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HOME ENVIRONMENT AND CREATIVE AND ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

by

WILLIAM ALAN BARSH

Under the direction of Melody Milbrandt

ABSTRACT

This study sought to delve into and analyze the home environment and its relation to creative and artistic activity. Three artistically exceptional third grade art students, their parents, and their previous year teacher were interviewed to collect data relating to students and their home environments. Factors related to a student's home environment such as the origins of their artistic inspirations, environment in which they made art at home, materials available to them, and the cultural values and beliefs transmitted to them in their homes were looked at to see how they influenced a child's artistic activity. Data was collected through interviews and teacher observations and combined with a review of literature to compile strategies that might be useful for parents to use to influence their children's artistic activity.

INDEX WORDS: Home environment, Creativity, Artistic activity, Families, Artistic influence, Parents, Children

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WILLIAM ALAN BARSH

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art Education

in the College of Arts and Sciences

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2006

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Home Environment and Creative and Artistic Activity

Purpose of the Study:

With the birth of my first child, I became intrigued as I watched her grow and develop. I observed my wife reading books to my daughter, sounding out words, and pointing out examples of objects. I was amazed how these strategies seemed to help my daughter's language development and in my mind, I began to notice how creating an environment rich in literacy aids in language development. If this is true for literacy, could an environment rich in art also aid in artistic development? As I followed this train of thought I began to reflect upon the students within my own art classes. I wondered if the students that seemed to excel did so simply because of talent or was their home environment and stimulus therein a large part of their artistic success? The experiences with my own daughter and questions about my students sparked an interest in studying any possible links between home environment and artistic activity.

I believe there is a need for this study because within the experiences of a child in elementary school their exposure to an art teacher or art experience can be extremely limited. For instance, at my school, an average child may spend most of their six and one half hour school day with their classroom teacher. Within that school day, a scheduled and focused art experience with the art teacher will last for forty-five minutes. If we take into consideration clean up, setup, fire drills, assemblies, and other time constraints, as well as the fact that they are scheduled for a formal art experience only once a week, the

relative time of focused art activity can be as little as thirty minutes a week. The art classroom is also a place where teachers can intentionally create an environment where students are challenged to think creatively and use creative ideas in making works of art. In contrast, students spend a great deal of time with their classroom teachers and within their home environment. Unless teachers and parents are informed about creative and artistic activities and practice, students may not get experiences to influence them creatively and artistically from teachers and parents. These are important influences that can shape the development of children. In her article, "Nurturing Creative Potential: An Interactive Model for Home and School", Cheryl Wright points out that many well known theorists such as Bloom, Gardner, and Piaget, have recognized the early years of life as very important in intellectual and creative development (Wright, 1987, p. 32). She also references Young's (1985) ideas of how children learn through exploration of their environments, in particular the home and school, as important developmental factors. She goes on to relate the importance of Lowenfeld (1975) and Brittain's (1975) emphasis on the early childhood years as the most crucial in encouraging creative thinking (Wright, 1987, p 32-3). Tizard and Hughes's (1984) ideas are also important as to why the home is a powerful learning environment for a child with their presentation of concepts such as: the encouragement of incidental learning as a natural reaction to their environment, the small number of children within the home and individualized attention from adults, and the close relationship between parent and child as an important factor in learning experiences (Jalongo & Stamp, 1997). Finally, Howe says, "The ways in which children develop in the early years are affected by the degree to which parents assume the role of teacher." (Jalongo & Stamp, 1997, p. 102) A large part of a child's life before school,

and once school begins, may not be with an adult who is focused on an enriching art environment. For this study in particular, if parents are not creating an environment stimulating creativity and art, children may miss out on some important enrichment as we have seen from these theorists.

What is this enriching creative and artistic environment? For this study and from the review of literature, it is an environment filled with opportunities open for creative freedom and artistic activity. Robert Schirrmacher, in his book, *Art and Creative Development for Young Children*, relates the idea of a creativity equation which follows like this; love, acceptance, and nurturance lead to autonomy and freedom which lead to competence and self esteem which lead to risk taking and creativity. (Schirrmacher, 1998, p.11) Schirrmacher's equation presents the idea that creativity is not just related to the physical environment, but inherent within creativity are social and emotional factors that could effect creative action. In this study, I am not only going to look at the physical environment, but also the social and emotional environment of the home as well. I will seek to examine if factors such as parental attitudes, access to materials, parent/ child interaction, and family culture could affect the creative and artistic activity of the child within the home environment. Cheryl Wright describes the creative family as one that shows respect for the child, stimulates independence, and creates an enriched environment. (Wright, 1987, p. 34) When these environmental factors are utilized, creativity could flourish and when the child is given access to materials, time for exploration, and the encouragement to explore, expression with creativity could be realized (Jalongo & Stamp, 1997). "Teachers can stimulate interest, but parents must extend and continue the experiences in order to make the most of the experiences

(Jalongo & Stamp, 1997, p.99)." This quote highlights the importance of the home as a stimulus and extension of the arts. In this study, I will interview three students of different ethnicities from my school and their families, as well as the student's previous year teacher to examine these children and their home environments and its possible relation to a child's creative and artistic activity. Findings from this study could provide useful information to parents by highlighting practices and attitudes that could have an effect on a child's creative and artistic activity within the home environment.

Research Questions:

1. In what ways might the student's home environment, including their cultural background, influence their creative and artistic activity?

Information to answer this question will be gathered as a compilation of answers from interview questions given to the students, their families, and their previous year teacher. The answers to the interview questions will be analyzed in relation to their reference to particular categories of data. The categories are: Attributes of the Student/ Artistic Inspirations and Creations, The Home Environment/ Making Art at Home, Cultural Influences, The Value of Art, and Further Artistic Endeavors. The answers that students, parents, and teachers give in relation to these categories, will be compared with research from my review of literature to assess the level of creative and artistic activity in the home environment.

2. Based on the information gained from the three case studies as well as information gained from the author's review of literature, what strategies might be generally useful for parents to use to influence their children's creative and artistic activity?

The data collected from interviews, teacher observation, and student's artistic product, will be compiled and examined. I will look to see if any commonalities arise related to the home environment of the children and its relation to creative and artistic activity. I will then take this information and combine it with information gained from my literature review in developing strategies to help parents create a home environment that is conducive to creative and artistic activity. This information will be compiled and arranged in a pamphlet that will be sent home to parents to be utilized as a resource (See figure 4.1).

Methodology:

This study began with the search for three exceptional art students of differing races and ethnicities from the 3rd grade at my school. To achieve this goal, I began by having third grade classes from my school complete an art project in my art class within their normal art rotation. The project was an open ended project entitled Imaginary Vacation, that allowed students to display their creative and artistic abilities. The students were given an opportunity to generate creative ideas in a brainstorming process to describe if they were given one more week of summer vacation what would they do, where would they go, and who would they take with them. They then utilized these ideas to make a work of art to demonstrate their artistic abilities assessed by Lowenfeld's theories of artistic development. In this study, creativity and artistic ability are two different concepts that were both observed and examined in relation to the selected students and their home environments. For the selection of these students, an operational

definition to judge creativity was defined as the process of thinking and cognition that can be manifested in originality, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration (Torrance, 1969). To observe these attributes within a student, I utilized the brainstorming component of the art project to provide insight into their ability to generate creative ideas, as well as my observation of the students' approach to the portrayal of their ideas throughout the art project. Originality was defined as the uniqueness of their selected ideas and the portrayal of this idea artistically. Fluency was defined as the number of ideas that they were able to generate in the brainstorming process. Flexibility was defined as the different directions and interpretations the student took from the original open ended project idea as observed in the brainstorming notes. Elaboration was defined as the degree of detail and descriptions the student incorporated and utilized to build upon the original project idea. The responses of parents, students, and teachers in the interviews were also used to observe creative attributes. Personal characteristics such as risk taking, self confidence, and novelty in thought and ideas were examined as possible creative attributes. Environmental attributes such as freedom to create, open ended dialogue and questioning, and support for creative activities and endeavors were also examined as creative attributes.

Students were also selected by their artistic abilities, operationally defined as the expression of their thoughts, feelings, emotions, perceptions, or imagination in a symbolic, visual form. This artistic activity was observed and assessed by my observation of students and the manifestation of their ideas in their artworks. The artwork was judged in relation to a baseline of what students their age could be able to do as described by Victor Lowenfeld's theories of artistic development. Students who

excelled in the areas of creativity and artistic activity were selected as candidates for the study. The students were chosen on the basis of creative spark, artistic activity, and ethnicity. The three chosen applicants were from three different racial and ethnic groups: African American, Caucasian American, and Mexican American. These categories were selected as being the three largest racial population groups within my school. The inclusion of the ethnic component in the research was meant to examine any possible cultural influences that home environment could have on artistic activity. In the study, culture was defined as the values, attitudes, and beliefs that parents transmit to their children. The aspects and affects that culture might play within the home environment in influencing a child's creative and artistic activity was examined though responses to interview questions from students, parents, and teachers.

Students who excelled in relation to their peers within their ethnic category were selected as candidates for the study. I selected the top three ranking students from each ethnic category as observed by the operational definitions of creativity from their brainstorming notes and teacher observation, as well as skill in artistic ability assessed by Lowenfeld's artistic developmental stages. Once these students were selected for the study, I made personal contact with their parents through a phone call to inform them of their child's selection for further continuance in the study. If the child or parents did not want to participate further in the study, I planned to move to the second ranked child from that category. In the study, all first ranked students and parents agreed to continue further in the study. These selected students participated in one interview, that lasted no longer than thirty minutes in length. The interview took place within the student's school day during a time that did not interfere with their classroom instructional time. The

location of the interview was at the school's conference room during which another staff member was present. Within the interview I sought to find out about the student's perspectives of their own art and creative and artistic activity within their homes. Parents were also asked to participate in one interview, that lasted no longer than one hour in length, during a home visit. The visit was scheduled at the convenience of the parents. The interview was designed to inquire about the parents experiences in art personally and culturally, as well as their perception of their child and creativity and artistic activity in the home environment. The utilization of a home visit was meant to conduct an interview in the midst of the environment central to the study. Having the interview take place within the home was to provide an opportunity for deeper insight and discussion both visually and verbally. The student's previous year classroom teacher also participated in one interview, that lasted no longer than one hour. It took place after school, at the school site in the teachers' classrooms. This interview was scheduled at the convenience of the teacher. The importance of this interview was to gain a unique perspective of a child who is talented in art from the point of view of their classroom teacher as well as to discuss any observable creative and artistic attributes that an artistically talented child might display in their regular classroom.

The interviews were recorded on a tape recorder. This was used to aid in transcription of the interviews. All interviews were conducted in a conversational style to aid in comfortability and ease to relax participants so that they could answer freely and honestly. Each set of interviews, student, parent, and teacher, utilized its own set of standardized questions (Appendix A, B, and C). Responses to the questions were compared and analyzed related to major categories (Appendix E). The identities of the

participants remain private. I used pseudonyms when referring to participants within my study. All data including names, the interviews, and other facts related to this study are kept private indefinitely in a protected place.

This research was conducted in a qualitative design. Interviews (with the student, student's parents, and student's previous year classroom teacher), observational notes of the students' activities in class, and the students artistic product were utilized to triangulate the data collected. The acquired information was examined to compare and contrast related responses and data. In the analysis process, categories related to selected criteria of the home environment were created to analyze frequency of responses supporting a home environment that influences artistic activity. The categories were Attributes of the Student/ Artistic Inspirations and Creations, The Home Environment/ Making Art at Home, Cultural Influences, The Value of Art, and Further Artistic Endeavors. I then compiled the findings from this analyzed data to create a resource for parents. This resource was a collection of strategies that can influence creative and artistic activity within the home environment. With administrative permission, a pamphlet was sent home with all students to encourage parents to pursue artistic explorations with their children in the home.

Participants:

The participants in this study were three 3rd grade students of different racial groups within my school who excelled in creative and artistic ability, their parents, and their previous year teachers. The selected students were Tim Okezie, who I presumed to be an African American student. His father Charles, sister Sandy, as well as his teacher

Ms. Brown participated in interviews. Maria Martinez was selected to represent Mexican American population. Her mother Cecelia and teacher Ms. Morgan participated in interviews. Mark Simmons was selected to be representative of Caucasian American students. His father Mike, mother Cathy, sister Samantha, and teacher Ms. Travis all participated in the interviews. These racial groups were chosen because they are the largest populations of students within my school and the inclusion of selected ethnicities was made to examine any cultural influences that might have affected creative and artistic activity in the home environment. As I moved deeper into the process of getting to know these students and families, it became clear that separating these students as representative of a particular racial culture or ethnicity was more complex and involved than I anticipated. In interviewing Tim, I discovered that he was born in Nigeria, and his family had been in the United States for a limited time. The cultural influences that he and his family displayed were very different from an African American student whose family had lived in the United State for several generations. Also, Mark's parents were of two different ethnicities. His father was Caucasian and his mother was Philipino. The blending of these two cultures within Mark's home might also play an important factor in the cultural influences found in his home in relation to another student whose parents were both Caucasian. The examination of culture at this point in the research shifted from being about particular racial groups or ethnicities, to more about the values, attitudes, and beliefs that the parents of the selected students transmitted to their children. Each family was then looked at individually throughout the study to discover specific aspects socially, emotionally, and culturally that could affect creative and artistic activity in the home environment.

The selection of third grade students was made on the criteria that these were students who have not yet reached a stage of accented criticism of their art found in older children in later stages of artistic development (Schirrmacher, 1998). Rather, these were students who were mature enough to give thoughtful answers to interview questions and still had a youthful spirit of excitement and energy displayed in their answers to interview questions and bold, bright, colorful artworks.

Limitations:

One limitation of the research was the small number of students utilized. Findings about racial or ethnic populations of students cannot be generalized. The richness of information gained from this in-depth case study of three students and their families may prove useful to other parents wishing to support their child's artistic achievements. Also, it is unknown how these children were affected by a low-income school with a diverse population. Cultural and environmental factors such as financial resources and parental background are factors that affected home environments of these families that might not impact families the same way in other cultural settings.

Timeline:

This study took place during the 2005-2006 school year. The research and interview aspects of this study occurred during November 2005 to January 2006. This was when the project observations, art project, interviews, and home visits took place. Data was compiled between February and March and pamphlets went home in April. The entire study was concluded in April 2006.

Review of Literature

> "The family is a cultural group, and family culture is the composite of cultural elements the members of the family have selected from the pool to which they have been exposed" (Degge & McFee, 1977, p. 281).

This quote captures the essence of what I would like to discuss in this paper; the examination of factors within the home environment related to creative and artistic activity. As a father of two and an art educator, I am reflective of my influence as an educator both professionally and personally. With my daughters, I look at the interactions I have with them, the materials available, and patterns of their growth and ask myself, "What kinds of experiences am I creating for them? Are they given an environment to soar on educational wings, or a restrictive yoke of parental control and intensity?" With my students, I survey the vastness of abilities before me. Why is it that this child excels and that one doesn't? My teaching is the same; classroom structure is the same; emotional and academic support is the same. Is this child simply more gifted in the arts than the other, or is there another reason? Then, in reading the article, "Art at home: Learning through a "Suzuki education", by George Sezekely, I was intrigued by the proposals he put forth. Within the article Szekely (1995) describes his experiences and reflections from putting his daughter in the Suzuki school for learning to play the violin. Through the highly involved and structured arena of the Suzuki method, Szekely

reflects and contrasts parental and social attitudes related to art and his daughter's musical education. He discusses the fact that art is devalued and associated with parents' misconceptions related to the act of play. This misconception is examined against the main idea stressed throughout the article, which is the permeation of the Suzuki method in teaching children the violin in the family environment. Activities are planned to enrich the experience; moments are seized and related to aesthetic experiences. The family is intentional in the growth, development, and enjoyment of music and the violin. Through relating these experiences, the author speculates on the effect that similar ideas might have on art making and artistic development. The richness of the experience seems to be directly related to the intentionality of the parents (Szekely, 1995). As I read this article I saw the students in my class and my little girls. A large part of their experience with creativity and the arts is based upon the environment created in the home. This was the spark that lead to the formulation of this study. Within this paper, I will first explore ideas suggesting ties between creative and artistic activity and the home environment. Based on those ties, I will then discuss attributes of home environments that are conducive to creative and artistic activity. Finally, I will conclude with a look at how culture and home environment could be related to creative and artistic endeavors with culture defined as the values, attitudes and beliefs that parents transmit to their children.

Part 1: Ties Between Creative and Artistic Activity and the Home Environment

Many researchers have identified linkage between artistic activity and the home environment. In her report, "Young Children and the Arts", Sara Goldhawk (1998) relates that early childhood education begins when the child is born and that research shows that experiences in the first three years of life have a powerful influence on long term learning and development. What we can take from this position is the importance and power of early childhood influences on the development of a child. Goldhawk (1998) also goes on to say that research has shown that learning experiences affect the child not only cognitively, but also neurologically, by developing greater synapses and growth in the brain.

Art is a large part of these early experiences. Many years before children are able to write, speak effectively, or even utilize numbers; art is the primary means of symbol making and expression of their worlds and environment (Collado, 1999). However, most parents dismiss these early scribbles as merely play with little meaning. They do not realize the greater impact of these first markings to the development of the child (Day and Hurwitz, 1995). Teachers and parents who are aware of the power and importance of these first markings are able to nurture the child and provide an environment that supports creativity. These markings are much more than scribble, but first attempts at making meaning, learning, and relating to the world (Day and Hurwitz, 1995).

Fatima Collado (1999) in her article, "The Role of Spontaneous Drawing in the Development of Children in the Early Childhood Setting," refers to Piagetian thinking in

stating, "It was Piaget's belief that the nature of the experiences provided to a child in the first five years of life was crucial to his intellectual development (Collado, 1999, p. 7)."

What is important for parents and educators of young children to understand is the crucial role that art can play in their development. Not only does it facilitate cognitive growth, it also promotes artistic growth (Collado, 1999). Artistic creations are one of the primary means by which children express themselves in play. While play is dismissed by many adults as simple and meaningless, Goldhawk presents a different idea. She puts forth the idea that, "Play is the business of young children; play is the way children promote and enhance their development. The arts are a most natural vehicle for play (Goldhawk, 1998, p. 7)." Many parents focus on activities associated with language arts and neglect many visual arts endeavors. This neglect could be detrimental to the intellectual and creative growth of the child. The creation of an artistic environment can be an effective way to enhance the development of the child. Within this environment, the nature of interaction can also be very important. How parents communicate with their children and relate to them about their art can have a tremendous impact (Goldhawk, 1998).

In her article, "Talking About Art: Understanding Children's Perspectives", Christine Mulcahey (2000) explores differences between how adults view the world of children and their art and how children view their world and their art. Mulcahey begins her article by asserting her opinion that often children are seen as raw materials for teachers to shape and mold. She suggests that this does not give children a voice in their education. She goes on to insist that talking to children is essential to understanding how they learn and how to better teach them (Mulcahey, 2000). In the article, Mulcahey

(2000) describes her participation in a research study that seeks to "investigate children's perspective on their own artistic learning (p. 10)." She describes how she interviewed a group of sixth graders for ten weeks by discussing and viewing their artworks in small groups. Mulcahey's research found that from the student's perspective there is a definite children's world and adult world. Children characterized the adult world as more mature and responsible and suggested that teachers didn't understand the children's world because they weren't children themselves. From the students' perspectives, adults controlled most things and gave little power or voice to children. When this disconnect between worlds and perspectives occurs, Mulcahey (2000) states that it impacts student art making in that they perceive that they are forced to work and perform which can negatively affect their artistic motivation.

She also found in her discussions that students had anxiety and concerns about the realistic representations of their work. Students showed interesting insight into the transitions of their work from what they considered childish creations to more mature, adult-like artwork (Mulcahey, 2000). From her research, Mulcahey presented the following implications: more room should be made for the students' voice in classroom practices; if choices are absent, children feel they are being forced to learn and perform and this can lead to resistance. Images do not need to always represent things naturalistically; if there is anxiety, a teacher can incorporate lessons with more non-representational ideas (Mulcahey, 2000). Examining the classroom environment from the student's perspectives can give the educator great insight into the lives and perspectives of the child. This information can also be useful for parents. When viewing children's art, parents should be aware of their own preconceived notions of shaping and molding

and turning children into little adults. Rather, they can listen to their child and support and encourage his or her artistic creations (Mulcahey, 2000). Parents might be inadvertently stifling artistic activity. I am interested to examine within my study the perspective that the parents take. From what kind of perspective are they looking at their child's artwork? How does their perspective affect the motivation of these children to pursue creative and artistic activities?

In a study of families from Australia, Berthelsen and Tennent (1997) sought to determine if there was a link between creative development and family relationships. Through the use of a survey, they collected data on attitudes that were supportive of the development of creativity and parental practices that nurtured this development. The aim of their study was to look at relationships between the personality characteristics valued in children by parents, features of the home that nurture creativity, and the parenting style of the mother that might affect personality traits (Berthelsen & Tennent, 1997). A study cited in the article was one by Torrance which suggested if children were to develop creative abilities, parents would support particular behaviors of creative individuals such as stubbornness, individual thinking, risk taking, non-conformity and sensitivity. Torrance went on to conclude that many parents ignored or suppressed creative behaviors and sought conformity (Berthelesen & Tennent, 1997).

