge in art making and ideas any more. I recognized the community that I belonged to, not only the one of OSU, but also the one combined by OSU, GEMS and the neighborhood.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“When I was working with the girls on the artwork, big idea played a very important role of letting me stay as a group member rather than being an outsider. During the process of
figuring out what everybody in the group wants to do to generate the big idea; everyone has to stay in the same page. We have to come up with the idea that all of us are interested in and have the vision of the artwork. Thus big idea makes people recognize their community and provides connections to tie everyone in the community together.”

**Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?**

“The hardest in the class is who to lead the kids to the place where I want to be in. Sometime when I mentioned a new concept to them, I needed to explain it in depth even though I thought it was simple enough. And sometime I need to bring them back to the topic when they went off. But the experience is not just about struggling with the kids. Experienced the service learning class, I feel so refreshing not only because learning with a middle school aged girls reminded me the fun time when I was still a kid, but also because I’m impressed by their ideas and thoughts, which is totally different from mine. There are some points of view, which I regarded pointless, are important in their perspectives.”

**Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.**

“I still remember how I felt before the service learning class. Like the other students who dropped this class, I was not sure whether I can handle working in a middle school with 13 year-old girls, which I had never done before. Can I work with these American kids? What should I do if they ask me something that I’ve never heard of? What should I do if we have a different point of view? These were the questions that I kept asking myself. And I made the decision to step out of my comfort zone. I tried to make the discussion as funny as I can so we had a great time sharing our information and experience in the first class. I tried to guide the girl to explain herself during the discussion. Those are all my first attempts. I was a teacher to lead the girl to participate in the section of the class while at the same time I was a partner to finish the project with my teammate step by step.”

**Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.**

“What makes the experience of service learning unique is the element of working with girls in a different age group. As a participant, I won’t get experience such feelings of struggling, refreshing and satisfaction if I worked with people at my age. Does something that I’ve never done before and stepped out of my comfort zone, I think it is the challenge that service learning brought me. I realized that if we always think too much without taking an action we could get any improvement. Never made artworks with kids? Try it. Never learnt something with small girls for a different country? Try it. That’s what makes us moving forward.”

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Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“The process of collaboration is absolutely going great for me. Unlike scientific calculations, artmaking depends more on ideas from artists. In other word, artists have to come up with ideas, which have not been used before, meaning that they may spend a lot of time getting inspiration. In collaborating in a group, ideas that come out from a group may contain more factors, more elements and more focuses because every member have different interests and life experiences. For instance, while making the project with the Gem’s girl, we choose different pictures, which we all believe are good, as backgrounds. Then we have our own preferences, so we add those pictures chosen by everyone within our group on the background. This process has pushed our project to a more complex and colorful level.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“When we work as a group, everyone will have a better view to discover their identity. Base on brainstorming, we share ideas and thoughts about everything. There must be commons and differences comparing your thought and the group’s. By considering these differences and commons, chances are provided for every member to discover a deeper level of understanding their own. We may find our both advantages and weaknesses, from either advantages or weaknesses from other members.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Basically, big ideas are not something that can be directly seen from artworks; instead, big ideas are something in a deeper level representing artist’s emotion and thinking. Big ideas are concepts of the artist. For example, a drawing, instead of being only called a beautiful picture, the big idea makes it become significant and impressive. Artists always want others to know what they are actually thinking by producing artworks; to be concise, for artists, the artworks are only tools to connect people and their hearts, which are big ideas. Big ideas are souls of artworks. Only by maintaining big ideas in mind, the artwork would be unique, be representative and be heard. Honestly, when I made the identity project, I lost my bid idea for a period of time. During that time, my project was stuck because I did not even understand what I wanted to put on the project. As soon as I figured out what I wanted to express, the project only took me thirty minutes to complete. It may not look very beautiful and impressive, however, it is the project from my heart and the meaning of it is exactly what I want to say. I have a better understanding of my own identity by completing the identity project. This project pushed us to identity our
own and this kind of projects will be always helpful because one can impossibly understand their selves clearly. By doing identifying project, I am encouraged and inspired to look for another aspect of mine, some may be advantages and some may be weaknesses. This process helps me to be better and friendlier. I also learnt some important aspects that I have to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners, which is to be respect to your partners. Since within a community, people either share common interests or live nearby. Another rule is to be honest. When discuss with partners, I have to let them know what is actually in my mind, especially while brainstorming.”

**Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?**

“The Gem’s girl is a little bit shy because we were not familiar with each other, I felt tough to develop. However, I tried to open the conversation by introducing my self and basically telling her my life in the OSU. She was interested about my life in China. She started telling me her interests and her family. Things become much easier, especially we found that we both love pets. We shared our long stories about pets and from then on, we found something relative to communities. This whole process taught me how to work with others even if they are strangers in the beginning. Also, my partner is a very creative girl and goods at putting some unrelated elements together. The way she makes project and even the way she thinks always are inspiration for me. But sometimes we had different ideas also. When doing the project, for example, we disagreed each other in the pictures chose to put on the background. To solve this problem, we explained the reason. At the end, I agreed with her and followed the way she chose because her way would make the picture more beautiful and would be a more direct way to explain our big idea.”

**Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.**

“Actually, the America is a place that is unfamiliar to me. Physically, I was not quite used to the food in the U.S. I had been living in China for 18 years before I came to here, which means I was addicted to Chinese food, such as rice. But in here, hamburgers and pasta are easier food to get. Other than the food, I spent such a long time to get used to the weather in Ohio. In my hometown, it is impossible to see snow. The temperature there was at least forty degrees. I did not even want to go to class during the winter. But fortunately I did not die in snow. Emotionally, homesick is the biggest encounter that international students must face. We can only go home once or twice a year. Especially when Chinese traditional festivals come, we can barely spend time with families. But this experience in other word will become one of my unforgotten experiences.”
Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“During the process of the Service-Learning, I have learnt reflected thinking. I realized that not only doing the project we assigned to do, but also doing every things in life, we will always have to look back and check if I have kept it in the right way, to prevent from going to a wrong way. Other than that, I also have to keep asking my self if there is another better way to express ideas.”
Interview Transcript: Qiong

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“The collaborative art making means that people groups with partners and works together for a piece of art making. In the process, people share and brainstorm the ideas together and then choose the best one to make it into art. The tool for making art is the software Photoshop CS.

In the communication with partners, there are various elements that are important for different people. For me, the elements I think important are active, creative, patient, attentive listening, compromise and responsible. We should be active to communicate and express our ideas among the group members. Also, these ideas should be creative and meaningful. We should feel the responsibility that we are one of the group members and should responsible for the project. In the communication, we will discuss the opinions with each group members, and we should listen carefully to other members and give feedback.

The experience of this collaborative art working has helped me to make an art work myself instead of just viewing or enjoying the art. Usually I just watch the art, but this time, I do it myself.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“Cooperation learning means that we can benefit from other group members in the process of cooperation. As to me, I have one OSU partner Ryan and one middle school partner Jessica, I have learned something from both of them. From Ryan, I relearned the skills of Photoshop CS since I nearly forget what I have learned 3 years ago. He is really good at Photoshop. He also regards Photoshop as a very useful tool and loves to use it. From Jessica, I have learned to notice the different perspective she sees the world. She especially likes the trees in the nature. In her eyes, all the trees are special and unique. The ability of discover and material draw of art can be learned on her. She leads me to see the different nature and the world in her eyes. They have let me develop myself from both the computer skills and the ability of finding art.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Big idea is the total concept or the spirit of the product in art making, we can make significant product with creative and powerful big ideas. It is the general idea artists think at the beginning, which inspires them to an art. It should be broad and unshaped. With
time goes on, artist will narrow it down and bring it into a smaller theme. Artist need time to adjust the Big Idea to a theme from time to time and it couldn’t be set immediately, it is the reason why artists work from Big Idea.

The Big Idea we set first at the beginning is the nature, which is broad and close to the community we exist. Firstly, we need to set the Big Idea to make the direction of the art, and then we try to figure out what attracts us most in the community. In this process, I have noticed the surrounding communities, such as OSU, international students, university village residents, Art Education 252 class. I have positioned myself and realized that I don’t belong to many communities. Thus, I decided to enroll in more communities to learn more knowledge and experience from those communities. Have reflection from time to time is good to notice something unnoticeable we neglect.”

Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?
“In my point of view, there is nearly no problems in the collaborative working, there are only some small problem. First, my insufficient English has interfered my understanding of some different word in discussion. Second, at the beginning of our meeting, Jessica seems a little bit shy to talk with me but the problem has disappeared in the second meet. Except these two small problems, the entire partner working is so successful and rewarding. In the partner working, I have learned how to talk with middle school girls and have knowledge of their school life and their age’s interests. Although I have got in touch with international primary school student before, American middle school student is the first time I try to talk with. It has broadened my experience.”

Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.
“At the beginning of my previous university in china, I was lived in school dormitory and begin the independent living. It is totally a new place for me and no familiar friends and people around me. The roommates in the dormitory are all strange. It is a new community, and we are assigned to join this community, people are all shy to talk with each other. Although we need to learn how to begin the talk and form the friend relationship, it is really hard to start a conversation without topic. But there are some people who are active enough to open the conversation towards others and create an atmosphere that all people want to communicate. With time goes on, we have known each other and begin to know other classmates. It is the first time I learned to enroll in a community and which is the base for me in the future. The experience has taught me how to get involved in a community.”
Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“If I don’t have my partners to do the collaborative work, I can’t finish the art making in such a perfect way, the Photoshop skills in this art making is far beyond what we learned in class. The background is adjusted to translucent rainbow color which needs to use many Photoshop tools. If I just learned the knowledge in class, I will not recall the memory of some Photoshop skills which do not teach in class and have a plain art making. In addition, if I have not attended the outside activity with the middle school students, I can’t have the chance to see the beautiful surrounding. I will not even try to walk into the small road which directs to the middle school.”
Interview Transcript: Shanshu

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“I think collaborative artmaking is a kind of art making which based on cooperation. And as my experience on this course, the process of collaboration artmaking is that: firstly, talk and get well known with your partner; secondly, look at the requirements of the project together and discuss the own idea with each others, and choose on idea; then collect the pictures or other things you need to do with the project; finally, do the project together. Actually, I noticed that it is much fun to listening to your partners' ideas and combine them with yours rather than only use one person’s idea to finish the project, because of the different background, there are a lot of new things you can learn from your partners.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“The cooperative learning group let me know how to communicate with partners efficiency and the experience to work and study with Mid-school aged girls is really exciting. And as a member group, I found that listen to your partners and encourage them to express their ideas is very important in the process, and good for the cooperation.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Big idea are broad and are collections of different concepts from the idea rather than simply explain an idea. It has a deeper view of an issue/idea from multiple directions. And Big Ideas play an important role in artmaking because it courage artist in deeper level of thinking instead of crafting of a product. And big ideas represent artist's overall purpose well for the artmaking. When I / our team creating art about the big idea, we started with an small idea and then large it during the processing of creation, such like taking and selecting pictures. And it let me realized lot of beauties in the community that I never noticed, like small signs, tress, bridges and houses.”

Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

“I am used to working with a community partner because it is a basic requirement of my major courses. But to work with a middle school aged girl is a big challenging. As an international student, I never experience the middle school life in American, so be honest, I was really worried that if I can communicate with the girl. With the help of my partner, we get well with the girl and it seems that she was interested working us. During this I learned new skills of communication and it helped a lot.”
Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.

“Study in USA is a big challenge. I came to America on September, 2010. At that time, I just graduated from high school and my English is really poor. My roommates are all native speaker and I remember at the first month, I asked them to speak slowly or I can not understand at all. Two months later, I got used of all the things, like the food, people and different study environment and I started to enjoy my college in America. It is hard to learn in a place that totally new at first, but when you get used to it, you will love it.”

Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“Working with the girls would definitely be the first. When we talked with each other, I know lot about her family and her school life, and she also showed me some art project she made last term, there is no other chance to get this special experience without the Service-Learning class. And before every Wednesday, I need to prepare the knowledge and gimp skills by myself, in case that the girl have problems with these stuffs. And I found that I can learn all the things much better than if I just take the class. Because actually I review them every week in order to help the girl and I did not feel boring.”
Interview Transcript: Harma

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“During the process of collaborative working with my partner, a middle school girl, we feel not bad to each other. I have learned a lot of thing from the collaborative artmaking. As an artist, I need to understand some important things. First, communication is one of the most important skills to make your partner feel good to work with you. Good feeling can make people glad to talk and suggest to the people they like. More commons can make more amazing things with your project. It is the first step to make your project perfect. Second, listening skills is also really important. We need to know what our partner's meaning is. To learn how to catch the point from people's communication is really hard. To give the right feedback of action can give you more trust from your partner. Those three points are the best things I learned during the collaborative working.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“College period is really important period in our life. We will understand our own identity better and better during the college life. When I working in a cooperative learning group with my little partner from middle school. I suddenly notice that I am a college student already. To these middle school students, my action and my word is not just an action or word. They will learn something from my actions and words. As a college student, I have to study how to take control in my life and make some choice by myself. They help me know what I can do what I cannot do in the different environment. Their actions let me remember my dreams again. It reminds me it is the time I can finish it.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“I think Big idea is really hard thing to explain. It is too abstract and indistinct in the different themes. Different artists have different spirits with different works in different environment. That is why I think is too hard to define what the Big Ideas is. Creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped me to understand my own identity as a community member. I started to notice something I passed around my communities. I started to understand what I suppose to do in my communities. The different communities have different point. It helps me to understand the real communities are.”
Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?
“The first time we meet each other is the hardest part. We don’t know each other, and she is ten years younger than me. It was really hard to find a title to start the communication. And she is little bit scare. Sometimes, when I was asking her some questions, she said whatever to me. That is really hard to me with the project.”

Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.
“As an international student, study in a place that is unfamiliar to me is really normal thing to me. When I was a high school student in TX, it was the first time I study in the place I ever been and no peoples I known. I feel little bit lonely, and hard to talk to people. But after few days, when my roommate came back, he is really nice American boy. My experience started to become better and better. I made more and more friends in my school. And my roommate helped me to know the real American life and teach me English. During the holiday, I can’t go back China to stay with my family. It was really hard and easy to be emotional. To have a trip with my friends was the best decision to fill my holiday.”

Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.
“I will never work with little girls if without the Service-Learning element in the class. I went to high school in America, but I have never touched middle school students before. To have Service-Learning work is more impossible thing to me.”
Interview Transcript: Fangshu

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“I think the collaborative artmaking is making the art with other people. Because working with other people, sometimes there would be lots of ideas in the group. At this time, I need to have a discussion about the idea with my group. Working as a group, we need to have a good communication in order to have a good plan with our artmaking. From the collaborative artmaking, I learned how to work with other people. I did not do some work like this before. From this time, I know it is very important to communicate with your partners, and giving your advice when the group discusses the project.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“In the cooperative learning group, we will discuss our own idea of the identity project. Because every people might have different views for the same things, my idea could be different from my partners’. In the cooperative learning group, I could find out that some of my idea is different from my partners are because of my culture. I am a Chinese. Thus, some of my thoughts would connect with the Chinese culture or habits. I think the cooperative learning group is very helpful to better understand my own identity.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Big ideas are just a big picture of the whole project. They are not a specific idea. They represent the spirit and the emotion of the artists. Thus, they are really important to artists. Of course, artists’ personal interest can affect the big idea. Moreover, when people talk about the theme, subject matter and big idea, they are not the same things. The subject matter can be a support of the big idea. Big idea is general, but also complex to people. It is an important element of artmaking. Artists try to present their project through the big idea. Big idea is really important for artists to start a project. It is kind of a way to see the big picture. By discussing about the creating art about the big idea of identity & community, I am more clearly about what position I would better be in a community. For example, as a student in the OSU, I think I need to participate more organizations or activities in the student, in order to make the university life more colorful.”

Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

“The most challenging part is that the girl does not talk too much. Also, there is a problem about myself. I do not like talk too much with people who I am not similar with. Thus I think if I could talk more, maybe we could have a better communication. Of
course, I have some rewards through working with the girl. Maybe we are not at the same age, sometimes she gives me some ideas or answers are amazing that I can not think about.”

**Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.**

“I am an international student. The first time that I came to USA was two years ago. This place was extremely strange to me. There was no body I knew. At the beginning of the several weeks, when I went out, I always had a map with me. I was afraid that I was lost. At night, I was being in the dorm. Because I did not like talking with people who I was not similar with, I did not talk with my roommate. My roommate was an outgoing person. Every night, she asked for lots of people come to our room to chat. At that time, I was so lonely. I really missed my family and friends in China.”

**Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.**

“Without the Service-Learning element, I would not have the opportunity to work with the middle school students. I think this experience is very wonderful. Although we did not have a very good communication at the beginning, as the time goes by, we are getting better. The Service-Learning helped me learn how to work with the people who are younger than me. Also, it gives me a chance to know what the American high students’ study environment. I was very curious about this before.”
Interview Transcript: Molly

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“This Service Leaning project with the GEM middle schoolers, was the very first service-learning project I have participated in. Overall my personal experience working with my community partner from Gram Expeditionary Middle School was a pleasant one. In the beginning I was a little frustrated with how things were going and I was apprehensive on how things were going to turn out. I have been involved with the Big Brother/Big Sister for several years and I have had such wonderful experiences with the program I was excited to get started with the service learning project. From having previous experience working with kids I was confident and comfortable going into what usually is an awkward situation. I knew that the first few work times could be a little awkward but I would have to just keep talking and ask questions to make it easier to warm up to each other. After even five times together it was still me doing all the talking. The questions I would ask or the conversation starter I would propose, I would get one word answers. The most common answers I would get was “I don’t know” and “I don’t care”, especially pertaining to the artwork. Some work times were just me talking to fill silence. I have never had so much trouble getting a kid to open up with me. I’m so glad I kept after it, because despite struggling the little moments of breakthrough I got were worth it. Once or twice she voluntarily threw out suggestions or ideas. It was not until the very last time that I felt like she was comfortable enough with my to have a conversation with me. She actually started one with me, and we were able to joke around. I think part of the reason it took so long was that we had very little in common, and maybe she felt like it was hard to relate to me, making it hard for her to open up. I really think it was the age difference that made it so hard. In the project we are all supposed to be on the same level, no one has the teacher and student roles. With me being older I think it was hard for her to teach me, she waited for me to give direction and was always looking for my ok on things. I like challenges like this one, so I had a good time with the service learning project. For me it became more about getting her to open up, than making collaborative art.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“Over the course of this project I learned some things about myself. I already knew that I would rather work on a project by myself then in a group. I thought I was more of the laid back person, meaning I don’t like to take charge in group situations. Both my middle school partner and my college student partner were both more shy then I was, so I had to step up and take the lead in the first few weeks. I found out that I like doing that. I liked knowing that others were counting on me, I felt like I was able to be more involved in the project because of this which made me want to give 100% each time. I like bouncing...
ideas off other people. This was the first class that I wanted to help others do their best as well, so I wanted to hear what my partners had to share. It taught me not to be so close minded, and as bad as it sounds, it taught me that sometimes my ideas are not always the best. I think our artwork was better because there were three very different people working on it, making it more relatable to a wider audience. This experience taught me that I can be a leader in a group, and that I need to be more open minded. It will not only better my art, but it will better me as a person as well.”

Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?

“Working with the art making Big Ideas of identity and community helped explore social issues related to my own person identity. While working with my community big idea, my group did not get really deep into a social issue. I think that if we had more time that would have definitely been possible. I think that it would have made the experience a lot more meaningful for everyone involved as well as more challenging. In my artwork I explored power, specifically the equality of men and women. Sexism in the business world still exists. There are still barriers due to prejudice on the basis of age, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation, and/or sex. Although generally illegal, such practices are prevalent in most countries. I thought it was important to look into this because I will be graduating in a few years and going out in the business world to start a career. In my major now which is math and science based, it is male dominated. So this issue is very close to home for me, I need to be aware of the issues I most likely will have to face. In order for me to be successful I need to be educated about the issue because the first step to change is education.”
Interview Transcript: Andrew

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“Working in a cooperative learning group to make a collaborative artwork was a little challenging at first for a variety of reasons. The first of which stemmed from the partner I was selected to work with, Magdah, as she is a very introverted individual with a very artistic focus while I am a very extroverted personality with a stout disinterest in art. This personality combination proved to be difficult the first day and slightly awkward up until the second day we worked together and she became frustrated with the laptop we were working with. Out of her frustration she began to make some comments about the computer and her dislike in Mac’s operating system in which I shared the same sentiment as we both had been advocates of PC for our entire lives. From then on she began to be more open to responding to questions and is now more likely to speak freely while working with our artwork. Even though we’re very different people we’ve been able to work well together and I think we do a good job of giving each other ideas and help and the few times we’ve disagreed on things we’ve been able to work it out.

While working with another partner can be beneficial personally, I am not sure I am convinced it is a very effective way for art to be created. I found that when different personalities such as mine and my partner’s are combined, it is difficult to find the place where you contribute to the process as well as there being a difference in interests. Through the time so far, I feel as though it would be more beneficial to have the college students be proficient in gimp to the point where we are able to teach them when they struggle rather than feeling just as frustrated as they are with no solutions available.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“One of the social issues apparent to me throughout the exploring the big idea of identity and community was the disparity of education. The act that we could walk to this school from our gorgeous campus and enter into a partially run down and underprivileged school was very apparent to me. This fact is based on the wealth of the surrounding area which is degraded partially by the fact that so many college students live off campus and devalue the area by running down houses by partying or not taking care of them. Therefore, the rest of the non-student population is generally of lower income and this fact is apparent in the school itself. In addition to this economic issue, the fact of the matter is that almost every girl in the class was African-American. This is another issue in which the minority population of the area is most likely also in a lower economic status in a disproportional rate to that of white Americans and the OSU class was predominantly white showing also that it seems that many of us at OSU have had better opportunities as far as education and possibly even in wealth.
I am positive that if we had the girls explore their identity and create a piece as we did in the beginning of the course, there’s would be much different. For example mine was very patriotic for my identity with a strong tie to the nation whereas I have a feeling that these girls would have a much more negative outlook on the nation which has given them less opportunity due to being an African-American female. Even the theme of community would be entirely different if it were done in my hometown which is a middle class suburb of Cleveland that is predominantly white and has a lot more wealth than the city that these girls live in. These discrepancies are made very clear through the exploration of both of the big ideas we have explored this quarter.”

Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?
“Due to the differences from a service-learning program and a traditional role of a tutor or mentor, I find it hard not to draw parallels between them. I feel as though the traditional role of a tutor is a more effective way of making these girls confident in these computer programs. From the frustration of gimp and its non-user-friendly format, the attempt to figure out the software on one’s own is more or less counterproductive because even with a solid background with computers it is nearly impossible for me to figure out how to work that program. Therefore, how are the girls going to become confident in the program when they constantly become frustrated with it and no one is able to guide them when they get stuck?”

Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.
“Another difficult aspect of this experience is very similar to the experience of going to college. We are asked to become independent and go to a foreign environment to achieve a higher level of education while not being used to the place or the people who occupy it. The experience with the younger students has proven to not be difficult in any way based on these factors. However, I believe it is only easy because as a first year student at OSU, I have already experienced my culture shock and am becoming used to learning in a very foreign environment. Also, I think that it is easy to learn with the middle school girls because it is not intimidating to us since we are older and more experienced and have been through their shoes so nervousness while working has not been an issue at all.

Through this service-learning experience, I honestly do not believe I have encountered anything that I would not have without it beside one thing. I doubt that I would have ever gone into the community for the sole purpose of finding defining characteristics of our community in the small things. Some of the things I was surprised to find were orange fire hydrants, of which I have never seen another color than red, as well as the plethora of random posters, signs, graffiti, as well as promotional stickers of which I never paid much attention. One thing I can definitely take from this experience is an appreciation for slowing down and being amazed by the nuances of the world around
me whether it be nature or the many things that comprise my community that I take for granted daily.”

Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“I anticipated a difference based on the fact that women tend to find things interesting that men find quite insignificant but I began to notice that it was more or less her artistic personality that had different interests rather than it being solely her gender. Also, I was surprised that similar to her gender, her age had little to do with her choice of pictures and points of interest when we walked around. When walking around N. High St., the area seemed to be very outdated and run down which surprised me for being so close to such a beautiful campus. However, I began to think and realized that the people that live in the area around and beyond the street are low income individuals since they are full time students that do not have high paying jobs. Similarly, there were other types of lower income individuals such as homeless who might have a very different view of the community than us students might have. In fact, it is most likely to be much more dismal view of their surroundings possibly affected by their life experiences and the way they got to where they are today.”
Interview Transcript: Wil

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“Peoples of different communities are truly able to learn about one another when they work collaboratively on a piece of art. Prior to working on this collaborative project, however, I did not have an overly romantic view of collaborative artwork. I saw art as an incredibly personal experience for those who enjoyed it, and a roadblock to graduation for those of us who did not. I enjoy working in teams, and as a lifelong athlete I have extensive experience in this area. However, my lack of natural ability has always hindered my enjoyment of art. I hoped that the opportunity to collaborate with individuals who were presumably more talented than me would help me to enjoy and appreciate artmaking more than I have in the past. Working collaboratively with an individual of a different community – socioeconomic, racial, religious, or other – can be an incredibly enriching and rewarding experience.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“Working with the idea of community has helped me to learn more about the culture of a demographic – middle- to lower-class African-American girls – that I have never interacted with before. As a twenty year-old Caucasian male, questions would quickly arise if I proactively spent time around teenage African-American girls. This fact alone represents not only how poorly our society has developed, but how far we have to go if we are to return to a state of comfort and understanding among one another. Anytime a male attempts to interact with a female, no matter how good his intentions, he is looked at with intense scrutiny. This is exacerbated when the issue of race is added to the equation. If it were not for this service-learning element of class, I would not have had the opportunity to interact with and learn about this particular demographic of society in such an in-depth way. Because this activity was conducted in a controlled environment without a judgmental or negative attitude, I was able to focus on learning from my community partner, rather than ensuring that my actions could not be misinterpreted. Once I look past the stereotypes traditionally levied on young, African-American females, I have begun to learn a great deal more. For example, my community partner enjoys all types of music, not just rap, as one may be quick to stereotype. Additionally, she is very family oriented, and has a sound relationship with her mother (rather than a rebellious one, as most people expect of teenagers). Therefore, this collaborative experience has helped to shatter some stereotypes that I had previously encountered (although not necessarily subscribed to). At the same time, I believe that interacting with me has helped to provide my community partner with experiences that she otherwise might not have enjoyed. For example, I hope she has learned that not all college-aged males are sex-driven drunks who only worry about their next beer and view females as objects. Rather, there are many of us who are...
educated and cultured, and take a more moral-based approach to life. As a result, I hope this experience will help to break down some of the barriers that she may see in older Caucasian males. This would result in a mutually beneficial experience.”

**Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?**

“I have never been a creative person; however I find that I am very good at developing others’ ideas. As a result, I typically struggle when it comes to individual artmaking. I am excited to create a piece with others whom can brainstorm ideas that I may not have and that I can develop into a completed piece of artwork. The opportunity to see this creative ability in an individual at such a young age, who presumably comes from a less fortunate socio-economic situation (a stereotype, I admit), has been very rewarding for me. In addition, it has been very rewarding to develop one of the few pieces of artwork that I am truly proud of. Lastly, it has been rewarding to be able to teach our community partner a skill set that, as technology progresses with society, will become not only useful, but quite possibly necessary in the workplace. As surprising as it may seem, there have been few challenges in working with our community partner. The only challenge directly related to our partner has been her simple inexperience with computers, which has been easy to overcome through instruction and sharing of the workload. The largest challenge to our work has simply been the time constraint. Consequently, working with our community partner has been a tremendously enjoyable experience.”

**Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.**

“Although this experience itself is new to me, I am fairly comfortable working in spaces that are unfamiliar to me. As a lifelong competitive and recreational soccer player, I have come into contact with dozens of the world’s cultures in a collaborative environment (a team). This makes me very comfortable when working with individuals of other racial, religious, and socio-economic communities. Sometimes I even enjoy these interactions more than those I have with my own community. Another experience of mine, although simple in nature, has helped me to feel comfortable interacting in the specific community that we are targeting with this activity. Throughout my first year at Ohio State, I worked for a company located on the far north side of Columbus (Polaris). In order to get there every weekend, I would ride the COTA bus from downtown Columbus to Polaris, traversing miles of the lowest socio-economic communities in Columbus, and ones that are predominantly African-American. Through simple observation and spontaneous conversation, I have learned and grown to appreciate these communities, their relationships, and their way of life. Because of these positive experiences in unfamiliar spaces, I am always eager to learn in new and different environments.”
Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.

“Although art has never been a favorite of mine, the ability to work in a collaborative environment with someone from a different community has made it a wonderfully rewarding and enjoyable experience. There are three characteristics that have created this rich, collaborative experience. First, the role of community (more specifically, the perspective of multiple communities) in our artwork, second, the few challenges and numerous rewards of working with our community partner and third, the experience of working in an unfamiliar environment. This experience has been both rewarding and educating for me, and I look forward to the final days we have to walk down this path of collaborative artmaking in our community.”
Interview Transcript: Lily

1.) Tell me about your personal experience working with your community partner from Graham Expeditionary Middle School. Please describe your personal experience working and learning in cooperative learning groups.

“When I first learned that I would participate in a service-learning course I was nervous to take part. Although I had experience working with young children, I had never interacted much with middle schoolers. Furthermore, I was home-schooled from kindergarten through eighth grade and my lack of familiarity with this setting only added to my building apprehension. The support of the staff at Graham Expeditionary Middle School and the maturity of my Ohio State and community partners, however, helped put me at ease.

The staff at GEMS was friendly and inviting. They worked hard to create an environment that promoted success on our project. Their flexibility allowed me to focus less on adjusting to our settings and more on the task at hand. Given the support of the school, I would say that my biggest setbacks were technology and communication. The laptops provided were not conducive to working quickly and efficiently and GIMP was not very user-friendly. These two factors combined led to difficulty with our artwork. Communication did not always come easily because our partner, Lanita, was shy. Although she stayed on task, I felt that she was uncomfortable voicing her opinions. She seemed assertive in some aspects and decided on a theme within minutes. I had a tough time, however, encouraging her to open up and make suggestions from that point on.

While many of my peers from Ohio State seemed to have issues getting their girls to focus and maintaining an appropriate level of give and take, my group definitely struggled more with getting ideas out in the open. I did not want to act too assertive or pushy by forcing my thoughts on others but at the same time I struggled with Lanita’s shyness. Although she became more comfortable with time, I still had issues keeping up conversation because she did not always have much to say. Despite these initial difficulties, however, this project was an overall good experience. Every situation has its impediments but I feel that the success of our piece outweighed the obstacles we faced at the start.”

2.) What did you learn about yourself working with another student from your community?

“Working with a younger student was an interesting experience because I am not used to being the leader in academic environments. Because this was my first quarter in college, I had not completely adjusted to the idea of being treated like an adult. In high school I had to ask to go to the bathroom. Teachers took attendance in every class and exercised their authority through strict rules and regulations. At GEMS, however, due to the large age gap between my partner and I, I became a leader. I learned that I am capable of stepping up in situations like this whether it be through leading conversation or encouraging my
partner to share her ideas. This experience definitely helped build my confidence and gave me the unique opportunity to hold an authoritative position and teach another individual while still learning these skills and about their life at the same time.”

3.) Please describe your process of making collaborative artwork with others. How did you and your groups negotiate decisions made about the artwork?
“Because Lanita was initially shy, Wil and I worked hard to help her feel comfortable in our group setting. We asked for her thoughts and opinions at every step throughout the artmaking process. When she did voice ideas, like her preferred theme, we agreed to incorporate them and commended her creativity in an attempt to show that we valued her input. Because we wanted to respect her choices, we mostly built off of her ideas, adding our own opinions and tweaks. Our project ended up going in a completely new direction once we got to work. The more we discussed the piece and added new ideas, the more our original theme evolved. Halfway through the process we decided to go in an all new direction and started back from square one. By the time we looked at our finished work, it was totally opposite from our original plans. I ended up liking it more this way, however, because I think it reflects the changes that took place as the dynamic of our group changed and we became more comfortable working with one another.”

4.) Does your final artwork look like you thought it would? How does it visually represent your idea of community?
“Because we strayed so far from our original theme, our finished piece looked much different than anticipated. When we first started, we planned to base our work off of personality, imagination, and music. By the time we ended, however, we had gone in an entirely new direction. Halfway through our work we decided to incorporate pictures of nature. We changed the background of our piece to a photo of Woodruff Avenue. Wil and I started a conversation with Lanita about the definition of the term “community” and from there our ideas began to build. We agreed to work from the idea that a community is a group of people who, despite their many differences, share a common attribute. To express this idea we photographed paintings of popular literary characters on the library wall at GEMS. Although these characters came from different backgrounds and stories, we placed them all together on Woodruff to show that they shared a home. I think our group agreed on this idea easily because it was somewhat representative of ourselves. Although we differ in ages, hometowns, race and more, we all share the Columbus community.”

5.) Do you feel your ideas are fairly represented in the final collaborative artwork?
“I think our group did a really good job making sure that each member’s voice was heard. We all contributed to the piece in our own way. Lanita suggested our main theme. Although we eventually branched off of that, her ideas really got the project started. When focus began to shift, I suggested that we change the background to better fit our definition of a community. Throughout the whole process Wil was the best at using
GIMP. While Lanita and I did take our turns at the computer, he did a lot of the technical work and added to the composition while he was at it.”

6.) How has working with the artmaking Big Ideas of identity and community helped you to explore social issues related to your own personal identity? Please use details and examples to expand on this.

“Working with identity and community simultaneously has allowed me to take a closer look at my upbringing and environment back home in Sylvania. When I examined my identity I automatically thought of my friends, coworkers, family, and house in Sylvania. I remembered the experiences throughout high school that helped shape the person I am today. When focusing on community with my middle school partner, however, I reflected on my environment in Columbus. I thought about Ohio State, the students I have met here, GEMS, and the surrounding neighborhoods. While working with these big ideas I realized they are not that different. To me, the two are almost interchangeable. Identity refers to my friends and community from the past while community refers to my surroundings in the present.

