Art Therapy Program Development
for Elementary School Students
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Abstract

Thesis Title:

Art Therapy Program Development
for Elementary School Students:

Anissa Ann Hollopeter

The literature on art therapy in schools is sparse and research to support its growth is necessary. The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to explore the development and implementation of an art therapy program in an elementary school setting in order to expand upon the current literature. The American School Counselor Association has stated that academic achievement is intricately connected to students' social and emotional standards of development, yet little information exists on art therapy programs that enhance these developmental standards and ultimately promote academic success. The significance of this study was to discover how art therapy programs could be developed and implemented in an effort to promote the developmental standards expected of students in order to achieve academically. The study resulted in the development of a workbook for elementary art therapy programs and contributes to future development of art therapy programs in elementary schools.
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Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

A recent study of high school graduation rates revealed that one in four U.S. students did not complete high school in 1998 (Holland, 2002). Failure rates were further elevated in many urban school districts, with nearly three out of four students in Cleveland, Ohio quitting school before receiving a high school diploma (Holland, 2002). These statistics reveal serious problems in the United State’s current education system and demands attention. The push for accountability by the American public is increasing, and the greatest challenge schools face today is proving that they can respond positively to pressures and improve academic performance (Busch, 1997). Fundamental changes, then, are a necessity in the American public education system, and new options need to be made available to promote student success.

The American School Counseling Association’s national model for school counseling programs holds within its framework standards for academic and personal/social development (American School Counseling Association [ASCA], n.d.). Academic development requires that students develop the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed for effective learning. Personal/social standards of development require that students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others. These standards are considered to be the foundation for student development and are intricately connected to academic success. There is no defined protocol for nurturing the development of academic and personal/social standards and the education system continues to search for viable
methods of doing so.

The National Art Education Association recognizes the benefits of the creative process and has dedicated itself to the development of art programs that further meet the needs, interests, and abilities of students (The National Art Education Association, 1999). The act of engaging in the art making process has been found to offer significant educational and psychological benefits (McNiff, 1992) which can be utilized by the education system to further promote student success. Art making is an inherent component to the art therapy process and while the use of art therapy within the school setting has only recently emerged, it has continued to grow in recognition (Busch, 1997; Kearns, 2004). This recognition has developed because the inclusion of art therapy in schools offers many advantages that can assist students in the development of positive attitudes while also increasing academic success. Some of the benefits found to be most relevant to elementary-aged pupils include: enhanced abilities to symbolize personal experiences in words and images, greater regulation of emotions and impulses, increased opportunities to observe the self and improved communication abilities (Ball, 2002; Kramer, 1971; Regev & Guttmann, 2005; Rubin, 2005).

Children who have positive academic experiences in elementary school often carry the success with them throughout the rest of their school years (Entwisle, 1995). Thus, the beginning stages of the academic journey, elementary school, seem a good place to begin the implementation of art therapy programs. Furthermore, elementary-aged students respond positively to creative modes of counseling (Ray, Perkins, & Oden, 2004). Linares et al (2005) found that creative based programs designed to promote cognitive, social and emotional skills in elementary school students were beneficial in
enhancing problem solving abilities and student’s emotional and social competencies while also promoting academic achievement. Art therapy, however, has just surfaced in the school setting and there is little information on how the programs should be developed and implemented. Further research needs to be conducted if the growth and expansion of art therapy in the education system, and all the benefits it potentially holds, is to continue.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this extended case study was to develop an art therapy program that could be implemented in an elementary school to promote academic success. Data was collected from students and school staff members to aid in the development of an art therapy program. The development of an art therapy program was generally defined as a program with interventions designed to enhance academic achievement while building on student’s emotional competencies and expected standards of social development for elementary students.

Research Questions

The inclusion of art therapy into the educational setting presented many questions. How could art therapy programs and interventions be adapted to help support and enhance academic achievement, social standards of development, and emotional competencies for elementary students? What type of interventions worked best to promote academic achievement? What kind of techniques worked best to encourage and promote social standards of development and emotional competency? These questions were explored so that an art therapy program could be successfully developed and implemented.
Review of the Literature

To understand how art therapy is implemented in the educational setting one must be able to see how the field has grown and the purpose behind its utilization. A review of the origins of art therapy in its historical context will reveal when, where, and why art therapy was first introduced in school systems and aid in understanding its present day uses. The progression and current status of art therapy, as well as the benefits it has and reasons for inclusion in the educational system will also be explored.

Historically, art therapy in the school setting grew out of a specific need for schools to identify and afford a remedy for students with learning disorders and associated behavioral problems (Busch, 1997). One of the earliest efforts to implement art therapy in the school setting began in 1975 in a Texas school district (Busch, 1997). The services were intended to provide research on the possibility of utilizing art therapy as a diagnostic, screening, and therapeutic tool within a behavioral modification model for “exceptional student education” (Busch, 1997). The use of art therapy programs expanded beyond learning disorders and behavioral problems in 1979 when Florida’s Dade county public schools began an art therapy program with the help of art therapist Janet Busch (Busch, 1997). The school-based art therapy program and associated services provided diagnostic and treatment options for the severely emotionally disturbed student.

In more recent years, art therapy has expanded beyond this and surfaced in mainstream classrooms with many different types of children. It has been used with students who are “at-risk” (Frostig & Essix, 1998), students who are experiencing sensory integration difficulties, and students who have Asperger’s syndrome or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (Kearns, 2004). However, the use of art therapy in the
school setting has developed outside of clinical disorders. School counselors have employed its methodology in determining the need for outside referral or simply to reveal the student’s subjective, emotional world (Ray, Perkins, & Oden, 2004).

Jarboe (2002) stated that the inclusion of art therapy in the education system has slowly increased as it has become more of a necessity in the effort to meet the rising needs of students who require more clinical assistance than can be characteristically met by teachers in the classroom setting. A number of students with no identifiable neurological issues or general development issues encounter problems with academic achievement, behavioral control, social development, and emotional competency. Art therapy programs in the school setting can be seen as having the potential to offer all types of students with various issues the opportunity to work through obstacles that limit their academic achievement, social development, and emotional competencies (Busch, 1997).

The effectiveness of art therapy in the educational setting has been studied by several researchers and found to be beneficial (Brantley & Brantley Kearns, 2004; Prout & Brown, 1999; Ray, Perkins, & Oden, 2004; Roller White, Wallace, & Huffman, 2004). Yet, there has been very little written about the use of art therapy in an educational setting and little empirical evidence to support the findings. In addition, there are few available resources to date that explore how an art therapy program should be developed and implemented.

Hence, the question, “How does one implement art therapy into the school setting?” The American School Counseling Association’s (ASCA Foundation) national model for school counseling programs has listed standards for academic development. It
also has standards listed for emotional and social development, yet there are few art therapy resources available to promote and aid in the development of these standards.

Busch (1997) and Frostig & Essix (1997) are among the few researchers to have effectively developed and implemented an art therapy program in the school setting and create a manual for doing so. Their program manuals offer guidelines and serve to benefit the future development of school-based art therapy programs. However, for the inclusion of art therapy in the educational setting to become more predominant and established, further research needs to be undertaken.

The current literature on art therapy in the educational setting is sparse. From a historical context, one can see how the inclusion of art therapy into schools is still developing and may explain why so little information is available. Art therapy has been making its way into schools, but its pace has been slow, though steadfast. The continuation of school-based art therapy programs requires further development of research. Established methodologies on how to implement and develop an art therapy program within the educational setting is a necessity if success within this subset of the art therapy field is to proceed.

Definition of Terms

Academic Achievement: Refers to the development of attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and skills that contribute to effective learning in the education system (American School Counseling Association, n.d.).

Art Therapy: A term referring to an established mental health profession that uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental, and
emotional well-being of individuals of all ages (American Art Therapy Association, Inc, 2007.)

Art Therapy Program: Refers to a program with art therapy interventions designed to enhance academic achievement and social and emotional standards for elementary students.

At-Risk Students: Refers to identified students who are prone to academic failure due to a variety of risk factors that include: emotional/behavioral disturbance, adjustment problems, emotional or socialization issues, which can be further compounded by family issues of poverty, neglect, violence, and/or abuse (Frostig & Essix, 1998).

Art Therapy Intern: A term used to refer to an art therapy graduate school trainee contracted to work a minimum of 300 hours in a placement setting supervised by a master’s level professional at the site.

Content: A term used in art therapy referring to the subject matter of an image; what is contained within the image itself.

Emotional Intelligence: A developmental term referring to intrapersonal skills and enhanced self-awareness; the abilities to identify, respond to, and express emotions (Schilling, 1996).

Emotional Competency: A developmental term referring to the skills and attributes whose level of development determines the strength of emotional intelligence and the degree of emotional competence (Schilling, 1996).

Formal Art Elements: Refers to elements of artistic design, including: line, shape, form, space, texture, and color.
Image Analysis: A term used to refer to the evaluation of art products and includes: the identification of formal art elements, patterns, content, and structural organization of art images.

Social Standards: A developmental term referring to learning and practicing effective communication skills; working cooperatively with others, resolving conflicts, and listening. Also refers to the development of interpersonal skills, being aware of other’s feelings, moods, and desires (American School Counseling Association, n.d.).

**Delimitations and Limitations**

The delimitations for this study were limited to the site and participants. The setting for this extended case study was at only one school and therefore, cannot be generalized with a reliable degree of confidence to a larger population. In addition, the research participants were limited to those students who had been referred for art therapy by the guidance counselor, teacher or principal.

A limitation found within this study was rooted in the students who were allowed to participate. The students referred for art therapy were limited to primarily first grade students because the school principal discouraged taking older students out of the classroom beyond what was perceived as necessary. Space, location, and supplies were also limitations in the study. The research site had little space for the art therapy program to utilize. Room availability was sparse and the rooms that were available were not set up with desired necessities for art therapy sessions, such as a sink or tiled floors. In addition, there was not a supply budget so supplies were limited to what was available in the art teacher’s room.
Chapter II

Procedures

Characteristics of Mixed Methods Research

The concept of mixed methods research most likely developed in 1959 by researchers who encouraged a “multimethod matrix” to examine multiple approaches to the collection of data, which included both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2003). Mixed methods research has the potential to complement traditional quantitative methods by offering insightful qualitative interpretations (Miller & Gatta, 2006). The decision to use mixed methods for this research was made because it utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods which provided the best understanding for this research problem.

Researchers begin a project with certain assumptions about how and what they will learn during their inquiry (Creswell, 2003). Selecting a knowledge claim is necessary. A pragmatic knowledge claim arises out of situations in which there is a concern with applications or “what works” and solutions to the problem (Creswell, 2003). Pragmatism offers the freedom to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meets the needs and purposes of the research study (Creswell, 2003). Pragmatism also allows the researcher to explore multiple methods and different forms of data collection and analysis that is essential to mixed methods research (Creswell, 2003). For these reasons a pragmatic knowledge claim was chosen for this research.

Type of Mixed Method Design

One of the primary reasons for conducting a qualitative research study was that the study was exploratory, meaning that little had been written about the topic being
studied and the researcher aimed to listen to and understand participants while also building an understanding based on their ideas (Creswell, 2003). For this reason, qualitative data steered this mixed methods research. The quantitative data was used to analyze and draw conclusions in order to build on the qualitative data.

The qualitative and quantitative data in this research study was collected sequentially, in phases. Qualitative data was, as mentioned, collected first, the intent being to explore themes with the participants and staff at the research site. Quantitative data was collected in the second phase, the intent being to expand knowledge pertaining to the efficacy of the art therapy program and to gather additional feedback and suggestions.

A sequential procedure was chosen because the findings for the qualitative data could be expanded upon to add to the quantitative data. The themes discovered through qualitative data collection added to the development of quantitative data (surveys). This elaboration served as a strength because it encompassed participant feedback in assessing the development and adequacy of the art therapy program. This sequential strategy of mixed methods also had its weakness; the quantitative data was imperfect in terms of statistical relevance. The quantitative data assisted in the interpretation of the findings, but was limited, given it was gathered from a small number of participants and staff at the research site.
Visual Model and Procedures of the Design

A sequential exploratory design (see figure 1) was used for this mixed methods research. The priority was given to qualitative data in the first phase and to quantitative in the second phase. The primary focus of this design was to explore a phenomenon and its purpose was to use the quantitative data to assist in the interpretation of the qualitative findings (Creswell, 2003).

![Figure 1. Sequential Exploratory Design](image)

Data Collection and Procedures

Setting. The setting for this research study was at an elementary school on the outskirts of a major metropolitan city in the Midwest. The sessions took place in the library media room or in the school guidance counselor’s office. There were occasions when circumstances prevented the use of the previous locations and a table in the school hallway was utilized. A total of 446 students attend the elementary school, which served grades kindergarten through five. The student to teacher ratio was 20:1 and the race distribution of the school was 88% African American and 8% Caucasian or other. The remaining 6% of the race distribution was not identified.
Participants. The participants for this research study were first and third grade students, ages six through nine. A total of 21 students participated in the study. Sixteen of the students were first graders, 13 were male and 3 were female. Five of the students were third graders, 3 were male and 2 were female. The students participated in group and individual art therapy sessions where a variety of art therapy interventions were utilized. The students were referred to art therapy by their teachers or school guidance counselor because they demonstrated behavioral and/or emotional issues that negatively affected academic achievement and classroom functioning. All participants in the research study were African American.

Types of data. Predetermined and emerging methods of data were utilized as part of the mixed method research. Qualitative data in the form of open-ended questions and interviews (see appendices A for the interview format) was collected first. Observations and image analysis was also collected in the initial phase of the research. Quantitative data in the form of closed-ended questions and surveys (see appendices B for the surveys) was collected in the second phase. The interviews and surveys were developed through the pooling of established surveys by professionals (Brantley & Brantley, 1996; Erford, 2007) and a website (Elementary Survey Results, n.d.). The pre-existing surveys and interview questions were modified to fit the participants and setting.
Methods of gathering data. All data was collected at the school during operational hours. The qualitative data, observations, and image analysis were recorded for each art therapy session. Observations were recorded after each art therapy session in the form of session notes. Image analysis was recorded after each session and also documented in the session notes. The session notes also provided details on the various art therapy interventions that were utilized and evaluated their level of effectiveness. Interviews took place upon first meeting with the students and because of the length of questions, the second meeting as well. Quantitative data (surveys) was collected in the final phase of the research process from the students, teachers, school guidance counselor and principal.

Data Analysis and Validity Procedures

Image analysis consisted of identifying formal art elements, patterns, content, and structure in participant images. The progression of artwork led to the development of themes, which was explored verbally and artistically. The themes were analyzed to determine what types of art therapy interventions were most suitable to include in the development of the program. Specific statements from the participants were explored to further understand themes and content pertaining to the image analysis. Images were analyzed and validated based on professional literature pertaining to art therapy image analysis. Examples of the art therapy interventions, student’s responses to the tasks, and analysis of images will be presented in the following chapters.
Observational data, in the form of session notes, was recorded after each art therapy session to document emotional, behavioral, verbal, and non-verbal responses. This information was reviewed to aid in the development of art therapy interventions for the program by determining participant’s overall response to the session. The surveys were analyzed to determine trends, patterns and effectiveness of the art therapy program and interventions. They were also used to gather additional feedback from the participants, teachers, guidance counselor, and principal. Pre-existing surveys were used in the development of the surveys because they had already been established as valid within the field and further promote validity. The data was compared with other research studies to compare and further validate findings. Data was also discussed with the school guidance counselor/supervisor for further input.

Report Presentation Structure

A more thorough literature review has been incorporated to further the understanding of art therapy program development and implementation in schools. A chapter on collaborating with school agency professionals and parents follows. A chapter on academic achievement and art therapy comes next, followed by a chapter on the expected standards for social development and art therapy, and then a chapter on emotional competency and art therapy. The final chapter focuses on the incorporation of art therapy interventions that were designed to enhance and support academic achievement, social standards of
development, and the emotional competency of students. This chapter examines and discusses student responses to the art therapy interventions, the survey results and final conclusions.

*Role of the Researcher*

The researcher was at the site for the duration of the school year, August, 2006 through June, 2007, as an art therapy and counseling intern working under the school guidance counselor. A working environment and relationships with staff and many students was already developed prior to the gathering of the research material. The experience of interning at this school and the lack of an art therapy program inspired the desire to explore art therapy program development.

