Visual Art Teachers’
Ranges of Understanding and Classroom Practices of
Assessment for Student Learning
In Visual Art Education

Dissertation

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By

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to gain comprehension of visual art teachers’ ranges of understanding about and classroom practices in assessment for student learning in art education. Twelve art teachers from traditional public schools; teaching in elementary, middle, or high schools; from three school districts from three states in the United States participated in this study. The setting for the study was their art education classrooms. This study was constructed around individual, guided, and semi-structured interviews with the art teachers. These interviews were supported by multiple sources of information including pre-site visit questionnaires, artifacts, and field notes from one-day observations within the art teacher’s classroom. The interview and pre-site visit questionnaire protocols were developed through field-tests with over 50 art teachers.

The analytical framework for interpretation was developed around feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992). Aligned to this framework were assessment practices from the literature in visual art education: Wilson (1992); Beattie (1997a); National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (2000, 2001); Dorn, Madeja, and Sabol (2004); and National Art Education Association (2009a). This framework had two themes: Student-Centered Assessment and Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher. Analytical coding was used in the analysis the units of data of the research sub-questions questions. Findings included a range of awareness of assessment practice, different purposes of art teacher comments to students, a progression of including the
student in assessment towards role of the student in shared power, and influences of school district support.

For those art teachers who both had a greater awareness of their assessment practices and used a wider variety of assessment tools for information for improving student learning, connections were found to their amount of professional development in assessment, inclusion in school-wide assessment practices, and use of an up-to-date art curriculum guide. Conversely, the art teachers who were unaware or uncertain of their assessment practices and had not been provided professional development or a current art curriculum guide, used fewer assessment strategies to inform their practice, did not utilize the assessment tools correctly or completely, and often equated assessment with grading.

It was found when the art teachers focused on improving their students’ art product, they used a limited range of assessment strategies, issued directives on how to fix artwork without checking for student understanding, and their students produced similar looking artwork. When the art teachers’ focus centered on their students’ learning skills and knowledge in art, they applied a larger variety of assessment strategies, including student self-assessment, checked understanding before providing comments to support learning, and their students created more individualized looking artwork.

Art teachers’ assessment practices were either supported or hindered by decisions made by those in power external to the art classroom was found. Art teachers from districts that provided professional development and a current art curriculum guide used more of the best practices of assessment in art education and focused on student learning in art.
Dedication

For those learning art and for those who teach them
Acknowledgments

First, thanks and gratitude to my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Christine Ballengee Morris, for her support and assistance in navigating this process. Also, appreciation to Dr. Michael Parsons for his interest in assessment in art education and direction in getting me started with my dissertation. Thank you to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Karen Hutzel, for her suggestions on data analysis and Dr. Debbie Smith-Shank, for her recommendations about including contexts of art education as well as for her own contributions to the literature of assessment in art education.

With gratefulness for your influences on my perceptions and perspectives, my thanks for teaching me: Dr. Vesta Daniel, to include all in the assessment process; Dr. Terry Barrett, to write what needs to be said; Dr. Susan Witten, how assessment in art education needs to be structured to best gather an understanding of what art students know and can do; Dr. Laura Chapman to reflect upon personal experiences influencing practice and how to lead for change; and Dr. Bill Loadman, how to frame questions on assessment for all parts of the school community.

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Vita

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Art Education

Minor Field: Classroom Assessment
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this research study was to gain insight into and comprehension of visual art teachers’ ranges of understanding and classroom practices in assessment for student learning in art education. Twelve art teachers from traditional public schools; teaching at the elementary, middle, or high school levels; from three different school districts; from three different states in the United States participated in this research study. The setting for the study was the art education classrooms of the art teachers participating in the study. This qualitative study utilized multiple data strands (Eisner, 1998) with the organization of this research study developed around individual, guided, semi-structured interviews with twelve art teachers supported by multiple sources of information for the triangulation of data. These supporting data sources included pre-site visit questionnaires, artifacts, field notes from one-day observations within each of the visual art teacher’s classroom, and my research diary.

The analytical framework for interpretation of the units of data was developed around the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992). Aligned to this framework were assessment practices from the literature in visual art education: Wilson (1992); Beattie (1997a); National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (2000, 2001); Dorn, Madeja, and Sabol (2004); and National Art Education Association (2009a). Analytical coding was used in the analysis the units of data of the research sub-questions.
Through this study, I wanted to listen to art teachers talk about assessment and watch their use of assessment in their art classrooms with their art students. I wanted to learn what the art teachers thought about assessment in art education, what assessment procedures they used, and how the information they gathered from the assessment informed their art education practice towards improving student learning in visual art education. To achieve this research goal, I gathered units of data about the assessment practices of twelve visual art teachers primarily through guided interviews supported by a pre-site visit questionnaire, artifacts, and my field notes from the day I spent with each art teacher in their classroom. The analyzed data from this research study can add to our visual art education professional knowledge about art teachers’ understandings and uses of assessment in art education to enhance student learning as well as what supports or hinders their assessment practices. The findings from this research study have implications for art teacher training and professional development.

In the next chapter, there is a review of the literature of assessment in visual art education focusing on assessment used in the art education classroom with students, a summary of the history of assessment in art education, and a review of the literature of assessment in feminist theory. In the third chapter, the qualitative research study methods used for data collection and analysis in this study are explained, with an emphasis on the interview process. The twelve visual art teacher research study participants are introduced in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the units of data based on an analytical framework of the feminist assessment theory and selected visual art education constructs in classroom assessment. The two synthesized themes of the analytical framework along with the findings for the research sub-questions and the
emergent theme are also explained in Chapter Five. The last chapter presents a summary of the findings, a discussion of the relationship of the findings from this study to previous research in assessment in art education, considerations for further research, and recommendations.

Chapter One examines some of beginnings of my interests in assessment and my personal experiences as an art teacher with assessment for student learning which informs my research lens. This chapter also presents the context of assessment in visual art education.

**The Beginnings of the Inquiry**

My personal understanding about assessment prior to the preparation for this research study came through my experiences as an art student, as a student of art therapy, as a pre-service art education student, as a teacher of art students, as a teacher of teachers, then as an art student again. Through a synopsis of this journey, the trajectory towards this research study is shown.

As an art student, I experienced or watched the impact of assessment on student learning in art. I was the student whose artwork was praised. But, in my personal desire to become a better artist, I found it frustrating not to be told what was praiseworthy so that I could learn and improve. It was also frustrating for me for the art teacher to stand behind me, telling me what I needed to change in my work, with no explanation or no questions on what direction I wanted to take my work. It was also frustrating to be told only to “keep going,” “nice work,” “it’s almost there,” or “add green.” I wanted to learn and comments like that were no help.
During my Bachelor of Fine Arts program, I felt a combination of empathy and anger as I watched an art teacher literally rip up one of my art class peer’s drawings into shreds with nothing more than, “not good enough.” I have observed other art students guess what their art teacher was looking for and modify their own work to match to the work of those the art teacher praised. They were learning how to mirror a chosen one’s style, not how to make their own meaningful art, due to the lack of meaningful assessment.

As a student of art therapy, I learned many important lessons about assessment. I learned through my clients—who experienced a range of exceptionalities and disabilities—that there are many informal measures to ascertain understanding; that multiple entry and exit points exist in the processes for making meaning in art; and how to adapt tools to address the individual learning, thinking, emotional, and physical needs of my clients. I also learned to weigh any comments I made to my clients because I did not want to sway, in any way, their making of art with my words because every mark and movement of art media provides insight and meaning.

As a pre-service art education student, there was only a smidgen of information about assessment provided during any of my coursework. During my student teaching I learned from my cooperating teacher how to grade art products and how to give directions to students on how to improve their artwork. From my own experiences as an art student, I knew there was more to learn and know about assessing student artwork. As an art teacher, my preliminary focus was finding better ways to give comments to my art students about their artwork. As I listened to my students and reflected on my own
experiences as an art student, my focus quickly turned to caring about improving my students’ learning in art rather only in improving their art products.

I sought ways to effectively gather information about what my art students understood and then how to use that information to help each of my art students gain a deeper and richer learning in art. I also looked for ways to help my art students to gather their own insights about their own making of art and making meaning through art. Looking towards the art education literature, I did find some information on assessment tools, but little information on how to use them or utilize the information gained with and for my art students. My art teacher colleagues were not able to help me very much. They saw grading and assessment as synonymous; I did not. Their recommendations were more about counting up aspects of art compositions—i.e. four places of overlap, two instances of value change—because that could lead to a numerical grade rather than recommendations about how to assess learning.

I found what I was looking for both in the literature and training about assessment for learning in general education. I adapted what I learned through these resources to meet the specifics of art education and applied it with my art students. I improved my data collection skills, reflected on my assessment skills, sought ways to use the information, and focused on how to change my practice.

I started developing my own art education assessment tools and practices with my art students. I created assessment tools or my art students and I developed assessment strategies together. I asked each student what worked and what did not work in helping him or her learn. Over the years, with my high school art students and with my middle level learners, we created assessment tools and strategies for art studio products,
sketchbooks, self-assessment, art criticism, art history, peer-assessment, collaborative work, social commentary, conversations about aesthetics, and student evaluation of my teaching. And an ironic by-product happened: Even though the attention of the information gained through these assessment practices was on improving learning rather than fixing art products, the quality of my art student’s artwork became much more personalized and award-winning.

Through this work with my secondary level art students, I reflected on all aspects of my students’ work, questions, successes, and challenges. I considered how I was giving feedback, praise, and direction; sharing exemplars; revising my teaching; and addressing all the other components of designing and using the data from authentic assessment to improve student learning in art education. I also learned about empowering my students in and through assessment and revisited reflections of my own past assessment experiences as an art student around the issues of power in assessment.

I wondered if the assessment approaches I was using with my secondary students would apply to elementary art students. With the help of my principal and an elementary school close by, I started teaching art with elementary students after my school day had ended. I talked with the kindergarteners through fifth graders about what facets of my assessment worked or did not work for them. We worked together to redesign or create assessments tools. I saw the application of assessment improve these elementary students’ learning in art at a level of success that was comparable to that of my middle level and high school students.

To extend my understanding of assessment in art education, I also returned to the role of the art student myself, enrolling in several classes in art media that I had no
experience with. I wanted to again hear and feel the assessment words and strategies as a learner, but now informed by my experiences with assessment as an art teacher as well as from my art students.

All of these experiences helped inform my personal perceptions as a source of meaning when I transitioned to helping with other teachers and their assessment practices. Teachers in visual art and other content areas—having seen the work my students were accomplishing and hearing my students’ conversations about art—asked me to provide professional development about classroom assessment. My work with assessment also caught the attention of my school district’s superintendent. I was tapped to head up assessment and curriculum in all content areas for our district. The teaching of teachers and working with educators across my district contributed significantly to my understanding and practices of assessment in the visual arts classroom. These experiences also clarified the differences between classroom practices for accountability and those for assessment to improve student learning. Art educator practices of classroom assessment to improve student learning is what drives my interest. Finding out what visual art teachers understand about and accomplish through assessment of their students’ learning is what this research study is about.

**Purpose of Research Study**

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to gain awareness and comprehension of visual art education teachers’ ranges of understanding and their resultant classroom practices in the assessment of the learning of their visual art education students in their art classrooms.
Rationale for Research Study

The problem this research study addresses is the lack of clarity about practices of assessment of student learning in art education. Assessment of student learning in art education continues to be misunderstood, remains conflated with accountability and grading, and there is limited specific information on art teachers’ assessment practices. The rationale of this research study is that through analysis and interpretation of the units of data primarily gained through interviews with twelve art teachers, additional clarity on art teachers’ assessment practices for student learning in art education will be found.

Research Question and Sub-Questions

My research question is what are visual art teachers’ understandings and practices of assessing student learning in the visual arts. My sub-questions were:

• What constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning?
• What personal antecedents are impacting the current assessment practices of the visual art teachers in this study?
• What is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers?

Structure of the Research Study

After an analysis of the state-level art education standards, curriculum, and assessment approaches across the United States, three states were selected based on the strength of their program of study. Based on a set of criteria, gatekeepers were contacted in selected districts. These gatekeepers then selected the study participants. Twelve art teachers from traditional public schools teaching at the elementary, middle, or high
school levels; from three different school districts; and from three different states in the U.S. participated in this qualitative research study. The primary research tool was an individual, guided, semi-structured interview with each of the art teachers during a one-day site visit to their art classroom. The information from these interviews was supported by data gathered through a pre-site visit questionnaire, artifacts, my field notes from observations and conversations throughout each art teacher’s instructional day, and my research journal. The analysis and interpretations of the units of data were based in feminist theory of assessment with a conceptual framework aligned with an art education assessment constructs to yield the research study results.

**Foundation for the Research Topic**

The foundation for the choice of topic of this qualitative research study on art teachers’ understanding and uses of classroom assessment for student learning was to add more light on how they use classroom assessment of student learning. In the literature of classroom assessment in art education, there are the results of surveys used to gather information on what assessment tools art teachers use at the international level (Dilmac, 2013), at the national level, (Burton, 2001a; Carey, Kleiner, Porch, & Farris, 2002; National Art Education Association, 2001; National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999), and at state levels (Alaska State Council on the Arts, 2009; Bothell Assessment and Research, 2010; Bothell Assessment and Research & WESTAF, 2010; Dorn, Madeja, & Sabol, 2004; Horn & Kentucky Arts Council, 2005; Montana Arts Council, 2010; Morrison & Cirillo, 2012; New Hampshire Department of Education, 2011; Sabol, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001a, 2004a, 2004b; Western States Arts Federation, 2010). The findings from this research study expands the existing knowledge base on assessment
tools used by art educators with findings on what assessment tools the art teachers choose to discuss, how the assessment tools are used, and the role of the student in the use of assessment tools in the art teachers’ assessment practices.

Also in the literature of assessment in art education are research findings on the influences of past experiences with assessment impacting current assessment practices of art educators (Orr, 2011; Smith-Shank, 1993), the art teacher’s view of assessment (Bresler, 1991), and what art teachers assess (Stake, Bresler, & Mabry, 1991), and the improvement in art teachers’ assessment of student learning through professional development (Andrade, Hefferen, & Palma, 2014). Findings from this research study augment the existing literature with findings about influences upon the art teachers’ assessment practices, what the art teachers assess, and how the art teachers used the assessment data. This research study also uncovered some of the connections between these visual art teachers’ practices and their understandings of assessment of student learning in art education.

Art Education in the Public School and Art Teacher Certification Contexts

This research study examined the classroom assessment practices of student learning of twelve certified visual art teachers who teach art education within public schools in the United States. To provide context for those research parameters, visual art education and the public school setting—including standards and expectations of teacher certification—are presented in this section. A focus on classroom assessment of student learning is a theme of focus throughout this section and how the information connects to the research study is included.

First, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) defines visual arts to,
include the traditional fine arts such as drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, and sculpture; media art including film, graphic communications, animation, and emerging technologies; architectural, environmental, and industrial arts such as urban, interior, product, and landscape design; folk arts; and works of art such as ceramics, fibers, jewelry, works in wood, paper, and other materials. (NAEA, 2012a)

On the day of the site visits, the twelve art educators participating in this study taught and assessed their students working in the art media of ceramics, wood, jewelry, drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and photography.

NAEA also has a position statement about student assessment in art education, stating it,

recognizes the importance of developmentally appropriate student assessment to teaching and learning in the visual arts. Effective assessment is a continuous process that is standards-based and directly linked to instructional goals, objectives and performance expectations. Performance assessment is the primary means of measuring student knowledge and skills in the visual arts. Visual arts assessment provides ongoing and instructive feedback for supporting student growth. Assessment strategies often include methods that involve student reflection and evaluation. When shared with students, assessment criteria enable visual arts educators to communicate goals for student growth and creative development. Educators who make informed judgments based upon formative and summative assessments are better able to
plan and improve instructional practice to meet the needs of their students.

(NAEA, 2013a)

It is seen within the art teachers’ introductions in Chapter Four and in the presentation of data in Chapter Five, the art teachers’ assessment practices hold both examples and counter-examples to the elements of NAEA’s position statement on assessment in art education.

Next, information about standards for student achievement in visual art education and curriculum guides is provided in this section of context setting. In 1994, national standards in the visual arts were released (NAEA, 1994). Since that time states have used these national standards to develop and subsequently revise their own state student education standards in visual art. Based upon my ongoing, over decade-long, analysis of the state standards, curriculum, and suggested assessments for the art teacher and the state assessment of students in the visual arts, as of January 2014, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have state standards in visual art.

Revision of the national standards began in 2011 by National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) with writing teams in the visual arts, along with teams in music, dance, and theatre (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2011). Assessments tied to and embedded with the standards, called model cornerstone assessments, are in development by the arts writing teams with a the first draft release in February, 2014 (NCCAS, 2014b). After several rounds of public comments and revisions, the revised standards, referred to as Next Generation standards (Sweeney, 2014), are slated for release in June 2014 (NCCAS, 2014a).
National standards are used by states to create state standards upon which local school districts create curriculum guides. According to national survey of public school arts education, 78% of the elementary art teachers and 87% of the secondary level art teachers had a written curriculum guide in visual arts (Carey, et al., 2002, p. 23, p. 51). Of those, 77% of the elementary and 87% of the secondary guides were aligned to state and national standards, with around 80% at both levels having been revised in the last five years (Carey, et al., 2002, p. 23, p. 51).

This information on national standards and curriculum guides ties to this qualitative research study through two means. First, one of the criterion for research participant selection was the art teacher taught in a state with state standards written in language that made them measurable and were accompanied by suggested classroom assessment strategies for the art teacher. This art teacher research participant selection process is explained in Chapter Three. Second, as is discussed in Chapter Five, is the art teachers’ access to and use of a school district curriculum in the visual arts that reflects state standards. Standards-based assessment is part of the analytical framework theme Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher.

Another three sets of standards in art education—addressing art teachers’ professional practice—also have connections to this research study. The Professional Standards for Visual Art Educators from NAEA (2009a), the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for Early Childhood and Middle Childhood in Art (National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 2000), and the Early Adolescence Through Young Adult in Art (NBPTS, 2001) each include a set of assessment standards of practice for the art educator. These three sets of standards are
part of the analytical framework used in the analysis of the units of data from the twelve art teachers participating in this study.

Also, National Board Certification was one of the criteria for determining the selection of art teachers to participate in the study because of the portfolio submission on assessment of student learning required for consideration for certification. Two of the art teachers participating in this study are National Board Certified teachers in Early Adolescence Through Young Adult in Art.

Next, information about education and art education at the national and state levels is provided. From the most recent report on education in the U.S. (Aud et al., 2012), there were 93,900 traditional public schools in 2010 (p. 40) with 49.5 million students enrolled in grades PreK–12 (p. 20). According to the most recent national report on arts education in the public schools from the U.S. Department of Education, during the 2009–2010 academic year the majority—83%—of public school elementary schools (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012, p. 28) and the majority—89%—of the public secondary schools (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012, p. 34) provided instruction in visual art. Of the public school elementary schools, 85% offered visual art instruction at least once a week and 87% provided this instruction throughout the entire school year during the 2009–2010 school year (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012, p. 29). The visual art instruction was provided by visual art specialists in 94% of the secondary schools (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012, p. 35). In the Arts Education Partnership’s (2012) most recent State of the States Arts Education State Policy Summary of arts education in the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, 45 states require instruction in arts at the elementary level and 41 states at the middle level, 27 states require arts credits for high school graduation, 18
states require assessment of student learning at the district level, and 32 states consider art a core subject area.

The art teachers participating in this study teach art in three different states; two of the three states consider art as a core academic subject and require assessment of student learning at the district level. Additionally, all three states require elementary and middle level art education, and include art as a graduation requirement. Concerning the implementation of these policies, all of the art teachers participating in this study teach in school districts that have elementary, middle level, and high school art education for the students. District-level assessment of student learning in visual art was not found in the units of data of any of the art teachers participating in this research study.

Art as a core subject area is defined in Federal law within the reauthorization of the Federal law Elementary and Secondary Education Act PL 107-110 known as No Child Left Behind (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2002a, p. 1958). No Child Left Behind also includes the requirement of highly qualified teachers. To be considered highly qualified, prospective visual art teachers new to the profession need to have at least a bachelor degree, demonstrate art content mastery on state-required testing and coursework, and teach students in the grade range they hold their license or certificate (ESEA, 2002b, pp. 1959–1960). Art teachers already in the field can demonstrate their highly qualified status through a process specified by each state. Frequently these processes include documentation of coursework, a master’s degree, or professional development experiences. Earning National Board Certification is another a means to obtaining the highly qualified designation.
All of the art teachers participating in this study are considered highly qualified by their state process with all of them receiving their teacher certification prior to the implementation of the Highly Qualified Federal requirement. All of the art teachers are certified in art education and all have their masters’ degrees with half having a Masters of Art Education. As noted previously in this section, two of the art teachers participating in this study have National Board Certification.

This context setting continues with a presentation of information on art teacher certification. First is a position statement from National Art Education Association followed by several teacher preparation programs standards that lead into the related topic of the prospective art educator certification or licensure process. Teacher education program policy and standards are part of the context of this research study because art teachers learning about the best practices of assessment is part of the analytical framework theme Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher which is discussed in Chapter Five.

The three offerings from the National Art Education Association that relate to pre-service art education are inconsistent in recommendations for the prospective art educator’s understanding of assessment. First, NAEA presented two position statements that reflect pre-service art education. NAEA (2011a) offered a position statement on the domains art education higher education programs need to address in their pre-service programs. Preparing art educators to be highly skilled in assessment was included in the teaching domain (NAEA, 2011a). The second NAEA position statement called for students in PreK–12 grade school settings to be taught by licensed or certified art teachers who are highly qualified (NAEA, 2013a). This position statement included the kinds of
understandings these art teachers should process such as understanding in areas including art media, aesthetics, and technology. Student learning or assessment practices in art education were not included in this position statement (NAEA, 2013a). The third offering in the area of pre-service education is Standards for Art Teacher Preparation (NAEA, 2009b); the prospective art teacher gaining understanding of assessment of student learning was included. Addressed later in this section are the inconsistencies found in the certification or licensure exams used to test the prospective art educator’s understanding of assessment.

Along with the standards in art teacher preparation from NAEA (2009b) there are also standards for teachers of all content areas including art education. Model standards were developed through a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (2011) called the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). From the stance that the current practices in public schools that keep assessment separate from teaching need to change, the teacher’s assessment literacy was one of the themes in the development of the ten InTASC model standards (CCSSO, 2011).

Another set of standards of teacher education that include assessment of student learning is that of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). In July 2013, CAEP came from the consolidation of two organizations that accredit higher education programs of teacher preparation, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2014a). Assessment of student learning was found in the standards of teacher preparation of CAEP. The first standard—Content
and Pedagogical Knowledge—has four provider responsibilities, three of which included student assessment (CAEP, 2014b).

There is a key point of information about CAEP and art education. Along with accreditation, CAEP recognizes teacher preparation programs in connection with content areas teachers’ specialized professional associations (SPA). For example, the English teachers SPA is National Council of Teachers of English, which, in concert with CAEP, evaluates and recognizes teacher preparation programs of excellence in English. The National Art Education Association is not listed as a SPA and as being a part of nationally recognized teacher preparation programs in art education (CAEP, 2014c).

These various teacher preparation position statements and standards are part of the parameters of this research study in providing information on what kinds of expectations are set for prospective art teachers to learn about assessment of student learning. Non-art educator standards are included because, as presented later in this section, exams for the prospective art educator in teaching and learning in general are required by some states. In the art teacher introductions in Chapter Four and in the presentation of the units of data and findings in Chapter Five, the art teacher’s knowledge of assessment in art education was found to be a factor in their assessment practices.

This next section of context setting is information about certification or licensure to become a visual art teacher in U.S. public schools. All states require all teachers in the public schools to be certified or licensed. Though the terms varies across the country—certification, licensure, or credential—on a NAEA website there is a link to information about over 760 teacher education programs in art education from all 50 states (EducationDegree.com, 2014). The degree types for prospective art teachers can be a
Bachelor of Art Education (e.g., The Ohio State University, 2014; University of Kansas, 2014), Bachelor of Fine Arts (e.g., West Virginia University, 2014; University of Arizona, 2014), a Bachelor of Arts (e.g., University of Florida, 2014; Purdue University, 2014), a Bachelor of Science (e.g., Pennsylvania State University, 2014; Kutztown University, 2014), a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Arts with a K–12 certification (University of Nebraska at Omaha, 2014), or a Bachelor of Arts in Art Teaching (University of Utah, 2014a). The extent assessment is taught in any art teacher preparation program varies (C. Ballengee Morris, personal communication, January 23, 2014). It was found the art teachers assessment practices were influenced by the amount of assessment training they had received.

The coursework and student teaching placement experience for the prospective art educator influences the type of certification attained. Through my review of the state education websites for all 50 states and the District of Columbia for requirements for initial credentialing requirements to become a certified art teacher, I found over a dozen grade ranges of licenses, certifications, or endorsements with K–12 or PreK–12 being the most frequent grade range (see Appendix A: U. S. State Art Teacher License or Certificate Grade Ranges). All of the art teachers participating in this research study have K–12 certification in art.

As of December 2013, nearly all the of the states—for this discussion, the term states includes the District of Columbia—require the prospective art teacher to successfully complete a teacher education program that has either a state approved program or one that is a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation or the former accreditation organization National Council for Accreditation
of Teacher Education. It appeared through an analysis of the units of data that not all of the art teachers participating in this study graduated from a program accredited by CAEP.

This leads into a discussion on the types of exams the prospective art teachers are required to pass with scores set by the states. The focus of this discussion is on the inclusion of assessment of student learning as part of the test objectives. Only three states—Iowa, Montana, and Nebraska—do not require the prospective art educator to pass any type of examination with the rest of the states requiring one or more different kinds of exams. These exams are predominately paper-based, timed, multiple-choice exams that are given at scheduled intervals throughout the year at sanctioned testing sites. As it will be presented, the majority of the states require one or more exams in the content types of art content knowledge; professional educator knowledge in teaching and learning; and basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. With the stated focus on how these exams reflect assessment in student learning in art education, there is no further discussion on the basic skills exams. Both the art content knowledge exams and the professional educator knowledge exams will be discussed on the content of assessment of student learning.

There are four different kinds of tests addressing assessments of visual art content knowledge of the prospective art teachers: test on art content knowledge, state-based exam on art content knowledge, exam on art content and analysis, and portfolio submission that includes information on assessment. Based on my analysis, all types of the tests check on the prospective art teacher’s knowledge including art media and art history. For this discussion, analysis on any inclusion of test content on assessment for student learning is presented. Analysis was done of the test frameworks, test objectives,
and practice test materials provided on the test developer or the licensure office of the state websites.

A test on art content knowledge developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) called Praxis II: Art Content Knowledge (Educational Testing Service, 2013a) is required by twenty-two states (see Appendix B: State Required Exams for Art Teacher Certification or Licensure). This multiple-choice exam does not include assessment of student learning in art education. Sixteen states (see Appendix B) use their own test for art content knowledge. These states’ tests were created by one of the professional test development companies with half of these including assessment of student learning, to varying extents, in the test objective competencies.

Two examples come from New Mexico and Texas. In the New Mexico Teacher Assessments, part of the National Evaluation Systems of Pearson, the prospective art teacher’s understanding of assessment of art education included multiple means of assessment, “e.g. rubrics, portfolios, accommodations for students with special needs, criteria-referenced tests, critiques, self assessments” (State of New Mexico Public Education Department, 2007, pp. 22–26). A sample question in the publically available study guide asked the value of creating maquettes and sketches as preliminary work to promote understanding (National Evaluation Systems, 2004). The Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES), created by Educational Testing Service, included a specific test competency in assessment in art education. Of the sixteen states that have their own tests, the Texas’ test for prospective art educators has the most objectives addressing assessment in art education with one test objective category addressing knowledge about the variety and purposes of assessments, student growth, using assessment to inform
instruction, portfolios, and developing assessment tools to use including rubrics (Texas Education Agency, 2012, p. 13).

Nine states (see Appendix B) require prospective art teachers seeking certification or licensure in their state to take the Praxis II: Art Content Knowledge and Analysis (ETS, 2013b). This exam is both multiple-choice and constructed response. The prospective art educators wishing certification in these states are to bring reproductions of four artworks they have made using two different art media. These are used in two extended response questions with the images of the prospective art educator’s artwork attached to the Praxis II exam. (ETS, 2013b). There could be some attributes of assessment here with the prospective art teacher needing to demonstrate ability to analyze their own artwork for strengths and weakness (ETS, 2013b) but assessment in student learning was not evident.

The last exam type in the prospective art teacher testing of art content knowledge is a portfolio submission as required by one state. Utah includes an in-depth verification of a prospective art teacher’s understanding of assessment as part of the licensure to add an endorsement to be a professional arts educator at the elementary, secondary, or K–12 levels (Utah State Office of Education, 2014a, 2014b). One section of this portfolio submission, in the art teaching methods section, is evidence of assessment tools the prospective art educator has created and used along with how the information of the student results was used (Utah State Office of Education, 2014b, 2014c) or university coursework in assessment.

To summarize this section on art education exams, in total, 48 states require the prospective art teacher to take an exam addressing content knowledge in art. Of those
exams, only nine have some clear evidence of examining the prospective art teacher’s knowledge of assessment of student learning in art education.

But some of those 48 states also use general tests on principles of teaching and learning for all content area teacher candidates that, based on my analysis, also include assessment. Fifteen states use the Praxis II Principles of Teaching and Learning. This test is offered in four student age bands—Early Childhood, Grades K–6, Grades 5–9, or Grades 7–12 (ETS, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d). As referenced earlier in this section, the grade ranges of the certificates and licenses (see Appendix A) determine the test or tests, such as if the prospective art teacher is seeking K–12 licensure. The Praxis II Principles of Teaching and Learning exams are designed to check the prospective teacher’s foundational knowledge for the career as professional educator (ETS, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d). About 15% of the multiple-choice section—with potentially one constructed response of the exam—is about assessment. The content assessed includes understanding types of assessment; how to choose an appropriate assessment for the learning context; and uses of rubrics, observation, portfolio along with student self- and peer-assessment (ETS, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d). Therefore, in these 15 states, the prospective art teacher’s knowledge of assessment would be tested through this Praxis II exam.

Four states have their own exam of professional knowledge (see Appendix B). For example, in Arizona, 40% of the professional knowledge test required for prospective teachers in all content areas at the elementary and secondary levels checks for understanding in assessment, learning, environments, and instruction (National Evaluation Series, 2011a, 2011b). The varied list of objectives for assessment includes
matching the appropriate assessment tool to the situation, applying assessment to inform instruction, using a variety of assessment methods, modifying assessment for learning, providing feedback, and peer- and self-assessment (National Evaluation Series, 2011a, p. 5). In summary of tests of professional knowledge, 19 states require the prospective art teacher to take an exam on teaching and learning and all of these exams include verification of understanding assessment of student learning. To summarize the information on art educator certification exams for the prospective art teacher, 28 states require at least one exam that includes assessment of student learning. This leaves 23 states’ exams not including any verification of the pre-service art educator’s understanding of assessment of student learning.

The next two areas of context are additional position statements and the results of a survey supported by NAEA that reflect assessment in art education. First, NAEA’s position statement on equity for students included the design of the assessment of student learning so all students can demonstrate their knowledge and abilities (NAEA, 2012b). This position statement relates to the units of data and findings of this study presented in Chapters Four and Five. Assessment strategies with students with learning needs are found in the introductions of some of the art teachers participating in this study and in several of the facets of the analytical framework used for data analysis.

Second is the area of professional development. In its position statement on the professional development, NAEA (2011b) asserted the value of professional development as “… essential to the life long learning of art educators” (p. 1). Examples of areas of opportunities included curriculum, instruction, and studio practices (NAEA, 2011b). Assessment was not included in this position statement. In the professional development
reports supported by NAEA, approximately half of the art teacher survey respondents did not report any kind of professional development (Sabol, 1998, 1999, 2001). Conclusions from a professional development survey commissioned by NAEA (Sabol, 2006b) included that professional development will become more important and the knowledge sought impacts the quality of art students’ art education. The connection of the position statement and survey studies findings on professional development is seen in Chapters Five and Six. The role of professional development in assessment of student learning influences the art teacher’s assessment practice is a finding of this research study.

In summary, this section presented context to the research parameters of this study with the focus on art teachers and classroom assessment of student learning. Information on the definition of visual arts, pertinent position statements from NAEA, information on the availability of art education in the schools, standards for art educators, and standards as well as degree types in pre-service art education were presented. Information on survey findings on visual art education curriculum guides, from the analysis of the state visual art standards, art teacher certification or licensure including required exams of all 50 states and the District of Columbia were also presented. How this context information connects to this research study was included. There was variation in how organizations and states address art teacher’s practices in assessment of student learning. Variations across the assessment practices of the art teachers participating in this study were found as will be seen in their introductions in Chapters Four and in the presentation of data and findings in Chapter Five.
Subsequent Chapters

Chapter Two contains a presentation of pertinent information on classroom assessment, a survey of the history of assessment in art education, and a review of the literature of assessment in art education focused on assessment of student learning including a compilation the best practice in assessment tools found in the literature. Also in Chapter Two is a review of the literature of assessment in feminist theory. Chapter Three contains an explanation of the qualitative research study methods for data collection and analysis with an emphasis on the research interview. Also in Chapter Three is an explanation of the field-test processes used in development of the research tools protocols. In the Chapter Four are introductions of each of the twelve visual art teacher research study participants. Chapter Five contains the analysis and interpretation of the data collected, based on an analytical framework of the feminist assessment theory and selected visual art education constructs in assessment. Chapter Six presents implications and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter presents five reviews of literature pertaining to the purpose of this qualitative research study of ascertaining how twelve visual art teachers understand and practice classroom assessment concerning their students’ learning in art education. First is a presentation of findings from the literature along with national and state reports that included art teachers’ experiences with and practices of assessment. Next is a review of pertinent general education literature on classroom assessment relevant to this research study. Third is a survey of the history of assessment in art education starting in the second century BCE through current literature (through January 2014). Pertinent to the focus of this research study on art teachers’ practices, specifics from the art education literature on assessment practices and best practices of assessment tools for art education are presented fourth. Lastly, literature on feminist theory of educational assessment is reviewed because of the application of these tenets was used as a conceptual and analytical framework in the analysis of the units of data.

There were several components to the development of these literature reviews. While the focus of this research study and of the literature reviews is the U. S. art teachers’ uses of classroom assessment practices for student learning, tangential topics were also included to indicate how classroom assessment fits into the landscape of the literature of assessment in art education. These other areas included international views,
mentions of program assessment, inclusion of large-scale testing in the arts, accountability, and grading.

Terms for the searches for the development of these reviews of literature were a consideration. Various terms for assessment have been used over time so any reference in journal articles, books, or textbooks for themes connected to what is currently called assessment was checked. I used some potentially synonymous terms in my searches of art education as these terms often address different educational concepts. Examples of search terms used were assessment, evaluation, judging, measurement, and testing. Even though I do not equate the two, I know that some art educators, over time and currently, see assessment and grading as synonymous. Therefore, I used the terms grades, grading, marks, marking as parameters in my searches. I used the terms *arts* when reviewing assessment where visual arts was included with music, dance, and drama. While I perused the articles on assessment from the other arts disciplines, literature that focused on music, theatre, and dance assessment are not included in this review of literature.

To develop the history of assessment in art education, I reviewed the existing literature of historical views of assessment in art education (Dorn, 1990; Gruber, 2008; Gruber & Hobbs, 2002; Joyce, 1997; Madeja, 2013) all which focused more on testing for the purpose of accountability than on classroom assessment for the student learning in art education. Art history, history of art education texts, journal articles, books, and selected art tests from art education were reviewed with primary sources studied when obtainable. Articles from *The School Arts Magazine* (1912-1935) on assessment in art education were reviewed for the years prior to the existence of the juried journal *Art Education* that was started in 1948. I sought to review as much of the literature on
assessment in visual art education available. This included information on national testing in art, program evaluation, and accountability. Articles of this ilk were reviewed for information on the trajectory of assessment from an historical sense as well as for the possibility that the concepts of assessment of student learning were included.

Using a variety of assessment terms was also applied to the review of literature in feminist principles of student assessment. Electronic databases for books and journal articles were used initially but the greatest lead on finding any resources on feminist theories of student assessment was through the references cited in the first set of book chapters and journal articles found.

Research on Art Teachers’ Experiences With and Uses of Assessment

Interviews, case studies, and surveys have been used to collect information on art teachers’ experiences with assessment and their uses of classroom assessment with their students. Through interviews of pre-service teachers about their experiences with art as a child, Smith-Shank (1993) found that negative childhood experiences with assessment in art had potential impact upon on future art experiences. Orr (2011) also found an influence of assessment experiences as a student impacting current assessment practices through interviews with university level fine arts lecturers. As part of Bresler’s (1991) case studies of elementary schools, the art teachers’ assessment style influenced by the art teachers’ view of the role of art was found. In reporting case study research findings, Stake et al. (1991) found the basis for evaluation of student’s artwork was not learning but most often was whether the student followed directions or finished the task. Professional development for art teachers found improvement in their assessment practices (Andrade et al., 2014).
Assessment of student learning was one of the categories included in national surveys of the practices of art teachers in the United States (Burton, 2001b; Carey et al., 2002; NAEA, 2001; NCES, 1999). In one survey, secondary level art teachers were provided a list to choose from and an entry to indicate the frequency of use from *very frequently to rarely or never* (Burton, 2001b). Portfolio review was selected as used very frequently by 11% of the secondary level art educators with 12% selecting they used portfolios rarely or never (Burton, 2001b, p. 135). Eighty-four percent of the art teachers selected very frequently used for teacher observation of the artwork as their means for assessing their students’ progress (Burton, 2001b). Other options selected as very frequently used by 58% of surveyed teachers were attitude and behavior (with the example of time on task) and nearly 50% selected grading. Individual talks with students and rubrics were both selected by a third of the teachers as used very frequently and a quarter of the respondents chose student self-evaluation as an assessment task they used very frequently (Burton, 2001b). Observation was an assessment strategy used most often by 82% the elementary art teachers, followed by 73% using performance tasks or projects and 35% of the teachers using portfolios (Carey et al., 2002, pp. 83–84).

Findings from surveys as part of a three-state research project (Dorn et al., 2004; Sabol, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a) showed the criteria art teachers used in assessing students’ artwork. Eighty-two percent of the art teachers surveyed selected that they strongly agreed that student artwork should be assessed (Sabol, 2004a, p. 4). In the art teachers’ response to what criteria they use to evaluate artwork, “… the elements of art, the principles of design, composition or use of space, and creativity (94.9% each) were identified” (Sabol, 2004a, p. 7). Eighteen options were provided for the art teachers in the
study to select how they evaluated student performance; 75% of the art teachers’ selections included effort, improvement, growth, and classroom behavior with 50% of the art teachers’ selections included turning work in on time, clean-up, reflection, and decision making (Sabol, 2004a, p. 7).

Sabol also conducted regional surveys of art teachers’ practices that included assessment (Sabol, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001a). Seventy-nine percent of the urban art teacher respondents most often assessed their students’ art activities upon completion with approximately 70% responding they assess during the art activity (Sabol, 1998a, pp. 47–48). Summative assessment was also a frequent response (82%) of the rural art educators who also often (71%) assessed during their students’ art activity (Sabol, 1999, p. 49).

Additionally, there was a glimpse into arts teachers’ uses of assessment with their students found in eight state reports of survey data. Some of these reports do not break these data down into arts disciplines so visual art was not always reported separately. That aside, the information on the types of assessment tools selected in the survey is informative. All of these reports were completed between 2005 and 2012.

From a 2005 report of a survey of school districts conducted in Kentucky, “the majority report that teacher observation is the primary way student achievement in the arts is measured … followed by open response, then by multiple-choice” (Horn & Kentucky Arts Council, 2005, p. 5). Forty-two percent of the schools reported using portfolios for assessment of student achievement in the arts (Horn & Kentucky Arts Council, 2005, p.35). In a 2009 report from Alaska, the 54 school district superintendents were surveyed about the status of arts education in their district and 23 school districts
reported their art teachers create their own assessments in the arts (Alaska State Council on the Arts, 2009, p. 7). From a 2011 report from New Hampshire, assessment was used by over 80% of the visual art education survey respondents for grading and over 75% of the visual arts teachers used classroom assessment to make instructional decisions (New Hampshire Department of Education, 2011, p. 13).

The Western States Art Federation commissioned a survey on the status of arts in their states with the four states presenting the data separately in 2010 reports. Montana surveyed the state’s schools and 57% of the responding schools reported that teacher-made assessment were the most frequently used means of measurement, 15% of the schools used the assessments created and required by their district (p. 3), and 8% did not assess the arts at all (Montana Arts Council, 2010, p. 8). From a survey of all but four of Utah’s school districts responding on the status of art in the state, 66% of the arts teachers used assessments they had developed themselves and 15% did not use assessments (Bothell Assessment and Research, 2010, p. 23). Forty-five out of the 200 schools in Idaho reported not measuring student learning in the arts with 69% of the schools reporting use of teacher-made tests and 23% reporting no use of assessments in the arts (Bothell Assessment and Research & WESTAF, 2010, p. 17). Sixty-four percent of the arts specialists in Wyoming used assessments their districts developed and required, 82% used assessments developed by teachers (the survey did not indicate if these were assessment developed by the survey respondents or ones other teachers had created and shared/borrowed), and 6% did not use any assessments (Western States Arts Federation, 2010, Table Q).
In their most recent report state-of-the-state in the arts in Minnesota from 2012, the Perpich Center for Arts Education found 84% of the schools responding to the survey said assessment of student learning in the arts was made primarily through teacher-created tools (Morrison & Cirillo, 2012, p. 11).

To summarize the data from across these seven reports, teacher-created assessments was both the most frequently reported approach used and showed—across the states—the highest percentage selected. Significantly lower in percentage was the number of teachers not using any assessment at all in the arts (Montana 8%, Utah 15%, Idaho 23% and Wyoming 6%) from 2010.

From these studies and reports, the findings show that while there were many art teachers in one study who responded in agreement that art needed to be assessed, this was countered with other survey findings of arts teachers who do not assess at all. Student behavior and turning work in on time factored into the evaluation of student artwork along with addressing the elements and principles of design. A large number of art teachers’ survey responses indicated they were using assessment to inform grading. The findings indicated an impact on art teachers’ practice based on prior experiences. Observation was reported as the most frequently used assessment tool along with portfolios and assessment tools created by the art teachers.

**Pertinent General Education Literature on Classroom Assessment**

The references in this section were selected based upon their pertinence to the research problem of this study. Assessment is a process or procedure for measuring learning (Popham, 2013; Russell & Airasian, 2011; Stiggins & Chappuis, 2012; Wiggins, 1998) to determine to what degree curricular expectations have been met (Wiggins &
McTighe, 1998) with evidence used to benefit students (Chappuis, Stiggins, Chappuis, & Arter, 2012) becoming a positive turning point of student understanding (Wiggins, 1998). Evaluation is sometimes held as a synonym for assessment yet there is a difference; teachers can assess a student’s project without identifying a value on that product (Wiggins & McTighe, 1999). Classroom assessment is a move from assessment of learning to assessment for learning, from accountability to a teaching and learning tool, and from the student wondering what to do next to being an active participant through self-assessment (Chappuis et al., 2012). Assessment for student learning supports all students’ attainment of learning goals with ongoing, “… interlaced experiences that enhance the learning process by keeping the students confident and focused on their progress, even in the face of occasional setbacks” (Stiggins, 2007, p. 23). Looking at assessment from the student’s point of view, when the assessment supports learning, the student feels empowered to accept responsibility for attaining learning goals, able to manage stress, and is more inclined to take challenges (Stiggins, 2007).

Assessment can be an umbrella term for a variety of deliberate processes for gathering a full range of information and evidence (Russell & Airasian, 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) including evaluating of the evolution of the student’s progress using a portfolio (Wiggins & McTighe, 1999). Performance assessment uses tasks for students to create a complex product or performance to demonstrate knowledge and skill (Wiggins & McTighe, 1999). Authentic assessment is the simulation or replication of a real-world challenge within the real-world setting (Wiggins, 1996/1997) where “… the context of the assessment—not just the task itself—is what makes the work authentic” (Wiggins & McTighe, 1999, p. 274). But assessment is different from grading; grading is the
summarized reporting of the achievements of the student from a specific time by using numbers or letters (O’Connor, 2012). Lorrie Shepard (2008/2009) listed these characteristics of classroom assessment:

- Challenging tasks to elicit high order thinking;
- Addresses learning processes as well as learning outcomes;
- An on-going process, integrated with instruction;
- Used formatively in support of student learning;
- Expectations visible to students;
- Students active in evaluating their own work; and
- Used to evaluate teaching as well as student learning (p. 98).

Formative assessment is on-going during the teaching and learning process whereas summative assessments of learning occur at the end of the instruction (Popham, 2013; Russell & Airasian, 2011; Stiggins & Chappuis, 2012; Wiggins, 1998; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Formative assessment is one of the most effective ways to increase student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Formative assessment is not the assessment tool, but how the assessment information is used to inform the teacher’s instruction and assessment towards improved student learning (Chappuis, 2009).

Feedback is one use of assessment data, it is different than advice or praise (Wiggins, 2010; 2012), and is powerfully influential in improving student learning (Hattie, 2012; Wiliam, 2012). Feedback is “… goal referenced, tangible and transparent, actionable, user-friendly (specific and personalized), timely, ongoing, and consistent.” (Wiggins, 2012, p. 13). Feedback focuses on the work of the student rather than the student (Hattie & Temperly, 2007). The specific information in feedback promotes
learning by helping the student to think and process, making feedback a valuable part of formative assessment (Hattie, 2012; Popham, 2013; Wiliam, 2011; 2012).

A teacher’s professional judgment is fundamental in understanding and utilizing all aspects of assessment (Rudner & Schafer, 2002). For educators to gain confidence and competence in applying classroom assessment to support for student learning, Stiggins, (2008) viewed pre-service and in-service training in classroom assessment vital for attaining assessment literacy. Researchers from general education, Bridgeford and Stiggins (1986), made recommendations specifically for art teacher training in assessment based upon their studies of assessment practices of general education teachers. The art education assessment course content recommendations were:

- Limited focus on developing paper-pencil tests like multiple-choice;
- Reduced attention to the interpretation of standardized tests;
- Conducting sound observation skills of student performance;
- Accomplishing accurate and systemic check of art student skills;
- Defining and differentiating performance criteria and levels;
- Devising assessments that reveal a representative sample of the students’ capabilities;
- Creating rating scales and checklist that target competence (rather than taste) for the art student’s projects;
- Acquiring ways for including students and art professional in the assessment process; and
- Gaining strategies in explaining the assessment criteria to students, parents, and administrators. (Bridgeford & Stiggins, 1986, 41–42)
To summarize this section of relevant general education classroom assessment literature, formative assessment evidence is used to inform the teacher’s instructional practice to support students’ understanding and learning throughout with the educational process. Assessment for student learning is different than reporting grades or accountability. Several formative assessment processes can be used to gather information to inform the teacher’s practice including observation, checklists, and portfolios. The collected informational evidence can be used to inform the teacher’s descriptive feedback to students relative to their work meeting the learning goal. Students are a part of the assessment process through self-assessment. Assessment literacy through pre-service and in-service training is essential.

Selected Literature on the History of Assessment in Western Art Education

This section is a historical delineation of the purposes and practices of assessment of visual art education through its trajectory to art education in the public schools in the United States. The literature review begins with the classical era in Greece, follows assessment in Europe, until focusing on assessment of art education in the United States starting with the late 1800s. Selected examples indicative of the focus and tone of assessment of the time are presented up to January 2014. In the historical eras when specifics on assessment was not found in the literature, speculation on the assessment practices are made based on the purposes and values of the art education of the time.

A review of the history of assessment in art education is important information for to this research study to show how past views and practices are perhaps influencing today’s views and practices of classroom assessment in art education as well as to note any changes in practice. While the focus of this research study is on classroom
assessments used by art teachers, the literature review includes program evaluation, art tests, national tests in art, and grading in art education along with the literature on classroom assessment to provide a comprehensive view of the history of assessment in art education. Additionally, while I firmly believe in the value of learning art in all settings—including what is taught and learned at home, gained through interaction with elders, or by self-taught artists—the focus of this review of the history of assessment of art education is primarily the public school setting.

Ronald Neperud (1995) began his text *Context, Content, & Community in Art Education: Beyond Postmodernism* with this chapter heading and opening line:

“‘Transitions in Art Education: A Search for Meaning’. The contemporary era of art education is affected by momentous social and ideological changes that strike at our conceptualizations of art, of teaching and learning, and of curriculum” (p.1). Across this survey of the history of assessment in Western art education, Neperud’s words can apply to the points of transition from the start of this survey 2,200 years ago through today.

The practices of visual art education have undergone change and continue to have changes of philosophy, content, purpose, and pedagogy. From both inside and outside the art education classroom, social conditions, philosophical views, political choices, ethical actions, financial impacts, and power relationships all interact with closely held traditions and emotional connections to the familiar in defining and determining the direction of art education and classroom assessment of student learning in art education. There is a progression of change through the field of art education from the education of artisans, to artists, to teaching drawing to some, to teaching art to many, and then to educating a
general public school populace about art. Those purposes and pupils of art education also influenced the assessment practices of the art educators.

**Classical Era.**

Two centuries after the first drawing class appeared in Greece, drawing was one of the subjects in school exams in second century BCE (Efland, 1990). At the school at Sicyon, the youths received “… theoretical instruction in accurate drawing …” where “fine rhythmic outline, spacing, symmetry, and proportion were considered the most important attributes” (Macdonald, 1970, p. 19). With those educational expectations, observation for accuracy is surmised to be the principle assessment practice.

**Middle Ages.**

During the Monastic education of around the year 800, one aspect of the art education was making books by copying scriptures (Efland, 1990). The quality of the work was evaluated by the accuracy of the copy and since the purpose of the work was to copy the Holy Writ; originality was not even a consideration (Efland, 1990).

**High Middle Ages.**

In the High Middle Ages, guilds were formed by a variety of artisans for training purposes. This included a form of certification indicating the acquisition of requisite skills. Starting as a teen, select young men would have the privilege of working alongside a master. “Training was by imitation of the master … with successful performance judged in terms of the accuracy of the imitation” (Efland, 1990, p. 23). The guild system established standards that the apprentice would need to meet (Efland, 1990). After five or so years, the teen would take the test—producing a masterpiece—which if passed would secure the title of master (Efland, 1990).
Renaissance.

In Renaissance art education, groups of artists taught and learned from each other through copying from models and real life, dissecting cadavers and ideas, and creating work as a landscape, portrait, or a religious theme in paint or sculpture (Efland, 1990). In 1568, Florentine artist Giorgio Vasari created statutes for learning art for the Compagnia di San Luca. (Goldstein, 1996). Three artists were to be selected annually—a painter, sculptor, and architect—as supervisors to select and teach boys at the academy or in their own studios (Goldstein, 1996). Vasari also included assessment techniques and tasks for the supervisors where “they were to visit the shops in which the boys ordinarily worked to call their attention to errors they were falling into. This was to be done gently ‘con amorevolezza’, considering the particular talent and experience of the boy” (Goldstein, 1996, p. 20).

Around 1578, a member of the academy—Federico Zuccaro—wrote a letter of reform ideas for academy included two assessment issues. First, Zuccaro asserted, “… examinations of student work would be used as occasions for communicating the rules and science ‘regole et scienza’ of art” (Goldstein, 1996, p. 22). Additionally, Zuccaro believed the work of the best students should be preserved and awarded prizes based on their “… conformity to the teaching of the academy …” (Goldstein, 1996, p. 22).

Rembrandt’s Workshop.

In Rembrandt’s workshop of the 1580s, his students worked both from the live models and from drawn compositions (Goldstein, 1996). These compositions were a regular part of this instruction that Rembrandt would review and collect, drawing on the student work as “… evidence of his intervention, usually in a few sure pen line
emphatically altering the relations of the figures to one another” (Goldstein, 1996, p. 38). According to Goldstein (1996), it is evident from the student work made after these corrected drawings they tried to learn from Rembrandt’s assessments.

The French Academy.

Working under the expectations of the monarchy of the mid-1600s, assessment within the Academy would be on how well the students matched the sanctioned imagery (Efland, 1990). In 1708, a treatise by Roger de Piles—Balance des Pientures—used a scoring system from zero to 80 to rate how well artist’s work conformed to the academy’s rules (Efland, 1990).

Ateliers of France.

Admissions into these studio-housed workshop schools were based on a portfolio of prior work and the prospective student would also need to create a painting or drawing of the live model (Efland, 1990). Notebooks for quick sketches and notes from nature and people were required of the art students (Efland, 1990). Weekly, the artist-patron would offer critiques of student work “… stopping at each easel to make and explain corrections” (Efland, 1990, p. 53).

Art Education in the United States: 1800s.

At this point this survey of the history of assessment in Western visual art education turns to the United States with occasional references to European influences. America’s first art academy opened in Philadelphia in 1794 (Efland, 1990; Macdonald, 1970). There was a different level of access to structured art education in the 1800s based on location—rural or urban—and on economic status.
The art education program of William Bentley Fowle of Boston of 1821 focused on the copy method and Philadelphian Rembrandt Peale’s art education system was for training the eye and hand through “… the art of accurate delineation” (Whitford, 1929, p. 8). During the drawing instruction portion of art teacher training at Columbia University Teacher’s College in 1898, the prospective art teachers learned the “… use of a plumb line and pencil measurement to give [them] the power to detect inaccuracies in student efforts” (Wygant, 1993, pp.17–18).

**Drawing Books of the 1800s in the United States.**

With innovations in printing, the U.S. saw the publication of instructional drawing books for home and school use in the 1800s. From 1820–1860, 145 how-to drawing guides were published in the U.S. (Korzenik, 1985, p. 51). Authors included Walter Smith, Louis Prang, John Gadsby Chapman, and Arthur Wesley Dow (Efland, 1990; Korzenik, 1985, 1990; Smith, 1996; Soucey & Stankiewicz, 1990; Stankiewicz, 2001). Assessment would have been on the accuracy of lines, shapes, and images drawn from observation. Through self-assessment “… people were unabashed about admitting that their product mattered!” (Korzenik, 1990, p. 206).

**Industrial Drawing: The Massachusetts Drawing Act of 1870.**

By the 1850s, instruction in drawing was an established part of public school education in parts of the United States (Stankiewicz, Amburgy, & Bolin, 2004). A drawing act created the first mandated art education in the United States was the first law of compulsory art education in the U.S. (Bolin, 1990; Efland, 1990). Within the Act, drawing was defined as industrial or mechanical as a reflection of the perceived need to instruct drawing in the U.S. in order to compete with the draughtsmen of Europe (Efland,
This constructive or industrial style of drawing was beneficial for manufacturers, who had instigated the law, but the pictorial drawing style was prominent in the taught curriculum (Stankiewicz, 2001). Industrial drawing or constructive drawing included students making “… working drawing, diagrams and geometric view, plans, patterns, drawing of machine parts and drawings to scale” (Stankiewicz, 2001, p. 16).

Walter Smith, supervisor of art for both Boston and the state of Massachusetts, saw industrial drawing as means to acquire precision of perception (Efland, 1990). Smith set the curriculum in instructional drawing to include drawing geometric shapes at the primary school level, copying drawings that show the principles of perspective at grammar school, and drawing from casts to apply skills in shading for the high school level (Smith, 1872, p. 49). Smith’s curriculum of industrial drawing also included testing of the students’ accuracy of visual depiction of observational ability. An example of a timed drawing test for children age 12 and under was to copy a set-up of a mixing-style bowl atop a rectangular cube in 40 minutes (Smith, 1872, p. 363).

**The Child Study Movement: Late 1800s to Early 1900s.**

During the 1880s there was shift of focus from teaching children like they were adults to focusing on education based on the child’s mind (Efland, 1990) and away from teaching for skill development and industrial drawing (Clark, 1987). Earl Barnes produced several studies analyzing children’s’ illustrations, how drawings reflecting children’s’ thought processes, and how children draw symbols rather than representational images (Efland, 1990).

A variety of art education tests were developed at this time. Barnes’ study of children’s drawings from 1893 and Thorndike’s scale of children’s’ ability to draw
realistically—Scale for General Merit of Children’s Drawing—was first published in 1913 and revised a decade later (Faulkner, 1942). Thorndike’s scale was designed for teachers to have a common metric to evaluate their student’s artwork (Clark, Zimmerman, & Zurmuehlen, 1987). Thorndike also contributed to other art tests used in the United States (Clark et al., 1987).

**Progressive Art Education of the 1920s.**

Near the start of the twentieth century was the beginning of Progressive Education movement. Moving from a teacher-centered to child-centered curriculum the 1920s saw how “… the uninhibited activity and interests of the child would heavily influence teaching theory …” (Daichendt, 2010) where the experiential style of learning tenet of John Dewey (Wygant, 1993) was preserved and supported within the social learning environment. Margaret Naumburg (1928), founder of the Walden School, supported children gaining skills in tool and media use and did not see that the practice of copying artwork should even be called art. Naumburg (1928) thought “the best teachers … are those who know when and how much to suggest in the way of technique and standards” (p. 85) and “… who hold just that balance between expression that is genuine, and technique that is control” (p. 99) because it is not sound practice to “… encourage too indiscriminately creation for its own sake, without considering standards to which such work should be related” (pp. 87–88).

Florence Cane (1951)—Naumburg’s sister and art teacher at the Walden School—emphasized the teacher’s role begins as an observer as the young child explores his world to then, once the child chooses to share his work, to be one to share “… a smile, a friendly recognition of his accomplishment, and a true valuation of it …” (p. 27). If the
child’s work is met with indifference from the teacher “… the new sense of achievement will be lost, and the desire to go on will be deflected” (Cane, 1951, pp. 26–27).

Test development for evaluation in art education occurred at this time. In 1934, the Progressive Education Association along with the General Education Board looked to the museum as a locale to study the evaluation of art students’ ability and performance. This resulted in several tests and questionnaires generated by Thomas Munro, Betty Lark-Horowitz, and Edward Barnhart (1942) at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Margaret McAdory (1929) created an art test—the McAdory Art Test—based on her research she started in 1923. Her test was a multi-choice test to determine artistic merit (McAdory, 1929, p. 3). There were 72 plates with four images to select the best design or example the art examiner showed the student. Examples from the test included selecting one of four different value scale interpretations of Jan Vermeer van Delft’s Young Woman with Water Jug at the Window (McAdory, 1929, plate 17) and four different ornate patterns of locks to select best line design (McAdory, 1929, plate 10).

While the Progressive Education movement gained prominence in the 1930s, the 1950s brought increased criticism from the public and scholars; the Progressive Education movement began to wane (Efland, 1990). Progressive Education ideals were retained and promoted in an art education textbooks with enduring influences for decades to come in the work of Viktor Lowenfeld (Efland, 1990).

**Literature of Assessment in Art Education of the 1930s.**

There were a handful of articles found for this period during the search of literature of art education that addressed assessment of student learning. Evaluation was
the operative word in the articles with much of the focus of the content on tests for ability, aptitude, and appreciation in visual art.

A literature search returned one article from the 1930s that involved assessment, which offered a checklist to guide the observations of art teachers (Grimes & Bordin, 1939). The 38-question checklist was to sharpen the visual art teacher’s observation of their students’ actions rather than in the artwork (Grimes & Bordin, 1939). This checklist included looking for how the student “examines critically criticism by others and makes use of it … [and] avoids vacillation in following out his own painting rather than shifting style, execution, and attitude as he sees others in class going in a direction different from his own” (Grimes & Bordin, 1939, p. 5).

Art aptitude tests of the time were used to reveal potential talent at a level to warrant specialized training in art included the Knauber Art Ability Test (Faulkner, 1942; Knauber, 1922, 1931). School districts commissioned tests to measure their students’ progress in art education including the Knauber Ability and Art Vocabulary Tests (Faulkner, 1942; Knauber, 1935). A text—The Measurement of Artistic Abilities by Madaline Kinter (1933)—was a survey of the published tests of artistic appreciation and artistic ability, studies, and projects in progress at that time. An article on evaluation in general from Pedro Orato (1940) included tests in visual art education from the 1930s.

**Literature of Assessment in Art Education of the 1940s.**

The literature of assessment in art education from the 1940s was small in number and focused on the purposes and value of testing and grading. At this time, a debate about evaluation and testing appeared to begin.
In the 1940s, the literature on testing in the visual art included a survey of 1930s tests (Munro, 1940), a project to develop tools for the purpose of evaluating art students’ abilities (Munro et al., 1942), and the Horn Art Aptitude Inventory of 1944 which was a timed test to ascertain potential success in the field of art (Hardiman, Liu & Zernich, 1992). Concerning testing in art, Faulkner (1940) stated that “… tests in themselves have no value or interest unless they contribute to our understanding of art activities and art teaching” (p. 481).

Viktor Lowenfeld’s first edition of Creative and Mental Growth (1947) did not directly address evaluation as he did in his subsequent editions. He did include exercises at the end of each chapter for each of his developmental stages that required the art teacher to collect data on that stage for analysis (Lowenfeld, 1947). For example, at the pseudorealistic stage for students 11 to 13 years old, Lowenfeld (1947) saw the student’s focus move from the significance of the art making process to the significance of the art product. Therefore, in an exercise analyzing a drawing from a student from this age range, the art teacher was to check for the presence of attributes such as correct proportion or the use of colors not tied to nature then reflect upon “what conclusion in regard to the child’s aptitudes can you draw from this analysis” (Lowenfeld, 1947, pp. 123–124).

**Literature of Assessment in Art Education of the 1950s.**

The assessment language found in the art education literature of this decade used the terms evaluation, appraising, marking (the 1950s’ vernacular for grading), and appraising. Evaluating or appraising student progress was a recent development in art education (De Francesco, 1954). Due to what De Francesco saw as the newness in
evaluation and the art teachers' motivation “… for adequate evaluation in art education [has] caused many teachers to leap to conclusions” (De Francesco, 1954, p. 222).

Teacher preparation art education textbooks on how to instruct elementary school-aged children in art education included evaluation in art (Conant & Randall, 1959; De Francesco, 1954; Gaitskell, 1958; Lowenfeld, 1952). Gaitskell’s (1958) chapter was called “Appraising Children’s Progress in Art” in his first edition of Children and Their Art. Currently in its ninth edition, this text included the middle level student and was authored by Michael Day and Al Hurwitz (2012). Day and Hurwitz (2012) also had a chapter called “Assessing Student Learning and Achievement.”

In his revised editions of Creative and Mental Growth, Lowenfeld (1952) provided an evaluation chart for art teachers to use to document a student’s growth in seven categories: emotional, intellectual, physical, perceptual, social, aesthetic, and creative. Lowenfeld (1952) also provided a measurement scale with objective criteria for the artwork including the adequacy of the artwork for developmental stage, technique being adequate for expression, and the degree of effort the final product represented (p. 52). Lowenfeld (1952) stressed that while the focus of his discussions were on the final product as evidence of development, that any “evaluation of the final product should then always be only a guide for the teacher and not a means for classifying or grading the child’s work” (pp. 41–42).

Specific recommendations on how to evaluate the process of making the art, the student’s growth, and student’s self-appraisal were addressed in several of the articles and textbooks. Journal articles spoke to the determining criteria for evaluating the art product (Waterman, 1959) and using student interviews in marking (Courtney, 1954).
Victor D’Amico, Frances Wilson, and Moreen Maser (1954) recommended the student be a part of assessing growth with directions to the student artist on how to collect their artwork to review and reflect upon progress and suggestions for further growth.

Many examples of assessment tools were presented in Edith M. Henry’s (1953) article sharing information gathered from an elementary art education evaluation project in the Denver Public Schools. Information about assessment purposes, processes and tools were explained with photos of student work, examples of documentation along with quotes from teachers (Henry, 1953). Her document included art students setting self-standards along with how-to collect information including informal conversations and setting up a folder of student work (Henry, 1953).

In his textbook, Charles Gaitskell (1958) provided lists of questions for the art teacher to use to check the three areas of quality the student’s artwork including if it “… indicates to any extent that he is sensible of the effects of tools and materials upon design” (p. 397) and “… to what level does this work show ability to use each element of design: line, mass and space, light and shade, color, texture” (p. 398). The content of his questions were similar to the content of the checklist of Grimes and Bordin (1939) previously discussed. Gaitskell (1958) advocated using checklists and he provided an example of a yes-no list on artistic expression as in “work showed variety of design” or “used own experiences” (p. 404). He also shared examples of anecdotal record keeping (Gaitskell, 1958). To assist in determining the art student’s progress, Gaitskill (1958) also recommended keeping a file of student work to be reviewed periodically.

Italio L. De Francesco (1954) expressed concerns over unwarranted conclusions being drawn by looking at single work from a student, therefore he recommended using a
range of assessment tools and techniques with clear recording and interpretation of evaluation results. De Francesco (1954) stated to merely gather data was not purposeful, reasons are needed for evaluation, and “to use that knowledge with profit for the teacher as well as the student” (p. 199).

Beginning in the 1950s literature, and continuing through in some of today’s literature, the terms grading and assessment were often coupled. In an editorial in *Art Education* journal by Lola Hinson Fitzgerald (1953), she shared her challenges with grading art products. Grading was tied to evaluation in art education textbooks (Conant & Randall, 1959; De Francesco, 1954). Grading practices changed for many art teachers in the 1940s and 1950s as they moved from “… numerical grading in favor of letter grades, but they managed to maintain a number of calibration by making lavish use of plusses and minuses” (Conant & Randall, 1959, p. 193).

**Literature of Assessment in Art Education of the 1960s.**

Nearly a dozen works were found with the assessment-related terms during this time period with an emphasis on evaluation with a move towards assessment. There was a focus on student learning in art with recommendations for evaluation tools of the interview (Wise, 1968), student self-evaluation (Godfrey, 1964; Harwood, 1969), criteria for evaluating written criticism of artwork (Munro, 1966a), and a questionnaire for criticizing a work of art (Munro, 1966b).

Themes in the literature of around evaluation in art education also included grading (Godfrey, 1964; Jefferson; 1963; Keiler, 1963; Luca & Kent, 1968; McFee, 1961), evaluation of goals (Paxson, 1964), programs (Keiler, 1961), and curriculum (Wilson, 1968). During this time what now called as the National Assessment of
Educational Progress (NAEP), was introduced (NAEA, 1965) and discussed (Meredith, 1967; Tyler, 1967). There is more about the NAEP later in this section.

In 1965, The Seminar on Research and Curriculum Development was held at Pennsylvania State University (Elfand, 1989). Referred to as the Penn State Seminar, this activity revolved around the concept of defining art as a discipline (Elfand, 1989). Along with refinement of Disciplined Based Art Education (DBAE), several art education curriculum reform projects followed including the Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory’s (SWRL) Elementary Art Program, the Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory’s (CEMREL) Aesthetic Education Programs, and the Kettering Project in Art Education. Collectively, these resulted in several art education curriculum programs to be developed (Efland, 1989). These programs reflected some of the ideas presented at the Penn State Seminar (Clark, 1984) and regional projects in art curriculum included assessment (Elfand, 1989).

Grading as assessment remained a topic in the 1960s with concerns and differing approaches. Within her two-page section on evaluation in art education in her textbook, June King McFee (1961) tied evaluation to grading; she saw determining letter grades in art as difficult and grades do “… not tell the next teacher or the parent much about the child” (p. 206). McFee (1961) provided criteria for the art teacher to use for evaluating the art student’s products and behaviors, for explaining to the parents, for planning the art program, and for sharing with the student’s next teacher.

Keiler (1961) recommended discussions with the art student about progress, to provide direction, and to clarify any grades. He advocated for discussions with each art student because, without discussion and clarification, a grade “… recommends no more
than a symbol whose exact meaning often remains unknown to the recipient” (Keiler 1961, p. 94). Blanche Jefferson (1963) likened grading to contests and competitions and combined these three practices together into one chapter in her art education textbook focused on children’s creative expression.

Jefferson (1963) acknowledged that schools require grades and made some cautioned recommendations based on improvement and effort when comparing student artwork over time for assigning grades (p. 270). Jefferson (1963) saw the storage of artwork as a challenge in grading based on the art student’s growth over time. Grades might be based only on what was easy to store over time, so only flat work, not three-dimensional work, was considered for the grade (Jefferson, 1963). “Memories being what they are, scarcely any teacher is able to recall the work of each of her children over a period of time, so that the three-dimensional work is omitted, the grade is then a partial one” (Jefferson, 1963, p. 270).

Harwood (1969) indicated a change in the art education instructional practices were not only attending to craftsmanship in art, but also to activities to develop the individual creative student due to “… a de-emphasis of the final product … in order to encourage the growth of the pupil” (p. 13). Luca and Kent (1968) saw evaluation as a difficult, complex, and continuous process that began with determining what evidence to gather to show the learning objectives have been achieved. They elaborated on the components of evaluating student learning in art including observation, consultations with the student, reflective writing for the student, and a longitudinal portfolio (Luca & Kent, 1969).
As the decade closed, Harwood’s (1969) article was an indictor of sentiments held by some in art education. He referenced and discussed several educational debates of the time around evaluation and measurement in art education. The overarching debate, which he saw as considerable (Harwood, 1969, p.12), was between a focus on program evaluation and a focus on measurement of student progress due to the national focus on educational excellence and reform. Harwood (1969) viewed aspects of student evaluation and instruction in art education having lead to helping the art student develop her own skills in seeking answers as a creative individual through teacher questioning (p. 13) and through the development of self-evaluation skills (p. 14).

**The National Assessment of Educational Progress.**

A short, five paragraph entry in the professional news section of November 1965 issue of *Art Education* announced the preliminary work on national testing in several content areas, including the arts, to be headed in development by Ralph W. Tyler and the Exploratory Committee on Assessing the Progress of Education (NAEA, 1965, p. 32). Few schools had yet to volunteer to participate in piloting this then unnamed test where “the assessment proposal is presently in the seed stage” (NAEA, 1965, p. 32). This was the first announcement in the visual art education literature of what would become the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Later in the decade, Ralph W. Tyler (1967) and Francean Meredith (1967) provided insight into the process of the national testing including visual art. The need for national testing was to provide information to the public on progress on education with dependable and comprehensive data (Tyler, 1967). The purpose of the test was to gather these data nationally which was “… not focused upon individual students, classrooms,
schools, or school systems but to provide overall information about the educational attainments of large numbers of people” (Tyler, 1967, p. 15). The test was focused on students aged nine, thirteen, and seventeen plus adults (Tyler, 1967, p. 15).

While there was NAEP testing in music in 1971–72, the testing for visual arts was delayed until 1974–75 “… because there had been little previous testing in this area and most of the tests had to be invented specially for NAEP” (National Endowment for the Arts, 1988, p. 93). The test creators were told not to consider machine scored multiple-choice formats, cost, time, or scoring in developing the tasks. While there was innovation in the resultant testing procedures, “… most were set aside before the art assessment were undertaken because they were considered too difficult to administer and too expensive and time-consuming to analyze” (NEA, 1988, p. 91).