Evaluating both ideas at the same time allowed me to compare and contrast. The largest differences between each location were mostly economic. Sylvania houses many mid to upper class families. The school system is reputable, properties are well kept, and inhabitants lead a comfortable life. Columbus, however, is slightly more depressed. There are many more signs of financial struggle and although schools like GEMS work as efficiently as possible given their budget, they are not quite as prestigious. I have learned through this experience that although I should appreciate the opportunities my socioeconomic status has allowed, I should not judge the abilities of others based on their income. Although Columbus and GEMS may not look as fancy and upstanding as Sylvania, the residents and students who live here are equally hardworking, focused, and intelligent.”
Interview Transcript: Richard

Question 1: Describe your understanding, and feelings on, the process of collaboration, and collaborative artmaking. How has working in a collaborative group helped you to grow as a learner and/or artist?

“Art Education 252 is like no other class I have taken because it has its students partake in a service-learning program with Graham Expeditionary Middle School. At first I felt a bit nervous being one of the students that would be working with a middle school girl without having another college partner as well. In addition, I have not had any former experience working in service-learning and did not know what to expect from the class or how to go about working with the middle school girl. On the first day we got to meet our students and go around campus taking pictures with them on our own. Despite my initial apprehension, the experience turned out to be surprisingly fun and exciting and we took a lot of interesting pictures. I think part of the reason my experience went so well right from the start was because of my girl, Kyra. Although she was only in seventh grade, she was very mature for her age and surprisingly outgoing compared to some of the other girls. In addition she was very passionate about artmaking and expressing herself through pictures and projects which is something that I am not so adept at. So in a nutshell I feel that I got a lucky pick and that we complemented one another very well. This made my overall experience working with Kyra a positive one that we both learned from and enjoyed. In working with Kyra I realized that it is not about the quality of the work but more about how we can communicate each other’s thoughts and feelings using the artwork. For example, I have learned many things about her personality and interests in the past few weeks. She really enjoys music and is more artistically adept than I am which comes in handy when creating our piece on gimp. She is also surprisingly outgoing and mature for her age and is not afraid to open up to me making the classes fun and exciting for me as well. The process of doing this project together creates many opportunities to teach as well as learn for both Kyra and I. The collaborative art making aspect of the service-learning can be challenging at times because we will both want to do something that interferes with what the other had in mind. But I think that is kind of the point because you end up having to make a compromise or a sacrifice to make the piece represent both your personalities instead of just one. It ends up containing different qualities that make it unique because neither person would have made it that way on their own. This is the entire purpose of collaboration: to build off of each other’s thoughts and ideas to create something new that portrays a part of everyone involved, and in the end, the work is better because of the multiple minds that were involved in the creation.”

Question 2: How has working in a cooperative learning group pushed you to better understand your own identity?

“Working with Kyra at the middle school taught me a few things about our community and about life in general. For example, when we got to walk around with our partners to take pictures for the second time we decided to take pictures inside the school that related
to our themes (music, nature, and personality). We were taking pictures of the paintings on the walls in the gym and I suggested we should go explore the music room to find pictures relating to our music theme. She then told me that they did not have a music room in the school. This is when I realized how different the socio-economic status is here than where I grew up and what I am used to seeing. The lack of a music room in a school to me is like the lack of textbooks or a cafeteria. This was such a foreign thing to me that it made me see how different the opportunities are in different communities.

Also, when working on our project using GIMP and looking up pictures from Google I let Kyra have full control of the computer unless there was something she needed help with. I learned very quickly that the computer knowledge I have take for granted all the time. Seeing Kyra struggle with simple functions such as right clicking on a mac or knowing where the files go after you save them was very different to me. Everyone I have grown up with and been in contact with has always known this information so after working with her a few times I could understand why our service-learning program wanted us to only work with the girls.”

**Question 3: What is a Big Idea, and why do artists work from/with them? How has creating art about the big idea of identity & community helped you to better understand your own identity as a community member?**

“Through working with the big idea of identity I have been able to get a better grasp of who I am and how I fit into society. When working with the big idea of community it adds onto this and shows me how my identity compares to others and how to build on our unique ideas and personalities and has helped me explore certain social issues in the community around me. One example is the socio-economic differences of the community on campus that I am a part of. When working on the theme of community with Kyra I got to see how different it was to be in an environment where some things I take for granted on a daily basis are absent. In addition I got to explore how power works and is implemented in our community. For example, I had power over Kyra in that she would listen to me and I could take control of the computer and project at any moment, not that I did, but the option was always there. I think this is because I am so much older than her so to her I was viewed as an authoritative figure. This is a simple concept but interesting to see how often it occurs in society. Working with the service-learning program at the middle school turned out to be a wonderful new experience that I was able to learn important real world skills from. In addition I learned many new tools and methods with Photoshop and about various social issues around our community when working on our identity and community projects. I have recommended this class to many of my friends and will continue to recommend it to anyone I think would be interested in learning what I have learned from this experience.”
Question 4: How is working with a community partner challenging and/or rewarding?

“Working with a community partner can be both a challenging and rewarding experience. I was really fortunate to get a fantastic community partner in the service-learning program named Kyra. She has a wonderful personality and is outgoing enough to share it with me and show me her likes and dislikes. She is extremely artsy and enjoys the project we are working on together a lot. This means that sometimes she feels strongly about certain choices we make regarding our artwork which can pose problems here and there. It is not always easy to get both our ideas and thoughts within the piece and we are forced to come to a compromise or decide to go a different way than we first planned on. One example is this picture we found on the internet that portrayed personality very well. Since our artwork is supposed to represent music, personality, and nature, the picture integrated really well into our piece. The only problem was how to put it in. Kyra first tried to put it in the background switching out our original background picture with the new picture and then fading it so it could barely be seen. I disagreed with this decision because I thought it would be better for people to really be able to see it since it symbolized our genre exceptionally well. We ended up compromising and having it be in the background but not faded enough that you could not tell what was going on in the picture. In my opinion, it turned out beautifully so we were rewarded for combining our thoughts and ideas into one. Another way working with Kyra can be challenging is that she does not have as much experience with computers and technology as I do. Letting her be in control of the computer for the most part is very helpful to her because she receives a wonderful hands on learning experience but at the same time it can be frustrating for me because it takes a lot longer and I have to keep showing her how to do certain things. As challenging as this can be at some times it is also surprisingly rewarding. I also get a learning experience as a mentor trying to help her to figure various things out and when she finally gets certain things right I feel proud that I taught her how to do it.”

Question 5: Describe your experience, physical and emotional, being asked to learn in a place/space that is unfamiliar to you.

“Working at the middle school in an unfamiliar place was a bit confusing and intimidating at first. In addition, it can be a pain to walk there and back because it is really far from the rest of my classes. I thought trying to work on our project there was challenging the first couple of days but I got used to it pretty quickly. The biggest challenge I would have to say is working with the school’s laptops instead of my own or the computers at the university. First of all they are macs and I have little to no experience working with macs. This ended up affecting our first day because I could not figure out how to transfer the pictures we took to where they needed to be and when any complications came up I did not know how to fix them. Whereas on my computer or on another pc I would have been able to be more useful and figure out what was going wrong which would have enabled us to start on our actual artwork sooner. Although this is a challenge, it is also a good experience because I have learned how to work with the
macs and in a place where I feel out of the ordinary. Another reason working at the middle school is a bit weird is that I am surrounded not only by students like me but by younger kids and teachers as well. Working at on campus or at my house I am surrounded by others like me whereas at the school I am more of a minority. At first it feels a little awkward but everyone there is warm and welcoming which creates a wonderful atmosphere for working.”

**Question 6: What experiences have you encountered that wouldn’t be possible without the Service-Learning element in the class.**

“Working with the service-learning program at the middle school turned out to be a wonderful new experience that I was able to learn important real world skills from. In addition I learned many new tools and methods with Photoshop and about various social issues around our community when working on our identity and community projects. I have recommended this class to many of my friends and will continue to recommend it to anyone I think would be interested in learning what I have learned from this experience.”
Appendix F: OSU Student’s Day One Identity Writings
Molly (Sophomore in Biology)

“Hi, I’m Molly, and a female majoring in biology. In high school I took a photography class that we used photoshop in, but most of the class was working with film and technique in the dark room. I have no experience with gimp. I have never done a Service-Learning really, just volunteer work. I really do like working with children and getting to know people. I have a younger sister who is middle school aged so I am excited to work with the girls!”

Wil (Senior in Business - Finance)

“My name is Wil, and I am a third-year male majoring in Finance. I took this class to increase my PhotoShop skills, which I believe will be helpful for marketing in the business world. I have some PhotoShop experience designing basic logos for businesses and bands. I have never heard of gimp before. I also don't have any experience working with school aged students in the classroom; however, I have participated in multiple soccer camps as an instructor for school aged students. I don't have any questions about service learning, as I am actively involved in service learning (almost on a bi-weekly basis) with the Fisher College of Business Honors Cohort program.”

Mary (Freshman in the Exploration Program)

“My name is Mary and I'm a freshman girl at Ohio State this year. In my freshman year of high school I took a photoshop class using Adobe, but the class was short and limited and so is my experience. I've never used gimp before but I'm willing to learn. During my high school career, I've worked in an elementary library and helped in a first grade class. Despite my general experience with kids, I'm still not completely comfortable with them mostly because I don't know how to tell them that they aren’t allowed to do something. I'm taking this class because I'm interested in graphic arts as a possible major but I have such little experience that I wanted to start back to the basics before leaping right into more advanced graphic design. Plus, I just have a general love for art. I'm really looking forward to the class and I hope everyone else is as well!”

Michelle (Sophomore in Math & Physical Sciences - Mathematics/Education)

“Hi! I'm Michelle, a sophomore female at OSU. However I am a recent transfer from Kent State University. My photoshop experience only goes as far as the editing i have done on my own time with very basic computer software. I have never heard of Gimp. I have worked a few times with school-aged children, most as a babysitter. I have also, however, spoke with them for our Strongsville D.A.R.E. program as a role model. From this course, I hope to allow myself to put my creativity out there and learn more from it. My initial thoughts about service-learning is that I believe it is a great idea and I think it will keep things interesting.”
Twicheng (Sophomore in Business - Economics - Business Administration)

“Hello, I’m Twicheng, from China. I’m boy in Fisher Collage of Business. I took this class because it GEC for sure, but I like to learn something about art and something I can use in my daily life easily. I know a little bit of photoshop, but to be honest, I do not know what is Gimp. I heard this class is teaching photoshop, after hearing what Meg said, I thought I could get a lot more from this class. I used to be a volunteer of 512 Sichuan Earthquake, and also helped the special kids (blind kids, deaf kids, etc) in the special middle school in China. However, I’ve never experienced Service-Learning in the US, I even did not have a chance to step in a high school in the US before. I’m very looking forward to do such interesting learning with high school girls.”

Lily (Freshman in Exploration)

“Hi my name is Lily and I'm a freshman here at Ohio State. I took a graphic design class my freshman year of high school and we worked with photoshop for about a quarter. By now I probably forgot most of what I learned so my experience is limited and I've never heard of gimp. I took this class because I really like art but didn't have a lot of time for it in high school. Although I don't have experience with service-learning my little brother is in middle school and I used to work summer camps with little kids. I haven't really gotten the chance to explore Columbus yet and I used to volunteer quite a bit so I'm excited about this opportunity!”

Beydan (Junior in Business)

“Hello, I'm Beydan, a girl, and this is my first quarter at OSU. I don't have any experience with photoshop and, to be honest, I don't even know what gimp is. I took this course because I want to learn how to use technology better, and because it meets my GEC requirements. I have never done Service-Learning, but I have worked with school aged children. I’m so excited for this part of the class. This past March, in celebration of the inaugural of Columbus State's president, Dr. Harrison, I participated in a voluntary Read-In. I was sent to Valleyview Elementary, where I read a book about going to college to 2nd graders. It was a rewarding experience and I'm looking forward to working with the middle schoolers.”