*Anticipated Ethical Issues*

Ethical issues were not anticipated during this research study, but supervision was provided by the school guidance counselor. In the event that potential trauma was revisited in the art therapy sessions, the guidance counselor had agreed to make services available to help resolve any problems. No ethical issues transpired during the research gathering process.

*Significance of the Study*

Education is often viewed as the cornerstone to a successful future. One must consider today’s youth, the growing dropout rates, and how a lack of education affects their choices. It is through the educational system that many of today’s youth acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to
learning throughout their life spans. A lack of education often accompanies poverty and crime as well and this makes these dropout rates a concern for every member of society.

The educational system needs drastic changes in order to effectively reach out to today’s youth (Busch, 1997). Art therapy has just recently surfaced in the educational system but offers great potential for increasing academic achievement and enhancing standards for emotional and social development that is expected from students in the educational setting. Reaching students at an early age, while they are still developing their thoughts and opinions, is essential. The addition of art therapy programs in the educational setting presents many possibilities for improving upon the attitudes and skills that today’s youth need and can be utilized by students as young as kindergarten.

This study aimed to explore how an art therapy program could be developed to support the academic, emotional, and social standards that were expected of students. The significance of this study was that it added to the body of literature on a subject for which little has been written about. In addition, this research study and all the information gathered has contributed to a workbook that can be utilized in the elementary school setting.

Expected Outcomes

The anticipated outcome of this research study was to acquire enough information to develop appropriate interventions to improve student performance
in the school setting. In addition, it was expected that an art therapy program that supported and promoted academic achievement and social and emotional standards for elementary schools would be developed.
Chapter III

Literature Review

Art therapy is a relatively new field in the therapeutic world, but it has grown into an established mental health profession recognized by many. Children have a natural tendency to create and art therapy can be seen as a creative and insightful method of delving into the often difficult to understand, psychic world, of a child. The benefits of utilizing art therapy with children in educational setting will be presented, as well as the history of art therapy in schools.

Art therapy and children

The American Art Therapy Association, AATA, (2007) states on its website that art therapy is a term referring to “an established mental health profession that uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages.” AATA sites that art therapy first surfaced in the early 20th century and in the 1940s it became a distinct and growth-oriented occupation. Around the same time educators discovered that a child’s artistic expression reflected cognitive, developmental, and emotional growth. The benefits of art therapy have grown tremendously and can now be seen in many settings: hospitals, clinics, schools, rehabilitation centers, and other health-care facilities throughout the United States (American Art Therapy Association, 2007).
Art therapy has typically been based on two theoretical frameworks: *art as therapy* and *art as psychotherapy*. Margaret Naumberg (1966), an early art therapy pioneer, referred to art as psychotherapy as a therapeutic approach that was based on the awareness of psychic processes that included the unconscious; art was used as a tool in the therapeutic process which placed emphasis on the art and the insights derived from images (Naumberg, 1966). According to Edith Kramer (1971), also an early art therapy pioneer, art as therapy focused more on the development of a sense of identity and engaging in art making because the process alone had therapeutic benefits. Art therapy with children has typically relied more on art as therapy, because children often lack the abilities to uncover unconscious thought patterns and on average respond better to it (Kramer, 1971; Rubin, 2005).

Judith Rubin (2005), a psychologist and highly respected professional in the art therapy field, recognized that the problems children encounter in growing-up, the problems that typically brought them to the attention of adults, almost always reflected conflicts that had not been successfully resolved. She maintained that the problem could either be between the child and the environment or it could be internal and representational of trouble within the child’s inner world. Understanding the inner experiences of a child can be complicated and finding the most appropriate manner of assessing a child’s inner world can be difficult. Art therapy has proven to offer a unique way of understanding a child’s inner world.
The creative process inherent in art therapy has allowed children to explore art making while also allowing for engagement with an adult to help resolve problems.

“Children have two minds – one that thinks and one that feels,” (Schilling, 1996, p. 3). The creative process allows access to both of these minds. The way in which children interact with and experience the world around them is interconnected to their sense of self. Using art therapy with children has many benefits; it allows children to express and share emotions and to learn new patterns of thinking and relating to the world (Waller, 2006). The advantages of using art therapy when working with children are many, but they are also beyond the breadth and scope of this research study. The benefits found to be most relevant to the elementary-aged population include the following: enhanced abilities to symbolize personal experiences in words and images, greater regulation of emotions and impulses, increased opportunities to observe the self, and improved communication abilities (Ball, 2002; Kramer, 1971; Regev & Guttmann, 2005; Rubin, 2005). These benefits are very much a part of the skills and knowledge that students need to improve academic success and the therapeutic process associated with art therapy is a viable method of doing so.

Naumburg (1966), a pioneer in the art therapy field, maintained that art work stems from unconscious content and that through the making of art one can bring unconscious material to the surface and elicit insight. While children may
not be quite capable of insight, the process of creation in the presence of an art therapist can enable a child to get in touch with him or herself, feelings, and appropriate ways of expressing them (Waller, 2006). From this perspective art work can be seen as a medium for self-understanding that provides insight into the inner and outer world of a child in a symbolic manner (Regev & Guttmann, 2005).

Children often have difficulties in mastering an internal locus of control; art work also has the potential to help ease difficulties in relation to this. Through the creative process a child learns about art materials and how to manage the media. This has been found to generate a sense of achievement and control over uncontrolled impulses (Regev & Guttmann, 2005). Art work has also been found to act as a “container” for powerful emotions, thus helping the child to cope (Waller, 2006). The theories about why children have benefited from play therapy parallel that of art therapy; each have helped children master a sense of control and express their wishes to be grown-up (Jarboe, 2002).

Art making also has the potential to help achieve emotional relief; it is easier for children to express “forbidden” and “dangerous” emotions or fantasies in the safe confines of art making (Regev & Guttmann, 2005). The reluctance to verbalize is not uncommon with children and art making provides a symbolic and representational manner of expressing that which cannot be revealed in words. Children have the opportunity to step out of themselves during art making, reflect
on their images, and create new ideas that could lead to healing (Jarboe, 2002; Rubin, 1978). Oaklander (1978), a child therapist, acknowledged that through fantasy and art making a counselor and child can engage in pleasurable activity, while also discovering how a child expresses a feeling.

Art therapy interventions have also been found to be beneficial in the identification of students at risk for aggression (Earwood, Fedorko, Holzman, Montanari, & Silver, 2004). Some level of aggression is healthy because it facilitates competition and competence in social assertion; however, high levels of aggression can lead to negatively overt behaviors such as lying, fighting, stealing, vandalism, and other maladaptive behaviors (Earwood et al, 2004). This is an important consideration for working with young children in the educational setting because these are common types of aggressive behaviors that can cause functional impairment and hinder academic success.

Art work has also been found to help children achieve a more positive self-concept because it provides the chance for self-expression. At the same time it also promotes free choice and total control over the process and product; thus, making it an enjoyable activity with the potential to enhance positive self-image (Regev & Guttmann, 2005). Some art therapists have argued that the physical enjoyment and playful elements of art therapy and creativity have helped children achieve better psychological growth (Waller, 2006). In addition, children who find it difficult to socialize and play can gain confidence through experimenting
with art materials (Waller, 2006). Art therapy also possesses many possibilities for communication. Students can learn new problem-solving strategies by actively communicating with each other and by exploring the unspoken through art activities, which creates a balance between individual expression and communication with others (Long, & Soble, 1999).

The inner world of a child can be one that is difficult to understand, and working through problems that a child encounters can be challenging. The creative process of art making can be viewed as a viable therapeutic strategy that can improve and enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of children. The benefits of utilizing art therapy in the educational setting include, but are not limited to: enhanced abilities to symbolize personal experiences in words and images, greater regulation of emotions and impulses, increased opportunities to observe the self, and improved communication abilities. The benefits of art therapy can be seen as a valuable method to help student’s develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for academic success.

**Art therapy and the education system**

The American educational process is collective, and children typically spend 13 years of their early lives progressing through it (May & Supovitz, 2006). The classroom serves as the basic unit of school to such an extent that it often becomes an important aspect of the child’s identity. For example, a child is often asked what grade he is in rather than how old he is. (Wengrower, 2001). When
children are young, school is one of the most important influences they have, and in many respects school is where children learn the knowledge and skills needed for success later on in life.

During the school years a multitude of influences affect academic development and rate of learning (May & Supovitz, 2006). The influences can be viewed as internal in nature; for example, the student’s developmental state or psychological circumstance. On the other hand, these influences can be viewed as external in nature; for example, the student’s teacher, social network, or educational program (May & Supovitz, 2006). These influences and their associated effects are not independent of classroom functioning; in fact they are very much connected to a student’s academic development.

The American School Counseling Association’s national model for school counseling programs holds within its framework standards for academic achievement and personal/social development for students (American School Counseling Association [ASCA], n.d.). These standards have been considered to be the foundation for student development and are intricately connected to academic achievement. Academic achievement is a term that refers to the development of attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and skills that contribute to effective learning in the education system (American School Counseling Association, n.d.).
Personal/social standards of development require that students develop knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect the self and others. Emotional intelligence is a term referring to the development of intrapersonal skills and enhanced self-awareness; in other words, students should be able to identify, respond to, and express emotions (Schilling, 1996). Emotional competence is a developmental term referring to the skills and attributes whose level of development determines the strength of emotional intelligence and degree of emotional competence (Schilling, 1996). Emotional competency can then be seen as related to the personal/social standards of development that the ASCA endorses and, therefore, constitutes another area that can affect academic achievement (Schilling, 1996).

Social standards of development are yet another area that has been found to affect academic achievement. Social standards of development refer to the learning and practicing of effective communication skills, which include working cooperatively with others, resolving conflicts, and listening (American School Counseling Association, n.d.). Social standards also refer to the development of interpersonal skills, which mean being aware of other’s feelings, moods, and desires (American School Counseling Association, n.d.).

When children do not acquire the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that are needed for academic achievement, problems often occur (Schilling, 1996). In the same vein, when children do not develop their social abilities or emotional
intelligence, problems also occur (Schilling, 1996). In the educational setting these problems become disruptions to the education process and impair classroom functioning.

Problems within the world of a child can be viewed as problems that extend into the educational setting. The challenge of educating students has become one that is not limited to academic factors alone; educators are increasingly required to deal with nonacademic factors that influence classroom instruction and student rate of learning (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006). Teachers are encountering issues in the classroom that go beyond the breadth and scope of what they are capable of handling while trying to maintain a learning conducive environment.

Baker (2004) argued that the efforts to remedy disruptions at the elementary grade level require developmentally appropriate counseling approaches that are often beyond the level of classroom guidance lessons and achievement programs. Students and teachers require greater assistance in order to meet student needs and maintain the classroom environment. Fortunately, the amount of time a child spends in the school setting presents many possibilities for gauging a child’s development and adjustment: their interactions with peers, academic functioning, and social behavior (Wengrower, 2001). In the school setting a child’s personality can be revealed and emotional competency observed.
Problematic tendencies can also be noticed and the best plan of action can be deciphered.

Traditionally, schools have addressed challenging behaviors by implementing social skills programs, intensifying disciplinary procedures, suspending/expelling students, or by placing students in alternative education programs to address their needs (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006). Punitive reactions to challenging behaviors have not had good results and therapeutic strategies are needed to reinforce appropriate behaviors, (Earwood et al, 2004). School-based interventions vary, but those designed to reduce problematic behavior through behavioral monitoring and reinforcement of appropriate behaviors have been found to be very effective (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006).

It is not surprising that the education system has played a significant role in the life of students because it has provided a framework wherein preventive interventions of various degrees could be carried out (Wengrower, 2001). Art therapy within a school setting has just recently emerged, but has continued to grow as a therapeutic strategy to help reduce challenging or problematic behaviors. Children have a natural creative tendency and art making can be a pleasurable experience for them. Research has indicated that elementary-aged students responded positively to creative modes of counseling (Ray, Perkins, & Oden, 2004; Schilling, 1996) and providing students with the opportunity to communicate through art making can be done with relative ease by school
counselors (Ray, Perkins, & Oden, 2004). It seems only natural that art therapy be included into the educational realm because it is a developmentally appropriate method of counseling.

Victor Lowenfeld and Lambert Brittain (1964) were among the first to recognize the impact that art has on the lives of children and sought out “art education therapy” in their book *Creative and Mental Growth*. They believed that art contributed to psychological integration because of the synthesis inherent to the creative process; further, they connected intellectual growth and psychosocial stages of development with children’s progression in drawings. In many ways Lowenfeld and Brittain laid a foundation for identifying developmental delays in children through the art therapy process. This can be seen as significant because developmental delays are often encountered within the school setting.

The educational setting first embraced art therapy as a way to remedy problems with severely emotionally or behaviorally disturbed students (Bush, 1997). One of the earliest efforts to implement art therapy in the school setting began in 1975 in a Texas school district (Busch, 1997). The services were intended to provide research on the possibility of utilizing art therapy as a diagnostic, screening, and therapeutic tool within a behavioral modification model for “exceptional student education,” but the efforts were thwarted after several months with no documentation to support the benefits of art therapy (Busch, 1997).
Decisions to implement art therapy shifted to encompass emotionality, and in 1979 Florida’s Dade county public schools began an art therapy program with the help of art therapist Janet Busch (Busch, 1997). The services provided diagnostic and treatment options for the severely emotionally and/or behaviorally disturbed student. In more recent years, art therapy has expanded beyond this and surfaced in mainstream classrooms with many different children (Jarboe, 2002). Students who were deemed “at-risk” because they demonstrated disruptive behaviors, were socially isolated, emotionally unexpressive, or were functioning below acceptable standards were found to benefit from art therapy (Frostig & Essex, 1998). Kearns (2004) found that students who were experiencing sensory integration difficulties such as, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or autism spectrum disorders, like Asperger’s syndrome, benefited greatly from art therapy and demonstrated an increase in positive classroom behaviors.

Yet, a number of students with no identifiable neurological issues or general development issues face the same problems with academic achievement, behavioral control, social development, and emotional competency (Kearns, 2004). Jarboe (2002) stated that the inclusion of art therapy in the education system has slowly increased as it has become more of a necessity in the effort to meet the rising needs of students who require more clinical assistance than can be characteristically met by teachers in the classroom setting.
Baggerly and Parker (2005) provided group play therapy, which included elements of art therapy, for elementary-aged boys in efforts to address emotional and behavioral problems such as low self-esteem, depression, aggression, and defiance. They found that students developed a more positive self-concept, had more self-confidence, demonstrated internal strength, and were more motivated to work towards higher academic and social achievement. Gut (2000) incorporated art therapy into the educational realm and found that student’s cooperative behavior, peer acceptance, social skills, and problem-solving skills progressed. Incorporating art therapy into the education curriculum was found to be a good therapeutic strategy for improving social skills and was in turn highly recommended for inclusion in the educational setting (Gut, 2000). Regev and Guttmann (2005) found that the mere act of engaging in art making improved student feelings of empowerment and control and offered great potential for psychological benefits. Grytting (2000) reviewed much literature and argued that art making provided children with opportunities for emotional expression, supported social development, built upon interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, and improved children’s spatial and kinesthetic abilities.

The National Art Education Association supports the work of Elliot Eisner (2002) and his book *What the Arts Teach Us and How It Shows*. Eisner’s book discusses the lessons the arts teach and identified several benefits in relation to art education. According to Eisner the arts teach students how to make good
judgments about qualitative relationships, in other words, art making is expressive and the right solution in creating an image is based on the student’s own judgments and acknowledgement of feelings. Art can show students that there is often more than one solution to a problem and more than one answer to a question. The arts also teach students that small differences can have great effects. Lastly, the art can help students learn to say things that cannot be easily said, for example, a student trying to describe an art product must delve into the self in order to discover the feeling and meaning inherent in the image that he/she has created.

The effectiveness of art therapy in the educational setting has been studied by several researchers and found to be beneficial in the lives of children (Brantley & Brantley Kearns, 2004; Eisner, 2002; Prout & Brown, 1999; Ray, Perkins, & Oden, 2004; Roller White, Wallace, & Huffman, 2004). Art therapy programs in the school setting can then be seen as having the potential to offer all types of students with various issues the opportunity to work through obstacles that limit their academic functioning. Art therapy can help students further develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed so that they can improve academic achievement, enhance social standards of development and become more emotionally competent; all of which lend to greater academic success.