NAEP—past the decade of the 1960s—is known as the Nation’s Report Card. NAEP is the United States’ sole national and on-going assessment of what students know and can demonstrate understanding through periodic tests in civics, economics, reading, geography, mathematics, science, U.S. history, world history, writing, the arts, and (beginning in 2014) technology and engineering literacy (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2014a). Under the layered auspices of the U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics, strategically selected representative sets of students throughout the country have been assessed periodically since 1969 (NAEP, 2013). Because of the sampling of students, individual scores for students or school are not reported but rather larger, generalized profiles of content area achievement and instruction at the national level are the spotlighted accountability (NAEP, 2013).
In 1978–1979 NAEP Arts was created and implemented without national standards in the arts (Pistone, 2002). Students were assessed using the artistic process model where they had to demonstrate understanding in creating, performing, and responding (Shuler & Connealy, 1998). Approximately 2,650 students aged 9, 13, and 17 took the multiple-choice and constructed response test (NAEP, 1980). An example of a selected response question of perceiving and responding was to select the main idea of a watercolor by Charles Burchfield (NAEP, 1980, pp. 32–33).

The 1997 NAEP Arts was based in the national content standards in the arts, added assessment in theater and dance, and relied more performance tasks for the student demonstration of learning rather than multiple-choice questions (Pistone, 2002). The addition of the performance tasks, while innovative, made the exams challenging to administer (Schneider, 2003). With this addition of students creating and responding to art, the 1997 NAEP Arts had students answer multiple-choice questions, prepare a written reflection, and produce an art product (Persky, Sandene, & Askew, 1998). Examples from the test prompts for the eighth graders asked the students to respond to image of a collage by Romare Bearden, interpret the work, and then create their own collages (Persky et al., 1998, p. 82).

There are also a few questions about assessment asked of the eighth graders taking the 1997 NAEP Arts. Nearly 80% of the eighth graders taking the NAEP Arts responded in the survey section of the test they never or hardly ever wrote about their artwork (Persky et al., 1998). One third of the eighth graders responded they had talked with their peers about their artwork or that of their peers at least once a week with 50% selecting they never or hardly ever did (Persky et al., 1998). Collecting and saving
artwork in a portfolio was shown as a positive influence with nearly 60% of the students scoring in the upper ranges of the NAEP reporting that they or their teacher saved their artwork in a portfolio (Persky et al., 1998). Results also showed that students who talked with other students about their artwork had higher scores on the NAEP Arts test than students who did not (Persky et al., 1998).

The NAEP Arts provided data for ways of looking at student learning in art education (Burton; 2001b; Diket, 2001; Diket & Brewer, 2011; Diket, Burton, & McCollister, 2000; Eisner, 1999; Sabol, 2001b; Siegesmund, Diket, & McCulloch, 2001; Ward, 1982) and teacher professional development in assessment in art (Shuler & Connealy, 1998). NAEP Arts also provided a model for developing state based large-scale assessments (Pistone, 2002). NAEP Arts may be a better model for evaluation strategies than as a tool for gathering data about individual student learning in the arts because of the limited population examined (Stankiewicz, 1999). Schneider (2003) recommended a reconsideration of assessment formats and which students are assessed.

**Literature of Assessment in Art Education of the 1970s.**

Program evaluation was a theme in the art education literature on assessment of the 1970s (Dobbs, 1972; James, 1974; Silliman & Silverstein, 1979; Stake, 1975, 1976) but accountability was more predominant. Grading was addressed differently both by Laura Chapman (1978) and in the fifth edition of *Creative and Mental Growth* (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).

In discussing the current trend for accountability in education, schools and teachers needed to show the public that the art educational resources were well spent (Eisner, 1975). The accountability concerns for art teachers was the need to show the
resources provided were put to good use for the advancement of the students’ art education (Qualley, 1976). “Art educators must act, not react, to the issue of accountability” (Davis, 1979, p. 42). Art education accountability and assessment of student learning were explained as the same concept (Steele & Victoria, 1975).

Brent Wilson (1970) suggested the new national test for the arts—NAEP Arts—was a means for understanding art education and that revealing art education was meeting its educational objectives. While Elliot Eisner (1975) stated that objectives can be written by teams of teachers only to be ignored once back in their art classrooms, he also asserted that art education “… desperately needed to evaluate what we do and what we achieve as teachers of art” (p. 177). In determining what information and evaluation measures to use, the purpose of the assessment needed to be considered as did the audience (Eisner, 1975). “No one procedure or type of data is good for everything” (Eisner, 1975, p. 178).

A component in the accountability process was to gather information on if the students were meeting the art course objectives, then to quantify that information for indicators of accomplishment (Qualley, 1976). The verification of student learning in the art education classroom using evidence gathered through assessment “… makes it possible for instructional efforts to become accountable classroom realities rather than classroom myths” (Davis, 1979, p. 42). Day (1974) observed there was connectivity between instruction and assessment as both are “… essential in the circuit of communication from the teacher to student to teacher” (p. 7). He also advocated for formative assessment in art education for “instruction without periodic or continuous assessment can become directionless and miss the mark toward which it was initially
aimed. Evaluation without the context of instruction can become a meaningless collection
of data with no opportunity to influence practice” (Day, 1974, p. 3).

Suggestions on assessment tools and practices of assessment included the use of
self- and peer-assessment (Madge & Weinberger, 1971) as well as formative and
summative assessments based on the content and behaviors in visual art education
(Wilson, 1971). The criteria used for the standards in evaluating art were perhaps derived
in the art teacher’s theories of art (Clarke, 1979). Laura Chapman (1978) presented
explanations and examples of 24 recording or information gathering tools of student
learning in art plus how to interpret results and audiences for the information (pp. 392–
407). Some of the recording processes Chapman (1978) suggested reflected the use of
technology including photographs of three-dimensional work, audio and video
recordings, and manually sorted keypunch cards. Chapman (1978) also stated art was
included in the current national trend in reporting student learning in all content areas,
clarifying that “… evaluation is not the same as measurement, or grading” (p. 384). In my
review of the literature of assessment in art education, this is one of the first appearances
of this distinction.

The issue of grading was addressed more strongly in the fifth edition of Creative
and Mental Growth (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1970) than in previous editions. Note first a
clarification on the change in authorship. Creative and Mental Growth was now authored
by W. Lambert Brittain though Lowenfeld’s name understandably remained. Brittain
became the co-author of the fourth edition of Creative and Mental Growth in 1964 after
Lowenfeld died in 1960 (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964, p. vi). As for grading, concern was
expressed because grading would move the attention of the child to the product and away
from the creative process (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964). In the fifth edition, the concern continued about a focus on the product and more strongly stated, “… that grading in art has no function” (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1970, p. 78). There was also distress expressed about the arbitrary nature of grading based on the values of the art teacher such as neatness and control of media, and what the art teacher enjoyed (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1970). There was elaboration on the apprehensions about grading in this edition:

There should be one place in the school system where marks do not count. The art room should be a sanctuary against the school system where each youngster is free to be himself and to put down his feelings and emotions without censorship, where he can evaluate his own progress toward is own goals without the imposition of an arbitrary grading system. (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1970, p. 79)

Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) addressed evaluation in art education in the eighth edition of *Creative and Mental Growth* as well as expressed concern of the assessment views of two art educators who supported Discipline Based Art Education; this is discussed in the section on the literature of the 1980s.

**Literature of Assessment in Art Education of the 1980s.**

First to be presented from the literature on assessment in the 1980s is assessment in Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE). Secondly, there were several debates in the literature about assessment in visual art education. These debates played out in a 1986 issue of *Design for Arts in Education* and in a 1989 issue of *Studies in Art Education*. The issues were philosophically and literally juxtaposed with articles on similar topics yet
with differing views following each other in the publication. There was also a one-sided debate in the eighth edition of *Creative and Mental Growth*.

Information about assessment of student learning in DBAE was found in the literature of this decade. Greer and Hoepfner (1986) stated achievement testing in the arts would both support DBAE and move art from the frills of education. Eisner (1988) also thought formal assessment would benefit the view of the arts. Eisner saw the lack of formal assessment in the arts as one reason of “… the marginal position of the arts in our schools …” (Eisner, 1988, p. 11) and stated evaluation of student learning was essential for DBAE:

Unlike some who hold that evaluation has no place in teaching of art since it is likely to thwart the creative expression of children and adolescents, those using discipline-based art education believe that educational practice that is not evaluated is professionally irresponsible. Evaluation is one of the important processes for improving the quality of curriculum, teaching, and learning. (Eisner, 1988, p. 31)

Eisner elaborated on the practices of evaluation within DBAE to include evaluation of the curriculum, pedagogy, and the learning outcomes. What the students learn and student engagement with the learning were important in DBAE evaluation because “… there is much concern with the process through which the child is engaged in his work as in the outcomes of that process” (Eisner, 1988, p. 33). He compared how engagement in learning would look: “it is one thing to see a classroom filled with children who mechanically and dutifully complete the assigned tasks and quite another to
see a classroom where children are immersed in activities that are genuinely meaningful to them” (Eisner, 1988, p. 33).

In a report nine years later, also commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Trust, Brent Wilson (1997) explained in *The Quiet Evolution* that assessment had been challenging to implement. Authentic performance assessment was the goal with some of the regional institute grant (RIG) programs developing “… innovative portfolio assessment processes and … comprehensive units of instruction with embedded assessment” (Wilson, 1997, p. 133). Unfortunately, “… the systematic approach to student assessment in the RIG programs cannot be considered a success” (Wilson, 1997, p. 134). It became evident that assessment training from institutes were not translating to assessment of student learning in the DBAE classrooms even to the point that the RIGs with the most resources in assessment had the least amount of assessment of student performance (Wilson, 1997).

In a journal article on assessment of student learning, Gentile & Murnyack (1989) viewed the four domain roles of DBAE “… provid[ing] extra challenges to the teacher for evaluating students” (p. 33). A focus on performances of the novice learner was needed where “… students must practice components of a skill and get feedback from the teacher before being required to do more complex projects” (Gentile & Murnyack, 1989, p. 33). Gentile and Murnyack (1989) also supported the need for assessment feedback by giving comments that were specific on what was correct, how to correct errors, information on progress, and not just offering praise or vague comments such as “good, can do better, or lacks perspective” (1989, p. 34). They also clarified that grades were not sufficient feedback (Gentile & Murnyack, 1989).
Michael Day (1985) presented several components of evaluation of student learning in DBAE. With a goal of becoming more effective, the art teacher needed to ask and act upon the answers of reflective questions about the impact of instructional pace, content, and if student learning was improved more by group or individual work (Day, 1985). For the evaluation of student learning, all four aspects of DBAE with different assessment tools were used to evaluate the different kinds of learning of the art students (Day, 1985).

In the studio production, the specific technical skills learned could be evaluated specifically as well, such as if the art student “… can construct a coil pot that will hold water without leaking” (Day, 1985, p. 235). These kinds of skills can be measured easily with the results of progress shared with the students so they can learn from their success or failure (Day, 1985). For art history, the evaluation tool needed to be tailored to suit the learning objective and instructional strategies used (Day, 1985). If the instruction were focused on the students learning a specific style or time period in art through visuals, then—after instruction—evaluation of student learning through presenting images from within and outside of that style would be appropriate (Day, 1985).

Language was a consideration for assessing students’ learning in the DBAE domains of aesthetics and criticism. Matching the instructional content, mode, and evaluation to the approaches used by professional of a domain was a component of DBAE (Day, 1985). Since professionals working in aesthetics use language to question and discuss the philosophies of art, assessing a student’s learning in aesthetics would be based in language (Day, 1985). The student’s language in their written and oral work would be evaluated as well how well each student could “… justify their conclusions at
levels of sophistication appropriate for their ages” (Day, 1985, p. 237). For checking the students’ understanding and use of criticism techniques, language was also a component of the evaluation of student learning though their verbal and written responses to art (Day, 1985). The concepts in Day’s article are addressed again later in this section as the article was openly criticized in *Creative and Mental Growth*.

Debates about evaluation, testing, and assessment in the visual arts were found in the literature in the 1980s. One topic of debate was the issue of large-scale testing in the arts presented in a 1986 issue of *Design for Arts in Education*. Brent Wilson (1986) asserted that the key to educational reform in art education was centralized testing at the state level to drive curriculum reform. In the article following Wilson’s in the journal issue, Karen Hamblen (1986) expressed concern that testing in art would limit and weaken the curriculum to what was easily tested—like formalist content—resulting in art teachers focusing on teaching what was tested. She continued her theme in other articles during the 1980s including the testing trends in general education (Hamblen, 1987) and cautioned against using testing in art as a means to legitimize it in education (Hamblen, 1988).

Another juxtaposition of opinions was in a 1989 issue *Studies in Art Education* presenting a supporter of assessment next to a skeptic of assessment in visual art. Howard Gardner (1989) discussed an overview of Arts PROPEL, including several assessment considerations because “assessment of learning is crucial in the arts” (p. 77). Assessments needed to reflect the art domain involved, therefore the assessments needed both to measure central and pivotal components to that art, and to assess with tools that matched the art: an artistic skill was assessed through art (Garner, 1989). Arts PROPEL viewed...
assessment as a “... cooperative enterprise involving artists, teachers, administrators, researchers, and the students themselves” (Garner, 1989, p. 77). Working on projects over time, students were able to reflect on feedback and discussions about their work, fostering their learning to think artistically (Gardner, 1989).

In the same issue of *Studies in Art Education*, in an article immediately following Gardner’s, Irving Kaufman (1989) also addressed evaluation and assessment, but with a very different tone. Kaufman (1989) strongly questioned the purpose of evaluation in art education seeing it as means for checking for conformity and likening it to “… high minded Nielson rating” (p. 88):

Though we lend credence to the faculty of intuition, we fetter it with frumpish assessments. Can we not at some point leave well enough alone and trust to the inherent joys, delight, and wonders we all agree reside in art? (Kaufman, 1989, p. 88)

Kaufman (1989) predicted that evaluation in art education would create a jargon-speaking cadre of art evaluators communicating only with each other rather than with an art teacher (p. 88).

A one-sided debate on assessment appeared in the eighth and last edition of *Creative and Mental Growth* (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). The section on grading children’s art, for the most part, was similar to previous editions, but there were two notable differences. First, this edition equated evaluation with rewards, gold stars, best picture distinctions, and grading with the suggested consideration that any of these were disruptive to the learning process (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987, p. 175). The second addition to the eighth edition was a commentary on the work of other art educators who
had written about evaluation in art education. Citing Ralph Hoepfner’s (1984) article on evaluating children’s art and Michael Day’s (1985) article on evaluation of student art in DBAE, *Creative and Mental Growth* stated “… there are some people in the arts who feel that evaluation of students is important” (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987, p. 175–176).

In the journal article that Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) referenced, Hoepfner (1984) addressed evaluation in art education from the standpoint of the art teacher systematically checking on the student’s attainment of goals with a focus on testing. Hoepfner (1984) did not address growth as the organic experience of a child (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987), but rather growth as measured by the attainment of goals. Day’s (1985) article about several components of evaluation of student learning in DBAE was presented earlier in this section.

Without stating DBAE, Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) stated disagreement with the premise that art was a discipline. They also disagreed with sequential instruction in art and monitoring students progress towards meeting goals set for them. “This is rather sad since those who subscribe to such evaluation—and sometimes school administrators feel this way too—do not understand the essence of art or the importance of this area to the children’s growth” (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987, p. 176).

**Literature of Assessment in Art Education of the 1990s.**

There was a large jump in the amount of literature around assessment in visual art in the 1990s with nearly 75 journal articles and books along with the March 1994 issue of the *Art Education* journal dedicated to assessment. Topics addressed in the 1990s included reporting on the national standards, research projects, state-level projects, international views, and the role of the art teacher in assessment.
The decade of the 1990s produced the largest number of books written on assessment in art education of any decade reviewed. As an outcome of a 1990 conference in The Netherlands, Boughton, Eisner, and Ligtvoet (1996) were editors of *Evaluating and Assessing The Visual Arts In Education: International Perspectives*. Another text from the 1990s, that was also an outgrowth of a conference on assessment in the arts, was *Measuring Up to the Challenge* (Mitchell, 1994). Carmen Armstrong (1994) wrote *Designing Assessment in Art*, which included how to design assessment tools. Donna Kay Beattie (1997a) wrote *Assessment in Art Education*, which was filled with assessment tools for assessing a variety of student learning and products. *Taking Full Measure* by Dennie Palmer Wolf and Nancy Pistone (1991) focused on assessment strategies to increase the critical thinking skills of secondary-level art students. Assessment was also a topic included in the grade span anthologies published by NAEA (Henry, 1990; Katter & Stewart, 1996).

The collective term arts was used frequently in the literature about assessment in the 1990s (Boughton et al., 1996; Colwell, 1998; Davis, 1993; Eisner, 1996; Gardner, 1996; MacGregor, 1992; Mitchell, 1994; Ross, Radnor, Mitchell, & Bierton, 1993; Wolf & Pistone, 1991). Within the arts descriptor, visual arts was included with drama, dance, music, and in some cases creative writing.

The terms accountability, authentic, evaluation, and assessment were used frequently in the art education literature of the 1990s where “the educational reform movement has brought new meaning to them” (Colwell, 1998, p. 29). Eisner (1994) observed that the term assessment was now replacing evaluation (Eisner, 1994). Wilson (1992) described the early 1990s in a “… current flurry of assessment” (p. 34). Part of
this flurry could have been the 1997 NAEP Arts testing (Day, 1998; Eisner, 1999). Material about the 1997 administration of the NAEP Arts was presented earlier in this section.

Work on developing national standards in the arts started in 1991 (NAEA, 1994). The National Art Education Association—along with other arts associations in music, dance, and theatre—formed a consortium to develop voluntary standards in the arts to reflect directive of the Federal Goals 2000: Educate ACT (NAEA, 1994). The standards—for students in grade spans of K–4, 5–8, and 9–12 grades—included two achievement levels: Proficient and Advanced (NAEA, 1994). The standards were presented as means of making a difference by “… powerfully addressing … two fundamental issues that pervades all of education—quality and accountability. Standards were to help ensure that the study of the arts is disciplined and well focused and that arts instruction has a point of reference for assessing its results” (NAEA, 1994, p. 5). The standards and assessment were also linked because the standards offered, “… for the first time in American education, a foundation for educational assessment on a student-by-student basis” (NAEA, 1994, p. 6). The NAEA standards document ended with a concern about implementation of the standards: “in the end, truly successful implementation can come about only when the students and their learning are at the center, which means, motivating and enabling them to meet the Standards” (p. 36).

Standards turned a focus onto the role of the art teacher. Reflecting the concern for implementation of the standards, professional development for new teachers entering the field and for those already teaching art was advocated because “… it is impossible to teach what one does not know” (NAEA, 1994, p. 12). Holding students to higher
standards that were clearly defined and seeing assessment and instruction as linked practices necessitated the implementation of the new standards and their use (Mitchell, 1994). To use the new standards in the arts with assessments, arts teachers needed to gain new skills and perhaps change beliefs (Mitchell, 1994). Art teachers were reticent to assess student learning in the arts because they feel unprepared (Zerull, 1990). There were some art educators dubious of the standards movement in the arts, questioning the implementation (Jones, 1994) or likening the implementation to the emperor’s new clothes (Ross, 1994).

Research projects in the 1990s provided insight into assessment in art education. Robert Stake, Liora Bresler, and Linda Mabry (1991) presented findings of their research of elementary level arts teachers. Along with many other aspects of the arts classroom, grading and evaluation were lenses of observation (Stake et al., 1991). Bresler (1991) stated that an aspect of the study was drawn from the researchers’ expectations that “… teacher beliefs about art to be intimately related to practice” (p. 82). She found the beliefs of art as satisfaction, as therapeutic, and as unique expression were reflected in the art teachers’ lack of evaluation as seen during her classroom observations (Bresler, 1991, p. 82). A quote from one of the art teachers about grading can also apply to assessment, “I don’t know how you can evaluate art” (Bresler, 1991, p. 78). Her findings on grading by the art teachers in her research study can apply to assessment, as well:

The reservations and barriers to grading art carry back to the teaching of it—the denial of criteria regarding children’s work of art … The result is the well intentioned but focused art lesson, where teaching is equivalent to presenting materials and directions. (Bresler, 1991, p. 79)
Within the summary of their full study, the researchers/authors found the students’ artwork was primarily evaluated on if directions were followed or if the task was completed (Stake et al., 1991). Comments about the work were of the art teachers’ “… personal likes or dislikes (‘How neat,’ ‘I like that’)… with few attempts to substantiate and rarely referring to a quality in the work” (Stake et al., 1991, p. 314). Yet, the art teachers in the study “… maintained there was no criteria for evaluation” and held the “… notion that art could not and should not be evaluated” (Stake et al., 1991, p. 315).

A study from Malcolm Ross, Hilary Radnor, Sally Mitchell, and Cathy Bierton (1993) researched arts teachers and students regularly sitting down together in sharing assessment conversations. The authors advocated empowering art students by giving them a seat at the assessment table with reflective talk about their own work, which provided access for the teacher to see what the student knew and into how the student conceived and made judgments about the artwork (Ross et al., 1993). Without these conversations to gain insight into the thinking and processing of the art student, the authors saw a frequent and problematic stance of subjectivity of assessment due to the art teacher working primarily outside of the student’s expressive actions (Ross et al., 1993).

At the beginning of their study, the authors found the art teachers had an overreliance on the observable art product for assessment as well as upon “… on what [the art teachers] called ‘gut feeling’” (Ross et al., 1993, p. 20)—often amounting only to somewhat blunt expressions of the teacher’s own aesthetic preference. In a professional development component of the study the art teachers practiced assessment conversations by acting in the role of the student in talking about their own artwork with the researchers in the role of the teacher (Ross, et al., 1993).
In addition to these two research studies on art teacher’s assessment practices, other research and commentary were discussed in the 1990s. Deborah Smith-Shank (1993) found pre-service teachers’ experiences with assessment in art as a child could influence their teaching practice. Gardner (1996) saw a trend of art teachers only occasionally using assessment. He cautioned that if the arts wanted to move from being a marginalized discipline to attaining a more serious consideration, assessment could not continue to be stalled; “the question is not longer, ‘shall we assess?’ but rather, ‘how shall we assess?’” (Gardner, 1996, p. 141).

Michael Parsons (1996) asserted that “… good teaching requires assessment and it is too little present in teaching art today” (p. 56). Colwell (1998) purported that the challenges of assessment in the classroom needed to be addressed during pre-service training where most teachers of all content areas receive little training in assessment, with the results of a study showing pre-service arts teachers receiving even less. Colwell (1998) asserted that arts teachers need to learn about assessment during their student teacher placement yet harbored concerns about potential lack of understanding of assessment held by the cooperating teacher. Eisner (1994) saw a role of “… assessment is to provide … feedback to teachers on the quality of their professional work” (p. 202). “What makes a lesson fly or flop may be due to the way in which information is provided, the way a teacher defines tasks for students, or by the way in which a teacher responds to student’s questions” (Eisner, 1994, p. 202). Reflecting on these observations can lead to better teaching (Eisner, 1994).

At the state level, there were several assessment actions addressed in the literature. F. Robert Sabol (1997) analyzed the visual arts achievement tests in the U.S.
At the time, 12 states reported testing and a broad range content of test items with primarily multiple-choice formats. In the California Art Education Association Portfolio project, art teacher participants collaboratively developed purposes of a portfolio for the art students (Taylor, 1991). The Illinois Art Education Association created a manual on assessment in the visual arts (Smith-Shank & Hausman, 1994). In 1996, the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education initiated a project called the Ohio Arts Education Assessment to create assessments for the state arts curriculum, produced a guide (*The Power of Arts Assessment in Teaching and Learning*), and increased understanding about assessment through professional development workshops that, by 2000, had influenced over 14,000 arts teachers integrating assessment into their arts classrooms (Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, 2014). The State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards Arts Education Consortium (SCASS/Arts) was a seven-year project that started in 1994 by the Council of Chief State School Officers (State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards Arts Education Consortium, 1999). The representatives from the 15 states in the project created prototype assessments in the arts that were aligned to the national standards (SCASS/Arts, 1999). These assessment tools were provided as models for developing assessments in the arts (SCASS/Arts, 1999).

The 1990s was a decade that continued discussions on accountability of art education programs and art teachers but with a turn to accountability in student learning in art education (Davis, 1993). There were also art educators acknowledging and expressing concerns around the topics of assessment, accountability, and large-scale testing in art education crossing from the 1990s and into the 2000s (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a; Bensur, 2002; Boughton, 2004; Dorn et al., 2004; Dunn, 1995; Eisner,
1996; Pistone, 2002; Soep, 2004a; Stankiewicz, 1999; Rayment, 2007a; Zimmerman, 1999). Topics specific to assessment of student learning in art education included the art teachers’ lack of understanding about uses of assessment in art education (Wilson, 1992), lack of assessment strategies in art education (McRorie, 1997), and the lack of assessment tools in art education (Davis, 1993; Frechtling, 2000). Puurula & Karppinen, (2000) expressed concerns on culture-bound assessments—where the criteria supports the majority and marginalizes the minority student populations—and hidden assessment—where the criteria is unknown to the student and is not collaboratively defined by the art teachers and students.

**Literature of Assessment in Art Education of 2000 to January 2014.**

In this period, the theories in visual art education move from DBAE towards postmodern, Visual Culture, visual literacy, and material culture along with influences of digital technology. The amount of literature on assessment in art education decreased significantly from that of the 1990s. Multiple viewpoints, measures of assessment, and voice were themes found in the literature of assessment in visual art education at this time. Additionally there were discussions on the 2008 NAEP Arts data, visual art teachers’ uses of assessment, recommendations for assessment for visual vulture experiences, the revision of the national standards in the visual arts, and assessment for learning through and with digital media and technology.

Several books about assessment in art education were published during this time frame. Three were collections of essays on issues: standards-based assessment in the arts (Taylor, 2006), a review of controversies and solutions to assessment in art and design in the United Kingdom (Rayment, 2007b), and a text of the presentations from a 2011


Teacher practices in assessment through presentation of research data on the topic were discussed in the literature with recommendations about assessment practices for the elementary art teacher and within the Visual Culture classroom. First to be discussed are survey and study findings from F. Robert Sabol (2004a, 2004b) with recommendations and Stanley Madeja (2004). In surveying art teachers’ assessment experiences, the art teachers in his study supported assessment in art education (86%) with 82% agreeing the student’s artwork should be assessed (Sabol, 2004a, p.4). In the art teachers’ response to what criteria they used to evaluate artwork, “… the elements of art, the principles of design, composition or use of space, and creativity (94.9% each) were identified” (Sabol, 2004a, p. 7). Eighteen options were provided for the art teachers in the study to select from on how they evaluated student performance. Seventy-five percent of the art teachers’ selections included effort, improvement, growth, and classroom behavior and 50% of the art teachers’ selections included turning work in on time, cleanup, and decision making (Sabol, 2004a, p. 7).

Based on findings of another study, Madeja (2004) pointed out the differences between the art student, art teachers, and artists in their view of achievement in art:

Although 90 percent of the teachers surveyed considered the elements of principles of design to be essential in learning art, both artists and students
thought that getting better at making art should be the most important goal in art learning. (p. 3)

From this same study, Sabo (2004b) recommended applying the criteria artists use to evaluate their own artwork in students artwork performance assessments.

The second discussion on art teacher practices of assessment is from Richard Siegesmund (2002). He made recommendations on changing some practices of the elementary art teacher based on the need of accountability and showing evidence of student learning in art thus showing a value for art. He advocated for the visual art teacher “… to find coherent ways of assessing, measuring, and presenting information on student learning beyond simply displaying artwork in the hallway” (Siegesmund, 2002, p. 25). He stated in a time of accountability in the schools, “… the art classroom cannot remain its own excluded universe, where the ‘good’ art teacher simply assuages emotional wounds” (Siegesmund, 2002, p. 24). For without showing evidence of student learning, visual art will not be considered valuable “when art is simply treated as a special place of refuge …” (Siegesmund, 2002, p. 27).

Lastly, Kerry Freedman discussed teacher practices of assessment of art within a Visual Culture (2003) and visual knowledge (2013) classroom. The art teacher’s assessment of an artwork is based on and compared to the large collection of student artworks in the art teacher’s memory (Freedman, 2013) resulting in “assessment of art is not a matter of being ‘subjective’ or ‘objective’, it is a matter of responding to evidence” (Freedman, 2013, p. 180). But, the art teacher’s personal preferences are not the sole basis of any assessment but part of the classroom and community dialogue where “… the communal value of any particular work of art is socially and culturally constructed”
Group assessment, supported by student self- and peer-assessment, can be used to reflect and support collaborative projects and cooperative learning (Freedman, 2013).

Other topics in the literature of assessment in art education from 2000 through January 2014 included stakeholders in assessment, the NAEP Arts, and recommendations for the future of large-scale testing in the visual arts. Multiple assessment measures for accountability for a variety of stakeholders were recommended for consideration (Brewer, 2008; Davis-Soylu, Peppler & Hickey, 2011; Dorn, 2002) including the voice of the art teacher through involvement in the development of assessments at the local and state levels (Dorn, 2002). Creating district-wide assessments in art with rich tasks that tie curriculum and instruction with challenging assessments was recommended as a means to be accountable in light of external assessments from No Child Left Behind (Beattie, 2006).

In 2008, the second administration of the NAEP Arts test occurred with about 3,900 eighth graders (NAEP, 2014b) from approximately 220 public and 30 private schools from across the U.S. taking the exam (NAEP, 2014d). The students were given prompts—ranging from what NAEP Arts referred to as easy, medium, and hard—and selected and constructed response questions (NAEP, 2014c). For example, a set of prompts for the students was based on images of self-portraits by artists Käthe Kollwitz and Egon Schiele (NAEP, 2014d). The student prompts included a hard multiple-choice question on technical similarity between the portraits (NAEP, 2014c), a medium difficulty constructed response of writing descriptions about the Kollwitz’s charcoal drawing (NAEP, 2014c), an easy task of creating their own self-portrait showing
something about their personality using their choice of oil pastels or charcoal pencil on white paper and the optional use of a mirror (NAEP, 2014c), and a hard constructed response for the student, to write about what they were trying to tell about themselves, using details from their drawing (NAEP, 2014c).

Information about the NAEP Arts included discussion of the results from the 2008 tests (Wilson, 2010), large-scale assessment (Persky, 2004), the assessment framework from the National Assessment Governing Board (2008), applying NAEP Arts strategies for developing a rubric for assessment middle level student’s art (Siegesmund et al., 2001), and secondary data analyses of segments of results from the of 1997 NAEP visual Arts exam (Burton, 2001a; Sabol, 2001b). The next administration of NAEP Arts test is scheduled for 2016 (NAEP, 2014a).

Digital media and digital technology were discussed in the literature in consideration for both assessing and learning digital media and for large-scale assessment employing digital technology. How to assess learning through digital environments (Stokrocki, 2011) such as the three-dimensional multi-user environments virtual realities like Second Life (Salmon, 2009) were raised. The use of digital technology for assessment in art education was offered in the literature with virtual world software for authentic, large-scale assessment (Taylor, 2014a) and hypertext-based connected computer webs (Taylor, 2014b). At the conclusion of his survey of the history of standardized testing in the visual arts, Madeja (2013) called for the professional organizations in the visual arts to lead in actively pursuing the development of evaluation systems in the visual arts for accountability and advocacy for art education that would include the use of new technologies.
The portfolio was the most-often discussed assessment tool or strategy in the art education assessment literature in the time frame from 2000 until January 2014. Studies on portfolios for assessment included secondary students in Canada, The Netherlands, and England (Blaikie, Schönau, & Steers, 2003, 2004); electronic portfolios for assessment in Taiwanese elementary school (Kuan-Cheng, Shn-Huey, Hung, & Ding-Ming, 2006); three-state research K–12 project in the U. S. (Dorn, 2003; Dorn et al., 2004; Madeja, 2004); and secondary school students in Florida and Indiana (Dorn & Sabol, 2006). Portfolio considerations included multiple uses for the variety of images in the portfolio (Boughton, 2005, 2013; Dorn, 2003; Eça, 2005; Gruber, 2008;), a portfolio assessment as a K–12 project called Models for Assessing Art Performances (Dorn, 2003), and the use of technology with digital portfolios (Boughton, 2004, 2005; Dorn et al., 2004; Dorn & Sabol, 2006; Fitzsimmons, 2008; Kuan-Cheng et al., 2006; Madeja, 2004).

Concerns and commentary about assessment in visual art education continued. Drawing from feminist theory of epistemological differences, Springgay (2006) argued against all kinds assessment in art including portfolio assessment. The NAEA Journal of Social Theory in Art Education (JSTAE, 2013) coined a word—assessination—as commentary on assessment in a call for papers for an upcoming, yet to be published, volume on “Growth, Learning, Assessment, and Assessination” (p. 10). Questions posed in the announcement for submissions pondered,

the utility of assessment in the art room … what advantages of the imminent changes in assessment in the visuals might bring or will these measures result
in the further dismantlement—assessination—of the unique learning that only the visual arts can facilitate? (JSTAE, 2013, p. 10)

The imminent changes alluded to in that call for papers could be tied to the revision of the standards in art education. As emphasis in general education turned from No Child Left Behind to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and mathematics, in due course, the literature art education included the melding of art education, assessment, and the CCSS (Franco & Unrath, 2014).

As for educational standards in the visual arts, 2011–2014 was the timeframe of the development of revised national standards in arts education called the Next Generation standards. As visual arts writing team member Olivia Gude explained the process of developing the Next Generation standards, the writing team members “… constantly asked ourselves, ‘Is this assessable?’” (Sweeny, 2014, p. 8). As noted in Chapter One, the release of the Next Generation standards and the model cornerstone assessments is slated for June 2014 (NCCAS, 2014a).

There was a trend in the most recent literature in assessment in art education around formative assessment. There was motion from away from assessing only the final art product (Sweeny, 2014). Even though Gruber (2008) used the accountability legislation of No Child Left Behind as a reason for measuring learning, he provided several examples of formative assessment for assessing learning in art education. Through suggested formative assessment tools using text, images, and numbers along with data collection strategies, Dennis Inhulsen (2013) encouraged art teachers to gather assessment data for leading conversations about student growth in art education with their school administrators. To model assessment throughout a unit, the draft cornerstone
assessment template tied to the New Generation standards suggested that ongoing assessments can include student presentation, reflective writing, discussions, and artwork (NCCAS, 2014b). Professional development for art teachers to understand and use formative assessment of student learning can bring a change from art teachers reticent to do any assessment or only focusing on the final product to art teachers embracing informative, on-going assessment with their students (Andrade et al., 2014).

This closes this survey on the history of assessment practices of visual art education. Covering 2,200 years of assessment, evaluation, and testing in art education, there were several threads carried through this history. Tests—for placement and accountability, developed and used by programs, districts, and states—were found and continued with national testing in the visual arts. Observation and portfolios were two of the first assessment tools found in the history of assessment in art education and these remain in the literature today. Concerns and commentary about even having standards, testing, grading, and assessment in art education was found staring in the literature of 1940s. Parallel were concerns the art teachers were using only their own aesthetic or personal preferences in the evaluation or assessment of their students’ artwork. At the same time, there were also art educators advocating for assessment as a means to improve student achievement, for advocacy for the arts with general education, and for student learning.

Over the years there have been more calls for assessment strategies and lists of tools than explanations on how to apply those assessment techniques in practice. There have been recommendations on including the student in the assessment process through interviews, self-assessment, conversations, and portfolio assessment. Training in
assessment for pre-service and professional development in-service training has also been consistently under consideration. The thread of using assessment in art education as a means to improve student learning has been intertwined with grading, evaluation, standards, large-scale testing, and accountability for centuries. These six intertwined threads have slowly separated in the art education literature into six different purposes.

In the next section, the specifics on the processes and tools for assessing student learning in art education from the art education literature are presented. This includes the best practices of assessment of student learning found in the literature of assessment in art education.

**Literature on Assessment of Student Learning in Art Education**

This section on assessment of student learning in art education takes a different tact than the historical view presented in the last section. Presented in this section is information from the literature of assessment in art education about what art educators describe assessment to be, and the considerations, purposes, and practices of assessment. This set of practices will also be addressed in Chapter Five.

**Definitions of Assessment.**

As found in the history of assessment in art education, terms about assessment, measurement, and evaluation have been used to discuss how to determine a student’s grasp of art education concepts. Evaluation is “… the process educators use to determine the quality and significance of student performance …” (Lankford, 1992, p. 78) that results in a judgment of value, merit, or worth (Beattie, 1997a; Eisner, 1996). In contrast, “measurement is an activity aimed at quantifying qualities; it has to do with matters of amount or magnitude as described with reference to some arbitrary standard” (Eisner,
The process of grading reduces the information from evaluation down into a symbol (Eisner, 1996) for reporting purposes.

The focus of this research study is assessment which can be defined as “… an estimate of the extent to which a student has met a criterion or objective” (MacGregor, 1992, p. 35) within an episode of learning (Wolf & Pistone, 1991). Katter (1999) saw assessment working along with curriculum and instruction, like a three-legged stool; when each of the legs—objectives, delivery, and assessment—has equal emphasis and balance, the resultant art education supports the student. Assessment of student learning is foundational practice in working towards quality in arts education (Seidel et al., 2009).

These three terms—performance, authentic, or alternative—are each used to describe assessments that required the art student to apply real-world strategies and practices such as performances, critiques, and personal reflection (Saraniero, 2014b) where “meaningful evidence of learning is sought” (Armstrong, 1994, p.53) without the traditional paper and pencil testing structure (Beattie, 1997a). Authentic assessment is meaningful within the learning context (Rudner & Boston, 1994).

In performance assessments, the students create their own responses rather than selecting from options such as in a multiple-choice test (Rudner & Boston, 1994). Within a multiple-choice test, the process by which the student arrived at the selection of an answer is not known; answers could be based on the student’s knowledge, guessing, or misunderstanding (Rudner & Boston, 1994). But in a performance assessment, the student’s knowledge or skills are demonstrated (Rudner & Boston, 1994). The performance assessment is a direct reflection of the intended outcomes where, instead of
testing the understanding of a process, the student actually performs that process as the assessment (Rudner & Boston, 1994).

In The *Arts and the Creation of Mind*, Eisner (2002) noted that “art educators have until quite recently escaped the narrowing influences of formal assessment and evaluation, and many would like to keep it that way” (p. 179). He listed misconceptions of why assessment and evaluation have not been welcomed concepts in art education.

- Assessment is grounded in judging the quality of a student’s work and judgment is obstacle in opening up creativity.

- Assessment and evaluation indicate measurement and measurement is seen as not compatible with art.

- Assessment and evaluation focus on the products of students while many art educators value the process over the product.

- Assessment has ties to testing and many in art education see no place for standardized testing where the preferred outcomes are far from uniform.

- Grading is associated with assessment, and evaluation and grading in art education is irrelevant and harmful especially to young art students.


Eisner (2002) countered this list of what he described as misconceptions embedded in fears with clarifying explanations about assessment and evaluation in art education.

- For a teacher to determine if a student understands, is engaged, or what to include in comments to a student is all judgment (pp. 179–180). Judgment—as well as assessment and evaluation—are critical aspects of teaching.
But making a judgment differs from sharing a judgment; clear and sensitive communication is needed to support learning not thwart it.

- The assumption that measurement is required for assessment and evaluation is wrong (p. 180). Measurement deals with magnitude and “measures of magnitude are descriptions of quantity” (p. 180). Assessment and evaluation “… ask about the merits of something” (p. 180). “We evaluate without measuring and we measure without evaluating (p. 180). Giving the size of a painting is measurement while “if I say the painting is a fine example of someone’s work, I am evaluating but not measuring” (p. 180).

- “Both the process and products can be assessed and evaluated” (p. 181). There are a myriad of characteristics in how a student works in art that can be observed and evaluated by the teacher. If the student’s work is looked at over time, “… what we now regard as the products of that work is really a part of a larger process” as “… markers along a journey” (p. 181). It is somewhat artificial to draw the distinction between process and product because “… what counts as process and what counts as product depends on how we look at it” (p. 181).

- Tests are not a requirement for evaluation and assessment (p. 181). Art teachers make evaluations everyday without the use of tests “… by looking at a student’s portfolio or observing the student at work; a test is not necessary” (p. 181).
• Assessments and evaluations do not need to result in a grade; “… they might, but they need not …” (p. 181). Grading reduces or pools judgments into symbolic representation of the merits of a student’s work (p. 181). But judgments about a student’s work can result into “… a conversation with a student about his or her work; the giving of a grade is not a necessary consequence of assessment and evaluation …” (Eisner, 2002, p. 181).

What Can Be Assessed in Visual Art Education.

Assessing an art student’s understanding is a multi-faceted challenge (Koroscik, 1992). Both the products and processes of learning in art education need to be assessed (Beattie, 1997a; Zimmerman, 1997). To understand the learning that students have acquired during their visual art education instruction, the art teacher can assess their learning of art content, skills, and behaviors (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a). The skills and behaviors include metacognition, handling of tools and materials, affect, critical thinking, analysis, collaborating with others, independent work, and creative skills (Beattie, 1997a). Creating an assessment that asks the students to use taught information in a situation different or new from the situation during instruction is a means of checking for learning through the application of higher-order critical thinking skills (Beattie, 1997a). Using a variety of assessments to gather information through the visuals, words, and numbers of art can demonstrate student growth (Inhulsen, 2013). Next Generation visual arts standards writing team member Olivia Gude explained in an interview what is not solely assessed in art education:

It’s not our job as art teachers to assess student artwork. … It is our job as art teachers to assess student learning [emphasis in original]. Many in the field
of art education have perhaps become too complacent about using the finished artwork as the only evidence of student learning. (Sweeny, 2014, p. 10)

The students’ content knowledge, processes, and skills are assessed within an art education classroom and through a means based on the philosophical stance of the program (Zimmerman, 1997). Literature that addressed the assessment of student learning in art were from several eras reflecting a focus on the child’s creative growth (Lowenfeld, 1947, 1952, 1957; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964, 1970, 1987), Discipline Based Art Education Based (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a; Day, 1985; Eisner, 1988; Fullan, 1999; Gentile & Murnyack, 1989; Wilson, 1997), and Visual Culture (Boughton, 2005; Freedman, 2003). The assessment of the selected and representative content, skills, and behavior needs to be an authentic reflection of the art education disciplines and means (Beattie, 1997a).

Assessment in art education can occur as part of promotion or certification (Boughton, 1996; 2013) such as in Australia (Beattie, 1997b; Boughton, 1997) and in New Zealand (Boughton, 1997); and as part of examinations in England (Allison, 1977; Boughton, 1997; Carline, 1968; Cunliffe, 2005, 2008; Hickman, 2007; Steers, 2013; Swift & Steers, 2006; Wilson, 1996), Scotland and Wales (Wilson, 1996), The Netherlands (Beattie, 1992, 1997; Boughton, 1996; Schönau, 1994, 1996; Wilson, 1996), Hungary (Kárpáti, 1995, 2013), and Finland (Laitinen, 2013). Specific assessments can be part of a high school art student’s specialized program through the Advanced Placement (AP) Program (Blaikie, 1994; Graham & Sims-Gunzenhauser, 2009) in Studio Art in drawing, 2-D art, or 3-D art (College Board, 2011) or Art History (College Board, 2012); or as part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (Blaikie,
The visual art education literature on assessment contained explanations of the process of moderation could be a part of these high school programs. Moderators or examiners from outside the art classroom compare the secondary level art student’s work to the stated expectations are used several countries—including Australia, New Zealand, and Britain—as well as by the IB program (Blaikie, 1994; Boughton, 1996, 2013; IBO, 2014b; MacGregor, 1992; Wilson, 1996). Moderators are used in these secondary or end of high school system-wide assessment programs “… to adjust marks or ensure an equitable distribution among all participating schools” (MacGregor, 1992, p. 36.).

Considerations in Selecting or Creating Assessment Strategies and Tools.

Lowenfeld (1952) opened his section on evaluation with this guidance: “… in evaluating the creative products of children, we must first of all consider the purpose for which we intend to evaluate the child’s work” (p. 26). Lowenfeld (1957) saw determining the purpose of the assessment as the first step in the evaluation, such as “… gaining insight into the child’s growth …;” understanding the student’s experiences; and checking the work for the student’s strengths, weaknesses, “… skillfulness or his lack of skill …,” or creative abilities and interests (p. 43). Functions of assessment can be clarified by both what is assessed and the uses of the information (Eisner, 1996, p. 5). The aim in developing assessment tools should be for them to serve multiple purposes (Parsons, 1996, p. 56). Assessments in art education can reveal the important dimensions of “knowing-that and knowing-how—the knowledge of cases and the knowledge of processes” (Parsons, 1996, p. 66).
The selection of the assessment tool—as directed by the standards or district and, created or found by the art teacher—is based upon the decisions of what selected components need to be assessed, how often, and in what way (Beattie, 1997a), the integration of assessment, curriculum, and instruction (Katter, 1999; Popovich, 2006), and upon how will the assessment data be used. In creating assessments that illuminate evidence of learning, there needs to be a match between what evidence is being sought and the assessment tool to be used (Armstrong, 1994; Dilmac, 2013). The choice of the assessment tool needs to match the content and skills taught, reflect the level of the students, and fit smoothly into the teaching and learning in art class (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a) and not disrupt or drive teaching (Beattie, 1997a). The assessment process must consider the student’s chronological age and experiential age with art as well as learning needs (Beattie, 1997a; Eisner, 1988; Jameson, 1968). Assessment in art education needs to be manageable in balancing the number of students taught and selecting what is representational of the art education program to be assessed (Dorn, 1998).

**Equity Issues and Appropriateness in Visual Art Assessment.**

Issues of equity fairness need to be considered and addressed (Armstrong, 1997; Beattie, 1994; Rudner & Boston, 1994; Smith-Shank, 1994; Zimmerman, 1997). When designed and well implemented, assessments used in art education “… can be democratic, multicultural, inclusive, and just” (Smith-Shank, 1994, p. 6). Art teachers need to be aware of fairness issues in the construction and uses of assessments. Verbal—oral or written—performance assessment “… tasks can place a significant linguistic demand on students” (Rudner & Boston, 1994, p. 10). Zimmerman (1997) asserted the
assessment might privilege those from Western cultures and marginalize others, “… if authentic assessments are not sensitive to pluralistic issues …” (p. 164). The design of assessments also needs to take into account the resources available to art students in both different socio-economic experiences as well as rural, urban, and suburban locales (Zimmerman, 1997). The criteria used needs to be considered as not marginalize any students (Puurula & Karppinen, 2000). Art teachers also need to be aware that there also might be a difference in art students’ familiarity with assessment formats (Rudner & Boston, 1994).

**Validity and Reliability.**

The validity and reliability of the assessment criteria and tools need to be considered by the art teacher (Zimmerman, 1997). The validity of an assessment is about accuracy of the assessment tool in gathering evidence that is relevant to the purpose and use of the results (Zimmerman, 1997). The questions or tasks in a test or assessment need to reflect the range and scope of the knowledge, skills, and processes within the curriculum content (Sabol, 1997). The closer an assessment matches the course content, the higher the validity of that assessment and the accuracy of the assessment of the achievement of the art students (Sabol, 1997). Beattie (1997a) offered examples of validity concerns in art assessment of when an art teacher wonders if the test she designed will really tell her what she wants to know about the progress of her students, if a test is fair, or if that art history essay test is straightforward.

Content validity looks at how well the assessment reflects the course content. Therefore “… tests with high content validity represent the topics, cognitive processes, and behaviors of a given course or unit” (Sabol, 1997, p. 140). In discussing standardized
testing in the arts, Sabol (1997) stated, “unless careful examination of content validity is done, it is likely that the test will not measure what is being taught” (p. 141). The reliability of the assessment is about consistency. The repeated outcomes of a reliable assessment taken by a student would have similar results or the results of equally trained art teachers judging “… the same art works and using the same criteria would similarly rate the products” (Armstrong, 1994, p. 80).

**Art Teacher as Artist.**

In their book on assessment in the arts, Dennie Palmer Wolf and Nancy Pistone (1991) illustrated the benefit of the art teacher making her own art through this quote from Walter Askin about what happens when the art teacher is not a working artist:

> What happens is that the art teachers move further and further away from doing their own work. The students become their medium and the teachers get better and better at designing assignments, prescribing the materials, insisting on format … they end up stealing back from the students all the available choices. Teachers end up saying, “you need a little more blue in the upper left there … yeah. Right there … a little brighter … right.” (p. 47)

Another consideration about the role of the art teacher as artist in assessing student learning is the application of technical knowledge. While the art teacher as artist knows the technical aspects of making art and how it feels when art media does not respond as desired, she or he may not be able to turn this experiential personal knowledge of making art into insightful assessments of their primary level art students (Hopper, 2007).
Best Practices in Assessment Processes, Tools, and Uses

These assessment tools and strategies were gleaned from the historical through current art education literature of assessment. This list includes practices that have been used for centuries in art education and others that are more recently infused in the art education assessment practices. These were selected due to frequency in the art education literature as well as for being considered best practices in assessment within the literature of assessment of general education.

Art teachers use a variety of assessment strategies with “each tool honed to its particular purposes” (Wolf & Pistone, 1991, p. 8). A range of assessment tools and techniques should be used to gather information about student progress in art (De Francesco, 1954; Inhulsen, 2013). Gathering enough information is important: “most of us conclude too much on the basis of quite inadequate data” (D’Amico, 1937, p. 2). Assessment in art education is just not tacked on to the end of a unit or as a result of an afterthought but rather “assessment should drive the design of the curriculum rather than be treated as a hitchhiker” (Taylor, Carpenter, Ballengee-Morris, & Sessions, 2006, p. 142). Assessment is ongoing and continuous, not just appearing “… like a jack-in-the-box, at the end of a term or a year” (Wolf & Pistone, 1991, p. 9). Because of this continuous nature, art students can use the assessment information provided “… to reflect on their own performance and to plow back the criticism into their work” (Wolf & Pistone, 1991, p. 9). “Assessments designed to focus on the process of making, from early ideas to fully developed work, can function as formative assessments.” (Gude as interviewed by Sweeny, 2014, p. 10). Any assessment tools or criteria need to be shared with the students at the beginning (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2014a).
According to Victor D’Amico (1937), evaluation needed to start at the beginning of the art experience. He was that most teachers “… merits evaluation as only a final step in the art experience” (D’Amico, 1937, p. 5).

**Pre-Assessment.**

Assessments done at the beginning of a term and each unit are pre-assessments (Beattie, 1997a; Inhulsen, 2013). Knowing the art students’ prior knowledge, misconceptions, misunderstandings, and preconceptions can help the art teacher build upon and mediate the knowledge during the instruction of the unit (Beattie, 1997a; Stokrocki, 2005). The educational blueprint for visual arts education in New York City (New York City Department of Education, 2007) listed the following examples of what pre-assessment may include.

- Portfolio review of last year’s work.
- Conversation with a previous teacher.
- A written questionnaire.
- A discussion to determine ability to analyze and discuss work.
- Knowledge of art vocabulary.
- An initial art project to determine skill level and understanding (p. 50).

**Sharing Exemplars or Examples of Work.**

An exemplar is an example of a component of the learning task or possible outcome of the learning assignment. Walter Sargent (1903) recommended that students see a satisfactory example of using foreshortening techniques in a drawing before they draw it. An exemplar can also be a drawing or model made specifically by the teacher for the student during the lesson as a form of teaching and assessment such as drawing an
example or technique on the “… edges of the child’s paper or on separate sheets … [to]
avoid drawing over a child’s work …” (Gerard, 1914, p. 257). As a visual resource for
high school art teachers and their students working on studio art submissions for the
Advanced Placement (AP) program, AP posts color image examples from previous years
of scored portfolios on their website (College Board, 2014a), 2-D design portfolio
(College Board, 2014b), and 3-D design portfolio (College Board, 2014c).

Portfolios.

More than a receptacle for containing artwork, the portfolio can also be an
assessment tool for multiple strategies. Portfolios are a collection of work that shows
evidence of learning across time (Barrett, 1990; Beattie, 1994; Boughton, 2013;
Castiglione, 1996; Clark, 2002; Conant & Randall, 1959; D’Amico, Wolson, & Maser,
1954; Dobbs, 1998; Dorn, 1998; Eça, 2005; Freedman, 2003; Gardner, 1989; Gitomer,
Grosh, & Price, 1992; Gruber, 2008; Hausman, 1992; Kárpáti, 1995; Luca & Kent, 1968;
Madeja, 2004; McFee, 1961; Mitchell, 1994; Puurula & Karppinen, 2000; Rudner &
Boston, 1994; Taylor, 1991; Todd, 1924; Walker, 1998; Willis, 2004; Wilson, 1992,
are also used in art education assessment (Boughton, 2004, 2005; Dorn et al., 2004; Dorn
& Sabol, 2006; Fitzsimmons, 2008; Kuan-Cheng et al., 2006; Madeja, 2004).

Looking at work over time can reveal information on progress in skill
development in art media as well as “… the student’s thinking over time and whether the
student’s visual concepts are becoming more complex and better integrated, and involve
more extensive and intensive knowledge, wider integrations, more precise perceptual
differentiations, and increasingly more knowledge and perceptual evidence” (Dorn, 1998,
Portfolios can reveal who the student artist is and what she or he is able to do (Castiglione, 1996) by “… making public the autobiography of a learner” (Wolf & Pistone, 1991, p. 42).

Portfolios can be used in formative and summative assessment and are “… the best indicators of strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the scope of the work” (Barrett, 1990, p. 311). But to arrive at an assessment, the art teacher must be knowledgeable about art and teaching and work with the student for a shared understanding of the work (Gitomer et al., 1992). The review of the art student’s work is a dynamic one where “… individual works are seen as part of a larger continuum” (Hausman, 1992, p. 4). Students can reflect on their own progress and may take the initiative to revise their own work (Wilson, 1997). “Questioning that encourages reflection lies at the heart of the portfolio interaction” (Gitomer et al., 1992, p. 9).

The mini-portfolio is a smaller collection of artwork and can provide evidence of learning based around a theme, curricular unit of study, or specific skills, which—due to its smaller scope—is recommended as an assessment approach for elementary art teachers who might have 700 students (Beattie, 1997a, p. 20).

A visual arts assessment tool that is used both internationally and in the United States is the portfolio assessment in visual art education aspects of the diploma component for high school aged student graduation through the non-profit foundation International Baccalaureate (IB) program. As of January 2014, there are just over 2,400 high schools in the world offering two levels of a high school diploma (IBO, 2014a). The visual arts subject guidelines and assessment parameters include the student’s presentation of a collection of studio work along with an investigation workbook and a
student interview with an internal or external examiner or moderator depending upon which level, Standard or Higher, of diploma the student is pursuing (IBO, 2014b).

Similar to the IB portfolio component is the Advanced Placement (AP) arts portfolio. AP classes, like IB, are taught at high school level. Unlike International Baccalaureate, AP courses are only for high schools in the United States. Successful portfolio completion can used both for high school and college credit. The AP Art Studio document (College Board, 2011) explained the required components for the art studio, two-dimensional portfolio, and three-dimensional portfolio. Quality, concentrations on a theme, and breadth of studio projects are the three sections assessed in studio portfolios. Students submit a specific combination of actual works and photographs for evaluation by trained teachers.

Another example of a programmatic use of portfolio assessment is Arts PROPEL that was discussed earlier in this chapter in the history of assessment in art education in the 1980s. In this case, the portfolio was used to assess the student’s growth over time in the process areas of production, perception, and reflection; and the name of the portfolio evolves into processfolio (Gardner, 1996).

**Journals and Sketchbooks for Assessment.**

Sketchbooks and journals are ways to check on each art student’s growth (Clark, 2002) in areas such as thinking skills, awareness, and ability to monitor their own work (Dorn, 1998). Beattie (1997a) defined these tools as “… written and visual records of student’s ideas, reflections, experiences, explorations, notes, studies, replies to teachers questions, and statements on goals and objectives” (p. 21). Student art journals can be a tool for both teaching and assessing as well as a platform for student self-assessment and
teacher-student conversations (Beattie, 1997a). A sketchbook is also a means for evidence of learning over time especially if the entries are dated and notes accompany the sketches (Barrett, 1990). The IB program requires an investigation workbook as written and visual documentation evidence of learning (IBO, 2014b). The art teacher can also keep a sketchbook for images and ideas (Da Silva, 1997), use journals or log books for keeping notes on observations (Zimmerman, 1997), or employ anecdotal records (Conant & Randall, 1959; Day & Hurwitz, 2012).

**Written Assessments.**

Along with the verbal words of the art student, the student’s written words can also be a source of assessment information (Luca & Kent, 1969). Prompting the students to write out comprehensive plans for their artwork aids in the students seeing how they will make artistic choices towards visually presenting the ideas and meaning of they intend (Schönau, 2013). The students’ words interpret the students’ artwork providing meaning and two sources of information (Parsons, 1996). Written art criticism by an art student can be assessed for descriptive, interpretive, and evaluative components (Johnson & Cooper, 1994). The written word of the art teacher can be a documentation of feedback, advice, and praise for the student (Wolf & Pistone, 1991). These notes are not written on the student’s work but on notes clipped to the work (Wolf & Pistone, 1991).

**Assessing the Studio Artwork.**

Art teachers, their students, and working artists have differing views of what criteria to use to assess a work of art (Sabol, 2004b, 2006a). To know how to proceed when working with a student, the art teacher needs to determine if the student needs feedback on the technical side of the artwork or on the aesthetic-expressive components
of the work (Eisner, 1997). There needs to be more to assessing a student’s artwork than only what is easier to assess like “… the smoothness of [a] surface and the fit of the joints in a sculpture” (Aspin, 1986, p. 41). The criteria might be to check a student’s grasp of a concept, execution of a skill, understanding of media or process, creative components, or the clarity of the message of the studio work (Sabol, 2006b). The final art product can be used as evidence of learning (Gruber, 2008) at a point in time as well as for comparison to the student’s earlier works (Hausman, 1988).

Haanstra & Schönau (2007) described an assessment cycle in art education that begins when the art student receives feedback or suggestions from the art teacher while she is working on her artwork and until the artwork is completed. With the new assignments, the assessment cycle begins again (Haanstra & Schönau, 2007). Michael J. Parsons (1996) offered that through assessment, studio learning could be clarified. “It seems unlikely that one can tell by looking at studio work whether a student has understood a particular concept or has blindly followed the teacher’s suggestion” (Parsons, 1996, p. 58).

**Classroom Tests.**

Art teachers use pencil-and-paper tests, frequently using tests from textbooks, drawn other sources, or creating their own tests (Beattie, 1997a). Tests and quizzes might be in the formats of fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, true-false, completion, matching, or essay questions (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a; Faulkner, 1940; Gruber, 1994, 2008; Newton, 1990). Classroom tests in art can be designed to assess a student’s art knowledge; appreciation; and skills in evaluation, comprehension, and analysis (Wilson, 1971). Eisner (1996) differentiated between testing and artistic process with tests.
focusing on pieces or segments from a uniform set of correct answers that are derived from the work of others, while artistic work is an idiosyncratic whole based on the artist’s individual and personal experiences. Faulkner (1940) recommended providing a photograph or art object as the stimulus for art test questions rather than wholly text-based assessment. Tests can also be part of an art education program such as the AP Art History exam that is a timed test with multiple-choice and essay questions (College Board, 2012).

**Checklists.**

Checklists are unobtrusive ways to gather information from students and a recording format for the art teacher (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a; Chapman, 1978; Gaitskell & Hurwitz, 1975; Grimes & Bordin, 1939; Inhulsen, 2013). Checklists can be used to record “… specify behaviors, characteristics, processes, or activities and a place for recording whether each is present or absent” (Beattie, 1997a, p. 60). Uses of checklists include ascertaining understanding, the acquisition of knowledge, completion of the steps in a procedure, determination if the work is complete or not, or if the required characteristics are present in the student’s work (Beattie, 1997a). Used as a recording sheet, the art teacher can employ a checklist for intentional observations (Armstrong, 1994; Chapman, 1978; Gaitskell & Hurwitz, 1975) by steering what attributes art teacher is looking for in the actions and choices of the students, thus “… bringing the evaluation process out into the open” (Grimes & Bordin, 1939, p. 1). Checklists can also be used in conjunction with other assessment strategies (Beattie, 1997a).
Critiques.

A critique is a thoughtful group discussion about the student artwork (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a; Elkins, 2011; NAEA, 2009a; Sotto, 2014; Wolf & Pistone, 1991) that is a challenging mainstay of the art studio yet there is little literature on the process (Elkins, 2011). The critique is a specific kind of discussion that can be lead by the art teacher or the students, and the student whose work is up for review might or might not talk (Elkins, 2011). Elkins (2011) asserted art teachers who are artists make the most effective teachers for a critique because of their understanding.

Elkins (2011) described several purposes of the critique including the art student getting feedback on her work towards making better or richer work, providing “… technical advice and suggestions about meaning” (p. 171), a means for the student to gain some distance from her work for a new perspective, and as a vehicle to “… inspire students to make more compelling work” (p. 159). Wolf and Pistone (1991) placed the critique in the more extensive, ongoing relationship of the art teacher observing, commenting, and discussing the secondary art student’s progress “… all designed to urge investigation and the pursuit of visual ideas” (p. 17). They cautioned that this “… is a fragile process … that can veer between discussing and imposing ideas” (Wolf & Pistone, 1991, p. 17). The critique is also used to assess artwork, the content of the student discussions, and can be used in conjunction with other assessment tools (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a).

Adding a written assessment tool to the critique can provide the art teacher with information on each student’s processing (Kobisz, 1976). It can also assist the art students in focusing attention on the criteria of the critique, aiding fluency of the student
verbal comments, helping the student in offering specific rather than global comments, and including all students—not just those who speak—in the critique process (Armstrong, 1994). For the individual student artist, “… critiques have traditionally been a way of letting students know what improvements might be made in their work” (Beattie, 1997a, p. 67).

**Art Teacher–Art Student Verbal Exchanges.**

The value of art student and art teacher talks should not be minimalized; they can be both a means for assessing student understanding (Mitchell & Ross, 1993; Ross et al., 1993) and for developing working relationships between the art teacher and student (Zimmerman, 1997). This formative assessment is the one-to-one discussion about the product or process of art “… where every interpretive and evaluative statement should find its justification in evidence available within the piece and within the pupil’s experience” (Ross et al., 1993, p. 36). Starting the conversation with the student’s appraisal of her own work then, through teacher questions based on successive student replies, the art teacher can “… encourage the pupil to question and explore” (Barrett, 1990, p. 305). If these one-to-one conversations are only didactic in the art teacher’s response to the student’s question, evaluative learning is missing (Barrett, 1990, p. 305).

“These assessment conversations are true reflections of the origin of the word ‘to assess’” which “… is derived from the Latin ad+sedere meaning to sit down together” (Mitchell & Ross, 1993, p. 2). “The purpose of the conversation was to give the pupil a voice and allow her space in which to realize, interpret and assess her own making in a shared act of compassion and contemplation” (Ross et al., 1993, p. 35) where “the assessment conversation begins and ends with the work” (Ross et al., 1993, p. 36).
Mutual understanding can arise from these ongoing assessment conversations partnerships where the art teacher’s preferences do not determine the assessment and “… the art teacher’s view is respected not meekly acquiesced to” (Ross et al., 1993, p. 164). Assessment is moved “… from the domain of the teacher’s personal preference and key it firmly into the pupil’s perception of her performance” (Ross et al., 1993, p. 54).

**Art Teacher–Art Student Interviews.**

A purpose of interviews as assessment is to provide information about an individual student’s understanding because while the artwork “… is evidence … the evidence needs to be interpreted before it can be used” and “to get to the cognitive processes that may or may not lie behind it, one needs to talk about it” (Parsons, 1996, p. 59). “An interview with the student gives the art educator insight into the understandings, feelings, attitudes, interests, and motivations of the individual student and is, therefore, an excellent strategy for gathering diagnostic information” (Beattie, 1997a, p. 68). Interviews can be the informal conversations the art teacher has with her students about their work during classroom to structured, private dialogues with individual student (Armstrong, 1994).

**Art Teacher–Art Student Group Discussions.**

In conversations with the art students, the art teacher is able to ascertain the students’ understanding and if there is any need for clarification or guidance (Barrett, 1990). These discussions can be with the whole art class or small groups and can be spontaneous or as part of the lesson (Barrett, 1990). Also during these discussions, the art teacher can check for evidence of learning in the art students’ processes and products (Barrett, 1990). During class conversations with students, the art teacher sits with the
class (Hamblen, 1984). The art teacher does not repeat the responses of student because “… that implies that students do not need to listen to their fellow-students’ responses” (Hamblen, 1984, p. 14). To indicate that multiple interpretations are possible, several students are asked to respond to the same open-ended question (Hamblen, 1984). Student installations, collaborative or community may be better assessed through discussion (Freedman, 2003, 2013).

**Art Student Self-Assessment and Reflection.**


Each student’s “… evaluation of her or his work is crucially important in art” (Barrett, 1990, p. 302). Self-assessment is prevalent in professional artists’ processes and in the creative process by applying a crucial lens to their work throughout to analyze and refine the artwork (Asch, 1976). By learning a skill integral to the role of the artist, the art students “… learn to read and appraise their own work” through self-assessment (Wolf & Pistone, 1991, p. 8). “Perhaps the most effective form of growth measurement is self-evaluation” (Conant & Randall, 1959, p. 193). But the self-assessment process needs to be taught to the student (Beattie, 1997a). The art teacher can provide prompts for student
verbal and written response in discussions, journals, for annotated portfolios and reports (Beattie, 1997a).

Student self-assessment aids in making the assessment process more valuable to the student and her learning (Beattie, 1997a). It also provides insight for the art teacher into the student’s understanding and thinking (Beattie, 1997a). Another purpose of self-assessment is for the student to ascertain her strengths and weaknesses by reviewing a collection of her own works (Barrett, 1990). One means of self-assessment is for the students to identify the criteria for both themselves and other students to use in the assessment (Schönau, 2013).

Reflection is also recommended to be a part of the art teacher’s practice (Smith-Shank, 1993). Korzenik (1993) stressed the importance for art teacher to reflect upon their own personal history in art because “… teachers tend to teach as they were taught …” (p. 118). Asch (1976) stated how an art teacher views assessment in art education is tied to how the art teacher views art education through a mixture of her educational theories, adherence to the views of influential art educators, practical experience, and convention. This mixture of influences and beliefs is so pervasive, that “… we seldom pay attention to them anymore, no less consider their effect upon student productivity and evaluation techniques” (Asch, 1976, p. 16).

**Art Student Peer-Assessment.**

Students’ providing their insight or judgments about or reactions to the current status of another student’s work is peer-assessment (Andrade et al., 2014; Freedman, 2013; Soep, 2004b). Peer-assessment can be used for the students to appraise group work (Armstrong, 1994) and requires the art students “… to reflect upon the accomplishments
of their classmates, which helps them see alternative reasoning patterns and develop and appreciate diverse ways to approach and solve problems” (Dorn, 1998, p. 244).

**Art Teacher Observation of Art Students.**

Art teachers observing their students during art class can provide short-term information about student progress towards learning goals (Luca & Kent, 1969). In a survey of secondary level visual art teachers, 84% of these teachers “… considered direct observation of artwork as their assessment method of choice” (Burton, 2001b, p. 141). In a national survey of arts education in elementary and secondary schools (Carey et al., 2002) observation was also selected as the assessment strategy used most often. Use of observation in watching an art student tackle an art-making task can “… provide some evidence of the quality of the inner process” (Lark-Horovitz et al., 1967, p. 192). Observation of art students can reveal “… how well instruction is working” (Beattie, 1997, p. 76). A version of observation could be watching a student teach her peers the skills or concepts she just learned (Zimmerman, 1997). These observations can be informal or structured using a data collection tool such as a tally, at stations to check a student’s art technique, or during a critique (Beattie, 1997a; Zimmerman, 1997). Based on the information gained through the observations, the art teacher can intervene with a modification of materials, with tools, or with instruction (Lansing, 1969). Honed observation of an art classroom or of student work by an expert is what Eisner (2002) called educational connoisseurship or educational criticism. It is the cultivation of the “… ability to know what they are looking at” to know “how to read a classroom or student work” (Eisner, 2002, p. 187).
Rubrics.

A rubric clearly describes “… varying levels of competency or success” (McCollister, 2002). In a chart or matrix format, a rubric reflects the relationship between the levels of achievement and the criteria that can make “… scoring more objective and reliable” (Beattie, 1997a, p. 106). Rubrics define the task with a range of points to make scoring decisions about performances and products in art (Dorn, 1998; Hoffman, 1998; Peeno, 1999). Rubrics are written specifically for the learning outcomes of a particular lesson (McCollister, 2002). Rubrics are designed to “… address the specific goals of a given assignment …” to “… assess student learning in a specific lesson or on a specific skill” (Dorn, 1998, p. 236). When rubrics are used to assess student artworks, corresponding visual examples for the written descriptions at each level of the rubric are recommended (Freedman, 2003; 2013). Including students in writing the rubric descriptors is also recommended (Hoffman, 1998). Providing a visual rubric for the students to then create the written descriptions aids in student self-reflection for improving their understanding for revisions of their artwork (Andrade et al., 2014).

This concludes the presentation of best practices of classroom assessment from the literature of assessment in art education. These sixteen practices are included in the next chapter in the analytical framework themes. The next section of this literature review addresses how the art teacher can use the information gained from the assessment.

How the Information Gathered Through Assessment Can Be Used

Information gathered by the art teacher, as a means for refining an understanding about student learning, can reveal where successes and reoccurring challenges are occurring in their teaching and be a means of self-reflection (De Francesco, 1954). By
reflecting on what they are seeing during observations of students while working, the teachers “… must continually ask themselves do their students really have all the information it takes to carry out an assigned task” (Lansing, 1969, p. 389). Assessment data can be used to inform instructional decisions to facilitate sound instructional practice (Gitomer et al., 1992) and guide instruction (Rudner & Boston, 1994). Assessment information is means for the improvement and evolution of art education (Gitomer et al., 1992; Smith-Shank, 1994).

**Using the Information: Feedback.**

Providing feedback is part of the art teacher’s assessment practice (Armstrong, 1994; Colwell, 1998; Dorn et al., 2004; Hickman, 2010; NBPTS, 2000, 2001; Schönau, 2013; Smith-Shank, 1994; Wilson, 1992). Learning how to assess the student’s learning and give feedback is an essential skill for the arts education teacher to learn during student teaching (Colwell, 1998). Learning goals are the target for the content of the feedback, the art teacher provides the art student feedback of substance that is immediate, constructive, and targeted (NBPTS 2000, 2001). The accuracy of feedback that is grounded in evidence adds to the art students’ understanding for their setting of realistic goals (Armstrong, 1994). Feedback is a necessary component in the art education classroom, where the assessment criteria is negotiated between the student and the teacher (Hickman, 2010). Ongoing feedback while art students work “… encourages and guides the students’ work forward” (Hickman, 2007, p. 79). If informational feedback is not provided, the art student is uncertain of their own self-assessment (Hickman, 2007) and is unsure about the effectiveness of their artwork or how to improve (Schönau, 2013).
Feedback is essential for the student to understand their progress in art as well as for the art teacher to gain information about their approaches to teaching (Smith-Shank, 1994). Smith-Shank (1993) recommended art teachers grade themselves on the quality of their students’ artwork, “if the students don’t draw well, they haven’t been taught” (p. 50). How the students are doing in art can also be evaluative feedback for the teacher about the instruction and the curriculum (Dobbs, 1998). Even checking the trashcan for what students have discarded can provide evidence for feedback to the art teacher that a revision of the lesson is required (C. Ballengee Morris, personal communication, February 16, 2012).

**Using the Information: Praise.**

Praise is when the art student’s work is endorsed by the art teacher in a non-judgmental, perhaps even a celebratory way (Ross et al., 1993). Praise can be done individually or in a group session to point out and compliment the art students for achievements found in their work (Lansing, 1969). But this public praise is not also a time to point out student’s errors; that needs to be a private conversation (Lansing, 1969). Praise should not be weak and needs to be an informed acknowledgement of the substance of the students’ work (Ross et al., 1993).