Berthelsen and Tennent found in their study that most of the mothers that participated in the study valued creative characteristics in their children over compliance. These mothers also favored more democratic environments that promoted creativity over restrictive environments. The conclusion of the study indicated that most of the 123 mothers surveyed valued the personality characteristics that favored creative

development and utilized an environment that supported these values (Berthelsen & Tennent, 1997). An interesting perspective presented in this study is that an important part of the creative development of the child lies with the attitudes of the parents. Parents that cultivate and value creative attributes in their children, as well as provide an environment that supports them, will most likely create a climate for creative potential (Berthelsen & Tennent, 1997). From the interviews, I will seek to examine if parents are actively seeking a creative environment and how they are imparting these values to their children.

In the article, "Children's Motivational Beliefs about Art", by Edens and Potter (2001), the authors discuss research ideas related to motivation. Edens and Potter put forth the idea that children become more negative about their art with age and that a negative effect in motivation is related to students' lowered self-confidence in their artistic abilities as they enter the middle grades. The authors studied developmental differences in children's motivation to see if they decline by changing beliefs in art. Within the study, they utilized some theoretical perspectives. The first one was mastery goals versus performance goals, where mastery goals were motivation in gaining proficiency in art and performance goals were motivation in exhibiting work for others. The other theory utilized in the study was Dweck's theory of entity/incremental, where students either believe that art abilities are somewhat fixed or that abilities can improve with practice (Edens & Potter, 2001). The hypothesis of the study was that in a class where students believe that art ability is fixed, they would be reluctant to show their work because of anxiety that it did not meet naturalistic standards. In addition, the anxiety would lead to reluctance to try challenging art tasks. These ideas are continued with the

theory that as a child's self concept of his or her abilities decreases with age, his or her reluctance about performance goals would increase (Edens & Potter, 2001).

Edens and Potter (2001) studied 48 students K-5 by utilizing a self-report inventory in interviews with the students. The findings of the study presented some interesting data. They found that overall younger children were more positive about their work and optimistic about improving. However, results did not show that older students placed more emphasis on mastery than performance goals. Also, there were not the major differences in negative attitude toward artwork to suggest that older students differ widely from younger students in negative attitude toward their art. The findings also showed that all the students held both mastery and performance goals. Contrary to Dweck's theory, mastery goals were not equated with students' beliefs that they can improve in art if they practice, but performance goals were equated with these beliefs (Edens & Potter, 2001). An important theory presented in the study is the positive correlations between students' self concept of their abilities and the relationship with mastery and performance goals, beliefs that one can get better with effort, and overall enjoyment of art (Edens & Potter, 2001). The relevance of this for the parent is that children who expect to get approval (rather than disapproval) from their parent, as well as having a parent who will support their belief that they are able to make good art, might elicit higher artistic motivation (Edens & Potter, 2001). In conducting research with my students, I am interested in seeing where their motivations come from in reference to their artistic abilities. Is it from a positive home environment, intrinsic motivation and self esteem, or a combination of both? Do they believe that art ability is fixed or that one can learn to become a good artist?

Another study from England is entitled, "Children's Talent in Fine Art and Music-England" by Joan Freeman. Within the study, researchers sought to question the formation of development in the aptitude of music and art. As part of the study, researchers examined the presence of commonalities of home environment in the lives of talented students. Children who had noticeable talent in music and art were compared with children of average talent having the same opportunities for school experiences. As part of the research, the parents were interviewed in their homes and observations of the home environment were also recorded. The results of the study showed that even though the talented and average children had access to the same school experiences related to the arts, the talented children's homes contained greater environmental influences. Within these homes, parents exhibited more encouragement and support for the arts and provided more materials and support for the child's creative experience. (Freeman, 2000) Parental understanding of early childhood development, parental attitudes about the arts, and motivations of the child, can influence a child’s creative and artistic activity. When studying families from differing home environments, I am interested to examine how these factors come together, and to what extent they affect young art students.

Part 2: Attributes of a Home Environment that are Conducive to Creative and Artistic Activity

What does a home environment look like, and what are the attributes of the environment that could foster creative and artistic activity? In his book, "The Torrance Kids at Mid-Life", Garnet W. Millar describes results of a longitudinal study of creative children by noted researcher E. Paul Torrance. The students were originally part of two schools overseen by Torrance when the research began in 1958. The original sample consisted of 391 students, 18 of which were selected for a follow-up study begun in 1980 because of the outstanding achievements and creative spark exhibited throughout their lives. From questionnaires, some interesting information was gained from the individuals' about their lives, including information about the attitudes and actions of parents and teachers from when the subjects were young. From the data, characteristic behaviors of parents and teachers that had great impact on these subjects as children were: a total commitment to their work (an intellectual passion), a positive role model, being somewhat non-conformist in word and action, being energetic, the implementation of fair behavior restrictions, a value on creativity, thoughtfulness, gentleness, and patience (Millar, 2002, p. 247). Along with the questionnaire, the individuals in the study offered suggestions to parents to help nurture creativity in their children. Some of their responses included providing choices for children, controlling and monitoring the amount of T.V. watched, talking with (not to) children about ideas, providing materials to make creative things, providing structure and setting limits, enjoying outdoor activities, providing a variety of books, avoiding modeling bad habits (such as alcoholism), asking

good questions, and having one parent not working outside of the home, if possible (Millar, 2002, p. 267). These highly successful and creative individuals listed several attributes that they felt were important in the early environment of their growth and development. Are any of these attributes present in the families I research and are there attributes, that when displayed by parents, can influence their children creatively and artistically?

In the book, *The Arts in Children's Lives*, Mary Renck Jalongo and Laurie Nicholson Stamp relate research in emergent literacy as related and important to the emergence of art ability (Jalongo & Stamp, 1997). The importance of parent involvement in early literacy is seen as necessary, but many parents may be unaware of the importance of parent involvement in early artistic development. The authors describe four themes that link emergent literacy and the arts. First, both emergent literacy and arts research emphasize the importance of role models. A parent can play an important part in the child's interaction with the arts. Parents who have confidence with the arts are more likely to encourage their children to participate in the arts than parents who are not confident. Children learn a great deal from the values of the family around them, and parents who value the arts can pass this love onto their children. Secondly, both emergent literacy and the arts research stress the importance of the child's role as an active participant. One consistent finding in the research is that children who are exposed to literacy before they enter school have greater success once in school (Jalongo & Stamp, 1997). Similar ideas can be associated with the arts. Thirdly, both emergent literacy and arts research emphasize the self-expressive power of language and art. Children will not see the expressive power of the arts unless parents stimulate this idea

through the use of materials, and provide time for exploration and encouragement as they experiment (Jalongo, 1997). Finally, both emergent literacy and arts research give evidence that early experiences exert a powerful influence on later experience. Children acquire visual schemas that can communicate experiences and enhance the information (Jalongo & Stamp, 1997). After establishing some background to stress the importance of stimulating the arts in the home, the authors go on to list seven tools in raising creative children that are adapted from Shallcross (1981) and Rich (1992): allow them to investigate, let them pursue their own answers, give them support, turn off the television set, pose new challenges, provide role models of creative adults, and don't get carried away with formal learning experiences (Jalongo & Stamp, 1997).

We can see some evidence underscoring the importance of arts in the home, but why is creativity important? In her article, "Nurturing Creative Potential: An Interactive Model for Home and School", Cheryl Wright, Director of the Child and Family Development Center at the University of Utah, lists three major reasons why creativity is important. 1) The development of creative thinking is at the heart of achievement in even the most basic educational objectives. 2) Creativity is important in adaptation to new skills and environments. 3) Teaching children to think more creatively is also important to personal growth and development (Wright, 1987). Wright summarizes the creative family into three aspects: showing respect for the child, stimulating independence, and creating an enriched environment (Wright, 1987, p. 34). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1975) state that the early childhood years are the most critical in stimulating creative activity. Torrance (1963) also relates that the creative imagination seems to peak during the ages of four to four and a half years old. Parents can enrich or inhibit children's creativity

during these formative years. These are the years that many parents have direct, personal influence over their children and parents focus on creating a stimulating home environment for the arts can be very important to a child's early creative development (Wright, 1987).

In her book, *Growing up Creative*, researcher Teresa M. Amabile (1989) observes that there are several ways that parents can kill creativity in their children. She stresses the importance of the climate created, and that coercion and pushing children into activities before they are ready can be detrimental to the child's creative growth. She outlines four methods by which parents can kill their children's creativity: 1) Evaluation- excessive judgment and criticism of the child's work. 2) Reward- tasks involving more complex problem solving that are associated with reward seem to subdue intrinsic motivation. 3) Competition- a combination of evaluation and reward. 4) Restricting choice- which creates an environment of forced regimentation which can inhibit creativity (Amabile, 1989, p. 72-78). Parents who are well intentioned may unwittingly be undermining their children's creative growth if they are exhibiting Amabile's creativity killers. I will be looking for potential creativity killers in my study to see if there are any instances of these affecting a child's creativity.

Amabile goes on in her book to highlight attitudes that parents can adopt that will stimulate creativity: freedom and not authoritarian restriction of child's activities, respect and confidence in child's abilities and uniqueness, moderate emotional closeness rather than coddling of the child, stressing the values of the family rather than excessive rules, achievement and doing your best rather than grades, independent parents who have their own interests, parental encouragement and appreciation of creative things and creativity,

parents who have vision for their children as capable of doing great things, and humor and the ability to laugh at situations and oneself (Amabile, 1989, p. 104-104).

Robert Schirrmacher in his book, *Art and Creative Development for Young Children*, gives a great kaleidoscope analogy for creativity and experience,

> "The more numerous and colorful the pieces in the drum of the kaleidoscope, the greater the variety of resulting shapes, colors, and patterns. Likewise, in creative expression, the greater one's background of experiences with people, places, and objects, the greater range of possibilities to draw from in creative activity (Shirrmacher, 1998, p. 10)."

The attitudes and values of parents and stimulation and experiences in the home environment can have a very important role in enriching or inhibiting creative and artistic activity. How will the values and experiences of the parents be reflected in the homes within my study? I am interested to see from the interviews if the values and attitudes of the parents become a basis for the creation of a creative and artistic environment or if they are relative to the interests of the child.

Part 3: Culture and Home Environment Related to Educational and Creative and Artistic Endeavors.

When I survey my students and reflect about the influences that have shaped their artistic development, I wonder if there are any cultural aspects in play as well. What are the values, attitudes, and beliefs that have influenced these children culturally? The

culture that a child is raised in can have a considerable effect upon the beliefs and values attributed to that child. In relation to creative and artistic endeavors of a child, the amount and focus of creative and artistic activity afforded to the child could depend upon the culture in which he or she was raised (McFee, 1970). My school draws students from a lower socioeconomic status with a diversity of ethnicities, most predominately represented by African American, Mexican American, and Caucasian American children. In looking at my students, I wondered if there could be cultural factors that I may not realize that affect these children in their home environments related to creative and artistic activity. I began research to look into ethnicity and socioeconomic factors that affect the culture of the home environment. However, I soon discovered that issues of ethnicity and class status were much more diverse and involved than I expected. In the process of selecting students for the study and then visiting their homes, there were not a set of normative attributes that could be assigned to a particular ethnicity. Each family had its own background and experiences that would subdivide them from the ethnicity from which they were chosen. It became clear that the research I was doing should be used as a platform for discussion of issues related to the larger idea of the culture of a home environment. The research done in this section of the review of literature looks at issues related to ethnicity and socioeconomic levels. In this discussion, these issues will be presented in the context of the particular ethnicity or socioeconomic level, and then brought out of its original context and examined upon the broader context and discussion of the culture of any home environment.

In the book, *Preparation for Art*, by June King McFee (1970), the author states, "In the anthropological sense, culture means the attitudes, values, the patterns of roles

and acceptable behavior, and the concepts of reality shared by a group of people" (p. 112). In a country as diverse as that of the United States, consideration of the culture of the home environment is of great importance. If a child is raised in a home where the culture dictates a high level of cleanliness, and an artistic activity produces what might be deemed messy behavior, that cultural aspect could have an effect on a child's artistic growth (McFee, 1970, p. 134). This is a simple example but raises an interesting proposition: Are there factors within culture that affect creative and artistic activity?

Much care needs to be taken in looking at culture. McFee stresses the idea of subcultures. In other words, one cannot make assumptions about entire cultures. There may be norms, but each situation, and in regard to this research, each family, should be seen as individual and unique, containing their own set of cultural values and beliefs (McFee, 1970). All ethnicities bring values, beliefs and cultural attributes that enhance our diverse society in the United States. Also, all ethnicities exhibit cultural ideals and attitudes that all families can learn from. In presenting ideas from research and literature in this section, the motivation is to present ideas to be taken out of the context of a particular ethnicity and laid upon a broader discussion of a culture of art in the home environment. In investigating the values and beliefs that a family holds, the idea of a culture that is transmitted to a child begins to emerge. I will present some issues in terms of culture and then raise some questions about how they might affect creative and artistic activity in the home environment.

In the article, "Making Cultural Connections for African American Children Under Six: Affirming Culture through Literature and the Arts", author Guda Gayle-Evans asserts an idea she says is found in African American culture. Gayle-Evans (1993) says,

"The school system was set up and still remains a system of White middle-class values. Because of this structure of the school system, many children from lower socioeconomic groups, as well as many minorities including African-American children, tend to feel alienated" (p.1). The author goes on to cite a study by Carnine, Karp and Weisberg which states that many students enter school excited and eager to learn but by the time they are sixteen they exhibit negative feelings. The study indicated that this was also true for African American children who were from low-income families (Gayle-Evans, 1993, p. 2-3). This raises the question of the impact of culture. It seems to suggest that at least in some cases, the culture of school is in conflict with the culture of some students. The students in the study stated they were eager to learn when they began school but later exhibited negative feelings. In the context of home environment, what might be the outcome for a child who was interested in creative and artistic activities but this interest was in conflict with the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the culture in the home? Might they exhibit negative feelings and discouragement after being in such a conflicting culture for many years?

What are other characteristics of the home culture? Gayle-Evans (1993) talked about the importance of the primary care giver as a socializing agent teaching the children things that are valued within the culture. From the article, one important aspect within African American culture is that of maintaining cultural identity. This trait was said to be important in maintaining a strong sense of self and heritage as related to being in a minority culture within a larger culture. The author suggested that a particular problem facing young African American children today was that they may not always have positive role models. She suggested that parents need to show interest in their

children's education and help them with their assignments at home (Gayle-Evans, 1993). From the interviews I want to observe if the parents in my study are a strong socializing agent in their homes? Are they positive role models and what kind of culture and values are they transmitting to their children in relation to creativity and art? Could these parents as socializing agents created a love for art and creative activity in their children and positively influenced them to pursue creative and artistic interests?

In the article "The Minority Family as a Mediator for Their Children's Art and Academic Education", Bernard Young (1990) writes,

> "…some researchers think that artistic development will develop in all persons in proportion to the potential with which they start. This notion raises a problem for low-income children and their parents. Parents from low-income areas who believe their children are talented either artistically or academically cannot sit around waiting for their children to bloom and their abilities flourish. They must take aggressive measures simply to survive. Poverty often causes despair, anger, and sometimes a lack of interest in anything except one's own worries (p. 36-37)."

Young goes on to talk about the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness that may result. Many parents experiencing poverty may have little education themselves and can provide little support and assistance to their children. The pressures of life can overwhelm ideas of stimulating creative and artistic actions (Young, 1990).

Young (1990) also brings up the point that it is important for parents to realize that children may have an interest in art that they have not discovered because of a lack

of experiences (p. 41). At times, parents may also see art as an unproductive venture, preferring that their children should concentrate on more traditional academic ventures. Young (1990) speaks of factors affecting black children and other minorities affected by poverty and their involvement in the arts,

> "Many black children and other minorities may be living in conditions of poverty for various reasons, but other factors that affect child-rearing practices and the education of these children must be carefully taken into consideration. For instance, a child's artistic interest and academic achievement may be influenced by family practices such as whether or not some relative in the family reads to the child about art, how frequently the child has been taken to museums, and how interested the child is in color, shapes, and design relationships (p. 44)."

Leo F. Twiggs, in his article, "Teaching Art to Disadvantaged Black Students", offers insight into how culture can affect art experience. Twiggs (1990) asserts that teachers must become familiar with the culture of black students, including the need to be strong and endure life's hardships, the role of the church, the extended family tradition, and the strong mother image in the family (p. 9). Twiggs (1990) also writes that black students' attitudes towards the arts should be examined, in particular the view that art is an unmanly activity (p. 9). These cultural factors can be related to the home environment in determining if they affect the pursuance of artistic activities and the value of creative activities in the home. In my study, do the immediate priorities of life within the home environment supersede the importance for experience and investigation into creative and

artistic activities? Factors such as the effects of poverty or limited experience in the arts, as well as any attitudes related to the pursuance of creative and artistic activities should be looked at as issues affecting a culture influencing creative and artistic activities in the home.

Alexenia Young Baldwin in her article, "Understanding the Challenge of Creativity Among African Americans" discusses aspects of creativity and African American culture. Baldwin (2001) asserts that African-Americans exhibit creative behaviors, but in ways that may not be recognized as traditional creativity, and thus possibly overlooked or dismissed. Baldwin has formulated a list of creative behaviors that are exhibited by African American children such as language rich in imagery, humor, symbolism, and persuasion; logical reasoning, planning ability, and pragmatic problem solving- ability; sensitivity and alertness to movements; and resiliency to hardships encountered in the environment. Baldwin goes on to say that some of these creative behaviors can be exhibited and viewed as negative classroom behaviors causing the creativity of the child to be overlooked, as well as limiting their opportunity for achievement and inhibiting their creative self confidence. Torrance states that a lack of positive self-concept among minority students in relation to their creative ability can diminish creative capabilities (Baldwin, 2001). The culture of school can have a powerful influence and result in alienation. These feelings of alienation that a student can have might also be found in the home. Just as a teacher may be unaware of a child’s creative potential and possibly dismiss creative behaviors as unruly, a parent unaware of creative attributes may unwittingly be inhibiting their child’s creative activity as well. Parents may be missing the opportunity to identify and support creative activity within

their own children. From the interviews, will the teachers and parents of the selected students be aware of creative attributes and will they characterize the children as creative as well?

In the book, *No Excuses Closing the Racial Gap in Learning*, Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom presented research that suggested possible environmental factors that might result in problems with educational achievement such as parental education, poverty, and place of residence. In a study of kindergarten students, some African American students were found to be behind upon entering kindergarten. The study revealed that part of the problem that these children had in adjusting to school was related to the family structure. The study found that children who live with one parent were behind in their ability to persist in a task, in eagerness to learn, and in their capacity to pay attention in school (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003, 134). According to this particular study, factors such as single mother families and the limited education of the parents (which were statistically found within this African American community) could be factors that affect achievement (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Could such factors also be related to the enrichment or inhibition of arts in any home environment? Could the family structure and educational background of the families in my study affect the experiences and culture that they pass onto their children?

Family involvement and lack of education are environmental factors that can affect any family. According to the 1996 President's Advisory Commission of Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, one of the ten factors that affect Latino American educational attainment was low parent involvement (Canning, Polanco-Noboa, & Salazar-Guenther, 2002, p.5). Within the Latin culture there is a strong respect for

authority. The Latin family perceives the school as doing its job and education is its domain; to infringe would be disrespectful. In traditional American educational culture, communication between home and school, and direct parent involvement in a child's education is strongly supported. This contrast in cultures could create possible tension (Sampson, 2004).

The family is the most important institution in Mexican American society. Many times the father is perceived as the head of the home and his traditional focus is to provide for the family. Culturally, women are traditionally groomed to display purity, and value goals in life of becoming wives and mothers. Boys are trained to provide for the family while girls, at puberty, are sometimes focused back into the home to be prepared for later marriage. Regrettably at this point, the value of education can be downplayed for girls, and at times, in Mexico, they may even leave school. Extended family plays a substantial role within the family, much more so than in traditional American culture (Brussel, 1971). Within the larger context, can creative and artistic activity be affected by the value of cultural roles and gender in the home environment?

Educational research has shown that Mexican American children bring many styles of learning to an educational environment from interactions within their family (such as observations and practice, modeling and hands on experiences, cooperation instead of competition, and utilizing community and family for instructional resources) (Huerta-Macias, 1998, p. 32-41). Many of these qualities are similar to characteristics that stimulate creativity. Are there kinds of cultural practices within a family such as cooperative art projects, modeling, practice, and incorporation of family as an

instructional resource that can positively affect creative and artistic activity? In the case studies, are any of these attributes represented?

Another important aspect of Mexican culture that seems to have a dramatic impact on their educational influences today is the issue of immigration. In the Thernstrom's book (2003), mentioned earlier, they comment on this issue of immigration,

> "…they come to America to better their lot economically. Far more than others though, they seem to see the move as a temporary pragmatic choice, and they keep alive the option of returning to the country they still consider 'home (p.106)'"

Many Mexican immigrants come to America simply for economic means. They do not have a strong desire to stay or assimilate their families into American society. Many times they are uneducated and unskilled workers. Some of them may have as little as eight years of education (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). These factors of little education and low desire for assimilation and involvement in the educational system could affect an environment that stimulates creative and artistic growth in these families. If these families have little desire to be involved in formal educational opportunities because of either lack of interest or little education, they may be missing opportunities for exposure to artistic experiences or education on creative practice. They may just simply be unaware of the environment they could create that would enrich a child interested in art. In examining a culture of art within a home, because of a lack of personal education or desire to create an enriching learning environment, parents may be limiting the

opportunities their children have to pursue an interest in creative and artistic activities. In the case studies, from the interviews, I want to observe if a parents educational background, as well as parental involvement in a child's education, affect the culture of art within the home environment.