Literature for art therapy in the educational setting is still needed. In comparison to other bodies of literature, there has been very little published about
its uses in this setting and even less empirical evidence to support the findings. For example, little research has been conducted on decreasing disruptive classroom behaviors through art therapy, particularly at the elementary school level (Brantley, & Brantley, 1996). The ASCA has expectations for academic development and standards for personal/social development in order for students to be successful and achieve academically, but little research exists on how art therapy can support these standards of development.

Children entering the educational system today have many challenging problems that place them at risk for failure, academically and personally, and for many, school is the only place where they are exposed to structure and safety (Jarboe, 2002). The benefits of art therapy in the educational setting have been seen as having the potential to enhance academic achievement while building on emotional competencies and expected standards for the social development of elementary students. There is still a need to develop a deeper understanding of the therapeutic application of art therapy in schools. The continuation of school-based art therapy programs requires further research. This is a necessity if art therapy is going to continue to grow and develop in the educational realm.
Chapter IV
Guidelines and Collaboration

Art therapists must bear in mind that after the home and family, school is the most important place in the life of a child given the twelve years spent in the education system (Wengrower, 2001). If art therapy programs are to succeed, art therapists must collaborate with teaching and counseling staff as well as parents, to determine the best therapeutic process to follow (Busch, 1997; Frostig, & Essex, 1998; Jarboe, 2002). Given this knowledge, one can recognize the importance of developing a relationship with either the parents or guardians of the referred student and the school faculty.

Within the context of the school setting, it is the responsibility of the art therapist to help students manage and express their internal conflicts and to also promote the ability to change and enhance academic achievement (Frostig, & Essex, 1998). Parents, teachers, guidance counselors and other school staff can offer great insight into how art therapy programs should be developed to best meet the needs of students. The parents, school staff, and art therapist need to work together to establish treatment goals and objectives that are appropriate within the confines of the educational system (Jarboe, 2002). Guidelines are essential and collaboration is crucial in order to ensure this process.
Collaboration with school faculty and parents

Guidelines were necessary to promote professionalism, competency, and confidence in the development of an art therapy program for the school setting. Establishing a relationship and good communication with the school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, principals, and teacher aids was paramount. Art therapists entering into the educational setting need to introduce and explain the profession to the school staff; this can be done through lectures, workshops, presentations of case studies, or other services to supplement the staff (Wengrower, 2001). Providing the school staff and parents with an initial in-service or meeting with them individually can help to educate them on the benefits and uses of art therapy in the school setting. This is especially important in schools where art therapy is a new service being offered, as was the case in this research, because it may be misunderstood as play, indulgence, or a privilege rather than as a viable method for helping students achieve academically and personally (Frostig, & Essex, 1998).

Individual and group meetings took place with the teachers, teacher aids, school guidance counselor, school psychologist, speech therapist, and principal to ensure understanding of the art therapy program and to promote collaboration. If school officials understand the importance of art therapy there is the opportunity for collaboration and the development of professional relationships that ultimately benefit the mutual client, the student (Wengrower, 2001). For example,
Wengrower (2001) found that the work of an art therapist in the educational setting can be more difficult because of the complexities in establishing the basic components of the therapeutic setting and climate, such as arranging appointment times and creating an appropriate, but intimate environment. She found that the process of securing an appropriate work space was paramount and situations such as the school administrator not being able to find suitable room for the sessions was a fairly common problem. Maintaining a relationship with school staff was found to help overcome obstacles such as these and was felt to be important in the development of the art therapy program.

Attending school meetings such as individual education planning sessions, staff meetings, and parent teacher conferences also helped develop a sense of collaboration with school staff. In addition, it yielded valuable information that aided in the development and maintenance of the art therapy program. It also further developed the relationship between the staff and this student art therapist. Once the school staff realized the role I was taking on in working with their students, they were eager to work in partnership with the art therapy program. Meetings were scheduled every other week with the student’s teacher once the art therapy groups began. These meetings allowed for collaboration and the sharing of information and ideas. It also made the process of setting up a schedule for the art therapy groups more feasible throughout the process. In my experience, once a developed relationship with the teacher was established there was greater
willingness and improved flexibility in scheduling the art therapy sessions. The teachers, given they spend the greatest amount of time with the students, were also the most informative in providing feedback on student performance, problems, progress, and offered suggestions for improvement.

In working with students in a school setting one must prepare for interruptions such as field trips, snow days, suspension, absenteeism, testing, transfers to another school etc. There were many occasions where interruptions such as those mentioned prevented scheduled sessions. It is important to maintain a schedule and if a relationship was established with the teacher I found that there was greater likelihood that I would be notified of calendar changes and could schedule make-up sessions in advance. This is another example of the importance found in developing a relationship with the student’s teachers.

Establishing a relationship with the parents was also critical to the process. A letter was initially sent home to the student’s family at the start of the art therapy program. This letter informed the parents of the art therapy services that were available to their children and requested their permission for their student’s participation (see Appendix A). Contact was made immediately following this in the form of a phone call. During the phone call the reason for their student’s referral was discussed, as well as the goals for the art therapy program. The parental consent letter was returned prior to beginning the art therapy groups. A photographic consent form (see Appendix B) was sent home after the art therapy
groups started, however, students participated regardless of photographic consent. The families were contacted on a monthly basis through a phone call or a letter sent home informing them of their student’s progress. On occasion face-to-face meetings took place. These instances occurred infrequently, but were setup in effort to familiarize the guardian with myself and the art therapy program, to answer questions, or to clarify information that could not be handled through a letter or a phone call.

The school guidance counselor was also involved in the process. She participated in many sessions and was actively involved in the art therapy program development. The guidance counselor initially acted as a buffer in she helped facilitate meetings with the school staff and parents. As the process ensued she allowed for more independence, but was always available when needed. Weekly meeting were scheduled with her for one to two hours. During these meetings problems encountered were discussed and information on student progress was shared. Treatment goals and objectives were reviewed and revised during these weekly meetings.

The goals for the art therapy program were developed based on information gathered from the school staff, parents and literature pertaining to art therapy in schools. Frostig and Essex (1998) noted a variety of goals for art therapy programs in schools that encompassed children’s cognitive, social, and emotional development. These goals included: enhanced creativity, task
competency, improved interpersonal skills, improved sense of discovery, release of tension, improved motivation, problem-solving skills, self-esteem and self-mastery through self-expression, improved coping mechanisms, self-awareness, group cooperation, communication skills, and organizational skills. These goals paralleled the goals for the art therapy program in this research study. These goals were also revised throughout the process to ensure student development and academic success. Staff surveys, parental reports and self-reports from the students helped in assessing whether the goals were being met.

By collaborating with the school staff and parents the art therapy program was developed and put into action. It was with the help of these figures that objectives and treatment goals were established and the progress of individual students monitored. The school staff’s role was also important because many filled out final evaluation surveys (see Appendices C – E) at the end of the program to determine the efficacy of the art therapy program and to offer suggestions for improvement. Future research should consider the importance of collaboration because it is vital to the process; if relationships were not established with these individuals the art therapy program would not have not been able to function efficiently.

Guidelines for setting up the art therapy program

The guidelines for setting up the art therapy program were many. Establishing an area for the art therapy groups was of primary importance. This
was followed by developing a referral process for potential art therapy candidates. Once students were selected for the art therapy program, individual sessions were planned and group sessions were formatted. A schedule for the therapeutic process, including the length and duration of the sessions, as well as a specific day for the session to take place on, was also established. Documentation of the sessions was consistent and ultimately aided in the development of the art therapy program.

The sharing of personal information inherent in the art therapy process requires secured space that is appropriate for art media and affords privacy. The sessions took place primarily in the library media room which was rectangular in shape, had ample space, and a large table with eight chairs for creating art work. Books lined the walls and there was plenty of lighting. It was also private and able to contain loud noises. If the library media room was not available, sessions took place in the school guidance counselor’s office. This room was less private and interruptions occurred frequently as the school guidance counselor often stopped by or students barged in looking for the guidance counselor. There was a small round table with four chairs in the corner of the room where art making took place. There were occasions when circumstances prevented the use of the previous locations and a table in the school hallway was utilized. This was by far the least appropriate area for the art therapy sessions because it afforded little to no privacy. This location was avoided if at all possible.
To begin setting up art therapy groups one must first identify the students to be worked with. Students were referred for this art therapy program by teachers or the school guidance counselor because they demonstrated behavioral and/or emotional issues that negatively affected academic achievement and classroom functioning. While the characteristics of the students referred for art therapy were many, there were some characteristics that were commonly found. Issues that manifested in the classroom included: anger, aggression, irritability, withdrawal, depression, isolation, poor self-image, low self-confidence, and poor communication skills. Some of the students presented serious emotional issues that were a result of his/her environment outside of school. Some examples included: a parent or close relative in jail, homelessness, living in community-based shelters, extreme poverty, family member(s) with health problems, and foster care.

The behavioral and emotional issues listed above were visible in the school setting and resulted in repeated office visits, calls home, bullying behaviors, inappropriate language, frequent visits to the nurses office, violence, theft, lying, and suspension to name a few. These behaviors were disruptive and/or damaging for the student and in turn caused a negative effect on not only academic functioning, but also on the personal development of the student. These students became familiar to me prior to the art therapy groups because they were
often in the office or being discussed in my presence by school faculty when the program was being set up.

Parental consent that allowed student participation, as mentioned above, was gathered prior to beginning the art therapy sessions and was a necessity. The referred students were met with individually to conduct the initial interview; this took place over two sessions. A variety of questions were asked during the two-part interview (see appendix G). During the interview the purpose of the art therapy program was discussed. The students were told that the art therapy program would help him/her to learn how to communicate better with classmates, teachers, family members, and friends. The students were also told that the art therapy group would be a special group where student’s could express themselves and learn new skills to help them be better students. Lastly the students were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could leave the art therapy groups if they felt it necessary.

After the interview process students were placed in either art therapy groups, scheduled for individual sessions, or both. The structuring of group sessions was important; the students were divided into groups so that each group had a peer role model that could demonstrate appropriate behaviors for the other students who were more inclined to be impulsive or needed consistent redirection. The groups were constructed of five to six members and meet weekly for 30 to 45 minutes depending on classroom availability. The groups met for an average of
twelve weeks. The individual sessions also took place on a weekly basis, lasted 30 to 45 minutes, and met over twelve weeks.

The groups were structured and followed the same routine weekly. A review of group rules constructed by the groups began all the art therapy groups (An example of the group rules will be discussed in chapter 5). A check-in procedure followed the group rules; this procedure encouraged the students to share information on how they were feeling that day and why. The activity and directives for the day were then presented and the art task would then ensue. Following the completion of the art task the members were encouraged to share their image. The processing of the image allowed the members to share information about their art work, their feelings in relation to it, things they would have done differently etc. Members were also encouraged to provide their peers with feedback on their images. The groups closed with a check-out whereby the members shared their feelings about group for the day.

To encourage group participation and to promote the use of appropriate behaviors a rewards chart was used. Student’s names were placed on a chart and each time they demonstrated appropriate behaviors they were awarded a sticker. Group members could also nominate other members for a sticker. Once the stickers were awarded to the student they were not taken back if undesirable behavior occurred, hence the students were not punished for inappropriate behavior, rather they were awarded for appropriate behavior. This was felt to be a
useful method for focusing on the positive behaviors the students displayed. Once
the students reached ten stickers they were allowed to pick an item from the prize
box which contained items such as pencils, erasers, pieces of candy, notepads etc.
Students who earned a prize received it after the group ended for the day and after
the other students returned to the classroom.

Record-keeping procedures were followed for every session. All sessions
were documented in the form of session notes immediately following the group.
The session notes documented student behavior, affect, verbal and nonverbal
communication, and progress. The sessions also noted the goals and objectives for
each particular session, as well as information pertaining to the art product
produced. The session notes were shared only with the school guidance counselor
as she was my on-site supervisor.

In conclusion, the development of an art therapy program requires that
school staff, especially teachers, be involved. Parental involvement is also just as
important. There are necessary guidelines that need to be followed to ensure the
development and implementation of an art therapy program in an elementary
school setting. This requires collaboration with important figures in a child’s life
and is essential if art therapy programs are to be professionally respected and
viewed as competent.
Chapter V

Academic Achievement

The students were referred to art therapy by their teachers or school guidance counselor because they demonstrated behavioral and/or emotional issues that negatively affected academic achievement and classroom functioning. Academic achievement is a term that refers to the development of attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and skills that contribute to effective learning in the education system (American School Counseling Association, 2007).

In speaking with the school staff there were several behavioral and emotional areas of concern that were brought to my attention and related to student achievement. The areas most commonly found to effect academic achievement and student performance included: poor cooperation skills, difficulties with problem solving, poor impulse control, and disregard for rules and authority. Therefore, a majority of the goals for the art interventions aimed to further develop abilities to work together, build coping mechanisms, improve impulse control and problem solving abilities while increasing appropriate behaviors. Five approaches were designed and implemented to meet these goals and will be discussed within this chapter.

*Group rules*

The “Bulls Group” was an art therapy group composed of six members
from the same first grade classroom (see appendix G for a description of the Bulls Group). All of the participants in this group were male and African American. Thomas, Jamal, Vincent, and Willy were 6 years in age, and Christian and Ray were 7. The group met weekly for 50 minutes after lunch in the library media room. The students were referred to art therapy by their teacher because they demonstrated behavioral and emotional issues that negatively affected academic achievement and classroom functioning. The issues that needed attention included: disregard for rules and authority, angry outbursts, poor socialization skills, and fighting with other students.

During the “Bulls Group’s” first session it became apparent that group rules were needed. There had been a few incidents that led to this decision: members had inappropriately touched other members, two members had engaged in name calling, and one student had his art work made fun of. In an effort to address these problems I made the decision to have the members create a group rules poster as the activity for the next session. The goal of the Group Rules activity was to have the members actively and independently identify rules that they felt the group needed.

The group sat down in the library media room for their second session and one of the members began messing with a book on the shelf behind him. I asked the other members what they thought about touching books in the media room. Christian said that it was “not good because the book was not his and we are
starting group.” The other members agreed. We then began discussing respect for people and other’s property. This conversation shifted to a discussion on rules and why they exist. The members came up with many examples for why rules are important: rules help keep kids safe, they let kids know what they can’t do, they keep kids out of trouble, and they help kids make good decisions. As a group we decided that rules were needed to ensure everyone’s safety and to promote respect. The members were asked if they thought the group needed to have some rules and all replied yes, all be it with some hesitation. A discussion of what rules the group should have then began. Together the members came up with a list of seven rules. I added two additional rules that the members had not generated on their own and I felt to be important: have fun and confidentiality.

After I wrote the rules down members were asked to create images to help them remember the rules with markers on small squares of paper, approximately 3” by 3.” Many of the images depicted symbols; Christian drew a hand in a circle with a line through it for the keep your hands to yourself rule, Thomas made a smiley face for the have fun rule, Ray drew a face with a hand over the mouth for the be quiet rule, and Jamal drew a boy with his hand in the air for the raise your hand rule (see figure 2). After completing the images the members took turns discussing their products. The members were all happy with their images with the exception of Willie. He said that he did not like his pictures because they were, “ugly and nobody likes them.” This seemed to indicate that Willie was feeling
insecure about his artistic abilities and I felt the group needed to further discuss the importance of respecting other people and their art work. I noted that as a group we would not talk badly about another person’s art work or laugh at it, but Willie seemed unconvinced. Christian spoke up and said that Willie was a “good artist” and Vincent noted that he “would not laugh.” The members offered support
and demonstrated elements of cohesion in the exchange. One of Willie’s images was later placed on the no laughing at others art rule (see figure 2) because it seemed appropriate in terms of the rule. Willie was always the one to mention this rule in later sessions when the rules were reviewed.

After the group processed their images they were collected so that I could make a poster to display the group rules. The rules were all printed out and accompanied by the images the members created. To ensure that the members understood the rules and images they had created, I also made small images to accompany the written out words. This was done to further help the students remember the rules, some of which could be difficult to read without the assistance of additional images.

Prior to entering his classroom at the session’s end Thomas expressed his gratitude for the development of the rules and said, “I’m real glad we made rules, thanks Ms. H.” He had been one of the boys involved in the name calling and was visibly upset by the incident. Thomas was chubby and rather short for his age. He was also missing his two front teeth and his clothes were usually large and tattered, likely a hand me down from his older brother. He was often picked on by the other students. Thomas was quick to retaliate back, but several verbalizations had made it apparent that he was bothered by it. His gratitude for the rules further supported the importance of group rules.
In allowing the group members to formulate their own list of rules individual responsibility was encouraged. The students were task oriented in generating their list of rules which showed their efforts in maintaining good focus and concentration. A sense of cohesion and community also began to develop within this session. The members seemed to understand that the rules they were creating were for them and intended to help keep them safe during the group meetings.