During their study on assessment through student and teacher talk, researchers and authors Ross et al. (1993) found some art teachers assumed praise was a “… kind of personal endorsement as perhaps the only contribution they can make to their pupil’s development” (p. 56). But for this endorsement from the art teacher to make any significant difference to the art student, the student needs to feel that the art teacher grasps the direction she is taking her work otherwise that praise is too unrelated to the
student’s experiences and loses any benefit (Ross et al., 1993). The praise from the art teacher also needs to be genuine “… because children are magnificent detectors of fraud. When they know a teacher’s praise is insincere, they soon lose respect for him and for their own ability as artists” (Lansing, 1969, p. 392).

In summary, there were several uses of assessment data found in the literature of assessment in art education: to inform the art teacher’s instructional practices including where challenges and successes are occurring; applied as fodder for reflection; as indicators for improvement; and as evidence to drive praise, feedback, and other kinds of comments to students.

This concludes the review of literature from general education and art education on assessment with a focus on classroom assessment of student learning. Additional information on the art educational assessment constructs aligned to the analytical framework for data analysis—Wilson, (1992); Beattie, (1997a); NBPTS (2000, 2001); Dorn et al., (2004); and NAEA (2009a)—is presented in Chapter Three. A review of the literature from research studies on art teachers’ uses of assessment is included in Chapter Three. In the next section of Chapter Two, a review of the literature of feminist classroom assessment is presented.

**Review of Literature for Feminist Classroom Assessment**

There is a limited library of literature for feminist assessment with not a large amount published in the last decade. Educational evaluation topics addressed within this literature included psychological testing constructs (Lewin & Wild, 1991), high-stakes test development (Reed et al., 2007), gender differences implications (Bannister, 1993; Brookhart, 2009; Willingham & Cole, 1997), and the psychological testing and
evaluation of women (De Barona & Dutton, 1997). Most of the literature found on feminist assessment was based in higher education assessment practices (Akyea & Sandoval, 2005; Campbell, 2002; Clifford, 2002; Lambert 1997; Morgall, 1993; Shiffman, 1992; Smith-Shank, 1992; Wetzel, 1999).

The review of the literature on feminist assessment presented in this section focused on the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992). These principles are the basis of other documents found in the literature and I used these principles for the analytical framework for the data analysis of this research study. Explanation of the origins of the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992) and a discussion of nine feminist principles of assessment with supporting literature on feminist assessment follows.

These principles grew from what started as a project reviewing women’s studies programs (Musil, 1992a, 1992b, 1992d). The Association of American Colleges and National Women’s Studies Association conducted the three-year study from 1989–1992 (Musil, 1992b). The purpose of their study was to determine the impact of women’s studies programs by examining what is taught and how student learning is revealed (Musil, 1992b). Women’s studies programs of 10 colleges were involved and the study included group meetings in data collection and assessment techniques for the participants as well as site-based work back at their respective schools (Musil, 1992d). *The Courage to Question: Women’s Studies and Student Learning* (Musil, 1992a) is the documentation of the project. The major outcome on feminist assessment that emerged from this three-year project is in a second book from this project, *Students at the Center: Feminist Assessment* edited by Caryn McTighe Musil (1992c) in a chapter titled “What is Feminist
Assessment?” by Joan Poliner Shapiro (1992). The principles were the basis for other documents on feminist assessment including a presentation to school administrators (Shapiro, Sewell, & Ducette, 1992), a presentation comparing the nine feminist principles to the American Association for Higher Education’s list of assessment principles (Lambert, 1997), and a discourse on conceptions of feminist power and assessment in higher education (Akyea & Sandoval, 2005). The nine principles of feminist assessment are delineated below with examples from the text and literature review supporting each principle.

Principle 1: Feminist assessment questions almost everything related to evaluation (Shapiro, 1992, p. 31). Included in this principle is the assumption that what has occurred thus far in assessment is inadequate, “… because it has not posed enough questions to see power relations, to note who is missing from the discussion …” (Shapiro, 1992, p. 31). “Feminist theory offers the potential to challenge hidden assumptions and beliefs and thereby effect changes in ways that can improve the lives of those who have been invisible, powerless, and disenfranchised” (Lambert, 1997, p. 1).

When done well, assessment can and should empower students (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2012). But there can be “pitfalls to implementing any assessment …” (Smith-Shank, 1994, p. 4). In the wrong hands, with the wrong motives, used without regard to the student or her learning, assessment can a powerful stick (Kohn, 1999) creating indelible memories (Speirs, 2002) of the teacher playing favorites or privileging others (Smith-Shank, 1993). Poorly executed assessment practices can lead students away from learning, even to the point of avoiding art classes due to prior damaging experiences that revolved around grading and negative criticism (Metcalf & Smith-Shank, 2001). The
impact of grades and feedback can stay with us (Smith-Shank, 2011) perhaps contributing definition to defining one’s power and one’s self-view.

Power issues found in the classroom continue with the second principle: Feminist assessment is student-centered (Shapiro, 1992, p. 31). Being student-centered and having student involvement are as essential aspects of quality classroom-based assessment that promotes student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Stiggins & Chappuis, 2012). Student-centered assessment could be one vehicle used to address a consideration of “… the distribution of power and privilege” (Lather, 1992, p. 91). I offer that student-centered assessment complements the tenet of feminist pedagogy emphasizing student empowerment (Gaudelius, 2000). Student-centered assessment includes the student and her voice in the assessment process by turning “… to students to reveal what is important to them, what they want to learn, and where their needs are not being met” (Shapiro, 1992, p. 31).

Centering on students within assessment is advocated for art education (Cannatella, 2001) and, specifically, for Visual Culture—“If we want students to engage with personal interests, relevant to their lives, we need to create an assessment structure that not only accommodates individual pursuit of ideas, but actively promotes it” (Boughton, 2004, p. 268). Yet sharing power within a classroom has complexity (Akyea & Sandoval, 2005). By sharing power only by using alternative measures gives the “illusion of power” warns Reynolds and Trehan (2000, p. 275) and leaves the hierarchical relationship unchanged.

Principle Three: Feminist assessment is participatory (Shapiro, 1992, p. 32). This principle stemmed from the feminist theory that strives to understand oppressive
silencing and the feminist pedagogy that promotes the “… interactive conversation that seeks the student voice” (Shapiro, 1992, p. 32). In negotiating the dynamics of the teacher–student relationship within the feminist classroom, a discourse on this relationship “… must include a frank look at the power of the teacher” (Bright, 1993, p. 130).

In an attempt to counter the traditional hierarchies of the classroom, the teacher may attempt to share power but this attempt of downplaying authority can confuse by “… obscur[ing] where power resides and how it is wielded” (Villaverde, 2008, p. 123). Additionally, “… assessment doesn’t occur in a politically neutral space” (Hyers, 1992, p. 75) and “… alternatives are typically based on humanistic, student-centered aspirations for social equality, rather on an analysis of the assessment process in terms of institutional power” (Reynolds & Trehan, 2000, p. 268).

This was evidenced in several articles on feminist assessment that elaborate on the opening up of the assessment process only to have actions end up closing it back down (Campbell, 2002; Clifford, 2002). One example of this open/closed cultural dualism (Richardson, 1997, p. 51) is the positive use of online focus groups for communication being subverted by giving points for the number of times of online participation, resulting in tension of encouragement with the intuitional culture (Campbell, 2002). Another example is the opening up of the assessment process through use of journals, but then closing it down by reducing a student’s grade by 20% for choosing not to participate in the journal writing due to privacy issues (Clifford, 2002). In these examples, the “… participative assessment has become part of a machinery of normalization” (Reynolds & Trehan, 2000, p. 273).
The fourth and fifth principles are addressed together. Principle 4: Feminist assessment is deeply affected by its context or institutional culture (Shapiro, 1992, p. 32). Shapiro (1992) elaborated on this principle: “… feminist assessment is informed continually by context” (p. 32). Principle 5: Feminist assessment is decentered which tries to deconstruct this “outside-in” or stringent vertical hierarchy (Shapiro, 1992, p. 33).

Principle 6: Feminist assessment approaches should be compatible with feminist activist beliefs (Shapiro, 1992, p. 33). While writing about “rewriting the rules” to disrupt the doctrine within art education, Karen Keifer-Boyd’s (2000) call to action is applicable to the activism called for feminist assessment in order “… to replace power and control with transformative and participatory practices” (p. 123). Her recommendations for guerilla tactics for this change is exemplified by the actions of some of the women’s studies students who responded to the requisite multiple-choice tests—and the school’s use of incentives including pizza, t-shirts, or cash—with low participation and sabotage in filling in the dots on answer sheets (Hutchings, 1992).

Principle 7: Feminist assessment is heavily shaped by the power of feminist pedagogy (Shapiro, 1992, p. 34). The example of feminist pedagogy she used to illuminate this principle is the part relationships play in feminist thought, where teaching and learning cannot be separated within feminist pedagogy (Shapiro, 1992). There is also a reliance on voice: “feminist assessment comes out of a fundament commitment to the individual and her voice, her account of her own story, and a refusal to wash out individual or group difference” (Hutchings, 1992, p. 23).

The eighth principle of feminist assessment is based on a body of feminist scholarship and feminist research methodology that is central to this interdisciplinary area
(Shapiro, 1992, p. 35). Shapiro (1992) asserted, “… the forms of assessment we use should be the natural outgrowth of scholarship in the field” (p. 35).

Principle 9: Feminist assessment appreciates values (Shapiro, 1992, p. 35). At the first meeting of the Students at the Center: Feminist Assessment project, each participant listed where their passion resides within women’s studies and student learning. These values rooted the project—what is measured is what is valued (Shapiro, 1992, p. 36) thereby “interrogat[ing] the values underlying the cultural practices we construct …” (Lather, 1991, p. 103).

In summary, the following are foundational and essential to the teachers’ actions in assessment distilled from the principles of feminist assessment (Shapiro, 1992).

• Seeking to understand the student’s needs.
• Listening and reading the student’s words for guidance.
• Including the student in assessment process.
• Building up and upon teacher-student relationships.
• Collaborating with the student for the assessment.
• Opening up traditional assessment practices.
• Utilizing practices that includes all students and excludes no one.
• Reflecting upon the teacher’s role of power in assessment.
• Seeing who is missing from the assessment process.
• Tackling power issues in assessment.
• Questioning all aspects of the assessment process.
• Centering the assessment practice on the student.
Sound assessment practices from the literature of art education are aligned with the principles of the feminist assessment to form the framework for the analysis of the data from this study. In the next chapter, the research methods of this study are presented. Further discussion of the analytical framework is discussed after a presentation of the selection of the qualitative methodology, research methods, and how the research study was conducted.
Chapter 3: Research Methods

This chapter presents the rationale for the research study, the explanation of the selection of qualitative research methodology, the theoretical perspectives, the research methods used to collect data, the parameters of the study, and the recruitment of visual art teachers participating in the research study. The processes used to develop the research protocols, conduct the study, structure the analytic framework based on feminist principles of assessment and selected visual art education assessment constructs, synthesize two themes, and assign analytic codes are described.

Overview of the Research Study

The purpose of this research study was to gain an awareness and comprehension of visual art teachers’ ranges of understanding and classroom practices in assessment of student learning in art education. This qualitative study utilized multiple data strands. The structure of this research study was built around individual, guided, semi-structured interviews with twelve public school visual art teachers in their art education classroom settings within traditional education public schools within the United States. The study was supported with multiple sources of information for triangulation of data. These data strands, supporting the primacy of the guided research interview, were pre-site visit questionnaires, artifacts, field notes from one day observations within the visual art teacher’s classroom, and my research diary. The analytical framework for interpretation was formed around the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992), selected visual
art education constructs from the literature for assessment of student learning. My personal perceptions, based upon my experiences with assessment as an art teacher, as sources of meaning and analytical coding were also applied in the analysis of the units of data.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Methodology


1. Qualitative studies in education often take place out in the field in schools and in classrooms, making them field focused (Eisner, 1998). In being field focused, qualitative studies tend to study the situation intact where the “… qualitative researchers observe, interview, record, describe, interpret, and appraise settings as they are” (Eisner, 1998, p. 33). The sites of the study were the twelve visual art teachers’ classrooms and the research tools for my study are comparable to Eisner’s (1998) list.

2. Eisner (1998) stated a qualitative study reflects “… the self as an instrument” (p. 33). The researcher brings a frame of reference to the setting to perceive behaviors and interpret their significance (Eisner, 1998, p. 34). “The self is the instrument that engages the situation and makes sense of it” (Eisner, 1998, p. 34). Eisner (1998) differentiated between
what a novice sees in a classroom and what an expert observes where “the expert knows what to neglect” therefore “… having a sense for the significant and possessing framework that makes the search for the significant efficient” (p. 34). With my years of experience as a teacher of visual art to students in all grade levels, as well as my applied knowledge of assessment in art education, I feel confident in the art classroom setting. From my lived experiences, what I sense, what I react to, and how I interpret becomes what Eisner (1998) refers to as the researcher’s signature (p. 34). As a qualitative researcher, I am “… providing individual insight into a situation” (Eisner, 1998, p. 34). My personal insight becomes a source of meaning (Eisner, 1998, p. 35).

3. Interpretive character is a feature of a qualitative study (Eisner, 1989, p. 35). Eisner (1998) used two meanings of interpretation. First, being the researcher’s “ability to explain why something is taking place” (p. 35). His second use of interpretation in qualitative studies was the researcher’s interest in meaning and interpreting the influence of the experiences on the motives of those in the situation being studied (Eisner, 1998, p. 35). Past experiences contextualize a “… background which particular episodes acquire meaning” of where “what they experience is, in part, shaped by their personal history” (Eisner, 1998, p. 36). Inquiry around research participants’ assessment antecedents as influential to current assessment practices is one of my research sub-questions.
4. Qualitative research is not about detachment, but about engagement and presence of the researcher’s voice in the text by writing with expressive language that displays the researcher’s signature (Eisner, 1998, p. 36). My personal perceptions, as a source of meaning, informed the research process and influenced how my voice—my researcher’s signature—is embodied in the text.

5. Qualitative studies pay attention to particulars (Eisner, 1998, p. 38). A qualitative study does not take the information gathered from the research participants and transform it into a numerical format losing “… the uniqueness of the particular features” (Eisner, 1998, p. 38). In this study, the particular features sought and highlighted are the choices and practices in assessment of each visual art teacher participating in the study.

6. “Qualitative research becomes believable because of its coherence, insight, and instrumental utility” (Eisner, 1998, p. 39). Multiple sources and multiple forms of evidence inform a qualitative study (Eisner, 1998, p. 39). There are multiple sources and forms of evidence from the twelve visual art teachers in the study. The twelve interviews—along with data from pre-site visit questionnaires, artifacts, observations, my field notes, my research diary as means of evidence, and myself as a source of meaning—provided a variety of evidence for this study.

The design components of this qualitative research study were consistent with Eisner’s (1998) features of a qualitative study.
Theoretical Perspectives and Feminist Theoretical Lens

The theoretical perspectives and positions held by the researcher need to be stated and the data collection processes need to reflect those positions (King & Horrocks, 2010). As a feminist researcher, views from feminist research theory (Kitzinger, 2004; Kohli & Burbules, 2012), feminist pedagogy (Crabtree, Sapp, & Licona, 2009; Macdonald & Sánchez-Casal, 2002; Maher & Tetreault, 2001; Mayberry & Rose, 1999), and fieldwork (Kleinman, 2007; Wolf, 1996) were applied. Epistemologically, I believe that learning about context is integral to gaining an understanding about a person’s life. Therefore this research study both took place in the context of the art teacher’s practice and used interview questions addressing contextual components of assessment. The purpose of this research study was to gain an understanding about art teachers’ practices in assessment in order to use the findings towards improving assessment for student learning in art education “… because feminists want to understand the world in order to make it better …” (Kleinman, 2007, p. 11) and questioning assessment practices is part of first principle of feminist assessment (Shapiro, 1992).

My ontological view of social reality relates to “our understandings and experiences are relative to our specific cultural and social frames of reference [with] a range of interpretations” (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 9). This view is supported by the use of the qualitative research interview to gain an understanding of each art teacher’s own experience with assessment. The approach for recruitment of the art teachers participating in the study reflected the feminist assessment paradigm that assessment is informed by context (Shapiro, 1992). The data collection methods reflected the application of feminist theory in fieldwork (Wolf, 1996), the feminist tenet to critique on
how knowledge is validated (Kohli & Burbules, 2012), and the feminist imperative to question all aspects of assessment (Shapiro, 1992).

Thus, using the data collection method of the interview in order to gain insight into visual art education teachers’ experiences of classroom assessment of their students’ learning was consistent with the qualitative methodology, epistemological views, ontological beliefs, and the feminist theoretical lens.

**Rationale for the Research Study**

The rationale for this research study was to augment the professional knowledge base on art teachers’ practices of classroom assessment and, as noted in Chapter One, to address the problem of the lack of clarity about assessment for student learning in art education. As noted in Chapters One and Two, there are several existing sources of information on art educators’ uses of assessment in the findings from qualitative research and quantitative studies. Findings from qualitative studies provide information on the influences of personal antecedents with assessment of pre-service art teachers (Smith-Shank, 1993) and college art professors (Orr, 2011), case study findings on elementary art teacher’s uses of assessment (Bresler, 1991; Stake et al., 1991), and improvement in art teachers’ assessment practices through professional development (Andrade et al., 2014).

This qualitative research study adds to the knowledge base of art teachers’ past experiences influencing assessment with art teachers working in schools; adds knowledge on art teachers’ practices of assessment at the elementary, middle, and high school levels; and adds to information on negative impact of the lack of professional development on art teachers’ assessment practices.
Primarily through surveys, there are findings about the types of assessment tools the art teachers identified as using, information on their training in assessment, and what is assessed. These studies were conducted at the state level (Alaska State Council on the Arts, 2009; Bothell Assessment and Research, 2010; Bothell Assessment and Research & WESTAF, 2010; Dorn et al., 2004; Horn & Kentucky Arts Council, 2005; Montana Arts Council, 2010; Morrison & Cirillo, 2012; New Hampshire Department of Education, 2011; Sabol, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001a, 2004a, 2004b; Western States Arts Federation, 2010), national level (Burton, 2001b; Carey et al., 2002; NAEA, 2001; NCES, 1999), and international level (Dilmac, 2013). The findings from these surveys provided information into art teachers’ practices of assessment based upon their responses to the options provided in the surveys. With the interview as the primary source of data for my study, the voice of the art teacher offering their own understandings and practices drove the findings.

This qualitative research study adds to the knowledge base about the tools art teachers use in assessment. This study provides information on how these art teachers used the best practices of assessment found in the art education literature and how they used the assessment data to advance student learning or for the improvement of the art product only. Some of the existing studies on the assessment practices of arts teachers did not separate the findings into the separate disciplines; the findings from this study can add to the understanding of practices of classroom assessment of visual art education teachers. Information on art teachers’ pre-service and in-service training in assessment is found in some of the existing studies. The findings from this study on pre-service education on assessment and the influence of professional development on art teachers’
practices of assessment for student learning findings adds to the professional knowledge base on classroom assessment in art education.

**Research Question and Sub-Questions**

My research question for this study was: what are visual art teachers’ understandings and practices of assessing student learning in the visual arts? Elaborative questions included:

- What is assessed in the art classroom?
- Which assessment tools are used?
- How are the findings used?

Listening to and analyzing art teachers’ voices about the assessment practices they use within their art classroom for assessing student learning furthers an understanding of the role of assessment for student learning in visual art education.

The first sub-question of this research study is what constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning? The development of this first sub-question was informed by research and hindrances shared by art teachers I worked with in the development of the some of the research protocols through field-tests. The field-test process is explained later in this chapter. The hindrances to assessment of time constraints and teaching large numbers of students came up as challenges to assessment during my field-tests and also appeared in the literature (Bensur, 2002; Dilmac, 2013; Sabol, 2004a). During the field-test, one art teacher—who was teaching art to nearly 450 elementary students she saw once a week—felt challenged to do any kind of assessment even though she felt knowledgeable about it. Another constraints or hindrance came up during a curriculum work with teachers of a variety of
content areas. When I was a school district administrator, I listened to their concerns about No Child Left Behind (NCLB) testing infringing on their classroom assessments. Through this experience, I wondered if this was also an issue for the visual art teachers in my research study.

NCLB was the federal educational reform act from 2002 that is the current reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2002a). According to a NAEA study surveying art teachers on the impacts of NCLB on art education, 51% of the respondents were spending more time on assessment in tasks including gathering, managing, and explaining results to students, parents, and administrators (Sabol, 2010, p. 131).

The second sub-question is what personal antecedents are impacting the current assessment practices of the visual art teachers in this study? The genesis of this second sub-question was my own assessment practice as an art teacher being informed by the assessment practices of some of my art teachers when I was a student. Those actions of disrespect and issues of power stayed with me and influenced conscious choices in my assessment practice as an art teacher. Research from the literature of art education assessment includes personal antecedents informing current practices of art educators (Orr, 2011; Smith-Shank, 1993).

The third sub-question is what is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers? This sub-question is tangential to the second question from the standpoint of the issue power, but here the consideration is sharing power in assessment, not the art teacher wielding power. This sub-question related to aspects of the existing literature; including the student in the assessment
process was also part of the feminist principles (Shapiro, 1992), was found in the general education assessment literature (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2012), and was found in the literature of assessment in art education (Armstrong, 1994; Asch, 1976; Barrett, 1990; Beattie, 1997a; Conant & Randall, 1963; D’Amico, 1937) through self-assessment (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; De Franceso, 1954; Freedman, 2003, 2013; Godfrey, 1964; Keiler, 1961; Lark-Horovitz et al., 1967; Schönau, 2013; Soep, 2004b), peer-assessment (Beattie, 1997a; Dorn, 1998; Freedman, 2003; Soep, 2004b), and giving the student voice in taking the lead in the assessment (Mitchell & Ross, 1993; Ross et al., 1993).

**Definitions for the Research Study**

For this qualitative research study, a visual art teacher is defined as:

- a full time teacher,
- a certified educator,
- teaching visual arts,
- to students in any grade from Kindergarten through twelfth grade, and
- in a public school in the United States.

Parameters for the art teachers participating in this study included:

- years of teaching experience;
- size of school district: small, medium, and large;
- grade levels of students taught: Elementary, Middle, and High school; and
- National Board Certified Teacher.
Data Collection Methods

In this section the primary and supporting data collections methods used in this qualitative research study are explained. The parallel of these data collection methods and the assessment tools in the literature of assessment in art education are also included.

Each of the twelve art teachers participating in this research study was interviewed to learn about their classroom assessment practices. Supporting the units of data from the interviews were data gathered through a written, pre-site visit questionnaire; my field notes from the one day observation with each visual art teacher in their classroom; and review of pertinent artifacts. Additionally, a research journal was kept throughout the process of the study from the inception, through field-testing, fieldwork, data collection, through analysis and interpretation of the data.

Primary Data Collection Method: The Guided or Semi-Structured Interview.

This study was constructed around individual, guided, and semi-structured interviews with each of the twelve art teachers participating in this qualitative research study. The interview is a qualitative, data collection tool frequently used in educational settings (Foddy, 1993; Gubrium & Holstein, 2001; Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, & McKinney, 2012; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; King & Horrocks, 2010; Kvale, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mishler, 1996; Reinharz, 1992; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Seidman, 2006; Tierney & Dilley, 2002; Tracy, 2013; Warren, 2002; Weiss, 1994). The interview is the “construction site of knowledge” (Kvale, 2008, p. 21; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 301) that is a complex undertaking (Glesne, 1999) used to find out “… how others feel and think about their world” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).
The qualitative interview was my primary data collection method to learn about the art teachers’ perspectives and their interior experiences (Weiss, 1994) along with their personal accounts or representations of their experiences (Silverman, 2006) with classroom assessment in art education. I elected to use a guided conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) to attain conversations with purpose and structure (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The guided or semi-structured interview was a way to record, listen, and seek out the underlying formation of what is being said and not said (Stone, Patton, & Heen, 1999; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) for learning about the art teachers’ lived experiences in and around assessment.

There are several components of the qualitative interview that match my values as a feminist researcher and my interests as a researcher of assessment practices of visual art teachers. There is a tenuous balance of power in a research interview because—just by simply asking a question—I impose what I, as the researcher, want to know (Wolcott, 1994). As a feminist researcher, I am sensitive to this imbalance of power and tried for a “conversational partnership” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) with each of the art teachers participating in this study. It was important for me to listen and to learn from each art teacher—their words and stories mattered in adding to and aiding in my understanding of assessment practices of art educators. With respectful reliance on these visual art teachers’ words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) as sources of information, the art teachers’ words and voice are privileged over the words of the researcher—a precept of feminist interview research (Reinharz, 1992).

Interviews access current and recent experiences as well as memories. With the possibility that educational choices made today are influenced by the art teacher’s past
experiences (Orr, 2011; Smith-Shank, 1993), the interview process can “… give us a window on the past” (Weiss, 1994, p. 1). By talking with each art teacher participating in the study, a level of detail emerged from our conversation as they shared their lived experiences (Johnson, 2002). Then, through analysis, I highlighted “… the meaning people attach to things in their lives” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 7).

Awareness, identification, analysis, and amelioration of power issues are significant to me as a feminist educator focused on assessment. Power issues are inherent in the interview process (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Having a dialogue with the art teachers, rather than interrogating them, was important to me. So I chose a semi-structured conversational model of interview. I tried to share power and establish a place for the art teacher’s own account to be heard (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003) and tried to breakdown the power differences and the distances between the researcher and the researched (Reinharz, 1992). An alliance through interactions with the individual was imperative in constructing an understanding of the person’s interior experiences (Weiss, 1994) and it was an imperative to me be a partner in the process.

Qualitative interviewing is a constructivist experience where the research interviewees are viewed as the meaning makers (Warren, 2002). With my objective to construct an understanding of each art teachers’ practices of assessing student learning in art education, the guided conversation was deemed an appropriate research approach. Through semi-structured interviews with non-directive, open-ended questions, the art teachers and I were able to add to each other’s understanding.

Such a dialogue is characteristic of the research interview, where both researcher and participant can explore and share in creating understandings of the meaning of the
questions and answers (Brenner, Brown, & Canter, 1985). The dialogue provided the opportunity to develop a richer understanding of the meanings held by the art teachers as well as my level of interpretation as researcher. To understand how people respond in a given situation, the researcher must formulate interpretations based on how the participants make sense of the situation (Foddy, 1993). Via this negotiated understanding, any misunderstandings of the questions or responses during an interview were immediately clarified (Brenner et al., 1985) by either the art teacher or myself.

Out of respect for the art teachers, the art teacher’s preference determined when to have our interview during the site visit. Most of the interviews occurred at the end of the school day. I had one remote interview (King & Horrocks, 2010). It was a telephone interview because the art teacher’s schedule did not permit a face-to-face interview during the day of the site visit. Most of the interviews were just under an hour long; none felt rushed and nor did any of the art teachers appear anxious to get going by looking at their watches, fidgeting, or even stating they had to go. The longest interview was nearly three hours with shortest being twenty minutes.

Based on what I learned from the field-tests, I chose to tape record the interview and to not take notes. With the audiotape creating a verbatim transcript, I was be able to immerse myself in dialogue with the art teachers, without pausing for extensive note taking which could telegraph to the art teachers that their remark was significant by writing notes. Further, with a taped interview I was able to review the dialogue after the interview several times to discern more information (Wolcott, 2005). I did my own transcriptions—taking me about ten minutes for every minute of the taped interview—
because I did not want to miss any of the subtleties of what was said, how it was said, or the silences (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

The interview research method parallels the use of the conversational interview as an assessment tool in art education (Armstrong, 1994; Beattie, 1997a; Dorn et al., 2004; Luca & Kent, 1968; Mitchell & Ross, 1993; Parsons, 1996; Ross et al., 1993; Taunton, 1984; Zimmerman, 1997). Mitchell & Ross (1993) presented the term of assessment origin of “ad+sedere meaning to sit down together” (p. 2) when advocating for discussion as a means for understanding. Each visual art teacher and I sat down together, mutually gaining understandings about assessing student learning in visual art education.

**Interview Guide.**

The interview guide in a qualitative research includes the main areas and topics the researcher wants to ask about, but the phrasing and order is kept flexible in order to respond to situation and follow the direction the research participant leads (King & Horrocks, 2010). Creswell (1994) recommended the interview guide include the fundamental research questions to be asked and follow-up questions. It is also important to “… communicate in the vernacular of the teacher …” (Frank, 1999, p. 29) so I was both careful and strategic in the word choices in the protocol. As a feminist researcher, I was also considerate of my partner in this interview, the art teacher, in several ways. Given that the art teachers’ time is precious and that these interviews were going to happen during their prep time, lunch, or after school, I did not want a long list of questions. Nor did I want a long list that would take up the entire time and not be a joint experience that could follow the lead of the art teacher. Not all questions were asked of all art teachers (see Appendix D Guided Interview Questions Protocol). The flow of the
The interview was guided by this protocol and the responses of the art teacher. Given the number of times the interview questions were practiced in the field-tests, I knew that this set of questions to guide the conversational interview would take about an hour.

The interview guide was developed with a combination of my personal experiences with the topic, insights from working with other teachers, through the field-tests, and from the research literature. Information on the development and field-testing of the interview guide appears later in this chapter. One goal of the research interview was to gather the art teacher’s accounts of their experiences with assessment rather than to tally up their answers like survey responses (King & Horrocks, 2010).

In addition to the questions from the guide and following discussion lead of the art teacher during the interview, I also asked probes. The three types of probes I used were asking for elaboration to learn more, seeking clarification, and pursuing completion of the art teacher’s explanations (King & Horrocks, 2010). Elaboration probes occurred during our interview. The clarification and completion probes most often occurred during the day when I needed more information about what I had seen or heard or, if due to a class change or loudspeaker announcement, the art teacher had been interrupted.

**Supporting Data Collection Methods.**

There were several data collection methods used to support the units of data collected through the primary data collection method of the individual, guided, and semi-structured interview with each art teacher. These supporting multiple sources of information are pre-site visit questionnaires, artifacts, and field notes from one day observations within the art teacher’s classroom. I applied the information from multiple other methods of data collection for triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne,
1999; King & Horrocks, 2010; Silverman, 2006) with the goal to triangulate within the context of each art teachers’ units of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011) for a more complex basis of evidence and understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) as well as to increase the trustworthiness of the study (Glesne, 1999). An explanation of the supporting data collection methods follows.

**Pre-Site Visit Questionnaire.**

On the more structured end of the verbal data collection continuum, a short questionnaire is a way to gather basic, factual information (Gillham, 2000). For this qualitative research study, the pre-site visit questionnaire information supported the units of data gathered through the art teacher’s interview. This questionnaire (see Appendix E: Pre-Site Visit Questionnaire) was emailed to the art teacher prior to my visit to their classroom. The pre-site visit questionnaire was used to gather factual information through questions on general information including years of teaching, grade levels taught, and specific information on assessment such as training and their definition of assessment. Asking this general information through the pre-site visit questionnaire saved the interview as a time for more in-depth questions about assessment. The open-ended questions about assessment on the pre-site visit questionnaire were to gather information to support the interview units of data as well as to get their ideas on assessment before any conversations during the site visit changed their thinking on assessment. The pre-site visit questionnaire was carefully created for clarity and length through the field-tests. The open-ended question format both minimized constraints upon the art teachers’ responses and allowed any misunderstandings from the pre-site visit questionnaire to be clarified collaboratively upon my arrival at the art teacher’s school. Information on the
development and field-testing of the pre-site visit questionnaire is explained later in this chapter.

**Observation and Field Notes.**

Observation of the art teachers working with their students during the school day was a means to gather supporting information for the primary data collection method of the qualitative research interview. In the classroom, I observed each art teacher in practice (Frank, 1999; Spradley, 1980). By observing the art teachers in action in their classroom settings, I watched the process as it happened in the experience of the art teacher rather than make interpretations based on presumed conjecture (Blumer cited by Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). With a focus of this research study on classroom assessment practices of art teachers, observing the art teachers in their classrooms matched the setting to what I wanted to find out (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). Through my years as an art teacher of students in grades K–12 coupled with my assessment background, I knew what I was observing and what to look for through an informed eye of an art educational connoisseur (Eisner, 2002). My interpretations were based in the observed evidence and I applied my personal perceptions as meaning to the information garnered through knowledgeable viewing to support and substantiate the data collected in the interview.

This means of data collection is also means of assessment. Observation is an assessment tool in art education (Beattie, 1997; Eisner, 2002; Lark-Horovitz et al., 1967; Luca & Kent, 1969; Zimmerman, 1997), is the most often data collection tool art teachers use in assessment (Burton, 2001b; Carey et al., 2002), and is one of the best practices of assessment (see Appendix C: Best Practices of Assessment for Student Learning from Art Education Literature).
My observations were captured through field notes. I had a composition book for each art teacher and used his or her pseudonym throughout. I had developed a prefigured observation protocol (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) to document my observations during the field-test. But I found this too constraining for the flow and immediacy of the dynamics of an art classroom. I then employed a structured field note format for accomplishing the written record of observations that specified what to observe which is an essential tool for observation methodology (Creswell, 1994).

The field notes captured during the instructional day I spent with the art teachers and their visual art education student resulted in both descriptive and analytic field notes (Glesne, 1999). I applied several ethnographic techniques in creating my field notes (Clifford, 1990; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Sanjek, 1990; Van Maanen, 1988). Contents of these field notes included writing down pertinent quotes from the art teacher from the day with teaching students, noting my observations throughout the day, sketches of the art room, class schedules, and notes of questions and probes to follow-up with the art teacher after class. In the bound book of field notes I kept for each art teacher participating in the study, I used a sidebar notes format (Altricher, Posch, & Somekh, 1993) to note ideas and insights as they came to me during the observations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011; Glesne, 1999).

**Artifacts.**

Artifacts are tangible documents or items that relate to the research setting (Tracy, 2013). Prior to each site visit, I searched for and analyzed public documents (Tracy, 2013) that were available from the state, district, and school websites for information. Once in the field and inside each visual art teacher’s classroom, I reviewed and analyzed
multiple sources of information. There was not any particular item I targeted or asked for; I was just observing to see what concepts might emerge through the research process. Artifact items reviewed included lesson plans; posted exemplars; outcomes; assessment posters; the art teacher’s assessment tools; parent communications; and student tests, writings, and artwork. Locations of items were noted, as was the wear on any documents involving assessment. I took photographs of the school and the art rooms (no people in the photos) as well as artifacts that I did not analyze on site or that I wanted to be able review again later. I did not use a protocol to record this information; I captured the information the field notebook I established for each art teacher participating in research study.

**Research Diary.**

The research diary was important for documenting the research process by recording the evidence and essence of my research including my evolving insights and observations, refocused goals of the research, and choices made based on the information emerging through the interviews as I reviewed and analyzed the collected data (Gillham, 2000; Glesne, 1999; King & Horrocks, 2010). I started keeping the research diary during a qualitative research methods class—several years before the fieldwork of this research study—using sidebar methods for notes and action (Altrichter et al., 1993). I continued my research diary—as discussed later in the field-test section of this chapter—through the data collection, data analysis, and written interpretation phases of the research study. When writing about specific art teachers in the study in my research diary, I used their pseudonyms.
I recorded my thoughts and feelings—separate from my field notes—in my research diary (Sanjek, 1990) as a means of clarification; as a place to self-assess; as a way of giving feedback to myself (Janesick, 2004); and to chronicle events, analyze assumptions, and scrutinize relationships (Taggart & Wilson, 1998). I reflected upon my assessment experiences—as both an art student and an art teacher—as the visual art teachers participating in the study shared their lived experiences and accounts of their assessment practices. More understanding can be derived from reflecting about the experience than from experience itself (Posner, 1996). During the site visits with each art teacher for data collection I also applied some analysis-in-the-field (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011) strategies based upon prior themes from the field-tests done during the development of the data collection protocols. This documentation also added to the credibility of my research study research by providing an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

My research diary was also the place for research reflexivity. Reflexivity is looking “… inwards and outwards exploring the intersecting relationships between existing knowledge, our experience, research roles and the world around us” (King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 125). I wrote reflectively upon these components before joining each art teacher in their art classroom, during the transcription of the interview, and throughout the data analysis and written interpretation. Additionally, as part of my reflexive process throughout the research, I considered if my authoritative voice was overriding the voices of the art teachers participating in the study (King & Horrocks, 2010). It was the accounts of the art teachers that are so integral to the process as a feminist researcher that I sought.

Journals and sketchbooks as assessment tools for student learning are a part of best practices of assessment (Barrett, 1990; Beattie, 1997a; Clark, 2002; Dorn, 1998; IBO, 2014b; Zimmerman, 1997) with recommendations for the art teacher to keep a journal or sketchbook for observation and reflections (Conant & Randall, 1959; Da Silva, 1997; Day & Hurwitz, 2012).

In the next section of Chapter Three, an explanation of the development of the data collection protocols and practices through extensive field-test experiences with art teachers is described.

Development of Pre-Site Visit Questionnaire and Interview Guide Via Field-Tests

Well prior to the data collection phase of this research study, field-tests were conducted to develop data collection tools and to hone my research skills in using them. The interview guide and pre-site visit questionnaire were developed through collaboration with over 50 art teachers via field-tests. Most art teachers participating in the field-test were elementary, middle level, and high school art teachers recruited to reflect the instructional levels, years of teaching, and National Board Certification
parameters of the anticipated study participants. Further explanation of the attributes of the art teachers participating in this research study is explained later in this chapter.

Many art teachers volunteered to be a part of the field-tests. Art teachers who used educational assessment in their classrooms and those who were self-proclaimed non-assessment users—including a few openly hostile toward the thought of assessing art—were asked to be a part of the field-test process. Some art teachers participated only once in the field trials while others participated several times in this iterative process.

As the interview guide and pre-site visit questionnaire formats were developed, art teachers would field-test them. Working with these art teachers, I wanted to find out several things—what worked well for them, what revisions would they suggest in the content and wording of the questions, my behavior, and my processes, what to keep and what to change—such that the process would be comfortable and engender participation of the art teachers participating in the research study. I also wanted to reveal to myself what changes I might need to make in my choices as a researcher.

I developed the pre-site visit questionnaire and interview protocols from five sources:

- ideas about assessment practices specifically geared for art based on reflecting on my own practice,
- modification of questions found in research studies of other content area teachers interviewed about their assessment practices (Stiggins, 1986; Stiggins & Conklin, 1992),
- listening to questions and commentaries of teachers of all content areas,
through aspects of my work in my school district that were relevant to this study, and

questions I developed based on the literature.

I had been keeping a research journal since a taking a methodology class and—by this point in the process—I had filled six books with notes, ideas, and prospective questions.

When ready to build the first version of the pre-site visit questionnaire, I pulled questions from my six research diaries into a single list. This list was edited to those questions pertinent to this study. The questions were revised for length, to address only one topic in each question—some written to address information, some for thoughts, and some for feelings—and lastly to get more than a yes–no answer. I also crafted several sets of questions that addressed the same information but asked it differently to find the best phrasing through the field-test experience. I sought an efficient set of questions; because teacher time is so limited I did not want to burden them with time-consuming protocols. Respect of the research study participant was paramount to me. While avoiding any closed response questions for the dialogic interviews, I did look to the survey and questionnaire design literature for ideas on word choice; order of questions, and for wording to avoid any leading questions (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004; Converse & Presser, 1986; Fody, 1993; Gillham, 2000; Hatch, 2002; Spradley, 1979; Sudman & Bradburn, 1982).

The pre-site visit questionnaire questions did not have precise answers for three reasons. First that could feel like an interrogation rather than a guided interview. Second, based on my field studies, there was a level of trepidation about being interviewed and I did not want to add stress. Third, the apprehension of talking about assessment in art
education was evident in my field-test—even with soft questions—I did not want to shut
down any conversation.

For the wording of the prompts, I avoided leading questions about art education
content knowledge, art education teaching philosophy, and assessment jargon. I did not
ask questions about content i.e. how do you assess learning in art history? Although I see
a bond between assessment and curriculum, I did not want to lose the primacy of
assessment in this study with questions on content beyond the more demographic type
question such as asking what they teach. I also did not ask any leading questions about
any past or current visual art education constructs in my questions because I wanted any
reference to their influences from art education philosophy on their assessment practices
to come from the art teachers participating in the study. Some of the art teachers in the
field-test used descriptors such as Lowenfeld and Discipline Based Art Education in their
answers so I was confident the structure of the questions in interview and pre-site visit
questionnaire.

I avoided using assessment jargon because jargon can be exclusionary (Van
Maanen, 1988). Using assessment jargon could close down the conversation because the
art teachers might did not know the term, as was seen during the field-test. I wanted the
conversations of the interview be a welcoming experience, not one that felt critical. The
only time I did use some jargon was in a question about No Child Left Behind,
abbreviated in the question as NCLB.

Once fully revised, I divided the questions into categories of information to
address in the pre-site visit questionnaire and information to gather in the interview. I
then applied the assessment strategy of scaffolding the questions from factual to more
complex for the pre-site visit questionnaire and from observational to emotional for the interview guide.

Field-Testing.

Both the interview guide and the pre-site visit questionnaire were field-tested with groups of art teachers and subsequently with individual art teachers. Within the group setting, the art teachers completed the pre-site visit questionnaire independently. Then I initiated a conversation amongst the group of field-test participants to process the clarity of the questions (Glesne, 1999) such as: what do you believe that question was asking? what order might the questions be in? were you uncomfortable with any of the questions? and what do you think I need to be asking?

In addition to field-testing the interview guide and the pre-site visit questionnaire, I was also able to field-test the research techniques to check the substance of the research question and to see if additional research questions emerge (Glesne, 1999). One component of my research sub-questions arose from my field-testing. The question about NCLB came from the art teachers in the field-test sharing the school expectation to include more assessment in their art classrooms. It was through these conversations I also learned information on hindrances to assessment that drove the development of that research sub-question.

After each round of trying questions including follow-up conversations with the art teachers in the field-test, I adjusted the interview guide and pre-site visit questionnaire based on their comments, my reflections, and my needs for what data the questions needed to gather. For example, reviewing the field-test participants’ recommendations—along with their answers to my questions and my notes from the group conversation—
revealed that I had not phrased the questions to elicit the kind of information I was after. Or I was asking the question in a way that used language that was more often used at the elementary teaching level, leaving the high school art teachers unsure what I was asking.

I also field-tested the data collection methods in classrooms employing a one-day site visit emulating the approach I had planned for my research study. These field-tests were with three art teachers—one each at the elementary, middle level, and high school. I ran the field-tests like I thought the day might unfold with the art teachers who would be participating in the study. Each these three art teachers completed the written pre-site visit questionnaire prior to my visit. I spent a day observing them with their art students in their classrooms, reviewing artifacts, and then interviewing each teacher at the end of their school day. We also debriefed after the interview about the data collection methods and my behavior. I made adjustments to my data collection methods and my behavior as a researcher based upon their comments and my reflections. After the field-testing and subsequent modifications to my research study instruments, I felt prepared to conduct the research study.

Attributes of and Locating the Art Teachers Participating in the Research Study

In this section I explain the attributes of the art teachers participating in the study, my sampling techniques used to recruit participants, and how the art teachers were selected.

Attributes of the art teachers participating in the study began with visual art teachers who were full-time, certified art teachers in the public schools in the United States. I sought out art teachers based on typical case sampling (Glesne, 1999). I was not looking for art teachers based on their experience in assessment for this study. I sought
art teachers from “… a variety of positions in relations to the research topic … [for] … meaningful differences in experience” (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 29). A purposeful (Patton, 1990) search for art teachers in four different attribute categories was used:

1. At the elementary, middle level or junior high, and high school levels;
2. With different years of teaching experience from new to the profession to seasoned teachers;
3. Working in different sizes of school districts; and

Teachers in the first three categories were pursued because of information that arose from the field-tests about assessment specific to the grade level, teaching experience, and the size of the district. These areas reflect my first research sub-question of: what constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning?

The fourth category was to seek out art teachers who were National Board Certified Teachers through the National Board of Professional Teaching Practices. Assessment is one of the areas of submission in the National Board Certification application and the NBPTS’s standards in art for the Early Childhood and Middle Childhood and Early Adolescence through Young Adult certificates are two of the selected art education assessment constructs from the literature included in the analytical framework. The attributes of the art teachers participating in this study along with pertinent demographic information are found in Appendix F: Attributes of Study Participants.
Locating Research Study Participants.

The art teachers participating in the study were from three different states in the U.S. and hence from three different school districts. While staying in one district or state would have allowed the research study research to focus on one common art education curriculum, it also may have overly limited the variety of perspectives. Searching for potential research study participants broke down into six steps: selecting a state, finding districts with National Board Certified art teachers, selecting the district, finding a willing contact within the district administration to approve my conducting research in their school district, and making the initial contact with the district-selected art teachers.

With the belief that educational assessment works in tandem with curriculum and instruction, I chose to select states that had art education state standards in a scope and sequence based in the national standards in art education. Additionally, the state’s scope and sequence needed to include suggested assessments and the state needed to offer art education assessment initiatives at the state level. I am quite aware that a district’s scope and sequence might not reflect their state’s scope and sequence. Further, even with a state or district scope and sequence being available, a teacher may chose to ignore it. Nevertheless, I wanted art teacher participants from states where there was at least the option for the teachers to have used assessment information available from the state. As noted in Chapter One, I analyzed the visual arts standards, curriculum guides, scope and sequences, and supporting assessments for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. I selected three states having art education scope and sequences and assessment initiatives: a western state, a central state, and an eastern state.
Using the search mode available to anyone on the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards website, I searched for National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) in the three states I had selected. From this list, I then searched these teachers’ districts websites to get a sense of the district including indications of art education. Based on hunches, I selected school districts that had NBCT art teachers and contacted a district in each state.

**Pseudonyms.**

Through this and the remaining chapters, whenever there is a reference to a research study participant, their school, their district, or on rare occasion to one of their students, a pseudonym is used to provide anonymity. The research study participants were invited to create their own pseudonyms. For creating the pseudonyms for the schools, school districts, students, and for any art teacher participating in the study that did not pick their own pseudonym, I picked pseudonyms by flipping through the index of a textbook; the text where my finger landed became their pseudonym.

**District Level Contacts: Gatekeepers.**

Gaining access to the research sites and potential participants of the study is part of the process (Glesne, 1999). My first try at contact—a cold call with a script I wrote for consistency—with each school district was successful. In the eastern state, the art supervisor for the Martinson School District agreed to support my research as did the curriculum director in the central U.S. state for the Elliott School District. For the western state, there was not a clear person of contact at the district level for the Anderson School District, so I contacted a NBCT art teacher directly. With all three districts, I asked if there was an application for conduct of research in their districts and if they wanted a
copy of the approved research document from my university’s Internal Review Board (IRB). In all cases there was not a form nor did they want a copy of the IRB document. All my initial contacts agreed to allow me to do my research in their schools’ settings. The district gatekeepers in the two districts then recruited the visual art teachers. I provided both the gatekeepers and the recruited art teachers a written lay summary of the study (Glesne, 1999) to let them know our roles during the site-visit, what I would be doing that day, and the art teacher’s role that day. All the art teachers participating in the research study signed an informed consent form.

**Implications on Research Methods in Meeting the Research Study Participants**

When I entered the participating art teacher’s classroom, I was sometimes met with trepidation and suspicion, which I did not fully understand. Internally, I acknowledged the power differential, the hierarchical situation between the researcher and the research study participant (Fontana & Frey, 2008; Reinharz, 1992) but some research study participants’ responses were laden with more concerns. I found out that concern had been added due to how their participation in my research study had been presented to them by their supervisors. They were faced with a researcher introduced through the influx of power of a supervisor, had been told I was an administrator, who was coming from a university with a known art education program, and who the supervisor had characterized—as many of the research study participants told me—as an expert in assessment. With that advance billing, their trepidation was understandable.

I needed to breakdown these power structures. So I would share, when appropriate, in a commiserating but not condescending manner, about experiences I had when I was an art teacher with that age of student. For example, in one art teacher’s
classroom the sink was not located in a place that would lend to easily classroom flow during cleanup; I mentioned that I would find that sink placement tough for cleanup, with the response of a surprised, “you were a teacher?” Many of the art teachers participating in the research study were surprised when they learned I had been an art teacher. Occasionally, I was asked questions about me or my teaching of art. Since the research study was about the art teacher and not about me, I kept my answers honest, courteous, but short and then returned the focus back to the art teacher’s experience (Weiss, 1994).

How I interacted with each art teacher appeared to address power structures to the point of apparent ease and trust on their part early in during the day of the site visits.

**Analytical Framework and Definitional Constructs for Data Analysis**

To analyze the data from the research study to answer my primary and supporting questions, I used an analytical framework that addressed both theory and practice. The structure of the framework was based on feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992) and supported with sound assessment practices from the literature in visual art education. Using an analytical framework based in the literature of feminist principles of assessment and assessment in visual art education literature is a means of relating the findings of the study to the literature (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011).

**Nine Principles of Feminist Assessment**

The feminist theories of assessment in the nine principles of feminist assessment (Shapiro, 1992) provided the structure for analytical framework for this study. These principles were first presented in Chapter Two.

1. Questions almost everything related to evaluation.
2. Is student-centered.
3. Is participatory.
4. Is deeply affected by its context or institutional culture.
5. Is decentered.
6. Approaches should be compatible with feminist activist beliefs.
7. Is heavily shaped by the power of feminist pedagogy.
8. Is based on a body of feminist scholarship and feminist research methodology that is central to this interdisciplinary area.

Visual Art Education Assessment Constructs

Visual art education assessment constructs were strategically selected based upon their relevancy to classroom assessment practices of art teachers, to the questions of this research study, and their fit within conceptual framework structured around the central factors and constructs to be studied (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The selection of the six lists that follow reflect research in the field of assessment in visual art education from respected authors or institutions. The selected constructs were aligned to the nine principles of feminist assessment (Shapiro, 1992) where applicable. As the constructs may fit under more than one of the nine principals, the language and premise of the principle guided the interpretation. The selected art education assessment constructs are presented chronologically.

Wilson’s Roles, Functions, and Purposes of Assessment.

In 1992, Brent Wilson listed 13 roles, functions, and purposes of assessment in art education. In his list, he shared the assessment role and an explanation of the function or purpose:
1. Criticism: for informing students about the quality of a work.
2. Grading: for informing students, parents and others about the achievement level.
3. Qualification: for determining entrance or exit of a program or course.
4. Placement: for matching the level of education with the student’s skill.
5. Prediction: to anticipate future success or failure.
7. Didactic Feedback: for providing feedback throughout the teaching process.
8. Communication: for presenting results of the education program.
9. Accountability: for detailing the extent the program goals were met.
10. Representation: for using assessment tools and tasks to show program goals.

**Beattie’s Principles of Quality Classroom Art Assessment.**

In her book *Assessment in Art Education*, Donna Kay Beattie (1997a) presented a list of 18 Principles of Quality Classroom Art Assessment:

1. Is student-oriented and teacher-directed.
2. Supports, rather than interferes with, instruction and course objectives.
4. Is continuous and focused on providing ongoing information.
5. Is contextual and authentic.
6. Represents an appropriate balance of formal and informal strategies.
7. Focuses on both products and processes.
8. Provides opportunities for students to revise and make changes in products and processes.
9. Is responsive to different types of knowledge.
10. Is responsive to expanded notions of intelligence and creativity.
11. Is concerned with students’ preconceptions and misconceptions.
12. Is equal for all.
13. Is standards-based.
14. Is criterion-referenced and compares students’ performances to past performances.
15. Is responsive to collaborative and cooperative learning.
16. Allows for reserved judgment.
17. Is explicit and ordered.
18. Exemplifies the latest and best assessment techniques (pp. 6–9).

**National Board of Professional Teaching Standards: Early Childhood and Middle Childhood in Art.**

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards has two sets of standards for visual art teachers for two different age ranges of the students taught. In each of these
sets of standards, there is a standard dedicated to assessment of student learning in visual art education.

There are total of nine standards for Early Childhood and Middle Childhood in art (ECMC/Art) that include Goals of Art Education, Knowledge of Students as Learners, and Equity and Diversity. The ninth standard—Assessment, Evaluation, and Reflection—is: “accomplished teachers understand the design, principles, and purposes of assessment; they regularly monitor, analyze, and evaluate student progress, their own teaching, and their programs” (NBPTS, 2000, p. 61). There are seven segments to this standard.

2. Teachers Use a Range of Assessment Tools.
3. Teachers Assess Student Understanding and Growth.
4. Teachers Promote Student Self-Assessment.
5. Teachers Are Reflective and Examine Their Practice Systematically.
6. Teachers Evaluate Their Programs.

**National Board of Professional Teaching Standards: Early Adolescence Through Young Adult in Art.**

There are a total of ten standards for the Early Adolescence through Young Adult in art (EAYA/Art) National Board certification; these standards similar to those of the ECMC standards as is the wording of the assessment standard and description. The sixth EAYA/Art standard is the assessment standard and the only difference is in the
description where the word practice is used rather than programs as in the ECMC/Art.

There are seven segments to the EAYA/Art assessment standard.

- Teachers Understand Assessment Purposes and Principles.
- Teachers Assess Student Understanding and Growth.
- Teachers Use a Range of Assessment Tools.
- Teachers Address Validity and Reliability Issues.
- Teachers Promote Student Self-Assessment.
- Teachers Enable Students to Apply Concepts of Assessment to Art in Their Lives.
- Teachers Communicate Assessment Results (NBPTS, 2001, pp. 55–60).

Both of these sets of segments from the assessment standard can be used to analyze understanding of assessment—a component of the research question—and fit well within several of principles the analytical framework of the study.

**Dorn, Madeja, and Sabol List of Nine Purposes of Assessment.**


1. To grade student achievement.
2. To provide student feedback.
3. To provide instructional feedback to students.
4. To evaluate art education curriculum.
5. To set student art education goals and standards.
6. To diagnose student art education needs.
7. To set art education program goals and standards.
8. To evaluate teaching
9. To identify strengths and weaknesses of the art education program (p. 14).

The application of art teachers’ purposes within a study of art teachers’ understanding and purposes of assessment provides continuity with the literature in assessment in art education.

**NAEA Professional Standards for Visual Arts Educators.**

The National Art Education Association (2009a) presented thirteen professional standards for visual arts educators. Under the category of Assessment, Evaluation, and Reflection there are three standards. I elected to use all of Standard VII: Visual Arts Educators Conduct Meaningful and Appropriate Assessments of Student Learning.

Visual arts educators:

1. develop a repertoire of assessment strategies consistent with instructional goals, teaching methods, and individual student needs;
2. use multiple methods of assessment, both formal and informal, formative and summative, and a range of assessment strategies such as portfolios, journals, class critiques, and discussions;
3. practice assessment as a joint venture through which both student and teacher understanding is enhanced;
4. provide opportunities for students to assess their own knowledge and skills and demonstrate an understanding of standards;
5. ensure that all students have many equal opportunities to display what they know and can do in art;

6. provide recognition of a variety of student accomplishments and positive habits of mind; and

7. evaluate student progress in relation to both short- and long-term instructional objectives (NAEA, 2009a).

I chose to include only two segments from Standard VIII: Visual Arts Educators Systematically Reflect on their Own Teaching Practice because of their direct applicability to this research study:

1. Visual art educators evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction on students and

2. Visual art educators search for patterns of student accomplishment and behavior in their classroom that reflect on the impact of their teaching practice (NAEA, 2009a).

I chose not to include any of the segments from Standard IX: Visual Arts Educators Assess Program Effectiveness because program evaluation is not a focus of the research study.

**Data Analysis**

In this section I describe the data analysis and the process of interpretation made from the analysis. Data analysis is to not only summarize the multiple data streams (Eisner, 1998) but also to address themes and patterns in the units of data that support through evidence of “… the uniqueness of the particular” (Eisner, 1985, p. 88). A feminist view affects how sense is made of the data during the analysis and interpretation.
(Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). The units of data for each art teacher came from the primary data collection method of the interviews. Supporting sources of for units of data were the art teacher’s written words in the pre-site visit questionnaires, artifacts, my field notes from one-day observations within the each art teacher’s classroom, my research diary, and my personal perceptions as a source of meaning.

Data analysis and data collection were done simultaneously (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) to clarify, direct, and support my research study. In my research diary, I was noting these analytic thoughts as they occurred (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Sometimes, these analytic thoughts would come to me during an observation and I would jot them down as a sidebar in my field notes to capture them before returning my focus to the observation. More systematic analysis occurred during the transcription of the interview tapes and when working through each visual art teacher’s units of data.

Once data collection was finished and the transcription of the tapes of the research interviews complete, I began systematic analysis of the data through analytic coding and use of the analytical framework. The analysis of the interviews and supporting data was organized and then coded based on both the analytical framework feminist principles of assessment and the art education assessment constructs, as synthesized into the two themes discussed below. Patterns were also developed through the analysis process.

The interpretation of the findings is in relation to the theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011) of feminist assessment and the two synthesized themes. Two themes occurred through by my grouping of like terms, concepts, and text supporting the lists from the feminist principles and the art education constructs together. The two resultant synthesized themes were:
• Student-Centered Assessment and

• Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher.

The synthesis of components from the feminist principles of assessment and the six art education assessment constructs into two lists are presented in Chapter Five.

**Analytic Coding**

Coding is a process of analyzing the collected data into meaningfully dissected parts while sustaining the interrelationships of the data and the context by assigning units of meaning to the segments (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Richards, 2009). Coding categories can be generated due to the particular questions of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Sub-questions of the study and patterns that emerged through the analysis and interpretation of the data were also coded. The units of data were reviewed for evidence and for contrary evidence (Silverman, 2006) for each analytic code.

Several different types of codes were used in the analysis of the data. I used descriptive codes (King & Horrocks, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994) that were characteristics of the components of the two synthesized themes discussed above as well as codes reflective of the three sub-questions:

- What constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning?
- What personal antecedents are impacting the current assessment practices of the visual art teachers in this study?
- What is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers?
Strategy codes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011) were used for coding how the art teachers used assessment and for noting the conscious use (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011) of assessment procedures by the art teacher. Counter-examples were also coded when an art teacher used or discussed as assessment task or strategy but the art teacher was not aware that it was an assessment strategy. These examples and counter-examples were used for illustrative evidence in the findings.

Definition codes were used for coding how the art teachers defined the topics of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). The definition coding I used included codes on the art teachers’ definition of assessment and their view of their role in assessment. These codes reflected components of the research study question.

Perspective codes are similar to definition codes in they look at definitional thinking, but the perspective codes are more particular to the setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Codes used for this category included aspects of the sub-questions for hindrances to assessment including NCLB. Perspective codes can include phrases used (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011) such as used as when an art teacher referred to the assessment process including the students. I used event codes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011) for coding the memories the art teachers shared about assessment experiences that reflected my sub-question on antecedents influencing current assessment practice.

How the art teachers thought about others who are part of their world is a code category that Bogdan & Biklen (2011) discussed as the ways a person thinks about things or people. Under this category I coded the units of data that reflected the art teachers comparing art to other content areas and how they viewed the influence of supervisors. Narrative codes were used for describing and analyzing the configuration of talk of the
participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Examples of these codes in my analysis were how the art teachers spoke about assessment of learning in art education: with hesitancy, pausing to search for answers, or articulated with ease. After several reviews of the units of data, additional pattern codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were developed as a theme emerged arose from the data analysis through interpretation. The theme of The Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing emerged from the analysis of the units of data.

I made many iterative trips through the data in different orders and in different ways as I looked for similarities and differences through cross-case analysis. Throughout the data analysis and interpretation phase of the findings, I used visual devices of sketches and diagrams to help me see patterns and relationships (Glesne, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994) with the units of data. I verified any interpretive conclusions back through my field notes and research diary (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Limitations**

The limitations of the research design and methods of this research study are predominately issues of time. The amount of time spent with each art teacher who participated in this study was a one-day site visit. A longer amount of time with the art teacher through periodic visits and conversational interviews over a school year could have provided a richer data for understanding art teachers’ uses of assessment for student learning. A longer amount of time with the art teacher could have aided in relationship development producing further mitigation of the power issues through my role as the researcher.

The time of the school year could also be a limitation of this study. All of the site visits with the art teachers was in mid-term and mid-unit. Site visits at the beginning of
an instructional unit, term, or school year could have provided additional units of data around pre-assessment. Similarly, site visits at the end of a unit, term, or school year could have provided information about summative assessment. There could have been an issue of time as a limitation with the pre-site visit questionnaire. Each art teacher had several days to complete the questionnaire; perhaps more time would have been beneficial for the depth of responses.

An additional limitation to this research study is sample size. Twelve art teachers participated in this qualitative research study. A larger number of art teachers could have provided more information about the range of understanding and practices of assessment. A smaller number—combined with more site visits and interviews—could have offered a more in-depth view of individual art teachers’ uses of assessment of student learning. Additionally, a larger number of art teachers from one school district, rather than the smaller number of art teachers from three districts as per this study, could have provided more information on the influence of a school district as well as power issues of hierarchical decisions made outside of the art classroom impacting the assessment practices of the art teachers.

Chapter Summary

This chapter explained the rationale for the study, explanation of the selection of qualitative research methodology, theoretical perspectives, and research methods used to collect data used in study. The parameters of the of this multi-data strand study were delineated as was the recruitment of visual art teachers participating in the study. The field-test process used to develop the interview guide and pre-site visit questionnaire was explained.
The data collection methods of the interview guide, with the supporting data collection methods of research diary, pre-site visit questionnaire, field notes, artifacts, and observations were presented. How the study was conducted, use analytic framework based on feminist principles of assessment and selected visual art education assessment constructs for data analysis with two synthesis themes and one emergent theme were described. The types of analytic codes used and how they connected to the research question and sub-questions was clarified, as was the analysis and interpretation process. The next chapter introduces the twelve visual art teachers participating in this study.
Chapter 4: Introductions of the Twelve Art Teachers Participating in the Study

This chapter presents the twelve visual art teachers who participated in the research study. First, general information about their three school districts is described. The introduction of each art teacher includes information about their schools, their school’s student population, and a description about the art teachers’ classrooms to set the scene. Descriptions of the art teachers, their educational backgrounds, what they are teaching, and information from data sources are also included. Pseudonyms are used for the art teachers, schools, students, and districts. The pseudonym for any student referenced reflects the ethnic heritage and gender of the student. Exposition on the units of data of these twelve visual art teachers is found in the presentation of findings in Chapter Five.

Introduction of Participating School Districts and Art Teacher Selection Process

The twelve art teachers work in three different school districts in three different states. Information on the selection process of these states and districts was presented in Chapter Three. Information on the school district and the specifics of selection of the art teachers per districts is explained below. The districts are presented in alphabetical order by their pseudonyms. Following the district overviews, the twelve participating art teachers are introduced district by district in alphabetical order by pseudonym.
Western State: Anderson School District Introduction.

The Anderson School district has about 15,000 students with urban and suburban setting located in a western U.S. state. The city economic base is light industry and a variety of produce from the surrounding agriculture. The district has six elementary schools each with their own art teacher, two middle schools with two art teachers per school, two traditional high schools with several art teachers per school, and several alternative high schools without any art teachers. The traditional high schools each have two art teachers (down from four per high school four years ago). Nearly 60% of the district student population are Hispanic, just over 25% White, with Black and Native American each making up about 3% of the student population in the district’s 23 schools. There is not an art coordinator for the district or for any other content area. Supervisors at the district level oversee curriculum and professional development for all content areas. Visual art is transitioning into Career and Technical Education; the district’s visual art curriculum is in the process of revision and contains suggested tools for assessment. For the Anderson School District, there was not a contact person for research at the school district and was recommended to contact the art teachers directly. There is one art teacher from this district participating in the research study:

- Susan Neal, high school art teacher.

Central State: Elliott School District Introduction.

There are about 3,000 students in this town’s school district. There are five K–3 elementary schools with two itinerant art teachers; each of these art teachers works at two schools and both work at together at another. There is one intermediate school with all the fourth and fifth graders in the district with one art teacher. There is one middle school
with all the sixth through eighth graders with three art teachers. Lastly, there is one high school with three art teachers. There are not any content area specific supervisors. One supervisor at the district level oversees the curriculum for all grades and content areas. The art curriculum was last revised in the early 1990s with little reference to assessment.

The district’s curriculum director recruited art teachers to participate in this study. He set up an after school conference call with the art teachers he recruited and me. He had forwarded the research synopsis I had sent him after our initial conversation to the art teachers prior to the call. At the top of the call, he introduced the art teachers and me and then asked the teachers if they had any questions. After a few logistical questions—mostly about do they need to create a special lesson or how much time out of school it would take—the curriculum director excused himself from the conference call. Prior to this phone call, I asked him how much he wanted to be informed or how much contact did he wish me to make with the building principals. He said just stop by to see him when I was first in town; I did not need to copy him or the building principals on any emails to the art teachers.

All of the art teachers on the call agreed to participate; it was decided by the group that I needed to email them to set up observation days and to send them—all requested via email—the pre-site visit questionnaire. There was one art teacher who later declined to participate. I called her to thank her for considering participation and did not to try to change her mind. One art teacher who was not on the initial conference call did participate in the study. Another art teacher participating in the study recommended him to me once I reached the school district. He was my only participant selected via this
snowball sampling method. There are six art teachers from the Elliott School District participating in the study:

- Arthur Carvé, middle school art teacher;
- Joan D’Arté, middle school art teacher;
- Michelle Marks, elementary school art teacher;
- Lynn Newton, elementary school art teacher;
- Susan Pappas, elementary school art teacher; and
- Kristy Silverman, high school art teacher.

**Eastern State: Martinson School District Introduction.**

This school district of approximately 74,000 students has a range of socio-economic and heritage backgrounds of students living in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The district has a large economic swing from the highly affluent to poverty level. There are about 75 elementary schools each with their own art teacher; 20 middle schools with several art teachers per school with the number dependent on the size of the student population; a dozen high schools all with at least three art teachers per school; and several charter, alternative, or special program schools. The district has a full time art supervisor and two part-time resource teachers. The art supervisor is in charge of visual art curriculum, district-wide art programmatic components such as student art shows, has input in hiring of new art teachers, and organizes professional development for the art teachers with special sessions for new-to-the-profession art teachers. The district art supervisor provides half-day leave days for art teachers to observe other teachers in the district. The art curriculum scope and sequence pacing guide revision had just been
completed with examples of assessment tasks. All district curricula are on a review and revisions cycle.

Serving as the gatekeeper, the district visual arts coordinator selected the art teachers to participate in this research study. She contacted each art teacher and her or his principal in joint emails with the research synopsis. I do not know the number of art teachers contacted as per the number who agreed to participate. I did not feel a need to pay attention to what was going on behind that selection curtain. Once given the name and email address, I emailed each prospective art teacher potentially participating in the study, with courtesy copy to the art supervisor, verifying their participation, explaining the time it entailed, parameters of the site visit, and the pre-site visit questionnaire. All of the teachers emailed back an agreement to participate. I set up my visitation for the schools via the visual art coordinator. There are five art teachers from the Martinson School District participating in this research study:

- Patrick Cooper, high school art teacher;
- Linda Delmont, high school art teacher;
- Angela Fielding, middle school art teacher;
- Nancy Lee, elementary school art teacher; and
- Kay Holloway, high school art teacher.

Introduction of the Twelve Art Teacher Participating in the Research Study

Anderson School District Teacher:

Susan Neal Introduction:

Susan Neal is the jewelry, ceramics, and International Baccalaureate (IB) visual arts teacher for Chaskin High School in Anderson School District in a western state. Neal
has been teacher for 12 years with the last six years at Chaskin High. Neal has a bachelor’s degree in studio arts—ceramics—and a master’s degree in counseling. She is certified both in visual arts and in Career and Technical Education. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in Early Adolescent and Young Adult Visual Arts, is an IB examiner for the visual arts for other school districts, and is a leader in the state for writing curriculum for Career and Technical Education jewelry programs. Neal taught ceramics at the college level for six years and currently teaches evening jewelry classes at the community college. Neal was a production potter and now she works in jewelry, exhibiting her work in local galleries.

Neal is a White woman in her late forties with shoulder length brown hair. She is wearing the school colors today, a school tradition on Fridays. Neal wears an apron with pockets to carry examples of the jewelry project (some which met the expectations, other which do not) so she has easy access to share them with the students. Neal also carries her own jewelry works-in-progress that the students ask to see and hear about the artist decisions she is making. Neal also stows the fine files for finish work in her apron. She explained that these small files could be used as weapons. With the gang activity in and around Chaskin High, Neal wants to keep track of these files yet still provide them for the students to use.

Chaskin High School is one of two traditional high schools in the district with about 2,000 students in grades 9–12. Eighty percent of the students are Hispanic, nearly 90% of the students receiving free and reduced-priced meals, over 25% are come from migrant homes, and nearly 20% of the school population are transitional English Language Learners. This school is having challenges meeting the standards set by the
state to meet the Federal educational expectations of No Child Left Behind or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Chaskin is an urban high school that has four, three story buildings connected by outdoor walkways at each level. Doors are locked and security guards are evident. The building is brick and masonry; Neal’s classroom is on the third floor in a building with narrow windows on one side that overlook trees which were flowering in May. Neal’s art room is long and narrow with the torch bay and vent hood near the center of the room beside the sinks; clerestory windows are on the other side. Along one wall are doors to the kiln room, storage room, and the offices for Neal and the two other teachers whose rooms also adjoin the office. One of those teachers is the two-dimensional art teacher; the special education department uses the other classroom. Near the office door is a tall jeweler’s bench that serves as a demonstration table for small groups, a storage space for metal, the location of the larger vises for the bracelet mandrels, and as Neal’s desk space for her attendance and lesson plans books. Neal is at this jeweler’s bench at the beginning of class when she greets each student by name as they enter the classroom and at the end of class to collect and count tools. During the class period, she moves around the room, working with the students.

Chaskin High has an alternating schedule of 90-minute class periods Monday through Thursday and 45-minute class periods on Friday. This Friday’s schedule was two classes of jewelry; an assembly during what is Neal’s prep period; followed by a ceramics class, an IB art class, and jewelry classes. All of her classes have over 30 students with the IB art class having 41 students. Neal teaches all grade levels in her classes. Even though the students are to take a general art class as a prerequisite to her
jewelry and ceramics classes, students are placed in her class without the prerequisite. The IB class is the only class with the grade level of students matching the course description. In all her other classes this trimester, there are at least two students who have not had any prior art education and at least two students who speak only Spanish. Neal speaks in deliberate and excited tones yet “I speak slower so my students who are learning English can catch what I am saying.” Her rate of speech picks up in her IB class, which is comprised nearly completely with White, English-speaking students.

Other than the IB class, the majority of Neal’s students are Hispanic. During her classes, the students at the tables talk with each other about their projects, mostly to help each other and mostly in Spanish. Neal tells me during our interview that many of her students have come directly from Mexico and they speak no English. Neal has learned some Spanish and does allow for Spanish to be spoken in her classroom; other teachers in the school do not. A few times during the day, a student translates what Neal has said into Spanish for another student sitting at their table.