In the book, *Black and Brown; Race, Ethnicity, and School Preparation*, William A. Sampson researched poor Latin and Black students and their school preparation related to home environment. Sampson says,

> "Increasingly, the research on the academic performance of poor Black and poor Latino students points to the role played by the families of these students in school preparation as a key factor- indeed the key factor (Sampson, 2004, p. viii)."

Sampson (2004) seeks to study families where students are achieving and the factors related to this achievement. He describes some beliefs of these parents that he has found aid in their children's achievement such as having high expectations, a belief in discipline and responsibility, and insistence on a quiet and orderly environment where children can work (Sampson 2004). Sampson (2004) also described the home environment and observed behaviors where children performed well in school portraying ideas such as talk, reading, support from parents, homework, chores, and involvement outside of school and the home. This discussion is important to understanding the home environment and creative and artistic growth, because as discussed earlier, many similar attributes associated with academic performance are also associated with creative and artistic

activity. The factors relayed by Sampson depict a home environment with strong parent involvement. Parents were not necessarily highly educated, or rich in resources, however they took a keen interest in the development of their children (Sampson, 2004). From the interviews, will the parents in my study exhibit behaviors (such as high expectations for their children, dialogue with their children, and the creation of areas to explore creative and artistic ideas) that depict a home environment with strong parent involvement?

Low income families may have, at times, obstacles to overcome in creating an environment rich in creative and artistic experiences, but this quote gives a unique perspective, "Neither poverty nor culture is educational destiny" (Thernstrom & Thernsrom, 2003, p. 121). Many of the parents in interviews in Sampson's research wanted to help their children, but seemed not to know where to go or how to do so (Sampson, 2004). I believe the same is true for home environments from all cultures. Most parents love and want to support the development of their children. In regards to a home environment that stimulates artistic and creative activity, they may not either by culture, or lack of knowledge, have the resources to create that environment. This research seeks to look into home cultures and home environments. It also seeks to observe familial practice and motivations. Hopefully, my study seeks to identify areas where some families are positively influencing their child's artistic activity and can provide strategies as a resource for other parents to incorporate similar ideas into their own homes.

This review of literature suggests the impact of home environment on creative and artistic activity. The information depicted the importance of learning in the early formative years of children. The studies described the impact of home environment and

parental perspective on artistic and creative development. This review looked at aspects and attributes of the home environment that could aid in artistic and creative development as well as factors that could inhibit this development. Lastly, this discussion examined aspects of the home culture in regards to transmission of values, attitudes, and beliefs affecting the home environment. A child's home can be a place of wondrous creative adventure and artistic growth when stimulated and prepared by parental attitude and family culture. It could also be a place of stifled potential if not acted upon and supported by parents within the home. As I look at my daughters and reflect upon my students, I think back about the quote from which I began this discussion.

> "The family is a cultural group, and family culture is the composite of cultural elements the members of the family have selected from the pool to which they have been exposed" (Degge & McFee, 1977, p. 281).

What are the cultural elements present in my family? Also, what beliefs and values related to the arts am I bringing into the cultural mix? This is a question for each family to look at and reflect upon their cultural home environment, and with all the pertinent information to ask themselves: Is our home environment a place that supports creative and artistic activity? In this study, I plan to examine several students and their families in relation to the environment and cultures described here and to learn about and reflect upon their home environment and creative and artistic activity.

Selection of Students for Study Based on Creativity, Artistic Skill and Ethnicity

The Selection of Students:

The students sought in this research study were three exceptional art students of differing cultural backgrounds, from the 3rd grade at my elementary school. The students were chosen on the basis of creative spark, artistic activity, and cultural background. The three chosen applicants were from three different cultural groups: African American, Caucasian American, and Mexican American. These categories were selected as being the three largest population groups within my school. The inclusion of the cultural component in the research is meant to examine any possible cultural influences that home environment could have on artistic activity. For the selection of these students, an operational definition to judge creativity was defined as the manifestations of the concepts of originality, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration. Originality was observed as the uniqueness of their selected ideas and the portrayal of this idea artistically. Fluency was observed as the number of ideas that they were able to generate in the brainstorming process. Flexibility was observed as the different directions and interpretations the student took from the original open ended project idea as observed in the brainstorming notes. Elaboration was observed as the degree of detail and descriptions the student incorporated and utilized to build upon the original project idea. Students were also selected by their artistic activity, operationally defined as the expression of thoughts, feelings, emotions, perceptions, or imagination by an individual utilizing a symbolic, visual form. This artistic activity was recorded by my observation of the students and the manifestation of their ideas in their artworks. The artwork was judged in relation to a

baseline of what students their age should be able to do as described by Victor Lowenfeld's (1975) theories of artistic development.

To observe these attributes within the students, they were asked to complete an art project that provided insight into their generation of creative ideas as well as artistic activity. The title of the art project was, "Imaginary Vacation." Students were asked to imagine that they were given one more week of summer vacation and to imagine where they would go, what would they do, and who would they take with them? They were told that, for this week of vacation, they could have unlimited financial resources, the rules of time, space and gravity did not apply, and any person could become part of their imaginative idea. Students were then given fifteen minutes to brainstorm ideas. They were instructed to label categories of Where, What, and Who, and then list as many ideas as they could think of. After the brainstorming exercise, students were then instructed to choose their favorite idea from each category and create an illustration about it on 12x18 white paper. They were given access to pencils, crayons, and markers to illustrate their ideas. There were no limitations on the type of picture to make, the materials to be used, or how long it would take to complete. Students were given complete freedom.

From this project, I evaluated students for creativity and artistic activity based upon the brainstorming notes, teacher observations and final artistic creation. The three students described below excelled in relation to their peers within their ethnicity group in regards to creative spark and artistic activity. These students completed their projects in my art class within their normal art rotation and art class activities, with no additional time required beyond their regular school day.

Reflection of Students:

Each reflection is arranged so that the child's name and project idea, (described as Where would you go, What would you do, and Who would you take with you), are listed first. Then, each child's manifestations of creativity are listed under fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality. Next, the artistic qualities of the child's project and any interesting artistic activity are described. Finally, any of my comments and observations throughout the project are listed.

Student Name: **Mark Simmons**

Ethnicity: Biracial- Caucasian and Philippine American

Project idea: (FIGRUE 2.1) Where: the moon, What: kill the aliens, Who: himself, his family, Jesus

FIGURE 2.1
Mark Simmon's picture

Creativity:

Fluency: Where: 6 ideas, What: 6 ideas, Who: 13 ideas

Flexibility:

Where: Mark began with several city and states and then moved into places outside the normal range of ideas like the moon.

What: Mark had several different ideas such as playing with a tiger, swimming with a shark, going to the White House. Each idea is rooted in a different story that could have been developed.

Who: Mark chose traditional people like his friends and family but also included some other imaginative characters that would take more thought and abstract thinking in imagining the occasion such as George Bush, God, and Jesus.

Elaboration: Mark took his original project idea of going to the moon to fight space aliens and elaborated the idea with many details. His idea evolved into including space worms which defend the planet earth. He drew an alien in his flying saucer coming to attack the earth with laser rays coming from the aircraft. Other objects depicted in his space picture are a large moon with different color craters, a menacing multicolored black hole as he described "ready to suck you into deep space", and a sun and stars.

Originality: Mark created an idea that would be outside the norm of many of our personal experience. Since Mark has never visited the moon or outer space, he had to utilize his own personal imagination influenced by his personal experiences dealing with learning about outer space through movies, T.V. shows, school, etc. His idea was definitely a novel in defending the earth from space aliens by the protection of galactic worms.

Artistic Qualities:

The finished work is highly imaginative and exhibits many qualities from Lowenfelds's Schematic stage. The space worm is depicted from a side view whereas the space alien is shown inside the spacecraft as depicted by the outer ring of the ship ending at the edges of a bubble surrounding the alien. The earth is colored in naturalistic colors as is the surface of the moon showing signs of naturalism at the end of the schematic stage. Interestingly, however, Mark has chosen to color space blue and the stars yellow; different from a naturalistic expression. Also the craters on the moon and the colorful black hole show signs of color choice related to emotional or random preference found in earlier developmental stages. Mark incorporates some interesting technical aspects. He incorporated both crayon and marker which was an option that students were afforded. He also experimented with the overlap of crayon and marker as seen in the background where he had began to color in crayon and then layered marker on top. The entire surface of the paper is also colored giving every aspect of Mark's creation attention with the use of multiple colors and details. The interplay of objects is also depicted. The worm and the alien are interacting with speech bubbles and the alien has fired a laser ray which has missed the earth. This is depicted in red at the top of the page. There does not appear to be a specific baseline. There however seems to be a definite skyline with the sun, earth, and flying characters oriented at the top of the page. Mark exhibits definite characteristics of the Schematic stage with his use of color and depiction of objects which are consistent with his age. His varied use of color and details, as well as depiction of a very creative idea, made his drawing stand out in relation to his peers.

Observation Notes:

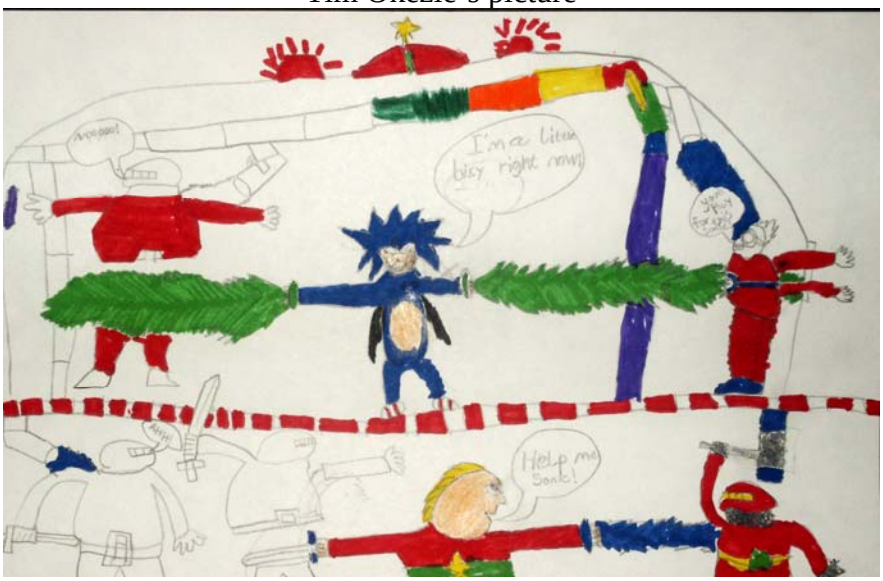
Mark is a very interesting and unique student in his work habits. He is animated when he makes his art and becomes the characters in the picture. He talks in their voices, makes sounds like lasers and other animated sounds to illustrate the picture, and openly talks about what is going on in his work with his fellow classmates. He is focused and diligent in his work in the fact that he is not wasting time. He comes to class ready to work and works diligently through the class. His drawings show an awareness of detail and emotion. He incorporates the small details into the characters and their vehicles to give them personality and excitement. He also uses color in a vivid manner. Color choice is not always naturalistic but it is applied to enhance and bring to life the picture he is working on. Mark also experimented with a combination of art mediums putting marker over crayon to achieve an interesting affect in the background of his picture.

Student Name: **Tim Okezie**

Ethnicity: African American

<u>Project idea:</u> (FIGURE 2.2) <u>Where</u>: Cube all Stars bad guy base, <u>What</u>: kick bad guy butts, <u>Who</u>: Sonic

FIGURE 2.2
Tim Okezie's picture



<u>Creativity:</u>

<u>Fluency</u>: Where: 9 ideas, What: 7 ideas, Who: 14 ideas

<u>Flexibility</u>:

Where: Tim had many creative ideas. One of his ideas in particular, involved the imaginative play of being inside a movie. I thought this was a particularly interesting idea of injecting oneself into an existing environment such as a movie. He had other ideas with being involved in a video game. However, along with these ideas, he also put places of interest such as the rain forest, the jungle, and going fishing. The ideas seem to elicit several different areas of interest and places that Tim would like to explore in his

imagination. Each idea seemed to contain a unique jumping off point of which he could have taken any one of these avenues.

What: Tim's ideas included physical places to visit as well as imaginative places. He listed doing things like being part of an imaginary video game land and the adventures involved therein as well as participating in the great activities at Six Flags, Sea World, and Disney World.

Who: Once again Tim's ideas move from the realistic to imaginative. He begins by listing many of his friends and classmates but also lists a video game character and an animal. Tim seems to be able to move from the real to imaginary easily in the creation of project ideas.

Elaboration: From the original project idea, Tim has added another super hero that Sonic is rescuing. He has also depicted the fort of the bad guys. He has included details of the invading bad guys as well as speech bubbles to depict the story within the scene. Sonic is given personality and motivation within the story.

Originality: While Tim's use of a common video game character is not that original, his creation of a story with these characters is interesting. Tim has created a scenario where he has injected his own ideas and story into the picture. The idea may have been taken from Tim's personal experiences in playing the video game, but he has translated them

into this depiction and continued the story line by his own direction and creation. Tim has become the hero in the picture as he is acing out an adventure.

Artistic Qualities:

The scene depicts Sonic coming to the rescue of a superhero from one of Tim's video games. The characters are easily recognizable and contain details which make them unique in relation to other figures depicted in the picture. The figures represented are not static or stiff but are posed in movements of action giving the picture an interesting and advanced quality. Tim has depicted the figures in similar size relationships showing a sense of proportion and dimension related to late Schematic and Early Dawning Realism developmental stages. His depiction of two baselines in the drawing shows a greater sense of dimension evident in later Schematic Stage development as a young artist moves into 3-dimensional ideas of object depiction. This drawing is still depicted in a 2-dimensional way as evidenced that all objects are on the same plane with no variation of object size in relation to depth. Interesting enough however, the sword of the bad guy in the lower scene does cross into the upper scene by overlapping the red dotted line. This depiction is repeated in other places and does seem to exhibit a limited concept of overlapping objects. Color choice in this picture is more naturalistic in the depiction of details within the characters with all the bad guys wearing red, Sonic wearing the traditional blue, and the hero in the bottom colored in with flesh tone for the face and blonde hair. Tim's picture was selected for the study for his skillful naturalistic use of detail in depiction of figures, use of overlapping, and multiple baselines which were more advanced than most of his peers.

Observation Notes:

Tim is a very talented artist. He has tremendous naturalistic skill for a child his age. In his drawing, he is very particular to get things to look the way he wants naturalistically. He spent a great deal of time thinking about and working on getting this arm just right, or that head to turn the right direction. The motion and meaning of the arrangement of figures within his work is planned rather than arbitrary. Interestingly, Tim can also be vocal about his art in the aspects of interacting with others. He makes others look at his work, and talks about his ideas and what he is expressing. Another student near Tim was influenced by Tim's drawings and I observed him trying to copy some of Tim's ideas into his picture. Tim's color choice and placement of figures in his work is methodical and focused.

Student Name: **Maria Martinez**

Ethnicity: Mexican American

<u>Project idea</u>: (FIGURE 2.3) <u>Where</u>: Las Vegas <u>What</u>: Eat and see T.V. <u>Who</u>: Family and Friends

FIGURE 2.3
Maria Martinez's picture

<u>Creativity:</u>

<u>Fluency</u>: Where: 12 ideas What: 11 ideas Who: 14 ideas

<u>Flexibility</u>:

Where: Maria had many interesting ideas. Her ideas ranged from places that would be normal and realistic such as visiting Tennessee, New York, etc., to other ideas that were more imaginative such as Neptune, Pluto, and a Big Castle with 1 million dollars. Maria showed a capacity to switch her thinking between the real and the imaginative.

What: Maria's ideas in this section were fairly normal. However, the generation of ideas was of note. She seemed to generate multiple ideas with relative ease and most of the

ideas involve some action where personal creativity would come into play such as arts and crafts, singing, and dancing.

Who: Maria's list of people to accompany her on vacation is fairly normal as well. She lists the usual people such as friends as well as celebrities that a girl her age might want to hang out with. Again the number of ideas and ease of generation is the noteworthy aspect of this section.

Elaboration: Maria took her original idea of going to Las Vegas to eat and watch T.V. and added multiple ideas and scenes that depict varied stories and ideas. In the lower left corner of the piece we see she drew a swimming pool with two children playing and splashing while another is diving into the pool depicted by the feet and lower legs of someone sticking out of the middle of the pool. Next to the pool, seemingly separated by a dark blue fence line drawn in marker, is a park scene. It contains swings and a slide with children on the swings. The ground is colored in with brown which might be related to dirt or sand often found in parks. The upper left corner of the picture shows a large sign saying, "Welcome to Las Vegas", with bright lights emanating from the sign. Underneath the sign is the blue car with a child's face in the back exclaiming, "Yes". This scene could be a depiction of a family finally arriving at Las Vegas and being mesmerized by the lights and splendor. Finally, in the upper right is the depiction of a Vegas restaurant complete with Elvis and Hula Lady. These multiple scenes seem to reflect the memories and impressions of someone who has experienced Las Vegas. Rather than depict a particular story, Maria has chosen to recreate the entire occasion for

the viewer to experience vicariously. She has taken the original idea of going to Las Vegas which could have been depicted in a single scene and expanded the idea to take the viewer on an amazing odyssey of experiencing Las Vegas along with Maria.

Originality: Creating a drawing depicting a family vacation is nothing new. However, what makes Maria's drawing unique is the story like quality she uses to express her ideas. It has a sense of a comic book where the scenes play out in segmented sections over the page.

Artistic Qualities:

Maria's creation exhibits several qualities consistent with Lowenfeld's Schematic stage of artistic development. She utilizes a nontraditional use of baseline which is shown in the upper half of the work where the cars, sign, and restaurant rest upon. Figures and objects are drawn from a frontal view and are somewhat grounded on the baseline with objects of relatively similar size. Interestingly enough, there is some variation of size of figures depicted in the different scenes. The image of the girl taking the tickets seems to be of a similar proportion to figures that could be in the cars even though the heads of the figures of the blue car are quite a bit smaller than the girl. However, looking at the girl in comparison to the Elvis figure pictured right next to her seems to indicate that the Elvis has been drawn in relation to the similarly sized Hula lady rather than the ticket girl from the previous scene. The figures inside the restaurant are drawn very small which could be an attempt to represent some type of special relationship of figures inside the restaurant to the figures outside in regards to depth.

Also interesting in Maria's picture is her use of aerial perspective in the lower left scene in relation to the frontal perspective utilized in other scenes. This use of multiple types of perspective is indicative of this stage found in Lowenfeld's descriptions. The color choice in the picture is more naturalistic than emotional. One noteworthy observation is Maria's use of selected detail. At times Maria shows a great design for detail and skill in crafting her figures. This is evidenced in the depiction of the boys arm in the pool going across his body. The concept of limbs moving across the body and overlapping seems to be a higher order skill. Also, Maria's whimsical attempts at showing the details of the Elvis singer and Hula lady show great interest and attention to detail. This use of detail though seems to be selective. She has taken care in crafting the figures previously represented but reverts to simple stick figures for the people in the restaurant and a simplified form for the boy on the swing. This may suggest that Maria chooses to incorporate care and detail in those figures important to the story and is less careful with non essential elements and characters in her creations. Maria's inventive use of scene depiction as well as incorporation of multiple baselines and character details was more advanced than many of her peers.

Observation Notes:

When Maria begins to work, she is very focused. She doesn't talk much with the students around her. It is almost as if she goes into her own imaginative world of creating and is oblivious to the other students. In discussing the picture with her, she related some advanced concepts of depth. She was talking about relating ideas of foreground, middle ground and background, and that changing the size of figures can

make them look closer or farther away. Interestingly, from the inception of the project idea, Maria selected her ideas, but they became more dynamic rather than static. As she worked, she made new choices and additions to her project ideas. She is not afraid to work through ideas and elaborate on original ideas. In her work habits, one can tell that she is focused and motivated. She works from bell to bell and is not distracted by noise or others around her. She is also particular in her work. She takes time to add the small details that others may leave out such as buttons on clothes, lights on a sign, etc.

Data Analysis and Discussion:

The findings in this section were derived from a compilation of the answers from interview questions given to the families of the selected students, the selected students, and the selected students previous year teacher. The answers to the questions were coded in relation to their reference to particular categories of information sought in order to find answers to my first research question: In what ways might the student's home environment, including their cultural background, influence their artistic activity? The categories created to arrange and evaluate the data are: Attributes of the Student/ Artistic Inspirations and Creations, The Home Environment/ Making Art at Home, Cultural Influences, The Value of Art, and Further Artistic Endeavors. The data collected was arranged into rubrics according to student interviews (TABLE 4.1), parent interviews (TABLE 4.2), and teacher interviews (TABLE 4.3). The answers that parents, students, and teachers gave in relation to these categories will be compared and contrasted below.