*Colorful figures of behavior*

In the classroom setting the first grade teachers had integrated a behavior chart which was a very common method used to manage classroom behaviors in this school and similar techniques have been commonly implemented in other schools. Each student’s name was placed on the behavior chart. Above the name was a space for a small square and within the square one would find either a green, yellow, or red square. The students began each day with a green square which signified appropriate behavior. As the day proceeded the color was subject to change depending on the students’ behavior. Once an incident deemed inappropriate occurred the students were given a warning and after the second incident their color was changed to yellow. Yellow was then changed to red after additional inappropriate behaviors and warnings. If students demonstrated appropriate behavior their color could be changed back in reverse so that the students could get back to green.
When the “Bulls Group” began many students started their check-in process by noting the color they were on for that day. Green became commonly associated with happiness, yellow with worry, and red with anger. In speaking with the teacher about how this chart affected their emotional state as well as their classroom behavior, an activity was designed to focus on the behaviors associated with color changes. Green, red and yellow model magic was used to create figures.

On the day the activity was scheduled the “Bulls Group” entered the library media room and were immediately excited when they saw the model magic which sat in the middle of the table. Despite the apparent excitement the group displayed, we began in the same manner we did every week; a review of the group rules was discussed first and was followed by the check-in process. To begin the activity the students and I started with a discussion of the behavior chart in their classroom. We talked about why the behavior chart was there, what kind of behaviors caused a color change, and the feelings associated with it. Appropriate behaviors such as sharing, following directions, and helping the teacher were listed by the members and sited as behaviors that could help students get back on green. Negative behaviors such as not listening, speaking out of turn, and fighting with other students were behaviors discussed as having a negative impact on the behavior chart.
After the discussion the students were given a small ball of green model magic and asked to create a figure, real or imaginary, that represented behaviors and feelings associated with green on the color chart. The same directives were given for yellow and red. The students eagerly worked on their figures and socialized throughout the process. Time limitations and the drying of the model magic required the activity to be carried over into the next week. As the group came to a close the figures were placed in front of the students and feelings about their products were discussed.

All of the members had given their figures names. They shared their names with the group and were asked to discuss how these figures might feel. As the students talked about their feelings in relation to their figures, most noted that their feelings were similar to those of the figures. For example, Ray said his yellow figure, “Spinney” was “worried about his friend the Angry Lightening Boy who is so mad he’d red” (see figure 2). Ray said that when he is on yellow he felt “worried” and when “other kids are on red I worry about them.” All of the members related to what Ray had said and shared similar stories. There was a great deal of energy and the students were eager to discuss their feelings. As mentioned above, time was an issue so the project was extended into the next week.
The following week’s session began as scheduled, followed the same routine, and also took place in the library media room. The members were excited because they were able to look at their figures which were dry and hardened. The members were given markers and asked to make faces on their figures while we reviewed the previous week’s session. Once the members finished their figures they were put into two groups of three. The members were each assigned a color, one red, one green, and one yellow. They were then asked to use their figure, based on the assigned color, to demonstrate how students on that color behave. Each member was given a chance to be each color and the members were asked to have their figures demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. If
members had difficulties generating scenarios on their own a scenario was provided for them.

The members interacted well with one another and demonstrated their knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Christian, Thomas, and Ray were in one group. At one point Ray was the red figure, Christian was yellow and Thomas was green. Together they played out a typical classroom scenario which they had come up with on their own. Ray, using the red figure tripped the green figure and threateningly said, “I’ll punch you!” Christian, the yellow figure, warned Ray’s red figure that “tripping kids and fighting is wrong and you are going to get in big trouble by our teacher.” Thomas used his green figure to act out hurt feelings at being tripped and said that “tripping people is mean and I don’t like it.” He also said, “I don’t want to fight your guy.” Ray then used his figure to apologize and tried to make amends, “I’m sorry. Can we play basketball instead of getting into a fight?”

A variety of scenarios were played out with the figures and the group seemed to enjoy the activity. The task allowed the members to explore inappropriate and appropriate behaviors in a creative way. In closing the session the members agreed that this was one of their “favorite art projects” and they were eager to share their figures with their teacher. They also verbalized some new things learned. Ray stated that he learned that “fighting hurt people’s feelings” and Christian learned that “telling kids they are acting bad can help them.”
The relaxation kit

Children in the school setting are still developing age appropriate milestones, such as, an internal locus of control; they are still learning how to appropriately control their bodies and emotions. Several students were referred for art therapy because they were having difficulties controlling their behavior and emotions. For many this meant blatant disregarded for school rules and disrespect for authority figures. Of these students, many did so in an impulsive and often violent manner. Robert was one such student. At the beginning of the school year Robert had been defiant and was often in trouble, but the incidents were more benign in nature and he continued to do well academically. As the school year progressed his behaviors became increasingly destructive and he began fighting, throwing chairs, tipping over desks, ripping posters off the wall and so on. Several violent outbursts resulted in trips to the principal’s office and suspension; Roberts’s academic performance plummeted. In addition, Robert made almost daily trips to the nurse’s office because of some ailment or another. At the time Robert was undergoing psychological evaluations with the school psychologist in effort to understand his intense expressions of mood, anger, and impulsiveness.

The first meeting with Robert revealed much. He was a 7 year old African American male of average height and weight, but his verbalizations were beyond average for a first grader. He was bright, very articulate, and communicated
subject matter with clarity and understanding. He was also cooperative, polite, and eager to share information about himself. As we talked about why his teacher referred him to art therapy he was actively involved. He explained that he knew the rules and he knew what he needed to do to stay on green on the behavior chart, but he had a hard time when he got mad. He said that when he was angry it made him feel crazy inside and in turn act crazy. Robert was also very adept at describing his thoughts and feelings.

Robert and I worked together primarily in the library media room on an individual basis for fourteen weeks. The art therapy goals for Robert included the following: to decrease the negative incidents that occurred in the classroom setting, to identify the triggers for angry feelings and develop appropriate methods for coping with them, to promote relaxation and more appropriate coping mechanisms, and to decrease the number of nurse and office visits. Roberts’s teacher was very concerned with the amount of time he spent out of the classroom which had a tremendous impact on his academic functioning. Together we decided to create an area in the classroom where Robert could go to when he could not control his anger, thus Robert’s calming corner developed. This was a small cubby hole like area that was slightly secluded from the main classroom because it was in the back corner of the room and separated by a book shelf. There was also a large window that looked out onto the trees in the school yard.
Robert was encouraged to go to his calming corner when his anger became difficult to control or he was feeling worried, frustrated etc.

To promote the effectiveness of the calming corner, art therapy tasks were incorporated in the form of a relaxation kit that Robert could keep in his corner. This kit consisted of a box that had a stress ball, soothing images, markers, pencils, blank pieces of paper, mandalas, and feeling cards with room to write out feelings. The purpose behind the relaxation kit was to provide Robert with an outlet for his anger while also remaining in the classroom and learning how to self-soothe. It was believed that if Robert could identify and cope with his anger while reducing the number of office visits then his academic performance may improve.

When I came to pick up Robert for our fourth session, he was visibly upset and was already on red despite it only being nine in the morning. We headed towards the library media room for the session, but Robert was quiet. This was usually a time in which he would tell me about his morning, but on that day he said with a grunt, “I don’t want to talk about my morning.” During check-in he said he was feeling “really terrible.” He was encouraged to elaborate on this and spoke of an altercation with a classmate. Before the school day had started he and a classmate were “fighting over a ball” in the school yard. As Robert spoke the anger seemed to drain from him and his mood seemed to lighten. We discussed how his body felt when he was angry versus calm and the triggers that caused
these feelings. He said his body felt “really mad and I make fists.” I took this opportunity to bring up the relaxation kit and introduced the activity. Robert was shown the items for the relaxation kit and the blue shoe box that would contain them. He was then given a variety of supplies to decorate it: foam letters and shapes, magazine images, markers, construction paper, plastic jewels, stickers, pom poms, glue, scissors, and other miscellaneous items.

As Robert glued on shapes, images and spelled out his name on the boxes top he continued to discuss the incident in the school yard that morning. After talking about what he could have done differently Robert determined that he and the boy “should have taken turns with the ball and should have never been fighting.” As his box grew closer to completion he commented on the vibrant colors and how they represented “all my different feelings.” On the inside of the box he placed pictures of serene landscapes and stated that he would like to “feel calm on the inside instead of angry.” After the box was finished Robert was asked to decorate a 12” by 18” piece of construction paper in a color of his choice with soothing images for the wall in his calming corner. Robert thought this would be a “good idea to help him relax” and made an image with a moon, landscapes, and a waterfall (see figure 4).

After lunch Robert placed his relaxation kit in his calming corner on the windowsill. He hung up his soothing image and gazed at. Robert and I sat down on pillows and talked about what it might be like to sit there when he was having
a hard time. He commented on the serenity of his chosen images and said they were “peaceful.” He said, “If I could look at the moon when I’m real mad it might help me think of how nice I feel at night when I’m in bed.”

The relaxation kit was kept in Robert’s calming corner and utilized often.

For Robert, a student that very much wanted to be an academic achiever, this space in combination with his relaxation kit and image helped create a safe place that he could retreat to when his behavior began to spiral out of control. His incidence of office trips decreased over the last couple months of school though
they were not completely eliminated. Robert’s teacher even commented that her classroom next year might feature a calming corner area because it helped give Robert a chance to calm down without leaving the classroom.

The book of good choices

The “Book of Good Choices” was an art therapy project that many participants made. The goal of the activity was to help students in their understanding and identification of good choices. It was also intended to help students develop problem-solving skills while also building on coping mechanisms and communication skills. After all, many of the students were in the art therapy program because they made poor decisions, demonstrated poor coping and so on. Robert, as mentioned above, was one of the students who made poor decisions. He was well aware of what the classroom and school rules were and what was expected from him. His troubles came with managing his impulses and anger and communicating them in an appropriate way.

Robert talked a lot about his “bad behavior.” He also had a tendency to talk down about himself and would say things like, “I’m dumb” or “I don’t do anything right.” In sitting and speaking with him it was apparent that he wanted to make better decisions so a “Book of Good Choices” seemed an appropriate intervention. The objective of the task was to help Robert identify positive choices he could make and the book could serve as a concrete form he could look back and reflect on.
Robert sat down in the library media room on the morning of our scheduled session and smiled. He announced with obvious pride, “I’m on green today and have been for the last two days!” He said that he felt “proud because I’ve been on green for so long” during check-in and spoke of the ways he had been “trying to help his teacher.” The day before he had helped his teacher “pass out counting cubes” and said, “I was the first to sit in my seat we got up from the reading rug.” He said that his teacher had told him he was “being an academic achiever” and he was obviously feeling pleased.

A book was created for Robert with blank pages prior to the session to conserve time. It was given to him and the concept of good choices was discussed. Robert was asked about the good choices he felt academic achievers made. Multiple situations were presented to him and he was asked how he would react. He was also encouraged to explore the ways in which other people might react. Robert was then encouraged to use the book and markers to identify good decisions he needed to make to be an academic achiever and to record them in his book. He immediately got to work on his first page “I’m not going to shout out” (see figure 5). He required assistance on the spelling of the words, but worked independently. He explained his image as he worked. It was a picture of him “sitting at quietly at his desk, listening to his teacher, and being an academic achiever.” Robert said, “I get in trouble a lot for talking out of turn, this makes my
teacher mad, but if I’m quiet it makes her happy.” This was a big step for Robert because he demonstrated empathy skills in relation to his teacher for the first time.

The next image Robert worked on said “I will ignore people who are trying to get me in trouble.” Robert said this was a “good decision” because he gets in trouble sometimes when he listens to some of the bad kids at school. This activity took multiple sessions to complete and many other pages followed. The additional pages included statements such as it is a good decision to be kind, I will listen to my teacher, or it is a good choice to raise my hand. The activity seemed to do a nice job of documenting the different decisions Robert felt were appropriate for school. In addition, it served to help Robert communicate areas he felt he needed to improve in and revealed his manner of coping with difficulties.

Figure 5. Robert’s Book of Good Choices
The Good Choices Book seemed to be an appropriate activity to help students make appropriate decisions for school. It also helped students identify areas in need of improvement and more appropriate methods of coping. Perhaps even more importantly it served as a concrete form that students could reflect back on. Robert, for example, finished his book and said, “I have not shouted out in class as much since I drew the first page of this book.” He even chose to incorporate it into his calming corner to further help him to remember to stay calm.

**Draw yourself at school doing something**

For this task students were simply asked to draw themselves at school doing something. The purpose of this activity was to find out how students saw themselves in the school setting. The open ended directives allowed for the student to make a decision on how the self was drawn, be it in a negative light or a positive one. The task directives were subject to individual interpretation and much could be gathered about the student’s self-concept and feelings in relation to their academic role. In addition, the task helped promote focus and the exploration and communication of feelings.

This task was first implemented with Jacob, a 6 year old boy in the first grade. Jacob was African American and of average height and weight. He had tight brown curls that framed his face and large, expressive brown eyes. He was very outgoing and talkative. Jacob was an only child and lived with both of his
biological parents who were married. He often engaged in attention seeking behavior in the classroom. This behavior ranged from yelling out or getting out of his seat to standing on top of his chair or telling imaginary tales about his trips to Africa. Jacob participated in the art therapy individually on a weekly basis for twelve weeks. Each session lasted 30 minutes and usually took place in the library media room. Jacob was referred for the art therapy program by his teacher because his behavior was extremely disruptive, he had poor focusing abilities, and he did not communicate well with other students. The goals for Jacob included: identification of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, increased focusing abilities, and improved communication skills.

On the afternoon of our scheduled fifth session, testing for the fourth and fifth graders was taking place. Jacob had gotten in trouble that morning and I saw him sitting in the principal’s office when I arrived at the school. To begin our session I asked him about the incident. He said, “I don’t want to talk about it, I’m in a bad mood.” I decided to leave the issue alone for the moment and proceeded with the directives for the Draw Yourself at School Doing Something task. When I handed him the materials he grunted in protest, but began searching for a red marker. He impatiently asked, “Where is that darn red marker?” After finding it he sat there for a minute tapping the marker on the table.

Jacob began drawing red squares with the days of the week, Monday through Friday, beside them. He then proceeded to create six human figures with
frowning faces that were encapsulated and all in red. Green colored the background between the figures (see figure 6). He demonstrated good focus and worked at a slow pace. When Jacob was asked to talk about his image he looked down at the floor and said, “It’s about me being on red all week.” He was asked if this is how he felt at school most of the time and he said, “yeah.” He also said, “I don’t like how I feel when I’m on red.” When asked what he would like to change about his image he said, “I would like it if I was on green instead of red.” When questioned about the significance of green he said that it was “the color of academic achievers” and that’s what he would like to be. Discussion continued and ideas for behaving like an academic achiever followed. By the time the session ended, Jacob’s mood seemed to brighten and he had generated multiple ideas on how to improve his behavior.

The art task revealed much about Jacob’s perception of himself and his role as a student. His verbalizations implied that Jacob had a negative self-image and fears of inadequacy. Jacob really felt like he was a bad student and doubted his capabilities to be an academic achiever. The green behind the figures, being Jacob associated green with good behavior and academic achievement, may have symbolized the hope Jacob had in being an academic achiever. Jacob demonstrated good focus as he worked and communicated acknowledgement of his at times inappropriate behavior.
Reflection on the art therapy academic achievement tasks

The goals for the art interventions were to enhance academic achievement by further developing abilities to work together, improve coping skills, enhance communication skills, improve impulse control, and to further develop problems solving abilities while increasing appropriate behaviors. Each of the art interventions were tailored to meet these goals in one capacity or another and were found to successfully do so.

The creation of the Group Rules Poster helped the students establish boundary lines so that they treated each other and the art therapy process with respect. It was a necessary step for the group and in creating the rules a sense of cohesion seemed to develop; the members were aware that these were the rules
for their group and they contributed to their development. In other words, they
had a say in what went into the rules. The Colorful Figures of Behavior activity
seemed to help the students further identify appropriate versus inappropriate
behaviors in a fun and playful way. It also helped the members identify feelings,
solutions to negative situations, and ultimately promoted self-exploration.