Reading and writing in English is a challenge for many of Neal’s students. Neal and I discussed the jewelry mid-term exams covering working with metal—“What is annealing? Explain the term ‘work hardened’ and list several ways it occurs.” On the 100 point quiz, the highest score was 96, half of the 26 scores were below 50. I asked her if she thought this was an accurate measure of her students’ understanding. “Most of the lower scores are due to a lack of English,” explained Neal, “I get at their understanding through watching and through questions.” Her tests are not translated into Spanish nor are her jewelry textbooks because it takes months to get something translated.
Neal explained during our interview that the students in all her classes have a rubric for the expectations of the project and part of their final grade will be self-assessment. They will need to be able to support or defend their decisions to Neal. It was individualized instruction as she moved from student to student, checking on their progress, asking a lot of questions, looking at their sketches, and examining their in-progress jewelry piece or ceramic work to ascertain their level of understanding. I observed Neal use the phrase “let me see your design” many times over the school day. “I ask them this so I can see what they are thinking, to support their ideas plus it helps to use visuals with the non-English speakers,” Neal elaborated during our interview.

Neal encourages the students to help each other. In the interview with her I mentioned she asked a student Carmen, a student, to help another classmate. Neal was working with different student and missed what occurred when Carmen talked to the other student. During our interview, I related to Neil that Carmen asked: “So, let me see your design.” “So what she was doing was mirroring exactly what I did,” Neal said with a smile.

Throughout the day Neal demonstrated a technique while pointing out what to look for with tool use and media. “Watch my file push away and lift—see how it is making it shiny?” Neal asks as she runs her finger over the filed area, gestures for the student to do the same, then watches both the expression of the student and their revised actions to check on their understanding of her instruction:

As I check on the students I monitor their work. I can tell by the teeth marks, and can look at the metal and I tell them that. Which is why I went around and retaught filing to a couple, they were sawing instead filing with the file,
actually making grooves in the metal, they were retaught that, they were, “oohhhh” [the sound of understanding] so that is one-on-one of instruction I do a lot of. They like it. You can read it, I can tell it and I can show it but, when they right there doing it, and I step in there to help them be successful, they like it.

During the ceramics class, the students covered the tables with canvas tarps, picked up their bisqueware from a cart outside the outside the kiln room, and got their glazes and brushes. Neal then moved to one of the four pottery wheels near the windows and began prepping an inverted leatherhard pot to reveal the bottom for trimming. She asked a student watching her, “Hey, Eduardo, am I making any progress here?” He looked like he was not sure what to say. Neal tapped the bottom of the pot while turning her head and exaggerated listening for the sound of the thickness of bottom. “Ah, thinness,” was said by several students while nodding in agreement. She moved on to another ceramics topic as she trimmed, looking up from her work to view the students at the end of each question. “How do you know if a pot is centered?” she asked. A student responded to her answer, “it doesn’t …” as he mimed wobbling. “It doesn’t look wobbly,” stated Neal.

Neal often asked the art students in all her classes “what is your next step?” always followed by the student’s first name. “The reason I ask a student what they are thinking is because I don’t want to always talk them through everything. I want to know what they are thinking so I can tell where they are at in their learning.”
Elliott School District Teachers:

Arthur Carvé Introduction:

Arthur Carvé teaches seventh and eighth graders as one of the three art teachers at Elliott Middle School in the Elliott School District. This is his fifteenth year as an art teacher and his tenth at this school. He has two bachelors’ degrees—one in fine arts and one in art education—and a Master of Art Education. Carvé teaches three-dimensional art and defined his role as a teacher in the pre-site visit questionnaire as: “to help [the] student to use different media.” Carvé is a tall, White male with glasses and salt and pepper hair parted in the center. He is in late-thirties, wearing a brown lab coat, sleeves rolled up to his forearms. He has adjoining art rooms with Mrs. D’Arté; we meet her later in this chapter. She recommended him for the study.

Elliott Middle School has about 900 students in grades 6–8. Eighty-eight percent of the students are White; just over 40% receive free and reduced-priced meals. Almost a quarter of the students receive special education services. The results on the statewide testing are scattered with some of the demographic groups of students scoring with only 20–30% proficient or advanced and only one group, non-disabled students, scoring with 90% in reaching or surpassing the test targets.

The Elliott Middle School building is a one-story brick school with instructional wings for each of the three grade levels and the integrated arts of art, home economics, and industrials arts; music instruction occurs near the front of the school. The school was built just a few years ago and is adjacent to the one high school in the school district. An elementary school, Kaufman, can be seen across the way. Other art teachers participating
in the study, Kristy Silverman, works at the high school and Susan Pappas works at Kaufman Elementary.

Carvé’s classroom is pristine, with relatively clear counters. One display board had posters on the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design. Another display board has laminated reproductions of a variety of styles, shapes, and painting designs of ice-fishing decoys above a box of examples of the steps in making a decoy along with six examples, most made by Carvé, plus a tub of resource photos of actual fish. On a white board are diagrams drawn by Carvé of the steps, side and top views, and the major steps written out beside the sketches. These are well-drawn schematics that are clearly labeled. There are two band saws, a drill press, disk sander, and jigsaw near the exterior door to the patio that has a view of the district’s high school. At the other end of the classroom are an immaculate kiln room and his office.

Carvé teaches six 47-minute long class periods a day on Mondays through Thursdays. Mondays and Wednesdays are one set of students, Tuesdays and Thursdays another, and on Friday he sees all the students in short class periods. First and second quarters of the year he teaches seventh graders; third and fourth quarters he teaches eighth graders. Joan D’Arté is teaching the seventh graders now. The third art teacher in the building (who did not participate in the study) teaches art to all the sixth graders. Carvé classes average eight students per class period with the largest class at thirteen. He did not use student names and did not interact with the students unless they approached him to ask him questions during the studio time.

He quizzes the students each week on an artist. During the first class day of the week he sees them, the students copy down notes on the artist off an overhead projector
slide to create a study guide. The second art class day of the week, they review their notes. On Friday the students take the quiz that is in the same format and order as the study guide. Carvé grades the quizzes and returns them the next week. The students keep the quizzes and a record sheet in folders. Last week the artist was Winslow Homer; this week is Frida Kahlo. The content and format of the notes page and test included:

Question 1. Who was Frida married to? __________

Question 2. What crippled Frida? _________

There were a total of eight questions on the quiz with the last question asking for the three themes in Kahlo's art. Three of the few visuals in the room were reproductions of Frida Kahlo’s work. Based on last week’s quiz on Winslow Homer, the quiz format and content will be the same as the notes page with an added extra credit question. Last week’s bonus question was “[number of] sharks in the artwork_____”.

Carvé determines the content of the quiz and the artist each week. When asked in our interview how he picks the artists, Carvé explained selects artists he likes and he tries to have both male and female artists. I asked him if there will be a quiz on the project the students are working on, “no, but I might need to change that.” He is not sure if he is required to give quizzes but he thinks it might be a district expectation.

During the beginning of each of today’s six classes, Carvé presented information on the next steps in making ice-fishing decoys. These decoys are about eight inches long, being made out of pine, with aluminum fins, and painted. Carvé had cut the basic shape of the fish out of pine stock; I could hear the band saw the day before during my site visit with D’Arté in the adjoining classroom. When asked if this project was part of the school district’s art scope and sequence, Carvé shrugged and grinned with amusement saying he,
“wasn’t sure if there was curriculum for art.” When asked during our interview how does he know if the students have learned about the ice-fishing decoy, Carve responded:

If they produced it correctly. In the end if they have the end product [laughs] if they have fins that are filed and attached on to their body of their fish decoy then I think they have gotten the idea.

Carvé used the box of examples of the steps of making the decoy to illustrate the over 90 steps of making the fishing ice decoy—from sanding the body of the fish through putting on eyelets to hang the finished decoy—without any hesitation. At the end he asked if there were any questions of which there were none in any of his classes. Once studio work time started, students would walk up to him at the from of the room and ask him one of several types of questions:

1. A clarifying question order of the steps, such as, “what do I do next?”
   Looking at the student’s decoy, Carvé would say, “You want to do …” and he would list the steps.

2. Where a particular tool was. Carvé would point to the location in the art room or direct the student where to look.

3. About parts of the decoy. These seemed to be questions that were aesthetic or artistic choices questions by the students: “are these fins too small?” or “is this color good?” Carvé would answer yes or no, sometimes with added problem-solving advice.

4. “Am I done?” Carvé would check decoy, without telling the student what he was looking or checking for like a smooth surface. He would tell them, “You want to …” giving direction for what he found lacking.
In answering all of these types of questions, except the tool location question, the student would hand him the decoy. Carvé silently examined the in-progress piece, then, without conversation or looking at the student, he would give directives on what to do next. Neither his students nor Carvé referred to the collection of completed exemplars or the diagrams available in the room.

Craftsmanship is the theme of Carvé’s interview, found within his written answers to questions on the pre-site visit questionnaire, and observed as part of his assessment practices in his classroom. Carve’ readily answered an interview question about how he assesses:

50% of grade is the fish decoy. The grade is based mostly on craftsmanship and if it is functional and if it does work. Also on the paint job, how well they sanded it, smoothed and shaped the wood, did they file the fins, did they attach them correctly, if the paint job is acceptable in the end, and then we test. There is a big stainless steel bucket of water. Hook them up to make sure they are balanced right and see if they work right. All are equal as possible: body, fins, and paint. Unfortunately, the paint job can make or break it. It is the last thing they do and unfortunately at this age they are not very good painters, so I try to avoid things that are painted because I have seen things that are very nice then at the last minute they are destroyed visually. So a lot of times in eighth grade when we do wood carvings we’ll wood burn in designs instead so they don’t aesthetically screw something up that they have put so much time into.
In his written responses on the pre-site visit questionnaire, Carvé sees the role of the art teacher is “to help student to use different medias” and the role of the student in getting an art education is “to understand what are the basics in art.” “Craftsmanship” was Carvé’s answer to two questions on the pre-site visit questionnaire: what types of assessment tools and strategies do you use in your classroom? and what does assessment look like in your classroom? Craftsmanship is also a part of Carvé’s answer to the pre-site visit questionnaire prompt what is the student’s role in assessment: “to know that craftsmanship is important.”

Joan D’Arté Introduction:

Joan D’Arté is one of the three art teachers at Elliott Middle School in the Elliott School District. Her classroom is adjacent to the classroom of Arthur Carvé, who was just introduced in this chapter. This is Arté’s 27th year of teaching art with 11 years at the elementary level and 16 years teaching the middle-level learner. When she taught at the elementary level she was “art on a cart with 1,000 students a week in four schools.” D’Arté has a Bachelor of Science in visual arts education and a master’s degree in school supervision. She had limited assessment instruction as a pre-service teacher, has attended a few workshops on assessment, and did not note any professional development in her school or district on assessment. When thinking about college, “truthfully, I don’t remember having to do all this stuff. I remember talking about craftsmanship. I remember us talking about skill. That was about it. I don’t remember us doing all the stuff we do now.” D’Arté values what she got from her student teaching cooperating teachers but not from her university supervisor:
My cooperating teachers were awesome. They gave vocabulary tests and gave me copies of everything so when I started off I had a good beginning because if I did not have those two ladies I would have been drowning. But the university supervisor didn’t want to climb the stairs up to the classroom where I was doing student teaching so I was only observed once and was told “you’re fine” and never saw him again.

Going clockwise around D’Arté’s classroom, a 38-foot by 28-foot space, there is a wall of counters with storage above and below, a storage room, her office, display space, an exterior door to a patio, and the door to Carvé’s room, a large white board, and more storage. The walls have inspirational quotes: “attitude is the minds paintbrush, it can color any situation”; “if it is worth doing, it is worth doing well”. There are also Elements of Art, Principles of Design, and art history timeline posters. At her desk sits a stack of graded quizzes on Peter Max to return to the students. Like Carvé she gives quizzes on an artist once a week; she was directed by her principal to give quizzes as a way to grade art.

D’Arté is a White woman with shoulder length brown hair and today is wearing an apron over her brightly colored outfit. During her prep period she is working on getting a bus for a field trip to the large city an hour away to see a musical performance and she is trying to round up some students to finishing painting the long banners on the floor of her classroom to “cheer the kids on to ‘testing victory’” for the statewide tests that are coming up. D’Arté expressed concerns about too much testing: “I am afraid we are going to get to the point that we have tested and tested our children so much to get the skill level that we have forgotten about the creative human part of being.”
When asked about a district scope and sequence in art, D’Arté spent time looking for one in her office on the day of my site-visit, “I know I’ve got it somewhere; I know I have it buried in my room. God knows if it matches the state standards.” She laments, “We have so much to cover and so little time and you sorta hope they get it and you try.” And she is discouraged,

I feel like there is an ocean of art and I giving them a raindrop. That’s what I feel like sometimes and it is pretty frustrating sometimes because I don’t feel like I am giving them everything. I know in the time that I have them and when I am done, they don’t even get it.

D’Arté teaches the same schedule as Carvé, seeing students three times a week. This semester she is teaching seventh graders. Her largest class this semester is 12 and her smallest has eight students. The students are making coil pots in clay that will be fired and glazed. In all classes, the students quietly enter the room, grab an apron, and sit at the table covered with canvas. In an opening of all her classes, D’Arté targets the review on smoothing the coils of the pot. “Every three to four layers. How do you use the tongue depressor?” she asks the group. The students respond together, “smooth.” Joan continues, “towards the top or in the direction of the coils?” Again the choral response, “in the direction of the coils.” “Great,” she exclaims, “Everyone knew the answer!” She moves on, “you want to make sure that you squeeze the clay, then roll it out. Had some folks yesterday who didn’t do that and that will cause you problems.”

D’Arté walks around the silent students as they worked, observing their clay pieces, then stating what she saw followed by different kinds of comments listed below.

- Explanation: “Always cup your hands; you give it resistance.”
• Demonstration: “See, you have a stress fracture there.” She demonstrated the solution with another piece of clay, not on the student piece and not just with words. The student is silent, and obliges the direction to fix the crack with a little too much water but she has moved on.

• Solution: D’Arté sees that another student’s work needs support; the sides of the pot are starting to collapse. She gets newspaper to make a support collar without conversation with the student.

I ask her what the final assessment for this project is. D’Arté explained the assessment is the functionality of the coil pot. Once the pots have been bisque fired, glazed, and fired again, she brings in milk and cereal. The students eat a bowl of cereal out of their coil pots. The pots are scored on how well they hold the milk. Some students don’t fair too well, “… milk pouring out like a sieve, all over the table” she laughs, “that worked out really, really well. I am going to forever do that; it is just too much fun.”

**Michelle Marks Introduction:**

Michelle Marks is an art teacher for three of the five kindergarten to third grade elementary schools for a total of 32 classes in the Elliott School District. I spent the day with her at Dickens Elementary. Dickens is a one level brick school built in the 1950s with a dedicated art room. About 250 students attend this school with about 85% of the student population White and a little over 8% of the students Asian. Eight percent of the school population are English Language Learners and approximately 26% of the students receive free and reduced-price meals. The school’s students have scored 92% or higher proficiency level in nearly all content areas for all students in statewide standardized tests.
Marks is a short White woman with short brown hair in her early thirties. She is quick to laugh, uses voice modulation for emphasis, and speaks very quickly. She has been in teaching art and in this district for ten years. She has Kindergarten-Twelve visual art certification, a Bachelor of Art Education, and a master’s degree in teacher leadership. Marks stated her interest in being an art teacher began when she was a high school senior when her own art teacher let her teach some of the freshman level classes. Marks picked the last name Marks for her pseudonym because, “isn’t that what assessment is?”

Marks’ art room is just around the corner from the front door in this one story school. Entering the classroom, to the left is a low counter with one sink, cabinets above with an electric kiln in the corner. Across the next wall are windows with enclosed heat vents under the windowsill. The third and fourth walls are chalkboards. Between the door and the wall of windows is an island of open shelving full of art supplies. This wall divides the room with a third of the room on the side with the sink and kiln. On the other side were three tables for students, Marks’ desk, and a round table at the window. There were no visuals in the room other than examples of the art projects the classes are working on tacked to the cork strip at the top of the chalkboard.

Marks teaches all the students in the school with one class per week for the entire year. Their regular education classroom teacher escorts the students to and from art class. The kindergarten classes are 30 minutes long; the first through third grade classes are 40 minutes in length. On the late February day of my site visit with Marks, she taught one kindergarten class, three classes of second graders, and three classes of third graders. There were 18 kindergarteners, an average of 20 second graders, and an average of 21 third graders in her classes. Her largest class at this school is 24 students and her smallest
is 17. Her classes were mostly balanced in the numbers of girls and boys. Most of her students were White with Asian being the second largest group with one class having nine Asian students including one boy who only spoke Japanese.

The second graders were using hole-punches around edges of stamp printed, three inch by five inch rectangles pieces of grey or purple construction paper to make a six panel quilt, in the colors of silver, turquoise, purple, and magenta. In an earlier lesson they printed the paper for their quilts with a set of sponge stamps of a star, heart, butterfly, and moon. Marks designed this quilt project to use hole-punches for the quilt project because the special education teacher asked her “… to do more hand strength projects including hole-punching so that the child’s hand would be able to get stronger and be able to hold a pencil longer” for test-taking.

Marks spent the 40-minute classes reminding the students of the project, working with table groups of students, answering the students who brought up work for help, checking off completion grade book “six shapes, six shapes six shapes,” then orchestrated cleanup. When asked about how she determines what students learn each day, Marks responded after a long pause “I don’t know how to determine what each student learns.”

The two classes of third grade students are using a running stitch in yarn to create a simple design—like a heart—on burlap. Marks shared during our interview that Susan Pappas, whose introduction appears later in this chapter, suggested this project to her. The other class of third graders was finger painting grapes on placemats for the teachers’ union spring banquet.

Grading how to thread a needle and tie a knot is how most of her time with the first class of third graders was spent. “Can you thread a needle? Can you tie a knot?” she
asked each student. Marks continued, “I have taken the grade I need to take so you can take them home. I am not going to grade the pictures because some of you are better at sewing than others.” When we discussed this process during our interview, Marks equated assessment with grading, “if they can thread the needle and tie the knot, they are outstanding. If they can do one, or the other they are satisfactory.” Also during the interview, Marks said sadly, “I just feel really guilty to mark them negative marks. I don’t know. Other teachers … [fades out] I want each of my children built up. I want them all to feel stronger and better after being in my class not to say ‘you can’t’, ‘you didn’t.’”

The kindergarteners were making a mouse out of a folded heart shaped piece of construction paper after listening to Marks read *Mouse Paint* (Walsh, 1989). The children were quizzical as to why they were not painting; several were challenged with the steps of the folded heart, placement of the ears, and tail in the remaining class time. In discussing that class during our interview, Marks also felt challenged by the time in helping her students make the mouse, “I came around a third time and cut a heart for that child. [Now speaking as if she was talking to the student] ‘You need to move on; here’s your heart. Staple it in.’”

In the pre-site visit questionnaire, Marks wrote assessment “… is about the level of student understanding.” She also wrote a paper about assessment in art education in college that she shared with me. It was an essay about what assessment is, challenges to implementation, and the means to assess student work. “Student products for evaluation include artwork, verbal or written response to art, academic tests, and student actions on behavior. Progress needs to be continually evaluated so all aspects can be considered.” In her answer to the interview question if her view of assessment has changed over time,
Marks replied, “I wrote a paper that assessment is a necessary evil. I don’t know if I think it is as eeee-villll anymore. I don’t think I do it right but I do what I can.” Also during our interview I asked her what did her students learned today, “I don’t know if they were doing a lot of learning but they were doing.”

**Lynn Newton Introduction:**

Lynn Newton is a new-to-the-profession art teacher at Corrigan Intermediate School. This is the school for all the fourth and fifth graders in the Elliott School District. There are approximately 530 students, with about 84% of the school student population White, a little less those 10% multiracial students, and close to 44% of the school population receiving free and reduced-priced meals. While the test scores across the content areas matched with demographic groups are varied, as a whole the school is meeting the state expectations.

Corrigan Intermediate is a one story building in a U shape with long hallways for the classroom and shorter halls for the integrated arts and physical education areas. Student artwork created in Newton’s classes adorned nearly every hallway; there were 18 by 24 inch self-portraits in tempera on most every locker. Originally build as a junior high in the 1950s, Corrigan has gone through several remodels including dividing up a large industrial arts classroom into small ones. Newton’s classroom is one of those smaller rooms. There is a large room designed to be an art room in a wing that was added to the school in the 1970s but that room is now used as a fourth grade classroom.

Newton is in her mid-twenties and is a tall, White female, with long brown hair. This is her second year both as an art teacher and at this school and she has a range of experience teaching other content areas and grade levels as a substitute teacher. She has a
BFA in sculpture and a Master of Education. She did not have any training in visual arts assessment but her cooperating teacher during her student teaching gave her Donna Kay Beattie’s book (1998) on assessment in art education. This book, along with a book of the state content standards, was on her desk. The art assessment book looked like it had been reviewed. The book of the standards was closed on her desk. I gently dropped it on its spine to see whether the book would open to an oft-used page. It fell open to well-worn pages presenting the fine arts table. Newton does not have the school district’s visual art scope and sequence but she is sure it is out of date explaining it does not reflect the state in the visual arts standards.

When asked what she feels when she hears the word assessment, Newton wrote on her pre-site visit questionnaire that she feels “… uneasy because I am inexperienced with truly assessing my students artwork …” with a goal “… to have my students assess their own work” not to pass this responsibility off but “… to influence students to use creative problem solving skills to help them to appreciate and understand [Newton’s emphasis] the world of visual art.” “Assessment is for me to figure out what I need to do differently when I hear crickets chirping, I know I need to do something,” she explained during the school day.

Newton is the art teacher for all of the students at Corrigan Intermediate School, seeing them once a week, for 45 minutes, for a total of 24 classes per week. “I have 32 days with these students. It is sad my time with them can be summed up in one month of days.” The average class size is 23 students with most of her classes made up of White students that are balanced between female and male students. Her students come to her as a classroom group from their homeroom fourth or fifth grade teacher.
Her classroom is a small, narrow, cramped room with pillars that impede flow in the room. Entering her room, the pillars are evident yet decorated with pastel paper work. On the left wall are display boards surrounding a green chalkboard. Reproductions, Elements of Art and Principles of Design posters, several examples of the projects the students were working on, and resource images are displayed. At the end of the room are windows with student art displayed below. This is the same for the right hand sidewall. Just to the right at the entry are Newton’s desk and freestanding shelves and cabinets of supplies. There is a small sink beside the door. Five pairs of acid top tables with chairs are in the main part of the room for the students. This space filled up fast when the students arrived.

Though Newton does not equate grading with assessment, grading is a theme throughout our interview. The fourth and fifth grade students do not receive a grade in art but an O, S, U, or N for outstanding, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or needs improvement. The report cards are computerized with the art teacher entering the letter. Newton wishes she could give grades to validate her class “… or at least have on the grade card why they are getting the grade they are getting even if it is an S, N, or U … You know, everybody else has a list of comments they can click on, I don’t. I don’t get to comment.” The lack of comment codes is true of all the art teachers in the school district.

One 4th grade class reviewed what they had learned about Adrinka cloth, connecting it to their personal characteristics, and started to create their own. Three other 4th grade classes reviewed reproductions of Jacob Lawrence and continued their work using tempera to make a painting of their bedroom in the same compositional and
painting style of Lawrence. One 5th grade class continued painting value studies in the style of Louise Nevelson for poster board assemblages.

In discussing Lawrence’s style, Newton asked, “why do you think he did that, to make the things in the painting look flat?” No students shared ideas until she said, “there are a lot of reasons why an artist chooses what they do.” This reflects what she wrote in response to the pre-site visit questionnaire prompt about defining your role as an art teacher: “I try to open awareness to a new way of thinking about the world to teach my students how to see through an artist’s eye and understand how that new perspective of the world can positively change their lives.”

Observation is one of Newton’s main tools in her art education assessment practice. During one of the fourth grade classes, she saw one student painting on another student’s Nevelson-inspired work and commented “that is like taking a spelling test for someone.” After the first class of the day to work in the style of Jacob Lawrence, Newton used what she observed as challenges for the students to make recommendations on painting and brushwork at the beginning of the next class.

Newton shared at the beginning of the day that her colleagues at Corrigan Intermediate had no idea that she had to go to college or get a degree to teach art. She is very frustrated that the principal will not include the arts in the data meetings on statewide and local testing results. Newton said sarcastically, “[the students] are getting smarter from all the testing.” I can attest to the school’s lack of understanding from a lunchtime exchange in the teachers’ lounge. After the reason for my presence was explained, a teacher asked incredulously, and with a hint of mockery, “How do you grade
art?” As we left, we encountered the principal in the hall. Again after a brief reminder on why I was there, “But you don’t assess [in art],” he said as he walked away.

**Susan Pappas Introduction:**

Susan Pappas teaches art for kindergarteners through third graders in three elementary schools in the Elliott School District in a central U.S. state. I observed her at Kaufman Elementary. This is her 32nd year of teaching and her 15th year at Kaufman. The school is a one level brick building that was built in 1950. There are almost 370 students at Kaufman, with 88% of the student population is White, about 8% Multiracial, and nearly 32% of the school population receiving free and reduced-prices meal services. In statewide standardized testing for the third graders, over 86% of the students met or exceeded the reading goal and almost 95% met or surpassed the mathematics goal.

Pappas has Bachelor and Master of Art Education though she had not had any training in assessment because “there were no classes!” she exclaimed in her pre-site visit questionnaire response. Pappas’ answer on the pre-site visit questionnaire as to how she felt when she heard the word assessment was “… how am I going to do that with 400 students a week, and I get a lump in my stomach just because I don’t like doing an assessment if it has to be done in a formal checklist way.” Yet she does use assessment in defining what she and her students do. “Assessment to me is evaluating what has been done. It is the act of judging. It is also accountability to myself … [Pappas’ ellipse] have my students understood what I am explaining to them,” wrote Pappas in her pre-site visit questionnaire.

A petite White woman with short dark-blond hair, oval wire-rimmed glasses, and a perpetual smile, Pappas has created a materials-rich learning environment in her art
room. There are reproductions, color wheels, student artwork, and a large collection of supplies. She has a dedicated art room at Kaufman Elementary. Just outside her classroom is a display case full of student created penguin sculptures. Entering her room, on both sides are a row of shelves and freestanding cabinets. There are reproductions on the fronts of the cabinets. The room opens up to a square, 18 by 18 foot space. The left wall displays more reproductions. In front is a wall of windows with more penguins in progress on the sill. To the left is a chalkboard with more reproductions on the wall. On the chalkboard Pappas had wrote the objective of the day for the classes of students coming to art.

This day’s five art classes have first graders taking a test on colors and shapes then reviewing the test as a class, kindergarteners (plus two adult special education aides) continuing to work on paintings of cats, 17 second graders first taking a test on clay then adding more paint to the penguins from the rookery at the window, and two classes of first graders continuing their work on straight stitch yarn patterns woven into burlap using yarn and large-eyed needles. The average size of her classes is 20, all relatively balanced between the number of girls and the number of boys, and a predominately White student population. I could hear each class coming down the all, escorted by their classroom teacher, due to their excited voices. All classes were greeted by Pappas and all students took their chairs yet remained sitting on the edge of the seats. They were excited to be there.

Pappas asked the first graders, “What are doing today?” The children respond with excitement, “our test!” The choral responses continued throughout the questions—“when we use a paint brush do we scrub or stroke?” We discussed during our interview
about the test with Pappas saying that the answers of the test gave her a sense of the class understanding but not of individual students. Pappas also used an assessment approach that is a management strategy, e.g. “anyone wearing the primary color red may line up.”

During the class of kindergarteners each continued to work on their painting of a cat. Pappas circulated around the seated, working students. She provided a lot of praise—“oh, cool, I love it!,” “very nice!,” “good job,” and “what a cool idea”—and addressed any concerns very quietly with the student, “is that a tool or a toy?” I did not note action by the adult aides that impacted Pappas’ assessment practice.

The second graders first took a test on clay then added more tempera paint to their bisque-fired penguins. “Now, to the best of your ability and in complete sentences, take this test,” said Pappas as she first passes out the test on clay, then delivers the penguins to each student as they take the test. After the test, they go over the results as a group, for example: “the oven is called a kiln, thumbs up or thumbs down.” Then they paint for the rest of the class period. The test will be scored with a smiley face, frown, or neutral face based on the number of correct answers.

Two classes of first graders continued their work on straight stitch yarn patterns woven into burlap using yarn and large-eyed needles. This is a similar project to the one discussed in Michelle Mark’s introduction. In the first class of first graders, as she returned the artwork, each student received advice, direction, praise, feedback, or a combination as seen in the following examples.

Direction: “you can start your beads now.”

Praise: “this looks great.”

Guidance: “you are ready to go across now.”
Combination; “You are ready to start going across; it looks great.”

The second class of first graders with 22 students also continued work on their fiber pieces; they received comments from Pappas like the previous classes had.

Even though I observed several different types of assess practices, Pappas was challenged when I asked her to identify the assessment practices she had used. “I don’t know how to title any of these things . . . .” Once I offered a few examples, she then was able to explain her assessment practices. When asked about her worst experience with assessment as a student, Pappas declared, “a red pen. I was not a writer, and, of course, [the writing] was circled, circled, circled.” This experience has unknowingly impacted her practice today. When I asked her if she uses a red pen now, “seldom, it’s a purple, it’s a blue [pause] I hadn’t thought about that.”

I offered that her assessment experience also has impacted her curricular choices as well as her assessment practice. During the interview, Pappas indicated that she supports and extends the writing done in the regular classroom, by requiring complete sentences (like seen today in the clay test), writing descriptively, and using a writing rubric. Pappas also shared during our interview that when she was an art teacher of fourth grade students, she did a lot of writing with them during art.

**Kristy Silverman Introduction:**

Kristy Silverman is one of the three art teachers at Elliott High School (EHS), which is the sole high school in the Elliott School District. EHS has about 1,000 students in grades 9–12. This is Silverman’s second year at EHS; she had previously been an elementary art teacher in the district. She has been an art teacher for a total of nine years, has a Bachelors of Science in Art Education, and a Master of Art Education from an art
academy. When asked in the pre-site visit questionnaire what classes she has had in assessment, Silverman listed a general education statistics class and a graduate level curriculum planning class.

As reported on this state’s testing results website, the student population of Elliott High is 85% White, just over 44% of the school received free and reduced priced meals, and just under a quarter of the school’s student population receives special education services. In the results for the tenth and eleventh graders on the statewide testing, all of the reported demographic groups fall above or exceeding the testing target by at least 80% of the tested population of students.

Silverman’s classroom is 22 feet by 34 feet. The entrance is at one of the corners; right inside the entrance door is a door to a large storage room with floor to ceiling shelves. Continuing around the room counter-clockwise is a chalkboard on the wall and her desk in front, a TV/VCR/DVD combination on a cart in the corner, and then on the long wall is waist high storage below windows that look out over a courtyard. Ringing the rest of the room are built-in storage cabinets with occasional sinks. Nearly bisecting the room is a large print drawer unit and book shelves. The shelves have over 100 different art books and a classroom set of art history textbooks. On one side of the shelf sits a large table for silk-screening fabric and a large light table. Twelve tables that seat two are compressed into half of this large room. Silverman does not use the silkscreen or light table; they were from the previous art teacher who has retired. Letters cut out and laminated hang above reproductions for two displays, one on the Elements of Art and the other on Elements of Design. On the green chalkboard at the front of the room are images of some of Matisse’s and Picasso’s work.
On my site visit day, Silverman’s classes were: two Art Foundations classes, one Drawing I class, two Drawing I classes, and one Painting II. Each class meets daily, lasts a semester, and is 41 minutes long. When asked about prerequisites, Silverman said they are usually followed in the placement of students into the class levels. The Foundations classes have 18–20 students, the Drawing I classes have 13 and 20 students, and the Drawing II and Painting II have nine and seven students. The majority of her students are female and are White. For each class, the students casually entered the art room and were slow in getting out their artwork and supplies. Student conversations during the classes were mostly school gossip or about last night’s television shows; conversation about the art projects amongst the students was rare.

Silverman is a White woman in her late twenties. She is petite with dark blond hair. Silverman stated was trained to be a Disciplined Based Art Education (DBAE) teacher. The letters DBAE are sprinkled throughout her pre-site visit questionnaire and our conversations. Silverman also uses a bit of assessment language in her response when asked what are your challenges with assessment: “finding a balance between grading a student’s progress and understanding concepts presented in class versus creating art for art’s sake.” She also said “feedback has great value; that’s why we are here. To guide and teach for them to grow and without that feedback, that knowledge, they won’t.”

Silverman’s lesson activities come from different art books. She does not follow a scope and sequence nor does she pre-assess what knowledge and experiences her students are bringing to class. All the classes I observed focused on the Elements of Art and Principles of Design. Since I had seen this information taught at other schools in the district during my study, I asked her about pre-testing since the Elements and Principles
are taught at all levels. “In our district?” she said with surprise, “I have no idea what artists they cover, we don’t communicate.”

The students in the two Art Foundations classes were doing a grid transfer activity. The students were to bring in a photograph or image from a magazine. This gets evenly gridded off, as does a 9-inch by 12-inch sheet of white paper. Silverman walked from table to table, looked at the work, and provided “keep working” type comments. I asked her during our interview what happens if a student does not grasp a concept in Art Foundations, “we would just move on.” When I asked her about her assessment practices in the Art Foundation classes during our interview, Kristy talked about how assessment and grading as one concept:

I think with my Art Foundations class I am more Lowenfeldian when I grade because there are so many students in here that are not in here because they want to be in here and I don’t want to turn them off from art by criticizing “you didn’t do this so this is why you got the grade that you got.”

The Drawing class students are making a tunnel book. There is not an example, but from the sketches in the book Silverman got the idea from, it is like very thin diorama. Silverman gave the next direction to the student without checking in on how the student wanted to proceed. The directions are either on how to cut out the layers or how to use colored pencil.

For the Drawing I class, Silverman got an activity out of a lesson folder from an art textbook company. The students are to select a section of a skill life, make a contour drawing of what the handout calls “visually interesting” creating negative spaces. Then, within the negative space, use a black Sharpie® to make what the handout states are
“interesting line, shapes, patterned designs”, or “mythical creatures, words or graffiti art.”

Silverman’s direction to everyone was “to make it pop.” “Please tell me I’m done,” pleaded a student; Silverman pointed to an area that needs more lines. In the interview, I asked her about the structure of her classes. “Sometimes I have the attitude that I want to be more laid back, there is so much stress from testing and grading. I know it is important for me to grade and to evaluate students but sometimes I feel like they need to come in here, blow off some steam, relax and not have some much pressure to learn.”

Silverman sometimes uses a rubric. When I asked her about assessing students, she told me about the one rubric she found on the Internet and uses without modification. It is titled Rubric for Grading Art. Across one axis are letter grades A-F and down the left side are four attributes: Elements of Art and Principles of Design; Creativity/Originality; Effort/Perseverance; Craftsmanship/Skill/Consistency. I asked if it was one rubric for all classes, “yes, all,” Silverman said and then added “rubrics are a waste of paper; a lot of kids don’t care.”

**Martinson School District Teachers:**

**Patrick Cooper Introduction:**

Patrick Cooper is one of three art teachers at Ehrlich High School in the Martinson School District in an eastern state. This school year he is teaching drawing, painting, photography/digital imaging, and Advanced Placement 2-dimensional studio. He has been a high school art teacher for a dozen years. He has a Bachelor of Fine Arts, a Master of Art Education, and is planning on pursuing National Board Certification in a couple of years. He also is the lead teacher for the district’s gifted visual arts program (that he teaches with one of the other art teachers in this research study, Angela Fielding),
was a member of the district’s pacing guide team, and is active his state’s art education association. Cooper has won many teaching awards including teacher of the year for his school district. Cooper has also won acclaim for his paintings, murals, and realistic portraits set in scenes of the community. He is an active, professional artist with nearly twenty solo and group shows. Cooper is a White male with dark hair in his mid-thirties.

Ehrlich High has a predominately White student population—about 75%—of approximately 1,200 students in grades 9–12 with Black as the second largest ethnicity group at 14% of the school population. The tested students scored over 90% in all academic areas in the state exams. Ehrlich High School is in the rural section of the district. Rolling hills with white rail fences line the roadway to the school.

Cooper’s classroom is on the first floor of this cinderblock school built in 1968. The room is a long—nearly 60 feet—with an about 20 by 20 foot alcove room with 16 computers and large projection screen. In the main room, which has a 20-foot high ceiling, are two clusters of computers with similar clusters of easels and taborets, then dozen black easel caballitto benches in semi-circles like they were set-up to look at a still life or model. Along one long wall are a display board with student-drawn portraits and another display board with a collection of student paintings of still life in black and white. Off this wall is a storage room. On the other wall is a green board with the week’s expectations of each class written in chalk. There are also handwritten posters of listing information on Developing Personal Criteria, Critiquing Your Work, and AP Art guidelines. At the end of the main room is a bank of windows with collection of white dress forms standing in front. The room felt more like a college classroom than one in a high school; the level of quality of the student artwork on the easels added to that feel.
Due to Cooper’s schedule, our interview could not be on the day I observed him in his classroom. We did our conversational interview via the telephone later. This was the only phone interview that occurred in the study. Cooper was quite loquacious in during our guided interview conversation.

Ehrlich High School is on an alternating A/B schedule with 80-minute classes. Cooper’s class size ranged from 18–24 students this semester. There is a balance in number between female and male students; the majority of the students are White. Students need to complete prerequisites to enter the upper level classes and some of Cooper’s students took the introductory class in art from him when they were ninth graders. Photography/digital imagery, Painting II Oil Painting, and AP Art were the classes I observed on the day of my field visit.

Cooper greets the students by name as they enter the room, “`morning, Mr. C.,” was a frequent reply. For the photography/digital imagery classes of mostly juniors and seniors, Cooper started the class with a combination of lecture and discussion using a PowerPoint® presentation about the photographic principle of the Nine Grid Zone of photographic composition and the difference between snapshots and photographs. For the painting and AP classes, the students got right to work and Cooper moved from student to student talking with each one of them about their work plus going to students with raised hands. Student conversations were about the task.

Before starting his PowerPoint® presentation and discussion with the photography/digital imagery class, he directed his students to “bring your sketchbooks over to help you go over the criteria.” Through questions and examples of slides, the students and Cooper have a discussion about the photos’ attributes that is a review of the
difference between the snapshots and photographs through which the two styles of images are clarified. He does not call on the students; most all students volunteer answers using photography terms like cropped or framed and use the formal qualities terms of value and balance in their descriptions to support their rationale. As he answers, all students are taking notes—using words and drawings—in their sketchbooks.

After a presentation of the Nine Grid Zone including placing the grid over images in PowerPoint® and discussing with the students the quality of the composition, Cooper told the students he has placed this grid into each of their computer files. Along with working on their long term project, their task today is to use the grid on a photo (not a snapshot) from their work and crop it to create a sound composition, and then save it to their folder along with a written explanation—in a word-processed document—about their choices to meet the expectations of the assignment projects. Once he felt the students understood both the new content and the assignment, he sent them off to work. The students moved to computers around the room and dove right into the assignment.

Cooper explained during our interview that group critiques are held weekly as the students build their portfolio of work. Through each assignment he incrementally provides instruction and feedback on the student’s photographs as they develop their photographic understanding and portfolio of photos for their individual projects that are based on their artist statement. The students are expected to photograph and write about topics that are personally important to them, “the students they are all working from their own experiences” shared Cooper.

When I asked several of his students how they pick which photo they will use for this assignment, most thought they would use a newer photograph, “one that Mr. C.
hasn’t seen yet that reflects my artist statement.” An artist statement is a main component of Cooper’s teaching and assessing, along with sketchbooks, critiques, and questions. “I’m big on artist statements and lots of group critiques as well as me giving them individual assessments and I like them feeling comfortable talking about their work in a real professional manner.” He continued about the connections of sketchbooks, the artist statement, and assessment:

I would directly link initially coming up with the artist statement, coming up with ideas, so these kids start thinking about self-assessment. I start them out with that and I think they also need to, again what has really helped a lot of my kids, is the work that they do in their sketchbooks. It has helped them out tremendously in the digital photo class and in the studio classes. I think it is important that teachers realize just the importance of unlocking their potential and their creativity and giving them a green light to go in whatever direction they want in that sketchbook with a set parameters.

Cooper also uses the artist statement as his guide for assessing the student’s artwork through his conversations with the student:

I’ll go back to their initial artist’s statement and develop the criteria from that and judge them based on what they set out to do in their initial intentions. This way, I can really hold them to what it was what they wanted to do. Generally, towards the end [of the term] and even in the middle [of the term] I ask them, “okay, if you need to make revisions to your artist’s statement the time to make it is now so that … I’ll know exactly what I am assessing you on.” I know the technical stuff, the formal stuff that we have to do from our pacing
guide but in terms of giving them the real specific feedback … I like to get a little more specific with them.

He follows the lead from the student’s interest to assess what they are attempting to say in their work as the student applies the content expectations of the school district.

Cooper also uses the artist statement as part of his pre-assessment of new students, “having them do some preliminary artist statements of what they want to pursue in their work, I can kinda get a feel for the type of education they have had and what level they are basically at quality-wise, at least in their thinking.”

While the students were working through the assignment, Cooper worked with three students who had missed the presentation from last class that was reviewed today on the attributes of a snapshot as compared to their goal of shooting a photograph. He went over that PowerPoint® presentation with them, including them talking through the examples. Cooper does something similar if there are some students who do not understand a topic. “If the majority of them get it, it makes my job easier because then I just have a few I that I really need to sit down with to some one-on-one time and go through and make sure they really understand it and they are just not yes-ing me to death, you know, going through the motions.”

**Linda Delmont Introduction:**

Linda Delmont is one of four art teachers for the nearly 2,000 students in grades 9–12 at Bryantsville High School (BHS) in the Martinson School District in an eastern state. BHS is celebrating its 150th year. The current BHS building opened in 1950 with a couple of remodels over the years. The school is a three story brick building on the crest of a hill at the end of the gently winding road off the highway. There is a two story tall
professionally created banner hanging on the side of the school near the entrance celebrating academic success on the state exams. There is a sign indicating the location BHS at the highway; the name of the school is dwarfed by the sign announcing the Advanced Placement testing dates.

Sixty percent of student population is White, a little over 25% is Black, with just under 10% each of students are of Asian and Hispanic ethnicity. Over 95% of the tested student population reached or exceeded the state academic expectations on the state test for NCLB’s Adequate Yearly Progress. No demographic group scored below the 80th percentile.

Delmont teaches photography—both 35mm with darkroom developing and digital imaging. Over her career she has taught at several levels and art media. She is in her 37th year of teaching art. Along with her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in art education, she has certification in photography from a prestigious photo school through a two-summer program. She is a White woman of average height with short brown hair. Delmont speaks very fast and is in constant motion checking on her students. But in watching her, she does not rush from student to student but gives each of them time to interact.

On the day of the interview and site visit, Delmont, or Mrs. D as the students call her, is teaching students in Photography I and Photography II. Both are semester long classes. The school is on an alternating daily schedule and the class periods are 85 minutes long. Delmont’s class size is about 22 students and she teaches mostly juniors and seniors. General art is a prerequisite for her photography classes and the students start with Photography I. For all the classes observed, the students come in and get to work, either pulling out photos from their bags or opening up photos on the computer.
This did not feel like they were feeling pressured but that the students were excited to get to work. There is often an advanced student working on images in the corner that Delmont checked on intermittently.

The students are working either working with film or digital photos. Through the course of the semester in Photography I, the students will work in both film and digital photography. If the students are working in darkroom they are printing test strips, contact sheets, or photos from negatives they have shot with a 35mm camera. The students are making contact sheets and test strips to determine which prints they want to make and for what length of exposure and development time. If the students are working on the computer, they are uploading photos, manipulating the images with the computer application Photoshop®, and using photos they have shot with a digital camera. A few students on the computer are scanning in the photos they developed in the darkroom. Conversation between the students is about the art projects, asking each others’ opinion on a print or how something looks on the computer screen punctuated with a laugh or an exclaim about the look of an image, “how did you do that?” Delmont interacted with both groups of students equally, moving between the darkroom, talking with students outside of the dark room about their prints, and with each student at the computers.

Delmont’s art room is about 40-feet long and 25-feet wide. The main entrance is at the corner. Along the long wall to the left is storage and counters off which are Delmont’s desk, a sink that juts into the room with access on three sides, and then there is a storage table in the back. Along the other long wall are acid top counters with five computers, and a bank of windows. There are ten computers along the short wall right inside the room with a long green chalkboard behind them. The agenda for the Photo I is
written on the chalkboard. In the main part of the room are four tables with eight chairs at each. Diagonally from the entrance to the room is the entrance to the darkroom, with the rotating column door to allow a person, but no light, in. The darkroom is about 10-feet by 12-feet, has eight enlargers and a larger area for developing film, printing photographs and hanging prints to dry, and has the pungent smell of stop bath.

Those chairs at the tables in the classroom were rarely used over the course of the day. The students, and Delmont, were at work at the computers or in the dark room. The tables were where Delmont stood with a student or groups of students to discuss test strips or photos just developed. Together they would lay out photos, then stand back to look at them and discuss what they are looking for in the work. Questions, critiques of what is seen in the work, and then the student making the decision on what to keep or change in the work based on the comments and their own reflection towards their goal.

Several projects are being worked on. Previously, all the students had made pinhole cameras. Having made their exposures, they are now in the dark room creating contact sheets to determine which shots to enlarge and develop. Delmont, with articulate ease, describes the process:

In the darkroom, they were all at different levels but essentially doing the same thing. They were using a test strip to get to a finished product and … are learning what the test strip does, how to read it, and then how to print out that final piece and making a judgment … like the boy who came out and said, “I think it is too dark but it could be okay for me,” but he was willing and actually a little pleased to take a few seconds off to get a better print And I make them understand I hate waste. I hate for them to just waste paper. But if
they are doing two to three prints to get the perfect one, as perfect as they can get it, then it is not a waste. I want them to understand that. What does it do to take two seconds off or five seconds. Nobody today had to burn and dodge but they’ll be doing that. And that's what the darkroom kids were learning more and more about the enlarger about the process of test stripping and getting that final print to look like they want it to look. Or get that contact sheet so they can go, “wow, look at this print it didn’t look like that in the negative I might want to print it.”

The other project the students are working on is Life Is Beautiful. This project is a photographic series of what is beautiful to the students using layering of images and color within the computer. Delmont explained the students can scan in 35mm prints or use digital images they have shot:

They have criteria in their notebooks so they are getting to the end of that. So as I am going around looking or seeing, checking do they have layers. Now we might not talk about that but I am checking on that. Are they using blending modes are they doing some of the things on their criteria sheet.

Delmont likes the use of the computer in being able to demonstrate “I … showed them some things right on their work … the computer is great for this then I can just … back out and undo and, [say] ‘now you decide how you want to approach that and they are a couple of ways you can do.’”

Delmont uses a lot of questions to clarify the students’ understanding. She also checks to ascertain understand via asking questions yet allowing that “… they can decide if that is what they wanted.” Her focus is on the students and the student focus is on their
photographs. Delmont uses the same questioning and feedback loop technique in the darkroom and at the computers. She checks to see what the student is trying to accomplish, gives descriptive feedback on what she sees or advice, and then asks a question that pushes the student artists in thinking and applying their artistic choices: “if you have a lota, lota, lota contrast, what are you sacrificing?”

When I asked Delmont during the interview what she saw as the benefits of assessment, she said, without missing a beat, “I think the biggest benefit of assessment is that it makes them better artists, better photographers. Assessment makes me see whether I am doing my job. It helps me assess myself because it is important, too. I have become a little more sophisticated over the years by giving them more specific criteria.” During one of the classes, as she observed her students, Delmont told me “I want them to work to the very end to get the very best that they can, they always have a chance to go back. If it needs work I try to have them tell me why. Making it better every time means they are learning.”

**Angela Fielding Introduction:**

Angela Fielding is one of the two art teachers for Kirk Middle School in the Martinson School District. The school has about 850 students pretty evenly spread over grades six through eight. Approximately 83% of the school population is White with a quarter of the school population changing over the school year, which is a high mobility rate. The school test scores drop each year from grades six to eight to a low of 63% of the tested eighth graders reaching or exceeding the state expectations.

Fielding has been teaching at this same school for 30 years beginning when it was originally a junior high. She has a Bachelor of Science in K–12 Art Education, a master’s
degree in administration and supervision, plus a K–12 master’s degree in reading. She applies her reading certification to assessment “… as well as curriculum writing, unit writing/explicit instruction development.” Fielding and Patrick Cooper are the two teachers in the school district’s visual arts gifted program for students in grades 6–12.

Kirk Middle School is a large, multistoried brick building that was been remodeled or added on to since the school opened in the late 1940s. The hallways and passages from one part of the building to another were like a maze. Fielding has a huge art room, 30-feet wide by 60-feet long. The entrances to the classroom are on one of the long wall, opposite the wall of waist-high counters and windows. Off one of the shorter walls is the kiln room and storage; two of the banks of sinks are also along this wall. At this end of the room are also four pottery wheels and a slab roller. The room has teaching posters, learning outcomes, vocabulary words, posted exemplars, and examples of student work displayed on the walls and counters. One section has posters about sculpture with photographic reproductions of works by Deborah Butterfield, Jud Nelson, and Marilyn Levine. There is a substantial amount of text and visuals but not in a visually overwhelming sense.

Fielding is in constant motion from the moment I meet her until after our guided interview conversation. This is not due to nerves but to a limited amount of time to prep all the supplies, quizzes, teacher posters, and check over the student papers and projects. Today’s class is making the form for the casting hand and forearm using plaster gauze. The forearm is attached to an 8-inch square base. The hand then holds an object of significance to the student and they paint with acrylic paints to continue the theme. Examples Fielding has on display by the window include a hand painted to look like it
has on a mitt coming out of a baseball diamond with it articulated back to look like it is catching the ball it is holding. Another example is a hand painted in pink, patterned in red hearts, holding heart jewelry. A third example is painted to look like an easy chair with a man’s necktie around the palm. There is also one with two blue hands poised to play over an azure keyboard.

Students attend her classroom in groups from the teams. The group of seventh graders attending her art class today came from the team where students who receive special education services are grouped. Fourteen students noisily entered the room: ten boys and four girls with three students absent. Several of the boys head over to look at the project examples described above. They are excited about this project and ask each other what they brought in for the hand to hold.

Fielding is at the door, greeting the students in an agreeable yet firm way. She keeps this concise yet kind tone throughout the day. “You need to sign this form confirming your receipt of your interim [report card]. Today is the last day,” she tells the class, to no one in particular. Fielding is a White woman of medium height in her mid-fifties. She is thin with long blond hair and she is dressed in beige jeans with a White western style shirt; her school identification badges hang off one of the shirt pockets.

Fielding tells the students to take out their art textbooks—from the counter—and to turn to a certain page. This page starts a unit on sculpture with text and photos explaining what sculpture is and what are the processes involved. This content blends with the poster displays and the casting project. This also matches her PowerPoint® presentation on attributes of freestanding sculpture as compared to a frieze. The students needed to use descriptive language as she teaches to reinforce this content knowledge.
The students partner up and they read the text aloud, with Fielding helping with the words only after they try but not to the point of struggling. Reading challenges these students, but there is a trust here with Fielding because no one is balking at reading, they are supported as they read and listen to each other. They are reading about the same information Fielding presented but in a different context.

Fielding then passed out what looks like a test, “this is an assessment, not a test,” she said calmly. And the students must have heard that before because no one reacts to the paper other than to take one and pass the rest down. She tells me later that she wanted to see if the students could reuse the information they were just taught and that she adapted this assessment to the reading levels of these students. The students in the next class will have a similar learning experience but with an assessment at a more seventh grade reading level. Fielding has adapted her assessments to the reading levels of her students but still assesses their acquisition of the content knowledge presented.

The questions on the assessment are scaffolded with the questions getting more difficult, more sophisticated, and more open-ended. In this case there were fewer and fewer cues in the question to lead the student to selecting the correct selected response, multiple-choice answer. The top of her assessment for this class is labeled “Selected Response” and the page includes:

Question 2: A person that creates a sculpture is:

A) a painter
B) a drawer
C) a sculptor
D) an architect.

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Question 4: A Relief sculpture is designed to:

A) be viewed from the front

B) have a flat back

C) be viewed from all sides

D) both A and B.

There is a similar content structure for the next period class’ assessment. The bolded words in the following section are her emphasis. The top of this assessment is labeled “What Do You Know About Sculpture?”

Outcome: Read pages 52–52 to gain information about sculpture. What are characteristics, types, materials, and construction processes of sculpture?

These are constructed responses:

Question 2: What is the name for a person who creates sculpture?

Question 4: What are two types of sculpture? Compare them.

The scaffolding for this second assessment required more thought processing—such as comparing—plus it became more child-focused with the last question asking about sculptures they have made. This second assessment was both a check for understanding of the content as well as finding out about prior experiences.

Fielding created these assessments herself, using a school district test items bank with the content found in the art textbook, in a language level geared to for the student groups, and in formats based on the state exams. Due to the level of the student results in the state exams, “our school improvement team is focused on improving scores on the [state’s name] state assessment, so we are required to mimic the format of the test on our class assessments.” She uses the results of the assessments “… to see if they understand
or if I will revise my teaching.” With the different levels of educational ability and needs of her students, Fielding wrote tests of the same content at three levels: for students receiving special education, students receiving regular education, and academically gifted students. I asked if students who do not have this level of reading (or level of English), how does she present the information and what does she do to check their understanding?

“Oh, I have to get at it another way, maybe they pick it up and touch [a sculpture] or ‘can you go through this book and … find an example of a free standing sculpture that isn’t in that chapter that we just looked at. Find me an example; let me see if you really understand.’”

In an answer on the pre-site visit questionnaire, Fielding’s definition of assessment is “measurement of learning which is preceded by an explanation/sharing of what will be learned prior to actual instruction” with the purpose of assessment as being “… to reflect, analyze, and modify my instruction strategies in order to support/scaffold learning for each student based on individual assessment results.” Assessment in her art room is “… ongoing, continuous as we progress, relearn/retake, reflect—as student driven as possible.” Fielding added during our interview, “I don’t want a child to feel unsuccessful. So if it is not doing what they want it to do then we will need to see how we can get it to where they want to go.”

Nancy Lee Introduction:

Nancy Lee is in her eleventh year as an art teacher and her third year of teaching at Elmore Elementary in Martinson School district in an eastern state. Two mornings a week she teaches art at a neighboring elementary. Lee is a White female in her mid-forties with shoulder-length light brown hair. She had worked for eight years as an art
teacher in a western state before moving east. Lee has a Bachelor of Fine Arts and 
master’s degree in art education and is working on her National Board Certification. She 
has been a member of the curriculum writing team for elementary visual arts for the 
Martinson District. Lee is also frequently tapped as a host, cooperating teacher for pre-
service student teachers in art education. The first period of the day of the site visit was 
taught by a student teacher and does not factor into this research study.

Elmore Elementary School has nearly 400 students in grades kindergarten through 
fifth grade. Over 75% of the school population is White with a variety of ethnicities 
represented in the remaining demographics. All students tested at nearly a 95% meeting 
or exceeding the targeted expectation for the state exam. The school opened in 1965. 
Elmore Elementary is a one-story brick building that is highly maintained with all very 
shiny and polished surfaces. There has been a lot of care taken with this building; it does 
not look its age. The Elmore Elementary school walls are lined and the library is filled 
with student artwork, complete with lesson outcomes and student essays on about their 
works. The displays were not for my benefit—the dates of on the student work were from 
a few weeks prior and the edges of some of the work was curling up from time out in the 
trafficked hallway. During our tour, Lee explained she uses these displays for group 
critical conversations about the work.

Lee’s room is on the first floor. It is at least 40 feet long and about 20 feet wide. 
The bank of windows all along the long wall floods the room with light. All the walls are 
white cinderblock with white display board attached around the room. These are covered 
with reproductions, presented in an orderly but visually dense fashion. At the long ends 
of the room is the front teaching space with green chalk boards, pull down screens, and
text driven displays about the tasks, learning outcomes, and class rules. The objectives are changed for each class and the students turned to note this as they come into the room. At the other end of the room is Lee’s desk. Supply storage appears plentiful, with bins of supplies—like bottles of tempera—to pull off the shelves and out for use. There are six butcher-block tables that seat four students towards the presentation end of the room. Colored circles hang above the student tables as indicators, e.g. “table orange, please clean up”.

Exemplars for each of the class’s projects are on the storage cabinets across the room from the windows. Lee verified students made these but during our interview, Lee explained she tries out the project before introducing it to her students, getting feedback from the project and media:

I always try something prior to teaching it or having it as a project because … when I found it was hard for me that I knew it would be hard for them so that is when I have to reassess and make some, have them use a media where I know that are going to be successful.

The students in grades first through fifth receive an hour of instruction, one a day week, and attend art class as homeroom groups. The kindergarteners do not receive art instruction. Students who are in the orchestra receive no visual art instruction. Today’s classes were fourth and fifth grade classes. The largest class was 27 students and the smallest class was 19 students due to absences. Lee’s average class size was 25 students and all fairly evenly balanced between the number of females and males.

The students streamed into the classroom, check the objective on the front board, with what appears as table leaders pulling out the works in progress. Each student also
has a folder that has notes, sketches, the rubric for that project, and a checklist of the
steps for the students to keep track of their progress. An example of a checklist for a fifth
grade cut paper, 18 x 24 inch, still life in greys, blacks, and whites provides the steps of
contour drawings of the parts of the still life of bottles and fruit with reminders of trying
different compositions with overlap before gluing. The key concepts of value, still life,
collage, and contrast are listed at the bottom of the checklist.

When asked about checklists during our interview, Lee explained she created
some checklists after watching her students overly challenged in a project, “I do a lot of
checklists to help them to be successful.” Lee also referred to these checklists, rubrics,
and exemplars as she moved from student to student to check on progress, answered any
questions, and to carry on conversations to assess the student’s understanding. “I still
always come back to the students to talk about what they are doing, to talk about their [art
projects]. For instance, how did we use these components?”

In most classes, Lee checked in with the table group then had individual chats
with students. No student appeared to receive more attention or time from Lee nor were
any students with hands held up for help or bringing work to Lee to validate. When a
student asked Lee’s opinion, such as the composition of the layered paper project, Lee,
used a few minutes to reference the exemplar, the rubric, the student’s sketches, and
sought out the student’s artistic direction and understanding of the concepts before giving
an opinion. Student conversations amongst themselves were primarily about the work
with some excited interactions over color mixing, “How did you do that?” Students in
every class moaned when cleanup time was called.
During our interview, Lee brought out several large binders with examples of student artwork accompanied by the lesson plans and the assessment used to check for her students’ understanding that she was developing in her preparation for the National Board Certification process. Examples included a test on the color wheel with fill-in-the-blank plus demonstrating color mixing and brush control in painting a color wheel to the tertiary color level and student written criticism. Lee also mentioned she looks at the student projects in progress as indicators of student learning. “For me it is how I can do something not only better but insure this student, actually, is really getting this concept or really learning … I look at [the students’] products—I have been teaching long enough—but I still look at some and go, what can I do differently here? I think that’s what makes us better teachers.” She also discussed reflecting on her student’s learning when she examines the students’ final products. Lee said she considers, “would another material or another instructional strategy have worked better. I think assessment is really good in looking at my instructional strategies if I could do something in a different way that would be more effective.”

**Kay Holloway Introduction:**

Kay Holloway is one of six art teachers for the just over 2,110 students in grades 9 through 12 at Nelson Marshall High School in the Martinson School District. Holloway teaches the Foundations of Art, Two-Dimensional Art Processes, and Advanced Placement (AP) Art History classes. She has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in art education, is a National Board Certified teacher in Early Adolescent and Young Adult Art, was a member of the district’s art curriculum writing team, and has been teaching for 15 years. The Martinson School district has a large economic swing from the highly
affluent to poverty level. Nelson Marshall is in the middle with the median household income at $43,000. Well over half of the school is White, with a quarter of the school Black, 10% Hispanic, and 5% of the school population of Asian descent. No demographic group in the Adequate Yearly Progress report is below 73% proficient in writing, mathematics, or science on the statewide testing. As a whole, the tested school population is 90% proficient or advanced on these tests.

The high school is a collection of three story buildings ranging in age from the 1930s through 2004. Holloway’s classroom is in one of the older structures and is in the old cafeteria. It is an awkward, jerry-rigged space. Tucked in an alcove between an outside wall of windows and a colonnade of brick archways are two art classrooms, divided by a collection of five foot high storage units, hinged print drying rank, movable display boards. More display boards are in front of accordion metal gates that block the archways. So two of her so called walls are open to sound of the hallway and the attached classroom on the other side of the storage unit wall. To enter Holloway’s teaching space, you have to walk through the other art teacher’s space. The other two sides of the art room are a brick wall and a wall of windows.

Holloway has given structure to the space. Student storage is marked for each of her eight classes. Drawing boards and bench hooks each have a designated spot. School rules, her classroom rules, descriptive words about color—e.g. hue, tint, analogous—hang from the ceiling between the teaching spaces, and student art are display around the room. The expectations of the projects and informational examples to reach those expectations are displayed as well. For example, the drawing classes are working on value. There are examples of these value studies displayed as well a chart of value scale
with the hardness of the pencil to best achieve that range of light values using 4H, 2H, or F hardness pencils through dark using 3B, 4B, or 6B pencils. Drawings of what it looks like for a square to turn into a cube, a circle to a sphere, using shading and shadow techniques based on a light sources are drawn out and labeled on 18 by 24 inch sheets of white, beige, gray and black paper.

Holloway is a White woman in her mid-thirties with shoulder length blond hair. Holloway has a calm voice, easy demeanor, but she is not soft. She is the one in charge. She is dressed for the weather as well as the chill in the classroom through the not-so-well-insulated 1930s windows.

Nelson Marshall school schedule is an A-B style; alternating 86-minute classes so Holloway teaches the same class every other day. The site visit was on an A day. She is teaching three classes today: 3-D art, and two 2-D art processes classes. Her average size of her classes is 22 students. Her student population is predominately of Hispanic or Black. Most of her classes have more males than female students.

The 3-D art students are making clay chili peppers, as a lesson in modeling where the skills learned and honed on this project will be applied next to a personalized project. Holloway moves around the room, looking for who needs help or if there needs to be intervention if tool use is problematic. “I provide information incrementally, …” said Holloway, “assessment is entwined in what we do.” She interacts with every student, checking in with each to see how they feel they are doing, whether they feel they are progressing, answering questions, and helping point out what to look at in the work. Holloway provided information to each student in what to do next from praise to more open for student choice:
• Praise: “you have some nice views; let’s see what you can do with that.”

• Guidance: “Now, Claire, you want to see how you can make if free-standing.”

• Advise: “so, here’s a couple of things to consider … .”

Whenever Holloway was talking with a student, she got on the same level as they are. If they are sitting, she sits beside them or crouches beside them. If they are standing, she stands. I noticed this when there was an instance where she was like a jack-in-the-box—crouching by a student to talk to her, then a note from the office would be delivered and up she would go to greet the student, then back down to her student, then up again for receiving a note from the guidance office, then back down. I asked her afterwards if she was aware of this proximity issue; she was not.

For the 2-D classes, the students come into class and pull their chairs to view one of the four foam cubes, cones, and spheres still life each lit with a reflector light to create strong shadows that are around the room. Holloway turned off as many of the overhead lights that she can in this shared space plus she closed the window blinds to the February sun reflecting off the mounds of snow outside. The students then scooted their chairs and works-in-progress to get the same view they each had of the still life set up from last class. There was a bit of looking at the forms, to their paper, moving their chair until they all got right into working.

One student missed the lesson from the previous class, so Holloway asked him to sit at the set-up near the front of the room. “So, what do you know about a kneaded eraser,” she asked him as she cracked open the plastic enclosing her eraser and gestured to him to do the same. The student said he was not familiar with this kind of eraser so she
demonstrated its use on a separate sheet of paper, “the charcoal has a dusty quality to it and when you erase, the eraser can get really dirty so you have to clean it by kneading.” Holloway used a separate sheet for all her demonstrations and clarifications with the students: “do you see what I am talking about?” she asks after what she tried a clarifying sketch. She used the same kind of paper they were working on so that her visual explanation would look the same.

Holloway requires an artist statement from all of her students; I asked her if she was able to gain a richer insight into the student’s understanding. She had not reflected on that until my question but, yes, she said the artist statement helps to “… understand about what they are processing.” Holloway shared, “for the most part I have refined and reflected and I am at a good point in my career and things are pretty systematic and structured and I feel I have gotten to that sense of objectivity which was the hard thing when I first started doing assessment. I just felt it was a subjective value judgment and I have kinda learned ways to move away from that, to give them the feedback, and I think I get better quality work because of that, too.” As Holloway said, “The expectations grow the realities.”

**Summary**

This chapter presented introductions of the twelve art teachers participating in the study. In the next chapter, findings of the study are presented within the synthesized themes from the analytic framework of the feminist theory of assessment and the visual art education assessment constructs.
Chapter 5: Presentation of Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to gain an understanding of twelve visual art teachers’ knowledge and uses of classroom assessment of student learning in visual art education. The setting for the study was in their art education classrooms within traditional education public schools in the United States. This qualitative research study was constructed around individual, guided, and semi-structured interviews with the twelve visual art teachers, supported by multiple sources of information for triangulation of data. These supporting sources of information were pre-site visit questionnaires, artifacts, field notes from one-day observations within the visual art teacher’s classroom, my research diary, and my personal perceptions as a source of meaning. The analytical framework for interpretation was developed around the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992) and selected visual art education constructs for assessment of student learning. This framework was synthesized into two themes: Student-Centered Assessment and Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher. Additionally, analytical coding was used in the analysis the units of data of the research sub-questions. An additional theme of the Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing emerged from the analysis of the units of data.

In this chapter, the analysis and interpretation of the units of data are presented within the two synthesized themes, the findings for the research sub-questions, and the
emergent theme. Throughout this chapter, all of these findings are combined to constitute a unified response to the research question of this study.

The first section of this chapter presents the analyses and findings organized by the analytical framework. The specific units of data from the art teachers that exemplify the facets of the analytical framework are presented. Examples found in the units of data that are contrary to or counter to the framework facet are also presented. There is a summary of the findings for each facet and for the two analytical framework themes. Aspects of the research question and sub-questions are referenced when reflected in the findings.

The second section of this chapter addresses the findings based in the analytical coding of data for the three sub-questions of this study. Examples from the units of data from the art teachers participating in the study are presented. Lastly, the third section addresses the emergent trend that arose from the analysis of units of data with a presentation of data and a summary of findings.

**Section One: Analytical Framework Analyses and Findings**

The analytical framework was structured upon the nine principles of feminist assessment (Shapiro, 1992; see page 146-147). Aligned with these principles were sound assessment practice constructs from the literature in visual art education:

- Beattie’s (1997a) Principles of Quality Classroom Art Assessment (see pages 148–149).
• National Board of Professional Teaching Standards: Early Childhood and Middle Childhood in Art (EMC/Art; 2000; see pages 149–150).

• National Board of Professional Teaching Standards: Early Adolescence Through Young Adult in Art (EAYA/Art; 2001; see page 150-151).

• Dorn et al. (2004): List of Nine Purposes of Assessment (see page 151-152).

• National Art Education Association (2009a; see pages 153–153).

The nine feminist assessment principles and the assessment practices constructs from the literature in visual art education were synthesized into two themes with multiple supporting facets for each theme. Where applicable, the supporting text from visual art education authors was included for a clearer or more comprehensive description of analytical framework. All of the feminist principles and nearly all of the assessment practices from the art education assessment constructs were incorporated into the analytical framework. Art education assessment constructs were not included within the themes if the constructs did not directly address the focus of this study of the art teacher’s classroom practices of assessment of student learning. Two synthesized themes resulted from this synthesis process:

• Student-Centered Assessment and

• Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher.

Units of data from the interviews with the twelve art teacher participating in the study, their written words from the pre-site visit questionnaires, their comments made during the observation day, and artifacts were aligned with the supporting facets of these two themes as examples or counter-examples to the themes. Field notes, my research
journal, my own experiences, and my personal perceptions as a source of meaning were applied in the selection, analysis, and interpretation of the units of data.

**First Theme: Student-Centered Assessment:**

For this first theme, seven facets for student-centered assessment were synthesized from the feminist principles of assessment and the art education assessment constructs. The code SC, for Student-Centered, precedes the enumeration of each of the seven facets in this theme. These seven facets are:

- SC1: Focus on Student Learning,
- SC2: Equitable and Contextual Assessments,
- SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction,
- SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment,
- SC5: Use of Assessment Data: Comments,
- SC6: Use of Assessment Data: Revisions, and
- SC7: Student Involvement in Assessment.

For each facet, the applicable feminist principles or assessment practices from the art education literature are listed, followed by examples from the units of data.

**Student-Centered Facet SC1: Focus on Student Learning:**

- **The students are a source of information** (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 2, Shapiro, 1992).
• Gathers information from the students on their learning priorities and progress in learning (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 2, Shapiro, 1992).

• Assessment focuses on the learning needs of the students (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 2, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of Standard IX, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000).

• Visual art educators conduct meaningful and appropriate assessments of student learning (Aspect of Standard VII, NAEA, 2009a).

• Student learning is thoughtfully assessed (Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• Student learning leads the assessment (Aspect of Sixth Principle of Quality Classroom Art Assessment, Beattie, 1997a).

• Assessment is used as a vehicle to increase student learning (Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• Attention is given to the distinctive aspects of each student (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 2, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 5, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• Aspects of each student are considered in assessment (Aspect of First, Ninth, and Twelfth Principles, Beattie, 1997a).

• One student does not represent the understandings of the group (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 2, Shapiro, 1992).

• Assessment is directed by the art teacher and oriented to the student (Aspect of First Principle, Beattie, 1997a).
Examples from the units of data for this facet center on the art teacher’s uses of assessment to understand the learning needs of each student, to reveal students’ understanding, to uncover artistic intent, to focus on individual student learning rather than only on the art product, and to check on the understanding of the group as well as the individual student. Student-centered assessment is focused on gathering information on what the student knows and what the student can do. The following are examples of student-centered assessment from the units of data followed by a summary of the findings and analysis for this facet.

High school art teacher Susan Neal used several methods to zero in on her students’ progress in gaining and applying art knowledge, attaining skills, and making art products as she worked with each student to assess her or his learning needs at that moment. Neal’s student-centered assessment methods included observing the student’s work skills with the media and tools, written quizzes, checking the artwork against the stated criteria, listening to student’s answers to her questions, and looking at the student’s sketches to check for understanding. She used these assessment methods with all her students, including non-English speakers. Neal observed her students at work during studio-time for any misunderstanding in how to use tools. For example, concerning her watching her beginning jewelry students use a file, Neal explained in our interview:

I can tell by the teeth marks, and can look at the metal and I tell them that.

Which is why I went around and retaught filing to a couple [of students]. They were sawing instead filing with the file actually making grooves in the metal.

Neal asked to see either her students’ sketches or paper models of the planned piece of jewelry to gather insight on the student’s thinking and understanding. Given the
number of students Neal has that speak only Spanish or are learning English, she also used the sketch as a non-verbal means to both assess her student’s understanding as well as a means to gain insight in order to direct her instruction to meet each student’s artistic and educational needs.