Attributes of Student/ Artistic Inspirations and Creations:

In this section, I was observing the inspirations and influences for the child's interest in art as well as the occasions of the child bringing artwork home. From the questions, I found that from the parent's perspective, two out of three children's interest in art was in some way inspired by an artistic experience in school. Two out of three

children also said that their artistic interest was sparked by someone in their family or extended family. Tim said his father taught him to draw while Maria said it was her cousin who began instructing her and teaching her about art. Mark said he learned to draw by using drawing books. All three sets of parents related that their children began making some kind of art before starting Kindergarten and all three students stated that they first started liking art before the age of seven.

The selection of students for this study was not based on gender but merely an assessment of creative and artistic qualities of students selected from specified ethnicities. It was not my intent or motivation to account for gender issues in this study even though the makeup of participants was representative of both genders. However, after reflection of parental and child responses, it became apparent that there could be gender differences in artistic inspiration and other areas. From this study in particular, the responses for artistic inspiration and source of ideas for projects yielded some interesting findings. Tim and Mark both related inspirations from T.V., movies, or video games that had origins in action, combat, aggressive orientations. Both Tim and Mark's depictions in the project were aggressive in nature and Mark in his interview said he preferred monsters and things from the Sci-Fi channel. Maria and her mother on the other hand related making snowflakes, dolls, picture of cheerleaders, etc. Also, her depiction from the assigned project was not confrontational or aggressive in nature. Rather it depicted life and relation to its events. In looking at these pieces of information, one might seek to research if boys and girls gain inspiration from different stimuli. And if they do have different inspirational needs within the home environment, then a parent might need to modify their home environments for stimulation of art in relation to gender.

All three families and children reported that the children were currently bringing artwork home to show their parents and all three parents reported they were proud of their children and the art they made.

As far as the perspective of the children's previous year teachers, all three students were characterized as good students who related well socially with others. They were all also related to be highly motivated students. Two out of three were characterized as helping others and supporting others in their class. Tim was described as a leader whereas Mark and Maria were said to be affected by the social groups within the class. This is of interest however because each of these students were described as strong and confident individuals by their teachers in other parts of the interviews. Mark was characterized as being confident in himself and outgoing. Maria was described as being her own person and not being afraid to go outside of the box. It seems that the classifications of leader or follower may have different contexts in relation to developmental and social paradigms versus working in a classroom and artistic creative setting.

The Home Environment/ Making Art at Home:

In this section, I was looking to find out particular attributes of creating art at home. I wanted to find out what kind of art do they make, where do they make art, what they do when they are finished with their art, does anyone participate with them, where do they get their ideas, what kinds of art materials do they use, and do they have free access to materials.

All three parents and children related that the children did make art at home. Tim and Maria's parents talked about experiences where they actively participated in making art with their child. Mark's parents related that they occasionally make art with Mark but that he prefers to make art on his own. All three children reported making art with someone at home, be it a parent, sibling, or extended family member. All three parents were able to easily describe the type of art their child likes to make and the subject matter they liked to portray in their art at home. Tim and Mark, along with their parents, related that they make art in many locations all around their home. Maria's mom said that Maria made art in her bedroom so that the younger sibling would not tear it up. Maria echoed this claim but also said that she sometimes makes art in the kitchen. Mark and Maria's parents reported their children having a particular place designated for art, be it a desk or art station. Tim and Maria's parents reported their child having a notebook in which their child created artwork, and all three children reported having a place to put their artwork once they were finished with it such as a drawer, notebook, art station, or on the wall.

Mark and Maria's parents said that when their children give them art, either brought home or done in the home, they like to display it where everyone can see it. All three parents said that their children do show them their artwork once they have completed working on it in the home. All three children said that sometimes when they finish artwork at home, and show it to their parents, they hang it up to display.

Tim and Mark's parents said that the ideas in their children's artwork are influenced by T.V. or movies they watch. Tim's father related that Tim can get inspiration for his art ideas by looking at other works of art. All three parents related the

idea of listening to their child's ideas and then giving them suggestions to expand their ideas in the creation of their artwork. Tim and Maria specifically cited their family members as a source of inspiration for ideas to make art works.

All three parents related the importance of knowing their child and what they were good at, and then encouraging them in their art. All three parents also related in some fashion the importance of spending time with their children, interacting with them, and listening to their children to hear their thoughts. Maria's mother specifically said that being present with a child while they make their art shows that you care about their art work. All three of the children related instances of their parents encouraging them in their artwork and how it made them feel good in themselves and as artists. Tim said it made him feel proud when his parents encouraged his artwork. Mark said his parents told him "good job" and to make another work of art. Maria said that her parents are happy when she gives them art and they say "good names" to her which make her feel happy.

All three parents talked about art projects or art materials that the students used related to both two-dimensional and three-dimensional applications. All three children related making art works in a variety of art mediums and all three children described having free access to art materials.

All three of the teachers interviewed said that their student made art in their classroom. They also all related that when students were given an assignment in class that had an art component, their student took the assignment seriously and worked diligently on in. The student did not see the art component as frivolous or free time. All three teachers described having some type of art center or free art time in their

classrooms. All three teachers recalled how their student enjoyed having their artwork displayed in the hallway or in the classroom. All three teachers also described possible art activities in their classrooms that utilized a variety of art media; not just drawing and coloring. Finally, all teachers spoke of the parent's involvement in some fashion in their child's education, either through impressions they had or actual discussion with the parents.

Cultural Influences:

In this section, I was looking to observe the artistic culture of the home. Was art an important part of that home environment? Did the family or the child know any artists or do anything that would influence the child's artistic interests? What cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs are parents transmitting to their children? What experience do the parents have in art making?

All three parents related having some type of art experience growing up in school. All three parents also related some family or extended family member who currently was involved in some form of arts activity such as music, architecture, writing, crafts, hairdressing, etc. From their answers, it also seems that all three parents continued in the arts out of their own interests. Tim's father said he continued studying and making art but the rest of his immediate family did not. Mark's father related that neither of his parents were artistic but he took arts in school. Maria's mother said she did not make a lot of art growing up but enjoys making art now. Interestingly however, Maria's mother was the only one of the parents who considered herself artistic. Tim and Mark's parents

made comments showing sensitivity to art aesthetic or artistic forms, but did not relate any comments about being artistic. Tim's father talked about being inspired to make art from the landscape in his native country of Nigeria. Mark's father talked about amazing things that they are doing in computer animation as well as comments supporting other art forms like car design, and hairdressing. Tim and Mark's parents talked about someone in the immediate family who was a musician and played an instrument. Tim's father was the only one who talked about having a collection of artwork and Tim and Maria's parents said that art was important in their home countries.

The parents interviewed in all three families had at least a high school education and Tim and Mark's parents spoke of advanced degree experience.

All three parents and children spoke of a current art experience within the home where one family member interacted and made art with another. All three parents also described a recent experience where specifically the parent and the child had either completed or were continuing to work on an artistic activity. All three children described an experience where they had made art with other siblings and all three children related experiences of making art with younger siblings or cousins. Tim mentioned specifically being influenced and inspired by seeing his parents and sisters draw.

Two out of the three parents described knowing an artisan within their community who was not related to their family. None of the families related experiences about going to see art, or experiencing art in their community. All three children said that their family members or people from their extended family were artists. All three children also said that they had friends who were artists. Tim talked about knowing a friend of his father

who was a practicing artist and made money from his work. Mark stated that along with his family, his art teacher at school was an artist.

One factor that did not present itself in the case studies in relation to culture was how parents of different ethnicities relate to their children. From the responses of parents and children to the specified interview questions, they answered more about the positive interaction they had with each other rather than the exact nature of the interaction. However, the interview questions did not go into specifics about the actual interactive nature of parents with children. Further study of the dynamics of the exchange between parents and children of different ethnicities could prove interesting related to cultural patterns. This idea could be extended further to include gender. It would also be interesting to study if different cultures have different expectations for boys and girls and how this might affect the environments they create. Issues such as the value of art within a family or culture might continue to arise and now include the component of gender. Possible questions might be: Within a particular culture, are issues of masculinity and femininity associated with the pursuance of artistic interest when gender is involved? Even though the question of the value of art and imagination was raised in the case studies, it was not presented in the context of gender. If there is a stigma related to a particular gender within a culture, how do these children deal with this stigma? Does it affect their art and how? Such concepts as what gender roles or stereotypes could parents be transmitting to their children in their home culture could be included in further studies.

The Value of Art:

In this section I was looking to see the value that the parents, children, and their teachers place on art and imagination. I was also looking to see if they think that an artist is a good choice for a job as well if they think that everyone is able to make art or only certain people. Also, I was looking for any other comments that might give insight to the importance that is placed upon art and art making.

All three parents, children, and teachers thought that art and imagination were important. Tim said that it was important for excitement and the creation of ideas. Mark said it was important in sharing ideas. Maria said it was important because art was fun and you can make stuff you have never made before which makes memories that you can remember when you get older.

Two out of three parents spoke specifically about an artist being a good choice for a job but also related in some fashion that one needs to take into consideration to be able to support oneself or family. All three children thought that an artist was a good choice for a job. Tim had shared about an artist he knew who made money from his artwork. Mark said you can make good pictures and give them to people and make a lot of money. Maria said you can make money making art and that it will make you happy that people will buy your art.

All three parents said they thought that everyone could make art but they all differentiated in some way between those who were natural artists and those who needed to be nurtured and supported for their interest to survive. All three children said that everyone could make art but made the same distinction as their parents. Tim said that not

everyone wants to make art because they don't feel they are good at it but that encouragement could help these kids feel better about their art making. He related a story about when he was younger and feeling negative about his own art work. He said that his dad encouraged him and that helped him keep trying and get better. Mark said that those who are not good artists can look at drawing books and practice and become good artists. Maria said that if you are a good artist you should teach others to be good artists too. All three parents pointed out a parent's responsibility in nurturing the artistic interest in a child. All three parents also described how art was a positive thing in a person's life. Tim's father said that art makes life better. Mark's father said it stimulated neural development. Maria's mother said it was a diversion from harmful things.

All three teachers thought their student was creative. Each teacher also described specifically that each child was willing to try new things. They also all related being aware of a student's creative potential in their classrooms and trying to develop creativity through such means as open ended questions, higher level thinking activities and cooperative groups. They said these things were an important component to have in the classroom but they all related that they felt confined by the restrictive, scripted curriculum of the school improvement plan enacted at their particular school. Tim's teacher shared how she had once had aspirations of being an art teacher and was a great admirer of children's art work. Mark and Maria's teachers specifically related experiences in art from their elementary school and Maria's teacher shared how these experiences probably affect the way she approaches teaching today.

Further Endeavors:

In this final section, I was looking to see if the parents and children had any feelings about the child's continued artistic practice and what type of activities might be important for that practice.

Tim and Maria's parents talked about giving their children activities that they could practice with to build their skills. Tim said he thought that making art at school was fun and that he didn't know everything about art and had more to learn. He also talked about learning about different types of art; specifically more design and abstract types of art. He referenced some of the art prints in the art room and said that those people are famous and they make these different types of art. Mark talked about having a teacher being enthusiastic, "pumped up", and making weird stuff so the students could get pumped up and make weird stuff too. He said important activities for art students are to practice everyday and to get someone to draw with. Lastly, Maria related that having fun is important and that you would be happy that you made art because everyone will like your art work.

Conclusions:

This study is important because of the impact it can have on future generations. The information gathered in the three case studies is admittedly limited, but the questions and discussions raised provide insights into the role art plays in children's lives at home. When looking at these three case studies in relation to research in the field, certain commonalities are discerned. In this conclusion, there will be a review of the major categories of investigation utilized in the research (Attributes of the Student/ Artistic Inspirations and Creations, The Home Environment/ Making Art at Home, Cultural Influences, The Value of Art, and Further Artistic Endeavors) which describe the data in relation to answering the first research question: In what ways might the student's home environment, including their cultural background, influence their artistic activity? Within each section, there is also a connection made between the evidence found in the case studies and the review of literature which provides answers to the second research question: Based on the information gained from the three case studies as well as information gained from the author's review of literature, what strategies might be generally useful for parents to use to influence their children's artistic activity? The focus and theme of this section will be on the important aspects and strategies parents can utilize to influence a home environment that stimulates creative and artistic activity.

Attributes of Student/ Artistic Inspirations and Creations:

Within the case studies, two out of the three students reported being influenced in their artistic interest by an art related experience at school. This finding underscores the need for parents to recognize the importance their children give to school art experiences. On the other hand, two out of the three students listed a family member as part of their artistic inspiration, so art teachers must also recognize the importance of the child's art experiences at home. Teachers and parents should not discount the impact and influence of each experience. All three families in the case studies described their children making art before they were old enough to enter school. During this time parents are the supreme influence. Goldhawk (1998) asserts the importance that the early years before children enter school play in influencing learning and development. Clearly, all the children in the case studies began making art in this critical time and all the parents described encouraging their children in their art production. This is relevant to child development since experiences in these early years are often communicated through artwork. Children are not always able to write or speak clearly in these early years and art can be an important vehicle for a child's representation of their world (Collado, 1999). These parents saw the importance of art in the life of their child and provided materials and experiences to support that interest. They may not have been intentionally trying to create deeper brain development or stringent artistic training, but all three families related that a sense that art and imagination were important. A love for art seems to be a result of early experiences with art making in the home.

Along with artistic inspiration coming from parents in the home, forms of direct instruction were linked to the children's beginning interest in art. Two out of the three children described an experience of being taught how to draw as important in their artistic interest. The other child described learning to draw through reading or looking at a book. Instruction by a parent directly or with a book can aid children in the growth of their artistic abilities.

Artwork is important to children. They place value on its creation and it is imperative for parents to recognize the value their children place on their art when they bring a piece of artwork home to share with the family. All three of the children brought artwork home purposefully to show their parents. When they made the artwork at school their teachers reported that they took it seriously. It was not fluff or free time to them. When children bring artwork home to show parents, parents should see it as an opportunity to encourage their children and build their artistic self esteem. All three children talked about how it made them feel good when their parents praised them for their artwork. This can have an impact on their motivation to create artwork.

In relation to motivation, all three children were characterized by their teachers as motivated and all three children reported their parents encouraging them. All three parents also talked about the importance of encouraging children related to their motivation. This encouragement can be linked with the child's motivation in their art making and possibly academics as well. All three of these students' previous year teachers characterized them as motivated and academically proficient. Parental encouragement is clearly linked to artistic motivation, and it can also be a link to academic success. Parents who are actively involved in the lives of their children and

encourage them in their activities, very likely increase students self esteem and boost motivation in a variety of areas.

Berthelsen and Tennent (1997) researched the link between creative development and family relationships. Their study showed that families who valued creativity in their children created home environments that support creative action. The three families in my case studies put great importance on encouraging and nurturing their children in their creative and artistic interest. From the interviews, parents supported a creative environment of interaction by allowing their children freedom to create, having sensitivity to their child's ideas, and providing support for risk taking aided in supporting their children's interest. Some of the children internalized this modeled behavior and were characterized by parents and teachers as displaying a nurturing personality with other students and family members. Two out of the three children's teachers reported that these children, in some fashion, helped and supported other students in their classrooms. All three students also described helping a younger family member in creating artwork. They seem to be continuing a cycle of nurture and support for an environment that allows creativity to be utilized in the arts.

The evidence presented in this section suggests that artistic experiences and encouragement in the years before schooling can foster an interest in art in children. The artwork students create at this time and once they enter school should be treated as important because these children deem them important. These children put time and effort into their creations and positive encouragement of a child's artistic activities can build their self confidence and esteem in their abilities. Parents and family members can be a primary source for artistic inspiration so family members should be cognizant of

their influence and provide opportunities which will foster creative activity and an artistic interest in their child.

The Home Environment/ Making Art at Home:

Making art in a supportive home environment during the pre-school years can have an impact on a student's artistic interest; so what does that environment look like? It can begin with participation. All three children in the case studies described making art with someone in the home. Only one of the students described preferring to work alone. Many parents are aware of the importance of parent involvement in early literacy but unaware of the importance of involvement in early artistic development. Mary Renck Jalongo and Laurie Nicholson Stamp (1997) compared research in emergent literacy and emergent art ability to relate the importance of parental involvement in both arenas. They portrayed four themes that linked emergent literacy and arts research such as the importance of role models in the life of a child, a child's role as an active participant in their learning, the self expressive power of language and art, and early experiences influencing later experiences (Jalongo & Stamp, 1997). Parents and children in the case studies reflected these ideas by parents providing positive role models and being actively engaged with their children in art activities, encouraging children's original ideas, providing materials and encouragement for children to express themselves through art. Children displaying a great capacity for creativity and artistic expression exemplified in the Imaginary Vacation art project were most likely influenced by early practice in

artistic expressions. Participation with a child in creating art or helping them create art is clearly important.

In the case study, Tim specifically stated how he was affected by watching his father and sisters draw and he cites creating art with his father as an influence in his artistic development. Parent's involvement in their child's artistic activity was demonstrated when parents were able to easily tell about their child's ideas and inspirations as well as what kind of art they made. They had an active dialogue with the child about their ideas and work, and by his dialogue they demonstrated to their child that the work they made was important.

This dialogue, from my review of literature, as well as impressions from the case studies, is vitally important. It comes down to perspective; how the parent views the child and how the child views the parent. Mulcahey (2000) asserts that often children are seen as raw materials for teachers to shape and mold and that this does not give children a voice in their education. When this disconnect between worlds and perspectives occurs, it can impact a child's art-making in that they perceive they are being forced to work and perform, this can negatively affect their artistic motivation. Talking to children is essential to understanding how they learn and how to better teach them (Mulcahey, 2000). A well intentioned parent can inadvertently be stifling a child's artistic activity through sheer ignorance. In the dialogue and interaction with children, parents should be sensitive to the environment they are creating. They should be aware of their own preconceived notions of shaping, molding, and turning children into little adults. Rather, they can listen to their child and support and encourage their artistic creations. The

parents in the case studies were all sensitive to avoiding constrictive environments but allowing them to grow and create in freedom in an interactive environment.

Creating this environment can be very important to allowing a child to develop their creative and artistic abilities. From the accounts of the children and their families in the case studies, the children had the freedom to create art anywhere, and two out of three of the children even had a designated place that could be used for art making when the notion arose. In this freedom, I wanted to observe in the case studies, if there were what Amabile called “creativity killers” (Amabile, 1989). Amabile related ideas such as excessive judgment and criticism, rewards as extrinsic motivation instead of supporting intrinsic motivation, competition, and restricted choices in the creative environment as creativity killers (Amabile, 1989, p. 72-78). In the interview with Mark’s previous year teacher, Mark’s father was seen to be pushing achievement to what the teacher perceived to be the detriment of Mark’s performance at school. Mark’s teacher recalled that when she talked with Mark’s father he relaxed a bit, and Mark’s achievement began to increase. In the interview with Mark’s father, he also related his high expectations for Mark’s achievement, but talked about the importance of encouragement. In supporting an environment of creative activity, expectations need to be unified with encouragement. All the parents in the case studies had high expectations for their child but exhibited few of these creativity killers. Amabile (1989) highlighted attitudes that parents can adopt that will stimulate creativity such as freedom in a child's activities, respect for a child and their uniqueness, moderate emotional closeness rather than coddling, achievement in doing your best rather than grades, parents who have their own interests, and parental encouragement and appreciation of creative things and creativity (Amabile, 1989, p.

104). Parents in the case study exhibited many of the qualities listed above. All allowed their child to create without any restrictions or consequences on their child's art making. Even though the parents in the study looked at their child's artwork and discussed attributes in it, they did this in a manner that positive rather than negative. All parents relayed high expectations for their children. Two out of the three parents in the case studies had personal interests or activities they were pursuing. Mark's dad was a musician and Tim's father was pursuing a career as a pharmacist. All parents had confidence in their children's art making abilities. In creating an environment that stimulates creative and artistic activity, parents should evaluate the atmosphere and interaction with their children to see if there are any "creativity killers" and if they are creating an enriching environment.

Freeman (2000) also studied the home environment in her comparative study of musically talented and average children and their home environments. The results of the study showed that even though the talented and average children had access to the same school experiences related to the arts, the talented children's homes contained greater environmental influences such as parents who exhibited more encouragement and support for the arts and provided more materials and support for the child's creative experience. (Freeman, 2000). In the case studies, the children and parents described having a place for the child to create artwork and a place to store it. Also, all three of the children said they showed their work to their parents once it was completed and then displayed. They talked about how their parents response to this display made them feel good about their art. These examples from the case studies relate to a positive home environment influencing artistic activity. The artwork of the children was given value by having a

place to make it and store it. Displaying the work gave it value and importance as well. Lastly, the occasion of the children showing the artwork to their parents was seen as an opportunity for encouragement rather than as a nuisance. Parents gave their children positive comments about their work and this boosted the child's confidence and esteem in their art making. Because of parental interest, art became a valued and worthy endeavor to pursue in the child's eyes.