The relaxation kit was designed to help students develop impulse control
and to provide them with an outlet when the classroom became too much to
handle. For students with frequent trips to the office, this task offered the potential
for remaining in the classroom while also learning how to self-soothe. If students
were able to identify their anger and cope with it without further incident while
also reducing the number of office visits, then academic performance may be
more susceptible to improvement.

The Good Choices book was designed to help students in their
understanding and identification of good choices so they could further incorporate
them into their lives. Another goal was to help students develop their problem-
solving skills while also building on coping mechanisms and communication
skills. The Draw Yourself at School Doing Something task helped shed light on
the inner-world of the students; their self-image and perceived roles as students
was very much revealed. In hoping to further improve student academic
performance one must consider the effects of student self-image. If behavior is
going to improve and academic achievement enhanced student’s need to feel like
they are capable of changing for the positive, this task helps in forming a foundation to build upon. This task also seemed to help students explore their concept of self or self-image, promoted focusing abilities, and allowed for the exploration and communication of feelings.
Chapter VI  

Social Standards of Development  

Social standards of development was an area found to affect academic achievement that was explored in the development of the art therapy program. Social standards of development refers to the learning and practicing of effective communication skills, which includes working cooperatively with others, resolving conflicts, and listening (American School Counseling Association, n.d.). Social standards of development also refers to the development of interpersonal skills, which implies the need for being aware of other’s feelings, moods, and desires (American School Counseling Association, n.d.). While formulating goals for the students many of the aforementioned social standards of development were included. Five activities will be discussed that were designed and implemented to meet these goals.  

My World Collage  

The goal of this activity was to encourage self-expression, self-awareness, and to help the group members share personal information about themselves. The sharing of personal information involves self-awareness and required the members to think consciously about themselves. It also allowed the members to further get to know each other, practice listening skills, and to develop a sense of community or group cohesion. To begin the activity the members were given a piece of 12” by 18” piece of colored construction paper of their choice. They were
also given markers, previously cut out magazine images, glue, and scissors. The magazine images were cut out previously because of time limitations and to ensure project completion. The magazine images also varied in content and theme. For example, there were pictures of people, families, food, sports, toys, games, nature, houses, and places. To begin the activity the members were asked to create a large circle on their paper with one of the markers. The group was then told that they were going to be creating an image about their world. To further their understanding they were asked to choose images that were a reflection of themselves: hobbies and/or interests, the things they liked/did not like, things that they would like to have, images that reflected their family and/or friends, or images that they simply enjoyed.

This activity was presented to the Bulls Group (for a description of the Bulls Group see appendix G) in the third session. The session began with a review of the group rules and then the check-in process. All of the members stated they were “happy” with the exception of Christian. He said that he was feeling “sad.” Christian was asked to explain this and he said, “I miss my Dad. He was supposed to come see me this weekend, but had to work. It makes me feel sad that I don’t get to see him very much.” Without any prompting Jamal spoke up and said, “I miss my Dad a lot. He’s in Florida and I have not seen him in a long time.” As a group we continued to discuss feelings of sadness and loss, all members were able to identify times they felt sad with the exception of Ray. The group also discussed
the things they did to help them feel better when they were sad. Going outside to play, watching television, and playing video games were among the solutions the group generated. Christian said that he “liked to make pictures for his Dad because it made him feel better.” He also said that his pictures “might help Dad remember to come and see me when he looks at them.” The other members thought this was a good idea and Jamal said he was “going to make pictures to send to Dad so he knows I love him and miss him.”

The session shifted at this point as the scheduled activity began. The members were given the directives and they immediately began working. There was a lot of conversation and explanation for chosen images as the members worked. The members shared all supplies without incident and interacted appropriately. As the session drew closer to the end the group was told they only had a few minutes to complete their collages and they scrambled to finish their images with great excitement. The members were then asked to process their images and they all wanted to be the first to lead the discussion. Thomas said that he thought “Christian should go first because he is sad today and maybe that will make him feel better.” The other group members agreed.

Christian smiled at his nomination to go first and launched into an explanation of his image (see figure 7). He had chosen yellow paper for the activity because it made him “feel happy.” His images expanded beyond the circle and covered the paper. He talked about each individual picture with excitement
and a smile. Christian said he included, “sports because I really likes playing sports and am good at them.” He had also chosen images of food he liked, “macaroni and cheese and cookies.” He also said he drew “pizza because its my favorite food.” As he pointed to images of families he said, “I picked these because they are kind of like my family.” He pointed to a man smiling who was placed in the center of his image and said, “This guy is like my Dad.” His affect changed with this statement and his smile disappeared. He then moved on to an image of a house and said it represented his “old house.” He said the old house was better because his “Dad and sister were there and they are not at the new house.” Jamal and Christina exchanged eye contact at that point and Jamal said, “I’ll come over to your new house if you want.” Christian’s smile returned and the processing continued. The other members commented on his images and Thomas said, “I really like all of the pictures you picked out Christian.” After all of the members had given Christian some feedback he sat down and stared at his picture. He seemed very pleased with his creation and said, “My Dad is really going to like this.”

The session seemed successful because the members were able to appropriately share personal information about themselves while also getting to know each other better. The members shared information about their likes/dislikes, favorite activities, and family structure. It also seemed to be a good
activity to encourage self-exploration and creativity. As a result the group seemed
to further develop a sense of cohesion and community.

Figure 7. Christian’s “My World Collage”

The check-in process and the interaction between Christian and Jamal
revealed abilities to practice empathy skills and while this was not a planned part
of the activity, it did serve to strengthen the skills necessary for the member’s
social and emotional development. The session also seemed to strengthen the
relationship between Jamal and Christian.

Compliment Cards

This task was developed after working with Jaclyn. Jaclyn was a seven
year old first grade student who was new to the school. She was very tall for her
age and overweight. She also appeared to be in the beginning stages of puberty as
evidenced by her height and the emergence of breasts. Jaclyn seemed to always have a scowl on her face and her teacher told me that many of the other students were scared of her. With her height and weight she tended to tower over the other students and her interactions with them were gruff. Prior to attending the school she and her Mother were homeless and living in a shelter. She was an only child and her Mother was quite young. Her Father was not very involved and Jaclyn rarely spoke of him. Jaclyn said that she and her Mom were “best friends.” Jaclyn was referred for art therapy by her teacher and the school guidance counselor because she had poor interactions with her peers, had difficulties socializing, appeared to have a low self-esteem, and had anger issues that resulted in her bullying other students.

Jaclyn and I worked one on one initially. During the check-in process she tended to report that she was mad, angry, frustrated, or sad. When the art therapy sessions began she often had a frown on her face and was very guarded in her interactions. As the sessions proceeded the frowns gave way to smiles and she began to let her guard down. One of Jaclyn’s primary concerns was not having any friends in her new school. She said, “The other kids don’t like me and are mean to me. Nobody will talk to me.” There were many discussions on how Jaclyn could be a friend to other students, but she did not seem to make any progress.
The Compliment Cards were created to help students build their socialization skills and to practice their ability to socially interact by giving compliments. The goal of this task was to promote knowledge of social and friendly behaviors so that the ability to socialize and interact with peers appropriately could be improved. The Compliment Cards consisted of eight cards that had statements such as you are nice, you are sweet, I like your shoes, or I like your hair (see figure 8). The statements on the card were generated by Jaclyn and I during our sixth session. The cards also had an image on them to help the student decipher the written words. The cards were in black and white and could be colored in before being handed out.

Figure 8. Compliment Cards
The Compliment Card session began with the check-in process to find out about Jaclyn’s day and her feelings. She had came into the session with her typical scowl and said that her teacher “was being mean.” Her teacher had moved her desk to an isolated spot in the corner of the room. When questioned about this Jaclyn said “I was asking another kid what we were supposed to be doing and the teacher said I wasn’t listening.” As discussion proceeded it became obvious that Jaclyn was having a rough day: she had gotten in trouble for pushing another student in the bathroom line, was reprimanded for getting out her seat without permission, had called another student a bad name, and was on red on the behavior chart.

We discussed appropriate versus inappropriate behavior and Jaclyn seemed to retreat into herself and became quiet. In effort to increase involvement a discussion on friends began and we talked about what kind of person she would like to have as a friend. She said that she would like to have friends that were “nice, shared, didn’t hit, and was good at reading.” We then discussed how Jaclyn could meet friends like this, but she stated that she did not know how to do this.

We had explored how to be a friend during several earlier sessions and little progress had been made. The notion of compliments was then introduced to help Jaclyn in identifying friendly behaviors. Compliments were discussed as being a good way to say something nice to another person. Jaclyn was asked how she felt when someone said something nice to her and she said, “I like it.” We
talked about what kind of things she might like to hear someone say to her and how others might like to hear the same kinds of things. Together we generated a list of compliments she could say to her classmates. I told her we would make compliment cards that she could keep in her desk to pass out at school. We then discussed images that could be put on the cards to help her remember the compliments. For example, she thought candy would be a good symbol for the "you are sweet" compliment card.

The Compliment Cards were designed and photocopied so that Jaclyn could keep several copies of each card in her desk. Jaclyn was asked to color in and fill out one compliment card a day to begin. Jaclyn decided that her very first compliment card was going to go to her art teacher because she “liked her shoes” (see figure 7). Her teacher was aware of the activity and helped Jaclyn in identifying potential students she could hand the cards out to in the beginning. As Jaclyn became more confident she handed out more cards and the one card a day minimum was surpassed. She said that she liked “coloring in the cards and writing the names on them.” She also liked the feeling she got when she handed them out and said “the kids in class like to get my cards and it makes me feel really happy.”

Jaclyn needed to acquire new socialization skills to make friends and the Compliment Cards seemed an appropriate activity. Originating friendly conversation was one of the difficulties Jaclyn had and the Compliment Cards seemed to be a good method for helping her with this. The Compliment Cards
were such a success that Jaclyn’s classmates began interacting with her more regularly because they wanted to receive a card. In addition, the students in her class asked if they could have Compliment Cards of their own and the teacher asked if she could make copies for some of the other students. Within a few weeks the Compliment Cards were being utilized by several students in the class and the teacher reported an increase in pro-social, friendly behaviors.

*The I Spy Scribble Activity*

This activity grew out of the scribble technique which was originally developed by the art therapy pioneer Florence Cane (Borowsky, Junge, & Pateracki Asawa, 1994). She believed that the scribble technique helped free the child from defensive stereotypic drawing because it evoked a sense of free association and tapped into the unconscious in the art making process. The Bulls Group (for a description of the Bulls Group see Appendix G) was doing an activity called a Round Robin during one of the sessions. This activity starts with each member having their own piece of paper on which they create an image. After an allotted amount of time the paper is passed to their neighbor who adds to the image in whatever way desired, also for an allotted amount of time. This process continues and the individual papers make their way to each group member until it returns to the original creator. During this session Ray, who had said he was feeling “frustrated” during check-in, scribbled on all the available space not already used by the other members. This left little room for the others to
add to the image and the group became agitated and upset. They began picking on Ray saying “scribbles are stupid.” After Ray was becoming visibly upset and I recognized that the situation was not going to resolve itself on its own and decided it was necessary to intervene.

Ray was asked where the other members were supposed to create images if he took up all the space. He mumbled, “I didn’t think about that, sorry.” He then put his head down and rolled his marker towards the center of the table. The creative potential inherent in scribbles was then discussed in attempt to get Ray involved again. The members were reminded that making fun of others artwork and engaging in name-calling was against the rules, but were also told that it was ok for them to be angry. In effort to focus on the positive and to encourage understanding of a scribbles creative potential a large piece of white paper (18” by 24”) was taped to the wall. Ray was asked to create a scribble on the paper with a marker in the color of his choice. He hesitantly chose a black marker and made a large scribble that encompassed the paper. Afterwards the members were asked to look at the scribble and see if they could recognize any shapes, forms, letters etc in the image. The mood of the group changed without delay and the members began noting all the different images they saw within the scribble. Thomas saw a shark, Christian saw the number eight, Vincent saw a whale, Willy saw a snake, and Jamal a triangle (see figure 9). The end result was positive and
Ray’s scribbles were not viewed with as much criticism. The members learned that they actually did like scribbles.

Figure 9. The Bull’s Group I Spy Scribble

The following session focused on the I Spy Scribble activity at the group’s request. The goal of this activity was to encourage self-expression, imagination, communication, socialization, and improved abilities to work together. As done before, a large piece of white paper (18” by 24”) was taped to the wall and a member created a scribble with a color of their choice. The scribble’s creator then chose a member to identify some type of form or subject in the image. Once a subject was deciphered the chosen member traced the image and added color to it with markers so it could be easily seen by the other members. Another member
was then chosen to find a new subject and the process ensued until all members had the chance to pick out a form within the scribble. Once the image was completed the members were encouraged to talk about the found images in the scribble. They members were also encouraged to help one another if a member had difficulties identifying an image.

This task seemed to help the members use imagination and encouraged self-expression, but it also helped them learn to work together. Through out the process the members offered each other praise and commented on members having a “good eye” when a unique image was discovered. When one member was having difficulties finding an image, the group worked together to offer potential ideas to help the troubled member.

*Group Banners*

This activity was designed to further develop communication and listening skills, enhance abilities to work together cooperatively, and improve conflict resolution skills. The activity also aimed to promote interpersonal skills; in deciphering subject matter for the task the members had to be aware of the other member’s feelings, thoughts, and desires in order for the project to be completed. The Bulls Group (for a description of the Bulls Group see appendix G) had not worked together on very many group projects and this activity seemed to be a good one for them to develop a sense of cohesion while also meeting the goals for the group. In addition, the room the group took place in (the library media room)
was lined with books and the group had asked if their artwork could be hung up so that they could look at it weekly.

To begin the activity the members were asked to form two teams of three. The group was already seated with three members on each side of the table and that made The teams took respective places at the ends of the table and asked to get comfortable. The supplies were then handed out: two 2’by 3’ pieces of white paper (one for each group), several brushes, bowls of water, paper towels, and palettes with various colored tempera paint. They were then asked to create whatever they would like, but they had to agree on what they painted and make it together. The members immediately began talking and sharing ideas. Christian, Thomas, and Vincent were in one group and Christian seemed to be leading the others in the direction of the image. He said, “Let’s make a house and a sun.” Vincent said that he wanted to “make robots.” The two went back and forth on what they were going to paint when Thomas spoke up. Thomas seemed submissive to both ideas and said, “Why don’t we do both?” The other members looked at Thomas as though they had not thought of this possibility, then nodded their heads in agreement and began working.

Christian began constructing the house with blue and green on the left hand side of the paper. He painted a brown figure within it and said, “That’s a boy who is in first grade like us.” Vincent began making the robots; one was green, one yellow, and another red and black. Thomas initially observed the other two
working, but then began adding color to the center of the paper. He played with the colors and mixed green and black together. Thomas seemed to have less direction and purpose than the other two, but seemed to enjoy mixing the colors. Vincent announced, “These three robots are us.” Christian and Thomas seemed to like this idea and they began generating names for their robots.

After 10 minutes of painting the groups were told they had five more minutes to finish their images. Before finishing the images the teams were also asked to come up with a name for their image. Christian, Thomas, and Vincent decided on “Robots Visiting a Boy” (see figure 10). Afterwards the paintings were put to the side and the members were asked to form a different group with at least one different partner. The groups seemed to like the teams they were already working with; they stood staring at one another and appeared somewhat defiant in responding to the directives. The members were given further encouragement to form new teams and they slowly complied.

The new sets of teams were given the same directives and time constraints. Vincent, Christian, and Jamal were on a team during the second portion of the activity. As they discussed the theme for their banner conflict surfaced. Vincent wanted to make more Robots and Jamal and Christian did not. Christian wanted to make a boy playing basketball and Jamal wanted to make a fish. The members bickered and their voices grew louder. I intervened at this point and said that they needed to work together to come up with an idea they all
agreed on. They were also reminded that they could not raise their voices and needed to be respectful of each other. They glared at me in response and began whispering to each other. After a moment they decided that each could have a section of the paper and began working independently. The image was divided into three sections: one with a fish, one with a robot, and the last with a boy and a basketball. Each of the sections were rather sloppy and the subject matter was difficult to decipher. They titled their image “The Bulls Group” after they could not agree jointly on another title.