Neal carried on conversations with each of her students and would then gear her answers and next questions to direct learning as dictated by the media or tool. Her answers and follow-up questions also reflected the direction the individual student wanted to take her or his piece, within the parameters of the project expectations. Neal did not give the students solutions; rather she guided the learning and assessment through questions. “I go around talking with each student on their filing techniques, how to achieve the look they are after,” explained Neal during our interview. Citing an example from one of the interactions of the day, Neal elaborated, speaking like she was talking to one of her art students:

“What’s your next step? What’s your design? Where’s your pattern you’ve created? Show me or tell me what your next step is. What are you going to do next?” or I’ll ask them about their thinking like with Pedro and the basket prong setting he was making. “Tell me what you are thinking as you get ready to solder this”—because you know he has it all set up and he looks like he is ready to solder, I go, “what do you think you need to do next?” and he said, “I need to stop and fix that prong so it is touching the circle of the basket.” And I went, “that is absolutely right; what do you think we should do next?”

Neal’s questions did not reveal a student’s success or weakness, “I ask those questions of everyone,” she clarified. Neal also did not telegraph the answer or solution
in her questions. Neal used questions to promote student thinking and the student’s answers to inform and guide her own decision-making for her next instructional step. While these questions appeared to focus on the look and quality of the piece, Neal’s questions let her assess what each student knew or misunderstood about the process, enabling Neal to extend or to remediate. “I ask in different ways to make sure they understand the concept and can do the skill,” Neal explained. Her assessment focus was centered on the gathering information to enable her to help each of her students learn the processes, improve their work, and meet the learning expectations of the project.

High school art teacher Patrick Cooper gathered assessment information about each of his students’ understanding and artistic vision through their written words of their artist statements. Using the information gained through each student’s artist statement and discussions with them, Cooper would recommend specific professional artist exemplars based on the needs of the student at the point in their educational development:

I’ll point them to a master artist, that … really relates to that certain style they are after or the technique they are after. I will have them take a look at that artist, do some research on them—we have tons of books we have gathered over the years—a lot of times I can just pull one off the shelf and say, “hey, you are working a lot like this person, you should really take a look at this and learn from them, let them be your mentor as opposed to me at this given moment.” And so a lot of times that is what they will do and they will gain a lot from that whether it is a photo person or it is a studio painting person.

High school art teacher Kay Holloway also used student writing to gather individual student assessment information centered on improving learning:
I do like them to write about what they are doing because that gives me, you know, I can’t be inside their brain knowing if this is the thing that excites them tremendously and this is something they want to pursue or are they just going through the motions so I have them write about their own work as a piece that’s insightful to me that I can’t get from just scanning the room or seeing the work they put on paper or the artwork they produce.

A counter-example to a focus on student learning is middle school art teacher Arthur Carvé’s sole attention on the craftsmanship of the product rather than on tending to the student learning through the product. He did not interact with his students to check their understanding nor comprehend the direction the student as artist wanted to take the artwork. Rather, Carvé gave directives on what they need to do next in working on the ice-fishing decoy. When asked during our interview what he thinks about as the students hand him their decoy-in-progress, Carvé explained, “by looking at it, feeling it, I know what I am supposed to be looking at. I could do an actual checklist but I just kinda have it in my head.” Carvé’s actions and comments to his students indicated the purpose of his assessment was to determine successful completion of the step in making the decoy project rather than ascertain what needed to be done to improve the student’s learning. His assessment style also appeared to assume the responsibility of the development of the project; Carvé told his students what to do next rather than the students self-assessing based upon the exemplars he had on display.

There were instances in the units of data that reflected a student-centered practice of checking the understanding of the individual student rather than a global check of a group or classroom of students. Susan Neal did not rely on group checks. When asked
how she checks for understanding in the larger group, Neal explained she presents the information but then “… breaks the information into small steps …” and verifies as she goes from table group to table group, from student to student. “I really need to check on my students who don’t speak English or my special education students because they can’t tell me in the large group if they understand,” Neal clarified.

“Once you have taught your curriculum long enough, you can do a quick scan and know where everyone is,” stated fifteen-year teaching veteran, high school art teacher Kay Holloway during our interview. Holloway peruses the class as they are working then uses that information to follow-up individually as she works with each student.

Elementary school art teacher Susan Pappas has a similar approach in checking on the understanding of both the classroom group and each individual student. Right after giving a developmentally appropriate, selected response, written test on colors, shapes, and lines to her class of first graders, Pappas reviewed the correct answers with the group. She would read a question and check the group for a need to reteach at that moment or to continue with reviewing the test. The choral responses to questions posed to the class—“when we use a paint brush do we scrub or stroke?”—gave Pappas a sense of the class’ understanding. “When you do a drawing and you place something on top of something else, what is it called?” asked Pappas. A first grade girl raises her hand and says, “Overlap.” “How many of you think she is right?” followed up Pappas. The class raised thumbs up for yes and Pappas scanned the room for mostly all in agreement. During our interview I asked Pappas what she does when a student does not demonstrate an understanding about a concept during the large group session. “When they are
working, I go around and check on it, ask them about it. I can see it in their work, too,” explained Pappas.

A counter-example was found in elementary school art teacher Michelle Marks’ answer to an interview question, how do you determine what the students learn each day? After pause of nearly a minute, Marks replied,

I don’t know how to determine what each student learns. As a general group, like, I feel like, the second graders know printing, I feel like the second graders would, if they saw a brayer again or a tube of ink or a tray [would] know, “hey, we’re printing today.” But each individual student, do I think Peter, if I gave him a brayer, would he be able to say it is a tool for printmaking? I don’t know.

Another perspective was part of an explanation middle level art teacher Angela Fielding made during the interview when she was talking about the frequency of the use of peer-assessment, “not every single period, not every single task, but every single unit they know they are going to assess someone. It’s a learning experience for us, not just the person we are talking about,” said Fielding. While it is an example of peer-assessment, this perspective is included as a counter-example here because the language used about “… going to assess someone” rather than assessing the product or outcomes of the efforts of the student.

In the units of data for the art teachers just discussed, there was a difference in the appearance of confidence level of the students and of their artwork. The students in the classrooms where the art teachers sought insight into their students’ thinking and artistic goals through questions, conversation, sketches, or writing worked more on their own
when creating their own interpretations of the educational goal. They were in their seats working on their art as the art teacher came to them to check on their learning progress. These students produced artwork exhibiting variety and personal expression. Within the units of data for those art teachers who focused more on the product or checked only on the progress of the production of the art product and not on the students’ learning, the students appeared to have less confidence in the art-making process. The students spent class time waiting with their arms raised or standing in line to see the art teacher to be told what to do next on the artwork. These students created very similar looking artwork.

**Findings for SC1: Focus on Student Learning.**

Based upon the analysis of the units of data, there was a difference in what the art teachers’ assessments were centered on: the art product, the student, or the learning of the student as viewed through the art products and actions. The components of the analytical framework indicate that student-centered assessment is about what the student knows and can do, not about the assessing the person or just their product. Within the analytical framework, there is a focus on the acquisition of knowledge and skill in art, with specific checks to ascertain the extent the students are learning the processes for themselves. Pertinent examples from the units of data show several different purposes of assessment among the visual art teachers in the study but primarily the focus was on student learning.

Most of the art teachers asked questions of the whole class or scanned the classroom to check their students’ general grasp of the task. Then, with individual student checks, the art teachers verified understanding or clarified misunderstanding. Checks for understanding through observation, questions, and looking at the work in conjunction with written work of the art student were assessment strategies employed by several art
teachers in the study. In consideration of students with limited English or special education needs, scanning sketches and talking with student individually—rather than in a large group—was done in order for the art teacher to ascertain the individual’s grasp of the concepts.

A focus on getting to know the ideas of the student as artist was another assessment practice seen in the units of data. Several means were used by some of the art teachers to get a sense of their students’ ideas, what direction the student wanted to take the piece, and the student’s learning priorities. Gaining this understanding of the student was attained through asking questions, looking at sketches, checking paper models, or reading student reflective writing and artist statement. With insight of the student’s ideas, many of the art teachers then personalized their next instructional step.

It was found that student-centered assessment in art education focuses on gathering information about the individual student’s learning of art. The art product was used an object for revealing learning rather than being the objective of the art education. The artwork was used as an example of learning in conjunction with sketches, student writing, verbal answers, and student actions in the assessment of student understanding. The individual student’s understanding of concepts and her ability to apply media techniques and tools for making art were assessed, not solely the look of or quality of the art product. From the units of data, those students with art teachers who centered their assessments on student learning spent more time working on their artwork during class time and created more individualized looking artwork than the more similar looking artwork produced by the students of the art teachers who focused their assessments on the art product. Also, in the student-centered assessment practices of art teachers there was
often an emphasis on using the student’s words, both verbal and written, and images to place each student’s individual learning priorities and artistic initiatives at the center of the art teacher’s instructional practice. The analysis of the units of data indicates that student-centered assessment in visual arts was assessment of the individual student’s understanding more often than a focus on gathering data towards fixing on the student’s artwork.

**Student-Centered Facet SC2: Equitable and Contextual Assessments.**

- **Ensures that all students have many equal opportunities to display what they know and can do in art** (Aspect of Twelfth Principle, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard VIII, No. 5, NAEA, 2009a).

- **Assessment tools and conditions address equity and fairness issues for gender, race, language, and ability of students** (Aspect of Feminist Assessment Principle No. 2, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of Twelfth Principle Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 1, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, No. 4, and No. 5, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

- **Assessments are authentic reflections of the social and cultural contextual student needs** (Aspect of Feminist Assessment Principle No. 4, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of Fifth Principle, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 4, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

The focus of this facet is on examples from the units of data of the art teachers’ application of assessment strategies reflective of both a quality art education and the educational needs of all students in the art class. The examples address the art teachers’
use of multiple means of assessment for all students to demonstrate understanding; taking
into consideration the equity issues in assessment for students receiving special education
services or English Language Learners; and the developmental levels of the students.

Middle school art teacher Angela Fielding tailored her assessments to the needs of
her students. The middle school education philosophy includes the team concept where
the students all have the same content area teachers (usually English Language Arts,
Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies) who collaborate. At Fielding’s middle school,
students are ability-grouped by team. All the academically gifted students are on one
team per grade level and all the students receiving special education services are on
another team per grade level. Through the structure of scheduling, the ability groups
continued into Fielding’s art classes. Students from the same team attended her art classes
together.

During the site visit, Fielding taught art to students from the seventh grade teams.
All the seventh graders were learning the same concepts of sculpture and were all
assigned the same plaster sculpture project. Fielding wrote different assessment tasks
depending upon the general learning needs of the students as per team. While each test
version addressed the same concepts about sculpture, the format of the test questions for
each team was geared for that group of students’ academic levels. For example, the test
for the students receiving special education services used selected response questions
while the test for students in the academically gifted seventh graders team used, “mostly
short constructed response questions,” Fielding explained during our interview. Then,
within the class setting, she would individualize additional assessments and or any re-
teaching based on those initial data results from the tailored tests.
Fielding also checked to make sure her students understood a concept by checking on their understanding through several means. For example, during the site visit in a class with students who received special education services, Fielding used several assessment tools to gather information for checking and verifying her students’ understanding on the types of sculpture. She used observation of the conversations of pairs of students talking about the information. Second, after Fielding had presented images of several different kinds of sculpture, the students took a quiz. Third, those students who did not do well on the quiz were asked, one-on-one, to select examples from the variety of reproductions of sculptures posted in the room. Fourth, Fielding individually questioned students when she was not sure they fully grasped the concept. She explained this process during our interview as if she was speaking on one of her students:

Can you go through this [art text]book and find for me an example of a relief sculpture and an example of a free standing sculpture that isn’t in that chapter we just looked at? Find me an example; let me see you understand.

High school art teacher Susan Neal discussed the missed questions from her beginning jewelry quiz with her students to check for their understanding via another way. Many of her Hispanic students are learning English and do not do well on written tests, so she followed up with each student with questions and by watching them work to check their understanding of the concept. Susan Neal would like to use the translation service for her written tests, “but it [takes] two months [said with a sigh of resignation], so many teachers are using it now, so I haven’t done it. I going to be honest with ya, it would be a huge help to the kids but what are you going to do?” What she does do is
check her students understanding through what has been presented earlier in this chapter, use of sketches, observation, and questions.

A counter-example on testing accommodations for English Language Learners is what middle school art teacher Arthur Carvé described during our interview how the study guide for the weekly test on artists is adapted for English Language Learners:

We highlight the worksheet, basically where the answer is. The Asian students usually have a translator. The Hispanic or Russian students, they don’t usually, so then, we kinda have to underline specifically to help them match it up so they know what to write down.

Elementary art teacher Susan Pappas makes developmental considerations so all her students have opportunities to demonstrate understanding. Pappas started off her test on clay with her second graders with, “I am going to read the questions because sometimes people have a hard time reading. Now, to the best of your ability, and in complete sentences, answer these questions.” She graded the tests with 😊😊😊 rather than letter grades or number correct. It was discussed during our interview and observed that Pappas used the students’ test results to follow-up with individual students or the entire class.

During my observation and in the analysis of the units of data, I did not note any of the art teachers in the participating in the study using a different kind of assessment with females than males—an action I had observed during my field-tests. I also did not note any of the art teachers in the study using assessment tools and strategies that were developmentally too high or too low for the age range of the students in their classes. For example, long essays where not required at the elementary level.
Additionally, I did not observe or hear during our interviews or the classroom observations, any of the art teachers participating in the study make negatively phrased statements to their students like I did during my field-tests. The assessments were used:

- to point out socio-economic differences: “you wouldn’t know anything about museums but you would,” as said to two different students during the review of an art history test,
- as a bribe: “clean that messy sink and you can skip the test”
- as punishments “none of you are doing this project right so you have to write an essay on what you are doing wrong”,
- as an insult “since you are special ed., you won’t be able to do this test so just skip it”, or
- as a gift “you were so polite today, I am not going to look at your quiz; just take an A”.

**Findings for SC2: Equitable and Contextual Assessments.**

Both the feminist and art education principles of assessment speak to equitable assessment attuned to the needs of the individual students within the social and cultural contexts. Based upon the analysis of the units of data, sensitivity to the needs of all students with authentic opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in order to support—not to derail or deter—learning was, for the most part, found.

The structure, wording, and format of assessment tools designed with specific consideration for a range of student learning needs while still gathering valuable information through authentic assessment was found in the units of data for some of the art teachers. In the units of data of other art teachers, the perceived parity was achieved.
through flagging what the English Language Learners needed to transcribe from their handout to the test; this practice does not reflect the components of equity in the analytical framework. Many of the art teachers checked each of their students’ understanding of concepts and art skill-set development at the junction of learning and practice in ways that reflected the student’s personal educational need. Several of the art teachers used multiple ways to check or to verify each student’s understanding. Understanding was checked and misunderstanding was uncovered by asking the students for information in a variety of ways. For several of the art teachers there was not a reliance on one means or modality to determine understanding. As seen in the units of data, assessment tools and strategies were designed to reflect the developmental age of the students. Any appropriate adaptations of the assessment tools occurred respectfully and in ways that address the learning needs of the students in order to ascertain the student’s learning as well as maintain art educational value.

*Student-Centered Facet SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction.*

- **Assessment is tied to instruction and curriculum** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001; Aspect of Standard VII, NAEA, 2009a).

- **Draws from and utilizes a repertoire and range of meaningful assessment tools and strategies** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001; Aspect of Standard VII, No. 1, NAEA, 2009a).

• **The art teacher understands purposes and uses of assessment** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 1, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **No single assessment provides enough information to check student progress in art** (Aspect of Third Principle, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 1, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **Seeks out multiple types of information** (Aspects of Third and Ninth Principles, Beattie 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 3, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspects of Standard VI, No. 1, No. 3, and No. 4, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001; Aspect of Standard VII, No. 2, NAEA, 2009a).

• **Only essential learning objectives are assessed** (Aspect of Second Principle, Beattie, 1997a).

• **Assessment process is focused on nurturing improvement, progress and growth rather than final judgments** (Aspects of Feminist Assessment Principle No. 8, Shapiro, 1992).

• **Uses assessment strategies that instruct and enhance learning** (Aspect Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **Knows best assessment strategy to use to reveal what students have learned** (Aspect of Standard IX, 2000, No. 1, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).
• **Assessments are authentic measures of both the art education content and the actions or outcomes of the students** (Aspect of Fifth Principle Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 4, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **Uses assessment data to ascertain students’ individual strengths and weaknesses** (Aspects of Fourth Principle, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 4, NBPTS EAYA/Art 2001).

• **Considers the timing and purpose of the assessment** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **The assessment task fits the purpose of the assessment** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 4, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **Uses a variety of assessments during instruction to quickly gauge the understanding or performance of either the whole class or individual student** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 3, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000).

• **Checks students’ prior knowledge and skills through pre-assessment before starting a new instructional unit for any misconceptions** (Aspect of Eleventh Principle, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 1, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **Written expectations of outcomes and exemplars are provided** (Aspect of Thirteenth Principle Beattie, 1997a).
• **Assessment process is continual to gather current information on student progress in learning** (Aspect of Sixth Principle Beattie, 1997a).

• **Applies formative and summative assessment** (Aspect of Sixth Principle Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, 2000, No. 1, NBPTS EMC/Art; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **Both formal and informal assessment approaches are used** (Aspect of Sixth Principle, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 1, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspects of Standard VI, No. 1 and No. 5, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001; Aspect of Standard VII, No. 2, NAEA, 2009a).

• **Compares student’s current work to student’s own past work to ascertain growth** (Aspects of Fourth and Fourteenth Principles, Beattie, 1997a).

• **Current student learning is compared to a standard** (Aspect of Fourteenth Principle, Beattie, 1997a).

• **Is unambiguous, clear, and well designed** (Aspects of Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Seventeenth Principles, Beattie, 1997a).

• **Does not overwhelm, interrupt, or interfere with the teaching and learning process** (Aspect of Second Principle, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard VI, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• **Assesses the students’ learning of visual art education processes, knowledge, skills, and products** (Aspects of Third, Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth Principles, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).
Observation is used for assessment (Aspect of Feminist Assessment Principle No. 7, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

Assessments using conversation with individual students, group discussions and class critiques are incorporated (Aspect of Purpose No. 1, Wilson, 1992; Aspects of Feminist Assessment Principles No. 6 and No. 7, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of Fifteenth Principle, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001; Aspect of Standard VII, No. 2, NAEA, 2009a).

Assessments tools include journals and written work (Aspect of Feminist Assessment Principle No. 6, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001; Aspect of Standard VII No. 2, NAEA, 2009a).

Portfolios are used as an assessment tool (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001; Aspect of Standard VII No. 2, NAEA, 2009a).

Tests and assessment tools with selected response, short answer and essay questions are used (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, 2000, NBPTS EMC/Art; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).
- Assessment tools include rubrics, checklists, scoring guides, and exhibitions (Aspect of Standard IX, 2000, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

- Acts upon the information learned from analyses of the gathered assessment data (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 6, Shapiro, 1992).

- Analyzes assessment data to guide changes, modification or adjustments to instruction to promote learning (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 1, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 1, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

This synthesized facet of student-centered assessment relates directly to the research topic of this study. Presented in this facet are the art teachers’ understandings of assessment and their assessment practices from throughout instructional units as found in the units of data. Five inter-related topics are examined: the art teachers’ awareness of their uses assessment practices, what they assessed, what assessment tools and techniques they used, how they used the results of the data, and a summary of the primary assessment practices found in the units of data of each of the art teachers participating in this research study.

The first topic to be discussed within this facet is the art teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices. Analyzing the units of data for the awareness of their uses of assessment practices reflects of a component of research question of the study. Along with presenting the art teachers’ awareness of their assessment practices, the factors found in the units of data which might support an art teachers’ assessment practice are included. These data factors are the art teachers’ training in assessment, professional
development, and use of a scope and sequence in the visual arts. Through the presentation of data, the potential influence these three components had on the art teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices is shown. Through data analysis, six different types of teacher awareness of assessment practices were found. In some instances, the art teachers’ practices are represented in more than one type of awareness.

The first type of awareness of their uses of assessment practices is where the art teachers did not know or had limited awareness of what assessment practices they used in their art classes. Arthur Carvé’s answers in conjunction with his actions are reflective of this first type. “Craftsmanship” was his written answer in his pre-site visit questionnaire to both what assessment tools he uses in his class and what assessment looks like in his art classroom. But “I don’t know” was his written response to what are his three most often used assessment strategies as well as his verbal response to some of the interview questions. The units of data indicate Carvé was not aware his use of the assessment strategy of observation of student art products to assess the product then to use that information to direct his students with discrete directives.

Potentially, his limited training for assessment is part of the reason for his limited awareness of his assessment practices. Carvé wrote in his pre-site visit questionnaire he had not sought out any learning about assessment, he did not remember any assessment training in either his Bachelor of Art Education or his Master of Art Education programs, that there is no professional development in his school district, and—when asked if he used a scope and sequence—he smiled wryly and replied “we have one of those?” With his focus on the craftsmanship and the successful look of the students’ final art product outcomes, Carvé’s assessment practices are apparently working fine for him. Potentially,
seeking out information on assessment in art education or processing what assessment he does would not be purposeful to him.

The second type of art teachers’ awareness of their uses assessment practice is little realization of their assessment practices for student learning as exhibited by art teachers who asked for some examples of assessment tools in order to answer inquiries on what assessments they use. For example, Susan Pappas and Linda Delmont needed priming in our interviews to discuss the assessment practices I had seen them use. Susan Pappas said almost apologetically, “I don’t know how to title any of these things …” Linda Delmont said, “I don’t know; give me some choices [laughs].” After my list of a few of the several assessment strategies I had observed her use during the day, Delmont was a bit surprised, shocked, and pleased, “Well,” said with a smile, “that’s what I do everyday.” With assessment practices having been named, both of these art teachers could then elaborate on their assessment practices. Once validation had opened their awareness of their practices for assessment for student learning what they each listed was also reflected in what was observed in their assessment practices.

Both of these art teachers were also the art teachers who had been teaching the longest: this is Pappas’ 32nd year of teaching art and Delmont’s 37th. As seen in the historical review of the literature of assessment in art education in Chapter Two, the terms around assessment have changed overtime. Pappas’ comment about not knowing the names of the assessment practices and Delmont’s asking for choices might be indicative of art teachers who have been implementing assessment of student learning for years. They know how to assess for the success of their students’ art education; they just did not know what name to ascribe to what they do.
The third type of art teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices is giving a description of what is done in the assessment rather than the identification of the assessment tool or strategy by name. The units of data from Patrick Cooper, Kay Holloway, Susan Neal, and Lynn Newton provide examples of this type of teachers’ awareness of assessment practices. For example, Susan Neal paused for a long time to reflect upon the question of what assessments had been seen that day. Neal focused her answer on what she did rather than listing the assessment actions by name, speaking, primarily as if she was talking to her students:

Um, I will ask them, “what’s next? what is the next step? what do you need to do to now? where are you going after this? do you have a plan for cutting the metal? I need to see your design.” What else? [Neal asking herself]. Oh, um, uh, … let’s see, that’s probably it.

Lynn Newton also shared what she did rather than listing tools.

I have told you one of the biggest parts of my assessment is for myself and being able to relay that information to them in a better way so they will understand it more. I ask each student what they think of their work. I try to make them see their own mistakes, I ask many questions. The students do really see [Newton’s emphasis] it. I observe their behaviors while they are creating. I encourage them to stand back and take a look.

Neal did ask those questions about the next step with nearly all of her students in her jewelry classes and many of her students in her ceramics classes. Newton asked questions at the beginning of each of her classes but rarely during the studio time. She did point out mistakes based on her observations. Newton also used observational
information on what was not working well with one class of students and changed her 
instruction for the next group of students working on the same learning outcome.

Neal comes from a school district with a scope and sequence in art education and 
a curriculum in Career and Technical Education that she was involved in writing. She 
participates on the school level decision-making team and her school district provides 
professional development at the school and district level. Newton’s school district does 
not have a current scope and sequence in art education so she uses the state level art 
education curriculum standards that include suggested assessments. As presented in her 
introduction, she is not invited to attend the school-level discussions on student test 
results. Professional development for art teachers on any topic is not provided in 
Newton’s district.

A potential reason that Neal and Newton, along with Cooper and Holloway, were 
able to describe of what was done in the assessment rather than naming the assessment 
tool might stem from their recent experiences of reflecting upon assessment integrated 
with instruction. Neal and Holloway completed National Board certification that included 
a submission on reflecting upon assessment of student learning in art education. Cooper 
is working on his National Board Certification. Newton recently completed her pre-
service training, which did not include assessment instruction, but she did have 
assessment discussions with her cooperating teacher during student teaching.

The fourth type of art teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices 
was held by art teachers who effortlessly articulated their answers to questions about their 
assessment practices. For example, during our interview Nancy Lee listed, “rubrics, 
exemplars, checklists, check for prior knowledge, rubrics, checklists and content
exemplars … quizzes, talks with students individually and as table groups, written work.”

Angela Fielding’s list of the assessment strategies she used in her classroom was “formative and summative types, self-assessment, peer partner assessment, criteria checklist, selected response, short answer, fill-in-the-blank, brief constructed response, performance process, product assessment, Feldman model of critique.” For both of these art teachers, most of what they articulated was also reflected in their assessment practices during my site visit. Student learning is the focus of their multiple assessments. One outcome of these assessments appeared to be quality art products as the students applied what their art teachers have verified they had learned.

Both of these art teachers are from the same school district. They shared that they have been part of visual art education curriculum writing in their district, are involved in school-wide practices in assessment, have sought out training in assessment, and implement their districts’ visual art education scope and sequence that includes assessment recommendations. Both of these art teachers appear to be comfortable with assessment practices, in creating meaningful assessments, and in using the assessment data to inform their instructional decisions. Both of these art teachers have had a variety of professional development experiences to enhance their learning of assessment and utilize a scope and sequence that supports their assessment practices.

The fifth type of art teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices is ambiguousness. Those art teachers whose answers in relationship to practice were ambiguous or inconsistent exhibited this type. An example of this type of awareness is shown in Michelle Marks’ units of data. Her answers in our interview reflected uncertainty. As quoted in her introduction, she stated she is not sure how to assess or if
her students are learning. During her teaching in several art classes, she focused on
gathering data about knots and needles, which is measurable though not particularly
meaningful. Marks wanted to know more about assessment and she asked me a lot of
questions on how to assess her art students’ learning at the end of our interview.

Yet, in the five-page college paper on assessment in art education Marks shared
with me, she wrote, “… evaluation can be helpful part of the students art experience if all
aspects are taken into consideration.” In her college paper Marks listed a variety of
assessment practices including, “interviews … observation, self-evaluation, checklists,
portfolio.” What she wrote in her paper, as a pre-service art teacher, did not match what
Marks now practiced as an art teacher. The assessment practices listed in her paper did
not match Marks’ primary practice of observation. Marks works in a district that does not
have a current scope and sequence in art education and does not provide professional
development for art teachers. In addition, Marks said in our interview that she does not
have support through communication with other art teachers within her school district.
She works in a school that potentially, based on the hole-punch issue, puts testing above
learning. Within her unsupportive settings, Marks’ uncertainty and ambiguity about
assessment practices is understandable.

The sixth type of art teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices is a
misunderstanding of assessment as illustrated by art teachers who, through their actions
and words, appeared to misconstrue what meaningful assessment for student learning is
and to equate assessment with grades and grading. Art teachers whose actions and words
reflect this category are Michelle Marks, Arthur Carvé, Kristy Silverman, and Joan
D’Arté.
Throughout the text of her college paper on assessment that Marks shared with me, in her interview answers, and in her actions during class time, Marks used the words assessment or assess as synonyms for grading. As noted in her introduction, she chose the pseudonym of Marks due to thinking marks or grades are the same as assessment.

As presented in Carvé’s introduction in Chapter Four, when asked in the interview about assessment his answer was about grading: “50% of grade is the fish decoy. The grade is based mostly on craftsmanship and if it is functional and if it does work.” He also noted that the weekly tests are an “… easy way to get grades.” Nearly all of Carvé’s answers to the questions asked about assessment via the interview and the pre-site visit questionnaire were answered with a component of grading attached.

Like Carvé, Joan D’Arté gives weekly tests on artists solely to generate grades. The content of these teachers’ weekly tests are not reflective of the content of studio art projects their students were working on. Their tests were memorization of facts—not meaningful assessments of student learning—because the content of the test is not linked to the content of the studio work and the format of the test requires the students to replicate the order and words of the study guide. Further, the results of the test are not discussed with the students and the data from the tests are not used to inform teaching. Yet, D’Arté included these tests in her answer about what assessment strategies she uses, “worksheets and quiz on vocabulary, observation, and oral questioning.”

Silverman sprinkled grading as a synonym to assessment throughout her written and verbal comments. An example of this was presented in her introduction. She described herself as being Lowenfeldian. She spoke of assessment and grading as one concept, “I don’t want to turn them off from art by criticizing ‘you didn’t do this so this is
why you got the grade that you got.’” She evidently holds a negative definition of criticism, which it can be if providing comments to students is not done appropriately. I think she might be applying Lowenfeld’s caveats about grading to assessment and missing his recommendations for analysis of artwork for indications of student growth. Through her misunderstandings about grades and assessment, and in her attempt to shield her students, it appears from the units of data that Silverman does not provide the kind of guidance towards learning for her students that comes from meaningful assessment.

A counter-example of misunderstanding assessment and melding it with grading were the work and words of Linda Delmont: “I think that on-going assessment makes me an easy grader because they really do good work. Their work is pretty high quality, I think.” Delmont could see the difference between grading and assessment and the positive impact of her on-going assessment on the quality of her students’ work.

This misunderstanding of assessment being the same as grading could be a systemic issue. Michelle Marks, Arthur Carvé, Kristy Silverman, and Joan D’Arté are all from the same school district where a scope and sequence for art education is not used nor has one been revised for years. These art teachers are not provided professional development nor could they recall if they received assessment education while earning their degrees. Only D’Arté had not sought out assessment information on her own. These art teachers are also not included in the school-wide conversations about assessment. Perhaps this practice of melding of assessment with grading is indicative of the absence of educational support to art teachers from their schools and school districts.

In closing this section on the art teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices, six types were found through the analysis of the units of data. Awareness of
assessment practices coincided with art teachers who used meaningful assessments for student learning and did not equate assessment with grading. Additionally, professional development and curricular support were potential contributors to an art teacher’s awareness and practice of assessment of student learning in art education. There is a potential connection between the art teacher’s experiences with writing curriculum, professional development in assessment, participation in school-wide assessment practices, and the use of an up-to-date scope and sequence in art education that includes suggested assessments to the art teachers’ levels of awareness of their uses of assessment practices. The art teachers who had those experiences could also name their assessment practices and demonstrated how they assessed their students’ learning along with which tools and strategies they used. The art teachers without the benefit of those experiences were unaware or uncertain about assessment for student learning and some thought assessment, which is gathering information, is the same as grading, which is reporting information.

The second topic to be presented within facet SC3—Assessment Used Throughout Instruction—is an examination of what the art teachers in the study were assessing. While, all of the art teachers used some sort of assessment to gather data to inform their teaching practice in order to make recommendations back to the student, there was variance in what they focused their assessment upon. All of the art teachers in the study assessed both the students’ products and processes of learning art with a variance of degree and purpose of their assessment. Linda Delmont’s interview answer is an example of what was assessed:
I assess both product and process. I think you have to assess both; the process is assessed everyday in talking with them. The process is somewhat evident in the final product. If they never grasped reading a test strip or burning a light corner or dodging a person’s face … that print is going to show that.

Based upon the analysis of the units of data, what the art teachers participating in the study assessed were ten different kinds of student actions and learning in art education.

The first kind of student action and learning assessed to be discussed is the completion of a task. From the units of data, student learning appeared not to be as much of a consideration in the assessment as was whether the student had finished the project. For example, Michelle Marks focused on the student’s ability to punch a hole or, like she asked many of her students, “can you thread a needle or tie a knot?” In this kind of assessment, the format of the art teacher’s questions reflected collecting evidence of the completion of a component rather than verifying learning.

Second and third kinds of student action and learning assessed are similar as the same content is focused on, but different in how the assessment is accomplished. Both kinds are assessments of a procedure or step within the process of making the art product. In the second kind, the art teacher uses observation to check on the art making procedure and provides the solution without checking for the students’ understanding of the process. In the third kind, the art teacher uses observation to check on the students’ understanding.

An example of the second kind of assessment focus, Joan D’Arté provided information to her students based on her assessment of what she saw as they made the coil pots, “if I can see a line, it isn’t joined.” It appeared through her students’ actions and
outcomes, they were making coil pots but they were not learning to make them well. This was exemplified in D’Arté’s discussion of her assessment of the glazed coil pots final product. The students ate breakfast cereal with milk using their completed pots; “one of them, the milk was pouring out the bottom faster that I was pouring it in.”

Arthur Carvé assessed the student’s product in meeting his expectation of the procedures for the ice-fishing decoy project. The students brought their wooden decoys to Carvé for his observational assessment and for his direction of what to do next. There was no checking the student’s understanding or learning in this process found in the units of data. His assessment was directly related to craftsmanship and step completeness, not to the students’ learning such as why this kind of sandpaper is to be used or why that part of the fin needed to be changed. In this second kind of assessment focus, the art teachers’ observational assessment about the making of the art product provided the art teacher information on the production process but not on the students’ learning of the process.

The third kind of what the art teacher assessment focused upon is also a procedure or step within the process of making the art product but with the art teacher checking on the student’s understanding. As noted in her introduction in Chapter Four, Susan Neal asked nearly every one of her students through out the instructional day, “what is your next step?” Though similar to the observation of the student’s work found in the second type of assessment just discussed, in this third type, the objective of the art teacher’s assessment is on the student’s understanding of the art making process by asking them what they would do next, rather than providing them with the solution.

The fourth kind of student action and learning assessed is a focus on aspects of student artwork while the students work during studio time. For example, Lynn Newton,
Michelle Marks, Kristy Silverman, and Kay Holloway assessed the student’s artwork through observation. Based on their comments, the assessment was on what was missing or not quite meeting the assignment in the student’s artwork. Sometimes the statements focused on the person rather than the work such as “you are missing three things” said Kristy Silverman about a drawing composition but personified her comment. There was also sometimes the desires of the teacher, “I want it to lay flat,” said Michelle Marks to a second grader about her stitching, or “I think you need to go to blues,” stated Linda Delmont to a digital photography student. “Stay away from making detail” or “we want this to look flat,” commented Newton based on her observational assessment of students not painting in the assigned style used by Jacob Lawrence in the series of his paintings they were studying. “A lot of yours are not popping out yet,” Silverman told a student working on the black and white composition. “You want your forms to fill the paper” or “that is too small,” Holloway pointed out to two of her students drawing geometric shapes. Based on the art teachers’ comments, the observational assessment was on aspects of the work that could be fixed or improved. From the units of data, it appeared that the art teacher did not verify information about student learning about the tools, art media, or art techniques.

The fifth kind of what student action and learning is assessed is, like the third and fourth kinds of focus, an assessment the student’s artwork addressing the assignment. But here the art teacher’s response after their assessment could be used to check for student understanding of the content, application of the learning, or improvement based on prior attempts. Several of the art teachers in study included checking for their students’ understanding. For example, Susan Pappas, Kristy Silverman, and Linda Delmont all
used questions based on their observations of the students’ actions or artwork to prompt solutions.

- “What could you add?” asked Pappas of a kindergartner’s composition.
- “Do you have a color scheme? Silverman asked a painting student.
- “Does it work as a whole picture?” asked Delmont of a digital photo student.

The art teachers’ questions were based on observational assessment or their students’ responses to a question and often also required the students to observe the situation to make an informed response. The art teachers asked questions that could be used to assess the student’s learning as well as putting the artistic choices in the hands of the art student.

The sixth kind of student action and learning assessed is the assessment of the student’s use of tools, art media, or art techniques based on the art teachers’ observational assessment as the students work during studio time. For example, Michelle Marks demonstrated how to use a hole-punch when a second student was making holes too close to the edge of the paper. Lynn Newton showed a fourth grade students how to, “stabilize your hand,” in painting. Susan Neal retaught several beginning jewelry students the direction to file the metal on their first project. The use of color was a common theme in art media assessment with Susan Pappas checking on her elementary students’ knowledge of the names of primary colors, Nancy Lee verifying her fourth graders’ understanding of mixing watercolors to get tertiary colors, and Patrick Cooper discussing the use of color to tie a painting composition together visually. Both Kay Holloway and Joan D’Arté assessed through observation then retaught their students; Holloway in the use of drawing techniques in shading and perspective and D’Arté in coil pot construction.
It often appeared in the units of data that the art teacher’s assessment was based on their own knowledge of the use of tools, art media or art techniques in their observation of their students at work. Examples of this art-making experience included Delmont’s observational assessment of her photography student’s prints and Carvé’s checks of his student’s ice-fishing decoys through touching the surface of the wood.

There was also evidence in the units of data of the art teachers’ knowledge of art-making processes along with their familiarity with the process and progression of the lesson impacting at what point in the student’s work the art teacher looked for specific student actions. Based on experience with the art medium and the lesson, they knew and referenced where past students had challenges or misunderstandings. They watched for those instances to assess their current students’ grasp of the process. Examples of this pedagogical experience-based observation include Kay Holloway checking for challenges with boxes floating above the horizon as her drawing students learned two-point perspective and Lynn Newton looking for students not fully grasping the style they were to emulate when they add too much detail to their of Jacob Lawrence inspired paintings.

Additionally, this sixth type of assessment focus was often used to check or verify the student’s grasp of a concept or process that were essential for the student’s success for the next phase of the lesson.

The seventh kind of student action and learning assessed is another check of the student’s use of the tools, art media, or art techniques during studio work time. But for this kind the art teachers assessed the students’ understanding of inherent properties or procedures of the art medium, tools, or techniques. It appeared through the art teachers’ questions that they had taught their students about how to use characteristics in the art
media or tools to inform their art making. When Susan Neal was demonstrating trimming a pot, she asked her students how she knew when she was finished, “by the sound,” one student responded referring to tapping the bottom of the pot. As a jewelry student worked on soldering, Neal asked her, “what color is the part of the flame you want to be centering on that area?” As presented in her introduction in Chapter Four, Linda Delmont’s photography students made and used test strips to inform how they will proceed with developing their prints, “they were using a test strip to get to a finished product and … are learning what the test strip does, how to read it, and then how to print out that final piece and making a judgment.” Delmont asked several different students about exposure times as they both looked at the student’s test strips and prints.

The art teachers’ assessment was based on their own understanding of the inherent characteristics of tools, art media, or art techniques in order to ask the appropriate question at the appropriate time in the art making process to check their student’s understanding. This type of assessment question required the student to apply the information about the characteristic used to inform the art making in that situation.

The eighth kind of what student action and learning is assessed is an assessment of student understanding of art content knowledge and concepts. From the units of data, the art teachers’ assessments for content knowledge were through questions and discussions with groups or individual students, quizzes, tests, student writing, and tasks to check for student understanding or misunderstandings as well as to verify attainment. These processes were at the beginning, middle, and end of instructional units.

At the elementary level, Lynn Newton started each class verbally quizzing her elementary students on knowledge—as recalled from their last art class on aspects about
Louise Nevelson, Jacob Lawrence, or Adrinka cloth designs—accompanied by corrections or clarifications for misunderstandings. Susan Pappas gave a test on color concepts to her second grade students and followed up by clarifying misunderstandings or reinforcing understanding. When teaching art criticism, Nancy Lee’s elementary students both write about and discuss the artwork. Lee also assessed her students learning the color wheel through discussions, a written quiz, and a test where they paint a color wheel. In addition, her students answered questions about colors as Lee walked the room during studio work time.

At the middle level, Angela Fielding checked her students’ understanding of the aspects of 2-D and 3-D sculpture through a written quiz, the content of group discussions, and students pointing out examples in their art textbook. She used the outcomes of these assessments to clarify misunderstandings during the class period before moving to the studio work on sculpture. Arthur Carvé and Joan D’Arté gave written tests on some background content and the name of several of the artist’s works every Friday. The content of the tests was not tied to the content of the instructional units and no information from the outcomes of the test were used to inform their teaching practice or their students.

At the high school level, Linda Delmont and Susan Neal gave a written tests, Delmont on the components of an enlarger and Neal on jewelry terms such as annealing. Patrick Cooper used large group discussion to check for understanding of the photographic compositions with follow-up paired or individual tasks for his photography students to demonstrate their understanding of those concepts using their own photographs with supporting reflective writings.
The ninth kind student action and learning assessment focused on the student’s artistic thinking. The art teachers participating in the study accomplished this through several means. Susan Neal stated in our interview that she referred to her student’s sketches and maquettes to both gain insight into her jewelry students’ understanding and their artistic thinking. Nancy Lee also required sketches, at least two preliminary drawings or plans, for all her 2-D and 3-D projects. “For them to move forward [on a project] they have to show me their understanding there in the sketch,” Lee explained during our interview. Kay Holloway and Patrick Cooper used student writing to gain insight both into the students’ understanding but also their artistic thinking. “Using the artist statement helps me understand what the student is processing,” said Holloway. The art teachers used applied assessment to writings, sketches, and models used for other means in the students’ art education as a way for assessing the thinking of their students, both as new information and for verification of understanding.

The tenth kind of what student action and learning assessed is student growth over time. For example, Patrick Cooper used the student’s artist statements along with his student’s collections of paintings or photographs for conversations to ascertain growth. It was also observed that several times each class period Linda Delmont and one of her students would look at earlier and current photograph prints to discuss progress to determine the next step. Kay Holloway referred to a student’s earlier drawing as a reference point for the student to see her or his development in their drawing skills. Portfolios were discussed by several of the art teachers but not as a primary source for assessing growth. The art teachers’ assessment of growth used prior work of the art
student to look for improvement or change. It was found this process was most often done in concert with the student.

These ten kinds of what is assessed do not cover the full range of art education components. There are components of art education that were not discussed, observed, or seen in artifacts as being assessed by the art teachers in the study. The art teachers participating in this study infrequently assessed areas of content or concepts found in the art education national standards and current practices of art education. Aesthetic or expressive aspects were rarely discussed or assessed as seen in the units of data, as was the concept of art as meaning making. Also, the assessment of contemporary art or art history appeared only occasionally in the units of data. Aspects of a Visual Culture education through art such as social commentary, collaborative art, or the use of digital video media were not topics neither discussed by the art teachers nor observed in their teaching practices.

To summarize this second topic of facet SC3, as found in the units of data what the art teachers focused their assessment upon fell into ten kinds with a variety of purposes for their assessments. Sometimes the assessment purpose was the checking for the presence of an expected content or process, the application of the learning, or the students’ improvement in learning based on prior attempts the processes, content, and concepts. The student’s skill in using an art tool, ability to apply art techniques used in making artwork, and content knowledge were the kinds of learning most often assessed. The art teacher’s own understanding of the art-making processes and experience with teaching the instructional unit appeared to inform their assessment. These assessments took place throughout the instructional unit. Assessing other components of the national
art education standards or current practices in art education that were not frequently found in the units of data.

The third topic to present in facet SC3—Assessment Used Throughout Instruction—are the types of assessment tools used by the art teachers as found in the units of data. The types and order of presentation of the assessment tools in the section reflects the suggested progression of assessment throughout an instructional unit as synthesized from the art education assessment constructs of the analytical framework, the best practices of assessment found in the art education literature presented in Chapter Two (see Appendix C), and sound assessment practices from general education.

Pre-assessment and pre-testing were discussed by several art teachers in the study. In reference to the number of art teachers at her high school that her students could have had prior to taking her art classes, Kay Holloway shared during our interview, “I use pretest to ascertain what the students know because they could have learned from five different teachers.” “I need to tap in where my kids are at and they just rise to any bar you really set for them,” said Patrick Cooper about the pre-assessment at the start of each new term. During our interview, Linda Delmont discussed the pre-assessment she gives her photography students:

I ask them in the beginning. I give them an information sheet [to complete]. I ask them all kinds of questions [in the information sheet]: What computer skills do you have? Have you done any photography? What art classes have you had? What museums have you gone to? What do you expect from the class?
Susan Neal said during the school day of the site visit, “we’ll do entrance exams and I’ll ask what their prior knowledge is, what their expectations are, what their preconceived notions are about what they are going to be learning here.” By knowing the experiences and skill their student have had in art prior to the start of the unit, these art teachers adjusted or modified the upcoming lessons in order to not repeat and to better meet the learning needs of the students in each of their classes.

A counter-example of pre-testing was found in the units of data of Kristy Silverman. As presented in her introduction, I asked her about pre-testing her students understanding and prior knowledge of the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design since I had seen aspects of that taught in the elementary and middle level art classrooms of other art teachers from her district participating in the study. She did not pre-test and shared her surprise these concepts were taught, “In our district?”

The next type of assessment tools to be discussed are the tools used to share the learning expectations and outcomes at the beginning of the unit of study through discussion, handouts, posters, images, and objects. For example, Susan Neal, Patrick Cooper, and Linda Delmont gave criteria sheets for their projects including the learning objectives tied to state standards; these sheets were analyzed as artifacts. Checklists of expectations were provided to her elementary students by Nancy Lee, “I do a lot of checklist to help them to be successful.” Patrick Cooper gave checklists to his photography students:

I have a sheet that is a checklist for myself and for the kids and I can easily check off [such as] the balance is sequential … you know, basically talking about the negative space versus the positive space, the main energy and
movement in the work and the presentation. I’ll check small boxes for value, clarity, composition and overall presentation. It is a pretty easy thing for me to do to give to them.

Susan Neal, Angela Fielding, and Linda Delmont post the criteria for the project in their rooms. Multiple postings were visible in each room; one for each of the art teachers’ classes, and all of three of these art teachers included their state’s coded student learning expectations tied to art standards. Neal’s also included the codes for Career and Technical Education for her jewelry and ceramics classes. Linda Delmont explained during the tour of her room:

I have become a little more sophisticated over the years by giving them more specific criteria and at the beginning. [Previously] we talked about it but now I’ll write it down and post it up especially when we are getting close to the end so they’re know, this is where you’ll need to be.

The art teachers with posted expectations and criteria sheets were seen referencing these—pointing them out or asking the students to pull theirs out of their folders—when they made their rounds with the students during studio work time. It was found in the units of data that that Neal, Fielding and Delmont would observe their students working then often use the expectations of the unit to explain their own determinations of how to proceed or to ask the students to make that decision. The expectations were referenced when the student asked what to do next or to get the art teacher’s input; the art teacher would ask the student’s idea based on the expectations, such as Delmont pointing at the criteria and asking, “does it meet the criteria?”
A few of the art teachers began the class period with a lesson or discussion of the specific criteria to work on that day. Then they addressed the previously discussed intended outcomes of the lesson in their explanation to their individual students throughout studio work time. For example, after an opening class discussion about filling a composition, later in the class Susan Pappas said to a student as she walked the room, “look at all that empty space.” After a lesson and discussion about dominant elements in a photograph, Patrick Cooper asked about the position of a dominant element in a photograph as he discussed the artwork with his student.

Counter-examples were other art teachers in the study making determinations about the work but without referencing any written outcomes or communicating how the student’s work compared to the intended outcome. It appeared within the units of data that these art teachers, such as Kristy Silverman, were acting upon their analysis of the observed art project but did not share their reference points with their students. Some only announced what to do next, such as Arthur Carvé’s directive to a student do more sanding on the ice-fishing decoy.

Next, visual examples or exemplars of the products were displayed in many of the classrooms. For example, Arthur Carvé provided many different kinds of examples of ice-fishing decoys. All in one area in his art room, he had: laminated photos of decoys, several completed decoys he had made, and diagrams of the major steps in making the decoy from drawing the outline on the block of wood to dry-fitting the fins. Michelle Marks displayed one example of the printmaking and hole-punch project final product that she had made. Kay Holloway shared or posted a variety of examples of student work from the studio assignment the students are working on so, “they know what we are
targeting visually,” she explained. Angela Fielding had both examples of the hand sculptures made by students around the room as well and photographs posted of the steps in making one. Susan Neal carried in her apron pockets jewelry pieces made by students—some successful, some not so in design or execution—she used as exemplars in discussions with the students to check their understanding of the process. I asked her to elaborate on her use of exemplars during our interview:

The exemplars are visual alignments to the rubric or expectations of the project. They make the expectations visually apparent so the students know what to aim for and what they need to consider to get there. They can see from the range from no attention to detail through above and beyond, what was present, what was missing at each level. They really help the non-English speaking students, too, to see and touch so they understand.

Most of the art teachers who used exemplars showed works made by students rather than sharing an example the art teacher had made. A counter-example of exemplars was in the practice of Kristy Silverman. She had not made any of the projects the students were working on the day of the site visit nor did she have any examples of student work. Silverman held up the textbook where the lesson came from so the students could use that as an example.

Several of the art teachers who had exemplars used them as resources for their students to use for their own self-assessments of their artwork as indicators of the expectations of quality. Within the units of data, Susan Neal was the only art teacher participating in the study who actively used a range of exemplars in her discussions with her students. Some art teachers who had exemplars were not observed referencing them.
For example, other than using the examples in his demonstrations at the beginning of each class, Arthur Carve’ did not reference his examples of the progression of steps to make the ice-fishing decoy or the finished pieces to his students.

Observation is the next assessment tool to be discussed. All of the art teachers gathered assessment data through one or more kinds of observation. Yet many of the art teachers did not see observation as a form of assessment. All of the art teachers in the study observed individual students’ artworks, analyzing the artwork on the spot on how close or far the student was in meeting the expectations of assignment. During our interviews, most of the art teachers discussed scanning the room to look for several things: the work of the students; the action of the students; and to check for progress, understanding, or challenges with the assignment. Most of the art teachers in the study were also observed performing this assessment task during the observation day.

Nancy Lee and Lynn Newton both shared during their interview discussions that scanning student artwork and actions by table groups with follow-up individualized analysis was a favored assessment process. During our interview, Kay Holloway had discounted observational analysis as assessment approach until I validated it as sound assessment tool. Holloway then commented:

Some of it is intuitive and some of it is just, once you know the students and once you have taught your curriculum long enough, you can do a quick scan and know where everyone is. And I think it comes from experience, I couldn’t have done that my first years of teaching because I didn’t know what I was looking for.
Once the assessment information was gathered through observation, nearly all of
the art teachers commented to the student on how to improve or first praised the student
in how they were using the art media or tools then made recommendations for
improvement. Their comments were based upon the analysis of the students’ actions or
artwork, the art teachers’ professional knowledge, and the expected learning outcomes
often referencing the posted expectations or criteria lists.

Another assessment tool used was the students’ written work. Several of the art
teachers in the study used written work to gain a stronger grasp of their students’
understanding and thinking to guide their instruction. As discussed previously, Kay
Holloway used reflective writing and Patrick Cooper used artist statements with their
high school students. “I compare their artist statements to what the students are working
on. I look for cohesiveness,” said Cooper. Kay Holloway and Susan Neal both shared
during the site visits that they utilized reflective writing in formats that match the external
assessment of their student will have at the end of the year. Holloway focused on essay
writing with her Advanced Placement Art History students to both check their
understanding of the content and to match the assessment format of the AP exam. Neal
included reflective writing prompts with her International Baccalaureate Art students to
gather insights into her students thinking as well as match as assessment aspect of IB Art
Investigation Workbook.

Linda Delmont shared during our interview, “I have them write more. Like when
we were doing the pinhole cameras, they came back everyday and did reflection.” Angela
Fielding used short and long constructed responses in some of her tests. Nancy Lee
assessed her elementary students understanding about art criticism by applying what they
learned in a written criticism of an artwork. All of these art teachers used reading of their students writing in conjunction with other assessment strategies to verify understanding and student thinking.

The next assessment tools used are small group discussions, whole class discussions, or critiques. These assessment practices were discussed by several of the art teachers during our interviews. The topic of conversations with individual students is presented later in this chapter under Student-Centered Fact SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment. Several of the art teachers, including Susan Pappas, Lynn Newton, Joan D’Arté, Angela Fielding, Linda Delmont, Kay Holloway, and Patrick Copper reviewed concepts from the previous class session at the top of the class through short discussions with all of the students.

Small group or table grouping discussions were seen in several classes including those of Nancy Lee, Lynn Newton, and Linda Delmont. In Delmont’s photography classes, small groups of students formed around a student’s photo to discuss its composition or print quality. These spontaneous groupings also circled around a computer to join Delmont in a discussion of a digital photography student’s work on the screen. It appeared that these small group discussions lead by these art teachers informed the students on their processes and the art teachers on their students’ understanding as the students shared their ideas about the concept or other student’s works.

Several art teachers discussed critiques during our interviews but none were observed. For example, Nancy Lee said, “we do a group critique.” Patrick Cooper talked about the photography and painting critiques:
When we have our group critiques the students understand whatever is in the work is the artist’s intention and if it is not, then those are the mistakes they need to fix it unless they like the direction it is going now.

Another assessment tool used were sketches and sketchbooks. These were used by some art teachers in the study in conjunction with other assessment information. Both Nancy Lee and Susan Neal asked to check their students’ sketches as they discussed the art project. Lee checked the preliminary sketches of her students’ art projects to make sure they grasped the concepts of the lesson. Neal reviewed her jewelry students’ sketches to both, “check their understanding of the concepts and to see [the students’] ideas.” Neal also relied on the sketches and maquettes as a non-verbal means for checking the understanding of her non-English speaking students.

Patrick Cooper discussed during our interview using sketchbooks as an assessment tool for him and his high school students:

What has really helped a lot of my kids. It is the work that they do in their sketchbooks; it has helped them out tremendously in digital photo class. I basically give them a sheet of ideas, anything that I am looking for and evidence of their process along the way is going to be evident in their sketchbooks and occasionally I’ll go back through their sketchbook and go, [as if speaking to student] “how come this sketchbook doesn’t reflect the quality of your paintings?”

The next assessment tool to be discussed is the use of displays. The assessment technique of using displays was brought up by several of the art teachers during the tour of the art room or our interviews. Nancy Lee, Patrick Cooper, and Linda Delmont all
brought up using displays as a form of assessment. Elementary art teacher Lee said, “I always do a display and they talk about what we see in the hallway.” High school art teacher Cooper explained, “with the painting and drawings they are constantly out on display all of the time … those kids have a lot more continual conversations with each other and themselves about their work.” High school photography teacher Delmont discussed the photographs from last term just down the hall in the display case, “there are some real good ones in the show case; the other day I was sending them down there like a field trip. I was sending three to four [students] and a time so they could talk to each other about it.”

An assessment tool, the portfolio, was brought up by several art teachers participating in the study, but its use was not observed. Linda Delmont’s photography students keep a collection of digital images to compare for growth and the darkroom students keep photos to pick the best one to mount. Delmont further discussed portfolio assessment during our interview:

Each nine weeks I do a portfolio assessment where they have everything they have done over the nine weeks and a sheet of what they have done and a journal. It is effective because they are seeing what they have done and if they do a self-assessment that enhances it.

Elementary art teacher Lynn Newton aspires to keep portfolios in her probable move to the high school level next year, “I want them to learn the process and be able to say ‘I did this when I was a freshman; look how I’ve improved.’ For them to see their own growth, yeah, I want them to see that.” Newton’s explanation on why she does not
use portfolio assessment in her current teaching position is discussed later in this chapter as a component of Sub-Question One.

While portfolio assessment can be used to ascertain growth, a few of the art teachers discussed using comparison of the student’s own work across time to show growth without discussing portfolios specifically. In talking about looking at his photography students’ work, Patrick Cooper explained, “I go back through their folders and I go back through their images then I evaluate based on that same criteria.” Kay Holloway helps her students see their growth from their past to current work. She explained this during our interview as if she was speaking to a student, “when you did the first one, what did you do? Let’s compare it.”

One art teacher, Susan Neal, discussed how she watched for a change in her students’ questions, from the kinds of questions from the beginning of the term to current questions. Neal explained:

There is a change in the kind of vocabulary the students use and more specific questions to their own work. I introduce the vocabulary of the art medium from the first day. I noticed the upper level students asking more specific questions that related to what they wanted to do as artists. [Neal now speaking as if she were a student] “If I want to attach these two pieces this way, I would use the torch from the bottom, right?” with often a verification of tool or skill they are attempting to use for their attempts. They were able to articulate what they wanted to know.

In the analysis of the units of data, there was also comparing the current artwork to previous works by the student in the on-the-spot analysis. This approach was employed
in three different ways. Several of the art teachers in the study looked at several pieces of earlier artworks to compare to the current student’s work. For example, Linda Delmont looked at several of a student’s photographic contact sheets and prints for the analysis of growth. Another approach in used by art teachers in the study was to give direction, recommendations, or feedback to a student on what to do next in their artwork then—minutes later in class—make an analysis based on what improvements the student had made. The art teacher held in her or his head what the previous work looked like minutes ago for a comparative analysis of what or how the student had changed the artwork.

A longer time frame of holding an image of previous work as a growth comparison to a current work was also evidenced. Susan Neal, when talking to her advanced jewelry students, referenced works they or another student had done a year ago, “remember how the first casting you did looked as compared to this one? What did you do different?” When we discussed this during our interview, Neal added, “This also relates to a student’s personal interest in the work so they could understand their own growth and development.” Kay Holloway discussed looking at a student’s artwork, then, the through her mental analysis of comparing past work to the current work, “I will refer back, like ‘I really see you achieved that.’”

The next assessment tool discussed is the rubric. Several art teachers shared the rubrics they used—reviewed as artifacts—and discussed their use during our interviews. Nancy Lee showed the rubrics she and her students use for checking artwork with a different rubric specific for each product. Lee, Linda Delmont, and Susan Neal all pulled out the rubric or expectation list for the art project from the student’s folder when discussing work with their students. Lee noted the rubrics are each designed specifically
for each unit. Lee also said that after the rubrics have been used to assess the learning outcomes and discussed with the students, “I try to attach it to the back of their artworks so it is right there with the project.” But, Lee added, “I feel I am not using them as effectively as I’d like even though I believe in them. I don’t always use them as much as I probably should be using them.”

A counter-example of the use of rubrics as an assessment tool is from the work and words of Kristy Silverman. As noted in her introduction, Silverman used the same rubric, which she had found on the Internet, for all projects. Silverman discussed using the same rubric for all projects when evaluating art projects at the end of the unit adding she, “… sometimes lists on the bottom what I was looking for.” She noted that the “assignments are graded with a rubric” but she saw them as ‘a waste of paper” because “a lot of kids didn’t care.”

Some art teachers in the study used written tests and quizzes. Most of the art teachers who created quizzes and tests used them at the beginning of the instructional unit. Susan Pappas’ first graders took test on colors and shapes followed by a group review. Angela Fielding created a test to check content knowledge segment from an art textbook unit on sculpture. Susan Neal’s test was on the basics of jewelry making. Kay Holloway uses released, previous AP Art History exams as guidance for her and for her students’ practice and preparation. Nancy Lee created a variety of tests to check for her students’ understanding of the color wheel and color mixing. It appeared through my analysis of the content of her binders of units with lesson plans, assessments, and student art examples that she does not overly test, but uses one or two tests per unit. As discussed in her introduction, Lee gave both a written quiz on primary and secondary colors and
one where the students painted the wheel by mixing colors. For a different unit at a
different grade level, the students applied their color mixing to create a color wheel using
colored pencil. Linda Delmont discussed her school district’s expectations for testing:

I have a bank of selected response and multiple-choice [questions to choose
from] and we are required to give two constructed responses and one extended
[response question]. For this class, their extended constructed response will be
to do a drawing of a pinhole camera. They actually do this in their journal and
then explain the construction and how it works.

Delmont also pointed out how photography has testing built in, “they have to read test
strips to understand the process.”

Through observation of different testing procedures and analysis the tests given
reviewed as artifacts, there were nine characteristics of the testing in common for the five
of the art teachers’ who were using sound testing practices as found in the literature of
general education. The tests of Susan Pappas, Nancy Lee, Lynn Fielding, Susan Neal, and
Linda Delmont were:

• created by the art teacher with Fielding, Lee, and Delmont adapting
questions from the test question bank tied to the expected learning
outcomes provided by their school district;

• given at the beginning of the instructional unit;

• in direct reflection of the content or skill that was just instructed;

• testing information that, by having a secure understanding, would benefit
the student for the next part of the unit;
• checked for vocabulary of pertinent terms, explanation of processes, and application of knowledge in a way different than how it was taught;

• one to two pages long;

• mostly in a selected response or short constructed response format;

• reviewed the answers right after the test or the next class session; and

• analyzed by the art teacher to check the student test results to look for areas of reteaching for individuals or for the entire class.

Converse to this are the previously discussed weekly tests by Joan D’Arté and Arthur Carvé who during our interviews discussed grading quizzes and the counting up the correct or wrong answers to yield a grade. Carvé offered during our interview that he writes the questions on the test in the same wording and order as the study guide to make it easier for the students, “if they can read it, they can get it.” The content of their tests was not about something that was instructed or related to the instructional unit. The information is not reviewed with the students to clarify misunderstandings but graded and returned. The data from the student test results were not used to inform the art teacher’s practice.

High school art teachers Susan Neal and Kay Holloway, who have IB and AP students respectfully, both talked about analyzing scores from the examinations. Analyzing the results of the current year points to next year’s instruction, “I can determine what to concentrate on,” stated Holloway. Susan Neal explained how she worked with her students to look at the data and the scoring rubric of IB Art, including her personal ownership to the scores:
I learn what we did well and what needs to be done better. I wanted to get a score of four or more and if I got all threes that meant we were doing mediocre work. If we got twos or ones, we’re doing very poor [work]. Our goals were to aim for fours and fives so that colleges that do acknowledge IB scores would give college credit. We would look at four and five criteria. We would look at the rubric, starting at one and work our way up to the fours so see [slowing her speaking for emphasis] what was the difference.

The units of data from this study reflected formative assessment far more than discussions on summative assessment. This limited amount of information on summative assessment practices is potentially due to the timing of the site visits. None of the site visits occurred at the end of an instructional unit or the end of a term when summative assessments often occur or are required by the school district to take place. All of the art teachers in the study were at the beginning or mid-point of their instructional units. Some of the art teachers did discuss summative assessments during our interviews.

Linda Delmont discussed summative assessment when she spoke about her photography students doing self-assessment. At the end of the unit, both the student and Delmont assess the products, “that final summative assessment is that they do one and I do one.” Lynn Newton will be using a written final as information for herself, “They are not going to get a grade on it; it’s going for me to know if I did what I set out to do.” As discussed previously in this section under portfolios, Patrick Cooper reviewed the work of his photography students through summative assessment.

Michelle Marks and Arthur Carvé both discussed summative assessments as probable means for checking for learning. “If they did do the product, then I make an
assumption that they understand. I make the assumption they learned whatever it was that we were doing; that they got it figured out,” stated Michelle Marks. Arthur Carvé had a similar take on evidence of learning. In responding to the interview question: How do you know if they learned it? Carvé replied:

If they produced it correctly. In the end, if they have the end product [laughs] if they have fins that are filed and attached on to their body of their fish decoy then I think they have gotten the idea.

In summary of the third topic under facet SC3—Assessment Used Throughout Instruction—as found in the units of data, the art teachers used variety of assessment tools and strategies during instruction. Starting with pre-assessment at the beginning of the unit, a variety of formative assessments were used to nurture student progress that reflected assessment components of an instructional unit. Most of the assessment tasks fit the purpose of assessment and most addressed essential learning needed for the next phase of the unit. Several of the art teachers used assessment tools that were instructive to the student such as the artist statements. Some of the art teachers had aspects of assessment tools but did not fully employ them. Many of the art teachers used multiple assessment that were used to verify understanding with the information gleaned from other assessments to adjust their teaching to enhance learning. The assessment strategies, found the least often in the units of data were peer-assessment, critiques, and portfolio assessment. Observation of the student artwork was the only assessment strategy found in the units of data of all the art teachers participating in the study.

In using observation, all of the art teachers did on-the-spot analysis then gave a response based upon what they saw. All of art teachers in the study had versions of
assessment that were part of the instruction yet not all of these assessments centered on student learning. I did not hear during our interviews or see during the site visits any assessments that interrupted the instructional process. Several of the art teachers included the student in the assessment process; this is discussed later in Student-Centered facet SC7 and in the findings for Sub-Question Three. From the units of data of the art teachers who used tests, the analysis of the test results accomplished by the majority of these art teachers was more than marking the number correct but looking what questions were missed and how often, and identifying which students were missing questions and who needed follow-up clarification. Aside from the middle school weekly quizzes on artists already discussed, I did not hear during the interviews nor observe any assessments that were not reflective of and connected to the learning objective through some degree of pertinence and meaning.

Examples of assessment tools matching the assessment principles and constructs synthesized for this student-centered facet were found in the units of data. All of the art teachers used one or more of the assessment tools. Only one of the art teachers in the study discussed or was observed using all of the tools from the synthesized list of the art education constructs of the analytical framework and best practices of assessment from the literature of assessment in art education (see Appendix G: The Use of the Best Practices of Assessment from the Literature of Art Education by the Art Teachers Participating in the Research Study). One assessment tool used by several of the art teachers, the sketchbook, was not found in the art education assessment constructs. Similarly, use of the maquette was not found in the literature of assessment in art education. Formative assessment was used to some extent by all of the art teachers
participating in the study. The opportunity for the students to use the information from the formative assessments is presented in Student-Centered facet SC6: Use of Assessment Data: Revisions.

The fourth and last topic for facet SC3—Assessment Used Throughout Instruction—is a summary of primary assessment tools and strategies discussed and seen in the practices of each the art teachers in the study. Primacy was determined by the extent the assessment tool or strategy appeared in the units of data. Some of the art teachers used conversation with their students as a primary assessment strategy; this is presented in the next facet SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment. While the outcome of collected assessment data can be feedback, discussion of the art teachers’ uses of feedback and other comments is reserved for presentation later in this chapter in Student-Centered facet SC5: Use of Assessment Data: Comments. The summary of each art teacher’s primary assessment tools—along with the focus of the assessments as found in the units of data—are presented in the same order as the art teachers were introduced in Chapter Four.

Susan Neal’s primary assessment strategy was to ask questions of her students to ascertain their understanding of the process that she used along with observation of the student’s work and actions as verification. Neal stopped by to check-in with each of her students in all of her studio classes. She often used the jewelry exemplars she carried in her apron to check for understanding of her students. Neal could anticipate the challenges and misunderstandings her students might have with the materials, tools, and project. She supported her understanding looking at the student’s sketches and used these as non-verbal means to assess the understanding of her English Language Learners. Neal used
the information gathered to reteach. She used more questions with her jewelry students
and more observation with her ceramics students. Based upon her words and actions
found in the units of data, the focus of Neal’ assessments was to gather multiple points of
data on her students’ content knowledge and skill develop for the dual expectations of art
education with Career and Technical Education for applied learning for all of her
students. The focus of her assessment for her IB Art students was gaining insight on the
thinking of her students.

Arthur Carvé’s nearly solitary assessment strategy was observation of his
students’ art product. The students came to him for direction. He would look the student’s
art product, check by touching the ice-fishing decoy, and give the next direction. His
observations were guided by knowing what to check for at each stage of making the ice-
fishing decoy. Multiple assessment strategies were not discussed or observed to check for
or verify understanding of his students. The focus of his assessment was data for him to
use to direct the craftsmanship of the artwork. The focus of his weekly tests was grades.
Carvé did discuss an authentic assessment. During our interview he discussed his
summative assessment where the finished decoys are checked for balance by hooking the
decoys to a fishing line and putting it into a bucket of water.

Joan D’Arté’s primary assessment strategy was observation of her students’ clay
project and their actions in making them. She knew what she was looking for in terms of
challenges and progress in each stage in making the clay coil pot to guide her
observations. Secondarily, she used questions to check for group understanding of the
processes of making a coil pot. Verifying her students’ understanding was not clearly
found in her units of data. The focus of her assessment was gathering data through
observation for comments in order to help keep her students on track in handbuilding a clay coil pot. D’Arte’ stated that the focus of her weekly tests was for producing grades.

Michelle Marks’ primary assessment strategy was the observation of the student’s work or actions when the student brought a challenge to her attention. It is not clear from the units of data if Marks could anticipate the challenges students might have in creating the different products in the different grade levels in order to direct her observations. Student understanding was only noted if there was an error. The focus of her assessment was data for problem solving the challenge at hand so the student could proceed with the activity. Grading was also a focus.

Lynn Newton’s primary assessment strategy was the observation of her students’ artwork and action as she moved from table to table. Secondarily, Newton used questioning of each group of students at the beginning of class to review the general understanding of the content knowledge. Multiple assessment strategies were not discussed or observed to verify understanding of her students for all her students. For some students, Newton talked about the work. It is not clear from the units of data if Newton could anticipate challenges student might have in creating the projects but she did adjust her teaching when several students had similar issues with the media. The focus of Newton’s assessment was gathering data in order to advise her students on the application of the art education content knowledge and skills then how to proceed on creating the assigned art projects.

Susan Pappas’ primary assessment strategy was observation of her students’ artwork and their actions. Individual questions for the students were asked as verification of understanding; conversations were similarly used. Pappas communicated information
to each student when she delivered their artwork as well as at least one additional check of progress during the classtime. One grade level class was given a test for information on what content was understood and where reteaching was necessary. Pappas knew and could anticipate where challenges might occur in the student’s of art media and in the application of the content knowledge with the artwork. The focus of Pappas’ assessment was gathering data to guide students’ learning and application of art skills and concepts of the art projects.

Kristy Silverman’s primary assessment strategy was observation of media challenges or missing components in her students’ artwork as per the assignment. Silverman walked the room to observe the students’ artwork and made recommendations or gave directives based on those observations. She knew the components of the assignment to look for in the students’ artwork. The student artwork was more of focus than student understanding. Multiple assessment strategies were not discussed or observed. The focus of her assessment was gathering data for steering the student’s progress on the assigned art project.

Patrick Cooper’s primary assessment strategy was individual conversations with his students to ascertain their understanding and direction they wish to take their works before providing feedback. He supported information with data gathered from artist statements and student sketchbooks as well as the content of the comments made by students during group discussions. Cooper knew and could anticipate where the individual student, in painting and photography, might have challenges with the art media or how to make progress when stymied. The focus of his assessment was gathering data
for guiding students’ learning through the application of the art content and skills through their role as reflective artists.

Linda Delmont’s primary assessment strategy was observation of her students’ artwork supported by questioning. She verified information about a student’s understanding by observing how she or he worked and by listening to small group discussions over student photographs. Delmont knew the art media, art processes, and the assigned project in order to anticipate challenges to guide her observations and questions. The focus of her assessment was gathering data to help her guide student learning and application of the processes of photography.

Angela Fielding used multiple forms of assessment to get a grasp on the understanding of each of her students. She did not use group checks but individual checks through tests, peer-assessment, and observation, and verification of understanding through other means if a student did not answer the question on the test correctly. She created different test formats based on the learning needs of her students. Fielding referred to the posted criteria and art product exemplars. She knew the art media, processes, and content knowledge within the instructional unit to guide her assessment practices. The focus of Fielding’s assessment was gathering multiple data points to help her guide all of her students’ learning of art content with the application of the information in art projects.

Nancy Lee used a variety of assessment strategies to follow and guide her students’ understanding. Checklists, referencing exemplars, tests, conversations, and observation of each student’s artwork and actions were used as multiple means of checking understanding. Lee understood the art media, content knowledge, and art
processes which guided her design and use of assessment tools. The focus of her assessment was to gather multiple data points to help her guide student learning in gaining foundational skills and content knowledge in art education.

Kay Holloway’s primary assessment strategy was her observation of each of her student’s artwork and how each approached drawing to aid her in helping each of them. Conversation and student reflective writing supported her decision making. Holloway referred to the posted exemplars. She understood the drawing media, processes, tools, and the art assignment to lead her observations at pivotal points of her students’ understanding. The focus of her assessment was to gather data to help her guide her students’ understanding, processing, and development of their drawing skills.