In Millar's (2002) recount of the findings from Torrance's creative kids, he spoke of particular attributes of parents and environments that influenced these children. Some of the characteristics listed were providing positive role models, being energetic, thoughtful, gentle, and valuing creative action (Millar, 2002, p. 247). The participants in Torrance's study presented their suggestions of what parents can do to nurture creativity in their children and listed such ideas as providing choices for children, controlling the amount of T.V. watching, talking with children about their ideas, providing materials, and asking good questions (Millar, 2002, p. 267). Clearly, the parents in my case studies exhibited many of these attributes such as being positive role models, being thoughtful and gentle in dialogue with their children, showing value in their child's activities by asking questions about artistic creations, trying to lead their children to deeper creative and imaginative levels by challenging them to embellish existing ideas, allowing their children the freedom to explore and create by providing support and materials, and specifically in two of the three families, monitoring their child's T.V. watching.

Cultural Influences:

> "In the anthropological sense, culture means the attitudes, values, the patterns of roles and acceptable behavior, and the concepts of reality shared by a group of people" (McFee 1970, p. 112).

As previously noted, the culture that a child is raised in can have a considerable effect upon the development of the child's beliefs and values. In relation to creative and artistic endeavors of a child, the amount and focus of activity afforded to the child could depend upon the culture in which he or she was raised (McFee, 1970). McFee stresses the idea of subcultures. In other words, one cannot make assumptions about entire cultures. There may be norms, but each situation, and in regard to this thesis, each family was seen as individual and unique, containing their own set of cultural values and beliefs. The research done in the review of literature looked at issues related to particular ethnicities and socioeconomic levels and described possible normative qualities. Since students in this study were not typical of the larger sub-culture racial populations, the study changed. The focus of this study shifted from generalizing about those populations, to noting parental behaviors supportive of artistic achievement. After reviewing the information gained from the case studies, the idea of artistic values creating a subculture emerged. One thing that characterized each of the families studied was a culture that embraced art. The children were immersed in an environment where there was an artistic element present. Parents transmitted cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs to their children in support of the arts. All of the parents said they had made art in the

past. All three families had family members participating in art-centric activities such as music, art, or family members associated in interests artistically related like architecture, crafts, or in one case, hairdressing. Two out of three families had someone in the immediate family who played an instrument. Also, all the parents interviewed in the case studies seemed to have pursued art out of a personal interest. None of parents had formal training or an extensive artistic background, nor did the families in which they were raised. None of the parents stated that their parents were artistic. The idea that emerged is that a culture of art is created by choice and can start with the immediate generation. The spark to creating a culture supporting art in the home is ignited by the parents. In reference to McFee's quote and a culture of art, the parents in these families brought attitudes, values, behaviors, and realities associated with the arts to construct a culture of art in the home environment which positively influenced their children. Analyzing the types of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors parents have created in their home is the first step in creating an artistic culture. The inclusion of interactive creative activities can influence children to become more self-confident and expressive.

Gayle-Evans (1993) emphasized the idea of the importance of the primary care giver as a socializing agent, teaching children things that are valued within the culture. She spoke specifically about the need for positive role models and parents who take an interest in their child's education. From the interviews with all three families, there was a transmission of values and an artistic culture from parent to child. All three families currently made art together. Each child also at times made art one on one with their parent. Through participation in art activities, interacting and talking about art projects with their child, and displaying the child's work, parents were showing their children that

within their home environment, art was something that was of importance. The role of parent as socializing agent can be a powerful influence on children and parents need to be aware of this role.

Baldwin (2001) related the idea that students may exhibit creative behaviors that are either misunderstood by teachers or dismissed as unruly. This dismissal of creative behaviors could result in children feeling alienated and unable to express the creative outlets inside them. These feelings of alienation that a student can have might be found in the home as well. Parents may be unaware of their children's creative potential and possibly dismiss creative behaviors, just as a teacher might, as unruly. Baldwin's (2001) suggestions for helping parents support creativity can be applied to all families with strategies like identifying creative behaviors and supporting these behaviors, as well as exposing children to contemporary creative individuals of all cultures and ethnicities as a positive influence. Of primary concern to parents interested in supporting their child's creativity in the home is awareness. Do parents recognize certain behaviors as creative and are these behaviors supported in the home? In my case studies, from the interviews, I examined characteristics of an environment related to creativity. The children were given the freedom to create without restriction and they had an interactive dialogue with parents about their work which at times included open ended questions and encouragement to elaborate on artistic ideas. Parents wanting to build an environment that supports creativity should first learn about its manifestations and secondly create an environment that allows creativity the freedom to grow and explore.

Parent child interaction is clearly important in the environment created in the home, but are there socioeconomic factors that could affect the home culture? Young

(1990) talked about the effects that poverty can have on the home environment in that parents can be overwhelmed by the reality and pressures of meeting the basic necessities. The weight of these issues may overshadow a desire to cultivate an interest in creativity and artistic activity in their children. Young (1990) points out that it is important for parents to realize that children may have an interest in art that they have not discovered because of lack of experiences. Parents who might be distracted by pressing economic issues may not have the time or energy to devote to experiential influences in creativity and artistic activity. These cultural factors are related to the home environment in determining if they affect the desire to pursue artistic activities and the value of creative activities in the home. The impact of poverty or economic hardship on the home environment was something I was interested in looking at in the case studies. All three of the families interviewed would most likely not be classified as being in deep levels of abject poverty, but within the lower socioeconomic class. Tim and Maria lived in apartment complexes in small apartments. Mark's family lived in a small home. Mark's father characterized his house as a small home and said that he chose to live in that home and not work long hours away from home for more money, so that he could spend a greater amount of time with his children. From visiting the homes, it seemed clear that the families had money to provide the necessities but that there was not an abundance of funds. The homes were modestly furnished with no noticeable ornate or extravagant accessories displayed. The walls were decorated with a few family photos or commercial artwork. The only noticeable ethnocentric artwork was an African tin relief positioned above the entertainment center in Tim Okezie's home. I did not see the helplessness and hopelessness as Young (1990) described in relation to being in a lower socioeconomic

level. None of the families spoke of the hardships of life distracting them from their children or creative and artistic endeavors. All three families were apparently happy in their homes. All three families exhibited closeness with their children and all three families were motivated in their child's artistic aspirations. Young (1990) said a parent's level of education could be a factor related to parents pursuing artistic interests in their children. This could have been a factor in the case studies. In all three families, at least one parent had a high school education and two of the parents talked about higher education experience. In reference to the arts, they all spoke of artistic experiences in school. These experiences may have provided a foundation to pass on to their children in relation to artistic activities that parents without these experiences may have been less likely to pass on. In my studies about Mexican American culture, I found ideas describing how education can be downplayed for girls once they reach puberty. This cultural ideal might affect the motivation of a child in the family to pursue what might be deemed non-productive studies, or even limit that child's experiences to pass onto their children later in life (Brussel, 1971). In the case study however, I did not see any evidence of this. Maria, the Mexican American girl I interviewed, and her mother were very motivated about school. Maria was characterized by her teacher as a good student and her mother shared in the interview that she had attended school all the way though high school and had taken art in school. Maria also described her auntie as being someone she knew as an artist. Maria's teacher also characterized her as creative showing cooperative skills, confidence in her self and motivation in her artistic creations in class. Maria's creative and artistic activities were not affected by gender or ethnicity, but rather influenced by a culture of art created in the home.

What factors might serve as motivation for parents desiring to positively influence their children while dealing with the realities of a lower socioeconomic level? Sampson (2004) in his research about poor Latin and Black students and their school preparation related to home environment describes important environmental attributes and motivational beliefs of poorer families whose children are inspired and achieving. Sampson relates that parents who instill in their homes high expectations, belief in discipline and responsibility, understanding of delayed gratification and internal control, requiring children will do their homework, and insistence on a quiet and orderly environment where children can work, aid in their children's achievement (Sampson, 2004, p. viii). The inclusion of these attributes in this discussion is important to a discussion of home environment and creative and artistic growth, because many similar attributes associated with academic performance can be associated with creative and artistic development. The factors relayed by Sampson depict a home environment with strong parent involvement. In Sampson's study, parents were not necessarily highly educated, or rich in resources, however they took a keen interest in the development of the children (Sampson, 2004). Sampson's research relates to the idea of subculture presented in the beginning of this section by looking at the beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices found in the home. It is less about the ethnicity, or class of the family, but rather the subculture the parents are creating. This quote gives a good perspective of this issue, "Neither poverty nor culture is educational destiny" (Thernstrom & Thernsrom, 2003, p. 121). None of the parents in the case studies from my research came from homes that were rich in artistic experiences. These parents haven't been trained in art education and creative development. They don't necessarily have an abundance of

resources to provide all the latest materials and trips to museums. But what is happening is that they are creating this culture of art. They are transmitting to their children beliefs, attitudes, and practices about creativity and art, thus creating a culture of art. For parents wanting to create this culture, it is much less about your background or economic status, but rather the beliefs and ideals you transmit to your children and the environment you create.

What I found in this study was that a culture of art was related more to the environment the parents created rather than a relation to ethnicity. Parents in the case studies had created a culture of art. Commonalities from the case studies relating to this culture of art included a parental interest in art which created a dialogue influencing their children, family members participating in artistic activities, an environment where art is created by children as well as parents in collaboration with children, and an environment where art, creativity, and artistic creations are valued and supported. Interestingly, all three of the children in their interviews related that the people in their family were artists. Could it be that the opportunities for artistic activities provided by parents have impacted these children to see their entire families as artists? How could a child say that the people in their family were artists without having artistic experiences at home? It seems reasonable to say that these families have indeed created a culture of art at home. Parents who wish to stimulate their children's interest in art should examine this culture as well.

The Value of Art:

The value of art is an essential element in understanding the home environment and creative and artistic activities. If art and creativity are not valued, then most likely parents will not seek to provide dialogue and opportunities to support these ideas. One of the most important questions related to this idea from the interviews in the case studies was, "Do you think that art and imagination are important?" Within the case studies, all parents, teachers, and children related they thought they were important. An important perspective presented in Berthelson and Tennet's (1997) study was that part of the creative development of the child lies with the attitudes of the parents. Parents that cultivate and value creative attributes in their children as well as provide an environment that supports them will most likely create a climate for creative potential (Berthelsen & Tennent, 1997). The parents in the case studies talked about the importance of a parent's responsibility to nurture a child's interests. The affirmation of the importance of artistic activities, and a parent's responsibility in nurturing these activities, shows the value that these families placed on art. It is a worthwhile endeavor. A key aspect in a family creating a home environment rich for creative and artistic activities is to analyze the value they place on art, imagination, and creative and artistic endeavors.

Wright (1987) highlights the value of creativity in her description of its importance. Wright describes the value of creativity as being important to achievement in even the most basic educational objectives, adaptation to new skill and environments, and important in personal growth and development (Wright 1987). Within the case studies, creativity was analyzed as an aspect of children's ideas and inspirations and the

environment that might support these ideas and inspirations. When a parent realizes the importance of art and imagination, and how a child's use of creative ideas can enhance artistic ideas and artistic activities, they then can begin to create an environment which values these things and provide opportunities for activities to stimulate them. The families in the case studies supported the ideals of a creative family by being concerned about their children's interest and ideas, respecting and encouraging that interest, and providing an environment to support that interest with freedom, dialogue, materials and activities.

How parents view the nature of artistic skill and abilities is another measure of the value they might place on artistic and creative activities. If a parent feels that one is born with artistic skill, they may not feel as inclined to nurture a child who does not show immense talent. But if a parent feels that artistic abilities can be nurtured to grow, they may be more likely to provide opportunities to stimulate that interest. The parents and children in the interviews were asked if they felt that everyone is able to make art or only certain people. Both parents and children differentiated between natural artists and those who have to work at it but they all gave answers affirming that one could grow if their interest was nurtured. One child in particular, Tim, shared how he was at a point in his art when he was discouraged but his dad encouraged him and helped him to continue to pursue his art making. The attitude that one can grow in abilities is a very important value for a parent to have. With this perspective, all members of the family are potential artists. This attitude and value brings artistic activities accessible to all and not only a selected few who some may say are gifted. The motivation is that every child is worthy of pursuing creative and artistic activities.

Edens and Potter (2001) in their study, presented the theory of a positive correlations between a students' self concept of their artistic abilities and belief that one can improve their abilities, related to overall enjoyment of art (Edens & Potter, 2001). The findings of the study presented some interesting data. They found that younger children overall were more positive about their work and optimistic about improving. The importance of these ideas for parents is to realize that children who have a belief that their artistic abilities can improve, and have parents who support and encourage this belief, can be positively influenced in artistic motivation (Edens & Potter, 2001). The children in the case studies reported being inspired and encouraged by their families. They spoke of how they felt good when their parents encouraged them about their artwork. For these children, their motivation is a combination of self interest and parental stimulus in creating art. Clearly from the responses of the parents in the interviews, they believe that a person can become better at art. Having this attitude is a factor that has created a culture of art in these home environments which encourages creative and artistic activities and motivation.

A final component is assessing a family's value of art is looking at it long term. The parents and children in the case studies were asked the question of whether they thought that an artist was a good choice for a job. Most parents said that it was a good choice, but they related being a realist in the sense of the difficulty one might have supporting oneself and a family on selling artwork. The fact that the parents did not criticize being an artist as a worthy vocation is telling. If they made a comment critical of being an artist, it might then suggest that their belief would be that an artist is not a high calling and would not encourage their children in it. The fact that they combined support

for being an artist, as well as a realistic view of the world, shows a support for the arts in a culture that is not easy to make a living as a practicing artist. The responses of the children also reflect the values and attitudes of the parents. None of the children had negative responses to being an artist. They all in fact talked about selling their art and making money at it. Again, the interesting point here may be what children did not say. The fact that at their young age, art is still a viable vocation is credited to the attitudes of the parents. They have not discouraged them but have allowed the vocation of an artist be something that someone could aspire to be when they grow up.

Parents wanting to create an environment for creative and artistic activities in their home need to look at how they value art. They need to ask themselves if they think creativity, art, and imagination are important. They need to reflect upon their beliefs about art abilities being fixed or capable of improvement and growth. Lastly, they need to look at whether they think that art and being an artist is a worthy endeavor in the long term. Questions such as is art important, and is an artist a good choice for a job, could shed light upon the values that parents hold about art. These values can have a great influence on the values, beliefs, and actions parents bring in creating a culture of art in the home.

Further Endeavors:

In the interviews with students and parents, the last section of questions was included to ask the parents and children a question that would get a sense of the home school art interaction, as well as a glimpse of any further artistic endeavors that students

may be working on or need encouragement in. They were asked the question, Can you think of any ways that I might encourage the child's artistic interest? The follow up question was, what kinds of art activities do you think are important for art students to do? The common response from parents was that they felt it was important for their children to have opportunities to practice and improve their skills. This might be linked to the idea that one can become a good artist and that art is an important endeavor to pursue. Some of the ideas related by the children were: it was important to have the attitude that you always have more to learn about art in a variety of media, techniques, and styles; art is an opportunity to show enthusiasm and create things that are wild and crazy and could only come from ones imagination; find someone to make art with and share ideas; and finally it is important to have fun and it feels good when people like your art.

From the interviews, the underlying sense was that parents and students still had an excitement about doing creative and artistic activities. They had a desire to continue to grow and to learn more in the vast arena of the arts. This is an important idea for parents to carry into creating a home environment supporting creative and artistic activities. There needs to be a sense of excitement and enthusiasm that there is a big world of art out there full of amazing art experiences and that making art is a lifelong process encouraged in a culture of art.

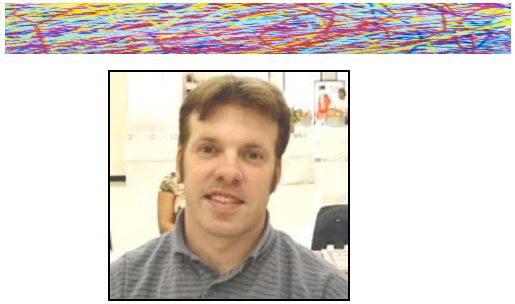
Recommendations for Research:

One recommendation to extend this research would be a comparative study of artistic interest and gender. A study might seek to observe if boys and girls gain inspiration from different stimuli. If findings from the research show that they do have different inspirational needs within the home environment, then a parent might need to modify their home environments for stimulation of art in relation to gender. Another research recommendation is to investigate not only how a parent relates to a child of different sexes, but how parents of different races or ethnicities relate to children of different sexes. Further study of the dynamics of the exchange between parents and children of different ethnicities could prove interesting related to cultural patterns. A possible premise to observe might be whether or not, within a particular culture issues of masculinity and femininity are associated with the pursuance of artistic interest when gender is involved. It is clear that research into the home environment and how it relates to creative and artistic activity is important. It goes to the foundational levels of a child's first impressions of their world and the values, beliefs, and cultures that are transmitted to them.

This study sought to delve into and analyze the home environment and its relation to creative and artistic activity. Factors related to a student's home environment such as the origins of their inspirations, environment in which they made art at home, materials available to them, and the cultural values and beliefs transmitted to them in their homes were looked at to see how they influenced a child's creative and artistic activity. The data collected through the interviews and observations was combined with a review of

literature to compile strategies that might be useful for parents to use to influence their children's artistic activity. These strategies were then listed in a pamphlet for parents to use as a resource (FIGURE 4.1). What can be gained from this particular study is the powerful influence that parents do have on their children. The home is the place of primary influence for a child before they enter school. This is a fertile ground for stimulation and growth and this study sought to equip parents with tools to plow that fertile ground. Hopefully the observations found in this study can serve as a launching pad for further studies aimed at gleaming best practices for parents and home environments to stimulate a love and interest for creative and artistic activity in the heart of children.

FIGURE 4.1



Hello! My name is Mr. Barsh and I am your child's art teacher here at Green Acres. I have been studying the idea of a child's interest in art by reading many books and talking with some our students and families, and I have discovered some exciting things:

1. Parents have a great influence over their children.
2. Kids like art.
3. Kids show their feelings and ideas through their art.
4. Art is a fun activity that parents and kids can do together!

I have created a poster for you to put on your refrigerator. It lists 10 things that you as a parent can do to inspire an interest in art in your child. Have fun!

Art and creativity are very important because they inspire a child's mind and imagination and create a vehicle to make their ideas come to life! There are many resources available for you to pursue these artistic ideas with your children such as:

- Your own imagination
- The local library
- Websites like www.crayola.com
- Your child's art teacher at school

Thank you for your time and remember, there is no more important influence in the life of a child than their parent.

Is your child interested in art, or would they like to be?

As a parent, you can influence and inspire your child's interest in art!

HOW?

10 THINGS THAT PARENTS CAN DO AT HOME TO INSPIRE ART IN THEIR CHILDREN

1) Look at and talk about the artwork your children bring home.

2) Hang up your child's artwork on the refrigerator or in a frame on the wall.

3) Find a place in your home where your child can make art without worrying about being messy.
   - A large garbage bag laid on a table can be a great way to prevent a mess.

4) Make art with your child.

5) Find a place for your child to store their artwork once they finish.
   - A drawer or a notebook work great.

6) Try developing an interest in art yourself.
   - Let yourself be free to have fun drawing, or check out some art books from the library.

7) Make art out of all types of things.
   - Pencils, pens, crayons, markers, and paints are fun, but you can make art out of anything like paper scraps, orange juice boxes, shoe boxes, sticks, etc. Let your imagination run wild and see what you come up with!

8) Take a notebook with you so that art ideas can be made anytime and anywhere.

9) Encourage, encourage, encourage your child with their art and other interests.

10) Just have fun!

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview questions for Student:

1) How did your interest in art come about?

Possible follow up questions:

When did your interest in art begin?

Did someone or something inspire you?

Do you bring home artwork created at school to show your parents?

2) Do you like to create artwork at home?

Possible follow up questions:

What kind of artwork do you make?

Where do you create art?

Where do you get your ideas from?

What do you do with the artwork once you are finished with it?

What do you think your parents and family feel about your artwork?

Does anyone like to participate in making artwork with you?

3) What kind of art materials do you use when making art at home?

Possible follow up questions:

What is your favorite art medium to work with?

Do you have free access to the materials or do you have to ask for them?

4) Are there any artist's in your family? If yes, who are they and tell me about their art?

Possible follow up questions:

Do you have any friends who are artists?

Do you know anyone in the community who is an artist?

What kinds of art do they make?

5) Do you feel that art and imagination are important? Why?

Possible follow up questions:

Do you believe an artist is a good choice for a job? Why or why not?

Do you think that everyone is able to make art or that only certain people are able to make artwork?

6) Can you think of any ways that I might encourage your artistic interest?

Possible follow up questions:

What kind of art activities do you think are important for art students to do?

Appendix B

Interview questions for Parents:

1) What are some of your ideas about how (student's name) interest in art came about?

Possible follow up questions:
When did his interest begin?
Did someone or something inspire him?
Does he bring home artwork created at school to show you?

2) Do you know if (student's name) likes to create artwork here at home?

Possible follow up questions:
What kind of artwork does he make?
Where does he create art?
What does he do with the artwork once he is finished with it?
Does anyone like to participate in making artwork with him?

3) What kind of art materials does (student's name) like to use here at home?

Possible follow up questions:
What are his favorite kinds of materials to use?

4) Are there any artist's in your family? If yes, who are they and tell me about their art?

Possible follow up questions:
Do you have any friends who are artists?
Do you know anyone in the community who is an artist?
What kinds of art do they make?
What kinds of experiences have you had in the arts? Did you take art in school, or create art on you own?