Seth (Junior in Exploration Program - Computer Science & Engineering/Science & Technology)

“My name is Seth and I'm a male/man Freshman/Junior (a Frunior, if you will) at THE Ohio State University; I'm entering into the Computer Science and Engineering program from a Game Design and Simulation program taught at the community college where I transferred from. I decided to take this course because it is relevant to my interests in technology and art. As for my experience with Photoshop, I use it every now and again as a hobby, but I have also taken a few classes to help me get some more practice with it. I also currently own CS5 and it is very snazzy. I know of GIMP, but I don't really use it, so I'm fairly inexperienced in that area. I'm interested to find out what
Song (Senior in Business - Operations Management)

“Hello, I’m Song, a female senior. I have no experience with either photoshop or gimp before. And I haven't involved with service-learning and working with school aged students; however, I do interested in volunteering to help some young students when I was in China. The reason why I choose this course was because I enjoy making DIY and painting very much when I'm home, and I want to further develop my knowledge by studying photoshop, and course can cover the GEC. My initial questions about service-learning is do I need to learn a lot of professional knowledge before we go there? Also, since English is my second language, I don’t know if I could express my thoughts correctly with girls.”

Brody (Sophomore in Exploration Program)

“Hi, I’m Brad, a male and undecided as to what I will major in. I don't have really any experience with photoshop or gimp. I have some experience with windows movie maker. Also, I tend to catch on to things very well when it comes to computers. I have no experience with service learning or working with school aged students, but I'm good with people and kids tend to like me. I hope to get something that can begin to help me with a visual design major. My only question about service learning is, I want to know how it benefits us students. I'm not saying I’m against it by any means, I'm just curious.

Ian (Senior in Engineering - Computer Science & Engineering)

“Hello, My name is Ian. I am a male Junior, but also a recent transfer student from Columbus State, so maybe a senior? I took several graphics classes in high school and have been using photoshop in both recreational and freelance uses for about four years. I have never worked with Gimp however, so I'm interested learning to work with it. I haven't taken any art classes other than a greek literature class, so I'm interested in seeing how this one goes and hope to get a better understanding of art. I have never done any service learning, but have done some volunteering. Having never done it before, I’m a little intimidated to be completely honest. The only question I would have about it, would be what is it like? (Hopefully that will be answered. Haha.)”

Sarah (Freshman in Exploration Program - Law)

“I’m Sarah and a freshman girl here at OSU. I have worked with photoshop in a few of my high school and middle school computer classes, but it has been awhile since I have used it. Gimp, on the other hand, I have never heard of. I have many experiences working with school aged students because I was a swim coach for middle-school aged kids and have also taught swim lessons to kids of all ages, including kids with disabilities. I am looking forward to working with the middle schoolers. In this course I
hope to learn more about art and art on computers. Service-learning sounds like a fun experience.”

Andrew (Freshman in Business - Finance)

“I am Andrew, a freshman guy here at OSU. I have absolutely no experience in photoshop or gimp but am looking forward to figuring them out this quarter. The closest thing I have done to Service-Learning was coaching a younger baseball team in the fall and it was a lot of fun so I expect the same out of this experience. I have no questions about Service-Learning but I am excited to work with younger students. I chose this course because it is linked to computer in art rather than drawing or painting with which I am not comfortable in. I hope to get a better understanding of photoshop out of this class as well as my GEC ed credit!”

Richard (Junior in Math & Physical Sciences - Physics Engineering)

“Hi I am Richard, male and I am a junior here majoring in physics. When talking to my advisor about which class to take this seemed the most interesting of the options. I do not have any experience with photoshop or gimp at all. All I know is my friends make some pretty good pictures using it so it will be nice to learn and make some of my own. I have no experience with service learning but I do referee soccer games for school aged students a lot so I have experience working with them. I expect to learn some helpful skills in photoshop and art in general in this class because I have close to none right now. Also, it will be nice to have a unique experience working with the the middle school students. I do not have any questions about service-learning or anything else that I can think of right now.”

Bao (Junior in Engineering - Physics)

“Hi everyone I'm Bao! I’m a guy majoring in engineering and physics I don't have any experiences with photoshop or gimp, but I've always been interested in photoshop and I'm looking forward to learning how to use them. I have no idea what service-learning means, but after reading the syllabus I thought it's a good idea. I never worked with middle school aged girls before so it worries me a little bit, but hopefully I'll become used to it after a few times. I hope I can learn from this course how to use photoshop to edit my pictures, and gain a better understanding of art. I'm studying engineering physics, but I also like art, so making art is a good way to use the other side of my brain for a change. An interesting thing about me is I’m a huge Harry Potter fan, but never got into Lord of Rings. I hope we can all have a good time in this class!

Shantae (Sophomore in Education and Human Ecology - Fashion & Retail Studies)

“Hello, I’m Shantae, a female at OSU. I took this course because it is a requirement for my major. As of now I don't have any experience with photoshop/gimp or Service-Learning with school aged students. I am expecting a lot from this course,
especially with the Service-Learning. One thing I am looking forward to is meeting the various middle school students, learning where they come from and where they are trying to go. I hope that I can provide some insight to them and help motivate them to strive and achieve all of their goals. The only question that I have is what exactly will we be doing with those students. I'm sure I will find out soon. Oh yeah, the unique things about me is I’m the first person in my family to attend college and I attended college while in high school.”

**Stephanie** (Sophomore in Health Professions - Exploration/Medicine & Nutrition)

“Hey everyone, I’m Stephanie, and a girl. I am excited for this course, working with art and children sounds like a lot of fun. It is also a good way to get away from all of those math/science classes I have been taking thus far. I have a little experience with photoshop, but not with gimp. In high school, I helped with the yearbook here and there, and learned a bit about photoshop. I am not sure how much of it I remember, but hopefully it all just comes back to me. For the past four summers, I have been a lifeguard - which creates a lot of interaction with children. I taught lessons and our pool held many community activities where a lot of children where involved. I am excited to work with school-aged children because when I taught lessons, I would generally get the younger/screaming children. It should be a good experience working with these school-aged children. I graduated high school with 60 other people and I’m allergic to citrus.”

**Jen** (Sophomore in Business Administration)

“Hi everyone! I'm Jen! I’m a girl majoring in business administration. I have taken a digital/visual communications class, but that was about 4 years ago. Unfortunately, I don't remember much about photoshop but I can't wait to refresh my memory and learn more. I play around a lot with gimp and Picasa on my computer, but nothing too complex. I am looking forward to learning more about color/contrast, brightness, and saturation of photographs. I love taking pictures and everyone always makes jokes about me carrying my camera around. I just think it's a great way to make memories. When it comes to the children, I feel like it will be an awesome experience. I have A LOT of experience with kids. I worked for a day care for about 8 years, taught a class of elementary kids once a week during my junior and senior years of high school, and I'm a big sister! My younger siblings are now 11 and 15 years old. So the middle-school age group is right up my alley. I can't wait to meet the girls and get to know them and what they're interested in. What makes me unique I love to travel and have been to 8 different countries. This course should be a lot of fun and I'm excited to get started!

**Chuan** (Sophomore in Business Administration)

“Hi, everyone. My name is Chuan and I’m a girl from China. I like to take photographs by using my iphone4 or Cannon 550D. And most important, I always beautify my photographs via PS or Meitu Xiuxiu which is a really popular PS tool in China now-a-days. My brother used to teach me to use PS when I was a high school
student, but since I used the simplified Chinese system of PS before, I'm not pretty sure that I can handle the English version of PS in ARTED525 class very well, haha! I never heard about Service-Learning before but I'm interested in it. The experience with school aged students that I had was to be a tutor for middle school student, like teaching them physics and maths. I hope that I can learn the true spirits of art in this class and form the ability to make creative art which represents my ideas. My unique thing is that I attended the 7th Youth Assembly at UN in Zolo as the student representative from mainland China. I also hope we guys can get along well with each other in class, wish us the best!

**Liang** (Junior in Business - Marketing/Business Administration)

“Hey just let you guys know, my name is Liang, but you can call me Kyle. Kyle is known as another Edison Chen not because of he has many girlfriends but he loves taking photos. Though he always believes that the meaning of taking photo is to record every moment as what it is originally, he is forced to use tools like Photoshop to edit pictures in study and work. As a business student majoring in Marketing he wants to obtain some knowledge in design skills. That’s the reason why he takes this class: for personal development. Never had experience working/studying with middle school aged girls, I feel excited about the service learning program, but be honest, I am little nervous. It would be a great time for all of us. I did have some worries about working with kids but getting energetic from working with them sounds like a good idea. Also, as I mentioned in the first class, I work for AIESEC, a non-for-profit organization that provides professional internship and leadership experience in over 110 countries. I think it is a good chance to introduce some of our programs in/after class. There are some really great teaching and volunteering internship programs in the BRIC countries and eastern Euro for this coming summer. If you guys are interested, I would like to provide you more information. Let’s have an awesome quarter learning together.”

**Fangshu** (Sophomore in Business - Finance in Business Administration)

“Hi, my name is Fangshu, a girl. I am not good at art, but I want to learn some things about the photoshop. I am a little afraid that I can not do well in this class, because I did not do well in any art class before. I think the service learning in this class could be an interesting part even thought it not so clear. I never did this kind of activity before. I hope I can use photoshop better after this quarter.”

**Jian** (Sophomore in Engineering - Electrical & Computer Engineering)

“Hi, my name is Jian, male engineer student. I learned some photoshop, which were just basic skills, when I was in high school. Before I uploaded photos to Facebook, I would 'photoshop' it. But they were all about two years ago, so I cannot remember much of those skills. And I have taken Engineering course so I am familiar with a software called Inventor, which is used to create 3D drawings. Taking this course allows me to move my eyes from maths and physics things ( I am in engineering major) to something about art. And I want to get familiar with photoshop again. I want to know what is main
difference service-learning from other styles of learning? I believe that working with middle-school age students will be a great experience to me. It would remind me of my own middle-age life, like the way of thinking and value-defining.”

Harma (Junior in Business Marketing)

“I am Harma, boy marketing student. I don’t have any experiences with photoshop/gip, Service-Learning and working a with school aged students. I hope I could learn some knowledge about photoshop from this course. I have really bad English understanding because one of my ear almost cannot hear. So I am afraid it is going to effect my Service-Learning.”

Ricardo (Freshman - Math & Physical Sciences - Chemistry)

“Hey, my name is Ricardo, a male in chemistry. I have some experience with Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop (mostly Illustrator) as well as experience with a 3D program called 3DS Max (the same software they used to make Toy Story). I took a class throughout high school which focused on 3DS Max, and I took a graphic design which taught Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. I learned a lot through playing around with the programs and following tutorials. All in all, I simply love computer art. The only experience I really have working with children was in my job working at a yacht club teaching kids how to sail. Other than that I can't say that I am great with children but I hope to have fun and gain a bit of an "eye" for art. Unique thing about me, is that I prefer to dink chocolate milk with a spoon.”

Yuko (Junior in Business - Accounting/Business Administration)

“Hi everyone ~ my name is Yuko~ I’m a female at OSU. Actually, I have not many experiences with Photoshop but I have some with using Google software called “Picasa”, which I think is very useful and convenient software to edit digital photos, especially for someone who don’t have much skills of Photoshop just like me :). Oh by the way, I also downloaded Gimp after our first lecture. Well, this is the first time I heard about “Service-Learning”. But I believe I will have much fun with those youths because I think they seem always creative and imaginative. This will be a great time to have brain storms when collaborating with them. I also have some experiences with kids before (usually age of 3-8 ) and I love them and their curiosity and passion to the world. Expect to get more connection with youths ~ I hope to have a new sight about art and I’m sure there would be a lot fun in this class. Finally, I want to say that it is like a family with you guys. Cheers”

Shansha (Sophomore in Business - Accounting/Business Administration)

“Hi everyone, I’m Shansha, a girl, and I am a little worried when I enrolled in this class cause I had took a similar class in high school, which taught students photoshop skills. But photoshop seems too hard to learn at that time. Hope I can do well this time.
This is first time I know about Service-learning class but I had some experiences with the school-aged children and I really enjoy the time with them. I think Service-Learning is about helping people and learning stuff. I want learn some photoshop basic skills in class, stay away from the math stuff and have fun with everyone and the children.”