When the second portion of the activity was finished all of the final products were hung up and processed. The members seemed to like the “Robots Visiting a Boy” image the best. The process of working together was discussed
and a couple of members said that it was “hard working in teams.” Christian said, “Nobody wanted to do what I wanted to do and that made me kind of mad.” Jamal agreed and said, “The Bulls Group picture is not very good and we all wanted to do our own stuff. It was harder for me to work with Christian and Vincent even though they are my friends.” This was further discussed and Jamal noted that it was more difficult working with them because they could not decide on a theme as a team. The members were asked if it was possible that some of the pictures looked better because the teams had worked together rather than separately. After thinking about this for a few seconds Thomas spoke up and said, “I think that the pictures where we worked together look a lot better because we worked as a team.” Christian and Vincent made similar statements. Discussion on working together as a team and what that meant continued. As the session drew to an end Vincent announced that, “The teacher likes it when we work as a team, but I think we need to practice.” He asked if the activity could be done again next week and the other members supported him in the question.

This activity seemed to help the members improve their communication skills. They learned about the importance of listening to each other if they were going to be able to work together cooperatively and create a banner. Situations also arose in which the members had to resolve conflicts and generate solutions to problems. In working together on the task the members communicated their own thoughts and opinions, but also had to be aware of the other member’s feelings,
thoughts, and desires for the projects theme. In addition, they learned that working together as a team yielded greater results than working independently.

*Something I want others to know*

The goal of the Something I Want Others to Know activity was to encourage self-expression, self-awareness, and to help the members share personal information about themselves. To begin the activity the group was given 12” by 18” white paper and markers. They were asked to take a minute to think about something they would like the other members to know about them that they did not already know. The images were then created and processed upon completion.

This activity was presented to the Bull’s Group (for a description of the Bull’s Group see Appendix G) on the fourth session. The session began with a review of the group rules and then the check-in process. The members brought to my attention that it was Ray’s birthday and Ray talked about the treats he had brought in to celebrate. The members were all excited about the cupcakes they were to receive later on that day and had to be redirected to focus on the check-in process. The members all reported that they were “happy” because they were going to get cupcakes.

The directives for the Something I Want Others to Know activity were given and the members sat thinking quietly. There were several questions about what the members were allowed to share and they were encouraged to share
whatever the wished. Christian was the first to get started and began making an image of a boy with a football. Willie and Vincent were next to start their images, Willie began working on a picture of his family and Vincent drew a picture of a garden. Ray began making an image of a large present and Thomas started an image of a beach scene after observing the others for a moment. They chattered lightly as they worked and talked about what Ray was doing for his birthday.

Jamal sat sullenly staring off into space. His excitement and happiness over the cupcakes seemed to vanish and he appeared to be deep in thought. After a couple of minutes he grabbed a blue marker and made a large circle. He drew a stick-like figure protruding from the bottom of the circle and a figure emerged. He then added facial features, hair, and large tear drops with smiley faces in them. He worked quietly and seemed unaware of the casual conversation the other members were engaging in. He proceeded to write sad on the cheek of the figure and his name was spelled out next to it. He also wrote sad in the mouth of the figure and then wrote his name again, this time next to the figure (see figure11).

After all of the members had finished their images they shared with the group what it was that they wanted the other members to know. Christian was the first to share and said that he had made the football picture because he hoped to “play in the National Football League someday.” Willie went next and said, “I drew my family because they are the most important people to me.” Thomas shared his image of the beach and said, “This is a picture of my trip to Florida. It was the
best time I ever had.” Vincent said, “I drew a garden because I love them and my brother and I work in the garden at home a lot. It is one of my favorite things to do.” Ray said with a large smile, “this is a picture of the present I’m going to get tonight. My Mom said it is really big and I am so excited to get to see what it is.”

Figure 11. Jamal’s “Sad Picture”

Jamal was the last to share his image. At first he sat staring at as if he were embarrassed. The room grew quiet in anticipation of his words. Jamal let out a heavy sigh and said, “This is me and I feel sad. I said I was happy, but really I’m sad.” Vincent spoke up and said, “Why do you feel sad?” Jamal fidgeted in his seat and seemed unsure of how to proceed. I spoke up at this point, sensing his discomfort and told him he did not have to share if he did not want to. He looked directly at me and said, “It’s ok Ms. H.” He then proceeded to tell the group, “I didn’t bring in any treats for the class when it was my birthday and this makes me
feel bad.” Jamal’s birthday had been just a couple weeks prior to the session and he seemed to feel ashamed for not bringing anything in. Without hesitation Christian said, “Its alright Jamal, we get treats all the time.” Vincent offered his support and said, “I didn’t bring any treats in for my birthday either. My Mom said we didn’t have enough money to bring in treats.” These statements seemed to make Jamal feel a little better and he said, “My Mom said we didn’t have enough money either.” The group continued to discuss money and how their families did not have enough of it for the remaining few minutes of the session. By the sessions end Jamal’s mood lightened and his affect brightened.

The session was successful because the members were all able to appropriately share personal information about themselves in an expressive and personal way. It also helped the student’s get to know each other with greater depth. Christian shared his dream of being a professional football player and Vincent revealed his love of gardens. Ray shared his excitement about his birthday present and Thomas talked about “the best time of his life,” his vacation to Florida. Jamal, on the other hand shared very personal and likely difficult to express information. In doing so, Jamal took a risk and opened up to the group. The other members were receptive and supportive in response and elements of cohesion were further developed. In addition, the members talked openly about the financial struggles within their family life, a very personal and private topic.

*Reflection on social standards activities*
Social standards of development are necessary for the success of students and greatly effect academic achievement and classroom functioning. Students need to acquire the knowledge and necessary skills in order to respect themselves and others. Social standards of development are based on effective communication and interpersonal skills. The activities designed for social standards of development focused on communication and interpersonal skills for this reason.

The My World Collage seemed a successful activity because the members were able to share personal information about themselves while also getting to know each other better. It also seemed to be a good activity to encourage self-exploration and creativity. The activity resulted in members feeling a greater sense of cohesion and community. The Compliment Cards activity was designed to help students build their interpersonal, furthermore, socialization skills and to practice their ability to give compliments. The task seemed to promote knowledge of social and friendly behaviors so that the students had the ability to socialize and interact with peers in an appropriate manner.

The I Spy Scribble activity helped the members use imagination and encouraged self-expression, but it also helped them learn to work together. Through out the process the members offered each other praise and appropriate feedback. It also helped them learn how to be sensitive to one another’s needs, when one member was having difficulties finding an image, the group worked
together to offer potential ideas to help the troubled member. The Group Banner activity seemed to help the members improve their communication and interpersonal skills. They learned about the importance of listening to each other and communicating ideas in order to complete a project. The members also learned how to resolve conflicts and how to generate solutions when problems occurred. Furthermore, they were able to recognize the importance of working together as a team and how this can affect the final product.

The Something I Want Other to Know activity helped the members creatively share personal information. The task was open-ended in the sense that the members could create whatever they wished as long as they disclosed personal information previously unknown to the other members. The majority of the members disclosed personal information that was positive nature, but one member, Jamal, took the risk of sharing more challenging information. This was a big step for Jamal because he took a risk in disclosing his feelings. The members responded with support and were able to identify with Jamal’s feelings. In doing so, they demonstrated empathy and strengthened the group’s cohesion.
Chapter VII

Emotional Intelligence

Personal or social standards of development require that students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills in order for them to understand and respect themselves and others. Emotional intelligence is a term referring to the development of intrapersonal skills and enhanced self-awareness; in other words, students should be able to identify, respond to, and express emotions (Schilling, 1996). Emotional competence is a developmental term referring to the skills and attributes whose level of development determines the strength of emotional intelligence and degree of emotional competence (Schilling, 1996). Emotional competency can then be seen as related to the personal or social standards of development that the ASCA endorses and, therefore, constitutes another area that can affect academic achievement. In developing the art therapy program it seemed appropriate to include techniques and goals that promoted the development of emotional intelligence and, in turn, emotional competency. Five activities designed to meet these goals will be presented.

The Feelings Box

The Bulls Group (for a description of the Bulls Group see appendix G) was constructed of first grade students. Their knowledge of feelings and emotional terminology was limited given their young age and inexperience. During the initial stages of the group the members had difficulties in identifying
feelings during the check-in process. The feelings the members were able to identify were restricted to basic feelings such as, happy or mad. In effort to enhance their emotional intelligence the Feelings Box activity was developed. The goal of the activity was to increase member knowledge of feelings so that they could identify, respond to, and express their emotions.

To meet this goal the members were first asked to discuss their knowledge of feelings and to share the emotional terminology they were familiar with. In addition, new emotional terminology was presented to them. A chart with faces and feelings associated with the faces was reviewed and examples of these feelings were discussed. The members were then asked to use markers to create images on small squares of various sized paper to depict a variety of different feelings. They were also asked to write the feeling they were depicting on the paper. Once the members had created two to three images they were discussed and members were asked to share a story, real or imagined, relative to their chosen feeling. As a group the members then used their images to decorate the Feelings Box, a blue box with a lid and an opening cut into the top of it (see figure12). Once the box was finished it became a part of the weekly check-in process. Members were given a black and white photocopy of a person and encouraged to color it in with markers based on their feelings for that day. Once they had finished coloring in their figure they were asked to share their product,
discuss the associated feelings, and then place it in the slit in the top of the feelings box.

*Figure 12. The Bull’s Group Feeling Box*

The Feelings Box was scheduled to be created during the Bulls Groups fourth session. The session began with a review of the group rules followed by checking-in. All members reported feeling happy and a discussion on what feeling happy ensued. The members were then asked to discuss the other feelings they knew. Mad, sad, bored, and silly were among some of the other feelings the group
noted and were able to explain. The feelings chart with facial expressions depicting the feelings was then presented. The members asked several questions about the different faces and feelings. They were also able to identify new terminology for feelings they had felt during the discussion. For example, Christian said that he had felt “guilty” one time before when he “stole another kids toy at the babysitters.” The idea for a feelings box was then presented and the directives for the task were given.

The members worked casually and socialized with one another. They shared stories about their weekends and talked about Jamal’s upcoming birthday. After each member had finished at least two squares the images were processed. The members were then asked to tell a story about a time they had felt their chosen feelings. Ray shared an imaginary story about his “sad picture” and said it was of a “boy who cried so hard that he made a puddle on the floor.” When further asked about why the boy was crying he said it was “because he does not have any friends to ride his bike with.” Willy shared one of his images, a “worried picture,” and said it was of a “boy who worried about walking home from school because of bullies.” The other members noted that they too had been scared of bullies before. After the members had shared their images the decorating of the Feelings Box started. The members were given glue and asked to work together to decorate the box with all their feelings. The members huddled around the box and Vincent was the first to glue an image, his “silly picture,” on the box. The
members took turns placing images on the box and were careful not to overlap the images so each member’s picture could be seen. To ensure the protection and durability of the Feelings Box it was later wrapped with clear packaging tape.

The Feelings Box (see figure 11) became an integrated part of the Bulls Group and was used each session thereafter during the check-in process. The members were encouraged to share their feelings and the associated image before placing it in the Feelings Box, but were not forced to do so. The members rarely refused to partake in the Feelings Box check-in procedure and seemed to enjoy involving themselves in the process. The activity was intended to help the member’s increase their knowledge of feelings so that they could identify, respond to, and express their emotions. In using the Feelings Box weekly the members seemed to demonstrate a more pronounced knowledge of feelings and were better able to express their emotions.

The Feelings Gumball Machine

The Feelings Gumball Machine was designed to encourage identification of feelings and to promote self-exploration in a fun and creative way. Gum was seen as a special treat by the students and was one of the most requested prizes from the good behavior treasure box. Ray of the Bulls Group (for a description of the Bulls Group and Ray see Appendix G) was one student who loved bubblegum. Ray was also friendly and bright, but he tended to deny his feelings. He consistently reported that he was happy and had difficulties citing any other
feeling with the exception of “super, duper, happy.” He maintained that he was happy even when his affect, verbalizations, and behaviors indicated otherwise.

Ray also demonstrated a low frustration tolerance and became fixated on his perceived inadequacies at times. On occasion this resulted in temper tantrums in the classroom setting, but whenever these tantrums were discussed within the art therapy sessions he denied the negative feelings associated with the event. On one occasion he had a temper tantrum and had been sent to the principal’s office in tears. When he was later asked about this and how he felt when he cried, he continued to say that he only felt happy. His blatant denial of feelings indicated he was uncomfortable with the expression of emotions, specifically negative emotions. One of the primary goals in working with Ray was to help him learn to identify and express positive and negative emotions in appropriate way.

The goal of the Feelings Gumball Machine activity was to promote the identification, furthermore, the expression, of emotions and seemed a good activity to try with Ray. It was felt that if Ray was able to gain some perspective on feelings he might be able to accept his own feelings whether or not they were positive or negative. If Ray could accept his feelings and learn new ways to express them he might in turn develop the abilities to deal with that which frustrated him and caused inappropriate behavior. A feelings chart depicting feeling faces was used to further aid in the identification of feelings and assisted in the construction of Ray’s Feelings Gumball Machine.
To begin the activity Ray and I briefly discussed the feelings chart, he was already familiar with the chart because of activities in the Bulls Group. A discussion about the different feelings and the ways they felt followed. Ray could identify various feelings in others, but seemed unable to do so for himself. For example, Ray said that his “little sister cries when she is hungry or if she gets really mad.” He talked about how she was “a little mad and whiney after her naps, but got really mad if you took one of her toys.” I noted that feelings were much like gumballs because they come in different shapes and sizes, they are similar to feelings because they can be either really big and strong or weak and small. Ray seemed to understand and related it to his sister and her anger.

Ray was then given glue, the gumball machine’s base, and globe and asked to make a gumball machine. He glued the base down and globe down with focus and precision. Afterwards he was given the markers, scissors, precut circular gumballs, and small squares of white paper. Ray was then asked to think about the different feelings discussed and to pick a gumball to represent the feeling. He decided that red would represent anger, sad would be represented by blue, loved by green and so on. After doing this he was asked to use the markers to create a face depicting the feeling onto either the gumball directly or onto one of the small white squares which would be glued onto the gumball. He felt the white paper needed to be used on the red gumball because he would not be able to make the face in red otherwise. Ray said, “The angry face has to be in red.” The
finished gumballs were then glued onto the Ray’s Feelings Gumball Machine (see figure 13).

In processing Ray said that his “gumballs were kind of like different feelings; some feelings aren’t so good, just like some gumballs don’t taste so good.” His comments implied that he still distanced himself from the negative emotions and expression of them. However, they also implied that he might be working towards greater acceptance of his feelings. Ray seemed to demonstrate greater identification of feelings and understanding for the ways in which people
express them. Ray also seemed to gain some perspective in terms of negative and positive feelings which was an improvement.

*Feelings Masks*

The Feelings masks were created to further assist students in the identification and expression of feelings and emotions. The Bulls Group (for a description of the Bulls Group see appendix G) had shown progress in identifying, responding to, and expressing their feelings during the sessions, but their expression of feelings in an appropriate manner needed to be further developed. In the group discussions the members could easily identify inappropriate ways of expressing negative emotions. For example, the members knew that expressing anger by way of yelling or hitting another student was not acceptable. Yet when asked about the acceptable ways to express anger the group had difficulties generating solutions.

To promote the development of emotional intelligence the Bulls Group created Feeling Masks. The feeling masks were created with negative emotions and used during a role-playing process. To balance out the negative emotions during the role play a “content feeling” mask was created. The content mask was created by me prior to the group. The masks that were given to the members were also created prior to the session because of time limitations. A white styrofoam plate was glued to a popsicle stick. The shapes for the eyes were cut out of the styrofoam plate with an exacto knife and a popsicle stick was also glued to it.
Eight feeling words were written down on individual pieces of paper and put into a bowl. The feelings included: angry, worried, frustrated, sad, jealous, mean, hurt, and afraid. The members each picked one of the feelings and decorated their mask based on the chosen feeling. The materials for decorating the mask included: markers, colored pencils, glue, scissors, construction paper, pipe cleaners, pompoms, yarn, and plastic knifes for modifying the eyes, mouth, and nose. After the masks were constructed the members took on the role of their mask one at a time. Another member played the “content feeling” mask at the same time while the remaining members served as an audience. A list of possible scenarios for each feeling mask had been devised prior to the group to ensure flow in the role playing process. After the role playing the members were encouraged to offer feedback on the role playing process as well as any suggestions.