5) How might you describe the value of art and imagination?

Possible follow up questions:
Do you believe an artist is a good choice for a job? Why or why not?
Do you think that everyone is able to make art or that only certain people are able to make artwork?

6) Can you think of any ways that I might encourage (student's name) artistic interest?

Possible follow up questions:
What kind of art activities do you think are important for (student's name) to do?

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Student's Previous Year Teacher:

1) How would you describe (student's name)?

2) In your classroom, what kinds of good artistic creations did (student's name) make?

Possible follow up questions:

Describe how (student's name) made art in your classroom.

3) Do you think that (student's name) was a creative child?

Possible follow up questions:

In what ways?

What kinds of creative attributes did (student's name) show in their work, problem solving, attitudes?

Appendix D

The Interviews:

Interview with Tim Okezie

Location: Green Acres Elementary School

Q: Okay Tim, tell me how your interest in art came about?

A: Well, like my dad, you know those paintings he showed you when you came to my house? Like, he encouraged me. I used to watch him, as he drew. Like, I first started liking art like when I was two, and I used to try to draw and he like taught me how to use a pencil. And I tried to draw but I kept making like scribble. And then just like later he showed me the angles you have to use to like draw something. And then it's like you start drawing like all sorts of things that I like. And, so I started learning how to draw those things from him. Like sometimes he makes like a market thing with an umbrella, that is shading the sun, and the marketer has food. And so I look at that painting, that piece of art and I keep on trying to draw it. And now I know how to draw it, and I draw it in my notebook, one of them. So it's like he encouraged me and showed me how to do it. And so that's why sometimes I just watch the TV shows and sometimes when I watch movies and might give me an idea of something I want to draw. And then I draw the thing that I think I want to draw.

Q: Tim you talked about how your dad inspired you to draw, did anyone else inspire you as well?

A: Yes, all my sisters and my mother. They inspire me, like my sister is really good, and she drew all kinds of things like she drew superman, batman, and all these other things. And even if she draws things that I am not like interested in, I like it because it like looks really real. That's why she encouraged me. My mom and my sisters really encourage me.

Q: Tim, do you ever bring home artwork that you have created at school?

A: Like in second grade when you told us to make any kind of thing but you told us to mix it all up, and different parts and stuff, Well like when I created that tiger thing with wings, I took it home and showed my dad, and he said that is a good picture because, it was all different kinds of parts, it looked like something he had drawn and like something he had seen. He said that had seen this kind of person like in a zoo, and so that is like one of the reasons he likes my art.

Q: What do they do with the art work when you take it home?

A: Well, like that art work, he hung it up for a while.

Q: How did that make you feel?

A: It made me proud of the art work I made. Sometimes my cousin comes. He is like five years old, and sometimes he watches me draw, and he learns from me.

Q: That’s neat that you can show your ideas to someone else.

A: He is getting kind of good. Before he didn’t know how to draw things, but he’s getting better, and he can draw things that I can.

Q: That is cool. Do people in his family like to draw too?

A: His baby sister does. Well, she can draw kind of well. She can draw a fish and she is only two years old.

Q: Do you like to create art work at home?

A: Sometimes I make spotted art work. Like with paint. Sometimes I make like artwork. Like circles and circles and lots of circles. And then I paint the circles and I make other squares between the circles, and make squares and other shapes, and then I paint it. Like different colors.

Q: So do you have access to paints at home?

A: I used to.

Q: If you were to make a piece of artwork today when you get home, would you have to ask someone for materials to use, or could you just get them on your own?

A: I could get them on my own. I just use crayon, a pencil, sometimes I get markers. Sometimes I get craft sticks to put into my drawing. Like sometimes I trace over the craft stick to make like some kind of design. And like sometimes I draw animals. I have drawn a rabbit, a crab, and I forgot what happened to the dolphin one I had.

Q: When you get these supplies are they in a special place? Where are they in your house?

A: Mostly in my house. Like under my bed I keep like some of my notebooks there. Sometimes I put my notebooks on the table, like if I want to draw earlier, I don't want to get the notebooks from under my bed. Sometimes I put stickers in my notebook and then draw around the stickers.

Q: Where do you create art at home?

A: Sometimes I create it my dad's room or my room. Or maybe, well not really in the kitchen…or maybe in the living room, kind of all over the place.

Q: Where do your ideas come from to do your wonderful works of art?

A: Well for one thing from my friend. He's really good at drawing. Like my friend and his brother, because sometimes we draw these cards and he just makes all kinds of creatures and stuff and its like you wont even know what it is until he tells you what it is because they just look all foreign, like different. And he taught me how to draw things like that. Like I have a drawing of a card, it's like I drew it like he had a person, but he didn't really look like a person because his hair didn't really look like it was hair. And he had like all kinds of designs on it.

Q: Where would you get your inspiration today if you were going to go home and make art?

A: Sometimes I'd ask my dad. Or sometimes I would just make creatures like creatures I haven't drawn before. Sometimes I make dragons, and sometimes I make creatures I haven't even put a name to.

Q: When you make art work what do you do when you are finished with it?

A: Well sometimes I decide if I am really done. Well most of the time when I make a creature, I make something like that so it looks like a creature from some kind of other world. And sometimes I hang it up or sometimes I put it in my notebook.

Q: What do you think your parents and your family feel about your artwork?

A: Not really anything. They just like it and they like the way I draw it. They don't really care what I draw they just like it and they like the way I draw it. I don't draw anything that they would say no, I don't like that. I don't draw things I am not allowed to draw, I only draw what I am allowed to draw.

Q: So if you finished a work of art and showed to them, what would they say?

A: Sometimes my dad might say like you could maybe add some more details and more pictures on one side of the paper. And sometimes if I had already done that he'll say okay you could put it in a notebook and try another one. And sometimes he gives me other ideas.

Q: Does anyone like to participate in making art with you when you make it.

A: My dad and sometimes my sister. Well first they would show me a final art work and then they would tell me to draw that art work. And when I am finished drawing that one they look at it and then they show me a different one. And sometimes he helps me if I get stuck on a part.

Q: Do you have any friends that are artists as well?

A: Yes, the friend I told you about and there is another boy in my class, and another person in my class. I have lots of friends that like to draw.

Q: Do you know anyone in your community who is an artist?

A: Like someone big? No. Well mostly my friends are good at drawing. I haven't really met anybody who is big that is good at drawing. My dad has met this popular person who was going to be a manager of a job and they took him to this place and he met this person who was really good at drawing and he drew a lot and he got a lot of money out of drawing. So I think that really inspires me.

Q: Did they make any other types of art or just drawing?

A: Well they made metal art, clay art, and other kinds. Most of the art my dad has he already showed me.

Q: What kind of art would most of the people you have talked about make?

A: My cousin he mostly makes art like creatures. Well sometimes he tries to make people and other characters. And my friends, most everybody tries to make things like that...except for my sisters. They draw people and characters form cartoons.

Q: Tim, do you feel that art and imagination are important?

A: Well yeah, because if you don't have imagination it would be hard to think of something to draw. You might think of something but it might not really be exciting. Like you might thing of something but you might not be able to think of anything else. And you would keep on drawing that same thing and keep drawing it over and over again. I think it [imagination] is an important part.

Q: Tim, do you believe an artist is a good choice for a job?

A: Well yeah because you could be an artist at something else because an artist is not like you are in a business. An artist makes drawings and then like sells them and things like that.

Q: How is a business person different in your opinion?

A: Well an artist you don't always have to be a business person. You would just be drawing art and selling it and you would still be getting money like having to spend money. Like when you have a job, you have to like use money to get into the job, but if you are an artist you don't really have to use your money all you have to do is just draw and sell the art you've made.

Q: Tim do you think everyone is able to make art, or is only certain people capable of making artwork.

A: I think everyone can, but some people just don't think they can. And they don't really try to. Like my cousin he does not think he can draw anything well. He used to think like he drawed ugly, but I keep encouraging him until he drawed.

Q: Why do you think some kids don't think they can make art?

A: Well maybe like sometimes when they make art people say that's ugly and stuff. Because I have felt like that before. But my dad like encouraged me in doing it again.

Q: Tim, can you think of any ways that I might encourage your artistic interests?

A: Not really like anything because like the things you put in store for us we like drawing. Like some of the things you make us do we don't know how to do those things. So I don't think you really need to do anything. I think you are already doing a good job.

Q: Tell me what you mean when you said you don't know how to do things like you've never done it before?

A: Like the project you gave us about drawing our names. I didn't really know how to do that. Well I have kind of done it but not like painted it and colored it. I just drew my name. I didn't make like any designs.

Q: How did you feel when you were working on this project? What was it like to you?

A: It was very exciting and cool.

Q: Did you like the way it turned out in the end?

A: I did. I had a good time with it.

Q: If you were the art teacher, what kind of activities do you think would be important to do?

A: Well for one thing learn how to make designs and not just things just because you can draw something well. Sometimes you might make a scribble and that's going to be like become famous one day. Like some of the posters on the wall. They don't even look like anything. But, some of them became famous later on because it's a different type of art.

Q: Tim do you have any questions for me?

A: No, not really.

Interview with Mark Simmons

Location: Green Acres Elementary School

Q: Mark, how did your interest in art come about? How did you come to like art?

A: First, I'd sometimes just watch scary movies, and then I just sometimes get an idea, then I just sometimes want to make up stuff that I might want to draw about.

Q: Cool. When did your interest in art begin?

A: When I was like seven.

Q: Seven. Do you remember what happened to make you like art? Did something or somebody inspire you to like art?

A: You

Q: Really? Was there a certain project that you liked?

A: When we did the masks.

Q: Oh, that really got you pumped up about art? Awesome! So did you ever make art before that?

A: I just used to draw.

Q: Do you remember coloring on papers or anything like that? What kind of things did you do, do you remember?

A: I would sometimes write and color on paper and I would sometimes use those little books that I can color in. (I interject, “Yeah like when you color in the books does it have drawings in it in it already that you color in?”) Yeah.

Q: Do you ever take art work that you made here at school to take home and show your parents?

A: uh-hum.

Q: Tell me about it.

A: Like I sometimes take my art and show it to my parents, and then sometimes I hang it on the wall or just keep it in my drawer.

Q: Tell me do you ever make art in your classroom during free time, or do you have an art center?

A: I can draw a little bit when I have time.

Q: What do you do when you take it home? Do you show it to your mom? What does she do with it?

A: I show it to my mom and dad and then they might keep it out for a while and then put it in a drawer.

Q: If they keep it out what do they do with it?

A: They like sometimes hang it somewhere so people can see my art work.

Q: Do they hang it in a special place in your house?

A: They just sometimes put it anywhere.

Q: Like on the wall or the refrigerator?

A: Uh-hum.

Q: Do you like to create art work at home?

A: Yes sir.

Q: Tell me about it. What do you like to make.

A: I like drawing like scary stuff like a monster, and other like sometimes nice stuff like my sister and my parents and everything.

Q: You talk about drawing monsters, is it a drawing, or is it a sculpture?

A: I think I just like draw it and then I just retrace it, my steps, and then I can like color it in finally, then I can show it to my parents and then hang it up or put it in my drawer.

Q: Do you draw it with a pencil and then what kind of colors do you use? Paint, markers or what?

A: Uhm, I use crayons and markers.

Q: Where do you create art at home?

A: In my bedroom and sometimes I watch some TV and sometimes I get good ideas.

Q: You know Mark that was a question I was just going to ask you. Where do you get all your great ideas from?

A: From TV, and sometimes I get it in my mind and it just pops up and I want to draw it.

Q: When you are working in your home, like in your room, what do you do with your art work?

A: Sometimes I give it to my parents and then they sometimes feel good.

Q: I remember earlier, you said you sometimes put art in your drawer. Tell me about this drawer.

A: My drawer is like from kindergarten and I keep all my stuff. And every once in a while me and my parents just clean it out and sometimes I leave my art work in there.

Q: So this drawer is in your room?

A: It’s in my room.

Q: So is it like a desk or a dresser?

A: It’s like a mirrored desk.

Q: You talked a little before about giving art work to your parents. What do you think your parents and your family feel about your art work?

A: They think that I am a good art worker and they feel good when I give them something. Once I gave my mom a picture of a flower, my dad a picture of another flower.

Q: What did they do when you gave it to them?

A: Sometimes they will just keep it or sometimes they will go to their desks at work and put it next to it to see what a good job I did.

Q: So when you give them art work do they look at it, do they say anything?

A: Yeah, they say good job Mark, and my dad says good job and can you give me another drawing if you can. And I said yes.

Q: Awesome. Does anyone like to participate in making artwork with you when you are at home?

A: But sometimes my sister is helping me a little bit, and then I just take over the rest.

Q: So you are saying you make a picture together? Like tell me about it. What happens?

A: We have this like big mat and there’s all these undrawed animals and we just draw some and then me and my sister feel good about doing that.

Q: Does anyone else make art work with you at home?

A: No.

Q: You talked before about some kind of material that you use when you make art at home. I think you said pencil, crayons and markers. Is there anything else you ever use to make art when you are at home?

A: Sometimes I just color it in gray, with pencil.

Q: What would you say is your favorite thing to use to make art?

A: To use markers.

Q: Tell me why markers.

A: Because they sometimes have light colors and dark colors and they sometimes make me feel good for some reason.

Q: Mark, when you want to make are do you have free access to art materials or do you have to ask mom or dad for art materials?

A: I sometimes ask my sister to borrow markers, and sometimes she says yes and then I just start drawing.

Q: So like if you go home this afternoon and you want to make a work of art do you have to ask mom or dad to get the markers and pencils or do you just have them?

A: I just have them for free.

Q: Where are they?

A: In my bedroom and sometimes the markers are in my sister's room.

Q: Mark, are there any artists in your family?

A: My sister, and my dad, and my mom is pretty good too.

Q: Awesome. Tell me about the type of art your sister, your mom and your dad make? What kind of art does each person make?

A: Well, my sister sometimes makes up her own and do the little drawing books, and my dad sometimes makes models of cars and everything, and soon me and him are going to design a car. And my mom makes like flowers and stuff.

Q: Does she draw or paint?

A: Uhm, first she wants to like trace it and then my mom asks me and my sister if she can borrow markers and crayons and we say yes and then she colors it in.

Q: Do you have any friends that are artists?

A: Well, my family and sometime one of my other friends Dylan.

Q: Dylan, he's an artist, too?

A: Sometimes.

Q: Tell me about the kind of art he makes?

A: He like sometimes makes weird stuff like an alien and everything.

Q: Mark, do you know anyone in the community who is an artist?

A: You and me and my mom and my dad. That's all I know.

Q: What kind of art do you think I make?

A: Like colorful ones, cool ones, and sometimes scary.

Q: Do you have a particular art work that you remember that I made, one that sticks out in your mind?

A: When your went to high school or college and made one of those things in the back (pointing to the tie-dyed pictures on the wall)

Q: Mark do you think art and imagination are important?

A: It gives me, it is kind of important because I can just share my ideas with my mom my dad and my sister.

Q: Mark do you think an artist is a good choice for a job for somebody?

A: Yes because sometimes my dad says that if you make good pictures, you can sometimes make lots of money and you can give it to people and you can sometimes make lots of money.

Q: Do you think everyone is able to make art or can only certain people make art?

A: Well, I think that certain people can make art, and sometimes people that are not talented they just sometimes draw and they sometimes draw in those books and sometimes they try to draw stuff on paper and then they sometimes become good artists.

Q: So you're saying that everyone is able to make art if they draw in books, they can become good artists? Is that similar to what happened to you? Or were you always able to make good art?

A: First I just did the drawing books, then I started to draw on paper.

Q: Mark can you think of ways that I as your teacher might encourage your interest in art?

A: You can get like pumped up and get weird stuff and get like ready for everything, and then I can start drawing some weird stuff.

Q: What kind of activities do you think are important for art students to do?

A: Practice, and make sure they try to practice everyday if they can. And sometimes if you have time you can probably go get someone you can draw with.

Interview with Maria Martinez

Location: Green Acres Elementary School

Q: Maria, how did your interest in art come about?

A: When I was six years old and my cousin showed me how to write the ABC's. And she started to make pictures and then I started to make pictures too. And then I became to like art. She always brought stuff from school when she came to this school but know she goes to Nighland Park. She brought lost of stuff and she show it to me. And then she started to show me how to make it.

Q: Your cousin, was she really good at making art?

A: Yes.

Q: What kinds of things did she draw that you remember?

A: She drawed people with clothes. Or sometimes she would draw animals but she couldn't so she would try her best at making them. She would also draw houses and decorate them. And she would draw monsters and different stuff.

Q: Did anyone else inspire you?

A: My other cousin, Antonio, my mom and my dad. Because my mom, she always showed me how to make different stuff that I never knew. And my dad would show me how to make people. It's just that I didn't know what they were because he drew them differently.

Q: Do you bring home the art work you create at school to show your parents?

A: I showed them the mask that I did in the second grade. And I showed them this animal hat I made in learning clubs when I was in second grade. It's just that my brother would get the animal hat.

Q: What did your parents say when they saw your artwork?

A: They told me to take care of it and to keep it in a safe spot. So I can remember it when I am bigger. And my mom put it somewhere but I don't know where it is. She didn't want my baby brother to rip it.

Q: Do you like to create art work at home?

A: I like drawing because every time when I am bored I get pencils, paper or crayons and anything like that. And I keep on drawing. But I usually draw with my artwork station that I got from Santa Clause. It came with lots of clay and paint and crayons. And lots of stuff. So I like drawing more because I think about stuff to draw. And I keep on drawing it. It may take me a day or two days to draw it. Because I have to do my homework and I have to eat and take a bath.

Q: When did you get this art station from Santa Clause?

A: I don't know but when I came from Mexico and I got to open up all my presents and I found it this year. It had clay and paints in it.

Q: Can you leave your art work at your art station and then do your homework and then come back to it?

A: Yes. But I have to hide it because my baby brother rips it.

Q: Where did you create art before you got the art station?

A: I used paper, I used crayons, pencils, and I also used pens, because I didn't have that much stuff to color with. Because every time my mom bought me paint my baby brother always put it in the sink.

Q: Where would you make the art work?

A: Sometimes I would make it in the table at the kitchen. Sometimes in my room.

Q: Maria, Where do you get your ideas from?

A: My mom. Every time that I tell my mom that I am bored, she tells me to color, and make art. And she tells me what to draw or what to make. Or sometimes I just get ideas from my cousins.

Q: What do you do with the art work once you are finished with it?

A: Sometimes I hang it up. Like on top of the television, in the kitchen. But I usually hang it up in my room with the walls.

Q: What do you think your parents and your family think about your art work?

A: I think that they are happy because I really make good stuff. And they are happy because I give them my art sometimes. And they are happy to see it because it is wonderful.

Q: When you see that they are happy about your art work how does it make you feel?

A: It makes me feel happy because they really like it. And I am really happy because they always tell me good stuff about it. And they call me names that I feel really good about.

Q: When you are making art, does anyone like to participate in making art with you?

A: Sometimes my mom, I show her my art, and she always wants to check it. And then she tells me what's wrong and I tell her if she wants to check it and so she draws where it needs to go and what doesn't need to go. And sometimes my baby brother, he's always knocking at my door to my room and he always has a pen in his hand, and I have to give him paper, and then he tells me that he is done and that he wants me to add more details.

Q: Are there any artists in your family? And if yes who are they and tell me about their art.

A: It's my cousin and my Auntie. Because my cousins, they're the one's who show me and I really like their art too, that's where I get their art, because they draw something and I put more details by drawing it. It's just that I add more details. And my Auntie because they are the ones who will tell me what to draw. And if I don't draw it, they will start to draw it and show me how what they wanted to tell me to draw.

Q: Do you have any friends who are artists?

A: Nancy, Elizabeth and Alexis.

Q: Do you ever make art together?

A: I make art with Nancy at school, I make it with Elizabeth at home. I usually make it with Elizabeth a lot because many times when she is at my house playing with me we always do different stuff like one time we did a snow globe. It broke because lots of water was getting out. And Nancy because sometimes at recess she has her notebook and I do too, so we start drawing stuff. And sometimes when its raining outside and we have to play inside, she is always playing with me and drawing with me.

Q: Do you know anyone in your community who is also an artist?

A: Yes. I know another girl who is an artist, but I haven't seen her a lot because she is the same age as me its just that she lives far away and I don't know where she is. But she does live in Georgia, in Cobb County.

Q: What is your favorite thing to use to make art?

A: A pencil. Because I could erase it and draw it again and again. And if I make a mistake I could erase it. It's not a dark color. It's like a light color or bright color of pencils, that's why.

Q: Do you have free access to the materials or do you have to ask for them at home?

A: Sometimes I get them for a present or for Christmas. But when I don't have the stuff I really need to make art, I have to ask my parents. But, every time I ask them I have to ask them at night time because my dad is the only one that knows how to drive.

Q: If you went home this afternoon and wanted to make art, would you have to ask your mom or could you just go and get the stuff yourself?

A: First, I don't have to ask her but I really want to ask her because sometimes she is telling me that dinner is ready and to take care of my baby brother while she is making dinner. That is why I ask her, and I will tell her where I am going to be. But I usually make art at my room so that my baby brother wouldn't disturb me. I tell her I am in my room drawing or playing but don't take too long.