Holloway’s focus of assessment of her AP Art History students was to ascertain their understanding in order to better prepare them for the AP exam.

**Findings for SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction.**

This facet addressed the variety of tools and strategies that made up the repertoire of assessment practices of the art teachers in the study. From the units of data, the art teachers’ awareness of their assessment practices, what was assessed, the assessment tools used, and summary of the art teachers’ assessment practice was presented. All of these topics relate directly to the research question of this study of what are visual art teachers’ understandings and practices of assessing student learning in the visual arts.

The art teachers’ awareness and understanding of their assessment practices along with connective information on their assessment training, professional development, and use of their district’s scope and sequence was presented. Through the analysis of the units of data, six types of teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices were found:
limited; little realization of practice; focus on what is done rather than a list of strategies; effortless articulation; ambiguous; and equating assessment to grades.

Through the analysis of the units of data, ten kinds of student actions and learning being assessed were found: completion of a task; procedural aspect of making an art project with and without assessing the student’s understanding; components of the student’s artwork with and without assessing the student’s understanding; skill in the use of tools, art media, or techniques; student understanding of inherent characteristics of art media and tools; content knowledge; artistic thinking; and growth over time.

Examples the art teachers’ uses of assessment tools as used throughout a unit of instruction were presented. These assessment tool types mirrored the synthesized list from the art education assessment constructs of the analytical framework and the best practices of assessment from the literature of assessment in art education (see Appendix C). Many of the assessment tools authentically reflected the concepts found in the visual arts national standards and the student outcomes measured. The assessment tool used by all of the art teachers participating in the study was the observation of student artwork with the art teachers all providing some type of comment based on their on-the-spot analysis of what they had observed. Some of the art teachers used only a few of the types of assessment tools while other art teachers in the study used multiple measures of assessment, most often to verify the information gathered to better guide student learning. Several of the assessment tools found in the units of data were instructional to the students such as artist statements.

One art teacher using all of the tools from the list synthesized from the art education constructs of the analytical framework was found in the units of data (see
Appendix G). Not found in the analytical framework list of assessment tools but found in the units of data of several art teachers was the use of the sketchbook. The maquette, used by one art teacher in the study, was also not found in the art education constructs of the analytical framework. The least frequently used assessment tools were peer-assessment, critiques and portfolio assessment. Some of the assessment tools found in the units of data were not fully utilized such as the use of exemplars. Of the art teachers who applied sound testing procedures, there were nine similar characteristics found.

Through the analysis of the units of data, what appeared to be pivotal in the assessment practices of the art teachers was a focus on student learning in the use of the assessment strategies and tools of learning. There was a difference in assessment practice when the art teacher’s focus was on helping the student to learn art skills, processes, and content for creating art rather than when the art teacher’s focus was on making a product. Art teachers who focused on the art product used assessment strategies to gather information in order to fix the product or provide a solution. Art teachers who focused on student learning both used a wider variety of assessment practices to gather and verify information on understanding, and then used that information to help promote meaningful student-centered learning. A summary of each of the art teacher’s primary assessment practices was presented.

There was also a wider range in the repertoires of assessment practices of those teachers in the school districts that had up-to-date scope and sequences and provided professional development; who participated in curriculum work; or who participated in school-wide practices, district-wide practices, or National Board Certification. Art teachers from the school district without those professional development and curricular
support had smaller repertoires of assessment and did not use the tools they did employ completely accurately or to a full extent. In some instances, what they were doing in assessment was not done well or correctly, and there was often confusion between assessment and grading.

From the units of data, assessment used throughout an instructional unit:

- checked and verified student understanding from the beginning of unit, throughout the lessons with a variety of formative assessment, through the end of the instructional unit with summative assessment;
- assessed all components from an up-to-date art scope and sequence that is tied to the most current national standards in the visual arts;
- utilized multiple measures to verify understanding;
- informed the art teacher’s practice to guide instruction;
- used the assessment tools and strategies strategically and correctly;
- employed visual, verbal, and tangible modes for checking student learning;
- was meaningful and connected to furthering the student learning of the expectations of the instructional unit with is part of a scope and sequence;
- was different from grading; and
- was supported by quality information in formative and summative assessment through pre-service coursework and experiences at the pre-service level and on going in-service training in assessment for the art teachers working in schools.
The art teachers’ acquisition of knowledge about the best practices of assessment is addressed in the next theme in this chapter in the facet APP3: Attains Best Practices of Assessment in the theme of Assessment as a Professional Practice of Art Teachers.

**Student-Centered Facet SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment.**

- **Assessment conversations between student and teacher to create understanding and meaning are integral** (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 6, Shapiro, 1992).

- **Assessment tools based in relationships and conversation are frequent tools of choice** (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 7, Shapiro, 1992).

- **During conversations, the art teacher asks questions to help students reflect upon work** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000).

- **Incisive questioning along with careful listening to students during conversations to assess understanding are utilized** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 2, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

This fourth student-centered facet addresses thoughtful, verbal exchanges and conversations used as assessment between the art teacher and the art student. These exchanges can vary in length from quick checks of understanding to extended conversations used for assessment. While the constructs making up this facet primarily use the term conversation, I am choosing to use the term verbal exchanges as the umbrella term for interactions found for this facet for two reasons. First, upon analysis of the units of data, I found more than conversations were being used in an assessment
practice. Also being used by the art teachers were quicker and shorter exchanges used for assessment purposes. Secondly, there is specific type of verbal exchange discussed in the literature of assessment in art education with the student at the lead called the assessment conversation (Mitchell & Ross, 1993; Ross et al., 1993). Therefore, the term of verbal exchanges is used to cover the various types of student-teacher verbal interactions found in the art teachers’ units of data.

These verbal exchanges can be used to assess learning and gain insight on the understanding, thinking, ideas, feelings and processing of the student to inform the art teacher’s practice on how to proceed to improve and support the learning and goals of the student. In an educational assessment partnership with the art teacher, these exchanges are informational and instructional experiences for the art student as well. Some of the exchanges with the students found in the units of data included the art teacher asking questions to gain more information prior to making a comment based on the information gleaned from the interaction used as assessment.

There is an extended presentation on the kinds of comments and feedback used by the art teachers as found in the units of data in the Student-Centered Assessment facet SC5: Use of Assessment Data: Comments. The art teachers’ individual, whole group, and small group discussions and questionings were presented in previous facets. This facet delves more into the verbal exchanges between the art teacher and art student that were used as assessment. In this facet the variety of types of assessment exchanges found in the units of data are presented.

First, there were verbal exchanges consisting of short interactions between the art teacher and the student that quickly gathered or shared information, with the art teacher
providing comments based on the content of the quick interaction. While brief, the art teacher gained some information about the student’s understanding or thinking before commenting. For example, at the elementary school level, Susan Pappas, Nancy Lee, and Lynn Newton all kept their exchanges with students to about three question–answer pairings, with some of Newton’s exchanges longer. Pappas used the group review at the top of the class time as an indicator of which student to converse with first during the studio work time as well as noting aspects of the artwork as she delivered it to each student. “Oh, Sam, I like that cat. Look at all that empty space” as she placed the artwork in front of the student, “what could you add?” Pappas always included praise along with directions after listening to the student’s answer to her question. Lee and Newton would check-in with the table group first, and then converse with each student around the table. They both used a combination of advice, questioning, some validation, and limited praise. These art teachers’ observations of how their elementary student was working in using a tool or art medium was the content of most of the conversations.

At the secondary level, middle school art teacher Angela Fielding briefly talked with each of her students during the textbook peer work and during the review of the assessment results on sculpture. She explained to me between class periods that most times she was using these exchanges with her students as another means of assessment to ascertain understanding. Her exchanges were similar to the same three question–answer combinations found in the units of data from the elementary art teachers. At the high school level, these brief assessment exchanges did not appear often in the units of data.

There were counter-examples to the brief assessment exchanges found in the units of data. Michelle Marks’ interactions with her students were not exchanges as much as
students asking her, “is this right?” or “what do I do now?” and Marks answering or directing the next step for that student. In Kristy Silverman’s brief interactions, she provided comments or directions but rarely ascertained the students’ thinking or understanding. As previously presented, Arthur Carvé’s assessment practice focused on the craftsmanship of the product with his interactions with his students directives on how to proceed. From analysis of the units of data for Joan D’Arté, her comments to her students could have been entrées into conversations, but her students barely talked at all so her comments stayed with observational comments, directions, and praise.

The second type of verbal exchanges used as assessment found were quick yet frequent exchanges with students that were extended conversations in segments over the class period. This type of segmented conversation used as assessment between the art teacher and student was only found in the units of data at high school level in the units of data of Patrick Cooper, Kay Holloway, Linda Delmont, and Susan Neal. The topic was usually about a technique or skill a student was using, such as developing a print in Delmont’s photograph class or Cooper talking through a student’s choice of an image in his. Susan Neal explained this process for her jewelry class during our interview:

Together, we’re looking at their edges [of their bracelet] and then talking with each student on their filing techniques, how to achieve the look they are after, cleaning off any burrs at the edges and then collaborating with that student, giving a re-demo if necessary, or showing them sand paper, or you know, adjusting what they’re doing because, you know, when I go back sometimes, I want to monitor that and adjust that as I go.
As a student worked through the process or choices, the art teachers checked back in on the student’s progress and continued the verbal exchange. The art teacher assessed the progress and talked with the student, making sure the student was set before moving on. The art teacher also learned of any additional insights the student had during the making of their artwork. Neal called this, “learning their ah-ha moments.”

The third verbal exchange type is another segmented conversation that continues throughout the school day. This type of exchange used in assessment was found in the units of data for the art teachers Susan Neal and Patrick Cooper. Some of these on-going conversations began when a student would rush in before school had started to excitedly share an artistic idea or breakthrough that had occurred to the student overnight. The conversation would pick up again during class time. In some instances the segmented conversation continued after class time had concluded, taking place into the changing time between periods. None of these observed on-going, verbal exchanges were chats between friends. Rather, these were professional discussions centered on art educational student learning. The art teacher often asked more questions than were answered and all the students looked very comfortable with the process.

These on-going, segmented, verbal exchanges throughout the school day used for assessment were not found in the units of data at the elementary or middle level. There were several students who popped their head into Lynn Newton’s classroom before school to exclaim, “we have art today!” or “I get to see you today!” While these are positive reflections upon Newton, these students’ comments did not evolve into on-going assessment exchanges. In looking at the units of data, the absence of on-going assessment exchanges by elementary and middle school art teachers who evidenced having extended
verbal exchanges between the art teacher and the student during class time could be an outcome of the bus or school schedule with a lack of a latitude of time for students at these grade levels.

The fourth type of verbal exchange was a conversation that was longer in time and richer in information for assessment. Some art teachers carried on longer conversations for assessment with individual students to gather information on their student’s thoughts, understandings, and feelings about her or his artwork. These longer conversations had five to ten exchanges between the student and the art teacher. Longer assessment exchanges were found in the units of data for Lynn Newton, Nancy Lee, Patrick Cooper, Kay Holloway, Linda Delmont, and Susan Neal. For example, Lynn Newton’s longer conversations were with students who were not pleased with the look of their tempera paintings such as, “I can see you are disappointed; what about it don’t you like?” where she would look at her student’s face with quick looks at the work to see what the student was referring to in the painting. She had these longer conversations for assessment with no more than three students per class period. Nancy Lee referred to checklists, tests, and sketches along with her observations to inform her assessment exchanges. “I still always come back to the students to talk about what they are doing, to talk about their [projects]. For instance, how did we use these components?” Patrick Cooper discussed how this process worked in his painting class:

I’m not one to tell them they need to put green in, you know what I mean? I keep it very open, I generally ask them questions and they try to get them to figure out what it going to be best for them. Like, for instance, this is one particular person I can think of; they are working on portraiture and it was a
portrait of one of their friends and it was supposed to be kinda narrative and they were sticking with this one monochromatic color range. Basically I just ask them, “why? why this color? why is there nothing else?” and they started to explain.

Newton and Lee had these longer verbal exchanges for assessment with no more than three students per class period while the Cooper, Holloway, Delmont, and Neal—who have longer class periods—carried on this type of assessment exchange with seven to ten of their students. Cooper’s conversations were the longest, one lasting nine minutes.

The fifth type of verbal exchange used for assessment was a longer discussion between the art teacher and a student that was also witnessed by group of students. This type included the exchanges art teacher had with one student in table grouping or during a demonstration. For example, when Susan Neal carried on discussion to assess understanding about trimming a ceramic pot on the wheel that was presented in her introduction. Neal gained information about the understanding of the student, the student gained a better understanding, and the other students observing the conversation were provided with information. Linda Delmont had similar exchanges when students were around her, watching her demonstrate a technique on the computer for a specific student or when she and a photography student discussed a print just out of the darkroom. The other students were often, but not always drawn, in the exchanges but students appeared comfortable in adding their unsolicited comments and observations about the skill or artwork.
The sixth kind of verbal exchanged used for assessment found in the units of data was a longer, individual discussion that included a demonstration of an art technique by a student. This type of verbal exchange was found only in the units of data of Susan Neal. For example, several of Neal’s advanced students were preparing to do a lost wax casting. Each of these students, throughout the class period, discussed the readiness of their cast and acted out the procedure then performed the casting task. Neal also had this type of verbal exchange for assessment prior to several different students preparing to then proceeding to solder complicated jewelry pieces. Neal and the student continued their dialogue during the soldering. She explained this process later, using the student’s soldering in her discussion:

[Jewelry] is Career and Technical Education as well as art education so I integrate work skills into the art process. I apply the oldest form of education of the apprentice model. Validating their knowledge, thinking, skills. Like before any complicated torch work. It is very difficult to do, so the conversations prior and then while they are soldering helps them process a technique that has many steps.

In all instances, the use of verbal exchange with demonstration for assessment occurred with advanced students who appeared to have had reflected upon the process prior to their conversations with Neal.

In the seventh type of verbal exchange used for assessment, Susan Neal and Patrick Cooper included the student’s artistic goals and the student’s criteria for the artwork in the conversation. Cooper relied upon the student’s artistic statement as the background for these conversations, especially the student’s goals. As presented in his
introduction, the student’s goals written in the artist statement guided Cooper’s assessment criteria, “This way I can really hold them to what it was what they wanted to do.” During her discussions for assessment, Neal asked her advanced jewelry students, “what aspect of the piece do you want to talk about?”

To close this presentation of the fourth facet in the theme of Student-Centered Assessment, there were seven types of verbal exchanges between art teachers and students used for assessment found in the units of data for the majority of the art teachers participating in the study. It was seen in the units of data that the art teachers who carried on the longer and extended verbal exchanges were adept at having a discussion that reached some conclusion yet did not monopolize the art teacher for the class period. The art teacher would listen to the student then ask questions, provide comments, or make recommendations such as Kay Holloway saying, “so here are a couple of things to consider.”

The art teachers who used verbal exchanges for assessment with the students also checked in with each of their learners. While they also would go to the student with a raised hand or attend to the student who came up to them with a question, the art teacher initiated connecting with the student and the majority of the connections were with each of the students in class. Counter-examples of this are the non-conversational assessment practices of Michelle Marks and Arthur Carvé. Neither of these art teachers interacted with all of their students. Several of Marks’ students would hold up their arms for several minutes, bracing the upheld arm with the other, often to no avail. Carvé also did not answer raised hands during studio work time. Students who needed assistance in either of these classes needed to take their work up to the art teacher and stand in line for the quick
advice given by the art teacher who looked at the work, not at the student, and had no
discussion.

Proximity and looking at the students’ face as well as their artwork were also
components of the art teachers who held conversations with the students. The art teachers
stood near to but not crowding the student. Many of the shorter exchanges, especially at
the elementary level, the art teacher was behind the student, looking at the work and
checking the student’s expression as they looked back around at the teacher. A tap
on the shoulder often accompanied the last comment by the teacher in the conversational
assessment exchange such as by Susan Pappas.

Linda Delmont and Susan Neal most often stood beside the students for their
verbal exchanges used for assessment. Delmont would sit beside her seated digital photo
students at the computers for their discussions. Patrick Cooper stood the furthest away
from his students but his is perhaps due to the need to step back away from the large
paintings many of his students were working on to get a good look. Kay Holloway
demonstrated respectful behavior by being at the same physical level as her student as
stated in her introduction. All four checked the expressions on their students’ faces during
the verbal exchanges used for assessment.

The content of the secondary level student conversations is a potential corollary to
the art teacher and the art students having assessment-based conversations. In the
classrooms of Arthur Carvé, Joan D’Arté, and Kristy Silverman, art teacher–student
verbal exchanges about art used for assessment were not observed nor were conversations
as an assessment tool discussed by these art teachers in their interviews. In Carvé’s and
D’Arté’s middle school classes, the students did not talk to each other and only interacted
with the art teacher to ask what to do next or through a quick acknowledgement such as “okay” to the directions given by the art teacher. In Silverman’s high school classes, the students were very conversant with each other, talking about current trends in fashion, music, and other media. Yet, there were no student conversations about the artwork they were producing. While this content of student talk could be apropos for an art course content focused on Visual Culture, this content was not reflective of the art content or projects of Silverman’s students.

In the classrooms where the art teacher engaged in conversations used for assessment, the student-to-student conversations were primarily about their artwork. These conversations were of varying content. Some conversations were asking a peer an opinion about an artwork or where other students were looking through a collection of images in the photography classes of Delmont and Cooper. Some of Delmont’s computer students also asked each other for assistance, usually with an admiring, “how did you do that?” Neal’s students’ conversations, both in English and in Spanish, were asking to see another student’s finished jewelry piece or asking and lending assistance with media and tools.

**Findings for SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment.**

As presented from the units of data, verbal exchanges between the art teacher and students were used for assessment of student learning. These exchanges took several forms and required a variety of skills for the art teacher. Seven different types of verbal exchanges used for assessment were found through the analysis of the units of data. Some of the art teachers showed the reflective presence to provide information and guidance that supported student learning, not just the creation of an artwork. Skills were needed to
listen for and to directly respond to the student as well as in how to develop a professional educational relationship with the student. The art teachers who participated in conversations used for assessment shared the assessment process by providing the student both a voice and a role through this shared venture navigated through conversation.

The art teachers who practiced verbal exchanges used for assessment knew how to start the exchange, foster it, and how to exit it, all with grace and respect for the student and for the other students in his or her classroom. These art teachers managed the resource of time, checking in with each student through short or extended conversations. They also maximized time and learning by making sure each student’s understanding was assessed through conversation so the student’s time in class was spent productively working rather than waiting to be helped. Skill in helping the student negotiate criteria for the assessment process added to these conversations and empowered the students. Building a trusting rapport and an educational relationship appeared to be essential components for verbal exchanges used as assessment; the art student and art teacher were partners in the educational process through their conversations.

Shared responsibility for learning was also found in the units of data of verbal exchanges used for assessment. Through conversations, both the art teacher and the art student learned more about the processes of making art. The art teacher learned what the student understood, wanted to try, and to what extent the student was applying the content knowledge and gaining skills with media and tools. This informed the art teachers’ practice in how to proceed with instructional information for the student’s learning to improve. The art teachers who participated in conversations used for
assessment imparted their art educational professional knowledge—personalized for the learning needs of this student at this moment—through a conversational means to help the student arrive at conclusions.

From the units of data, the student’s art making practice was influenced by the conversations used as assessment they had with their art teacher. The students were informed on how close or far they were to the learning target, gained options of how to proceed, made informed choices, and ultimately took on responsibility for their own learning. This differs from some of the art teachers who, as seen and heard from in the units of data, took on all the responsibility of the making—telling the student the next step of the art activity without requiring the student to compare their work to the exemplars, to ask thoughtful questions, to learn, and to apply art educational content and skills.

Findings from the analysis of the units of data also revealed a potential connection between the art making educational content of the secondary student peer conversation and the presence of conversations between the art teacher and the art student used for assessment. Art educational learning was the focus of class time and conversations between the art teacher and the students and amongst the students themselves.

As shown in the units of data, knowledge of the art media, the tools, art content, anticipation of potential challenges in working with that media, and the process of assignment were some of essential understandings an art teacher were needed to participate in conversations used for assessment with students. The analysis of the units of data revealed that while verbal exchanges used for assessment between the art teacher and art student were appropriate at all age levels, more conversations used for assessment
took place at the high school level. The length of the class period appeared to be a factor in the frequency of conversations used for assessment with more of these art teacher and student conversations taking place in longer period art class. Through the analysis of the units of data, it is indicated that student-centered assessment in visual art education includes verbal exchanges used for assessment where the art teacher both gathers assessment information and uses the information to make instructional choices focused on student learning where the student not only as the center of the assessment but as an informed partner.

*Student-Centered Facet SC5: Use of Assessment Data: Comments.*

- **Effectively uses feedback with art students** (Aspect of Purpose No. 7, Wilson, 1992; Aspects of Purposes No. 2 and No. 3, Dorn et al. 2004).

- **Provides immediate, constructive, targeted feedback of substance** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 3, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspects of Standard VI, No. 2 and No. 5, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

- **Student learning goals are targets for the content of the feedback** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 4, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000).

This facet focuses on the art teachers’ use of data in comments to the students. Once assessment data has been gathered—using any of the assessment tools and strategies—and the art teacher has analyzed the data for information to inform her or his practice, comments were made to the art student. While there also can be comments given to art students from their peers, this facet addresses the kinds and purposes of comments made to the student by the art teacher derived from assessment data.

Comments from the student to the art teacher are discussed later in SC7: Student
Involvement in Assessment and in the finding for Sub-Question Three in Section Two of this chapter. Information on the process of analysis of this facet begins this section followed by explanations on the types of comments found through analysis of the units of data. This is followed by examples of the art teachers’ uses of combinations of comments and a summary of the findings for this facet.

The analysis of the data for this facet began with examination of the units of data that included the word feedback. Six of the twelve art teachers participating in the study used the term feedback when discussing or describing their assessment practice. Yet, there were twenty different purposes of those comments including how to hold an art tool, encouragement, and how close the student was to reaching the targeted goal. To execute an analysis of the units of data, a definition of feedback was necessary.

There was no definition of feedback in the four constructs from art education forming the facet or in the literature of assessment in art education that discussed feedback addressed in Chapter Two. Not finding clarification from the literature of assessment in art education on the term feedback to use for the analysis of the units of data, I turned to general education literature and the work on feedback from Grant Wiggins (1998, 2012) for a definition of feedback. As previously cited in Chapter One, Wiggins (2012) explained that feedback was different from giving students praise, advise, instructions, or directions. Wiggins (2012) advocated that feedback is telling what is seen in the work of the students that indicates where they are in their progress towards reaching the educational goal. Using this definition of feedback in the analysis of the units of data, feedback was rarely found.
For clarity in discussing the analysis of data for this facet, the general term comment is used when describing all of the types of responses made by the art teachers to their students based upon the data they collected through assessment. The specific term of feedback—as defined by Wiggins (2012)—is included as one of the types of comments but is reserved for those indications of where student progress is with respect to reaching the educational goal.

Next, examples of comments as evidenced in the units of data for all of the art teachers in the study are discussed. There was a range of purposes of comments found in the analysis of the units of data for all twelve of the art teachers’ comments. The different purposes of comments given to art students by the art teacher are based upon the units of data from all twelve art teachers’ responses during the interviews, from the content of conversations, and from observations from during the school day. Similar purposes of the comments from the art teacher to the art student—based upon the art teacher’s used of analyzed assessment data—were grouped yielding resulting in twelve different purposes for the teachers’ comments. It was found the purposes of the comments ranged from general praise to specific feedback. The twelve purposes of comments drawn from the units of data were:

1. General praise or approval for the student’s work or actions,

2. Encouragement or general reassurance,

3. Vague comments of praise,

4. Vague recommendations,

5. Validation or confirmation of learning in art,

6. Specific directives on what to do next,
7. Directions couched as a request,
8. Modeling with clarification to clear up misunderstandings,
9. Recommendation on how to proceed by giving a course of action based on what the art teacher wanted or would do,
10. Advise towards an action that was needed,
11. Guidance on how to proceed based on the degree or amount the student’s work or actions were progressing towards the targeted goal, and

The units of data also included the practice of combining different purposes of comments together; this discussed later in this section.

The majority of comments to students were stated after the art teacher’s observation of the student’s action or an art product or as a response to a student’s question. Several art teachers used a combination of the current observations with recollections of the student’s past work then analyzed that information to form their specific comments. These comments made by the art teacher were made immediately or after a short pause. Examples from the units of data for the twelve purposes of comment follow.

1. General praise or approval for the student’s work or actions.

Susan Pappas provided praise as she delivered the artwork to each of her elementary students: “Oh, cool I love it,” “Very nice,” or “What a cool idea.” Michelle Marks commented to a table of second graders using the hole-punch along the edges of their prints in order to stitch them together, “I like the printing and the classroom teacher
likes the hole-punch.” Linda Delmont called out to her each of her classes as the students left at the end of the class period, “You all did good work today.”

The comments of praise were often without elaboration or context. The praise compliments were often said without another type of comment. When praise was given to individual students, it was relatively equally divided between the look of an artwork and the art making actions of the art student. Most often the nonspecific praise was given to a group of students, like Delmont’s praise to her class presented above.

2. Encouragement or general reassurance.

“This makes your hand stronger so you can write,” said Michelle Marks in the context of encouragement to a second grade boy when she saw him stop using the hole-punch to shake out his hand like it was tired. Responding to several of her beginning jewelry students’ laments after comparing their first wirework to some of the better exemplars, Susan Neal told them, “you are just learning so be patient; jewelry teaches you patience.” Encouraging comments like these were most frequently given quietly after an art teacher noted challenges in the art making actions of an individual student.

3. Vague comments of praise.

Comments were analyzed to be vague if there was not elaboration or context provided. For example, “Look at this,” Angela Fielding told the class as she held up a student’s work, “Blake did an excellent job” and Linda Delmont said, “That is good,” when looking at a one of her high school student’s photographic print. Neither art teacher explained what she saw in the work that motivated the praise.

4. Vague recommendations.
Vague recommendations were comments focused on what the student needed to do in that moment but were not specific or came without elaboration. Kristy Silverman told her high school art students to, “make the positive space pop,” about black and white drawing project. Silverman responded a Drawing I students, “until is looks like mine, you are not done.” Kay Holloway gave the advice to one of her students drawing from geometric forms, “just draw what you see.” Holloway also told another drawing student to, “make the arrangement as you see it.” In all of the examples of the vague recommendations given to student, the student did not ask for further explanation at that point but did ask for more information later in class.

5. Validation or confirmation of learning in art.

Validation is similar to the content of the categories of praise and encouragement, but the art teacher mentioned something specifically tied to the learning defined this comment. Lynn Newton validated an area of the composition of a fourth grade girl’s painting with, “I like how it blends,” said as she pointed to the section. Newton told another fourth grader, “You are controlling the paint better than anybody I’ve seen.” Kay Holloway validated her entire class at the end of the period, “all of you did an nice job of putting in your three values.”

Susan Pappas validated a student’s comment about what he saw in a reproduction that reflected the concept of the discussion, “I like what you said” as she touched the child’s shoulder. Joan D’Arté validated her class of middle school students with, “great, everyone knew the answer” after choral response to a question about how to smooth coils in making a clay pot during a review at the beginning of class. Linda Delmont told one of her photography students, “You did a nice job of composing this,” while looking at the
print placed between them. “You are doing a good job,” praised Angela Fielding to seventh grader applying plaster strips to partner’s arm. After asking his permission first, Kay Holloway held up a student’s work to the class of high school drawing students, saying, “this is a nice example of shading.” Nancy Lee’s wrote a comment of, “very nice description” on a student’s art criticism paragraph.

Validation comments were typically made to individual students though some, like Holloway’s example, were made to one student yet in front of the entire class. The majority of the comments also came towards the end of the class period of studio work time, after the students had applied the knowledge and skill reflected in the appraisal of quality learning comments. The validation comments were connected to the learning context, e.g. the endorsement of a student’s shading made during studio time where the students were to be applying the shading techniques in their drawings.

6. Specific directives on what to do next.

This purpose of comment was formed from the units of data where directives were not during instruction but during studio work time as the art teacher made the rounds to the students or as the students came up the art teacher for assistance. Susan Pappas gave specific directives to individual second grade students working on the stitched burlap fiber project as she interacted with each student: “you can start your beads now,” and “you are ready to go across now.” Arthur Carvé gave directives to the students who brought up their ice-fishing decoy to him. He would take the fish, turn it over in his hands, and check the surface. Carvé would then provide one directive to his student such as, “sand this side,” “concentrate on that area,” “go to the 220,” or “you want this part a little bit thinner.”
When one of her high school students pointed to a color she wanted to mix as compared to the color of paint she had mixed thus far, Kristy Silverman instructed, “if you want this color,” pointing to verify the color, “then you need more yellow.” In a quick conversation with a student who is troubled by the look of his test strip he just developed in the darkroom, Linda Delmont asked as she examined the test strip “uh, what enlarger?” “Eight,” replied the student. “Stop it down more,” directed Delmont. Kay Holloway, as part of short conversations with drawing students working on representational, geometric, perspective drawings of cubes with cast shadows, directed “that box needs to be corrected,” and “this shadow can’t be here.”

For all the art teachers who gave directive comments, the comments were made to individual students after looking at the student’ work. In most cases, these directive comments were the extent of this particular interaction with the student. Many of these directives were made looking at the artwork without glancing at the student. This type of comment was frequently found in the units of data.

7. Directions couched as a request.

The parameters formed for this purpose of comment came from units of data that were similar to the directive comments but were veiled as a request. “I want you to stay away from details,” was Lynn Newton’s direction to a fourth grade trying to put smaller shapes than were more conducive to the paint medium. Linda Delmont directed one of her digital photography students, “I would like a little more color there.”

The comments of this purpose were primarily about working with the art medium or on how to improve the look of a composition. Nearly all of the directions that were couched as requests were given after a student had asked how their artwork looked.
8. Modeling with clarification to clear up misunderstandings.

In the following examples from the units of data, the art teachers first observed what the students were making or their tool use. Secondly, they analyzed their observations on the spot, and then used comments with modeling to clarify the misunderstandings of their students. Michelle Marks retaught how to use the hole-punch based upon seeing how close to the edge of the paper a second grader was making holes, “All the way in and punch, skip a space, all the way in and punch,” she said as she used a punch on her student’s work. Lynn Newton held her own hand to model to reteach an aspect of how to use a paint brush, “stabilize your hand,” to a fourth grader painting their bedroom project. This comment would have been an example of a directive comment if Newton had not modeled with her own hand on how to stabilize.

When Newton’s students worked to create their own the Adrinka cloth, one student was not using an Exacto© knife safely. “Whoa, remember to hold your paper here to protect your hand,” called out Newton as she then acted out using the knife safely. Joan D’Arté told her students working in clay, “remember you need to score and slip,” as she made gestures in the air of making lines in the clay. Susan Neal re-demonstrated to a jewelry student, “the file goes in this direction.”

These observations of the individual student’s misunderstanding lead the art teacher to reteach each of these techniques—safe knife use, score and slip, and filing—to the at the beginning of next class of students working in the same art medium. The vast majority of the modeling comments provided by the art teacher found in the units of data occurred when students were working in a three-dimensional art medium. Additionally, after demonstrating or miming the correct technique, all of the art teachers in the
examples also stayed and watched as the student used the technique again to verify the student understood.

9. Recommendation on how to proceed by giving a course of action based on what the art teacher wanted or would do.

The parameters for this comment purpose arose through the analysis of the units of data noting comments made by the art teachers using the phase “I would …” as part of their comments. “It is up to you; I would go one more,” was Joan D’Arté’s reply to student who asked if she should add another coil to his clay pot. “I would stick with three colors,” recommended Kristy Silverman to a Drawing I student.

Similar to directions couched as a request, the majority of comments made for this purpose of comment were as a reply to a student’s question. Most of the courses of action comments were made about working with the art medium followed by comments made on how to improve an artwork. Follow-up with the students concerning the topic of the comment was infrequent, as was the student asking another question about the same topic.

10. Advice towards an action that was needed.

For this purpose of comment, it appeared that the art teachers’ drew on their own experience with the art medium, project, or test to provide advise to the students on how to improve their success. As she made her rounds, Lynn Newton counseled a fourth grader “You need a bigger brush.” Joan D’Arté told one of her seventh graders working on his coil pot, “Always cup your hands. You give it resistance.” Kristy Silverman advised one of her drawing students about colored pencils, “now, you need to sharpen those.” Silverman also told her class of high school students working on the grid transfer
project, “the better results come from one square at a time.” Joan D’Arté advised a student with one side higher on his clay pot than the other, “what I suggest you do is make it even.” Kay Holloway advised one of her drawing students, “you need to get the shadow in; I can help you with that.”

Advice was given as a parting comment to both individual students and to whole classes. Patrick Cooper’s advised one of his digital photography students, “you need to figure out why certain things are working in the photo.” “Keep all the criteria in your head as you do it,” was Cooper’s closing comment to a painting student at the end of their extended conversation about the artwork. “Your landscape should be a narrative; keep your narrative going,” was another closing comment made by Cooper’s to another advanced painting student. As his students left Arthur Carvé’s class, he called out, “study tonight so you don’t fail the quiz.”

Advice was found frequently in the unit of data. Often, there was not follow-up to see if the student acted upon the advice during that class session. For Lynn Newton and Joan D’Arté, seeing the challenges and providing advise to an individual student informed their practice. In the classes of the same content that followed, they each repeated the advice given to one student in the previous class to the all of the students at the beginning of start of the subsequent classes. For example, after reviewing how to securely attach layers of clay coils to make a well sealed clay coil pot at the beginning of class, D’Arté added, “had some folks yesterday who didn’t do that and that will cause you problems.”

11. Guidance on how to proceed based on the degree or amount the student’s work or actions were progressing towards the targeted goal.
This purpose of comment is similar to advise comments in content. But the wording found in the units of data for this comment was less on what to do—such as the pencil sharpening advise of specific directive comments—and more on what was seen based on the students’ artwork. The wording of the comment included aspects of guidance. For example, Susan Pappas told one of her elementary students stitching yarn on burlap who thought she was finished, “You have a couple more lines.” “You have a few more seconds until the flux flows,” stated Susan Neal as she guided a jewelry student using a torch to solder.


This twelfth purpose of comment addresses the rare instances where feedback as defined by Wiggins (2012)—observational comments on what is seen in the student’s work towards meeting the expected learning goal or the intended artistic goal of the student artist—were found in the units of data. Where feedback was found within an art teacher’s units of data, it was also noted the art teacher used feedback infrequently.

Kay Holloway gave her high school students working graphite drawings of representational geometric forms in perspective feedback about their drawings. “It is out of proportion,” and “that part of the box would be in the air,” said Holloway to two different students as she pointed to the box in question. As Joan D’Arté walked around, watching each of her middle school students work on their coil pots, she gave feedback to individual students, “you have a tendency to start and end the coils at the same place” and “see, you are getting a stress fracture here.” She also pointed out what she observed in the student’s works. Patrick Cooper gave feedback to his students on how close or far the
photographs or paintings addressed student’s own goals from her or his written artistic statement.

To summarize this section on the purpose of comments made by art teachers, based on analysis of the units of data, there were a dozen different purposes exhibited for comments. The purpose of comments made ranged from general praise to specific feedback. Most of these examples of comments from the units of data were made by the art teacher on-the-spot with the analysis taking place during the observation of the student’s work. What the art teacher looked for in the student’s artwork or in the art making, the art teacher’s analysis of the data gathered through assessment, and what was then to said to further the student’s progress were reflective of the art teacher’s professional experience and knowledge with the art medium, the art project, and the age of the students. It was found in the units of data that a few of the art teachers gave only vague praise or directives to students who did not speak English or those students who receive special education services.

The most frequent purposes of comments found in the units of data were directives and advice. For a few of the secondary level art teachers participating in the study, praise was not found in their units of data. The specific type of comment of feedback was rarely found in the units of data. Other than for the purpose of praise or validation, most of the comments made were about an error or something missing from a student’s work or actions. All of the art teachers used more than one kind of comment with some of the art teachers having a wider range of comments than others. The need to provide a comment to a student also informed some of the art teachers’ practices where they then reminded all the students in the next class in order to ameliorate that error.
What was not found in the units of data from the research study, but did occur during the field-tests were derogatory comments of an artwork being described with a negative expletive or lamenting, “you never listen so no wonder your work is so bad.” It was not observed that female and male students received different types of comments nor was it observed that stronger student artists received more or fewer comments than those students challenged by the art medium, technique, or project.

There were six art teachers who used the term feedback in describing their assessment practice. Only two of these six art teachers who directly discussed feedback, Kay Holloway and Patrick Cooper, were observed using feedback as defined by Wiggins (2012) with their students. This finding potentially reveals a general misunderstanding of the term feedback by the art teachers participating in the study.

**Combinations of Comments.**

The units of data also included the art teachers using combinations of comments—a mix of types and purposes—in assessing student learning. Michelle Marks used praise and directives in, “this looks great! Now fold it this way and start to punch,” to a second grade boy who brought his work up to be checked. Susan Pappas also used directives and praise when she delivered her student’s stitched burlap work, “you are ready to start going across; it looks great.”

Kristy Silverman used directives and advice to her high school students using colored pencils, “start out light and gradually get it what you want. If you start out dark, you can’t go back.” Linda Delmont used what she had seen in an earlier work of a photography student for feedback combined with direction, “your image is sharper than that; stop it down more.”
There was also use of a combination of comments with questions. Susan Pappas used observation and a prompt to add more to the work, “wow, I can see the circle, oval, and trees. Anything else you could add? Pappas also combined praise with re-teaching and a question, “oh, Jack, I like that cat. Look at all the empty space [gestures hand over paper] what else could you add?”

**Summary of Findings for SC5: Use of Assessment Data: Comments.**

Providing comments to their students is one use art teachers made of assessment data. There were twelve different purposes for comments synthesized from the units of data. Comments were used to provide students information: general praise or approval for the student’s work or actions; encouragement or general reassurance; vague comments of praise; vague recommendations; validation or confirmation of learning in art; specific directives on what to do next; directions couched as a request; modeling with clarification to clear up misunderstandings; recommendation on how to proceed by giving a course of action based on what the art teacher wanted or would do; advice towards an action that was needed; guidance on how to proceed based on the degree or amount the student’s work or actions were progressing towards the targeted goal; and, in rare instances, feedback as defined by Wiggins (2012).

The majority of the art teacher’s comments were based upon their analysis of assessment data gathered on-the-spot through observation of the actions and outcomes of their students. All twelve of art teachers in the study used at least two different types of comments with their students and most of the non-praise based comments focused on student errors. It appeared that the art teacher’s professional judgment and experience in art media, tool use, application of techniques, the art assignment, and the age of the
student were utilized by the art teachers as they looked at what juncture to gather the
information then what comment to say to promote student success. Using combinations
of comments were also found in the units of data.

Through the term feedback was used in the art education constructs used in the
analytical framework, there was not an accompanying definition for the term feedback.
From general education is Wiggins’ (2012) definition of feedback—telling what is seen
in the work of the students that indicates where their progress towards reaching the
educational goal. Within the units of data from all twelve art teachers participating in the
study, feedback as defined by Wiggins (2012) was rarely found yet the term was used by
six of the art teachers. Within the units of data from the six art teachers who used the
term feedback in describing their assessment practice, two provided feedback revealing a
consistent understanding of what feedback is was not found.

**Student-Centered Facet SC6: Use of Assessment Data: Revisions.**

- **Assessments provide opportunities for students to revisit, revise and
  reevaluate products and processes** (Aspects of Eighth and Sixteenth

- **Learning is checked strategically to uncover challenges and reveal

- **Assessment addresses the students’ preconceptions, presumptions,
  misconceptions, and misunderstandings** (Aspect of Eleventh Principle,
  Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 5, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000).

This synthesized facet of student-centered assessment reflected practices that
occur during the formative phase of the learning and artwork that gave the students
information they can use for relearning and revising their work prior to a final evaluation. Revision focused assessment strategies check for misunderstandings and to provide information for students to learn through changes to their work in progress. Assessment information was based on uncovering misunderstandings that were keeping the student from successfully addressing the expected outcomes of the instructional unit. This is based upon the art teachers’ knowledge of where and when during the lesson and instructional unit to gather information to ascertain students’ challenges in grasping the task, knowledge, or skill.

All of the art teachers in the study were seen providing their students the opportunity to revise their artwork prior to any final evaluation. The comments made by all of the art teachers to their students were based on their direct observation of the current status of the artwork the student was working on in class at that moment. The content and processes used to provide information on how the artwork was not meeting the criteria or how to improve the artwork differed amongst the art teacher participating in the study.

Some of the art teachers—such as Susan Pappas, Lynn Newton, and Kristy Silverman—most frequently made general recommendations on what to add or remove after looking at the artwork. Others, such as Susan Neal and Patrick Cooper, were observed most often providing open-ended remarks allowing for student artistic choice on how to proceed with revisions after discussing the work with the student. Neal also referred the students back to the exemplars and the printed expectations of the unit. Neal elaborated on this process during our interview:
The jewelry exemplars are something they can physically see and touch. We look at the expectations and the pieces together. [Speaking now as if she was talking to her students] “What makes this an average piece? Why is this one better? How is it, this B level one, meeting the expectations? How is the A level above and beyond?” It gets them connecting the expectations in a tangible way so they know what to consider revising in their own work especially with attention to detail.

Cooper referenced the content of his students’ artist statements for possible revision to the artwork. He explained during our interview there might be revision in the artist statement, as well:

Eventually they will go back and re-read their artists’ statements. They’ll check on what their initial thoughts were, they’ll take a look at the narrative theme their work is gradually progressing into and their overall theme and they’ll made some conscious decisions then based on what they hear … you know, they might need to revise.

Several of the art teachers, such as Angela Fielding, Linda Delmont, and Kay Holloway, provided information to the students for revision by using both approaches of sometimes general and other times open-ended information. A few art teachers, such as Michelle Marks and Arthur Carvé, made very specific and discrete directives to their students on what and how to fix their work.

Lynn Newton wrote in her pre-site visit questionnaire that she wants her students to learn to revise their own work:
As far as everything I assess them on, I want them to get the most from it. The willingness to change what’s wrong and to see what’s wrong and I think that would benefit them in life. I ask each student what they think of their work. I try to make them see their own mistakes.

Kay Holloway shared during her interview how she helps those students who state they are finished with a work:

I give suggestions on ways they can polish; I like to use the term polish instead of finish. [Talks like she is speaking to a student] “Okay you may feel like you are finished working with that right now but we can polish this; do you see this?”

Linda Delmont talked about revision during our interview:

I want them to work to the very end to get the very best that they can, they always have a chance to go back. If it needs work I try to have them tell me why. Making it better every time means they are learning.

**Findings for SC6: Use of Assessment Data: Revisions.**

There were several approaches for gathering information through assessment guide comments to aid in a student’s revision of her or his artwork found in the units of data. Information shared with the students was based in the observing the student at work, reviewing artwork, reading written words, listening to student questions, and participating in discussions with the students. All of the art teachers gave their students an opportunity to revise prior to the final assessment, but often not in the most conducive means for determining what might be revised or for assessing student learning. Not all of the art teachers that had posted expectations, rubrics, or exemplars were observed using
these assessment tools such that the students themselves could refer to them to aid in their own self-assessment aspect of the revision process or that the art teacher could use as reference points.

Pointing out what is wrong in a work as a way to direct the students to make changes was seen in the units of data where the student was not part of the decision making process. This practice left open the potential that the subsequent revisions might only reflect the directives of the art teacher and not thoughtful consideration of the student artist. Additionally, the majority of the art teachers’ focus here were all on changes, weakness, and errors.

Aspects of the units of data included the art student in the process of determining what needs to be revised and why it needs to be revised based on both strengths and weaknesses of the artwork. Referencing an exemplar, the student’s artist statement, or noting a criteria list were ways seen in the units of data used by some the art teachers to redirect the student’s attention to revisit the learning expectations or outcomes. In the units of data presented elsewhere in this facet on student-centered assessment, art teachers used both exemplars and criteria lists, but they did not address using them as part of the revision process.

The art teacher’s professional judgment through observation and her or his own use of the posted criteria list helped in assessing what steps the student might take for revision. Some of the art teachers served as a resource for recommendations for improvement of the work rather than being the sole arbiter of the work. For some art teachers, the student’s voice and learning were central to the revision, not the look of the artwork. As the units of data indicate, revision opportunities for the student made use of
multiple assessment strategies with multiple occurrences to gather and share information about the strengths and challenges with the art student’s work product. Through these assessment strategies, the student could comprehend the rationale and make their own, thoughtful, informed choices for revision.

**Student-Centered Facet SC7: Student Involvement in Assessment.**

- **Students are involved in the assessment process** (Aspects of First, Eighth and Thirteenth Principles, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 4, NBPTS EMC/Art 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 5, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001; Aspects of Standard VIII, No. 3 and No. 4, NAEA, 2009a).

- **The assessment process can create ways gives students a voice**
  (Aspects of Feminist Principle No. 3 and No. 7, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of Art Standard IX, No. 4, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 6, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

- **The students are active participants in the assessment process by evaluating their own work through self-assessment** (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 2, Shapiro, 1992; Aspects of Eighth and Thirteenth Principles, Beattie, 1997a; Aspect of Standard IX, No. 4, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 5, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

- **Self-assessment assists students in monitoring their own progress**
• Self-assessment is part of long-term implication of student assuming responsibility for own goals and learning (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 3, NBPTS EMC/Art 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• Students gain skills through critically examining own work and of their peers, understanding their connection to artistic process and to other artistic and human experiences (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 4, NBPTS EMC/Art 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 6, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• Assessment supports cooperation and collaboration (Aspect of Fifteenth Principle, Beattie, 1997a).

• Peer-assessment aids students in gaining new perspective on own artwork (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 4, NBPTS EMC/Art 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 5, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• Students participate in creating assessment tools, process, and criteria (Aspects of Feminist Principles No. 5 and No. 7, Shapiro, 1992; Aspect of First Principle Beattie, 1997a).

• When students are a part of creating the assessment criteria, this experience and information aids in guiding them during the learning process (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 3, NBPTS EMC/Art 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 3, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

• Assessment is a dynamic, collaborative, and joint partnership for the student and visual art teacher (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 6,
The components of this student-centered facet advocate for the importance of including the student voice in the assessment process in several ways including self-assessment, peer-assessment, working with the art teacher in creating assessment strategies, and as a partner with the art teacher in assessment. Aspects of including the student in the assessment process found in the unit of data have been presented earlier in this chapter in facets SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction and SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment. As previously noted, some art teachers in the study gained insights into their students’ thoughts by reading their artist statements, seeing their ideas in their sketches, or through verbal exchanges used as assessment. The findings of student role in the revision process as part of assessment was delineated in facet SC6: Use of Assessment Data: Revisions.

The remainder of facet SC7: Student Involvement in Assessment, is the presentation of the units of data showing the art teachers’ discussion of student self-assessment, peer-assessment, critiques, and student evaluation of the instructional unit. Student self-assessment or peer-assessments were seldom found in the units of data.

Linda Delmont shared about her use of the student self-assessment during our interview:

You try to pull them along in little increments. I really think that at this point and every step along the way it becomes more incumbent upon them to use that self-assessment towards what they are doing … but until they start really
owning it, too, then, as a [Level] III and AP, they really have to own it. If they aren’t doing it, it matters.

Delmont also discussed providing her students with criteria list, which I saw students refer to during the observation day. Based on the stated criteria from the start of the unit, “usually I have them do a self-assessment then I do an assessment,” Delmont explained. Angela Fielding discussed using peer-assessment with her middle school students along with collaborative projects supporting peer-communication. As presented earlier, Fielding sees peer-assessment as a learning experience for both of the students involved.

Including the student in assessment is an aspirational goal for Lynn Newton. In her written answer on the pre-site visit questionnaire to the question about the main purpose of her assessment is “… for me to help me to know how far I can push each class/student. My goal is to have my students assess their own work.”

Group critiques, which can be run like guided peer-assessments, were discussed by a few of the art teachers in study. For example, Nancy Lee discussed using group critiques with her elementary art students:

We assess it as a group. We do a group critique, I do individual critiques and checklists and, you know, we look at the finished product itself in assessment: do you meet all qualities? The checklist lets them and me know … I think if you have a good start, a good understanding, you get a really good finished result. If you have this, it is going to flow right into it. They know where they are heading, what they are supposed to do.

Patrick Cooper discussed three different vantage points in the group critique:
When we have group critique, I keep it very varied. Some days I’ll do the talking. [Other times] it will be all them, and [other times] we just want to hear what [the artist] has to say without anything else. Some days [the student artist] isn’t allowed to talk at all as if they are a fly on the wall at a gallery opening and we are all talking about their work. So they get a little bit of everything and it becomes this continually revolving type of process.

Linda Delmont included student self-evaluation of the unit as part of her high school students’ final exam:

As part of the final exam I give, as part of their constructed responses, would be to talk about their most successful things and their most unsuccessful thing and make suggestions.

Also included in Delmont’s final exam was the request for the students’ feedback about the teaching and learning experience in her classroom:

I tell them it absolutely doesn’t matter what you say and that has been a real help and they would sometimes talk about logistical things. Like how the darkroom was run. Some projects that I thought were really good, the kids would say they were okay but [speaking as a student] “maybe I would have found it more rewarding if I could have done this or that.” Feedback from the kids has been helpful.

Within the units of data, Delmont was the only art teacher who directly addressed gathering students’ feedback to assess and inform her teaching practice.

As previously presented, Susan Neal and Patrick Cooper are guided by their advanced student’s own criteria for how to assess the artwork. Neal directly asks her
advanced students about what component of the work the students want feedback on. Observing a few of these interactions during the site visit, the students asked her to look at design mechanics of earrings, “what about the balance of these?” or construction “I am want to do these cold connections. What do you think?” In these few interactions I observed, there was not a vague request to on how does the piece look or if the piece was okay or good. Cooper used the artist statement as guidance on what to assess. He discussed this during our interview, talking as if he was speaking to a student about the content of the artist statement guiding his focus, “I’ll know exactly what I am assessing you on.”

Students as part of the process of the assessment process was found in the units of data at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Individual, paired, and group based student involvement in assessment was discussed by several of the art teachers participating in the study. A few of the art teachers asked for the students criteria for looking at the artwork or used the student’s artist’s statement as the criteria. Beyond those examples from the units of data, none of the art teachers in the study discussed or were observed including their students in the development of assessment tools or processes or using assessment instruments created by previous students.

**Findings for SC7: Student Involvement in Assessment.**

In this section, the units of data indicated the inclusion of students as an active member in the assessment process. In earlier facets, the use of student writing, artist statements, and checking sketches were used by the art teacher to gain an appreciation of the student’s thinking and the direction the art student wants to take her artwork. Artist statements, reflective writing, and sketches were also modes of assessment where the
student’s voice was sought out by several of the art teachers towards solidifying student learning. These reflections were authentic methods indicative work in the role of the artist. Self-assessment, peer-assessment, and critiques were also authentic assessments reflective of the role of the artist. Checking on the direction the student wants to take the piece of art was a respectful step several of the art teachers took in the process of providing guidance and advice geared towards the needs of the student.

As seen in the examples from the units of data presented in this and in previously presented facets, several of the art teachers created opportunities for their students to be a valuable part of the assessment process. The following examples from the units of data indicated the student involvement in assessment had several layers.

- The student self-assessed through reflective writing, reflective questioning (through an individual conversation with the art teacher or through questions from another student or the art teacher during a critique), or assessment tools such as a rubric or short essay.
- Peer-assessment through paired conversation, use of an assessment tool such as a checklist or rubric, or participation in a critique.
- Capturing the student’s thoughts, ideas, and voice through answering verbal or written questions, reflective writing, artist statements, sketches, maquettes, or plans were used as assessment tools as information for both the student and the art teacher. These were used as sources of information to assess a student’s understanding and for the art teacher to gain an understanding of what kind of advice, reteaching, or guidance was needed to reflect the direction the student wanted to take the artwork.
Gathering an art student’s opinion about the unit of study, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques through an end of unit evaluation.

There were approaches used to involve the student in the assessment processes. Peer-assessment was the least used assessment process; including the students in creating any assessment criteria was very infrequent as well. The student as a collaborator in creating assessment tools or processes was not found in the units of data.

Student involvement in the assessment process is a situation of shared power through shared assessment. Implementation is a consideration including how to teach students to be fair assessors of themselves and considerate assessors of others. As seen in the units of data, student-centered assessment in visual art education included tapping into, seeking out, sharing with, and learning from the art student’s voice through assessment strategies.

**Summary of Findings for Theme One: Student-Centered Assessment.**

Seven facets comprising the theme of student-centered assessment in visual art education were synthesized from the feminist principles of assessment and selected visual art education constructs for assessment of student learning structure the analytical framework.

- SC1: Focus on Student Learning.
- SC2: Equitable and Contextual Assessments.
- SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction.
- SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment.
- SC5: Use of Assessment Data: Comments.
• SC7: Student Involvement in Assessment.

This theme of student-centered assessment directly addressed the research question of this study of visual art teachers’ understandings and practices of assessing student learning in the visual arts. Discussing the art teachers’ awareness of their assessment practices was a reasoned start for looking at their understandings and practices of assessment.

Six types of art teachers’ awareness of their uses of assessment practices were found: limited, little realization of practice, focus on what was done rather than a list of strategies, effortless articulation, ambiguous, and equating assessment to grades. Tied to these levels of awareness was the presence or lack of training in assessment during pre-service programs to become an art teacher, professional development opportunities as an art teacher, and their use of their district’s scope and sequence.

Analyzing the units of data for what the art teachers assessed identified seven kinds of student action and learning being assessed: completion of a task; procedural aspect of making an art project; skill in the use of tools, art media, or techniques; the use of questions to assess skill in the use of tools, art media, or techniques; artistic thinking; growth over time; and content knowledge. To assess these kinds of student actions and learning, the art teachers used a variety of assessment tools throughout an instructional unit. The vast majority of assessment practices found in the units of data were formative assessments. Some of the art teachers used multiple measures to validate learning; others used the same item in multiple ways, such as the artist statement. All art teachers participating in the study provided information and opportunity for the students to revise their artwork.
A student-centered assessment process used by all of the art teachers participating in the study was observation of the student’s art project. Most of the art teachers’ assessment practices used several measures and means to gather information in order to make educational decisions in the moment when working with the student. The least frequently used assessment processes seen in the units of data across all seven of the facets were the critique, portfolio assessment, and peer-assessment. Two assessment strategies found in the units of data but not within the art education assessment constructs were sketchbooks and the maquette. The sketchbook is one of the best practices of assessment as gleaned from the literature of assessment in art education (See Appendix C). Most of the art teachers focused on the progress the student was making with application of skills, use of art media, or fulfilling the assignment, not only the quality look of the work.

A summary of the primary assessment processes used by art teacher was also presented in this theme. Some assessment components were present in the data but not used to the fullest extent, such as the use of exemplars. Most times, the focus was on what the student was doing incorrectly or what was missing from the project. There was a difference seen in the units of data between those art teachers who centered their assessment more on aiding the learning of the student and those art teachers who used assessment to give directions on how to improve the art product.

Along with the presentation on what tools the art teachers used to gather assessment data, there was a discussion of the use of data by the art teachers. Feedback appeared within the art education constructs of the analytical framework but it is not defined in that literature. The use of a regular education resource was applied in the
analysis of the data to reveal twelve different purposes for the comments made by the art teachers to their students as a result of assessment: general praise or approval for the student’s work or actions, encouragement or general reassurance, vague comments of praise, vague recommendations, validation or confirmation of learning in art, specific directives on what to do next, directions couched as a request, modeling with clarification to clear up misunderstandings, recommendation on how to proceed by giving a course of action based on what the art teacher wanted or would do, advice towards an action that was needed, guidance on how to proceed based on the degree or amount the student’s work or actions were progressing towards the targeted goal, and feedback as defined by Wiggins (2012). The art teachers all used assessment data to provide both comments and the opportunity for their students to revise their work prior to the final evaluation.

Most of the art teachers who worked with students who received special education services or were learning English appropriately adapted art assessment tools and used several means to check for the student’s understanding. The lack of parity was present in the units of data but infrequent.

Students were educational partners through professional relationships with several of the art teachers. Through verbal exchanges used for assessment, student writing, and questioning, the art teachers purposefully gathered the thoughts and feelings of their students for insight into the student’s artistic goals. This was seen across the seven facets of student-centered assessment. Partnerships were also forged through advanced students influencing the assessment criteria the art teacher would use. Self- and peer-assessments were also used by several of the art teachers. Shared power of students creating assessment tools was not found in the units of data.
This first synthesized theme of Student-Centered Assessment in visual art education focused on the analysis of the units of data art teacher’s assessment relationship with the individual student, small groups, or the entire class of students in the service of improving student learning in art education. Next to be discussed is the second theme, Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher.

**Second Theme: Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher**

This second synthesized theme addresses the art teachers’ professional practices associated with classroom assessment of student learning. For this theme, four facets were synthesized from the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992) and from the six art education assessment constructs of the analytical framework.

This theme takes a different tact with assessment than the first theme did. While both themes address assessment practices of art teachers, the first theme focused on student-centered assessment whereas this theme addresses assessment as a professional obligation of the art teacher. These professional practices address using assessment data for professional reflective practice, in standards-based assessment, in the pursuit of best practices of assessment, and to address power issues external yet impacting the art education classroom. The code APP is used in enumeration of the four facets in this theme Assessment as a Professional Practices of the Art Teacher in the facets of:

- **APP1**: Assessment Informs Reflective Practice
- **APP2**: Standards-Based Assessment.
- **APP3**: Attains Best Practices of Assessment
- **APP4**: Issues of Power in Classroom Assessment.
Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher APP1: Assessment Informs Reflective Practice.

- Self-reflection is central to the professional responsibility of an accomplished art teacher (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 5, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000).

- Monitoring and reflecting upon student progress informs teaching practice (Aspect of Standard IX, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, NBPTS EAYA/Art, 2001).

- Through the processes of using formative and summative assessments for student works, reflecting upon successes and challenges in student learning and teaching practice (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 4, NBPTS EMC/Art, 2000).

- Self-evaluating the effectiveness of teaching to promote student learning (Aspect of Standard VIII No. 4, NAEA, 2009a).

- Reflecting on any performance differences in assessment results between student population groups (Aspect of Standard VI, No. 4, NBPTS/EAYA Art, 2001).

- Reflecting on information gathered on the progress of students to evaluate success of instruction and to guide refining practice to improve student learning (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 4, NBPTS/ECMC Art, 2000; Aspect of Standard VI, No. 5, NBPTS/EAYA Art, 2001).
• **Looking for patterns in the student work and classroom actions as indicators of teaching on learning** (Aspect of Standard VIII No. 5, NAEA, 2009a).

Examples from the units of data for this first facet of the theme Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher originated in the content of what the art teachers shared during discussions during our interviews and in conversations throughout the day of the site visits to their classrooms. The reflective practices discussed here are examples of the art teachers’ own self-assessments of their teaching practice using a variety of assessment strategies to determine student progress. The art teachers were looking at and reflecting upon what was working and what needed improvement in their teaching and lesson content to further the learning progress of their art students. The reflective practices presented in this section are of three variants.

1. Determining through analysis of observational data the challenges the students were having during instructional time and making adjustments,

2. Reflecting at the end of an instructional segment on how to improve the learning outcomes, and

3. Keeping a journal to reflect upon lessons.

Examples from the units of data of these three variants of reflective practices follow.

First, many of the art teachers in the study noted they had made changes in their instruction or had modified the expected outcomes of the art product as a result of reflection. These reflections were often shared as we watched students work during studio time. Frequently these exchanges started with the art teacher commenting, “we used to do …” or “this has changed a bit …” followed by an explanation. For example,
Nancy Lee and Kay Holloway both talked about adding checklists to aid the students in keeping track. “For any very complex, multi-stepped procedure … I have used a checklist for the different stages,” explained Holloway. Both Holloway and Susan Neal discussed changing the order of instruction to make the progression of learning more successful. Both also mentioned the information for these changes came predominately through their observation of their students at work during the unit and how the final products exhibited the intended learning outcomes.

Susan Neal and Arthur Carvé both noted in our interviews a modification of the instructional unit outcomes for the production of a final art product. Neal explained how and why the first piece in Jewelry I has evolved, “I have changed the requirements of the mask several times by shrinking the size, adding more metals, and other techniques for a stronger start of learning the skills and techniques that lead to the next projects.” During our interview, Carvé noted he has modified the size of the ice fishing decoys. Based on his observations of the patterns of quality of his students’ work, the required size of ice-fishing decoys has been reduced. “I taught this before a few years ago and used to make the decoys really big and slowly have gotten them smaller and smaller,” he explained.

The second kind of reflection based in assessment is the reflection done at the end of an instructional segment such as at the unit, at the end of the school year, or throughout a teaching career for the purpose of refining required art products. Susan Neal’s reflection lead to changes to the Jewelry I mask came at the end of that unit when she saw the need for a revision in that first project for better learning and outcomes for her students throughout the unit. Michelle Marks shared that assessment aids her the end of the school year reflections:
The benefits for assessment for me is help me plan next year and helping me see what projects were way too difficult for this grade level, what projects were way too easy, what projects could we change in some way.

Career-long reflection to hone the instructional experiences of her students was shared by Kay Holloway, “for the most part, I have refined and reflected and I am at a good point in my career and things are pretty systematic and structured.” It was not clear from the units of data what kinds of assessment strategies, beyond observation of the student work, were used to aid the recollection and reflection for this second kind of reflection.

Lastly, one art teacher in the study shared she kept a journal to note her reflections. Lynn Newton imparted:

I have a journal that I reflect about my lessons because having five to six classes a day [snaps her fingers] going like that fast, I forget. I reflect that day but usually I know what went wrong enough to where I’d teach if differently for the next class or depending on the level of the students in the class. So I use assessment more for that.

*Findings for APP1: Assessment Informs Reflective Practice.*

Reflective practices informed by assessment were found in the units of data for all twelve of the art teachers participating in this study. Three variants of reflective practice were also found: adjusting a lesson after observing students’ challenges, making modifications based on reflection at the end of a lesson, unit, or over a period of time, and keeping a reflection journal. Most of the art teachers mentioned in passing about how they had changed a lesson, the progression of the unit instructional components,
curricular content, adding an assessment, or the students’ learning outcome. The examples were both longer in process and outcome than the on-the-spot analysis of observational data presented in the Student-Centered Assessment facet of SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction.

In appeared from the units of data that assessment information used for reflection was collected over time. The art teachers assessed and reflected upon what was working or not working in the order of a unit, instructional style, or curricular content. Additionally, some art teachers considered what assessment components to add to improve the student learning or what changes needed made to the student’s art product outcomes. Observation of the students working and their art products appeared in the units of data as the main assessment strategy used, over time, to collect information and to inform their reflective decisions. The majority of the art teachers did not note when this assessment data collection or reflection over time took place; only a few noted the occurrence of their reflection at end of the school day, at end of the school year, or through their career.

In comparing this assessment process informed by reflection to the on-the-spot assessment process presented in facet SC3, the outcomes found in the units of data were different. Most often in the units of data for the on-the-spot analysis, the analysis of the assessment data resulted in a change of the art teacher’s instruction or in comments made to their students. In this facet, the units of data indicated that the art teachers’ analysis of the assessment information—with added time for reflection—most often resulted in a change of the requirements of the students’ learning outcome.

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Through the analysis of the units of data, a cycle of assessment and reflection surfaced. The reflective assessment cycle for these art teachers appeared to have three parts: 1) gathering assessment information over time; 2) reflecting on the data; and 3) making educational change in their instruction, the curricular content, assessment strategies or tools, or aspects of the student learning outcomes. Once the particular educational change was made, this cycle began anew for more refinement through reflection upon further assessment information.

None of the twelve art teachers linked the three parts of this reflective assessment process cycle together. Nor did they make the connection of the accumulation of assessment information to see patterns in the work habits or work products. The absence of connection of assessment to reflection to changes in practice could be due to this process cycle being endemic to their art education teaching practices. Within the units of data, there appeared to be the intention of making changes to improve the student learning outcomes but not intentional collection of assessment information as fodder for reflective practices for making those changes. Only one art teacher practiced intentional collection of assessment information through her daily journal writing to feed reflective practices used for educational changes.

**Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher APP2:**

*Standards-Based Assessment.*

- **Assessment is based in the visual arts standards** (Aspect of Thirteenth Principle, Beattie, 1997a).
• **Art teachers measure progress of students towards achieving the content standards in visual art** (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 6, NBPTS/ECMC Art, 2000).

This second facet of the second theme—Assessment as Part of the Professional Practices of the Art Teacher—discusses the units of data indicating the art teachers’ uses of visual art standards, district curriculum in art based in standards, and assessment of the outcomes of the standards. Discussion in this section is based upon the analysis of the units of data from the conversations with the art teachers during the site visit, our interviews, and from pertinent artifacts. There was not a differentiation between content or performance standards within the units of data.

The first factor to be examined for this facet is the art teachers’ uses of a district curriculum in the visual arts that is tied to the state standards that are based on the national standards in art education. As explained Chapter One, the selection of art teachers for this study was limited, in part, to those teaching in states with state standards based on the national standards in art education. The twelve art teachers participating in this study are from three different states. Each of the three states’ standards in the visual arts and their scope and sequence or curriculum has been revised several times and includes suggested or model assessment strategies. Because standards-based assessment addresses the curriculum, scope and sequence, or pacing guide of the school district or state, the discussion of the units of data is divided by the three different school districts and states represented in this study.

The instruction and assessment of Susan Neal, who teaches in the Anderson School District, reflected several expectations and sets of standards. The instruction and
assessment for her jewelry students addressed both her state’s standards for visual arts and Career and Technical Education (CTE) with her district curricula providing guidance for pacing. The projects her ceramic students were working on addressed her district curriculum and state’s standards in visual art. Her unit plans, offered by Neal for review, listed the state’s numerical reference code and the standards to be addressed in the lessons. In addition to the state standards in art and CTE, her International Baccalaureate (IB) Art students needed to meet or exceed the IB Art expectations. “I sat with each standard and methodically wove the three together,” Neal explained.

Neal’s classroom assessments were incremental Measurements towards meeting the expected educational outcomes as established by the three sets of standards. Her practice included pre-assessment strategies to ascertain her students’ skills and knowledge in order to better instruct towards the educational goals of the standards. Several years ago, she used the sample assessments provided by the state as models but now she creates her own assessments. Neal also participates in the annual, state-level, voluntary examination of her art students in a drawing-based, performance assessment of a state standard in the visual arts.

Shifting to the Elliott School District, none of the six art teachers from this district participating in this study used a district curriculum guide for the visual arts to steer their instruction or assessment; most were not sure if an art curriculum even existed. The art teachers in the Elliott School District who were aware of the existence of an established curriculum in the visual arts, Susan Pappas and Joan D’Arté, were aware because of their many years in the district. Both speculated that the curriculum guide had not been revised for decades. When asked if that guide included assessment, D’Arté shared, “I don’t think
it had any assessment [pause to ponder], no, it wouldn’t have since we didn’t do that back then.”

The date of revision, any reflection to state standards, or the inclusion of any assessment strategies for the Elliott School District visual arts curriculum could not be verified. The six art teachers either did not have a copy of the art curriculum guide or they could not find the copy they had received years ago. In checking with the school district administrator who was in charge of the curriculum for all content areas for Elliott School District about the date of the most recent visual arts curriculum guide, he indicated he did not know, adding this about the visual arts curriculum document, “I don’t know if we even have one of those around the office.”

In absence of a district curriculum guide, one art teacher in this district turned to her state’s standards in the visual arts for guidance in instructional content and assessment. Lynn Newton used the state standards document for curricular and assessment guidance. Her assessments, both in what was discussed during the school day and during our interview, attempted to check for her students’ knowledge and skill of the grade level content standards in art.

The other five art teachers from the Elliott School District did not intentionally use standards-based assessments. Based on the analysis of their state’s art standards combined with the units of data on what the art teacher assessed, Susan Pappas’ assessment of her second grade students matched the state standards. Arthur Carvé’s strategy of assessment of the art product was his observation of the students’ ice-fishing decoys in meeting his standards of craftsmanship; this is not a state standards-based assessment as discussed in the art education constructs of the analytical framework.
The third state and school district visited for this research study has the five art teachers from the Martinson School District. All five of these art teachers mentioned using their district’s pacing guide and its suggested assessments. According to the district’s visual art education coordinator, the district curriculum guide had been aligned to the national standards in the visual art soon after the release of the standards and the district guide had been subsequently revised on the typical curriculum revision cycle of every five years. She added that the pacing guide with suggested assessments had been implemented at the start of the school year.

During our interview, Kay Holloway compared when she first started teaching in this district a decade ago to now. “We didn’t even have it very clearly communicated what our curriculum was. The binder I got was from like 1970, she said laughing, “Like, we have a curriculum? I mean, I was like clueless.” Holloway continued by discussing the current impact of the art pacing guide that was provided at the beginning of the school year:

Now you can kinda break it down into the objective things to look for and I can see with all the work that has been done with the pacing guide. There is a part with assessment and there are some suggested assessment strategies. Any teacher would benefit from learning to read the pacing guide and understand developing a unit of instruction and using the indicators as a way that you have benchmarks that you are looking for. And there can be a variety of ways, even creative ways that you check for that.

All five of the art teachers participating in the study from Martinson School District discussed their use of their district’s pacing guide for direction in the instruction
and assessment of their students. All five also mentioned during the instructional day what instruction was occurring at the grade levels that followed theirs, preceded theirs, or by their art education colleagues within their school. The pacing guide was reviewed as an artifact and it reflected the their state’s current standards in visual arts as well as the suggested assessments that the state recommends at the age span levels.

It was not found in the units of data that any of the six art teachers—the five from Martinson School District and Susan Neal from the Anderson School District—from the two states and school districts with up-to-date, standards-based curriculum guides in the visual art felt any difficulty in creating or implementing standards-based assessment. Nor was it found in the units of data that any of these six art teachers felt any pressure from an external source to implement the standards or to use the standards-based assessment. It appeared these methods were inculcated within their teaching and assessment practices. There was some strife noted by one art teacher in the study, Susan Neal, whose students are required to participate in her state’s annual standards-based assessment in the visual arts. The strife was due to the assessment being a drawing-based assessment when she was primarily teaching students in jewelry and ceramics; the state level assessment did not reflect the art medium the students were learning. Neal discussed needing to stop instruction and learning in these three-dimensional art media to teach her students the components of drawing that were applied in the state-level standards-based assessment task.

*Findings for APP2: Standards-Based Assessment.*

The state standards in the visual arts for the three states that the art teachers participating in this study teach were analyzed as artifacts as part of the process for
research study participant selection for the study. All three states have revised standards for art education that reflect the current national standards in the visual arts, provide a scope and sequence, and include suggested assessment strategies. Of the three school districts with art teachers participating in this study, two districts provided their art teachers with a current curriculum guide in visual arts education that reflected their state’s most up-to-date revision of standards in the visual arts. Additionally, one of these districts provided an art education pacing guide that includes suggested assessments. From the units of data, it was evidenced that all six of the art teachers from these two these school districts used standards-based assessments.

Reflecting the continuity aspects of a curriculum and developmental progression of standards, these six art teachers also mentioned about the art content their students could have had prior to their class. Also reflecting continuity, all six of these art teachers used pre-assessment strategies to check their students’ prior knowledge as well as a means to effectively address the standards. Additionally, it was found in the units of data that several of these art teachers specifically assessed the foundational skills and knowledge needed to attain the standard. They did not assess just the educational outcome stated in the standard, but also the aspects of skills and knowledge needed to achieve the goals set forth by the standard.