The session began with a review of the group rules and the check-in process. The members eyed the supplies that were placed on a counter to the side and were eager to find out what the task for the day would be. Their attention had to be redirected several times in order to get through the check-in process. The bowl with the negative feelings was passed around and the members each chose one of the feelings. The feelings the members selected were then discussed in order to ensure understanding. Afterwards the members began decorating their masks and their excitement was evident. They laughed, conversed, and shared their ideas for the masks creation as they worked. For example, Jamal, who had
selected the “mean feeling” said, “My mask is going to have really angry eyebrows.” He glued red pipe cleaners onto his mask in a slanted down fashion to create eyebrows and also used one to create a jagged shaped mouth because he felt they helped depict, “a really anger and mean face” (see figure14) Willy, who had selected the “scared feeling” seemed to be having difficulties with the decoration of his mask; he placed materials over the mask, carefully arranging them, but could not seem to commit to an idea and glue anything down. After several moments he asked his peers how he should make a scared face. Jamal who was intensely working on his “mean feeling” mask responded immediately and suggested that Willy make a, “circle for the mouth, like he is so scared he is screaming.” Willy thought this was a good idea and Jamal’s face lit up with pride.

They engaged in steady conversation as they finished their masks.

Figure 14. Jamal’s “Mean Mask”
Jamal and Willy seemed to form an alliance during the project and asked to be the first team for the role playing process. Willy took on the role of the “content feeling” mask and Jamal took on the role of the “mean feeling” mask. The two held the masks up to their faces and Jamal used his “mean feeling” mask to make negative comments directed at Willy and the “content feeling” mask. “You’re stupid and don’t know how to play basketball,” was the first thing Jamal said. Willy took a moment to respond and then said, “Why are you so mean?” Jamal answered, “Because I feel like it.” The scenario continued to unfold and Jamal revealed that his mask was feeling mean because he “was having a bad day.” Willy suggested that Jamal’s “mean feeling” mask should, “try and have a better day and be nice.” Jamal said he was “feeling too mean to be nice.” Willy was stuck on this statement and sat quietly. At this point I intervened and asked the group what they thought could be done to get the anger out. Christian said that Jamal’s mask should, “talk to his teacher about his feelings.” Vincent recommended that Jamal’s mask “go home and punch a pillow.”

The Bulls Group continued to act out the scenarios, but often needed the feedback of others in the group to come up with appropriate solutions. It seemed as though the members were better able to generate solutions if they were not directly involved; many scenarios came to a standstill because one of the role players did not know how to proceed forward in an appropriate way. Identifying the feelings was not an issue, but expression of the feelings was. With the help of
the other members all scenarios concluded with an appropriate solution, all be it this was not an easy task. The members did seem to demonstrate some progress in responding to and expressing the negative feelings, but they were dependent on each other in doing so. Ultimately the task seemed to help the students think through their reactions to negative feelings while also allowing them to work together. Through their collaboration as a group they were also able to verbalize acceptable ways to express negative feelings.

_Sculpt Your Anger and a Friend_

Many of the students who participated in the art therapy sessions had issues with controlling and expressing their anger. The previously mentioned activity adds further support to this statement. Several students were referred for art therapy because they were having difficulties controlling their behavior and emotions in an appropriate way. In fact, multiple sessions with many students focused on anger and ways of coping with it. For many, the expression of anger was followed by blatant disregard for school rules and disrespect for authority figures, the self, and classmates. Identifying angry feelings, triggers associated with it, and finding methods of redirecting it were among the goals for many of the art therapy sessions.

The Sculpt Your Anger and a Friend was a technique utilized in attempt to redirect anger in an appropriate way. It also helped students explore the triggers associated with anger. The activity encouraged students to use model magic in
various colors to create an angry figure or symbol to represent how they felt when they were angry. After finishing the figure the students were asked to create a friend for the angry figure. The friend was supposed to help the angry figure calm down so that good decisions could be made. The figures were then set aside to dry and harden. The following session the members were given markers to add faces or colors to their figures in whatever way they liked.

The Bulls Group members (for a description of the Bulls Group see Appendix G) were among the students referred for art therapy because they all had anger based incidents or angry outbursts in the classroom setting. These outbursts negatively affected academic achievement, classroom functioning, and were detrimental to the student’s development. One of the goals for the Bulls Group was to regulate feelings and to learn new methods of coping with negative feelings such as anger. In giving their anger a form that was separate from themselves it was felt that they might be able to gain a new perspective on dealing with it. If the students could view their angry feelings from a different perspective then they might be able to identify more positive ways to cope with that anger. For this reason the Bulls Group members each created an angry symbol and friend for their symbol.

The session began with a review of the group rule and the check-in process. The members seemed to be in a more negative mood than typical and they disclosed their negative feelings during the check-in process. Christian began
and stated that he was, “feeling horrible” because he was “on red.” Vincent and Jamal said similar things, both were also on red. Ray said he was “mad” because he was also on red and had lost his afternoon recess privileges. Thomas and Willy reported less negative and generally more positive feelings; Ray was feeling “happy” and Thomas was feeling “sleepy.” The negativity during the check-in process was taken as an opportunity to introduce the task. The members were asked to take some of the anger they felt and create a symbol or a figure that represented their anger.

The directives seemed to appeal to the members and Christian said, “Give me some of that stuff; I’ve got a lot of anger right now.” The members were given small balls of model magic and immediately got to work. The model magic was pounded out and played with initially. Christian seemed especially agitated as he constructed two different figures, but when he finished each figure he proceeded to flatten and destroy it. Jamal created a human like figure and then ripped its head off, this caused laughter among the members and a smile appeared on his face. Approximately ten minutes into the activity the members had to be redirected because their energy had become focused on destruction rather than creation. They were further encouraged to make some kind of a symbol and told they could play with any leftovers at the sessions end. The idea of playtime appealed to them and within minutes all had created a symbol or form for their anger.
The members were then asked to create a friend for their angry symbol. To ensure their understanding they were told that the angry figures friend should be someone or something that helped the angry figure calm down so that good decisions could be made. All of the members with the exception of Christian sat and thought about the directives. Christian began immediately working on a long snake like figure and the other members copied his actions. After Christian determined the snake like figure was long enough he began to roll it into a coiled ball. The other members continued to make their friend for the angry symbol and no longer copied Christian’s actions. The figures were all finished by session end, but time constraints prevented the processing of the figures and the activity carried over into the next session.

The following session began with a review of the group rules and the check-in process. The members were in lighter moods this session and the reported check-in feelings were either happy, excited, or silly. The members were eager to see their angry symbols and friends from last week and asked to get started. The previous session was reviewed and the members were given their symbols and markers and asked to add any finishing touches. They worked with good focus and conversed casually. Once the members finished their symbols they were processed. Each member took a turn to describe their angry symbol and the associated friend. They were also encouraged to talk about what made their symbol angry and how the friend helped calm the angry symbol.
Christian presented his angry symbol and friend. Christian named his figures, “The Angry Dog Monster, Scar,” and “Roundy” (see figure 14).

*Figure 15 “The Angry Dog Monster, Scar, and Roundy”*

Christian said that “Scar” was a “very angry dog monster.” When asked what made “Scar” so angry he said, “His owners don’t feed him and he gets red at school a lot.” He was then asked about “Roundy” and said, “He helps Scar stay calm and to stop yelling. He tells Scar when he acts bad. He also tells him to say he is sorry and to talk to his friends when he acts a fool.” The other members asked him questions about his figures and Christian was happy to share. For example he shared with a smile that “Scar” was given his name because “he got a scar on his nose when a mean kid smacked him with a stick.” Christian spoke with great energy when talking about his figures and seemed very pleased with the final product.
The activity seemed to enable the students to identify triggers for anger while also helping them identify ways to calm the anger. Each member was able to discuss their angry symbol and reasons the symbol was angry. They were also able to create a friend for their angry symbol and verbalize ways in which the symbol helped calm the angry symbol down. The friend symbol seemed to offer a way for anger to be redirected in an appropriate way. It seemed apparent that Christian had projected himself onto “Scar” who also had problems with being on red at school. He also revealed one of the triggers that made him mad at school, getting on red on the behavior chart. In creating “Roundy” Christian identified a method for coping with the anger, talking to his friends. The members were also pleased with their final products and took pride in their symbols which ultimately serves as a strength.

*The Anger Thermometer*

This activity was another that focused on the identification of triggers associated with anger and appropriate expression for it. As previously mentioned, many of the students in the art therapy program had issues with appropriate expression and management of anger. Robert (for a description of the Robert see Appendix H) was one such student. His behaviors had become increasingly destructive as the school year progressed and he began fighting, throwing chairs, tipping over desks, ripping posters of the wall and so on. Several of his violent
outbursts resulted in trips to the principal’s office and suspension. As a result Roberts’s academic performance plummeted.

Robert had created the Relaxation Kit (an activity previously discussed) and it seemed to help, but Robert had difficulties identifying his anger. He would at times become angry quickly and would have a “melt down” before his Relaxation Kit could be utilized. In effort to help Robert identify his angry feelings the Angry Thermometer activity was developed. The Angry Thermometer was a thermometer that Robert created to help gage his anger throughout the school day. It was taped to the side of his desk to help him monitor his angry feelings. The idea was that if Robert could monitor his anger and see that he was getting near the top of the anger thermometer, or the boiling point of the thermometer, then he might be able to see that he needed to take a moment for himself in his calming corner (see p. 52 for information on Roberts calming corner).

On the day of the scheduled session Robert was on green and feeling very good about himself. He smiled widely and said, “I’ve been on green and am an academic achiever today.” He was given praise and discussed how this made him feel, “very proud and happy.” He talked about how much he liked being on green and how he wished he “could be an academic achiever everyday.” The idea for the angry thermometer to help him monitor his anger was then presented to him. He seemed to like the idea and we began the task.
A thermometer was created by me prior to the session. After the task was completed it was laminated for protection and a slit was cut down the middle of it so that the anger indicator could be moved amongst the levels. Robert was given the precut thermometer, anger indicator, and markers, magazine images, glitter, glue, scissors and tissue paper to begin the task. The thermometer was placed on the table before Robert and he eyed it suspiciously. He poked the black and white copy of the thermometer with his finger and asked, “How is this thing supposed to help me?” We then began talking about the behaviors and associated feelings that often resulted in him getting in trouble.

Robert was able to identify anger as a source for many of his inappropriate behaviors within the discussion. Robert was asked if he thought he might be able to control his anger better if he could keep track of it. He made direct eye contact and said, “I think sometimes I get angry so fast that I forget the rules, sometimes I’m so angry that I think about rules, only being mad.” We then discussed how he became angry and together Robert and I discussed his levels of anger. Robert said that at first he gets “grouchy or frustrated.” He then went on to say to that he becomes “mad, then really, really mad, and then explodes. He was able to identify his explosion point as the level at which he usually gets sent to the principal’s office and/or has to make a call home to one of his parents.

Robert was then encouraged to create the different levels of anger on his thermometer. He designed several levels which included: grouchy; frustrated;
kind of mad; mad; really, really mad; explosive; and melt down. He attached magazine images, drew on red shapes and black lines, and used the glitter and black marker to indicate the different levels of anger. His lines separating the levels were dark and thick. The indicator that depicted his level of anger was colored in red and he wrote his name across it in black (see figure 16).

Figure 16. Robert’s “Anger Thermometer”

Robert finished his Anger Thermometer and smiled. He said, “This is
Really cool. Are you sure my teacher will let me put this on my desk?” He was assured that his teacher was accepting of it and we then began to process his final product. He spoke of the faces he had decided to include and remarked on the variations in the angry faces. As he inspected his work he commented on a particularly angry man and said, “Look at this guy, he looks crazy mad. I’m glad I put him there.” Robert continued to comment on his Angry Thermometer and the discussion shifted to how he could use it in class. He gave examples of several things that would move him up the angry levels: “when I get pushed in line, when I forget my lunch, if I get yelled at by the recess lady, and when I raise my hand and the teacher doesn’t call on me.” We also discussed at what level it might be good for Robert to take a time out in his calming corner. He pointed to an image of a stop sign that was placed on the “really, really mad” level of his thermometer. As the session came to an end Robert seemed to think that his Angry Thermometer could “help” and he would “try it out.”

Reflection on Emotional Intelligence Activities

The Feelings Box activity was intended to help the member’s increase their knowledge of feelings so that they could identify, respond to, and express their emotions. The use of the Feelings Box in the sessions that followed showed that it was effective in doing this; in using the Feelings Box the members demonstrated a more pronounced knowledge of feelings and were better able to express their emotions. They were also able to share their feelings and
acknowledge appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing them. The Feelings Gumball Machine seemed to further help students identify feelings and to promote self-exploration. The Feelings Mask activity helped students learn how to identify, respond to, and express feelings and emotions. The feelings focused on were more negative in nature and helped the students examine how these more uncomfortable feelings could be expressed. It also allowed them to work together in unison.

The Sculpt your Anger and a Friend activity assisted the students in the identification of anger triggers and helped them explore ways to calm anger. Angry feelings were given acknowledgement in the creation of the symbol and then redirected in an appropriate manner through the creation of the friend symbol. The Anger thermometer was created to further help students in identifying and gauging their level of anger. It was felt that if students were able to be aware of their anger they might acquire the abilities to monitor their reactions. It was also a good activity for identifying the triggers of anger.
Chapter VIII  

Conclusion and Recommendations  

This chapter will review the purpose of the research study and examine the overall effectiveness of the art therapy program. The goals of the program will be presented. Results from the surveys will also be discussed and recommendations for future research will be explored.  

Research purpose  

Today’s education system has found itself under the scrutiny of the American public as high school drop out rates continue to rise. One out of four high school students do not successfully make their way through the education system in they do not receive a high school diploma. This is far too large of a number and it is deemed as unacceptable by society. As the push for accountability increases, the search for methods leading towards improvement continues. Fundamental changes are necessary and new options need to be made available so that today’s youth can succeed academically.  

The American School Counseling Association’s national model for school counseling programs holds within its framework standards for academic and personal/social development (American School Counseling Association [ASCA], n.d.).  

These standards are considered to be at the heart of student development and are seen as intricately connected to academic success. Yet the education
system has no defined system for developing these standards in its students. The
creative process has the potential to unearth significant educational and
psychological benefits. Creativity is an inherent component to the process of art
therapy which strives to enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being
of individuals of all ages. Art therapy can help promote positive student attitudes
that students can carry with them through out their academic journey. Instilling
positive attitudes in regards to education must start early in the academic years,
therefore, the implementation of art therapy programs in the elementary school
setting seems only appropriate.

**Outcome of the art therapy program**

This research study explored the use of art therapy in the elementary
setting in hopes of discovering appropriate interventions to help support and
enhance academic achievement, social standards of development and emotional
competency. Through the process of exploration art therapy techniques were
developed and implemented that proved to be beneficial; academic achievement
was improved, emotional intelligence was enhanced and standards of social
development were further expanded upon.

At the conclusion of the research study surveys were collected from
school staff (see Appendices C, D and E for staff surveys) so that the efficacy of
the art therapy program and interventions used could be assessed. Four teachers,
the school guidance counselor and the principal completed the surveys. All of the
school staff surveyed reported an increase in appropriate behaviors, improved socialization skills and enhanced emotional intelligence, all of which are believed to be connected to academic achievement. All of the staff surveyed also indicated that the art therapy program was beneficial to the students and noted that they would like to have similar programs in the future. Three of the four teachers surveyed indicated that the art therapy program addressed student issues that could not be addressed within the classroom setting and was ultimately beneficial.

The students were also surveyed (see Appendix I) at the conclusion of the program. Their responses indicated that they perceived themselves as having demonstrated improved behaviors, increased socialization skills, and enhanced emotional intelligence. Their survey responses also contributed to the development of the workbook in they identified their favorite and least favorite art materials, and their favorite versus least favorite art activities. The surveys also sought out information on what the student’s learned about themselves during the program. The feedback the students provided helped dictate the activities that are included within the workbook, as well as those not included. The overall responses of the students in regards to the art therapy program were positive and indicative of growth. Of the 21 students surveyed all but 3 said they would like to be in art therapy groups in the future.

The activities that were found to most improve the knowledge and skills associated with academic achievement, according to student survey responses,
included: the Good Choices book, the Group Rules, the Relaxation Kit, Colorful figures of Behavior, and the Draw Yourself at School Doing Something art therapy techniques. The Relaxation Kit was by far the most popular out of the five techniques; it even became an integrated part of the classroom for one of the first grade classes. The Good Choices Book was sited as the activity the students learned the most from.