Q: Do you feel that art and imagination are important?

A: Yes, because it is really fun making art, and because you make stuff that you have never made, and because you get to keep it and you get to make it. And then you will remember it when you get bigger and bigger.

Q: Do you believe that an artist is a good choice for a job?

A: Yes, because you might get lots of money, and people might be liking your art because it is rally colorful, and great and wonderful, and you will like it because you are selling out your art. And you're making art for other people to like them. And you will

feel happy that other people are liking your art. And lots of people will be watching your art and seeing it.

Q: Do you think that everyone is able to make art or only certain people are able to make art?

A: Everyone, because even though you are not a great artist, you still could be a great artist. You just have to try. And the people that know how to make art should really show other people how to make art.

Q: Can you think of any ways I could encourage your artistic interest?

A: They should really have fun. Because if you make art the most important thing is to have fun and to be happy that you made art and to be happy because everybody would like your art.

Interview with Tim Okezie's Father

Location: The Okezie's apartment

Family present: Tim, his father Charles, and Tim's sister Sandy

Q: Where do you think Tim's interest in art came from?

A: Basically, actually, I am a scientist and I am in pharmacy. I studied some in Nigeria and I took art as a hobby. I like artwork and I do have some collections. When my first girl was growing, I figured out that she might be, you know, interested in art so I started teaching her how to draw, something like drawing, something like perspective. Let me show you what it is like. (He proceeds to pull out paper and demonstrate.) If you want to have something that is a mile or ten miles away, you can put it on the paper and it will be contained in it. So she took off from there and now she draws, she paints now. From school I guess (referring to Tim sitting next to him) and from his interaction with his sisters, and participate, and having some interest in art. It is about interaction. Looking at what the other people have done.

Q: When did you find that his interest in art begin?

A: Yeah, when I was little we used to live in a rural setting and you see a lot of farms and there would be gently rolling hills, and the grasses growing,

Q: When Tim was a young boy did he pick up crayons and pencils and start drawing?

A: Yeah, scribbling. Once he start school, he stopped in Nigeria and change the art. We do some painting, we do some crayon painting, or crayon and then watercolor.

Q: So art is a subject that they have in elementary school in Nigeria?

A: Yes, they have it in elementary schools in Nigeria. The academics in Nigeria is modeled after the British. You know we were colonized by the British. You have a good division between science and art. But basically I grew up in the academic setting. You do everything until way into the high school where you begin to specialize. You are very good in math, good in physics, good in chemistry; the sciences, you begin to pick up them sometimes. You know, but if one not very good in mathematics, you know very quickly the art you select. Then you have art, not the sciences. But, the background, you will have done all.

Q: Does Tim like to make a lot of art at home here at the house?

A: (Tim interjects, "I have a lot of drawings in my notebook.") He has a lot and, he likes to do a lot of things, (as Charles shuffles through some papers finding one and placing it on the table for Tim to draw on). I love whatever they do. Interest is built up by showing interest in what they do and encouraging them. Beyond pencil and paper in having interest in what they do. (Tim is busily working on a drawing under the watchful eye of his father.)

Q: Does Tim create art at a certain place, like a art corner or anything, or anywhere?

A: Anywhere! Anywhere. He jumps on my bed, he will come out here, wherever.

Q: Does he like to do something with his art when he is finished with it?

A: Like in the kitchen?

Q: Yeah, does he like to display it?

A: No, not display. But my daughters, when you were small (referring to Tim), my first daughter, and other daughter, both of them do something that was sold in their school. When she was about fourteen or fifteen. She draws beautiful. The school picked it and then they displayed it in the school, (the daughter walks in the middle of the conversation and the father tells her to sit down with us in the living room. The father then turns to the daughter and tells her about myself and the school liaison with me.) These are some of Tim's teachers, and they are talking about the work of art, and I tried to recall the one picture when you came back, and when I get you at school you told me that your artwork was sold. What was it again, painting? (Tim chimes in, "abstract painting")

(Sandy: It was just regular paint. The school just had a fundraiser where they took one from class, my mom and dad wanted to buy it but she couldn't.) (Everyone laughs)

A: My wife wanted to have it. In Nigeria, we have boarding school, and my wife went to visit her, and she went up and she say, 'hey, my children that artwork was sold and we couldn't pick it", and I say, "Well, forget it, she is the artist here, she can do another one." She is my first girl. My first girl is the one who really shows a lot of, you know… It would be tough for her, you know she is the one who is in nursing school, she does the clinicals and she doesn't have time, but if she has time… She can draw. She can paint,

(Tim: She has a notebook where she has a lot of drawings. One time she drew some cartoons like Scooby Doo and others.)

Q: Do you like to watch your sisters when they are drawing? (Referring to Tim)

(Tim: Yeah, My older sister, she drew… One time she drew superman, batman… Like you know that lady called Oprah on the T.V.? She drew her.)

A: I am proud of them. (He tries to draw something and jokingly says, "I can't even draw now.") Yeah, she draws very well.

Q: Did you have an interest in art since you were young?

A: As I said before, where I grew up, everything was rural. I go out on the farm, and wherever I am, I was always in nature. Trees growing and birds, you know I guess, it comes a bit naturally.

Q: Did anyone in your family make art when you were a boy?

A: Yeah, but they don't draw. It is just me that continued. They are all in big cities.

(Everyone laughs in reference to the previous statements)

Q: Does Tim have a favorite type of art materials he likes to use?

A: Most times just pencils. And second really color.

Q: Crayons and paints?

A: Crayons, maybe paint, but I don't want him using paint except in the studio

Q: Is there anyone in you community that continues to make art or that you may consider to be an artist?

A: There is one guy at the church, he can draw, he uses glazes and glass. (Charles then proceeds to bring out some embossed tin sculptures that he had brought from Nigeria to show us some artwork from his community in Nigeria.)

Q: So you brought these from Nigeria?

A: Yes, I got these from Nigeria and have brought these back.

Q: Is it cheaper to buy artwork in Nigeria?

A: Much cheaper.

Q: Tim, do you remember seeing these artworks as a young boy? What did you think? (Tim: Well, I have seen one of them. It was kind of like that but real different. In one of my notebooks, well the first notebook I had was from Kindergarten. First it had some pictures and then I started drawing other things in it. Like first I started out like drawing something like a cartoon character or maybe one of my own characters that looks kind of like a real character before I like start trying to draw the real one. So that's like in some cartoons, like when I start drawing Superman, like before I started drawing Superman I drew another character that I knew how to draw that was like Superman and then I started making it look like Superman and then I could just draw Superman.) (Tim then quickly goes and gets one of his notebook of drawings as well as one of his sisters for us to look at.)

Q: (In looking at the sister's notebooks and characters that she has drawn) Does she watch T.V. and copy the pictures?

A: Um hum.

Q: What value would you place on art and imagination?

A: Yeah, it is always a good pleasure when you know that children… you can see that most of them are, basically studying science. My oldest daughter is studying medicine, and this one wants to follow me and do pharmacy, be a pharmacist. So having a balance is of interest. Because I keep telling them that you don't know what it is that you want to do. So I believe it is important in having a good time and it is good to make money at it. So just like my oldest, she plays guitar, and the middle one, she plays the piano. So she started because of academics, but you won't loose anything. It makes your life better. You know, appreciating a work of art, because art is good. You know, because you can pull a sheet out, and your mind escapes from all types of troubles. It can be something that you enjoy to do and it can also bring value to someone.

Q: In Nigeria, is an artist held in esteem? Tell me about the role of an artist in Nigeria?

A: Yeah, it goes to the PhD level in university and colleges, so it is in high reputation. It is not anything inferior, no. Like I told you, at some point in your high school, you are divided so that you are specialized. You go into art, you go into music, you go into all kinds you know. Not only graphic arts. You have portrait. You have all kinds of things.

Not always made by machine, by hand. They are beautiful. And it is taught in the school. You know, you have a lot of artist in my country, Nigeria.

Q: Have you seen any differences as far as art, culture and society in coming to America compared to Nigeria?

A: I think a lot of because of my second girl; she is the one who wants to do medicine, but she draws too. So art is big in Nigeria, but not as much in U.S. This is a big economy. America has a big economy. It is a good comparison with Nigeria.

Q: In your opinion, do you think that everybody is able to make art, or is art only for people who are good at art?

A: No, it is interest. When you have an interest in anything that you are doing. Anybody can do it.

Q: I find in my classes sometimes that some of my student's say that Oh I can't draw, or only Tim is good at drawing. It is interesting how they have that perspective they think that some kids can and some kids can't.

A: It is interest. But, you know it is like I said, the interest is sometimes ignited at home. (The father then turns his attention to Tim and encourages him to draw a picture utilizing perspective ideas.) When you do a little bit of this for them, they say, "Wow". (He then turns his attention back to Tim and watches him as Tim completes a type of drawing that they have seemingly worked on before.) So sometimes it is how you explain it and how you ignite their… (Glancing at Tim working on his drawing momentarily) I am not an

artist, as I told you I am a pharmacist. In this country I am just finishing up my college. I took my last test in November and am waiting for my Georgia board.

Q: You are an inspiration, just to hear your passion for your children and their excitement for their learning. If I had another family here that said, "We're kind of interested in getting our kids excited about art." What might be some advice to them about things they could do to encourage that family to inspire art in their children?

A: It would have to be, to come from the family, and to encourage their children, no matter how strong, and find out what that child is doing. You know, if they want to do cups, you know, say that looks like it. (Referring to drawing a cup.) You know, I don't know if what I am doing is right. I can't draw, so people ask my friends if they can do it. You know, just encourage them.

Q: Can you think of any ways that I might encourage Tim's artistic interests as his art teacher?

(Tim interrupts and begins to show and explain the drawing he has been working on to all of us sitting there. He talks about the parts of his drawing and then Tim and his father have an exchange about depth and perception in his drawing of things that he could add to the picture and what size to make them.) (The father remarks during Tim's drawing, "That is what he continues to do, he goes back and works on it until he gets perfect".) I then repeated the question again.

A: Yeah, um, give him some tasks. You know what I am saying. Tasks. Give him some homework or something that fires the imagination in any direction that you are wanting to look at. Basically something he can work on.

Q: Like something independent that he can work on by himself?

A: Yeah, yeah, I would appreciate that.

Interview with Mark Simmons's Family

Location: The Simmons's home

Members Present: Mark, his father Mike, his mother Cathy, and his younger sister Samantha

Q: What are some of your ideas about how Mark's interest in art came about?

Mike: I think, initially, probably through the video gaming. Yeah that seems to be where he got a lot of his initial ideas. The monster critters and these types of things. He acquired these from the video games and the like. However the whole video game scene got out of hand and he got to the point where he wasn't controlling himself with it, so we unplugged it and it has been unplugged for some time. We took the Nintendo 64 away about a year ago. He has a game boy he plays with now but we monitor that pretty closely. But to answer your question, the video games is what brought it about. And he started sketching and developing his characters.

Q: About what age did this all start?

Mike: Gosh, probably I would say when he was four. He started sketching. He got more detailed as he got more motor skills, until he got to the point to where he is now.

Q: Does he bring the artwork that he has done at school home to show you?

Cathy: Yes, he is bringing something, like the drawings he does at school, like spaceships.

Mike: Yes, he has definitely brought things home. We like to get to the points where maybe he has got some paintings like that where we can actually frame. We like to do that; hang them up you know. It gives them encouragement and we like to do that. I like them to take them to work and put them in my office at work. That would be great.
Mike speaking to Cathy: That doctor, Smith, that you went to, who had his son's paintings on the wall of his physicians room. So we thought that was a great idea. So, we would like to do the same for them as they acquire the skills. So as they draw or paint, or whatever they do, we would like to put them up.

Q: What kind of artwork does Mark like to create here at home?
Mike: I think he likes a little different types of drawing. He likes airplanes. He likes cars. He likes lots of monsters. He likes the Sci-Fi type stuff. He seems to gravitate to the Sci-Fi stuff and I think that has to do with probably the Sci-Fi channel. We watch that on occasion. We are not huge T.V. watchers but the Sci-Fi channel as well as some of the new cartoons that he watches. They are not like the cartoons whenever I was growing up. The computer animation is out of this world today. And I think that is where he gets a lot of his ideas from, and tends to gravitate towards the creativeness of science fiction.

Q: Does he create art he at home in a certain place?
Mike: Sometimes he will be drawing at the table, sometimes he will be in his bedroom, sometimes he will be sitting right here (referring to the living room in which we were seated), most anywhere. Sometimes on the kitchen floor, most anywhere. He doesn't

need a specific local to do it. Samantha (Mark's sister sitting in the room with us) is the same way. She can do clay modeling on the kitchen floor or she can come in here and lay on the floor to do drawing, or on her desk in her bedroom. We have got environments set up in their rooms with computers and very nice desks in their rooms. So we try to make the environments conducive to learn and explore. (Mark exclaims, "With clip art.") Yeah, with clip art and some computer applications. We have been working with power point and some clip art stuff. So they seem to like that.

Q: When Mark is finished with artistic creations, what usually happens with them once he is done?

Mike: Oh yeah, he will come and show them to us. (Mark has returned from his room as we were talking and shows an oil pastel picture of a creature made the previous year in art class. Mike begins to talk about Mark's picture.) It looks like a critter that is hovering above the trees. It is a very large critter because I can see this man down here, and a hill you know. He has got an interesting concept of scale. He will bring it to us and show it to us and we will review it with him and say, "That's pretty cool man." So, like this right here, this is something that we will probably take and frame it. This is pretty cool here. I like this right here, this is really cool. So we will put the things away until we can come up with the money to buy frames. He is usually very excited when he finishes one to show it to us and we are very excited to show our excitement for him and to show him and encourage him. But we do that pretty much about everything. When he does good in math we encourage him, when he does bad in math, we still encourage him (the father says jokingly), whatever the case might be. Of course when he does bad, we

encourage him by giving him a little more home work. A little less play time. Yesterday, he flagged a couple of math assignments in school and then he did a report and it was obvious he flew through the report to get outside and play. So he had to do the whole thing over again.

Q: Whenever Mark is creating his wonderful creations, does anyone like to come over and work with him?

Mike: Occasionally, occasionally we do that. Occasionally we will work with him and say, "You might try this or you might try that." We'll come up to him, either Cathy or myself, but the majority of the time, it is an autocratic effort. He doesn't really want any help. He has got his ideas and he wants to lay it out.

Q: What kinds of materials does Mark like to use most of the time when making his art?

Cathy: Sometimes he likes to make, uh, build uh, like a bottle of coke. He wants to make that a car. He wants to put wheels and build some car toys. He says mama can you save that and I say, "What are you going to do with that thing?" You know that orange stuff. Orange juice. He says, "Mama, save that for me."

Mike: He tends to look for unsundry household items and materials that he can use. If he does draw, he likes pastels, sketching with pencils, makers, crayons, pretty much the gamut of stuff. Pretty much, we shy away from finger painting and stuff like that. (Mom laughs) He doesn't seem to really be interested into the clay modeling like Samantha. Samantha, she really is into the clay modeling, but he's really not into that. He really likes the sketching and drawing. That is his forte. And that would be considered,

because I like that, I like that a lot. He and I have been working downstairs on sketches of an automobile. It is conceptual right now. It started out that we were going to build a go-cart. It morphed into other things. We started talking about fuels, and I involve him in this. That is kind of my forte. So, we have got some sketches down there. He seems to be very interested in that kind of stuff.

Q: Do you guys have a history in art or have been involved in art?

Mike: Well I am a musician. Well I guess that is an art form in and of itself. I am a professional musician. I have been playing drums for thirty years now and I also play the E flat alto saxophone and the B flat clarinet. But I picked up the drums on my own. I was trained to play those two instruments, but the drums I picked up on my own. I put those two down because I really just fell in love with playing the drums. I have been playing them for thirty years and he has kind of gotten to the point where he believes he would like to start playing the drums as well. I have a very expensive electronic set and all the sound reinforcement equipment down in my office downstairs. He needs to grow a little bit before he can actually play it, and develops a little more motor control; I will start him off on a snare drum and start with some rudimentary stuff. I would like for them both to get into music. It is a very awesome stimulator, neural stimulator. I am the lead percussionist for my church.

Q: Do you explore any visual art growing up?

Mike: I really enjoy drawing. I really enjoy sketching. I never got really good at three dimensional. I was more a two dimensional sketcher and I worked with perspectives and

things like this when I was in college. But that was mainly because I was in a mechanical engineering course and computer generated design options. And we were trying to learn how to do projections. In our descriptive geometry class we were being trained how to do architectural type sketching which is where they use perspectives and obliques. I can't remember all that stuff but I still like drawing. I like sketching like he does.

Cathy: I like drawing too and like cutting some. I like crafts. You know, making flowers with candy canes.

Mike: In the Philippines, they are very handy with arts and crafts.

Q: Did you have experience with arts in the elementary schools?

Mike: Definitely, yeah, painting, arts and crafts, various types of drawing classes. I was in involved in that. I really enjoyed it. Even in high school, I took a class where we worked with clay. We made objects with clay. We would fire them and glaze them and fire them and I really had a lot of fun with that. It was really interesting to learn how to do that.

Q: Are there any artists within your family or extended family?

Mike: Well, Margaret, she is good. My sister Margaret who lives over in Decauter Alabama is really good. Especially with the arts and crafts stuff. She is just out of this world. (The father then begins to talk with the kids and say, "Do you remember when you went over there this summer and made all of the arts and crafts stuff." The kids answer and talk about their project and then run to their rooms to get one of the projects they made and show us.) I say that my sister Margaret is probably more fluent than I.

She is really good. In fact she went into hairdressing. That is an art form all its own. She has the gift much more so than I do. I tend to gravitate more towards music. It tends to run in the family.

Q: Were your parents artistic at all (referring to Mike)?

Mike: Not even in the slightest. Well, I can't say that you know. Dad is a mechanical engineer and a civil engineer as well. He got a civil degree after he got out of the aircraft industry. When I was an early teen, we actually built three experimental aircraft in our basement and flew them. Aircraft has been a passion of mine. I spent fifteen years in the aircraft industry. But from an artistic standpoint, I don't know if you can consider that really artistic; it is more mechanical. Neither one of my parents really gravitated towards the arts in any way that I know of.

Q: How might you guys describe the value of art and imagination?

Mike: I consider it to be… When we say art form, when we say art, I consider music, graphic arts, audio visuals, you know animations, I look at the whole gamut and I think it is actually absolutely essential. From a psychological standpoint of view it has importance in developing the neural network that a child uses to go onto other disciplines: math, sciences, whatever. I think that it is foundational. I support it, I think it is foundational.

Q: Do you believe that an artist is a good choice for someone to be?

Mike: Well, physics is definitely not the way to go. I love it. That is an interesting question that you ask. I think that any discipline, you can make it what it is. I know a lot of musicians like myself that are hungry. If I had to make a living on my music… we would be in trouble. But, that is how I look at it. I look at it from a standpoint of view… I am a realist. As much as I enjoy music and the arts, I believe that if you are going to be successful at it you have to start young and be specific. You have to put your energies into it and get good at it. Like for example, Escher, everybody has heard of Escher. That stuff he does is very interesting. I mean he has made a name for himself by doing these, uh, I don't know what you call those types of drawings he does, (I interject, "Tessellations.") It is very interesting and he sold a lot of them and I'm sure he probably made quite a fortune doing that. So, my answer is that as a realist, if you can use it to support yourself and your family, by all means.

Q: Do you think that everyone is able to make art, or only certain type of people can make art?

Mike: Honestly, I think that there are people who are gifted and are born artists, and have that mental capacity to just do it and create art. And some people who have to work at it, and then there are some people who have absolutely no creative ability whatsoever and don't even care to really invest in it. In my forty eight years I have pretty well seen the gamut of that. I know people that, they have absolutely no creativity whatsoever, and there are some people who have worked at it and developed it and then there are people who I have know who is just like, Wow, you did that, that is fantastic. Like my next door

neighbor Jeff. Jeff, he is English and has been living in the states for fifty or sixty years and he likes to paint. He dabbles in it and he is like one of these guys… he has done it for many years and so he has developed it, but he is not a natural. (Mike then tells Mark to run and get one of Jeff's painting off the wall in the other room.) He gave Mark a painting of a boat and it was cool. It was perfect for his room. We hung it up in his room. He (referring to Jeff) is the kind of artist who enjoys it, but he has to work at it. (Mark brings in the painting to the room for all to see) I could never do that. He gave us the picture and we framed it and put it in Mark's room. I can't do that. I can't paint like that. I mean if I worked at it you know and spent X number of years working and painting, I might be able to do that. That is just where my giftings lie. I am more of sketchings and conceptualizations. I feel that there is some that are born, some that are made, and some that don't care.

Q: Can you think of ways that I as Mark's primary art teacher can encourage Mark's artistic interest?

Mike: Hey, I mean you're the professional (jokingly). Yeah, absolutely. What I do is I just determine where he appears to have any interest and then I encourage him in that particular line. Then try to get him to expand that a little bit and diversify a little bit. I mean, obviously I am not an art teacher, but if I were that is probably how I would do it. I would see where they tend to gravitate to and encourage them in that and then offer assistance how they can expand that a little bit and explore other areas where their giftedness could be utilized and expanded upon. For example, whenever Samantha sits

down to do some crafts of some kind, you (referring to his wife) will sit down and say, "Well let's try this" and you will kind of see what she is doing.