The third school district with art teachers participating in the study did not have a current curriculum guide in the visual arts despite there being revised state standards and state scope and sequence for art education available. Only one of the six art teachers from that school district attempted to use standards-based assessment and she used her state’s standards as a guide. Another art teacher’s assessment reflected her state standards but
this was not an intentional reflection on her part to conduct standards-based assessment. None of the art teachers were aware of what content was taught in art in grade levels prior to theirs and it was not found in the units of data that any of these art teachers used pre-assessment strategies.

Based on the analysis of the units of data, there appears to be a connection between the presence and implementation of an up-to-date, standards-based curriculum guide at the district level and the art teacher’s use of standards-based assessment including incremental assessments of foundations to the learning and outcomes of the standard.

Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher APP3: Attains Best Practices of Assessment.

• Reflects the latest and best practices in assessment (Aspect of Eighteenth Principle, Beattie, 1997a).

• Remains up-to-date with current practices and research (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 5, NBPTS/ECMC Art, 2000).

• Assumes responsibility for own professional growth (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 7, NBPTS/ECMC Art, 2000).

• Participates in professional development (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 7, NBPTS/ECMC Art, 2000).

• Seeks to improve, is willing to change, and is open to innovation (Aspect of Standard IX, No. 5, NBPTS/ECMC Art, 2000).

For this facet, the units of data concerning the art teachers’ attainment of knowledge about best practices in assessment are presented as analyzed using Beattie’s
principles of best practices and aspects of NBPTS standards. This attainment of best practices of assessment in art education facet is analogous to a facet in the first theme of Student-Centered Assessment facet SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction. Included in SC3 were examples from the units of data of the art teachers’ uses of assessment tools and strategies from the literature of best practices from the art education literature.

In her book *Assessment in Art Education*, Donna Kay Beattie’s (1997a) eighteenth principle of quality art education classroom assessment was to reflect the most recent and best practices of assessment. In the explanation of this principle, Beattie made five recommendations for the art teacher. Her first three recommendations concerned learning the best practices in assessment in art education:

1. Be responsive to the new classroom assessment techniques developed in all academic areas;
2. Glean and gain from large-scale assessments at the state, national, and international levels; and
3. To gain as much knowledge as possible about different assessment approaches (Beattie, 1997a).

The other two recommendations, listed below, in her eighteenth principle addressed using the information learned about assessment in art education.

4. Modify and adapt strategies to meet the needs of certain students.
5. Utilize a wide range of the best assessment strategies (Beattie, 1997a).

Responsiveness by the art teachers to new classroom assessment techniques developed across all academic content areas—Beattie’s (1997a) first recommendation—
was found in the units of data from several of the art teachers participating in the study. Angela Fielding applied strategies she learned through her advanced degree in reading to her assessment of learning of her middle level art students. She wrote in her pre-site visit questionnaire both that her “M.A. in Reading from [nearby prestigious university] helped with assessment” as did the training she has sought out in assessment in “explicit instruction.” She applied reading assessment strategies when checking on her students’ understanding and comprehension of the instructional content about the types of sculpture after they read about this in their art textbook. Susan Pappas required her students at the intermediate grade levels to write in complete sentences in their assessments; she gained this practice from her students’ classroom teachers.

Beattie’s (1997a) second recommendation—for art teachers to learn from large-scale testing assessments at the state, national, and international levels—was seen in the data of several art teachers. The units of data of Susan Neal, Nancy Lee, Angela Fielding, Kay Holloway, Patrick Cooper, and Linda Delmont included school- or district-wide assessment practices based upon student results of statewide testing. For example, the school-wide expectation to post the learning objectives for the lesson was observed in these art teachers’ classrooms; this visual text allows the student to self-assess towards those daily objectives. Lee and Delmont both discussed the inclusion of more reflective writing as a school-wide practice that they each used in their assessment practices.

Angela Fielding and Susan Neal both teach in schools in academic jeopardy under the sanctions of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or No Child Left Behind, due their schools’ students’ test results. For both Fielding and Neal there were examples of assessment practices influenced by large-scale testing within their units of
data. Both of their schools have implemented school-wide practices as means to address the students’ low test scores. Fielding pointed out both the types of prompts in her test questions and wording used in her teacher-student conversations are school requirements. She also addressed how she adapted the test format per the academic needs of her students. The teachers in Neal’s school are required to administer written quizzes to increase their predominately Hispanic student populations’ familiarity with writing in English.

Both of these art teachers complied with their schools’ expectations to administer written tests. But they also designed tests that gave them more information about their students’ learning of the art content of the current unit. Neither teacher relied on the written test results as the only measure of their students’ understanding; they did follow-up checks for understanding via non-written means. Fielding asked her students to show her examples of sculpture from a different section of the textbook. Neal asked her students to show her the information asked on the jewelry test, “I would check for their understanding of the word and then ask me to show me step-by-step the procedure; verbally show me and physically demonstrate it,” Neal explained.

Patrick Cooper carried his interest to learn from large-scale testing to a different level by conducting his own research. During our interview, Cooper discussed a research study he conducted with the previous art supervisor for the school district; they were “trying to figure out if there was any type of a link between the students’ test scores and what art classes they were taking.” Cooper explained his findings:

I did find that the students that stayed in one basic track throughout their four years. For instance, they went into Foundations they took a Studio I Painting
class, they stayed with Painting I, Painting II, Painting III, and AP. Those kids ended up in this study that I did with much higher test scores than the kid that, say, took one digital photography class, one 3-D class, one painting class, that hopped all over.

A counter-example of learning from large-scale assessments was the practice of weekly quizzes by Joan D’Arté and Arthur Carvé. As noted in her introduction, D’Arté’s school principal directed her to give quizzes. Neither she nor Carvé knew the rationale of that direction. These art teachers complied with this expectation, yet their tests were empty measures. Neither art teacher tied the content of the test to the content of the studio lesson—such as a Carvé’s test on Frida Kahlo when the students were making ice-fishing decoys—nor used the students’ results of the test to guide their instruction or inform the students.

An art teacher wishing to learn about the results of large-scale testing was Lynn Newton. As noted in her introduction in Chapter Four, Newton expressed her desire to attend the staff meetings where the students’ results to the statewide testing are discussed, but was not invited to the meeting.

Gaining information from national assessment of Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) levels of assessment were seen in the data of Kay Holloway and Susan Neal. For her AP Art History, Holloway shared:

I am zeroing in on the prompts that come directly from old released exams and I’m going to show them the rubrics and we are really going to zero in on how to attack an essay like that because up to now they have been a little more loose or rambling. They really need to tighten that up.
In Beattie’s (1997a) third recommendation for learning about best practices in assessment she advocated for the art teacher to learn as much as possible about different assessment strategies. This recommendation coincides with the aspects of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards art education standards in art education concerning professional development in assessment that includes the art educator taking responsibility for one’s own learning. Within the units of data there are six areas of information addressing the learning opportunities about assessment of the art teachers participating in this study.

• during their pre-service art certification program,
• during their master’s degree programs,
• in-service professional development,
• participation in curriculum writing tied to assessment,
• National Board Certification, and
• any assessment training they had sought out on their own.

Starting with pre-service training, when asked in the pre-site visit questionnaire to share about the assessment coursework from college, none of the twelve art teachers listed any training or coursework on assessment during their art education teacher certification programs. The most recently certified art teacher, Lynn Newton, wrote in her pre-site visit questionnaire, “I did not take a class that addressed assessment for visual art,” but she did say during our interview that her cooperating teacher during her student teaching was helpful about assessment techniques.

Next, all twelve of the art teachers in the study have a master’s degree with half of the art teachers in the study having a Master of Art Education. While the all art teachers
participating in the study shared they had no training or coursework in assessment during their art education certification programs, several of the art teachers noted a modicum coursework during their master’s degree programs did address assessment. The timing of these master’s degrees—if they were obtained recently or years ago—did not appear to factor in the amount of assessment coursework in their art education advanced degrees.

For those art teachers with Master of Art Education who recalled assessment instruction during their degree programs, Kristy Silverman shared that she had a statistics class during her Master of Art Education. Patrick Cooper, Linda Delmont, Kay Holloway, and Nancy Lee said there was a little to some discussion about assessment during their programs for a Master of Art Education. As for master’s degrees in areas other than art education, Susan Neal and Angela Fielding learned about assessment in their respective counseling and reading programs. Lynn Newton specified she did not have training in assessment for art education during her Master of Education degree but did have coursework about assessment in general.

For those art teachers who did not note assessment instruction during their master’s degree programs—Joan D’Arté’s master’s degree in school supervision and Michelle Marks’ master’s degree in teacher leadership—neither recalled any assessment coursework. Arthur Carvé said, “I don’t remember any courses on assessment” from his Master of Art Education program nor did Susan Pappas, “there were no classes!” she emphasized in her pre-site visit questionnaire response.

The third of the six areas of information concerning the art teachers’ opportunities to learn about assessment is in-service professional development. In-service training for the art teachers in assessment in art education at their school district level was limited and
varied by school district. Within the units of data for the five art teachers of the Martinson School District, most of the teachers mentioned the professional development organized by their district visual art education coordinator concerning the recently released pacing guide’s suggested assessments; they did not discuss any other opportunities. All six art teachers of the Elliott School District noted there was no professional development for them in any topic area within art education. Susan Neal, the only art teacher from her district participating in the study, noted no assessment in-service opportunities at the district level. Neal was the only art teacher in the study who noted the professional development provided from her state department of education in assessment in visual art. Her training is for the annual state-level, classroom-based assessments in art.

Participation in curriculum writing tied to assessment is the fourth area of information. It was found in the units of data for some of the art teachers participating in the study. Susan Neal contributed at the state-level state in writing curriculum for Career and Technical Education jewelry programs. Patrick Cooper participated in writing the recently released pacing guide with assessments for his school district. Nancy Lee was a member of the elementary level and Kay Holloway was a secondary level member of the visual arts curriculum writing team for their school district. In looking at these four art teachers’ assessment practices as presented earlier in this chapter, all four of these art teachers used a variety of the best practices in assessment. None of the six art teachers from the Elliott School District noted any participation in any curriculum or assessment writing at their district or state levels.
The fifth area of information concerning the art teachers’ learning opportunities about assessment is National Board Certification through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. For both certificate levels in art—Early and Middle Childhood (EMC/Art) and Early Adolescence to Young Adulthood (EAYA/Art)—there is a required portfolio submission on assessment. For both certificates, one of four entries of the portfolio submitted for consideration for National Board Certified status focuses on classroom assessment of student learning in art. Entry number one titled *A Portrait of Teaching Over Time* is the visual documentation of assessment tools used, and written reflection about the sequence of assessment of student progress to increase student learning (NBPTS, 2013a, 2013b).

Two of the art teachers participating in the study—Kay Holloway and Susan Neal—are National Board Certified Teachers in Early Adolescence to Young Adulthood/Art. Two other art teachers in the study, Nancy Lee and Patrick Cooper, are working on their certification. When asked in their interviews about the National Board Certification process impacting their assessment methods, all four mentioned how the certification process added focus to their assessment practice. “There was also added refinement in what I already do,” shared Holloway. “I am really looking at what I do,” said Cooper of preparing for the certification process. These same four art teachers participate in curriculum and assessment writing in the visual arts for their districts or state.

The sixth area of information concerning the art teachers’ learning opportunities about assessment found in the units of is what assessment training the art teachers had sought out on their own. This reflects Beattie’s (1997a) recommendation for the art
teacher to take responsibility for learning about assessment. One source of gathering units of data about this area was a question on the pre-site visit questionnaire: What kind of learning about assessment have you sought out? The responses varied, but the majority of the art teachers who answered this question included conversations with other art teachers. Michelle Marks wrote, “Dialog with other art teachers” and Susan Pappas, “Little to none, discussions with art teachers.” Other art teachers wrote “Not any.” Arthur Carvé and Kristy Silverman left the question blank.

Additional units of data on what learning the art teachers had sought out were shared during the interviews. The professional development several of the art teachers discussed seeking out about assessment included workshops and a textbook. Susan Neal discussed pursuing training in assessment through the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) training and International Baccalaureate (IB) examiner training:

I went towards training through IB and AP College Board looking at portfolio requirements in order for someway to assess student artwork. I have really benefited from these trainings but the most significant aspect was becoming an IB examiner, being able to look from the outside in.

During the interviews, Patrick Cooper, Susan Neal, and Susan Pappas all mentioned assessment workshops through their respective state art education associations. Lynn Newton referenced Donna Kay Beattie’s (1997a) *Assessment in Art Education* as a source of information and it was observed on her classroom desk.

This completes of discussion of the examples from the units of data that reflected Beattie’s (1997a) first three recommendations on learning the best practices in assessment in art education. Turning to her fourth and fifth recommendations from her
principle of best practices of assessment, she advocated two uses of the information once
the assessment material is learned.

Beattie’s (1997a) fourth recommendation was to modify and adapt strategies to
meet the needs of certain students. As presented earlier both in their introductions as well
as units of data in this chapter, Angela Fielding made adaptations in her assessments for
her students who receive special education services and as did Susan Neal for her Spanish
speaking students who are learning English. Also previously presented are the counter-
example of Arthur Carvé in the highlighting of the worksheet so the English Language
Learner students would know which text to copy over onto the test sheet.

The fifth recommendation from Beattie (1997a) was for the art teacher to utilize
an array of assessment strategies. Assessment strategies in art education have been
previously addressed elsewhere in this and other chapters. A collection of best practices
in classroom-based assessment found in the literature of art education was presented in
Chapter Two (see Appendix C). Examples of best practices of assessment found in the
units of data from the twelve art teachers participating in the study have been presented
previously within this chapter in Student-Centered Assessment facet (see Appendix G).


The components of analytical framework of this facet focus on the art teachers’
pursuits to attain and apply best practices of assessment of their students’ learning in art
education. Several opportunities or means for the art teachers to learn about assessment
and then to implement the best practices within their art classrooms with their students
were found in the units of data. How the art teachers were instructed and informed about
assessment, involvement outside of their classroom, and what was sought for improving their assessment practice was summarized.

Recollection about instruction or coursework in assessment during their undergraduate programs to become an art teacher was reported as nil. Only a few of the art teachers with a Master of Art Education recalled any discussion about in assessment specific to art education during their degree programs. Three of the art teachers who elaborated on learning about assessment during their master’s degree programs received degrees in education, reading, or counseling.

Actions taken to remain informed and current about assessment through professional development in assessment in art education varied. District-level in-service training in assessment for art education was limited or nonexistent in the units of data. Several art teachers shared they have learned about assessment in art education through professional development opportunities from their state department of education or through workshops at their state art education association conferences.

Several of the art teachers in the study have integrated into their art education practice what they have learned from district-wide and school-wide assessment practices or from colleagues from other content areas. Several of art teachers who implemented the school-wide or district-wide assessment practices stated these were part of their school’s administration attempt to increase students test scores in large-scale assessments. Almost all of the art teachers who have implemented school-wide practices authentically added them to their assessment practices.

Involvement in professional development learning experiences at the district, state, and national level was found in the units of data. Several of the art teachers
participated as art education curriculum or assessment writers at the district or state levels. There was also involvement in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate training. National Board Certification process was an experience that enhanced learning in assessment, as the units of data indicated, as means of focusing and refining the assessment process.

Based on the analysis of the units of data, the art teachers participating in the study all started at a relativity similar point of not recalling any training in assessment during their coursework to become an art teacher, and then diverged into two different sets of six teachers each. Once in the profession, the two sets of six teachers each start to form. One is a set of isolated teachers and the other is a set of opportunity and pursuit of learning.

The set of isolated art teachers are discussed first, addressing where the art teacher isolation was found in the units of data of the art teachers. All six of these art teachers in the isolation set are from the same school district. The majority of these art teachers’ experiences in learning about best practices in assessment reflect an unfortunate progression. Few recalled any training in assessment during their master’s degree programs. This was compounded by there being no professional development provided at the district-level. Few of these six teachers are personally pursuing learning about assessment. For some of the art teachers, there was not informed participation with school-wide assessment practices. Appropriate modification of assessments for students experiencing a disability or learning English was contrary to best practices. In analyzing these same art teachers’ practices of student-centered assessment previously presented in this chapter, the majority of units of data revealed that most of these six art teachers’
practices of assessment were found to be limited to only a few types of the best practices with their additional assessment practices being counter to a best practice. Additionally, several of the art teachers in this group also equated assessment to grading.

In contrast is the other set of six art teachers for whom there was a level of opportunity and pursuit in learning about assessment. They, too, had no recollection of coursework during their degree programs for art teacher certification. But from their master’s degree programs, they all recalled some to considerable discussions about assessment. Opportunities for learning about assessment were found in the units of data of these six art teachers through professional development at the school level, by learning from colleagues of other content areas, and by implementing school-wide practices in assessment within their art rooms. Adaptations of assessment tools for students with special needs or English Language Learners was respective and authentic.

For several of these art teachers making up this second set, there were opportunities at the district-level for learning more about assessment such as professional development on pacing guides and participating on curriculum or assessment writing teams. Some of the art teachers from this set had the opportunity at the state-level to learn more about assessment from their state department of education or from workshops on assessment during their state art association meetings. Others learned more about assessment through AP or IB training, or reflected upon and then documented their assessment practices for National Board Certification. Personal actions to seek learning to improve or enhance their understanding of assessment were found in the units of data of these art teachers.
All of the art teachers in this second set had evidence of applying the best practices of assessment as found in the art education literature. Additionally, those teachers who learned about general assessment strategies practiced more of the best practices in assessment than those art teachers who had no assessment training. Furthermore, art teachers who participated assessment professional development that was specific to assessment in art education—the workshops, writing teams or National Board—used an even wider variety of the best practices of assessment. They had attained best practices of assessment.

Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher Facet APP4:

Issues of Power in Classroom Assessment.


- **Is committed to question if what is measured is what is valued** (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 9, Shapiro, 1992).

- **Considers who is missing from the assessment conversation** (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 1, Shapiro, 1992).

- **Counters traditional hierarchical patterns of assessment by including students in the assessment process** (Aspects of Feminist Principle No. 3 and No. 5, Shapiro, 1992).

- **Seeks to reveal and challenge power issues of assessment** (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 3, Shapiro, 1992).

- **Is aware of hierarchical and external issues framing the classroom assessment** (Aspect of Feminist Principle No. 5, Shapiro, 1992).
The components of this facet all originate from the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992). Issues of power and classroom assessment did not appear within the art education constructs of assessment that comprise the analytical framework of this research study. In the text that accompanied each of the feminist principles, Shapiro (1992) included several components about power and assessment.

- Questions about how assessment takes place with what kinds of tools through which approaches, importance of context, and examines the influence of past practices and traditions.
- Includes doubting if past practices have been adequate because the probable lack of questioning to reveal power relationships and who is not part of the process.
- Challenges the traditional assessment hierarchal power relationships by giving the students a voice in the assessment process.
- Strives to avoid the external, dominant, hierarchical assessment force that determines what is questioned through which means that attempts to meet some abstract image of excellence that is not tied to students or curriculum (Shapiro, 1992).

During the processes to develop the data collection tools for this study, a number of the art teachers participating in the field-tests initiated questions and discussions about assessment in art education. Some of these topics were about the hindrances and constraints upon their assessment practices; these are discussed under this research sub-question presented in Section Two of this chapter.
Other issues that some of the art teachers participating in the field-tests raised questioned the assessment process. Some challenged why does art education even need to be assessed. Others challenged the role of technology mandated by the district administration that was forcing changes in their assessment practices. From many field-test conversations, with these art teachers questioning and challenging assessment, interview questions were developed to ascertain the presence and influence of power issues on the art teachers participating in the study.

This questioning of the traditional or external power issues, addressed in the feminist principles of assessment and evidenced during the field-tests, was not found within the units of data from the twelve art teachers participating in the study. All twelve of the art teachers in the study, to varying degrees, questioned their own assessment practices as each shared with me their attempts or desires to improve an assessment tool or strategy. But none of the art teachers discussed questioning the processes, influences or traditional practices in the assessment in art education. Additionally, questioning or challenging any the external forces of power influencing their assessment practices did not appear in the units of data.

As previously discussed in Student-Centered Assessment facet SC7—Student Involvement in Assessment—those art teachers who included students in the assessment process used student self- and peer-assessment as well as including the voices of the advanced student in determining assessment criteria for their own work. None of these art teachers discussed or demonstrated this inclusion of their students with the rationale of breaking the hierarchical power practices of assessment or addressing any issues of suppressive silencing by giving their students voice. Also, as noted in facet SC7, none of
the twelve art teachers participating in the study further empowered their students by having their students be integral in the process of creating assessment tools.

As it is seen in the presentation of data and findings in the next section addressing hindrances to assessment, administrative decisions were external forces impacting the assessment practices of the art teachers participating in this study. The art teachers who discussed external influences for assessment practices did not share any doubts, questions, or challenges of the processes.

**Findings for APP4: Issues of Power in Classroom Assessment**

The issues of the power that comprise this facet all came from the feminist principles of assessment; a discussion of the power issues of assessment was not found in the art educational assessment constructs of the analytical framework. Questions and challenges to the assessment process from the art teachers in the field-test guided and influenced the interview questions used in the study. Within the units of data of the twelve art teachers participating the study, the presence of an awareness of power issues of assessment, questioning the power issues within their own assessment practices, or challenging those from external forces were not found.

This stark difference in their awareness and questioning of issues of power around assessment between the art teachers participating in the field-test and the art teachers participating in the study was a surprise. Upon analysis and reflection, one reason for the difference could be power-based aspects the participant selection process. Many of the art teachers who participated in the field-test were self-selected while none of the art teachers in the study were. This different selection process reveals a power issue as school district administrators selected most of the art teachers in the study.
As part of this selection process, as noted in Chapter Three, the district gatekeepers told the art teachers participating in the study about my own role as a school district administrator and defined me as an assessment expert. Also as noted in Chapter Three, I attempted to address these power issues. While the art teachers in the study were open in discussing and sharing about a range of issues, as noted by the amount and content of data, they perhaps were not comfortable discussing issues of power of assessment with a school district administrator. But my role as a district administrator who is knowledgeable about assessment perhaps worked in my favor with the art teachers in the field-test. They possibly were so open in sharing their issues with power in assessment with me because they perhaps thought I was in the position to do something to ameliorate these issues for them.

Summary of Findings for Theme Two: Assessment as Part of Professional Practices of the Art Teacher.

There were four facets to this theme. The first facet dealt with the art teachers’ reflective practices as tied to assessment. All of the art teachers used, to some degree, a reflective assessment process cycle to improve instruction, curricular content, assessment strategies or, most often, the student learning outcome requirements. All of the art teachers used this reflective process for the improvement of student success and progress in learning. However, connecting the assessment to the reflection to these educational changes was not found in the units of data. Strategic data collection to be used for reflective assessment process cycle was found in the units of data for only one art teacher.

The second facet in this theme of assessment as a part of the professional practices of the art teacher was the art teachers’ uses of standards-based assessment.
Based upon the analysis of the units of data, there was a connection found in the use of standards-based assessment practices of the art teachers and their access to an up-to-date district-level curriculum guide in the visual arts. Additionally, those art teachers using a current curriculum or pacing guide tended to address not only the final outcome of the standard but also assessed the foundational skills and knowledge needed to meet or exceed the stated learning outcome of the standard.

The third facet focused on pursuit and attainment of best practices of assessment. The analysis of the units of data indicates that the art teachers’ opportunities to learn about the components of the best practices of assessment was influential in the art teachers’ use of those best practices in assessing their students’ learning in art education. None of the dozen art teachers participating in the study could recall any assessment information provided during their coursework to become an art teacher. Few of the twelve could remember discussions about assessment during their master’s degree programs. Despite that starting position, those art teachers who had access to professional development in assessment at the school and district levels or who had pursued it at the state or national levels were the art teachers who applied best practices in assessment with their students. In contrast, those art teachers with limited or inconsistent access to professional development tended not to seek out learning about assessment, tended to use few of the best assessment strategies, or tended to use assessment in counter productive ways for student learning. The units of data evidenced that the art teachers who received training in general education assessment strategies used more strategies from the best practices of assessment. Those art teachers whose professional development was specific
to assessment in art education tended to use the greatest variety of best practices in assessment.

The fourth and last facet in this theme of assessment as a part of the professional practices of the art teacher was the topic of external and traditional uses of power in classroom assessment. The units of data for all twelve of the art teachers indicated there was not an awareness of traditional or external power issues of assessment or the questioning of the power issues within their own assessment practices. However, this may have been a power-based aspect of the research participant selection process.

This concludes the presentation of findings from the first section of Chapter Five. Section Two of this chapter presents the analysis and findings from the three sub-questions of this study.

Section Two: Findings Based in the Analytical Coding of the Three Sub-Questions

This second section of Chapter Five contains the presentation of the analyzed units of data reflecting the three sub-questions of this study. The three sub-questions support the research question of this study—what are the art visual art teachers’ understandings and practices of assessing student learning in the visual arts? These sub-questions are:

- What constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning?
- What personal antecedents are impacting the current assessment practices of the visual art teachers in this study?
- What is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers?
There were questions specific to each of the three sub-questions in the pre-site visit questionnaire, during the site visit, and during the interview. The interviews also included follow-up questions based upon the direction the art teacher’s answers led. Analytical coding was applied to the units of data gathered from the pre-site visit questionnaires, conversations with the art teachers during the instructional day, and the artifacts that supported the data from the interviews with each of the twelve art teachers participating in the study. Findings for the three sub-questions and an emergent theme follow.

**Sub-Question One: What constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning?**

The topic of hindrances to assessment practices supports the research question by seeking insight on what might be keeping art teachers from doing the assessment of student learning that they acknowledged wanting to do.

Many of the art teachers who participated in the field-tests, that I organized to develop the interview and pre-site visit questionnaire questions, animatedly voiced constraints to their use of assessment without prompting. They had something to say about what was getting in their way to assess such as the number of students they teach each week or added assessments due to No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Teaching a large number of students, time constraints impacting assessment (Bensur, 2002; Dilmac, 2013; Sabol, 2004a), and more time spent on assessment due to NCLB (Sabol, 2010) are topics found in the art education literature.

But the twelve art teachers who participated the study differed from the art teachers who took part in the field-tests. Unlike many of the art teachers who took part in
the field-tests, the majority of the art teachers in the study did not initially note or state any hindrances to their assessment practices. Only two topics of constraint were brought up by only a few of the art teachers participating in the study. They raised storage space for keeping portfolios and—like a number of the art teachers participating in the field-test and as raised in the art education literature (Jefferson, 1963)—the number of students taught per week. The analysis of the units of data uncovered an additional of issue that appeared to be negatively impacting the assessment practices of more art teachers in the study beyond those few who shared constraints. This hindrance, the length of the class period, was detected by comparing the units of data of potential constraints with the units of data where the constraint did not occur.

The components of research Sub-Question One on hindrance of assessment practices are:

- 1st Component: Storage space to keep portfolios,
- 2nd Component: Number of students per class or per week,
- 3rd Component: Structures and sanctions of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and
- 4th Component: The length of class period.

Examples from the units of data of both the facilitation and the constraint to assessment for each component are presented.

**1st Component of Sub-Question One: Storage Space to Keep Portfolios.**

A lack of space for storing paper-based portfolios was one of the two hindrances to assessment brought up by some of the art teachers participating in the study. Portfolios for assessment are most often either traditional paper-based or digital. As noted in the
literature review of assessment in art education presented in Chapter 2, portfolio assessment can be used for a variety of purposes and often it is used to document student growth over time.

Elementary art teacher Lynn Newton and high school art teacher Kristy Silverman considered the lack of space their art rooms to store traditional portfolios a hindrance in their assessment practices. When Lynn Newton brought up the topic of portfolios during our interview, she gestured around her limited storage space saying, “I’d like to but don’t know how I’d do that.” Newton does want to use portfolio assessment once she makes her projected move to the high school into a classroom down the hall from Kristy Silverman.

Kristy Silverman said during the tour of her art room that a great deal of her classroom and storage space was occupied tools and materials from the retired art teacher whose art room she now has. Due to lack of space, she returns artwork, “… right away. I give it back [to the students] or put in the display case.” Because of this lack of storage, Silverman did not see where she would keep portfolios. Neither Silverman nor Newton mentioned digital portfolios as an option and nor do either have computers in their art rooms for student use.

The students of all art teachers participating in the study had some sort of storage for their artworks in progress. Some students used portfolios for storage but not all students kept portfolios for assessment purposes. The visual art teachers in the study who made use of portfolios as an assessment tool, such as Linda Delmont and Patrick Cooper, used both traditional and digital portfolios. Additionally, several of the high school art teachers—Susan Neal, Kay Holloway, and Patrick Cooper—taught students who
participated in programs that include a portfolio of artwork for assessment for meeting
the specific requirements of International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement.

Five art teachers discussed and showed examples of portfolios used to assess
student growth over time. High school art teacher Kay Holloway and elementary art
teacher Nancy Lee both shared the process of assessing for growth by students keeping
portfolios of their artwork. Both Holloway and Lee discussed pointing out or referencing
an earlier piece of artwork of a student to show them their growth in drawing.

Each of Susan Neal’s International Baccalaureate students kept both traditional
portfolios of two-dimensional artwork, tucked in their own section of slatted storage area
under a counter, and digital images of two-and three-dimension artwork on the computer
the students use in her classroom. Portfolio assessment of any format was not used with
her ceramic and jewelry students. Neal was the only teacher in the study who discussed
having had training in portfolio assessment.

Patrick Cooper’s painting and drawing students kept traditional portfolios for
assessment for throughout the semester in a large slated storage unit, as did his Advanced
Placement painting students. Cooper’s photography and digital imaging students keep
digital portfolios that are used for assessment on the class server that the student can
access through one of many computers in the art classroom. The use of these portfolios as
a discussion topic with between art teacher and student was not observed with Neal or
Cooper but individual students reviewing an array of work with a peer was observed in
both art teachers’ classrooms.

Linda Delmont’s photography students using the darkroom kept portfolios of their
contact sheets, negatives, and printed photos to review over the span of the instructional
unit. Most of the students were observed carrying these with them in their backpacks. Digital photography students’ images were kept in folders on one of the several computers the students use in the art room. The content of both kinds of portfolios were discussed during the day between Delmont and her students comparing photos.

**Findings for Storage Space To Keep Portfolios**

Through the analysis of these data, it appears that for this study the use of portfolio assessment is constrained or enabled by a combination of space, assessment practice, length of class period, student access to digital cameras and computers in the art classroom, and the students working in 2-dimensional art media.

**2nd Component of Sub-Question One: Number of Students Taught.**

The units of data were analyzed both for number of students in the art teachers’ art classes and the number of students taught per week as hindrances to assessment. This is the second of two topics of constraint brought up by art teachers in the study that negatively impacts their assessment practices. Two art teachers participating in the study discussed the impact of a large number of students on their assessment practice at the elementary level. Elementary art teacher Susan Pappas wrote on her pre-site visit questionnaire:

> When I hear the word assessment, I feel how am I going to do that with 400 students a week, and I get a lump in my stomach just because I don’t like doing an assessment if it has to be done in a formal checklist way.

During our interview, Joan D’Arté had negative memories recalling teaching 1,000 students a week when she taught art-on-a-cart at the elementary level:
It was just awful. I don’t want to do that again. The frustrating part at this level is many times I felt like a stone hopped across the water [adding emphasis with her hands hitting the table] I touch her, I touch here, I touch here. They’re out. And I really don’t know if I have really covered everything you’re supposed to cover and [now whispering] you talk like you are supposed to talk. [Speaking so softly it is barely audible] I don’t know if they have gotten it.

There were examples and counter-examples found within the units of data for the number of students hindering assessment practices. Patrick Cooper had an average class size of 18 students in his advanced art classes. This number of students did not appear to hinder his having extended conversations used as assessments with his students. Another high school art teacher, Kristy Silverman, had an average of eight students in her upper level classes. The units of data did not hold evidence of her having discussions for assessment with her students or other assessment strategies to reveal a depth of understanding of her students’ learning in art education. Both Joan D’Arté and Arthur Carvé had an average of eight students in their middle level classes and the data collected during the study did not show either using a range of assessment strategies to gather evidence of their students’ learning in art.

**Findings for Number of Students in Taught.**

The topic of the number of students in art class—either the number per class or per term—was discussed by only two of the twelve art teachers in the study. Art teachers with a lower class size did not mention valuing that small number of students for instructional or assessment benefit.
The analysis of the units of data of art teachers suggests that professional development experiences in assessment in art education and the use of assessment to verify and promote student learning had greater potential implications than the number of student taught. The examples from the units of data about professional development and assessment practices were presented in Section One in Student-Centered Assessment facets SC1 through SC7 and in Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher facet APP2 (Standards-Based Assessment) and APP3 (Attains Best Practices of Assessment).

Those art teachers with a large number of students, both per class period and per week, and who used practices of Student-Centered Assessment and aspects of Assessment as Part the Professional Practices of the Art Teachers also had participated in workshops in assessment and used assessment to check their student’s understanding and attainment of the art education content knowledge and skills. Those art teachers who had a large numbers of students, both per class period and per week, but did not use practices of Student-Centered Assessment and aspects of Assessment as Part the Professional Practices of the Art Teachers also had not participated in any workshops in assessment for art education and their assessment focus was on improving the look or completion of the art project.

The implications of the professional development and purposes of assessment were also found in the units of data of the art teachers with a small number of students per class period and per week. Those art teachers with smaller class sizes and who had participated in assessment professional development had an awareness of their assessment practices, used a wider range of best practices, applied standards-based
assessment, and saw assessment as a means to support and promote student learning in art. Those art teachers with small numbers of students in their classes and who did not have assessment professional development focused their assessment on the student art product and used a limited range of assessment practices that were not standards-based.

To summarize, the majority of the art teachers in the study did not raise the number of students—large or small—they taught during a class period or throughout the week as a factor hindering or helping their assessment practices. Through the analysis of the units of data, there were similar factors found both for the art teachers with small numbers of students and the art teachers with large numbers of students when the art teacher used best practices of assessment in art education. When the art teacher’s experience with assessment was accrued through professional development in assessment in art education, they focused their assessment on their art students’ attainment of content knowledge and skills. This appeared in the units of data of the art teachers with both large and small numbers of art students. Additionally, awareness of their assessment practices appeared in the units of data for those art teachers with small numbers of students who also utilized standards-based and best practices of assessment. The art teachers who did not practice standards-based and best practices of assessment and who were not aware of their assessment practice, regardless of whether their classes had large or small numbers of students, did not participate in professional development in assessment for art education and did not focus their assessment on the improvement of the art student’s learning. For this study, the lack of professional development in assessment in art education was more of hindrance to the art teacher’s assessment practice than the numbers of students taught.
3rd Component of Sub-Question One: No Child Left Behind.

As stated in Chapter Three, the origin of this component of my first sub-question came from art teachers involved in the field-testing phase of this study. School, district, and state reactions to student test results used in the reauthorization of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) impacted the assessment practice of some of those art teachers in the field-tests. There are many external implications forced on a school if student test results are low or remain low in some or all of the demographic groups of a school. Participation in testing per demographic group is also data collected as an NCLB requirement. So both district- and school-wide practices to meet Adequate Yearly Progress in NCLB testing are common. Nationally, students in grades three through high school are tested annually in reading, writing, and mathematics (and more content areas in some states), using state exams to address the Federal expectation of NCLB. Art teachers in the field-tests discussed implementation of computerized systems for attendance, required inclusion of math terms in their weekly art lessons, and the required inclusion of words found in the testing prompts in quizzes in art. Therefore, an interview question was posed about NCLB with all twelve of the art teachers participating in the study to see if any external influences are hindering the assessment practices within their art room. In this section, pertinent examples from the art teachers in the study are shared and the findings analyzed.

Susan Neal’s school has been hit with NCLB sanctions due to the students’ test results with implications on instructional content and class time. “We are supposed to do more reading and math in our lessons, but using those in our tests is not. I am not required to do that, yet,” explained Neal. All of the teachers in her school are required to
do written quizzes or tests that include short answer sentence responses. Also, Neal checked on the other kinds of questions formats used on the state exam to model in making her tests. As stated earlier in this section, the school schedule at her school changed after the study site visit with shorter class periods implemented due to the math teachers requesting daily contact with their students to help increase test scores. Neal shared that this change in schedule has nearly eliminated her conversational assessment strategy with her students. This hindrance to Neal’s assessment practice is discussed further in the next component of Sub-Question One under length of class period.

Lynn Newton felt NCLB had implications on the view of art education in her school. Newton is not included in the grade-level or school-level sessions on the students’ results on the statewide tests, in discussions about how to improve student learning, or in getting information about the tests. “Nobody includes us in that; they don’t realize what we do,” stated Newton during our interview. Continuing along the same vein of others in her school not understanding the learning that takes place for her art students, Fielding added during the instructional day, “What I do could make them smarter for the stupid tests they have to take.”

Linda Delmont’s interview answer started with, “What’s NCLB?” Then, once I explained what it is, she described how it has impacted her assessments:

We’re supposed to do all this reading and we’re supposed to do all this writing. Now I have them write. I have them write more. I have them read. Like when we were doing the pinhole cameras, they came back every day and did reflection and they were really fun for me to read. I’ll support [the school expectations] as much as I can but I still want my kids to do the art; that’s why
we are here. And I think if they learn to read a test strip to understand how an enlarger works, understand how a camera works, for goodness sake, it is going to help them with that test. It makes their reasoning sounder.

In Patrick Cooper’s answer to the question about NCLB, he elaborated on an informal study he conducted (discussed in facet APP3 in Section One of this chapter) where he compared test scores to the progression of art classes the students took. After explaining the results of his study, where students in a studio track did better on their tests those students who took a mixture of art courses, Cooper continued:

There is a big argument about that, I know, and I’ve never been one to think that we should linked standardized testing to success in art. We would probably be shooting ourselves in the foot in the long run because the minute the results don’t go the way we want them, they would probable cut all the art programs [knowing laugh]. I did see a line, though, and maybe it just was at our school but basically a kid that knew their focus kinda knew their track, they were pretty focused with their testing.

As noted in Angela Fielding’s introduction, the test results of her middle school’s students dropped lower with each grade level and nearly 40% of their eighth graders are not meeting the state expectations. Those progressively lower test results have implications for the students’ academic success and on the school if results do not improve. During our interview, Fielding described the school-wide initiative to help the school’s students do better on the state exams that are used in meeting the federal expectation of NCLB.
Fielding explained that all of the teachers are expected to create assessments that reflect the format of the statewide test and use the language of the prompts of the state tests. Angela explained that visual art is not required to do the extended, longer essay type question because of the short time students are in art and that the other content areas are required to use that question format with their students. “We want them to practice those formats like selected response, the short answer, the fill-in-the-blank, and brief constructed response,” Fielding listed without hesitation during our interview. She used these question formats in a quiz on sculpture such as, “Justify your answers by going back into the text to find a sentence that supports your answer.” Fielding shared during the school day that she then uses the information from the quiz, “… to see if [the students] understand, then I revise my teaching.”

A counter-example of awareness of external forces on assessment practices were found in the units of data of the art teachers participating in the study from Elliott Middle School. As presented in their introductions, Joan D’Arté and Arthur Carvé give tests weekly on artists as their solution to their school’s principal’s expectation for weekly grades in art. Arthur Carvé said he—unlike his school neighbor, Joan D’Arté—was not aware of this requirement. As presented earlier in this chapter, on Monday the students receive a study guide on an artist that is not part of or reflective of the content of the studio work and Friday they take a test that is a word for word match to the study guide. They are trying to “… get the sixth grade teacher to test, too, so it would easier for the seventh graders to know the routine,” said Carvé.
Findings for No Child Left Behind.

The impact of meeting the expectations of No Child Left Behind as constraint on assessment practices was a theme in comments made by the art teachers who were involved in the field-tests. Within the units of data of the art teachers participating in the study, expectations for assessment originating externally to the art education classroom were found, but none of the art teachers cited this as a hindrance to their assessment practices. Some of these expectations were integrated by the art teachers into their assessment practices, such as testing formats. Other implications—such as being left out of the discussions about student data or cutting instructional time resulting in a loss of extended conversations used as assessment between the art teacher and students—were not readily integrated.

For the expectations of testing and the formats of testing to be used, the units of data indicate that art teachers can be aware of the impact the external expectations place on their assessment practices and choose how to meet those expectations while still addressing the learning needs of their art students. Expectations for test formats were seen in several art teachers’ assessment practices as smoothly and authentically integrated for checking their students understanding to inform their teaching towards increasing their students’ learning. Along with addressing the external expectations on test format, several of the art teachers adapted the expected format. Their tests contained content that was contextual and reflected the vocabulary, content knowledge, or skill information needed to proceed to the next phase of the instructional unit in art. Rather than an artificial test tacked on, as seen in some units of data from the study, some art teachers
authentically assimilated the quizzes and tests required for addressing NCLB into their assessment practices and the student’s art class experience.

The expectations external to the art education classroom within the units of data, that the art teachers were unable to integrate into assessment practices were twofold: not able to attend school-wide staff meetings discussing student test results and diminished instructional time resulting in a loss of opportunity to continue to implement a best practice assessment strategy. These decisions that negatively impacted the art teachers’ assessment practices appeared to the art teachers to have been made hierarchically by their school principal or district administration. The units of data also showed that through the peer pressure Carvé and D’Arté placed on the sixth grade teacher to give artist tests like they do, they had potentially, and inadvertently, become part of the power hierarchy.

In summary, the impact of NCLB on the expectations levied on the art teachers to include specific testing formats or assessment verbal questioning did not appear to hinder the assessment practices of the art teachers involved. Those implications of NCLB which were found to impact the assessment practices of the art teachers involved were the lack of inclusion in student test data conversations and shorter class periods. There was also the possible implication of hierarchical decision influencing power issues amongst art colleagues.

*4th Component of Sub-Question One: Length of Class Period.*

The length of the class period as a hindrance to assessment practices was not discussed by any of the art teachers in study but was found through data analysis and triangulation. The added data from Susan Neal—which length of class period changed
after the site visit—was factored into the analysis. Longer class periods appeared to have positive implications for the art teachers who more fully practiced student-centered assessment and assessment as a professional practice. Six art teachers in the study had 60 minutes or more of class time with their art students. Based on the findings from the analysis of the units of data, these same six art teachers, listed below, used a variety of Student-Centered Assessment (facets SC1 through SC7), Standards-Based Assessment (APP2), and Attains Best Practices Of Assessment (APP3) to improve learning for their art students.

- Elementary-Nancy Lee: 60-minute classes once a week.
- Middle level-Angela Fielding: 86-minute classes every three days.
- High School-Linda Delmont: 85-minute classes alternating daily.
- High School-Kay Holloway: 86-minute classes alternating schedule.
- High School-Patrick Cooper: 80-minute class periods alternating daily.
- High School-Susan Neal: 90-minute classes two days a week, 45 minutes on Friday.

Although they had shorter class periods, two art teachers in the research study employed many of the student-centered assessment practices, aspects of standards-based assessment, and several of best practices of assessment in art education for student learning.

- Elementary-Susan Pappas: 40-minute classes once a week.
- Elementary-Lynn Newton: 45-minute classes once a week.
Length of class time could be a contributing factor in art teachers demonstrating fewer of the best practices of assessment in their practice. The following teachers have shorter class periods with an average of 43 minutes.

- Elementary-Michelle Marks: 40-minute classes once a week with 30 minutes for kindergarten once a week.
- Middle level-Arthur Carvé: 47-minute classes twice a week with 30-minute classes on Fridays.
- Middle level-Joan D’Arté: 47-minute classes twice a week with 30-minute classes on Fridays.
- High School-Kristy Silverman: 41-minute classes daily.

Student-centered assessment practices and best practices of assessment in art education learning in art education were not frequently found in the units of data of these four art teachers with shorter class periods. Standards-based assessment was not found at all in the units of data of these four art teachers. The shorter class period could be an influencing feature in these art teachers’ assessment practices.

Susan Neal, who previously had longer class periods but now does not, reflected upon and shared the differences in her assessment practice. During the site visit, Susan Neal had 90-minute classes twice a week with 45-minute classes on Fridays. The units of data from Neal documented her use of student-centered assessment in art, employing all of the best practices in art education (see Appendix G) as well as many of the facets of the assessment as a professional practice of the art teacher. During a post-site visit telephone conversation, Neal lamented that her class periods had been reduced to 50-minute classes everyday. This change was due to the math teachers in her high school
wanting to see their students daily because of trying to meet statewide testing proficiency levels in math for Federal NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress. “This has really changed how I teach, how I assess, and how much and how well the students are learning in my classes. I have to cut so much out. My conversations with [the students] are cut out,” said Neal sadly.

**Findings for Length of Class Periods.**

Based on the analysis the units of data for all of the art teachers participating in the study, it appears that the length of class time is potentially a contributing factor in the art teacher’s assessment practice at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The art teachers with the longer class periods were also the art teachers who used a wider variety of the best practices of assessment, focused on student learning, used conversations for assessment, gathered insight through written assessments, and used standards-based assessment. The art teachers with the longer class periods also had clearer understandings of their own assessment practices. Through the analysis of the units of data for the art teachers in the study at the elementary, middle level, and high school levels, the art teachers with the longer class periods generally utilized assessment practices to a fuller extent than those with shorter class periods.

An additional potential connection to the length of class period and the art teacher’s assessment practice is school district support. As discussed in facets SC3 and APP2, those art teachers who are supported by their school districts with up-to-date curriculum guides and professional development also used more of the best practices of assessment in art education. The four art teachers with the shortest class periods also come from the same school district without a visual art education curriculum guide and
no professional development. It could be argued that an average of 43-minute class periods is an additional example of a lack of district support for the art teachers, art education, and the assessment practices needed to foster and verify the students’ acquisitions of said art education.

Summary of Findings for Sub-Question One: What constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning?

The basis of this sub-question came from the impassioned responses from many of the art teachers participating in the field-tests. Impacts to classroom assessment also appeared in the literature of art education. This sub-question had four components: storage space for portfolios, number of students in class or taught over a week, implications of No Child Left Behind, and the length of class period.

Based on the analysis of the units of data of all of the art teachers participating in the study, factors that supported use of portfolio assessment were storage space for both physical and digital portfolios, length of class period, student access to computers and digital cameras in the art room, the use of conversations for assessment, and students working in 2-dimensional art media.

Those art teachers with smaller numbers of students in classes did not mention this being a positive factor in their assessment practice. Based on the analysis of the units of data, findings indicate for this study that the art teacher’s of participation in professional development in assessment more of a factor than class size or number of students taught.

Assessment practices required to be implemented in the art education classroom as a result of No Child Left Behind were found, but none of the art teachers in the study
discussed this as a hindrance. Assessment expectations such as testing formats were, for most part, implemented effectively and authentically for the art education classroom. Questioning the implementation of assessment practice decisions made outside of the art education classroom was not found in the units of data. Diminished art class time to accommodate daily class time requested by other instructional areas did have impact to the point of eliminating the assessment practice of assessment conversations was also found.

For this study, the length of the class period appeared to have an impact on the assessment practices of the art teachers. The art teachers with longer class periods used more aspects of student-centered assessments and assessment as a professional practice than those art teachers with shorter class periods.

It was also found through the analysis of the units of data that decisions made external to the art education classroom were potentially issues of hierarchical power that impacted the assessment practices of the art teachers participating in the study. All of the hindrances, constraints, and implications found in the units of data—test format and who hears test results, the length of a class period, student access to technology, the number of students in a class, the number of classes an art educator teaches, the structural layout of an art classroom, access to professional development—were impacted by decisions made somewhere along the administrative or governance chain. These decisions, which hindered assessment practices, were made externally to the art classroom. These decisions that impacted the assessment practice of the art teachers participating in this study exemplified components of the principles of feminist assessment in who is missing from the assessment conversation and in avoiding the dominant vertical hierarchy. Some
decisions made by school administrators had negative impacts on the assessment practices for some of the art teachers in the study and other decisions made by school administrators had positive impacts on the assessment practices for other art teachers in participating in the study.

Sub-Question Two: What personal antecedents are impacting the current assessment practices of the visual art teachers in this study?

As referenced in Chapter Three, studies within in the literature of assessment in art education (Orr, 2011; Smith-Shank, 1993) discussed the influence of art educators’ past experiences with assessment when they were students upon their current practices of assessment in art. This issue of past experiences with assessment influencing current practice was also discussed by several of the art teachers in the study. Towards the end of each of the conversational interview, questions were posed about their best and worse experiences with assessment, both as a student and as an art teacher. A few of the art teachers said they had no recollections. All of the art teachers in the study who did share memories did so at length, without hesitation, punctuated with animated actions, and voice modulation that was not often prevalent in other parts of our interviews.

Once their memory stories were shared, each was asked if they saw a connection to an assessment practice they are implementing now. These probing questions only went so far because I did not want to intrude past the trust boundaries of our research relationship. A few times during the field-test, some of these memories were rather intense for the art teachers and our conversational interviews moved from research into the realms of therapy. While ultimately informative and often cathartic for a few art
teachers in the field-test, this was not a process appropriate for a research relationship from one-day site visit.

Joan D’Arté quickly recalled her experiences from when she was an elementary art teacher with 1,000 students a week to instruct and assess. As previously noted, D’Arté said she was not sure if the students had learned, “I don’t know if they have gotten it.” Contextually, it was the number of children she was teaching that was the negative memory more than any aspect of assessment. She elaborated extensively when she recalled her negative experiences as a college student. D’Arté started her explanation with her limited art education prior to college: “I had one seventh grade art teacher for nine weeks was the only art I ever had during my entire school career.” She continued to explain how this impacted her college experience:

I had no art. I have to admit when I got to college, it was really, really hard for me. And it was really mind-boggling when I walked into my first art class because there were people who had almost pre-college experiences. Some of these kids had jewelry making, ceramics, and all this stuff. I was self-taught and I could whip up stuff but I have to really work hard to get the quality to the levels everybody else was because I had taught myself many times the wrong way to do things.

Again, her memory did not directly include assessment but imbedded was her self-assessment.

I noted to her the symmetry of seventh grade; the only art class D’Arté had before college was in seventh grade and she is now teaching seventh graders. “Oh, yeah,” she said, realizing the parallel, “I want to make sure they have what I didn’t have like
ceramics and I show them the steps.” This connection was with curricular content and instructional strategy, but not with her assessment practice of observation to check on how the students are applying the steps of making a coil pot correctly. D’Arté connected her recollection with bad memories about learning things incorrectly as a self-taught student to her current instructional approach of teach the steps correctly. But she did not appear to connect that to her assessment practice.

Susan Pappas currently uses a purple pen in marking her elementary students’ tests, unknowingly influenced by a bad experience with assessment as an adult learner. As discussed in her introduction, I asked if she was aware connection between her past anxiety of writing essays during her master’s degree program and subsequent angst over the amount of red markings “all over my papers” by her professor on her essays with her current choice of pen color used grading her own students’ work. “I hadn’t thought about that,” she replied with surprise and agreement. She was also surprised at the connection I offered that her negative experiences with assessment impacted her curricular and assessment practices with writing. Pappas requires complete sentences of her older elementary students and uses a writing rubric to aid in developing her students’ writing. Pappas agreed there was a connection between her own experiences in assessment with her looking for assessment options that included writing when she adopted assessment practices from her students’ classroom teachers.

Kay Holloway’s assessment practices of feedback, explaining the evaluation process to her students, and using her students’ reflective writing for insight, were informed from her negative experiences as a high school art student:
I’ll tell you, when I was in high school, my high school art teachers came up with some rubric … I can remember [the rubric] had three components and it might have been technique, expressive, and one other thing. [pause] Effort. And then they’d average the three together to give you your final grade. And I always had problems with that because I felt sometimes what they might have given me for the effort [pause] … It didn’t really matter, my own sense of what I had done or what I thought I was really achieving or where I really was challenged and I would end up with these A- or B+ or I would get a C on the one little component and I would freak out [starts to laugh] because I was an honors student. I was an A+ all the time and I would get a C for like this technique thing and I always felt a little unnerved by that. I think they only did that one year … I have no idea where they came up with the grades, for, you know, you’d turn over the paper [doing so with paper on the table to illustrate her point] and there would be a grade there. So I don’t know if I got very much feedback on what I was doing well or not doing well. And even when they tried to be more systematic I still, from my point of view, I wasn’t sure where they were getting that [grade] from.

When I asked if she saw that experience having informed how she assesses now as an art teacher, Holloway responded:

I never really reflected on it until you asked the question but I really had a strong memory of it and I certainly know that some of my hesitancy of putting a letter grade on the artwork is from that same sense of how do you make an assessment about so many internal intrinsic things going on that you can’t see
from the outside. I think overall education had tried to provide those places where the students themselves, the students look at the checklist, you have more of a dialogue with the student. Certainly is when you teach them over time, you know them and can get inside their heads a little bit.

The units of data show that Holloway also used student writing as a means to see those internal processes of her high school art students:

Often I do like them to write about what they are doing because that gives me, you know, I can’t be inside their brain knowing if this is the thing that excites them tremendously and this is something they want to pursue or are they are just going through the motions so I have them write about their own work as a piece. That’s insightful to me. I can’t get from just scanning the room or seeing the work they put on paper or the artwork they produce.

Holloway sent me a post-site visit communication explaining the impact of her realization of the connection of her past experiences in assessment to her current practices. She explained that she continued to think about connections from her past experiences to other aspects of her art teaching practice.

Patrick Cooper was aware of the impact of a negative experience he witnessed in college upon his current assessment practices with his high school art students:

At the college level once there was a guest speaker who came in, [famous contemporary painter], and did a group critique and … he just really ripped a couple of people to just pieces with his critique and some of was valid, some of it was, to me, in my opinion, came across as very arrogant and very pompous, very “I know better than you” type of thing and that to was the
worse experience I had ever seen and I vowed never [said with emphasis] to do that to one of my kids, to put them in a situation where they are worried about asking me how they are doing on their work because out of fear of me just tearing them apart. I mean, there are ways you can do things the right way and I think there are ways you can do thing that would break somebody’s spirit, I don’t know, where that line is, to me, that has been the worse scenario for me.

Within the units of data from my field notes from the observations of the Cooper and his students, I noted it appeared that he had fostered a supportive professional assessment relationship with his students. The students did not show any trepidation in asking him about their artwork in both the photography and painting classes.

Linda Delmont’s memories of the worse and best assessment experiences as a student were tied to photography:

I think a lot of my undergraduate art teachers [pause] I don’t think I am the best artist. I think that is why I like photography so much because I wasn’t the best drawer or painter and … I never really felt like they used assessment to help, they really used assessment to push you out of there. Now, when I went to the photography institute I got a lot of support and I did get on-going assessment that made me a better photographer. And they were wonderful, just wonderful but that undergraduate art, it was painful sometimes but I stuck with it.

Through our discussion her memories, Delmont made the connection from both her negative and positive experiences with assessment as a student to her assessment
practices as an art teacher of photography. In my field notes made during my observations of Delmont and her photography students, I recorded that her use of assessment appeared to be helpful to their growth and provided on going assessments to help her students become better photographers.

**Findings for Sub-Question Two: What Personal Antecedents Are Impacting the Current Assessment Practices of the Visual Art Teachers in this Study?**

Not all art teachers participating in the study shared personal antecedents of assessment. The majority of the recollections of those art teachers who did share assessment memories were negative personal experiences with assessment from when they were students at the high school, undergraduate, or graduate school. Many of the art teachers who shared these personal antecedents about assessment were surprised by the connection to their current practice of assessment. In the analysis of the units of data, the memories were most often tied to anxiety over their ability to meet quality requirements of artwork. Not understanding the requirement, not knowing a skill, or not employing a skill correctly through what manner and means the teacher had provided information, and the content of that information were themes in the assessment memories.

Also found in the units of data for those art teachers who shared personal antecedents about assessment was a connection from the emotions these memories evoked to their current assessment practices aimed at assuaging anxiety or mitigating those negative feelings arising in their own students. For example, posted and discussed requirements, often with exemplars and rubrics, were found in units of data for most of these art teachers to aid their students in understanding the requirement. Observation of their students working during studio time with comments to help their students know and
employ the art techniques and tools was found in the units of data for all of these art teachers who shared assessment memories. All of these art teachers also interacted with their students in a respectful manner that most often included explaining the reasons or rationale for their comments. Those art teachers who demonstrated a technique did not do so on their student’s work but modeled in the air, on a separate piece of paper, computer file, or pieces of clay.

For some of the art teachers participating in the study, these questions of assessment experiences opened a window of understanding upon their adopted assessment practices. As with the existing literature in assessment in art education, a connection was found between past experiences with assessment as an art education student influencing the current assessment practices of the art teacher.

**Sub-Question Three: What is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers?**

The discussion of Sub-Question Three has four segments. First, the origins of this sub-question are presented. This is followed by a recapitulation of the content of literature of assessment in art education assessment and feminist assessment literature addressing including students in the assessment process and issues of power in assessment. Third is an explanation of how Sub-Question Three differs from previously examined units of data presented in Section One of this chapter involving students in assessment. Fourth is an analysis of the units of data in light of the student role of shared power. This fourth segment is followed by a summary of the findings.

First, the genesis of this sub-question came from an aspect of my own assessment practices as an art teacher when I empowered my elementary, middle, and high school
level art students throughout the assessment process. Along with self- and peer-assessment, this empowerment included my formalized requests for my art students to provide feedback on my instruction and lessons throughout the unit. After instruction and guided practice on components of assessment, my art students were my active and authentic partners in negotiating criteria and in developing rubrics, test questions, and other assessment tools of assessment for learning (Lutz, 1999, 2002, 2003). Sub-Question Three also came from my added interest the inherent issues of power in assessment practices, the implications of power differentials, and processes employed to address power issues in classroom assessment.

The second segment is a summary of the content of the literature on assessment from art education and from the principles of feminist assessment addressing the role of the student in assessment and power issues in classroom assessment. Including the student in the assessment process as found in the feminist assessment principles and the selected art education constructs were part in the analytical framework in Student-Centered facet SC7: Student Involvement in Assessment. Examples from the units of data in SC7 were previously presented in Section One of this chapter.

Some of art education assessment constructs aligned to the analytical framework (Beattie, 1997a; NAEA, 2009a; NBPTS, 2000, 2001) and from the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992) addressed including the student in the assessment process. From the standpoint of role of the student in shared power in assessment, the literature of art education in assessment did not directly address power in assessment while the feminist principles of assessment did. Students do have a leadership role in the assessment process—both in the literature of assessment in art education and in the
feminist assessment principles—in creating assessment tools and criteria, in the assessment conversation, and in assessment as a collaborative process between the student and the art teacher.

The third segment is an explanation of how Sub-Question Three differs from previously examined units of data presented in Section One of this chapter. Examples from the units of data where art teachers included their students in assessment were presented in several facets in Section One. These facets included:

• SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction.
• SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment.
• SC7: Student Involvement in Assessment.
• APP4: Issues of Power in Classroom Assessment.

The art teacher including or involving the student in assessment differs from the art teacher sharing power with the student as a partner in the assessment process. To address shared power topic of Sub-Question Three, units of data around this topic for all of the art teachers participating in the study were reanalyzed including those initially presented in facets in Section One of this chapter.

The fourth segment in the discussion of the reanalysis of the units of data reflecting of the student role of shared power. The number of examples in the units of data where the student was included in shared power in assessment was negligible. This limited number of examples and the reexamination of these data lead to the consideration that involving students in the assessment process could be a start of a range of inclusion that could lead to a greater student role in shared power in the practices of the art teacher. An examination of the units of data for examples of how the art teacher’s practice
supported, sought out, incorporated, and fostered an empowered role for the student in assessment revealed a progression of examples. There are four interwoven strands that determined the progression:

- Level of participation of the student needed in the assessment.
- Release of control of the assessment parameters by the art teacher.
- Influence of the student voice upon their own assessment.
- Influence of the student voice upon the assessment of others.

Within the units of data from all twelve art teachers participating in the study, examples and counter-examples illustrated a fourteen-part progression in an ever-greater role of the student toward shared power in the assessment practices of the art teachers through the inclusion of the student in assessment.

2. Checklist Designed to Help Students Self-Assess.
3. Questionnaires Designed to Help Students Self-Assess.
5. Rubrics Used In Self-Assessment.
7. Questions and Assessment Conversations Incorporate Student’s Ideas.
8. Reflective Writing Incorporates Student’s Ideas in the Assessment.
9. Sketches Incorporate Student’s Ideas in the Assessment.
10. Student as Part of Own Summative Assessment.
11. Student Feedback for the Art Teacher.
12. Student as Member of a Group Critique.
13. Students as Partners in Peer-Assessment.


The fourteen parts of the progression will be discussed in the section that follows.

1. Open-Ended Studio Projects

In the units of data for all of the art teachers in the study, the students’ studio art projects were used by the art teacher as a source for formative and summative assessment. Most of these studio projects appeared not to be designed for student conformity to the intended learning outcomes, but rather were open-ended and designed for each student’s personalized response address the learning expectations.

Many of the art teachers participating in the study used the assigned studio art projects as means of assessment. These were, to varying degrees of opportunity, personalized demonstrations of the students’ grasp of the content knowledge, skill development, and use of media techniques of the instructional unit. As a potential example of a nascent step towards shared power, open-ended assessments value each individual student’s voice over rigid conformity. An example of the open-ended studio outcome was the Jacob Lawrence inspired bedroom painting project taught and assessed by Lynn Newton. The inclusion of the students was the personalized interpretation of Lawrence’s style through the application of the painting techniques to portray their own bedroom. A counter-example, where the studio project was not open-ended and included little personalization by the student, was the stitched, paper, printmaking paper project of Michelle Marks. With a lack of an opportunity for individualized and personalized expression with no choice in the colors, size, or images used, the stitched art product appeared not to be an effective means of assessing student learning. The units of data
indicated that when the studio projects all looked the same, it is not known if the individual student has parroted others or has demonstrated learning. An open-ended art project that includes the student’s presence can supply evidence of learning to the assessment process.

2. Checklist Designed to Help Students Self-Assess

Creating and providing tools for art students’ self-assessment of their progress was found in the units of data of several art teachers. For example, Nancy Lee and Susan Neal both discussed their reflection upon how to improve their students’ learning within a complicated instructional unit. Each teacher developed checklists to help their students self-assess their work. Lee discussed creating a checklist for the progression of steps in a printmaking project and Neal shared the checklist for a small, metal mask that is first project in Jewelry I. The students of Lee and Neal could use these checklists to track their progress through the steps of the project. The responsibility for the progression of the project was in the hands of the students. Students coming up and asking what to do next was not observed in Lee’s or Neal’s classrooms. A counter-example was the absence of a list of steps in the units of data of Arthur Carvé. His students stopped working to ask him what to do next at each phase of the project rather than being able to determine for themselves from a checklist of the steps. It appears that use of a checklist includes the student in the assessment process through fostering their self-assessment of completing the project steps.

3. Questionnaires Designed to Help Students Self-Assess

Linda Delmont and Angela Fielding discussed student writing assessment tools with short constructed responses they designed for their students’ self-assessment of
projects to aid in the revision of works in progress. Delmont also used a specific form for student self-assessment as part of the portfolio assessment with her photography students. These could be considered examples of sharing assessment power with students because the art teachers showed value for the student’s input to the assessment process by creating tools to seek out and support the student’s self-assessment—the art teacher’s assessment was not the only assessment valued in the process.

4. Posted or Printed Learning Expectations for Used Self-Assessment

Several art teachers—including Susan Pappas, Nancy Lee, Angela Fielding, Patrick Cooper, and Susan Neal—referred to the learning expectations of the project through discussion, presentation, posted lists, or handouts. Along with being a means for standards-based assessment and clarifying the intended outcomes at the start of the unit, the students can also use these oral and printed presentations of the expectations to check or validate their own progress. Counter-examples were found in the units of data of Michelle Marks, Arthur Carvé, Joan D’Arté and Kristy Silverman. It appeared that their students were not provided posted or printed expectations as a means for their self-assessment. Their students asked their art teacher if they were right, if they ready for the next step, or if they were finished. Providing posted or printed expectations could be considered in the range of attaining shared power in assessment because—in absence of these—the art teacher was the sole arbiter of what is correct or complete.

5. Rubrics Used in Self-Assessment

Within the units of data, several art teachers used the rubric as summative assessment as well as a formative assessment for comments or feedback for their students. The rubric was also used for students’ self-assessment during the production of
their artworks. This practice was found in the units of data of several art teachers who were observed using or referencing a rubric as they made their rounds to each student during studio work time including Nancy Lee, Angela Fielding, Linda Delmont, Patrick Cooper, and Susan Neal. These art teachers also all discussed using rubrics written specifically for projects that described the segments of progression toward meeting the learning outcomes. Within the units of data, all five of these art teachers referenced a rubric for student use. Analyzed as artifacts, their rubrics were written in a way that provided descriptors that could be used to guide the project development from the start of the unit, during the progression of the instructional unit, and to verify progress.

A counter-example of the use of rubric was found in the units of data of Kristy Silverman. When she used a rubric, Silverman did not modify the content of a generic rubric to reflect the art project and used the rubric only for determining grades. A non-specific rubric provided only at the end of a unit would not be inclusive of the student for self-assessment for their artwork during that unit. Providing students a rubric specifically designed for the project at the beginning of a unit and then modeling the use of that rubric for guidance provides a self-assessment tool for the student and a means of choice for the level of expectation the student aims to attain.

6. Exemplars for the Students to Use in Self-Assessment

Another tool that was provided at the beginning of the unit for the students to use as a guide for self-assessment was the exemplar. There were examples in the units of data of art teachers using exemplars as a means for students to see how others, including other students, have approached the learning outcomes. For example, Linda Delmont specifically sent her students to look at the display of photography projects of her
students from last term when they were starting that same project. Angela Fielding’s art room was filled with student examples of the plaster hand project holding an item of personal significance. Susan Neal used a range of incomplete to successful jewelry exemplars created by students to use for visual cues in discussing outcomes with students that aided those students in self-assessment.

Counter-examples of the use of exemplars were also found in the units of data. For a few of the art teachers in the study, there were no exemplars present. For some of the art teachers, there was only one exemplar available in the classroom, such in in the units of data of Marks and Silverman. Also in the units of data for several art teachers, there were exemplars present but they not referenced by the art teacher or used by the students, such as found in the units of data of Arthur Carvé. A final counter- example was the situation where the only exemplar provided was created by the art teacher or by a professional artist, not a student. A variety of exemplars, made by students and referenced by the art teacher, can be used guides for self-assessment by the students. Providing exemplars of other students work also models a value for the student voice as a part of assessment.

Thus far, the parts of the progression suggesting a move towards the role of shared power with the student in the assessment process have provided an opportunity for student presence in assessment and means for the student to self-assess. The next three items in the suggested progression move from including the student to incorporating the student in the assessment process. The examples found in the units of data show the art teacher seeking out the student’s ideas and thinking to incorporate as essential parts of the assessment process.
7. Questions and Assessment Conversations Incorporate Student’s Ideas

Specific types of questions and conversations used as assessment, found in the units of data of several art teachers, sought out and incorporated into the assessment the thinking, ideas, and aspirations of their art students. These types of questions were more than the clarifying questions asked of students and used by the art teachers to assess and guide their responses. Through these types of questions, the art teachers gathered information on their student’s understandings, thoughts, and feelings about their artwork. These questions also tended to be part of conversations. The units of data discussing questions and conversations used as a means of assessment to inform the assessment practices of the art teachers were presented in Section One of this chapter in facet SC3: Assessment Used Throughout Instruction, and in facet SC4: Verbal Exchanges as Assessment.

Viewed now as a means to incorporate the student voice in the assessment process, examples of questions and conversations used as assessment were found in the units of data for Lynn Newton, Nancy Lee, Patrick Cooper, Kay Holloway, Linda Delmont, and Susan Neal. The students’ ideas, thoughts, and artistic goals for their artwork were gathered, assessed, and incorporated to guide the art teacher’s response. As part of the progression towards shared power in assessment, having the student’s voice in the assessment is essential.

8. Reflective Writing Incorporate Student’s Ideas in the Assessment

Several art teachers included longer constructed response written assessments, such as reflective writing or artist statements, to gather the thoughts, ideas, and artistic goals of the students and the direction they wanted to take their artwork. For example,
Kay Holloway and Patrick Cooper both discussed using reflective writing and artist statements to assess each student’s understanding and thinking, to their personalize their instruction for each student, and inform their conversations used for assessment. The students’ written words steered aspects of these art teachers’ assessment practice.

9. Sketches Incorporate Student’s Ideas in the Assessment

Different than sketches accomplished as a drawing exercise, these sketches were used as a visually driven means for understanding the student’s ideas, thinking, and goals for the artwork and were incorporated into assessment response by the art teacher. Sketches used in this manner were found in the units of data of a few of the art teachers participating in the study including Nancy Lee and Susan Neal. Neal used her students’ sketches as a means to check their understanding but also to see the direction her jewelry students wanted to take their projects. She discussed using this information to personalize the student’s instruction plus as a means of insight into the thinking of her students who were learning English. Also, found only in her units of data, Neal used her jewelry students’ maquettes to see their thinking and ideas. As with the reflective writing, the information found in students’ sketches guided the art teacher’s assessment to personalize instruction towards addressing the intended outcomes through the artistic goals of the student.

Approaches seven through nine in this progression of an ever-greater student role in the assessment practices of the art teacher discussed shared power examples from the units of data where the thoughts and ideas of the student were gathered through questions, written reflections, and sketches and were then incorporated as essential components into the assessment process. Counter-examples found in the units of data
were where the art teacher did not use questions, conversations, writing, or sketches to ascertain the thinking, understanding, or artistic goals of the student. With a look at the artwork and often without a question to the student, several art teachers simply told their students what to do next without checking on their student’s grasp of the project or direction they wanted to take their artwork. This was found in the units of data of Michelle Marks, Arthur Carvé and in some instances in the assessment practices of Joan D’Arté and Kristy Silverman.

Seeking out then incorporating the student’s thinking and artist goals to drive assessment could be an example of shared power in assessment through respectfully listening, reading, or viewing the student’s ideas and aspirations along with their understanding and learning. This is compared to solely teacher-driven directives based only on the appearance of the product that neither includes the students nor assesses their learning. Both assessment styles rely on the art teacher’s personal experience and professional knowledge in what to look for in the artwork. But incorporation of the student’s voice to guide assessment and instruction could be considered an example of the art teacher sharing assessment power with the student.

These next four approaches continue the progression of an ever-greater student role in the assessment practices. Without the participation of the student, these assessments approaches could not occur. There is also a progression of increased influence on other students through the student’s participation in the assessment in the following approaches.
10. Student as Part of Own Summative Assessment

The students having a role in their summative assessment was found only in the units of data of Linda Delmont. Delmont includes student self-assessment as half of the summative assessment of a unit, “they do one and I do one.” She also includes student self-evaluation of the unit as part of her high school students’ final exam. The student’s participation is fundamental to the summative assessment of each particular student and shows a value for the student’s view and voice in the assessment. By dividing the summative assessment between the student and the art teacher, Delmont is empowering her students for their individual assessment.

11. Student Feedback for the Art Teacher

Seeking the student’s ideas and opinions about the art class can empower the students if the art teacher’s request is not an empty request. Linda Delmont was the only art teacher in the study that discussed gathering her students’ ideas about the projects or classroom structure through end of the semester feedback and using that data to change her future instruction. “Their ideas improved how the darkroom is now run,” explained Delmont. Her request for feedback was not an empty one. Delmont empowered her students to share ideas that could and did influence change. As part of the progression, the student voice is essential to this assessment but the assessment process can continue even if all students do not comment.