Compliment Cards, the My World Collage, the I Spy Scribble activity, Group Banners and Something I Want Others to Know interventions were sited by the students in the surveys as the best activities to help enhance social standards of development. Compliment Cards were especially successful, as noted by both students and teachers in the surveys. The I Spy Scribble activity was listed by all five of the Bull’s Group members (see Appendix G for a description of the Bull’s Group) as the activity liked best. It was also cited as one of the activities that the members learned the most from. Two of the members said that the activity helped them learn how to work together and how to respect others.

The activities that were found in the surveys to most improve emotional intelligence included: the Feelings Gumball Machine, the Not So Good Feelings Masks, Sculpt Your Anger and a Friend, the Anger Thermometer, and the Feelings Box. The Anger Thermometer was only utilized with four students, but was reported by all as having a significant impact on controlling their anger in the classroom setting. Teachers further validated this in both surveys and in meetings.
The Not So Good Feelings Masks were cited as the most popular in acquiring knowledge of feelings and appropriate expression of them. The Feelings Box was also cited as a task that helped students learn about feelings.

The student surveys also explored activities that the students did not like. Among the art tasks that the students did not like, clay was the most common. The students noted that clay was “messy” and “dirty.” Two students also indicated that they did not like the activities with colored pencils because they were “boring.” A technique called “The Round Robin” was the least liked activity with four students noting that they did not like it. This activity is a group project in which every person’s image is passed around and each member takes turns adding to the image.

Student and school staff responses, in both surveys and in meetings through out the process, indicated that art therapy interventions could be adapted to help support and enhance academic achievement, social standards of development and emotional competency. Their responses also contributed to the development of a workbook with art therapy techniques specifically designed to help students attain the knowledge and skills necessary for academic success in the elementary setting.

Recommendations

This research study revealed the need to further investigate the use of art therapy within the school setting. The school staff surveys indicated positive
experiences, but the small number of those surveys limits the validity of the findings. The surveys gathered were collected from only four teachers because those were the only teachers I was able to work with. Three were first grade teachers and one was a third grade teacher. In future research, working with multiple teachers from various grades could lend greater support to findings. In addition, this would help further encompass all the grade levels within the primary grades and ultimately add to the research findings. The student survey results indicated that the majority of students enjoyed the program and seemed to benefit from it, but was unable to determine the long-term effects of it. Additional measures, such as follow up surveys, could help in understanding the long-term effects of art therapy.

A final note for those interested in art therapy program development in an elementary school setting would be to build alliances with school staff, the school board and parents so that a more thorough collaboration may be possible. Forming relationships with these individuals is critical in determining and meeting the needs of students. I did not take the opportunity to attend school board meetings, but feel this would have been a wise decision to have made. Requests for art therapy program necessities, such as space and a supply budget, could have been granted if an alliance with the school board had been made.
**Closing thoughts**

There are many children in our schools that struggle with academic success. Outside of the family unit school is one of the most significant influences in a child’s life. The potential for positive impact in student lives begins in the elementary setting and art therapy offers a creative mode of expression that can help students develop and acquire the knowledge, attitude and skills necessary for the school setting. The knowledge, attitudes and skills learned in the educational setting contribute to academic success which in turn has an effect on the entire lifespan. The welfare of children everywhere relies on the development of future research and art therapy programs such as the one described in this study so that children can grow into adults who are capable of achieving healthy well-being and successful living.
References


Appendix A

Art Therapy Permission Slip

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, my name is Anissa Hollopeter. I am a graduate student in Ursuline College’s Art Therapy Counseling Program. I am pleased to inform you that your child has the opportunity to be part of an art experiential program led by myself. The sessions will take place on a weekly basis for approximately 30 to 45 minutes during the school day. The goals for the program will focus on strengthening socialization skills, increasing self-esteem, and further developing decision-making abilities, among others depending on your child’s needs. We will also be working on behaviors to help your child further develop listening skills, greater focus, and feel more positive about learning. To meet these goals we will engage in art activities, games, and crafts to further your students understanding.

Our first session will begin in just a few weeks. We would like to include your child. Permission is needed for participation in the sessions. Please fill out the tear slip below if you wish for your child to take advantage of this exciting opportunity and have your child return it to his/her teacher. If you have any questions or concerns I encourage you to contact the School Guidance Counselor or your student’s teacher.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this invitation.

Sincerely,

Anissa Hollopeter

_____ YES – I would like my child _____________________________ to participate.

_____ NO – I would not like my child to participate.

Parent/Guardian: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Appendix B

Art Therapy Photo Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for allowing me to work with your child. To meet course guidelines I am required to obtain art work or photographs of art work and would like to use your child’s art work in course related presentations. The art work/photographs will be used for educational purposes only. Your child’s name will not be used and he/she will not be identified in any other way. Please sign below and have your child return this form to his/her teacher. If you have any questions or concerns I encourage you to contact your child’s teacher or the School Guidance Counselor.

Thank you,

Anissa Hollopeter

I ___________________________________________ hereby agree that my child’s art work may be used in educational training. I understand that my child’s name will not be used in conjunction with the presentation or discussion of his/her art work.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _______________________________________________________

Signature of Participant _____________________________________________________________

Date ____________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Teacher Survey

Teacher Final Evaluation Survey

Grade you teach _______  Number of students in your homeroom _________

Appropriate Behaviors: A term referring to acceptable student behaviors, decision making abilities, and impulse control.

Socialization Skills: Refers to the development of interpersonal skills and the learning and practicing of more effective communication skills;*** being aware of other’s feelings, moods, and desires; *** working cooperatively with others, resolving conflicts, and listening.

Emotional Development: A term referring to increased intrapersonal skills and enhanced self-awareness; *** students have increased their abilities to identify and express emotions, likes, dislikes, strengths, and weaknesses.

Please circle the answer you most agree with.

 SA = Strongly Agree  
 A = Agree  
 NS = Not Sure  
 D = Disagree  
 DS = Disagree Strongly

1. The program was beneficial to the students in my classroom.

2. The students enjoyed the art therapy sessions.

3. My students demonstrated an increase in appropriate behaviors.

4. My students demonstrated improved socialization skills.

5. I saw improvements in the emotional development of my students.

6. I would like for art therapy sessions
for my school in the future.

7. I believe that similar programs in the future will be beneficial to the students.

8. The student art therapist appeared to be professional in her duties.

9. The student art therapist was enjoyable to work with.

Please take the space below to write out any additional comments, feedback you may have, or suggestions for improvement.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Thank you so much for your time!
Appendix D

Principal Survey

Principal Final Evaluation Survey

Appropriate Behaviors: A term referring to acceptable student behaviors, decision making abilities, and impulse control.

Socialization Skills: Refers to the development of interpersonal skills and the learning and practicing of more effective communication skills;*** being aware of other’s feelings, moods, and desires; ***working cooperatively with others, resolving conflicts, and listening.

Emotional Development: A term referring to increased intrapersonal skills and enhanced self-awareness;*** students have increased their abilities to identify and express emotions, likes, dislikes, strengths, and weaknesses.

Please circle the answer you most agree with.

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
NS = Not Sure
D = Disagree
DS = Disagree Strongly

1. The program was beneficial to the students at my school. SA A NS D SD

2. The students enjoyed the art therapy sessions. SA A NS D SD

3. The students reportedly demonstrated an increase in appropriate behaviors. SA A NS D SD

4. The students were reported to have demonstrated improved socialization. SA A NS D SD
skills.

5. Increased emotional development

| SA | A | NS | D | SD |

was reported.

6. I would like for art therapy sessions

| SA | A | NS | D | SD |

for my school in the future.

7. I believe that similar programs in the

| SA | A | NS | D | SD |

future will be beneficial to the students.

8. The student art therapist appeared to be

| SA | A | NS | D | SD |

professional in her duties.

9. The student art therapist was enjoyable

| SA | A | NS | D | SD |

to work with.

Please take the space provided to write out any additional comments you may have or suggestions for improvement.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Appendix E

Guidance Counselor Survey

School Guidance Counselor Evaluation Survey

Appropriate Behaviors: A term referring to acceptable student behaviors, decision making abilities, and impulse control.

Socialization Skills: Refers to the development of interpersonal skills and the learning and practicing of more effective communication skills;*** being aware of other’s feelings, moods, and desires; ***working cooperatively with others, resolving conflicts, and listening.

Emotional Development: A term referring to increased intrapersonal skills and enhanced self-awareness;*** students have increased their abilities to identify and express emotions, likes, dislikes, strengths, and weaknesses.

Please circle the answer you most agree with.

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
NS = Not Sure
D = Disagree
DS = Disagree Strongly

1. The program was beneficial to the students at my school.

2. The students enjoyed the art therapy sessions.

3. The students reportedly demonstrated an increase in appropriate behaviors.

4. The students were reported to have demonstrated improved socialization skills.
5. Increased emotional development was reported.

6. I would like for art therapy sessions for my school in the future.

7. I believe that similar programs in the future will be beneficial to the students.

8. The student art therapist appeared to be professional in her duties.

9. The student art therapist was enjoyable to work with.

Please take the space provided to write out any additional comments you may have or suggestions for improvement.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Appendix F

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Y = Yes  N = No  NS = Not Sure

1. How old are you?

2. When is your birthday?

3. Is there anything you would like me to know about you?

4. Will you tell me about your family? (Note siblings, ages, and who the student lives with).

5. What kinds of things does your family do together?

6. What do you like to do for fun?

7. Do you have any questions? (Note questions or concerns)

8. Do you like this school?  Y  N  Other

9. Do you feel safe at this school?  Y  N  NS

10. Do you feel like you belong?  Y  N  NS

11. Do you like learning?  Y  N  NS

12. Do you like going to school every day?  Y  N  NS

13. What do you like best about school?

14. Are you a good student?  Y  N  NS

15. Could you be a better student?  Y  N  NS

*If yes, how?
16. Do you behave well at school? Y N NS
17. Does your teacher believe you can learn? Y N NS
18. Does your teacher think you are a good student? Y N NS
19. Does your teacher care about you? Y N NS
20. Does your principal care about you? Y N NS
21. Do you get recognized when you do well in class? Y N NS
22. Are you challenged by the work you do in class? Y N NS
23. Do you know what you are supposed to be learning in class? Y N NS
24. Do you participate in class? (Answering questions, participating in discussions and activities) Y N NS
25. Is good work expected from the students at your school? Y N NS
26. Are students treated fairly by the teacher? Y N NS
27. Are students treated fairly by the principal? Y N NS
27. Do the students at your school treat you with respect? Y N NS
28. Are the students at your school friendly?  Y  N  NS
29. Do you have a lot of friends?  Y  N  NS
30. Does your family believe you are a good student?  Y  N  NS
31. Does your family believe you can do well in school?  Y  N  NS
32. Does your family help you with school problems?  Y  N  NS
33. Do you have any questions? (Note questions or concerns)
34. Do you like making art?  Y  N  NS
35. What art materials have you worked with?
36. What art materials do you like best?
37. Are there any art materials you would like to try?
38. Are there any art materials you don’t like?
39. Would you like to make art with me?
Appendix G

The Bulls Group Description

The “Bulls Group” was composed of six members from the same first grade classroom. All the participants in this group were male, ages 6 or 7, and African American. The group met weekly for 50 minutes after lunch in the library media room. The students were referred to art therapy by their teacher because they demonstrated behavioral and emotional issues that negatively affected academic achievement and classroom functioning. Examples of the behavioral and emotional issues the student’s demonstrated included: disregard for rules and authority, angry outbursts, poor socialization skills, and fighting with other students. The goals for the group included: further developed cooperation and socialization skills; improved impulse control and enhanced internal locus of control; improved emotional intelligence so that negative feelings such as anger could be redirected and more appropriate coping mechanisms could be developed; improved problems solving abilities, and ultimately an increase in appropriate and acceptable behaviors.

Thomas was 6 years old. He was chubby and rather short for his age. He had short dark hair and brown eyes. Thomas was shy and quiet. He was often picked on by other students, but was quick to retaliate back. Thomas was also missing his two front teeth and his clothes were usually large and tattered, likely a hand me down from his older brother. Thomas was the youngest of four children.
His older brothers were 16, 14, and 11. His sister was 17 and had just had her first child, a boy. He lived with his siblings, nephew, and Mother. His Father was not actively involved and Thomas rarely saw him. Thomas’s older siblings often babysat him because his Mother worked two jobs.

*Jamal* was 6 years old and full of personality. He often spoke with great energy and it showed in his expressive brown eyes. He was very outgoing, friendly, and talkative. Jamal was of average height, but very slender. He was quick to help other group members and often sought out their approval. Jamal lived with his Mother and older brother who was 9. Jamal’s Mother was unemployed and was often hard to contact. His Father had been in prison for approximately six months, but Jamal was told that he was on a vacation in Florida.

*Vincent* was also 6 years old. He was of average height and weight. He had braided hair and hazel eyes. Vincent was polite and had a good sense of humor. He laughed often and seemed to enjoy making others laugh. At times Vincent would grow quiet, but was quick to explain his solitude, usually because he was upset or angry. Vincent had been diagnosed with ADHD early in the school year and took medication regularly. He lived with his Mother and was an only child. His Mother worked full time and Vincent spent a lot of time with his Grandmother while she worked.
Willy was also 6. He had a fuller frame for his short body and wore wire rimmed glasses. Willy was friendly, cooperative, and eager to interact with others. He was often overly talkative and enjoyed being the center of attention. He had a natural artistic ability and seemed to really enjoy the art therapy sessions. Willy lived with his Mother, her boyfriend, and his sisters. Willy’s sisters were both older, age 13 and 9. Willy had never met his Father and did not speak of him.

Christian was 7 and very tall for his age. His hair was buzzed short and he was always well groomed. He was polite and respectful, but also very moody. He tended to withdrawal into himself when he was upset. Christian was also very open and honest with his feelings. He had one older sister who had just moved away to go to college. This was a difficult adjustment for him because they were very close and he was now the only child in the home. Christian lived with his Mother, but he tended to spend the most time with his Grandmother. His parents had divorced two years previously and his father was not very involved in his life. All of the interactions with his family were speared by his Grandmother and she was the one contacted for permission, updates, etc because his Mother was never able to be contacted.

Ray was also 7. He was of average height and weight. His hair was braided and he was often dressed in designer clothes. Ray was friendly and bright. He tended to deny any feelings other than being happy, even when it was apparent that he was bothered. He seemed to demonstrate a low frustration tolerance and
anxiety. Ray would often become fixated on small details that hindered continuance in projects. Ray lived with his Mother, her boyfriend, and his sisters. Both of his sisters were younger, one was 4 and the other was a newborn.
Appendix H

Robert

Robert was a 7 year old African American male. He had brown braided hair and dark eyes. Robert was of average height and weight, but his verbalizations were beyond average for a first grader. He was bright, very articulate, and communicated subject matter with clarity and understanding. He was also cooperative, polite, and eager to share information about himself. Robert was always well groomed and took pride in his appearance and clothing. Robert participated in weekly art therapy sessions including, group and individual meetings. The individual sessions with Robert took place for 30 minutes over the course of fourteen weeks. Each session lasted 30 minutes and usually took place in the library media room.

At the beginning of the school year Robert had been defiant and was often in trouble, but the incidents were more benign in nature and he continued to do well academically. As the school year progressed his behaviors became increasingly destructive and he began fighting, throwing chairs, tipping over desks, ripping posters of the wall and so on. Several violent outbursts resulted in trips to the principal’s office and suspension; Roberts’s academic performance plummeted. In addition, Robert made almost daily trips to the nurse’s office because of some ailment or another.
At the time Robert was undergoing psychological evaluations with the school psychologist in effort to find out if he was behaviorally and/or emotionally disturbed. His parents felt this was unnecessary and felt his academic issues stemmed from his teacher’s inadequate classroom instruction. Robert lived with his Mother, Father, and eight siblings. He had three older brothers, age 16, 13, and 9. He also had three older sisters, age 14, 11, and 8. Robert had one younger sister, age 4, and one younger brother, age 3 months. Both of his parents were employed outside of the home, but were actively involved with the school system.
Appendix J

Student Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terrific</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Needs work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I enjoyed being in the art therapy groups
Being in the group helped me
I learned new ways to behave
I was able to help other members of the group
I learned about feelings
I learned how to communicate
I learned how to respect others
I made new friends in the art therapy
I would like to be in future art therapy groups
My friends would enjoy being in an art therapy group

My favorite art material was

My least favorite art material was

The activity I liked best was

The activity I liked least was

The activity I learned the most from was

Did you learn anything new about yourself during the art therapy groups?