Qiong (Sophomore in Business Finance - Business Administration)

“i am Qiong, a female in business. i have learned photoshop in my previous college in China nearly 3 years ago, so the knowledge is almost fade away in my head. In my previous learning, i found it very useful and important. i want to relearn this skill in this course and enjoy the art. art is something mysterious to me, i have never touch this before, so i wanna have a good experience with it. i have been a volunteer assistant in international primary school in china before, those kids are very quit and active, i like to see them. i want to know what project will we do with those high school girls?”

Xiaolin (Senior in Business Finance - Business Administration)

“Hey everyone, I'm Xiaolin, and I’m a girl. I used photoshop many years ago, but all I learnt were just some basic skills and I am not sure if I still remember them now. I am used to using some iphone App to edit my photos because they are easy to handle with and can also get great effects. Actually, just like the first time I said, I am not very good at things about art. So I hope I could get some inspiration and initiations from this class. The only experience I had about "Service-Learning" was to be a lifeguard of the school children with mental defects when I was in high school. I learnt a lot from this experience about how to corporate with these young children. I believe this course will bring me much fun! Something unique about me is I like to eat meat.”

Morgan (Freshman - Exploration Program - Exploration Medicine)

“Hi everyone, I’m Morgan, freshman female. I absolutely love art. I took art all through high school and received best senior portfolio and best of show. I also took art history one and art history two through a post-secondary program at a local community college. Unfortunately, all my experience in art is more traditional with drawing and painting. I have never worked with photoshop/gimp before, but I'm ready and eager to learn! I have some experience with middle school girls, along with personal experience, I was in a counseling/volunteer group called Jo's Girls, where high school students went every so often to the middle school to talk to seventh grader's about having self confidence. I am undecided as of right now and I am taking this class to explore education. I am really debating on becoming an art teacher. I hope after taking this course that I will have a clear decision. The only question I have is how are we getting graded on our projects if they are collaborative? I am excited to start the projects and have a hands-on environment. What makes me unique is I traveled all over Italy this summer.”
Appendix G: GEMS Student’s Day One Identity Writings
Lanita (8th grade)
“"I like to learn and talk to friends and I dislike some of the ways teachers teach us. In my free time I love to listen to music. I am a really optimistic fun person. I express myself with the way I dress. I think others like the way I dress and that I’m fun, nice and outgoing. I want to go to school for cooking, doing hair and fashion. Well, I didn’t choose the elective, the elective chose me.”

Aviona (8th grade)
“I don’t like the teachers except Miss. Hessler. I hang out on my free time with my friends and family. I like to have fun and I’m crazy. Others like everything I do! In college I want to study fashion, doctor, lawyer, pediatrician. I took this elective because of Kutnow.”

Akiriya (8th grade)
“Most I like about school is my friends and math class. Least I like is the drama. On my free time I like to get on Facebook and spend times with my friends. I love being in the wind. Something unique about myself is I am a leader, very kind and helpful. Others like that I speak the truth and is not afraid to say it. Also how funny I am and that I’m a true friend to have. I want to study veterinarian, animals. I want to be a vet because I love animals and how unique they are. I took this elective cause I like taking pictures, so I wanted to learn about cameras and stuff.”

Arielle (6th grade)
“I like getting to learn new things about math and science. I don’t like when people talk behind other peoples back. I like to read in my free time. [something unique about yourself] I don’t like other things people like. Others like that I’m friendly. I want to study crime scene investigating, math, science. I want to be a CSI agent because I’m helping the community. I took this elective to learn about pictures, and what things you can do on a computer about pictures.”

Sophia (6th grade)
“I am very creative. I love that you can see friends at school. I don’t like math because I am not good at it. I have colored hair (purple) and blue eyes, that makes me unique. People like how nice I am, and one thing for sure is I am not shy. I would love to study French and I would love to be a vet as well. I took this elective because I like to take pics and to learn more about the community.”

Andrea (8th grade)
“I like how nice the teachers are. I don’t like most of the loud kids who don’t care about learning. I love to draw. Stray and wild animals like me a lot for no reason. I am calm, relaxed, kind, silent. I use actions more than words. I listen to people, let them vent out problems and give them feedback over some tea. I don’t know what people like about
me. In college I want to study animals or art. I want to learn how to help animals and maybe make art about them. I took this class because I hope to get better at computer art."

Ariel (8th grade)

“I am fun, funny, awesome, a leader and very smart. I like the atmosphere at school and I don’t really like science. In my free time I like to skateboard and listen to music. Something unique is that I like to skateboard and the only pair of shoes I wear are Converse’s and I’m very awkward. Others think I’m hilarious (people tell me all the time). I have that star quality and I’m beautiful. In college I want to study math and I want to become a BAU/FBI agent, so I can study the way people think. I took this elective because my principle tole me and because I didn’t want to do yoga on Wednesday.”

Appendix H: Collaborative Introduction Interviews
**Bao, Xiaolin & Linda**
1. Looking things up for school work, emailing, communication, search the web, entertainment, music & to save paper, don’t have to bring a big textbook.
2. Mom and aunt are both artists. Different ideas and different things can be created. Drawing, making anything you like. Experience making art in school. Emotions and help to relax.
3. What your surroundings are, how well you know about it. Art community with mom, neighborhood of school. When you live and the people around you. A group of people with something in common.
4. OSU, GEMS, museums, buildings, people, friends, family, cars, and things you don’t usually notice.

**Stephanie & Andrea**
1. We both own a laptop that has gimp and photoshop. Computers have benefits, online music is inspiration.
2. Express emotions and creativity. We both draw and like art. Andrea likes to make creatures from her dreams and imagination.
3. A group of people who work together to complete a specific goal. Ohio state OSU, church, this class/service-learning, this school GEMS, help stray animals groups (animal awareness), groveport, nutrition.
4. Don’t like college atmosphere (beer cans). Nature (trees, gardens), people walking, buildings, signs, schools, friends, family, animals, cars, taxis, buses, RVs, bikes and insects.

**Yuko, Liang & Danique**
1. Were good at apps and sites - Youtube, Facebook, Twitter.
2. Have experiences making art, painting dancing, and were creative and express ideas.
3. People coming together into a group having activities together, together for some common goal, established relationship with some connection. GEMS community, OSU community, but now we belong to the art making community.
4. People, collaboration, fun.

**Jian & Sophia**
1. Chat with other people, play games, read articles.
2. Art, be yourself, patience.
3. Working, living, helpful, group of people.
4. Flowers, schools, houses, pets families.
Fangshu & Arielle
1. Arielle doesn’t have a lot of experience with computers.
2. Arielle loves art and have a lot of experience with art.
3. A group of people that work together.
4. Buildings, hospitals, police stations, etc.

Shantae, Jeff, & Mia
1. Shantae can get a lot of work done, Jeff can spend free time on the computer, Mia doesn’t really use computers.
2. S-I just started once I changed my major, most favorite is making colleges. J-I’m awful at art. M-I’ve taken an art class at every school every year, sculpture is my most favorite.
3. M-group of people all with similarities, member of Jewish community and GEMS. J-Agree with Mia, member of OSU community. S-community is a family all with similarities, member of OSU community, organizational communities within OSU, and my community of friends.
4. J-signs that symbolize, example, GEMS sign, synagogue and people. M-greenery like the environment, example, trees, grass, leaves. S-symbolic signs, and the environment, example trees, people, signs, etc.

Morgan & Katlyn
1. Experience different things, getting on Youtube and playing games.
2. Like to design, want to be a fashion designer, sketches out ideas, makes you feel better about ourselves.
3. People coming together, community of our schools, recreations and where we meet, community where we come from.
4. Houses, families, schools, parks, corner-store, school sign, both schools, cars and people, peoples different fashions.

Harma & Shamera
1. Facebook, picasa, email, movies, games, homework.
2. Making pictures, painting.
3. Basically somewhere you belong and there’s different types of communities, made stronger, get to know people.
Jen & Rihanna
1. Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, connivence.
2. Computer art, art class, 8 yrs. of computer classes, painting, collages, photography.
3. Anything you're a part of, anywhere you live, organizations, etc. School, ballet, OSU, gymnastics, track.
4. People, nature, buildings, patterns, designs, schools, houses, cars, friends, weather, organizations.

Ricardo, Qiong & Jenny
1. Internet, entertainment, access to the work.
2. It's pretty fun to make.
3. Group of people that live together, protect each other, work with one another. City, town neighborhood, religion, school community, friends.
4. People, nature, environment, anything really, food.

Chuan & Akiriya
1. Playing games, Facebook, different things people do on the computer. Chat with friends, searching and such.
2. Doing collages, photo-books, different types of artwork. Take photos of family when traveling, doing trips. I enjoy beautifying them by some tools.
3. A community is counted by different parts and areas, for people to go to work, play, school and act.
4. Buildings, parks, working places, schools, markets, etc. All of them around us can be used for artwork.
Appendix I: Reflective Writings Posted on Carmen
- **What are some important things to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners?**

“One important thing to keep in mind when interacting with the girls is that we are not only teaching but learning as well. Also we are building a relationship with our community by sharing thoughts and experiences with one another.” - Richard

“Important things to remember when working with our community partners is to not only teach them, but also learn from them. In order for the service learning to be successful we have to both teach the girls and learn from them.” - Sarah

“These girls have so much to offer and I think we have a great responsibility in being providers to help them reach a higher potential and in doing that I believe we will learn a lot from them as they get closer to that potential.” - Mary

“Importantly, I can learn many different cultures and knowledges from other communities. We can learn a lot of things together.” - Twicheng

“While working with the middle school girls we should keep in mind that this experience is meant to be mutually beneficial. Though we may act as mentors because we are older and more experienced, we are here to learn from them as well and should pay attention to what knowledge they are able to offer us.” - Lily

“The most important thing to keep in mind is to understand how much efforts I could bring to the community, and how many things I could learn from other people living in the group, because everyone in the community have different beliefs and abilities.” - Song

“Things to keep in mind? These are middle school girls. Of course it's going to be awkward to work with them at first. I'd admit, if I were their age, and a college student approached me saying "let's make art!" I'd be a little off-put. Also, that this is a learning experience. We can't be perfect at this instantly. As much effort has to be made on our part as theirs, so if we go in expecting this to suck, It probably will suck.” - Ian

“An important thing to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners is that we are not there to just teach them but we are also there to learn from them. That is when service-learning works when both people are willing and wanting to grow. There are so many different people, with different backgrounds and experiences, living in the same community. We just need to keep in mind that by understanding each other, our community and ultimately ourselves will be better.” - Molly
“When communicating with our community partners, it is important to remember that members of other communities deserve to be treated in the same way that we treat members of the communities to which we personally belong.” - Wil