12. Student as a Member of a Group Critique

Students providing comments is vital in the group critique; if the students are not participating, they are only observers of an individual critique. Within the units of data, only Nancy Lee and Patrick Cooper discussed using the group critique. As previously
presented in SC7, Cooper discussed on some days he leads the critique and, “[other times] it will be all them, and [other times] we just want to hear what [the artist] has to say without anything else.” If a student was the leader of the group critique, or a contributor to the critique, this would be a potential example of shared power.

13. Students as Partners in Peer-Assessment

Peer-assessment does not occur if another student does not participate in the assessment of a student’s work. Peer-assessment only appeared in the units of data of Angela Fielding. Fielding both discussed and was observed utilizing peer-assessment through paired assessment between her middle level art students. Her students used the comments provided by their peer-partner in the revision of their own artwork. Peer-assessment could be an example of shared power if it is authentic, necessary to the assessment process, and not merely an isolated activity. The student as an informed assessor is central to the premise of peer-assessment. Progression in shared power continues with peer-assessment; all participating students have influence over the assessment of another. The voice of the student is valued and the art teacher hands over assessment power that is shared amongst the students.

Up to this point in the suggested progression of shared power with students in assessment, the art teacher has determined the parameters of the assessment. These parameters found in the units of data included the studio product in demonstrating learning outcomes, which exemplars to provide and reference, components of assessment of teacher-designed tools, content of the prompts of questions, potentially who participates in group critiques, and who is partnered with whom in peer-assessment. The progression thus far also has entailed an increase in the role of the student as assessor.
The art teacher was not the only voice in the assessment and the student voice has become more instrumental in the assessment. For the last approach in the progression developed from the units of data of the art teachers participating in the study, the art student plays a prime role in controlling and influencing the assessment.

14. Students Determining Own Criteria

Two art teachers participating in the study asked their advanced students to determine what criteria they wanted their art teachers to use in assessing their artwork. Patrick Cooper used his students’ written artist statements as direction for criteria to assess his advanced student’s artwork. He verified and clarified their criteria during the conversations with his students used for assessment. Susan Neal directly asked her students what criteria they wanted her to use to assess their work. Students’ determining their own criteria to drive the assessment is an example of the art teacher sharing power with students in assessment.

This progression of the art teacher sharing power in assessment with the student started with open-ended studio projects and ended with the students determining own criteria. These fourteen steps were found in the units of data of the art teachers participating in the study. Additional steps towards increased shared power beyond the fourteen observed in the study were part of the literature in assessment of art education. Two additional steps were found within some of the art education constructs of art education and in the feminist principles are:

- Student Leading the Individual Assessment Conversation.
- Students Creating Assessment Tools or Criteria for All Students.
While joint art teacher and art student conversations used for assessment were observed and art teachers discussed the process, situations with the student in the lead or taking the lead were not found in the units of data. As previously discussed in facet SC7, the empowering practice of the art teachers including their students as integral in creating assessment tools was not found in any of the units of data. Nor was there any discussion or demonstration of the art teachers including their art students in assessment as a means to share power, breaking any suppressive silence by seeking the student’s voice in the assessment process, or abating the hierarchical power in practices of assessment. As noted earlier in this chapter in facet APP4, Issues of Power in Classroom Assessment, none of the art teachers in the study questioned any of the hierarchical patterns, issues of power, or if their students were missing from the assessment discourse.

Six of the art teachers did express interest in learning more about increasing the role of their students in the assessment process specifically in the design and implementation of assessment tools. When apropos, I purposively, albeit carefully, would ask the art teacher if their students were involved in creating any assessment tools. With all twelve of the art teachers, I asked this as an addition to the conversation about assessment tools the art teacher used, taking care not to overwhelm or overtake the dialogue. In most instances, when the art teacher shared examples of the assessment tools used with the unit, I would ask if the students were involved in creating the assessment tool we were looking at in front of us.

In several of the conversations, the art teacher said a surprised “no” or a scoffing “no,” and then we would continue discussing use of the assessment tool. In a few instances, the art teacher—Lynn Newton and Susan Pappas—would say something along
the lines of, “oh, that’s a good idea,” and carry on. Nancy Lee, Angela Fielding, Linda Delmont, Susan Neal, Patrick Cooper, and Kay Holloway all asked for ways they could involve students in creating the assessment tool. Lee even pulled out a binder of assessment tools that she uses and we spent over a half an hour at the end of the observation day discussing the process of how she could revise these using her students as integral partners in the process.

**Findings for Sub-Question Three: What is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers?**

The topic of including students in the assessment process was found in the literature of art education with students taking part in creating assessment tools and leading assessment conversations. Students as active participants in assessment, including creating assessments, were also components of the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992) as was the role of power in classroom assessment. Directly addressing the role of the student in shared power was not found in the literature of assessment of art education. Including the student in assessment and the role of power in assessment are both parts of the analytical framework in facets SC3, Assessment Used Throughout Instruction; SC4, Verbal Exchanges as Assessment; SC7, Student Involvement in Assessment; and APP4, Issues of Power in Classroom Assessment.

To address this research sub-question, the units of data of each art teacher were reanalyzed through the multiple lens of involving or empowering students in assessment or sharing power in the assessment process with the art student. From using the analytical framework with this new analysis lens came the consideration that the inclusion of the
student in the assessment process could be considered as a progression of increasing the role of the student in shared power of assessment.

A fourteen-step progression of approaches with an ever-greater role of the student was found in the units of data. The progression started with including the student presence in the assessment process, through assessment tools that supported student self-assessment, to assessment processes where the student is integral, and ending with the students creating their own assessment criteria for the art teacher to use.

There were two additional steps extending this progression that were part of the analytical framework and in the art education literature but were not found in the units of data. These were the art student leading the individual conversations used for assessment and students creating assessment tools or criteria for all students. A student initiating a conversation with a question was observed in all of the classrooms but not to the extent of shared power discussed in the art education literature where the art student was leading the assessment conversation with the art teacher (Mitchell & Ross, 1993; Ross et al., 1993). Being guided by the artwork, interests, and intentions of the student as determined by their words, sketches, artwork, and writing was discussed and observed in the practice of several teachers. But assessment empowering students with leadership role or a voice in the development of the assessment tools by the students was not found in the units of data.

Students in the role of shared power in assessment perhaps parallels the amount the art teacher themselves are empowered in their school district. As discussed in facet APP3—Attains Best Practices of Assessment—in theme Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher, there were art teachers who are involved at the district or
state level in curriculum writing, creating pacing guides, or assessment. Susan Neal was part of her state’s writing team for Career and Technical Education jewelry curriculum and Patrick Cooper contributed to the pacing guide with assessments for his school district. Both of these teachers also empowered their students by having their advanced students creating their own assessment criteria, which was the fourteenth step of the suggested progression developed from the units of data. Neal and Cooper were also part of six art teachers in the study who wanted more information on how to have their students create assessment tools and criteria for the class projects. Conversely, the art teachers who work in districts that appear to not empower their art teachers also did not empower their students within their assessment practices.

**Synopsis of Section Two: Findings from the Three Sub-Questions**

There are three sub-questions supporting the research question of this study. The sub-questions are: what constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning? what personal antecedents are impacting the current assessment practices of the visual art teachers in this study? and what is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers?

The four kinds of constraints or hindrances to the assessment practice of the art teachers in the participating in the study are similar to those found in the literature of art education. These similar topics were the number of student in class or taught over a week, the implications of No Child Left Behind, and the length of class period. The lack of storage space for portfolios was also a stated hindrance to assessment by art teachers.
participating in the study. Data analysis looked at both art teachers experiencing a hindrance to their assessment practices as compared to those who appeared did not.

Several art teachers who felt they could not do portfolio assessment did not have physical space in their art rooms for traditional paper portfolios nor did they have computers or digital cameras for student use in their rooms. Those art teachers who did practice portfolio assessment had dedicated space in their art rooms for paper-based portfolios and most also had computers and digital cameras for student use in their art rooms for digital portfolios. Additionally, those art teachers who practiced portfolio assessment also used extended conversations for assessment with their art students and had longer class periods. The art teachers who found the lack storage space was a hindrance to portfolio assessment also had shorter class periods and did not conduct longer conversations for assessment with their students. Lastly, those art teachers who did practice portfolio assessment did so only with two-dimensional artwork. The size and configurations of the room, rooms wired for technology, availability of computers and cameras for student use in the art room, and the length of the class period all were factors in the units of data supporting or hindering portfolio assessment. Aside from only including two-dimensional artwork in either the traditional or digital portfolios for assessment and conducting conversations used for assessment, the other findings for this component of Sub-Question One appear to be impacted by decisions external to the art teacher.

The number of students taught per class or per week was not a topic discussed either positively or negatively by a majority of the art teachers participating in the study. Though the analysis of the data, the number of students—large or small—did not appear
to be factors as hindrances to the art teachers’ practices of assessment. What did appear to be a factor was the art teacher’s professional development in assessment in art education. Those art teachers—with both large or small numbers of students in both short and long class periods—who had had professional development in assessment in art education practiced more of the best practices of assessment, focused on student learning, used standards-based assessment, and were more aware of their assessment practices than those art teachers who did not have professional development in assessment in art education. Those art teachers who did not have opportunity for professional development focused more on the betterment of the student’s artwork than assessment to promote learning, did not practice standards-based assessment, practiced fewer best practices of assessment, and were less aware of their assessment practices no matter the number of students they taught. It appears from the analysis of the units of data that the absence of professional development in assessment in art education was more of a factor in the art teacher’s assessment practice than the number of students taught. The support of the school and district to provide professional development for art teachers in assessment appears to be a factor in hindering art teachers’ assessment practices.

The implications of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) were found in the units of data. Several of the art teachers in the study are required, as a part of district- or school-wide practice, to include testing and questions formats in their art education assessment as a means to increase the results of the students’ test results in the testing used to meet NCLB expectations. School- or district-wide assessment requirements, for the most part, were authentically assimilated into the assessment practices of the art teacher used in purposeful assessments. Hindrances to assessment practices, determined at the school
administration level, were isolation from school discussions on student test results and the shortening of the class periods. From the analysis of the units of data, decisions made external to the art classroom impacted the art teachers’ assessment practices.

The length of the class period was found to be impactful on the assessment practices of the art teachers participating in the study. Those art teachers with longer class periods used more components of best practices of assessment and aspects of assessment as a professional practice that those art teachers with shorter class periods.

Findings for Sub-Question One consistently included the impact of school or district administration decisions on the assessment practices of art teachers participating in the study. Larger classrooms, student access to technology in the art room, longer class periods, inclusion in school-wide practices, and professional development in assessment were all positive influences on assessment practices of the art teachers who benefitted from these and were hindrances to the assessment practices to those art teachers in the study who did not.

Sub-question Two was what personal antecedents are impacting the current assessment practices of the visual art teachers in this study? The findings of the analysis of the units of data for this sub-question were consistent with the existing literature in art education of personal antecedents with assessment impacting current practices of assessment as an art teacher. Not all of the art teachers participating in the study shared memories, but most of those who did were surprised to find the connection to a negative experience of assessment they had as a student influencing a current assessment practice. Most of the memories were tied to anxiety of not knowing or meeting the expectations or how the instructor gave comments back to the student. Manifested in the assessment
practices of the art teachers with negative memories were approaches used to mitigate the comparable feelings of anxiety in their current art students. For most of the art teachers who shared personal antecedents of assessment and connected those memories to their current practices, a level of awareness of their assessment practices was increased.

Sub-question Three was what is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers? The units of data were reanalyzed using the analytical framework with a focus on empowering or shared power with the student through the art teachers’ assessment practice. The view through this lens lead to the consideration that the inclusion of students in the assessment practice could be part of a progression that leads to ever-greater student roles in shared power in assessment. A fourteen-part progression was presented based upon the units of data that started with presences of the student in open-ended projects used in assessment through the student determining their own criteria for the art teacher to use. Two components of empowering students were part of the analytic framework but were not found in the units of data: the art student leading the individual assessment conversation as per Mitchell & Ross (1993) and Ross et al. (1993) and students creating assessment tools for all students. Based on the analysis of the units of data, it is posited that perhaps the empowering of the art teacher in participating in writing curriculum or assessment documents at the district or state level relates to those same art teachers sharing power in assessment with their own students.

Consistently across all findings of all three sub-questions was the existence or absence of the art teacher’s understanding or awareness of their own assessment practices. Several art teachers shared what was hindering or impacting their assessment
practice but none of the art teachers noted anytime during the site visit or interviews what was helping or supporting their assessment practices. Of the art teachers who shared personal antecedents about assessment, few made the connection to their current assessment practices. Additionally, cutting across the findings of two of the three sub-questions was the role of the school or district administrations’ decisions either supporting or hindering the assessment practices of the art teachers participating in the study.

This concludes the presentation of findings for the research study sub-questions. In Section Three of Chapter Five, the theme that emerged from the analysis of the units of data, the Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing, is presented with examples and findings.

**Section Three: Emergent Theme: Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing**

The Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing is a theme that emerged through the analysis of data. The key term in the name of this theme, sanctuary, is borrowed from Lowenfeld’s and Brittain’s (1970) “the art room should be a sanctuary …” (p. 79) in addressing their concerns about grading, assessment, or testing in art education because it is similar vein of the concerns found in the units of data. This is in comparison to Siegesmund (2002), who used the term refuge in a caveat that the art room cannot be a “… special place of refuge …” (p. 27) where evidence of student learning is not assessed. This theme reflects the concepts around the stated goals brought up by three of the art teachers participating in the study—Kristy Smith, Nancy Lee, and Linda Delmont—to have less stressful classrooms and less testing than their school colleagues in other subject areas. This theme emerged through the analysis of data using the analytical
framework made up of the feminist principles of assessment and selected assessment
practices constructs from the literature in visual art education, applying the analytical
coding of definition, pattern, and perspective as well as coding how the art teachers spoke
about other personnel in their school or district.

Within the units of data of these three art teachers participating in this study, it
was important to them that their assessment actions were different that those of teachers
of content areas or other art teachers. The discussion of this emergent theme of the Art
Room as Sanctuary from Testing begins with the art teachers’ statements that reflect the
theme interwoven with pertinent supporting examples from each of the three art teachers’
assessment practices and work environment as found in their units of data. These
examples are also supported by instances from the facets of analytical framework of other
art teachers participating in the study previously presented in this chapter. This is
followed by a summary of the analysis and findings.

Kristy Silverman is in her second year teaching art at the high school level after
her move from elementary art. Through analysis of the units of data, Silverman views
assessment, testing, and grading as synonymous. She teaches in a high school with minor
challenges in meeting the state exam benchmarks. Information about any kind of testing
such as state exams, Advanced Placement, or the SAT was not evident around the school.
Silverman shared during the school day, when we were discussing the absence of an art
education curriculum guide in her school district, “I know some art teachers with the state
standards. They want to turn an art class into a regular classroom.” This matches her
other units of data where she does not refer her state’s standards in visual art nor does she
use standards-based assessment.
Silverman said during class time as we watched her students work on their projects, “sometimes I have the attitude that I want to be more laid back. There is so much stress from testing and grading.” As found in her units of data, Silverman does not use quizzes, tests, or any form of written assessment to ascertain her student’s understanding to inform her practice. Nor does she check for her students’ prior knowledge or skills. She was unknowingly repeating content that other art teachers participating in this study at the elementary and middle school levels had been observed teaching. Silverman wants her art students, “… to come in a room that is not as structured as a regular classroom is.” Her desire for unstructured classroom is reflected in other aspects of her units of data. Silverman had no procedures to start to the class, such as a review of the content from the day before to check on students’ understanding, or comments on process based upon her reflection on how to improve student learning as discussed in the Student-Centered Assessment and Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher facets in Section One of this chapter.

Silverman also did not employ assessment tools that can also provide parameters for students to serve as opportunities for student self-assessment. This use of assessment tools for student self-assessment was as noted as a student-centered assessment practice and a best practice of assessment in art education. Tools that can be used for student self-assessment can include posted or printed expectations, checklists, or a range of exemplars, or rubrics. Silverman’s use of rubrics was applying a generic one to the final project for grading purposes that Silverman added she, “sometimes list on the bottom what I was looking for.” As previously presented in this chapter, other art teachers in the study who utilized best practices of assessment used rubrics created one specific to the
project to be assessed and provided them to the students at the beginning of the instructional unit. Additionally, other art teachers participating in this study who employed best practices of assessment also referred to the rubric during studio work time as a source of formative assessment discussion with individual students and also modeling their use as a guide for the student’s own self-assessment.

During the our conversational interview, Silverman continued to discuss her rationale for her assessment strategies, “I know it is important for me to grade and to evaluate students but sometimes I feel like they need to come in here, blow off some steam, relax and not have so much pressure to learn.” Reflecting Silverman’s desire to have her students to come to art class to relax and not be pressured to learn, it appears within the units of data that some of her students felt at ease. They were slow to enter the art room and to get to work during the 41-minute class. There was also no rush at the end of class; all would be cleaned up and ready to go well before the bell. Additionally, the students talked amongst themselves about school gossip or what was on television the night before; they rarely discussed the art project they were working on.

There could be three points around which some of Silverman’s art students showed some angst. One was not knowing what is expected in the project based upon the tone of their questions to Silverman as in, “now what do I do?” The students relied on Silverman to tell each of them what step to do next in the project or which basic art technique to use. Another possible point of angst found in the units of data was around the students’ tone and questions about project completion with questions to Silverman such as “please, tell me I’m done” or “am I done yet?” Silverman responded to these questions in three ways: specific directions in what to do next, vague directives such as
“you need to make it pop” or by providing a solution to a media or compositional challenge that was indicating that the project was not completed. The third potential area of angst was seen throughout the day in students who used the art class time to hurriedly work on homework due in an upcoming class of another content area such as math or history. Conversely, despite their personalized pressure to get the homework done, these students also appeared comfortable within the art room setting to do this homework, rather than work on their art projects, without any redirection by Silverman.

Units of data from Silverman also support her quote about not wanting her students to feel pressure to learn. Student-centered, best practices in assessment of art education strategies of posted learning expectations, checking prior knowledge, questions to her students to verify their understanding or learning were not found in her units of data. Additionally, Silverman’s focus of comments and directives to her students were about the look of the artwork rather than addressing how the artwork embodies learning outcomes as seen the units of data of other art teachers participating in the study who applied best practices of assessment. As noted in her introduction, if a student did not grasp a concept, “we would just move on.” Silverman stated in her interview that completion of the project is what guides the final evaluation of the artwork. Supporting Silverman’s goals of not wanting learning or testing to be an issue in her art room, the use any quizzes, tests, or any kind of written or drawn assessments to check or verify her students’ learning was not found in her units of data.

Elementary art teacher Nancy Lee and high school art teacher Linda Delmont both used the same language when each voiced wanting their art rooms to be “a less stressful classroom” than the other content area classrooms in their schools “because of
all the testing” of the statewide exams. This importance to differentiate their assessment practice from that of their school colleagues was stated by both Lee and Delmont, near the beginning of the site visit, never from a stance of defiance, and using an apologetic tone. Both also asked subtle questions of me to see how I distinguish testing and assessment during the morning of the site visits.

From the analysis of their units of data, Lee and Delmont differentiate assessment, testing, and grading with Lee having a wider vocabulary of assessment terms than Delmont. Both are from the same school district that provides a pacing guide and teach in schools that are doing well—without challenges in any of the content areas or demographic groups—in meeting the state expectations for student results in statewide exams. Both practice school-wide assessment expectations including the paper-pencil test format required of Delmont’s final exam.

Both also come from schools where information about testing was evident. A large banner about Advanced Placement testing hung from the outside of Delmont’s school and in the halls were posters about Advanced Placement testing, SAT tests, and the last few year’s percentages of student test results in reading, writing, and math on the statewide exam for addressing No Child Left Behind. Similar information on the student test results on the statewide exam was displayed at the entrance Lee’s elementary school.

Both Lee and Delmont used a variety of assessment practices to inform and include their students. Both checked for prior knowledge and mentioned adapting their instruction to better meet the learning needs of their students. Both Lee and Delmont employed multiple, best practice assessment strategies and used standards-based
assessment to inform their practice in meeting the learning needs of their students’ art education as well as the quality of their art products.

Lee and Delmont both included their students in the assessment process through providing self-assessment opportunities, posting learning expectations, and used extended conversations for assessment. Additionally, both created and used project-specific rubrics in formative and summative assessment as well as reference the performance levels with their students during studio work time.

From the units of data, both appear to have created classrooms that are not stressful for their students. For each 60-minute class period, Lee’s elementary students excitedly streamed into her art room. The students would pause to check the board for what they were doing in class that day then table leaders pulled out the artworks in progress while others rounded up the supplies for the table. During the opening of the class, the students would animatedly respond to Lee’s recall questions of the content from last week’s class. Based on their answers or questions, Lee would clarify or reteach a concept if there was a misunderstanding evident in the student’s verbal responses. During the work time, the students dynamically talked about the art project or art media techniques amongst their table partners with questions such as, “ooh, how did you get that color?” There was laughter and exclaims from individual students such as, “I like how that looks!” about their own artwork.

Lee walked from table group to table group, interacting with the group of students as a whole then with each individual student, asking questions to verify the student’s understanding or thinking. She asked more questions of her students than they asked of her. Lee’s students did not seem uncertain on what to do; checklists for steps were at
hand in some classes, rubrics in others, with exemplars and project expectations for each
class were around in the art room. The only sign of stress for many of Lee’s students
came at the end of class when with cries of disappointment with Lee’s call for cleanup
because they had to stop their work on their art. Lee reminded them they could continue
work next time in class.

Linda Delmont’s high school photography students also streamed into class and
got right down to work, either in the darkroom or at the computers, during the 85-minute
class. The start of each of Delmont’s class was a brief comment on what aspect of the
project expectations she would be checking on in their work that day. There was some
chatting about school gossip between pairs of students during the first few minutes of
class. Most of the student conversation in the classroom was then about the artwork with
students asking each other for input about the look of an image or requesting help on how
to do a technique. Rubrics or project expectations were pulled out of their folders and
kept beside those students working on the computers where work was at a slower yet
steady pace than the bustling darkroom.

Student conversation in the darkroom was at a minimum as Delmont’s students
focused on their developing. Students in the classroom and darkroom asked Delmont’s
opinion on their prints, her recommendation on either darkroom or computer techniques,
or asked for her help with a challenge that had tried to solve themselves. Some students
were still working on their projects on the computers even after the bell for the end of
class rang where Delmont would remind them they needed to save their work and go.

All of Delmont’s students appeared to know what to be working on and were
personally motivated to accomplish tasks to reach their artistic goals. The only signs of
stress for Delmont’s students found in the units of data for were in her students using the darkroom. This was due to the limited amount of time each student had each week, challenges with particular enlargers, or the time needed for the process of developing. An 85-minute class period is barely enough of the amount of time needed to develop a roll of film or print. To assuage her students concerns at the end of class, Delmont frequently told students who had used the darkroom that she would take film or prints, “… out of the dryer for you.”

As for addressing their comment about all the testing in their schools, it appears in their units of data that neither Lee nor Delmont gave long paper-pencil tests, other than Delmont’s district-required final exam. Delmont’ final exam in which she included student’s self-assessment and a request for feedback to gain her students’ perceptions on the instructional units and the structure of the classroom. Lee and Delmont did use quizzes to check content knowledge and short essay questions. Both also used fill-in-the blank type of tests that were authentic measures of art studio techniques by including drawing or painting such as Lee’s color wheel tests with watercolor or color pencil blending of the secondary and tertiary colors or Delmont’s test on illustrating the parts of a camera.

**Analysis of Findings for Emergent Theme of Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing.**

Four topics are discussed in this section. First are the assessment procedures that were used or not used to address stressful classrooms. The assessment procedures found and not found in the units of data of these three art teachers also apply to the second topic to be discussed, testing. Third the potential rationales for these practices are offered. Lastly the potential influence of these art teachers’ definitions and understandings of
assessment in art education upon their goals for a less stressful art room without testing are discussed.

First, all three art teachers—Kristy Silverman, Nancy Lee, and Linda Delmont—who brought up the goal of creating less stressful classrooms for their student without testing for their appeared to have attained these goals. Silverman, Lee, and Delmont all had art classrooms where the students only occasionally looked or sounded unsettled, so it appears as if their approach for creating a less stressful classroom was working for each of them. In Silverman’s classes this was seen in the units of data with the unhurried pace of her students. Only some of her students sounded or appeared anxious or stressed about not understanding project expectations, expressing the desire to be told they were done to completion, or in trying to get homework done for another class. In Lee’s classes, her students were excited to get to work and only appeared stress when they did not want to stop working on their art projects due to the end of class. Delmont’s students seemed focused on their projects with time appearing to be the stressor for some of Delmont’s photography students using the darkroom in trying to complete all the steps of developing a roll of film or print. The students of Lee and Delmont did not appeared to be stressed by using the assessment tools provided. Rather, they appeared to rely on them.

Based on analysis of data, there were assessment procedures that supported and informed students that were missing in the practice of Silverman that were present in the assessment practices of Lee and Delmont that perhaps mitigated stress in their students. In the assessment practices of Lee and Delmont, learning expectations for the curricular units were printed out, daily learning goals were both written on the board and discussed at the beginning of class, exemplars of possible artistic solutions were on display around
the art room and referenced, and there were assessment tools for students to use to self-assess their progress towards the goals including checklists and project-specific rubrics. Additionally, conversations used for assessment (as presented in facet SC4 in this chapter) took place between Lee and Delmont with their individual students. Conversation content between Lee and Delmont with their students often contained students sharing their artistic goals in meeting the expectations of the project with the art teachers verifying learning. As evidenced from the units of data, both Lee’s and Delmont’s students knew where to get information, what they needed to do, and appeared excited and focused about their art making not stressed by uncertainties through the application of these assessment processes.

Silverman did not post or print out any learning expectations of the day or for the unit nor start the class with the learning goals of the day. Exemplars for the projects were rarely provided, and self-assessment tools were not offered. Interchanges between Silverman and her students were about the next step in the project without verification of learning. Silverman’s students did not have the opportunity to use any assessment resources and relied on Silverman to tell them the increments towards completing the activity or, in some instances, to be informed if they were finished.

Based on the analysis of the units of data and for this study, it appears that the art teachers’ assessment practices that provide students guidance on learning expectations, tools student self-assessment, and conducting conversations for assessment supports the students by eliminating the stress of uncertainty. Conversely, the absence of these assessment practices of the art teacher might add to the anxiety of some students due to the uncertainty of the expectations, even when the art teacher’s objective is to have a
classroom where students can “… come in here, blow off some steam, relax and not have so much pressure to learn.”

The second topic to be presented is the art teachers’ discussion about testing. These three art teachers’ avoidance of testing their art students appeared to be in compensation for the amount testing they perceive to be occurring in their students’ other classes. To that end, none of the three art teachers gave paper-pencil tests that might be de rigueur in the classrooms of the other teachers in their schools, other than Delmont’s required end of the term final exam. Silverman also did not use any other form of written assessments. Lee and Delmont both used quizzes and tests but with art-based fill-in-the-blanks as well as other written assessments to verify their students’ learning. Verification of student learning through other means of assessment was not found in the units of data for Silverman. Based on the analysis of the units of data and for this study, it appears that the absence of using a paper-pencil test format does not impact the student learning when verification of learning is assessed by other means by the art teacher.

The third topic to be discussed in the analysis of the findings of the emergent theme of the Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing is probable rationales for these goals. The rationales for this absence of assessment in Silverman’s practice could fourfold. First is Silverman’s identification with Lowenfeld; as noted in her introduction in Chapter Four, she referred to herself as “Lowenfeldian.” Perhaps her identification with Lowenfeld’s art educational theories about grading and evaluation has influenced her practice of assessment. Second is Silverman’s goal for her students to come to her art room and, “… not have so much pressure to learn.” As found in the units of data, she focused her assessment on based on the appearance of the artwork towards the
completion of projects by providing solutions rather than checking on the attainment of her students’ understanding and learning towards attaining an art education. Thirdly, Silverman melds testing with assessment. So, through conjecture based on the units of data, her goal to not have any testing extrapolates to not having any means of assessing student learning. Lastly, this is Silverman’s second year at the high school level after teaching art to elementary school students. She possibly might not be accustomed to the frequency that paper-pencil tests are used across the content areas at the high school level as compared to the assessments done at the elementary school level. Perhaps, Silversman overhears the tests her students might be talking about throughout the day or seeing the homework from other classes students do during art is perhaps what influenced her comment, “there is so much stress from testing and grading.”

As for the rationale for the testing comments from Lee and Delmont, there could be three reasons. First, both teach in schools where testing had a visual presence with posters and banners about testing so testing could be part of the school culture. Secondly, both teach in schools that implement school-wide assessment procedures to support students in doing well in the statewide exams so is it probable that staff meetings have included professional development on these procedures as well as discussions on the test results of their school’s students. With this possibility of a testing culture within their schools, Lee and Delmont’s awareness of the amount of testing occurring in their schools with their students might be heightened.

Last is a discussion of the analysis of the units of data of the art teacher’s definitions and understandings of assessment in art education, as they appeared to influence their goal for the Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing. As seen in her units of
data, Silverman views assessment, testing, and grading as all being the same practice. In her goal to not have any testing in her art room, it follows by her own definitions that she would not have any assessment practices beyond her use of observation. With her goal to have a stress free art room without pressure to learn, it also seen in her units of data that Silverman does not use any assessment means to check or verify her students learning. Her comments to her students are about the look of the work with the goal of completion of art project rather than the attainment of learning. Through the analysis of Silverman’s units of data in this emergent theme of Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing, her words and actions evidences a focus on her students completing an art activity rather on attaining an art education.

Within the units of data for Nancy Lee and Linda Delmont, they place testing as part of assessment but not a format that they choose to use in their art room other than the term ending final exam required of Delmont to administer. With their goals not to use tests but to focus on student learning, Neal and Delmont choose to use means other than testing for checking for student learning. Both discussed and demonstrated actions towards student learning in art by using multiple measures of assessment to check on their students’ understanding of the content knowledge, art media and tools skill and technique development. Both also then verified each student’s acquisition of learning. In their goals to address stress, each used a variety of assessment tools to inform their students and provide tools for self-assessment. From their units of data, both understand and apply many of the best practices of assessment in art education in their own assessment practices. Through the analysis of their units of data in this emergent theme of the Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing, both Neal and Delmont’s focus was on their
students’ learning and gaining an art education that was supported and fostered through assessment.

In summary, in the emergent theme of the Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing, the three art teachers who voiced this concept appeared to attain their goals. Potentially evidenced in by their words and actions, the understanding of assessment with a target for students’ learning an art education divided the paths of this goal. Not understanding the differences between assessments and testing, combined with to not wanting her students to feel pressured to learn influenced assessment practices one of the three art teachers. However, without providing known expectations or resources for self-assessment, stress was present for those students wanting to know what to do next or for the art teacher’s confirmation of the completion of the art task. These students strolled into class, did not use the full class time to work, and used the art period to do homework for math or social studies. With her understanding that assessment and testing were synonymous, the goal of no testing in her art class also manifested as no assessment beyond her observation of the look of her students’ art projects. Reflecting her goal of not wanting her students to feel pressure to learn, the student’s completion of the art activity rather than attainment of learning an art education was the outcome.

Choosing not to give tests yet using a variety of assessment tools to support their students’ learning and self-assessment towards the known project expectations was the practice of the other two of the art teachers. By their actions and words, both appeared to understand assessment for learning in art education. Their students appeared excited to delve into their art projects, easily accessed self-assessment resources, and answered their art teacher’s questions to verify their learning. Stress was not from assessment but from
the arrival of end of their working on their art for the day. The assessment practices of
these two art teachers provided parameters and self-assessment tools for their students
towards that less stressful setting but more importantly towards verifying each of their
student’s learning and attaining an art education.

In the next and concluding chapter, a summary of findings, connection of the
findings to the literature of assessment in art education, and recommendations for further
study are presented.
Chapter 6: Discussions and Recommendations

Introduction

This final chapter presents a summary of the findings, a discussion of the relationship of the findings from this study to previous research in assessment in art education, considerations for further research, and recommendations.

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to gain an understanding of twelve visual art education teachers’ ranges of understanding and practices of classroom assessment of their art students’ learning in art education. The research question was what are the visual art teachers’ understandings and practices of assessing student learning in the visual arts. The three sub-questions were: What constraints or hindrances do these visual art teachers have in accomplishing assessment of their students’ learning? What personal antecedents are impacting their current assessment practices of the visual art teachers in this study? What is the role of the student in shared power in assessment practices of these visual art teachers?

Twelve art teachers from traditional public schools, teaching at the elementary, middle, or high schools levels; from three school districts; from three states in the United States participated in this study. Central to this qualitative research study were individual, guided, and semi-structured interviews with the twelve visual art teachers. The units of data from the interviews were supported by additional, multiple data streams (Eisner, 1998) gathered through pre-site visit questionnaires, artifacts, field notes from one-day
observations within the visual art teacher’s classroom, and my research diary. Data analysis and interpretation utilized an analytical framework developed around the feminist principles of assessment (Shapiro, 1992). Aligned to this framework were assessment practices from the literature in visual art education: Wilson (1992), Beattie (1997a), National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (2000, 2001), Dorn et al. (2004), and National Art Education Association (2009a). These resulted in two themes of Student-Centered Assessment and Assessment as a Professional Practice of the Art Teacher. Analytical coding of the units data was used in the analysis of the research sub-questions yielding findings and an emergent theme of the Art Room as Sanctuary From Testing.

Summary of Findings

This summary begins with tabular presentation exhibiting findings of the assessment practices of the art teachers participating in this research study. Table 1 presents a summary of findings of the assessment practices exhibited by all or none of the twelve art teachers participating in the study. The areas of assessment that were addressed in the facets of the analytical framework but were not found in the units of data appear in this table in the section labeled none. Table 2 is a summary of findings of the assessment practices for most or few of the art teachers. The tables are followed by a summary of findings addressing the research question of this study through a division of the art teachers two groups based upon the art teacher’s demonstrated level of understanding of assessment.
Table 1

Summary of Findings About the Assessment Practices for All or None of the Twelve Art Teachers Participating in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portion of Art Teachers</th>
<th>Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| All                     | • Used the assessment strategy of observation,  
                         | • Provided some form of an example of the final art product required of the student,  
                         | • Looked at their students’ artwork to obtain information for on-the-spot analysis for comments to the students to improve their work or understanding,  
                         | • Assessed their art students’ studio artwork projects,  
                         | • Made comments to their art students that were based on assessment data, and  
                         | • Provided comments of different purposes and kinds for revisions of student artwork prior to summative assessment. |
| None                    | • Recalled any coursework or information on assessment during their undergraduate art education programs,  
                         | • Connected reflecting upon assessment data to the changes they made to their instruction,  
                         | • Performed assessment of any current themes in art education (i.e. collaborative art or social commentary),  
                         | • Had any awareness or questioning of the power issues of assessment,  
                         | • Included their students in the assessment process by creating assessment tools, and  
                         | • Had a consistent understanding and use of feedback. |
Table 2

Summary of Findings About the Assessment Practices for the Most or Few of the Twelve Art Teachers Participating in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portion of Art Teachers</th>
<th>Finding</th>
</tr>
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| **Most**                | • Focused assessment on student learning;  
                         | • Used art education student-centered assessment practices with differing purposes and extent;  
                         | • Applied an up-to-date visual arts curriculum guide tied to current state and national standards in the visual arts;  
                         | • Used standards-based assessments;  
                         | • Frequently checked on the student’s understanding before providing a comment;  
                         | • Employed observation to scan classroom as the students worked on their artwork to assess general progress then followed-up individually with students;  
                         | • Utilized verbal exchanges with individual students for assessment with varying degrees of purpose and depth with individual students; and  
                         | • Focused their assessment on several kinds of student learning and actions including the student’s art education content knowledge, skill in using an art tool, and use of art techniques in making artwork. |
| **Few**                 | • Used peer-assessment, critiques, and portfolio assessments; and  
                         | • Recalled assessment discussions or coursework during master’s degree programs. |
Based upon the analysis of the units of data, the art teachers’ practices and understandings of assessment of student learning in art education fell into two groups. One group of the art teachers demonstrated an understanding of assessment in art education and the other group of art teachers appeared to not fully understand. The presentation of the findings summary is divided into those two groups.

One group was made up of those art teachers participating in the research study who—through their words and actions—demonstrated an understanding of classroom assessment practices in art education. This group of art teachers most often also assessed for their students’ attainment of learning in art education. Most of the art teachers in this group were aware of and reflected upon their assessment practice. They also used assessment data to inform their practice. These art teachers gained assessment insight from their general education colleagues and authentically infused school-wide assessment practices into their art education assessment practice. They also sought out additional learning in assessment on their own.

This group of art teachers used a variety of assessment practices and multiple measures to check for and verify student learning. Most of the art teachers in this group started assessment at the beginning of the instructional unit and continued its use to the end. The kinds of student learning assessed included content knowledge, skills in tool use, application of art media techniques, understanding inherent characteristics of art media and tools, artistic thinking, and growth over time.

The written tests created by the art teachers in this group were tied to the instructional content to measure learning that would be needed by the student for the next phase of instruction. Several of these test formats were art-based, constructed responses
through drawing and painting. Tests were also analyzed for areas that needed to be retaught. Art teachers in this group appropriately adapted their tests for students with special learning needs and followed up with verbal checks for understanding or asked their English Language Learners for a demonstration or sketch to verify understanding.

This group of art teachers used a variety of means to gather both the students’ understanding of concepts as well as insight into their students’ thinking and artistic aspirations. They provided a range of comments to their students including praise, advice, directions, and feedback based upon the assessment data they had collected. Prior to giving comments, the majority of the art teachers in this group checked first for their student’s understanding and watched the student’s facial expressions for added information.

The students of the art teachers who demonstrated an understanding of assessment in art education used the self-assessment tools provided and referenced by their art teacher to determine the steps and their artistic choices towards the learning goal. The students spent time working on their artwork than waiting for direction or validation. They participated with their art teachers in assessment conversations and talked amongst themselves about the artwork and art making processes including helping each other. The art students of the art teachers who showed an understanding of assessment in art education created artwork that both met the learning expectations and looked individualized and personalized.

For the art teachers in this group, the students’ art products were both a means of assessment of learning throughout the instructional unit and a summative assessment of their students’ personalized evidence of learning the educational expectations. District
and school administration support and decisions appeared to be positive factors for these art teachers who demonstrated an understanding of assessment in art education and practiced a range of best practices in student-centered assessment in art education.

The second group of art teachers is comprised of art teachers who—through their words and actions—did not demonstrate an understanding of assessment in art education. These art teachers did not differentiate between assessment and grading. Hardly any of the best practices of assessment in art education or student-centered assessment were utilized or discussed. They were not aware of nor reflected upon their assessment practices or how they used any of the data they did collect. Art teachers in this group did not seek out learning on assessment on their own and they did not effectively incorporate school-wide assessment practices into their practices.

The main tool of this second group of art teachers in their assessment practice was the observation of the artworks produced by their students. The comments they made to their students were most often directives on what to do to improve the art product. Seldom did the art teachers in this second group check on their students’ understanding of the concepts or learning before giving any directives.

These art teachers used a limited number of assessment tool types, and the tools they did employ were often not used correctly or were not appropriately adapted for students with special learning needs or those learning English. The assessment data collected through their use of written tests was not used to inform either the student or the art teacher. None of the art teachers in this group provided assessment tools for student use or discussed student self-assessment.
The majority of the art students of the art teachers in this second group spent much of their class time waiting, often with hands raised or standing in line, for their art teacher to provide direction on the next step, validation on quality, or confirmation of completion. The students of those art teachers whose assessments focused on collecting data for fixing the artwork, created artwork that was similar to the look of other students’ artwork. The student conversations during these art teachers’ classes were about television or school gossip, not about their artwork or art making process. For these art teachers, the focus of their assessment practice was their student’s completion of the art task based on the teachers’ internal criteria, not on student learning in art. The group of art teachers who did not demonstrate an understanding of assessment in art education also shared a lack of district and school administration support and decisions that negatively impacted their practice.

This concludes the summary of findings from this research study. In the next section of this concluding chapter of the dissertation, the connections between the findings and the visual art education literature on classroom assessment are detailed.

**Relationship of the Research Findings to the Literature of Assessment in Art Education**

Three areas are addressed in this second section of the chapter. First are instances where the findings of this research study were also addressed in the literature of assessment in art education. Second are instances where findings were not found in the research study but were found in the literature. Third are instances where findings from this research study are not found in the literature of assessment in art education.
Findings from the Research Study Also Found in the Literature.

From the review of literature in assessment in art education, sixteen best practices in assessment in art education were found (see Appendix C). Findings from this study showed all sixteen types of best practices were utilized to varying degrees by all the participating art teachers with one art teacher using sixteen (see Appendix G). It was found that observation was the one assessment practice used by all of the art teachers in the study. This finding is consistent with the literature reported studies where observation was the favored assessment tool (Burton, 2001b; Carey et al., 2002; Horn & Kentucky Arts Council, 2005).

The best practices of assessment found in the literature of art education that were observed to be least often used by the art teachers participating in this study were peer-assessment, critiques, and portfolio assessment. Some of these findings are similar to the findings of a national survey of high school art teachers (Burton, 2001b) where a little more than 10% of the respondents infrequently used portfolio assessment and are aligned with the NAEP Arts findings (Persky et al., 1998) where a third of the eighth grade students taking part in the test rarely talked with their peers about their artwork and half never did.

Another finding from the research study that is similar to findings in the literature is on the topic of assessment coursework during pre-service art education programs. None of the art teachers participating in the research study could recall assessment information offered during their bachelor’s degree programs. This is similar to findings in the literature of art teachers receiving little training (Colwell, 1998) or no training (Dilmac, 2013) in assessment during pre-service preparation to become an art teacher.
Another finding from the research study was an apparent connection of the assessment practices of art teachers who used best practices and student-centered assessment to their participation in a variety of professional development activities. This finding reflects the literature of art education in there have been studies about assessment that included professional development in assessment (Sabol, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001a, 2006b) and findings that professional development influences art teachers practices of assessment (Andrade et al., 2014; Dorn et al., 2004; Ross et al., 1993). This finding also supports the recommendations for the content of the training in assessment for art teachers (Bridgeford & Stiggins, 1986).

While a finding from the research study was that some of the art teachers’ assessments focused only on gathering data towards improving the look of the students’ art product, the assessment practices used by most of the art teachers participating in the study focused on gathering information towards enhancing student learning. This finding reflects the literature on student-centered assessment in art education (Beattie, 1997a; NAEA, 2009a; NBPTS, 2000, 2001) that focusing on student learning by using assessment to establish what the student knows and can do.

Ten kinds of student actions or learning were found to be assessed by the art teachers participating in the study: completion of a task; procedural aspect of making an art project with and without assessing the student’s understanding; components of the student’s artwork with and without assessing the student’s understanding; skill in the use of tools, art media, or techniques; student understanding of inherent characteristics of art media and tools; content knowledge; artistic thinking; and growth over time. These findings reflect the research studies of what art teachers assess (Sabol, 2004a, 2006b).
Using conversation between the art teacher and an individual art student as an assessment tool is part of the art education literature on assessment (Armstrong, 1994; Barrett, 1990; Beattie, 1997a; NBPTS, 2000, 2001; Parsons, 1996; Zimmerman, 1997) with specific research into the art education assessment conversation (Mitchell & Ross, 1993; Ross et al., 1993). It found through this research study that the art teachers used seven different types of verbal exchanges as assessment with individual students. These seven types of exchanges used as assessment ranged from quick checks of the student’s understanding to extended conversations used for assessment of student learning.

There were several findings about the assessment practices of those art teachers who utilized conversations for assessment of student learning. The art teachers whose assessment practice included the assessment conversation focused their assessments on student learning. These art teachers applied their knowledge of the art media and tools along with skills in assessment conversations such as maximizing time, proximity to the student, and attention to the student’s facial expressions as another source of information. Additionally, it was found in the classrooms where the art teacher and students engaged in conversations for assessment, the students’ casual conversations with each other were more often about the artwork. In contrast, in classrooms where verbal exchanges used for assessment were not a part of the art teacher’s assessment practice, the students either did not converse at all or the topics were not about the artwork they were producing.

The literature of assessment in art education discusses that assessment data can be used by the art teacher in the forms of praise (Lansing, 1969; Ross et al., 1993) and feedback (Armstrong, 1994; Colwell, 1998; Dorn et al., 2004; Hickman, 2010; NBPTS,
Findings from this research study also showed art teachers providing praise and feedback. However, based on the variances in how half of art teachers participating in the study used the term feedback to describe a variety of purposes of comments, a consistent understanding of feedback was not found. For the research study data analysis, it was necessary to have definition of feedback. As a definition of feedback is not found in the literature of assessment in art education, a definition of feedback from general education assessment (Wiggins, 2012) was applied to the units of data.

Twelve different purposes of art teacher comments to students were found: general praise or approval for the student’s work or actions; encouragement or general reassurance; vague comments of praise; vague recommendations; validation or confirmation of learning in art; specific directives on what to do next; directions couched as a request; modeling with clarification to clear up misunderstandings; recommendation on how to proceed by giving a course of action based on what the art teacher wanted or would do; advise towards an action that is needed; guidance on how to proceed based on the degree or amount the student’s work or actions were progressing towards the targeted goal; and feedback as defined by Wiggins (2012).

It was found that the art teachers participating in this research study used several assessment strategies, which included the student in the assessment process; these strategies also appear in the literature in assessment in art education. Several of the art teachers provided tools and supported processes for student self-assessment or evaluation (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Asch, 1976; Barrett, 1990; Beattie, 1997a; Conant & Randall, 1959; De Francesco, 1954; Freedman, 2003; Godfrey, 1964; Huffman, 1998;
Found only in the units of data for a few of the art teachers were peer-assessment (Dorn, 1998; NBPTS, 2000, 2001; Soep, 2004b, 2001; Wolf & Pistone, 1991). Art teachers in this study used student reflective writing prompts—including artist statements, reflective questions during individual conversations, rubrics, sketches, and checklists—as assessment tools for their students’ self-reflection and revision of their artwork. Rubrics and checklists were also found used in peer-assessment.

A hindrance found to the art teachers’ assessment practices found in the literature and the study were the number of students taught and time constraints (Bensur, 2002; Dilmac, 2013; Sabol, 2004a). In the units of data was found that the art teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels with longer class periods used a wider variety of the best practices of assessment, focused on student learning, used assessment conversations, and had a clearer understanding of their own assessment practices. For this study, findings indicate that the art teachers’ participation in professional development in assessment was more of a factor than class size or number of students taught.

Art teachers reflecting upon their assessment practice (Smith-Shank, 1993) and art teachers using assessment data for reflection towards improvement of instruction (Conant & Randall, 1959; De Francesco, 1954; Gitomer et al., 1992; Lansing, 1969; Rudner & Boston, 1994) were findings for this study. On-the-spot analysis of collected assessment data through observation of individual student artwork was found in the
practice of all of the art teachers in the study with all making comments to the students and several discussing making changes in their instruction.

It was found that some of the art teachers, based on their observations of their students at work or how well the final products, reflected upon the intended learning outcome at the end of a unit or term resulting in instructional changes. The changes found based on art teacher’s reflection over time were to the order of instruction, aspects or requirements of an art product, and the development of checklists to aid the students. It was found that none of the art teachers made the connection of the cycle of gathering assessment information, reflecting, and making educational changes. An additional finding is the art teacher newest to the profession discussed keeping a reflection journal as an assessment tool to capture her thoughts for revision of the lesson.

The art teachers’ personal experiences with assessment impacting current assessment practices are found the units of data, in research (Orr, 2011; Smith-Shank, 1993), and in literature (Asch, 1976; Korzenik, 1993) of assessment in art education. It was not found in the units of data for all of the art teachers participating in this study; only some could recall or shared memories. Of those who did share personal antecedents about assessment, there was a connection to these memories with aspects of their current assessment practice. It was found that these memories most often were connected to anxiety over their ability to meet quality requirements of artwork. Also found that these art teachers utilized assessment strategies that could mitigate similar feelings arising in their students. That most of the art teachers who recalled assessment memories did not make the connection of their past experience with assessment to their current assessment practice was also a finding.
An emergent theme from the data analysis—the Art Room as Sanctuary from Testing—was a finding from this research study. This concept was found mentioned in the literature of assessment of art education as recommendations for the art room to be such a sanctuary (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1970) and as a caveat against fostering a room of refuge that does not include assessment of learning (Siegesmund, 2002). Through the analysis of the units of data, it was found that the art teachers who voiced this concern had two differing approaches to creating an art classroom environment free of stress for their students. One approach was to employ a range of the best practices of assessment for the students, including tools for students to self-assess, to ameliorate any uncertainties of the process or products involved. The other approach was a goal of no pressure for the students to learn that resulted in no assessment practices beyond observation and in no provision of assessment tools for the students to gauge their progress.

**Findings Not Found in the Research Study But Found in the Literature.**

Two aspects of the student role in assessment that are part of the literature of assessment in art education were not found in the units of data for this study: students included in creating assessment tools (Beattie, 1997a; Huffman, 1998; NBPTS, 2000, 2001; Puurula & Karppinen, 2000) and students in the lead role in the assessment conversation (Mitchell & Ross, 1993; Ross et al., 1993).

One impact on an art teacher’s assessment practice that was found in the literature of assessment in art education was not in the findings of this study. Art teachers spending more time on assessment as a consequence of No Child Left Behind (Sabol, 2010) was found in the literature being was not a finding for this study.
Findings Found in the Research Study But Not Found in the Literature of Assessment in Art Education.

The three findings from this research study that were not found in the literature of assessment in art education dealt with the art teachers’ awareness of their assessment practice, steps towards empowering students in the assessment process, and the external forces of power impacting the art teachers’ assessment practices.

First area of findings was in the types of awareness of assessment practice. Six different types of awareness of assessment practice were found in the words and actions of the twelve art teachers.

1. Did not know or had no awareness of their assessment practice.
2. Little realization of assessment practice and needed examples of practices observed.
3. Describing assessment practice rather than listing tools or strategies used.
4. Effortlessly articulated the assessment practices used.
5. Ambiguous connection of awareness to actual practice.

It was found that there was an apparent connection of the amount of professional development in assessment, inclusion in school-wide assessment practices, and the use of an up-to-date art curriculum guide to those art teachers with a greater awareness of their assessment practices. Conversely, it was found that the art teachers who were unaware or uncertain of their assessment practices had not been provided with professional development or a current art curriculum guide.
The next area of findings found in the research study, but not in the literature of assessment in art education, deals with the surmised progression of assessment strategies towards fully empowering students in the assessment process. Based on an analysis of the units of data, a progression of an ever-greater inclusion of the student in the assessment process towards role of the student in shared power was found. The fourteen-part progression is as follows.

1. Open Ended Studio Projects.
2. Checklist Designed to Help Students Self-Assess.
3. Questionnaires Designed to Help Students Self-Assess.
5. Rubrics Used In Self-Assessment.
7. Questions and Assessment Conversations Incorporate Student’s Ideas.
8. Reflective Writing Incorporates Student’s Ideas in the Assessment.
9. Sketches Incorporate Student’s Ideas in the Assessment.
10. Student as Part of Own Summative Assessment.
11. Student Feedback for the Art Teacher.
12. Student as Member of a Group Critique.
13. Students as Partners in Peer-Assessment.

For this area of shared power with students in assessment, it was found that the art teachers who included their students in aspects of their assessment practice did not
discuss any reference doing so to break down hierarchical power aspects of assessment or to address any suppressive silencing of the student voice.

Another finding is there could be a connection between this absence of articulating about power issues in assessment to lack of the art teachers doing any questioning of the power issues impacting their own assessment practices. A potential parallel between the degree the art teachers included their art students through shared power in assessment and the degree the art teacher themselves were empowered within their school district was found. The art teachers who empowered their students to create their own criteria also appeared to be most empowered by their school district through participation in district level curriculum or assessment writing teams. The converse was also found; the art teachers who worked in a school district that did not have structures in place to empower them did not empower their students within their assessment practices.

Lastly, in this section of findings found in the research study but not in the literature of assessment in art education, are the findings around the external, hierarchical forces of power impacting the art teachers’ assessment practices. The following were found to be the main aspects determined external to the art teachers’ classroom that exerted power on their assessment practices.

- Length of class.
- Size of room with storage.
- Student access to technology in the art classroom.
- Participation to professional development in assessment.
- Provision of an up-to-date art curriculum guide that is tied to current state and local visual art standards.
It was found that the art teachers who had the longer classes, and access to those other aspects listed, practiced more of the best practices of assessment in art education, had a greater understanding and awareness of assessment, and focused their assessment on student learning in art. Conversely, it was found that the majority of those art teachers who had the shorter class periods and who did not have access to the other aspects listed exhibited limited use of the best practices of assessment, erroneously employed assessment tools, equated assessment with grading, and focused their assessment on gathering information to improve the look of the student’s artwork. It was found that the art teachers’ assessment practices were either supported or hindered by decisions made by those in power external to the art classroom.

This concludes this discussion on the relationship of the findings from this study to previous research in assessment in art education. Next, considerations for further research will be made based upon the findings of this study and the literature of assessment in art education.

Considerations for Further Research.

Based both upon the findings of the research study and the literature of assessment in art education, there are three areas for consideration for further research. These three areas are: issues of power in assessment including the role of the student, the analysis and use of assessment data by art teachers, and the processes used by art teachers when they create their own assessment tools.

The first consideration for further research to be conducted is in the areas of issues of power in classroom assessment in art education including the role of the student in assessment. There are two rationales for this consideration. One rationale is findings
from this study indicate power issues around assessment in art education. These findings were about empowering students through assessment, hierarchical decisions made external to the art education classroom impacting the art teachers’ assessment practices, and a lack of questioning of assessment issues by the art teachers participating in this study. The second rationale is that through a review of literature in assessment in art education, the topic of discussing power issues around assessment in classroom assessment in art education was not found. Therefore, research studies in the area of power issues in assessment in art education would fill a void in the literature.

The second consideration is additional research regarding art teachers’ processes of analysis and use of assessment data. Findings from this study provided some insight on the on-the-spot analysis, thinking behind the creation and revision of assessment tools, and changes made in instruction. The art education literature on classroom assessment in art education provides information about assessment tools (see Appendix C). There have been research studies on what assessment tools art teachers’ use (Bothell Assessment and Research, 2010; Burton, 2001; Carey et al., 2002; Montana Arts Council, 2010; Morrison & Cirillo, 2012; WESTAF, 2010; Western States Arts Federation, 2010) and the criteria, (Sabol, 2004a, 2006a; Stake et al., 1991). Yet, how the art teachers analyzed the data collected through these tools and make decisions to inform their teaching practice has not been reported in the literature. Understanding how art teachers analyze and use assessment data would further the understanding of assessment for the art education profession.

The last consideration for further research is how art teachers create and refine the assessment tools they use with their students. This research study found art teachers
created assessment tools and several research study survey results also indicated that art teachers use assessment tools they have created themselves (Bothell Assessment and Research, 2010; Montana Arts Council, 2010; Morrison & Cirillo, 2012; WESTAF, 2010; Western States Arts Federation, 2010). Yet, the processes the art teachers employ to create and refine the assessment tools they use in with their students have not been reported. While this study revealed some of the thinking and rationales used by the art teachers when creating assessment tools, more information on this topic is warranted.

Three areas for considerations for future research were made based upon the findings of this research study. In the next section, recommendations for improving assessment practices of art education teachers are presented.

**Recommendations**

In this section of the concluding chapter of the dissertation, recommendations for the improvement of assessment practices of visual art education teachers are made based upon the findings of the research study. The topics of the recommendations are an elaboration on assessment tools in art education, the delineation of the components of a cycle of reflective assessment process, conspicuous focus on assessment during in pre-service art education programs, resource materials for school district administration and school board members on assessment in art education, revision of NAEA position statements, and a focus on student learning in the classroom assessment art education.

Based on the findings of this study, an elaboration on assessment tools in art education is needed for enhanced implementation. The art education literature provided the best practices of assessment, but explanations for application of each assessment tool are often missing and needed. Based upon the findings from this research study,
providing information and examples on how to correctly and fully implement assessment tools in art education are essential for student learning in art education. This elaboration needs to include how to select the most beneficial assessment tool for what is to be assessed—such as content knowledge, skill in using an art tool, social commentary, collaboration, or artistic thinking—and how to consider of the purpose of the assessment when selecting an assessment tool—such as checking for initial understanding, verification of understanding, or growth over time. Additional areas recommended for elaboration, based upon the findings of the research study, include how to create a tool that gathers the needed assessment information, how to adapt assessment tools for the different learning needs of students, and how to include students in the process. Providing these explanations with examples for assessing student learning at different grade levels, at different times through instruction, and for different art education curricular learning outcomes is recommended. These elaborations on assessment tools also need to include examples of how assessment improves student learning in art education. These explanations of the how-tos of assessment in art education could be used in the pre-service art education coursework on assessment, professional development for in-service art teachers, and to inform those art teachers seeking out information on their own. Art educators could benefit from these explanations of the assessment tools, and in turn, so could their students’ learning.

The next recommendation is that resources and discussions about assessment in art education need to delineate the interrelated, yet different, components of a cycle of reflective assessment process. Based upon the findings of this research study, a clear understanding of using the assessment tool, reflection on the data, and using the
information gained to inform the art teacher’s practice appears to be lacking. For example, observation is an assessment tool that provides information that is analyzed followed by providing feedback is one use of the assessment information. Each step be clearly defined and explained individually as well as how each step informs the next. Time differentials of this cycle were found in this study—from on-the-spot, during a lesson, to end of school year. Therefore it is recommended that how timing impacts this assessment reflection process cycle also be explained. A related recommendation addresses using information in making comments to students. Based on the findings from this research study, clarification on the kinds and purposes of the comments made to student based upon assessment data, especially feedback, is needed.

Imbuing art education degree programs with a conspicuous focus on the tools and process of assessment as a professional practice in art education is recommended. It was shown through the findings of this study that an understanding of assessment in art education leads to student learning whereas a lack of understanding tied more to art activity. As found in this research study, the art teachers had minimal to no recollection of assessment coursework. Therefore is it recommended that coursework in assessment for student learning be integral and foundational in art education programs in higher education. Instruction, discussions, and application of the components of classroom assessment for student learning and the processes of a reflective assessment cycle need to be obvious and reinforced. It is recommended that intentional and deliberate instruction on assessment for student learning also include how the role of assessment influences the difference between teaching art and teaching students. Clarification of differences
between assessment and those concepts found equated to assessment in the study of testing used for accountability and grading is also advocated.

Related to the findings from this study and in the literature of art teacher’s personal antecedents in assessment impacting assess practices, assessing these higher education students through the use of the best practices of assessment in art education is recommended. Modeling the use of the assessment tool by the professor with student reflection on the experience of the assessment as a learner, coupled with consideration of how they might use or adapt assessment tools with their own students is also recommended. This experience would inculcate the future art educators with the value for and means of assessing student learning in art education and reinforce assessment as a professional practice of the art teacher.

It is recommended that the master teachers for student teacher placement, as well as the university supervisors, aid in highlighting components of the assessment for student learning in art education as the pre-service art teachers apply these learning during their student teaching. As addressed in Chapter Five, master teachers were noted for their assistance with assessment by a few of the art teachers participating in the study.

Next, it is recommended that literature about assessment in art education be developed to serve as resource materials geared for school district administration and school board members. The decisions found impacting the art teachers participating in this study could be both from school district policy and practice. Highlighting the impact of school district decisions on the student learning on art education, as per the findings of this research study, is recommended. Information on the impact on student learning in art education at the policy level—such as length of class and educational specifications for
building design—should be created for the school board members. This information could be submitted to the National School Boards Association and its state-level affiliates. Literature on the impact of decisions made outside of the art classroom on student learning in art education also needs to be created for the school district administration personnel who implement policy. This information would be submitted for publication to the national professional journals of the organizations of school district personnel, such as National Association of Secondary School Principals or the Association for Middle Level Education, and higher education programs that include principal and district level personnel certification. Placing this information and understanding of assessment for student learning in art education into the hands of school district decision makers could benefit the art teachers, their assessment practices, and the learning of art education for their students.

Reflective of these recommendations on information for policy and practices impacting student learning, it is also recommended that the position statements of NAEA presented in Chapter One that do not address assessment of student learning, be revised to include this important aspect and role of the art teacher. With the release of the finalized New Generation standards and cornerstone assessments to come in this calendar year, the time appears apropos for NAEA to revise these position statements to include assessment for student learning.

My final recommendation based upon the findings of this research study is paramount. It is strongly recommended that any discussions in the literature of art education about assessment tools and processes consistently include how the assessment addresses student learning. Even though that might be implied or assumed, the specificity
of using the wording of student learning is called for because, without this language the
goal of student learning may not be a focused or purposeful. As per the findings of this
study, assessment supports student learning in art education and without assessment, it
was not art education but art activity. If the goal of an art education is to educate students,
then assessment towards the goal of student learning needs to be an evident and integral
aspect of every discussion about assessment.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this research study was to gain insight into art teachers’
understandings and practices of classroom assessment for student learning in visual art
education. Insight was gained through the analysis of the units of data of the twelve art
teachers via an analytical framework made up of principles of feminist assessment and art
educational assessment constructs. It was evident from the findings from this study that
art educators need to be capable of fulfilling their professional obligation to effectively
implement all facets that comprise the practice of assessment for student learning in art
education. Also from the findings of this study, it is clear that the art teacher’s effective
practice of classroom assessment is crucial in facilitating student learning in art
education. Every day, tens of millions of students enter art education classrooms in the
U.S. public schools. It is apparent from the findings from this study that to insure each of
those students has a learning experience in art, rather than one of mere art activity, that
classroom assessment is key for student learning in art education.
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Appendix A: U. S. State Art Teacher License or Certificate Grade Ranges

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade Range of Certificate or License</th>
<th>States Employing Grade Range (There can be more than one range offered per state)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PK–3</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–6</td>
<td>Hawaii; Utah; Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreK–8</td>
<td>Massachusetts; Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–6</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–9</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–8</td>
<td>South Carolina; Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–12 or 5–Adult</td>
<td>Massachusetts; Oregon; West Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–12</td>
<td>Hawaii; Utah; Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–12</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–12</td>
<td>Missouri; South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P–12, PK–12, EC–12, PreK–Adult, or Early Childhood–Adolescence</td>
<td>Alabama; Arizona; Connecticut; Georgia; Indiana; Kansas; Kentucky; Maryland; Massachusetts; New Jersey; New York; Ohio; Oklahoma; Oregon; Rhode Island; South Carolina; Texas; Vermont; Virginia; Washington; Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–12</td>
<td>Alaska; Arkansas; California; Colorado; Delaware; District of Columbia; Florida; Hawaii; Idaho; Illinois; Iowa; Louisiana; Maine; Michigan; Minnesota; Mississippi; Missouri; Montana; Nebraska; Nevada; New Hampshire; New Mexico; North Carolina; North Dakota; Pennsylvania; South Carolina; South Dakota; Tennessee; Utah; Wyoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As of November 2013, information on grade ranges of certificates or licenses available to prospective art teachers was gathered from each states’ department of education office of licensure or certification website.
Appendix B: State Required Exams for Art Teacher Certification or Licensure

As of January 2014, these are the exams required by states for art teacher certification or licensure. Each state has set a passing score for the exam. Information on exams was gathered from each states’ department of education office of licensure or certification website, the test developers’ websites, and through personal communication with representatives of the state’s teacher licensure or certification office, as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Required Exams for Art Teacher Certification or Licensure As of January 2014</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
<td>States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis II Art Content Knowledge—Does Not Include Assessment of Student Learning in Art</td>
<td>Alabama; Delaware; District of Columbia; Hawaii; Idaho; Indiana; Kansas; Louisiana; Maine; Mississippi; Missouri; New Hampshire; New Jersey; North Dakota; Pennsylvania; Rhode Island; South Dakota; Utah; Virginia; West Virginia; Wisconsin; Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Exam Art Content Knowledge—Includes Assessment of Student Learning in Art</td>
<td>California; Florida; Illinois; Michigan; New Mexico; New York; Texas; Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Exam Art Content Knowledge—Does Not Include Assessment of Student Learning in Art</td>
<td>Arizona; Colorado; Georgia; Massachusetts; Mississippi; Ohio; Oklahoma; Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis II Art Content Knowledge and Analysis—Does Not Include Assessment of Student Learning in Art</td>
<td>Arkansas; Connecticut; Kentucky; Maryland; Nevada; North Carolina; South Carolina; Tennessee; Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Education Portfolio—Includes Assessment of Student Learning in Art</td>
<td>Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis II Principles of Teaching and Learning: Early Childhood or Grades 5–9 or Grades 7–12—Includes Assessment of Student Learning in Art</td>
<td>Alabama, District of Columbia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, West Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Exams in Professional Knowledge—Includes Assessment of Student Learning in Art</td>
<td>Arizona; Minnesota; Ohio; Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Assessment of student learning with any exams or no examinations required</td>
<td>Alaska; Arkansas; Colorado; Connecticut; Delaware; Georgia; Hawaii; Idaho; Indiana; Iowa; Maryland; Massachusetts; Montana; Nebraska; New Hampshire; New Jersey; North Carolina; Oregon; Pennsylvania; Vermont; Virginia; Wisconsin; Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of student learning on at least one required exam</td>
<td>Alabama; Arizona; California; District of Columbia; Florida; Illinois; Kansas; Kentucky; Louisiana, Maine; Michigan; Minnesota; Mississippi; Missouri; Nevada; New Mexico; New York; North Dakota; Ohio; Oklahoma; Rhode Island; South Carolina; South Dakota; Tennessee; Texas; Utah; Washington; West Virginia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required Pre-Professional exams or exams testing basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics are not included in this list.
Appendix C: Best Practices of Assessment for Student Learning from the Literature of Classroom Assessment in Art Education

Best Practices of Assessment for Student Learning from the Literature of Classroom Assessment in Art Education

- Pre-Assessment
- Exemplars
- Portfolios
- Journals and Sketchbooks
- Written Assessments
- Artwork
- Classroom Tests
- Checklists
- Critiques
- Art Teacher and Student Conversations
- Art Teacher and Student Interviews
- Group Discussions
- Student Self-Assessment
- Peer-Assessment
- Observation
- Rubrics

This is a compilation from the literature of assessment in art education of the best practices of classroom assessment of student learning in art education. Discussion and references for these best practices are found in Chapter Two.
Appendix D: Guided Interview Questions Protocol

Interview Protocol

I am not asking you anything that I already have the answer for—this is not a quiz, there really aren't any right or wrong answers. I hope this to be a collegial conversation. I am trying to build an understanding of your understanding and use of assessment in your classroom and welcome your questions. You can skip any of these questions.

- What influences you to change your practice, to change what you teach or how you teach?
- What runs through your mind as you pick assessment strategies?
- How do you match the assessment strategy to what you are teaching?
- How do you match the assessment strategy to what the students are learning?
- How do you assess product?
- How do you assess process?
- Do you see these things as equally important?
- Is there more of a focus on the accomplishment (done) than the learning?
- What do you look for when you look at assessment results?
- What things go through your mind when you look at assessment data?
- How do you find out if your students have those requisite skills and understandings?
- What are your most effective assessment strategies?
- What makes them effective?
- What is the typical audience for the results of the assessments used in your classroom?
- In what ways do you communicate the results of your classroom assessments?
- How do you communicate evaluation criteria?
- What criteria do you use to evaluate a project, performance?
- How is information gained from the assessment used?
- How are assessment results communicated?
• How often—daily, weekly, quarterly, etc.—do your students receive a report card or progress report?
• What about grades in art; what are your practices and feelings about this?
• What is your level of participation in parent conferences?
• What is the impact of standardized testing and NCLB testing on your classroom?
• Thinking of yourself as a student, what was your worse experience with assessment?
• Share about your best experience with assessment as a student.
• As a teacher, tell about your worse experience with assessment.
• Tell about your best experience with assessment.
• Have you experienced a change in student learning through effective uses of assessment?
• What are the benefits of assessment? To you, to your students?
• Has your view of assessment changed over time?
• If you were designing the professional development, what would you recommend learning about assessment?
• What do you want to add?
• What do you want to ask me?
Appendix E: Pre-Site Visit Questionnaire

The following are the list of the question in the pre-site visit questionnaire that was emailed to each of the art teachers in advance of my site visit.

- Your Name:
- Your pseudonym, the name I will use to refer to you throughout the research and documentation:
- School/s:
- Grade Level/s you teach:
- Total Number of years teaching:
- Number of years teaching art:
- Number of years teaching the grade level/s or courses you are teaching this school year:
- Number of years teaching at this/these schools:
- Have you taught any other grade levels and content areas? What were they?
- List your degree/s, college/university, and major/s.
- Share about the assessment course/s you had in college.
- What kind of training in assessment have you had as a teacher?
- What kind of learning about assessment have you sought out?
- What do you believe is the purpose of an art education?
- Define your role as an art teacher.
- What is the student’s role in getting an art education?
- When I hear the word assessment, I feel____________________ because …
- What is your definition of assessment?
- What do you feel are the purposes of assessment in your classroom?
- What types of assessment tools and strategies do you use in your classroom?
- What does assessment look like in your classroom?
- What are your three most frequently used assessment tools or strategies?
- What kinds of assessment data influence your decisions as a teacher?
• What is the student’s role in assessment?
• How often do you make art?
• What is your art medium?
• How are the students placed in your class?
• What are the prerequisites for your class?
• What school-wide practices impact assessment?
• How has technology impacted your teaching? Your assessments?
• As a student, what was your art education like?
  • In elementary school?
  • Middle school/junior high?
  • High school?
  • College?
• What are your challenges with assessment?
• What keeps you from doing what you want to do with assessment?
• What supports are in place for you to assist you?
• Anything you want to share?
• What do you want to ask me?
Appendix F: Attributes of Art Teachers Participating in the Research Study

Four different categories of attributes were used in the search for art teachers to participate in the study.

1. At the elementary, middle level or junior high, and high school levels;
2. With different years of teaching experience from new to the profession to seasoned teachers;
3. Working in different sizes of school district; and

The following table shows the attributes of the 12 art teachers participating in the research study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of Art Teachers Participating in the Research Study</th>
<th>Participating Teacher Pseudonym Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SN</td>
<td>AC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience (years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New to the Profession</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>9–15 Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 25 Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+ Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District Size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-size</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBCT in Art</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Participating Teacher Pseudonym Initials Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anderson School District</th>
<th>Elliott School District</th>
<th>Martinson School District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SN: Susan Neal</td>
<td>AC: Arthur Carvé</td>
<td>PC: Patrick Cooper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD’A: Joan D’Arté</td>
<td>MM: Michelle Marks</td>
<td>LD: Linda Delmont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN: Lynn Newton</td>
<td>SP: Susan Pappas</td>
<td>AF: Angela Fielding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS: Kristy Silverman</td>
<td>NL: Nancy Lee</td>
<td>KH: Kay Holloway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: The Use of the Best Practices of Assessment from the Literature of Art Education by the Art Teachers Participating in the Research Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Use of the Best Practices of Assessment from the Literature of Art Education by the Art Teachers Participating in the Research Study</th>
<th>Participating Teacher Pseudonym Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices of Assessment From the Literature of Art Education</td>
<td>SN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplars or Examples</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolios</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals and Sketchbooks</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assessments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Studio Artwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Tests</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklists</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiques</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-Student Conversations</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-Student Group Discussions</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Self-Assessment</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Reflection</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer-Assessment</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
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