“And, when communicating with our community partners, I believe it is best to keep an open-mind to what they say or do and try your best to learn from it. Being middle school girls growing up in an area where there aren't any soy bean fields within 50 feet, they are much different from my quasi-rural, college-aged, male self, and so they are going to react and behave differently than what I am used to. Though it is quite humorous to look at their immaturities and compare them to ourselves at that age; amidst the note-passing, gossip, and taking pictures of cute boys, there are unique qualities to each and every one of those girls that make them different from any of our other acquaintances. I don't know about the rest of you, but I don't make it a point to interact or befriend any middle school children, so this class offers us the chance to observe and casually interact with these middle-schoolers in a way that can benefit their futures while letting us learn how [cliché alert, ya'll] to see the world through their eyes.” - Seth

“Most important things during communicating should be respect. We need to learn how to respect a new community's culture and use the reciprocal ways to exchange different experiences in different communities. Interests can also play an essential role when communicating with others. We need to be curious and active when interact with our community partners.” - Xiaolin

“Some important ideas to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners are: to stay positive, be supportive and listen to one's partners ideas, don't control the project but be a guide. I think these concepts are important especially with working with these girls because some may have some or no experience at all with the computer programs we are using. We need to stay positive and supportive because it may be embarrassing for the girls or frustrating. I also think that we should take more of a laid back role in the project so that they can gain the ability and confidence to be creative and use the technology/programs without a guide.” Morgan

“When communicate with my partner, I have to keep in mind that they are middle school aged girls that come from this neighborhood. They may be shy or surprised to work with older students that come from another country, so we have to be gentle and patient with them.” - Bao

“ The most important thing is being respectful to your partners. Since within a community, people either share common interests or live nearby. Showing respect is the basic rule when communicating. Then, be honest is another rule. When discuss with partners, you have to let them know what is actually in your mind, especially while brainstorming.” - Jian
“When communicating with our community partners, I suggest we'd better highlight these as followed:
1. Show our full respect for the community partners. Because everyone needs dignity.
2. During encountering time, remember to maintain confidentiality. This makes us more trustful and help partners get involved.
3. Don't forget to adjust our communication style when facing partners of different personalities. If so, we and our partners will get along more well and closer with each other.
4. Please listen with your eyes and ears which can show your great attention to what your partners say. And your interactions will be more enjoyable and comfortable.” - Chuan

“What first important things, from my perspective, to keep in our mind would be equality. The point is they are not on inferior ladder just because they are younger. Just like Meg said in the syllabus, “the service activity is not volunteerism nor is it charity”, yes, it is collaboration and we are equal in this community. Another important thing should be keep in mind is differences of identity, including gender, race, class, age, nationality, knowledge, etc. Other things are better to keep in mind would be the history and background of this community and the concept of service-learning.” - Yuko

“When communicating with our community partners or others in various communities it is important to have an understanding of them to form a connection. Without an understanding or knowledge of what they represent it would be difficult to relate to them.” - Shantae

“Some important things to keep in mind when communicating with our community partners are their age, gender, and knowledge. They are younger girls, so their interest may be quite different than ours. Also, we have to understand that they might not know anything about computers or digital cameras, so we may have to be more patient with them.” - Stephanie

“It is important to keep in mind that these girls are younger than us. They might not think the same, have the same interests, or have the same opinions. It's our responsibility to recognize that and appreciate it as well. It's also important to keep in mind how we thought and felt when we were that age. We just wanted to have fun! My mission is to let these girls have a blast while working with us and look forward to meeting with us every week!” - Jen
In your own words, what do you feel are the most important aspects to keep in mind when working on a collaborative art-making project?

“In my opinion, the most important thing to keep in mind when making collaborative artwork is to communicate effectively between each other in order to make sure both people incorporate their ideas into the artwork.” - Sarah

“When working on a collaborative art-making project I believe it is most important to keep an open mind toward others. Every group member envisions the finished product differently and it is important to make sure that their voice is heard throughout the process. Each artist has their own unique style and the art is not truly collaborative unless everyone’s individuality is expressed. This point was emphasized while working with the middle school girls. Because my partners and I have many differences I learned that we need to be respectful and listen to one another’s ideas before reaching a decision rather than focusing on our own opinions. Although this may be frustrating to some, I think that collaboration pays off in the end because so many original ideas are brought to the table and combined to create a unique piece.” - Lily

“To me the most important aspects to keep in mind while working on a collaborative art-making project are communication and teamwork. You have to make sure that you are both communicating your ideas so that no one is left out. In addition, teamwork is very essential to the group-work because otherwise it just becomes one-sided and not a piece of art that incorporates both peoples backgrounds and personalities.” - Richard

“In my words, collaborative art-making is very important. First of all, it inspire me to gather more ideas from a group of people or works, and it is also a group working process which allow me to corporate with other people and change my mind to the most fitful one. It is an group work, and it will help everyone in the group to adjust each others’ ideas to come up with a common theme.” - Song

“In order for things to run smoothly, there has to be good communication. Everyone must have an understanding of what the common goal is. If everyone is thinking different things, but are not communicating their ideas, the final product will not turn out. Going along with that, everyone needs to have their own voice. The whole point of collaborative art it to make art with someone besides yourself. If everyone is not putting in the same about of effort and ideas the collaborative part of the art work is not there.” - Molly

“When working on a collaborative art-making project, the most important aspect to keep in mind is the idea of mutual contribution. The fact that it is called collaborative art-making indicates a strong emphasis on being able to contribute one's best abilities to a project while recognizing their weaknesses and shortcomings. In addition, when noticing
one's weaknesses, it is also necessary to notice other's strengths in the same area and to replace your weakness in the project with their strength.” - Andrew

“The most important part of the collaborative artmaking process is teamwork. If the members paired together can't work together efficiently then the process won't advance and the participation in that project won't be equal. Everyone needs to work together and be open to at least listen to different points of view and opinions so that the art can express each individual as equally as possible.” - Mary

“When working collaboratively, I feel the most important thing to remember is communication. Communication is the key to ensuring that the artwork is indeed collaborative and not just one person’s interpretation of everyone else’s ideas. Communication is important because part of collaborative artwork is understanding and learning from each other. If this is to take place, all of the participants must communicate clearly with one another.” - Wil

“Collaborative art-making project seems to be group working to me. That means we should cooperate. If you just watching others doing the art work, that is called observation, not collaborative. So I think the most important aspect of collaborative art making is working together, change mind and making the art more sensitive and perspective.” - Twicheng

“It's not called "collaborative" if someone's doing all the work. If you're used to sitting back and mostly watching others work, step up, get your say on the project and find some way to contribute. It'll be a different experience than you're used to but you'll find you will get a lot more out of the project that way. Same goes for if you're used to doing all the work. You may be good at things, but others will never have the chance to get better at it too if you're always doing the work. This goes for not just art-making, but all group projects. They seem painfully obvious but they're really easy to forget.” - Ian

“The most important thing that I think I have to keep in mind when working on a collaborative art-making project is to be true. When having disagreement with other members in your group, the best way is to say it out. Only in this way, the project from the group can be promoted.” - Jian

“Important aspects to keep in mind when working on a collaborative art-making project are what is the partner(s) getting out of this experience, is it a good or bad experience, and what is the value of the experience they are receiving.” - Morgan

“The most important aspects to keep in mind when working on a collaborative artmaking project are the communication skills, listening skills, and good action. Communication skills is really important to make your partner feel good to work with you. Make your
partner good feeling is the first step to have a perfect work. People always glad to talk and suggest to the people they like. More commons can make more amazing things. Listening skills is also really important. We need to know what our partner's meaning is. To learn how to catch the point from people's communication is really hard. To give the right feedback of action can give you more trust from your partner.” - Harma

“When working on a collaborative art-making project, I feel than it is important to trust and understand my partners, to express my ideas clearly and to have enough knowledge about the materials we work on. Collaboration means to corporate with others to finish a work, which needs to combine all members' ideas. So it's necessary to understand and trust each other during the project. Also, we need to have enough knowledge about the theme of the work and to show our understanding appropriately.” - Xiaolin

“When working on a collaborative art-making project, the most important aspects to keep in mind are being involved, communicating with one another, being patient with one another, and having confidence in your artwork.” - Shantae

“I think one of the most important aspects of working collaboratively is communication. Talking out ideas and reflecting upon on them is key. Opinions must be shared, otherwise it isn't collaborative. Collaboration means talking and listening, and these are the basic fundamentals of any collaborative work.” - Ricardo

“A cooperative art-making project always pushes one get much more involved in communication among group members which means to bravely express yourself, to organize your viewpoints well, to politely accept constructive suggestions, to know how to settle with arguments during discussions, to patently listen to others' speaking, to select the key points when facing with piles and piles of conductive plans, etc.” - Chuan

“In my opinion, the most important aspects to keep in mind when working on a collaborative art-making project are communication skills, difference of identity, and brain storm. First of all, when doing a collaborated artwork, we need to talk to others, therefore, having strong communication skills, such as the way you talking to people, will make the collaboration more efficient. Second of all, keeping remembering that we have difference of identities, such as age, race, nationality, and knowledge, is also very significant when working together. Because we have different background, our culture and what thoughts we have might be totally different; thus, we need to always have consciousness so that we could listen and understand the partner better. Last, I think brain storm is a very important step no matter working on collaborate art making or self-art making, because art making is a creative work. You will never know how you could benefit from brain storm with others and get new ideas on artwork.” - Yuko
“In my opinion, the most important aspect in collaborative art-making project is that respect and listening. We need to respect all the ideas come up from partners and listen what they think about the topic, their different perspectives towards the community.” - Qiong

“I feel that the most important aspects to keep in mind are communication and patience. It takes communication and compromise when trying to come up with a theme. It also takes patience, especially for us and the GEMS, because we are sharing a computer with our partners and only one of us can physically work on the project at a time. We also have to be patient with our partners because we may not agree on everything.” - Jen

“The most important aspects to keep in mind when working on a collaborative art-making project are the skills of communication, negotiation, and listening. It is important to be able to listen with your partner so that everyone's ideas get involved in the art making process. Also, negotiation is important because not all ideas can/will be incorporated into a piece of artwork - therefore, the broad skill of communication is important to achieve both negotiation and listening.” - Stephanie
- Describe your ‘sidewalk encounters’ experience in our class.

“The 'sidewalk encounters' from our class have been quite interesting. On the first photo-shoot we went on, my community partner, Israel, kept wandering around and taking pictures of people on the streets. It was a tad out of the ordinary, but it was definitely humorous! It was also different for me personally because I still wasn't quite used to the urban environment of Columbus and all of the hustle and bustle of the campus life. Basically, I got to experience the environment around the middle school, while still learning about my new environment on campus.” - Seth

“The first day with the girls when we split up into small groups and went around taking pictures we had a couple sidewalk encounters. I recall meeting a few homeless people on the side of High street that asked for spare change. We ended up just passing by them and ignoring them all together. In addition, there were a few people advocating gay rights on the sidewalk that asked for our time to sign a petition or something. Again we pretty much just ignored them and continued on taking pictures of the campus.” - Richard

“I consider the class we have in art ed 252 is like a small community with lots of sidewalk encounters, such as I have experienced communicate my identity project with some other students, and after exchange our ideas, their art works inspired me and I fell like there are something new came out of my mind, and there are more things that I could added into my project to enhance the quality of mine. At the same time, when we partnered with the middle school girl in class, although we never met them before, but we are still able to work and communicate, and came up with the same theme with them to complete the project together.” - Song

“McDonald's because they can have cheap food and free water there. Some of them are stay there for asking money. This is the react of the low income level of the society.” - Twicheng

“The sidewalk encounters I have experienced in class are less dramatic than the ones in the reading. My sidewalk encounters include poor people asking for money, people shouting their religious views from the street corners, being handed coupons for restaurants, and being approached by activist groups.” - Sarah

“The sidewalk encounters that I have experienced are fairly similar to many OSU students including the evangelists on the Oval or the various groups asking for signatures for a petition or the many homeless on high street that beg for money.” - Andrew

“Our sidewalk encounters included poor people asking for money, people eating on the sidewalk in front of restaurants, and individuals screaming and shouting for their cause...
on street corners. Because art was the main focus of our expedition, we all believed that the opportunity for creative, interesting, and stimulating photos would be greater nearer campus. As a result, we did not spend too much time in the neighborhoods. I believe that this contributed to a lack of more “exciting” sidewalk encounters. This is because college students are not at home emotionally when they are on campus (for most of us, our emotional home is still with our family), and thus are much less passionate about their community than someone in the neighborhoods described in the reading would be.” - Wil

“Sidewalk encounters... Hm. The day we went around for photos, we met two men playing chess outside a restaurant, several strangers as the girls ran around taking photos, and a woman who tried to get us to visit her store with fliers. I admit, these aren't as exciting as some of the examples from the book, but it shows that our area has some bit of activity to it. Talking with the girls could be considered a sidewalk encounter of its own, as they've had more experience with the area than we have.” - Ian

“My ‘sidewalk encounters’ is more talking with the Gem's girl. During we took pictures about community, we even extended it from taking community pictures to our families. She told me a lot about her families and described all her pets to me. She sometimes told me what she was worrying about, what she felt interesting. I have discovered how different between a Cantonese family and an American family. This is also an evidence to prove that our class is community-based action research example.” - Jian

“My "sidewalk encounter" was on the street with the girls together. We walked around the street taking pictures of the neighborhood, my partner was really excited to see the greek houses, the cars, and the other buildings around the area. As we were taking pictures, she also talked a lot about how she wanted to do the project.” - Bao

“Basically, my sidewalk encounters experience is walking around the school and observe the beauty of the community and nature. I saw the streets, the buildings and some small animals. Girls were excited about seeing some interesting things like broken bicycle.” - Xiaolin

“My sidewalk encounters’ experience in our class is mainly focusing on the every possible elements about the community, especially some details. For example, from the macro observation, we noticed trees, buildings, signs, and roads. But we also noticed something usually easily be ignored, for example, little trash bins, and even some environment-unfriendly things lying on grass, such as plastic bottle, plastic bag, and white snack box. Interestingly, we also encountered a lovely spotty dog named Anat. We had a small talk with the dog owner and he is really a nice man.” - Yuko

“My 'sidewalk encounters' experience in our class is going out with the girl, and taking picture. We followed the road around her school, and took many pictures about the
building, trees, shops, and signs beside the road. It did not take too long, but we really liked it.” - Fangshu

“my "sidewalk encounters" are observing and feeling the nature and the community. when we take the pictures with partners, we encounter the nature we usually not see, we stop walking and use our whole body to feel the nature, take pictures with partners about everything beauty. The experience working with my partner is that I noticed something I have not seen before and try to know what middle school students interested on and their thinking and feeling toward the nature. It is all fresh to me.” - Qiong
In your own words and from your own experiences, what do you believe the meaning of 'democratic education' is? Reflect on your experience throughout this course; what do you feel you have learned, that you may not have, if this course was not taught through a service-learning framework?

“Democratic Education is applying the things we learn in class to our own life instead of just memorizing the course material. Through our service-Learning this quarter I have learned many things that can be applicable to the real world such as social skills, creativity, and how to help others learn.” - Richard

“Democratic Education is a mix of a traditional classroom learning and learning from a real world experience. Everyone participates freely and equally including students and staff. I feel that I know how to work better on a project with others. I know how to contribute without being overbearing, and I feel like I am better working with people.” - Molly

“Democratic education takes place when an educator builds connections outside of the classroom and encourages students to explore the community and world around them. In order for democratic education to be effective, the teacher and students must realize that education does not only take place at a desk, inside the classroom. Lessons learned outside of school can be equally valuable. If this course was not taught through a service-learning framework the scope of lessons I learned would be much more narrow. While I may have gained more experience working with photoshop, I would have missed out on interaction with the girls and maybe even with classmates. I would not have learned to collaborate or to effectively organize and make decisions as a team.” - Lily

“I'll admit, what we've done has felt a lot more open-ended than most other classes I've taken. From the example of this class, I'd say "democratic education" is the process of learning through doing and coming to the conclusion yourself instead of being told the conclusion and having to accept that as truth without anything personal to back it up. I never thought that by taking this class I'd be exploring social issues. I never thought I'd be working with a middle school girl and a partner together on something. I never thought I'd be given a camera and told to explore and take pictures. Without this class, I would have done none of that. I'm sure the photoshop (and maybe gimp) skills might have been
offered in another section, but I'd like to say we got more out of this class this way. I learned to talk with someone who isn't my age, and how her middle school life was different than mine. In the end, we learned how to make something together.” - Ian

“Democratic education is creating a balance of both traditional classroom experience as well as real world experience and the application of the classroom learning in a community. I feel as though this form of learning is extremely beneficial in the boosting of confidence of the student because they see their skills being put to use and see that what they have learned can be applied to life and that it will make a positive difference as they were taught. From this experience of collaborative art I have learned to be more confident in teaching and relaying skills to others based on previous or related knowledge such as knowing the process of Photoshop but taking that knowledge and applying it to GIMP.” - Andrew

“I believe democratic education is a form of learning in which most of the learning is taken place outside the classroom. Unlike ordinary learning, democratic learning is a way to learn by experiencing the places around you in the community. Also, democratic learning is a more hands-on, practical way to learn instead of learning about something in the classroom, but not being able to experience it. If the class was not taught through a service learning framework, I would not have learned a lot of things I did. For instance, I would not have learned about and met my Gems partner. I also would not have learned how to work as a team to make a collaborative piece of artwork. Working with the girls helped me to learn more about my surrounding community.” - Sarah

“Democratic Education Simply means the connection between in-class education and out-class education. It also encourages students to have more experiences by exploring community, also, society and the world. Service Learning is a kind of Democratic education, I learned a lot from it. Not only in-class materials, also working with people, with different combined community, no matter the social class, nationalities and skin colors. Outside the classroom, we can learn a lot of things that we cannot get in the books. I will learn less if the course is not taught through Service Learning framework. Without the service learning, I will not experience to working with high school girls. Working with those girls, I learned how to communicate with them, how to explain my thought and how to respect and combine other partners thought into one artwork. That’s much more valuable than the course it’s self.” - Twicheng

“By simply looking at the phrase “democratic education” I would define it as education as desired by those who are being educated. In other words, the students choose the curriculum, similar to the way, in theory, that citizens choose their laws and government in a democracy. However, this is not in line with the way the article describes democratic learning. As describe in the article, I believe democratic learning is a misnomer. As described in the article, democratic education is learning that is not confined to the
classroom. I believe this would be better defined as "community-based education" or "public-based" education. From a technical perspective, I would not have learned GIMP if this had not been a service learning project. For a more "philosophical" answer, I would say that I learned that the appearance or location of a school is not indicative of its students’ socio-economic status. Although the GEMS school appears old and worn-down, it is able to afford Apple computers, and the students where name-brand clothes and even have iPads. While they may not be as well-off as some of us students, they may still be better-off than they appear at first-glance.” - Wil

“In my opinion, "Democratic Education" have more connection between the students and teachers than normal education. Democratic is based on the unlimited communication and the chance to express everyone's own idea, so I think the democratic education requires more communication. If this course was not taught through a service-learning framework, I would never have the chance to talk and doing art-making with the middle school aged girls. And of course, I cannot get so many interest ideas with the girls rather than the same aged college students.” - Harma

“I believe that "democratic education" is being able to find comparison and connect the things that we learn to our lifestyles. We have utilized "democratic education" in this course because on every project we have done we compare it to our identity, which is who we are, where we're from, how we live, things like that. It is a good thing that this course was taught through a service-learning framework because it allows us to work in groups with other students who do not live the same lifestyle as we do. We get a chance to explore other people's "democratic education" through their artwork.” - Shantae

“Democratic education is that creating the a connection between teacher and students as well as theoretical knowledge and real life practice. The application of democratic education also builds up a local community for a better environment. As a participant, I won’t get experience such feelings of struggling, refreshing and satisfaction if I worked with people at my age. Does something that I’ve never done before and stepped out of my comfort zone, I think it is the challenge that service learning brought me. I realized that if we always think too much without taking an action we could get any improvement. Never made artworks with kids? Try it. Never learnt something with small girls for a different country? Try it. That’s what makes us moving forward.” - Liang

“Democratic education means to teach students in a equal environment without compulsion. Students have rights to express their own opinion and teachers are willing to listen to students' voice. Throughout this course, I feel I have learned how to communicate with girls younger than me. If it was not a service-learning course, I think I would not have chance to talk and cooperate with school girls so frequently.” - Xiaolin
“Democratic education compels students to participate freely and equally in a school democracy. Even in a democracy school, it may not have compulsory uniform curricula. So students have the chances to make self-decisions and schedule courses or career plan relatively much more freely. Throughout this course, I get better understanding of American style middle schools, which is really different than mine in China. And if this course was not taught through a service-learning framework, I will probably never know courses can be taught in this way and even strangers can join hands to make a masterpiece via service-learning, and may not be offered to experience collaborative works.” - Chuan

“Democratic Education means that young children are able to choose what they want to learn and organize their own schedule. Also, they are equal to their teachers and the decision making is democratic. I have mostly enjoyed this course throughout the quarter. I've learned a lot of new tricks on both photoshop and gimp, also I made some very good friends. The readings every week are also very inspiring and informative. The best part though is that I get to work with a GEMS girl, which at first I didn't think would go so well. Through working with my GEMS partner, I learned how to communicate with middle school aged girls, and I explored deeper in my own identity. If this course was not taught through a service-learning framework, I would have never experienced all the above things. I really like working with someone outside of OSU, and make our community better as a whole.” - Bao

“From my view, democratic education is a way that people can choose what they want to learn from the education, which means there is no force or pressure on people’s learning or their choice of leaning. I do think I benefit a lot from this course, especially the service-learning, because this is the first time I have such a good experiences with these lovely middle school girls. They actually remind me of what I was like in their age. I can see my history and growing up. If this course was not taught through a service-learning framework, I would not have these feelings and thinking my growth. Also, I would not have had such a chance to be with these girls and in GEMS. I also learned the application GIMP and communication skills a lot~ course with learning-service is cool!” - Yuko

“Democratic Education is education in which young people have the freedom to organize their daily activities, and in which there is equality and democratic decision-making among young people and adults. I feel like I've learned to better communicate with students and how hard a teacher's job is. If this course was not taught through a service learning course I wouldn't have understood how difficult it is to entertain and keep the attention of a young girl in middle school. I also wouldn't have learned that not all schools are created equal which I knew coming from a small school but just by observing the amount of books the kids had in their library you can tell they are struggling to keep up to date with Ohio's regulations for education and to have adequate technology.” - Morgan
Appendix J: Community Celebration Flyer and Photos
Building Community Through Collaborative Art Making

Art Education 252, A Service-Learning Experience with The Computer in the Visual Arts:
OSU college aged students came together with middle-school aged girls from Graham Expeditionary Middle School to explore the idea of building community through a collaborative digital artmaking experience. Photography and campus and community exploration framed our collaboration and inspired the participants artmaking process, and the outcome of our final artwork.

Thank you to all who made this experience possible!
OSU Art Education and the wonderful people at Graham Expeditionary Middle School.

Figure 55: Community Celebration Flyer
Figure 56: Community Celebration - Photo of Group Presentation

Figure 57: Community Celebration - Photo of Celebration Party (a)
Figure 58: Community Celebration - Photo of Celebration Party (b)

Figure 59: Community Celebration - Photo of Celebration Party (c)