Cathy: I tried to give her an idea of how to make the drawing and then I will give her an idea of ways to make it better.

Mike: Whenever they first started coloring or first started scribbling, you say that is good but at the same time we don't try to put them in a box. We let them be artistic. You know in this case you should draw inside the lines but if you want to draw outside of the lines you do it however you want to. They are exploring. I see that as also part of the problem where parents have taken their children and stuffed them in a box. In other words let me use an analogy. You go to school to get an education, so you can go get a job to work for somebody else. We are totally getting away from that. The whole idea behind getting an education is so that you can expand your envelope of creativity and eventually employ yourself. Come up with something for yourself. So that you don't work for somebody else, they work for you.

Q: If there was a family, and they wanted to cultivate the arts and creativity, what is some advice that you would give that family?

Mike: That is pretty simple. The idea is pretty simple but the equation can be sometimes difficult to achieve. The investment of your time; pure and simple. You have to be willing to sacrifice material good and material gain so that you can spend time with them and invest your time into children, and that is the bottom line.

Interview with Maria Martinez's Family

Location: The Martinez's apartment

Family Members present: Maria, her mother Cecelia, the interpreter

Q: What are some of your ideas about how Maria's interest in art came about?

A: Mom says she thinks that more than anything that because Maria really likes art and she also likes art class at school.

Q: About when did she start drawing, painting, etc.?

A: Basically in prekindergarten. She likes to cut, and color, and use lots of color in her art.

Q: Was there a person who might have inspired her to do art?

A: Mom says that her brothers are fairly artistic and intelligent in that sense and mom likes to do crafts and things like that. Mom says that Maria really likes dolls so sometimes when they have a little bit of free time they will paint the faces and make them pretty together. Mom is a little artistic.

Q: When you were a little girl (directed to Cecelia) did you make art and create art on your own?

A: Mom says not so much. In Mexico, the system as far as the art class thing is very different from Mexico versus the United States. However, when Maria brings home her

notebooks and writing things from school sometimes she will draw in them while she does her homework.

Q: When Maria makes artwork, does she bring home to show you?

A: She does. She is very proud of what she has done and to show mom.

Q: She is a very talented and wonderful young lady.

A: Mom says that on Monday she drew a picture of a cheerleader, and she brought it home and the little boy, baby boy, saw it too and he began to like it and want to look at it as well.

Q: Does Maria like to make other artwork here at home; drawings, paintings, or other sculptures?

Maria: "Yesterday I made snowflakes." (She then continues to briefly describe how she made them out of cut paper and learned how to do them at school.)

Q: When Maria makes art at the house, does she make it in a particular place?

A: Mom says usually in her bedroom or in here (referring to the living room in which we were sitting) because sometimes her little brother likes to participate too (referring that he might tear or break what she is working on) and she wants to make sure she will be able to finish her stuff without her brother tearing it up.

Q: When Maria is finished with her artwork, does she like to put it anywhere to display it?

A: She likes to show it to her aunt, her dad, and she puts stuff in the kitchen so that people can see it.

Q: I saw the artwork on the wall. (Referring to a drawing taped on the wall of the living room in which we were sitting) Do you like to put it there so everyone can see it?

Maria: "It is Christmas stuff."

Q: You had mentioned before that Maria's brothers are interested in art. Does everyone in the family like art? Are there artist in the family?

A: Mom is saying that her brothers (the mom's brothers); one of them is into architecture, and even in thinking about their writing, is artistic. But, as far as her husbands family, not many of them have studied a long time, as far as their education, be it informal or formal, so they don't have as much experience with that. So it is more her side of the family.

Q: Within your community here in Smyrna, do you see any art being sold or made in this community?

A: Not much.

Q: As far as American culture verse Mexican culture, is there more art in one of the cultures in your experience?

A: She is thinking about her experiences in the United States. In Mexico, she tended to go to museums and places like that so she was sort of given the opportunity to see more art, but here not so much. She hasn't seen so much.

Q: In Mexico, was art a subject that you had in school?

A: She says, thinking about art class, it was more of like what we have here; fine arts. They would go to music sometimes, art sometimes, poetry or something like that other times. And more than not she remembers attending those classes during high school. Her three years of high school in Mexico.

Q: In your personal opinion, how would you describe the value of art and imagination?

A: Mom says yeah, especially when you think about it is more important that children are creating art and being artistic than getting themselves involved in other things that are harmful.

Q: Do you believe that everyone can make art or only those who are what others might say are "talented"?

A: She says that for everybody, not just those who have demonstrated something artistic.

Q: As a mother, how do you see art as a part of Maria's life?

A: She says that she knows that she likes it now and she thinks that she will continue to grow in terms of being an artist but also she says that she thinks that there is a responsibility that is also due to her role as a mom and the dad's role to continue to

encourage her to pursue creating things in art and things like that. She says that more than anything she says that Maria likes to draw and that is really her strongpoint.

Q: Can you think of any ways that I can encourage Maria, as her art teacher, in pursuing her artwork?

A: Mom says that as far as what teachers can do, I guess really focus on what the kids are good at and what really interests them and inspire them to continue in that area. For example, like Maria, in her drawing since that is her strongpoint, continue to stress drawing with her and push her in drawing.

Q: If parents want to create an interest in art in their children, what advice might you give them to inspire their art?

A: Mom says, for example as she had mentioned with teachers, find out what they are good at and motivate them. The same way for parents. She said, for example, if they like crafts, sit down with them and participate with them. Like drawing, in Maria's case, well, sit down and give them some ideas how to draw something or watch them draw. The parent could be there to motivate and be present. Because if you are not there, you can't motivate. If parents are their to motivate, kids will try harder and try to meet their expectations. However, if they don't do that, well the kids think, my mom and dad aren't interested in what I am doing so why should I be.

Interview with Tim Okezie's teacher, Ms. Brown

Location: Green Acres Elementary School

Q: How would you describe Tim?

A: Tim is one of the brightest students that I have had. Very self directed. Very self motivated. Really inquisitive. He likes to study and learn. He was really interested in animals and in particular science sorts of things. He did research and a presentation. He's really, really inquisitive and self motivated. You really did not have to do a lot to get him to perform. He was really seeking out opportunities.

Q: You said that he was self motivated. Was this something that you found was consistent throughout the year, or did it grow?

A: Well, that whole class that he was in last year was really self directed. And as I became aware that they were able to deal with things on their own, they became a little bit more um… they got a little more freedom and a little more freedom the more they were able to handle it. So by the end of school year last year they were pretty much teaching the class. You know, he would do a biology lesson, or they would be doing their own sort of research.

Q: Tell me about Tim academically?

A: I am sure that he made all E's last year. I am not 100% sure but I would assume that. Good grades, good attendance, good conduct. A good student all around straight across.

Q: As far as socially, how did he relate to others in the classroom?

A: He was definitely a leader. He kind of kept the other guys motivated and took control and did what… the other kinds wanted to be like him. What he did, the other guys would flock to that too. I can remember one time last year, they did a whole… they must have spent two or three weeks on types of cats. They called it their "cat family research." We are researching their cat family. They would go to the library and come back with books on cats. Tons of cats that I hadn't even heard of. They would tell me all of the differences. Tim wanted to try to stump me on facts. He would try to find obscure facts and ask me. He was always irritated if I knew the answer. I thought I knew something you didn't know. He was always trying to get ahead on the knowledge curve.

Q: How about as far the normal grain of the class. Tell me about Tim and his interaction with others. Did he try to follow others? Or was it an issue for him?

A: No, not really. He got along really well with his peers and he was one of those kids that you could always ask to interact with a kid who needed support, you know social support. He was always really good at doing that. He was very social. Happy kid. Really happy. Always had a smile. He gets along really well with his peers.

Q: Describe how Tim made art in your classroom?

A: Well, we did a lot of art last year. More so than we have even done this year. We had a lot of poster contests and as you know, Tim came in and in the Australian one did very well. He was really serious about it. It was not like play time art. It was work. And so he crafted his entries very slowly. He was usually one of the last ones to get

through. Because he put a lot of time and a lot of effort into it. So, he worked on it really hard. He thought about it. He did a lot of mental planning before he got started.

Q: The art that he did in the classroom, was it related usually to assignments that you were doing or if they had free time or an art center?

A: I give a lot of art opportunities in my class so they had a lot of assigned art like the poster contests and things like that. They are also encouraged… part of America's Plan, (school improvement plan), even encourages a picture with some types of writing they were doing. Particularly book reports and types of things. So they would draw that. Again the cat family. That was an obsession so we drew a lot of cats; cheetahs, leopards, and all that. But if they could come up with some way to relate it to an assignment I always let them draw. So, they liked that. They usually thought they were getting away with something but generally for the most part, they wrote well and got their work done. So the illustration thing was extra bonus. I didn't mind. I got the part I needed done.

Q: You talked about some of Tim's work and you talked about the poster contest, can you tell me a little more about the picture that Tim made?

A: Yeah, the one he won was a koala poster contest from Australia. And he drew, I want to say, a koala up in a tree. The entry needed to have a picture and a slogan type thing. I am trying to remember exactly what his little slogan was. I think it had something to do with dingoes, because we were studying dingoes then. And there was a dingo attacking a koala so the koala was up in a tree and said something about, "Save me from the dingoes!" or something like that. One of things I sort of think I know about entering into

poster contests is that color over the whole page. And if they color over the whole page they always get a better response. That was one of things we went for so that is one of the things that he did. It was really colored in well.

Q: Did he respond to your instruction?

A: Oh yeah. I think I did have to remind him that it did need to have a logo and all that. But we also did a fire prevention poster contest. I wasn't responsible for getting these turned in and frankly some of them were so good, I was surprised that we didn't hear something. So, I'm thinking that they might not have made the mail that time. Then we did Kind News poster contest.

Q: Kind News, tell me about that?

A: Kind is Kids In Natures Defense. It is an environmental magazine. The theme, I am trying to remember. I do this every year and every year there is a theme. I can't remember what the theme is but the winner of the contest gets their poster published in the centerfold of the teacher guide to Kind News that comes out the next year. So you will see that artwork around the school. You might not know what it is but it will be a little poster showing kids drawings. They enjoyed doing that. We got a thank you letter back from them, but didn't win much. It was fun. They really enjoyed entering and they didn't seem to mind… they weren't doing it to win. They didn't even remember when we won the Australian poster contest, they were like oh yeah, we forgot you could even win something. They got their little stickers, posters, and bookmarks and things from Australia. Like, they didn't even get upset when they didn't win (referring to the Kind

News contest). He was very gracious about it. He was a little bit modest about it. All the attention; he likes it but he tries to be modest. He tries (jokingly). He knows he should be trying to be modest. His parents are very reserved and polite people. So he has been brought up in a well mannered home, that's for sure.

Q: Did you ever have any interaction with his family as far as his artwork is concerned?
A: I don't think so, other than running into his dad. His dad used to come up to the school every once in a while and telling him, trying to impress on him, that it was an international contest that it was kind of a big deal. So, his dad was pleased. So, his dad is more towards academic than the arts. But, I believe that his dad is a pharmacist, more scientific. So, he has a very logical scientific deal going.

Q: After the kids in your class would do artwork, what would generally happen to the artwork once it was completed?
A: Depends, some of it would go up in the hallway. Some of it would like, I don't know if you can tell over there, there are some cut out fish with writing on it. So sometimes we made an artsy background for our writing, and that would go up in the hallway or be kept for the next year like that did because I thought it was cute. Eventually they would get to take it home. A lot of times they would want to take it home before I was ready to let it go. I like to put it up, you know. And around here, kids put drawing things up all the time.

Q: I could see that when I came into your room, you do have a lot of pictures of student artwork up. What is your perception of child art?

A: I love it. I try to change it out because I get so very much of it. I mean, they give it to me every day. (Tamara pulls out a piece in front of here) This child has been into making these little bookmarks and little books. She knows that I like fish so she has made that for me and it just shows up on my desk. I think that I have told you before that I wish that I taught art. I not as much an artist but am more of an art collector. So I just really like kid art. I took a couple of their pieces home. You know I asked them last year and then took it home.

Q: Is there a particular quality about it that you appreciate?

A: I really like last year… we did these… I don't know if they were done in your class, I think that you might have done it… Animals that had body parts that didn't go with other animals. You know just crazy mixed up kind of animals. I just thought those were great. I really liked those and I think those were the ones I took home. I think I have those. Most of my house is decorated with giraffes and their were a couple with giraffe ones which I thought were really cool. Just different things that I like. It is just interesting to get to know the kid. That student there (pointing to an empty desk where one of her students sits) like to do the same drawing over and over. It is the same… I am not quite sure about the cross on the neck. It is sort of Animeish looking. She is learning to draw from a book about learning to draw. You can tell a lot from what they draw and what they do. I think that you have seen that from out in the hall where they tried to copy

an original painting. I think that it came out really good and they were really excited about it.

Q: What was their reaction when they first saw the paintings was it that I can't do that?

A: No, they think they can do anything you know. They are very confident. I don't have too much of that, "I can't do that" or "I am not good at it" or whatever. I think um, I am not usually the blow sunshine up the skirt teacher. With art I just like to tell them that it doesn't matter, there is no one right way for it to come out. However it is suppose to come out is how it will come out. You thought it was going to be blue there but now it is green, well, it was supposed to be green. So, they sort of get that though.

Q: Do you think that Tim was a creative child?

A: Oh, very.

Q: In what ways did he exhibit that?

A: Well, he was the first student in second grade that I have ever had that just walked up to me one day and said, "Can I teach a lesson to the class." Well, I suppose you could. He planned it and planned a lesson plan. He literally had note cards and research and, "Tim you ready", "No, got some more research to do." He worked on it for about two weeks before he did it. He was very good about speaking to his peers and answering questions. They asked him questions like kids ask you know. And he was prepared for all of them. He did really well with all of that. You know, of course, all of his drawings were real creative. He did a lot of interesting things with the computer. He liked to get

on there and pull off pictures. It seems like he was one of my Komodo dragon people. He pulled off a komodo dragon and then colored it and then drew it and talked about it and that was right before we had those tidal waves and the tsunami out in that area. So he was like well we have got to find out if the komodo dragons are okay during the tsunami. And apparently they were. They were far enough away so that nothing happened to them. So, we felt much better.

Q: What kinds of creative attributes did Tim show in his work, problem solving, attitude, the way he approached things?

A: He is a planner. He plans things out real well. He is not a spontaneous spur of the moment type of kid. He has got a plan, and he sticks to it, and he is really good at recruiting others to buy into his plan and help him with his plan. He does a lot of planning. He is just that one kid that is doing everything that you would hope a kid would do in school. Like being really interested and being really creative and trying new things and reading different kinds of books and hanging out with different kinds of kids. He wasn't like cliquish or exclusive. Like sometimes the higher level kids will get together and not want to hang around the lower level kids. Sam was hanging around everybody all the time. So, he was really popular, still is.

Q: It seems that you have a particular philosophy in the way that you approach the environment of a classroom. Tell me how you approach the structure of your classroom?

A: I am kind of a unique teacher in a lot of ways in that my parents are not always particularly happy about it. Like, the types of things we do in here. Like we have a lot of

logic puzzles which is what we are doing now. And that is kind of like the little homework I give them. I don't know if you know the new Japanese craze, the Sidoku? It is in all the newspapers now and is the next big thing. It is just a little math logic game that you do. And on some of the surveys that I got back, some parents said that they don't think that my homework connected with their learning in class. I send home… I have them read for twenty minutes and if I send home anything it is a logic game. It is something to stimulate them. You know, a trivia question like we have been working on a riddle. We had been working on a riddle for a day and a half and they went home and worked on that with their parents. To me, that is just a way to get their brains working in a little bit different way than here is some more of the math subtraction problems that we did today. Go home and do fifty of those. Tomorrow come back and we will do fifty more. They are going to get that from every other teacher in the school. They will get that in first grade and they will get that in third grade and they will get that in fifth grade. So for me, I try to do a little more important stuff. Like the other day, we got the paint out the other day and painted that big long caterpillar that is out in the hall for the book of the month thing. Technically we don't have time to do that. I think it is kind of cute when the administrator compliments me on something like that because I am thinking clearly you don't understand that if I was following the rules clearly we wouldn't have time to do something like that. You know I have to find ways to work it in. A lot of it we do for indoor recess. But, we like to do art, I like to do art. Every once in a while you have to get out the glitter and let them mess up the room a little bit.

Q: How do you feel that these activities that you are trying to do relate to the creative aspects and nurturing that part of the child?

A: That is what I am trying to do. You know, they are seven, eight years old. They still think they can do everything. I was reading some motivational books over the holidays that if you went into an adult group and ask everyone to raise their hands if they are a good painter, very few people would raise their hands. And some people would be nudging others and say, "You're a good painter, raise your hand." And they would say, "No, no, I don't want to raise my hand." And if you went into a second grade classroom and said, "Raise your hand if you are a good painter." Every hand would fly up. It is like what happens to that. You know, what happens to that. The ability to create and the desire to create. Where does that go? So, it is important to nurture that when it is still around. Maybe you can make it stick around longer.

Q: If you were going to give some advice to a new teacher about creativity, and art in the classroom, and how they could incorporate it, what advice would you give them?

A: Don't get caught. I incorporate art and music in my classroom a good bit. Lately in the afternoons before the buses go, I try to have in my schedule that I have some silent reflection. Sometimes we do a little logic puzzle. Sometimes during silent reflection we would draw. During silent reflection we listen to classical music and we are supposed to be thinking about what we learned about that day. Like reflect in your head like what did you learn today. Did you learn a new word? Come up with something that you can tell your parents when they ask you what did you learn today. Sometimes during reflection we just draw. Draw what you hear or just draw.

Interview with Mark Simmons's teacher, Ms. Travis

Location: Green Acres Elementary School

Q: How would you describe Mark?

A: He seems to be a well rounded good personality, kind of easy going little guy. Very eager to please. Very bright as far as academics. Just a well rounded little guy. Always wanting to exceed so I suppose there is that competition edge. Competitive is the word I am thinking of.

Q: Did you find these qualities that you have described, were they consistent throughout the year? Did they grow or change?

A: They let up towards the end of the year, but that is normal as far as the kids and his talking. And I was glad to see that he was socializing a little bit more. Initially, dad was wanting to push, push, push, and for the first conference I got dad to not push so hard. It's not necessary…this is only second grade. Mark doesn't need to be spending all his time doing academics. So…Dad did and Mark soared.

Q: Was he experiencing pressure in the classroom academically?

A: Definitely, he was wanting to bring in books and initially at that first conference dad had told me I want to be as supportive as I can but I don't want you to be doing anything in class that would be altering anything academically that I would be doing at home. And I don't want anything at home to be academically affecting anything in class. I want us to work together. And I thought wow, you are pushing him. You know. But he is a very

easy going young man and I think after mid-year last year, he kind of loosened a little bit and had a little bit more fun. He seemed more at ease.

Q: Academically did he do well in the beginning or was there anxiety and pressure about grades, or was he just kind of consistent he just did fairly good most of the year?
A: Truthfully, I think he did very well at the beginning of the year. And as pressure of the school year passed, developmentally, I'm not sure I haven't really analyzed it, but he did even better at the end.

Q: How socially did Mark relate to the other students within the classroom setting?
A: Initially he would talk to the other students and get along but there weren't any cliques in here last year. I had a couple of guys that were a little cliquish but I did not want them to have cliques or anything like that so I was against that. But he socialized with the other students but he was more focused on gotta do well, gotta please, you know, and I wanted him to socialize a little more because in second grade they should be socializing a little bit. Not so much that it interferes academically, but they need to be well rounded.

Q: Would you say in the social aspect, would you say was Mark an initiator or a follower? As far as how he approached things?
A: He wasn't shy by no means. He would initiate friendships and what not, but at the beginning he was truly focused on academics. That was…that was it. I mean its like honey, I mean he like wanted to start to bring in books that his dad wanted him to do when it was down time here. And I said no, put them away. But if I were to label him as a

leader or a follower, I would have to say there were certain aspects where he was a follower.

Q: Have you ever witnessed Mark making art in the classroom in a center or as part of a project?

A: I consider him to be very creative. He liked to draw. And as far as the blocks and things like that…yeah, he was very creative. And it was always, “Ms. Travis, come here you have gotta see…”

Q: So pretty frequently?

A: Always, I was always getting pictures from him. Students love to give their teachers pictures. But he was continually drawing pictures, making little books. There were many times during writers workshops where he really wanted to make chapter books with his writing. But as far as the blocks and other things, yes, I considered him to be creative.

Q: You said that when he would make drawings he would he give them to you, was that a normal thing that he wanted to give or display them?

A: He’s a giver. He definitely liked to give and there were times when I would say no, take it home to mom or dad, take it home. And all kids, particularly Mark, loved to have things displayed out there. When I mentioned that they were going to be displayed for other students, and everyone to basically view, he put forth an extra effort. But I think that is in his nature.

Q: Was Mark similar in respects to enjoying having his work displayed outside or more so than other students?

A: I would have to say that you could see the motivation as soon as I would say that it was going on the exterior wall, that yeah, there was extra motivation right there. Where as with other students it was like “yeah, yeah, I know you want me to do a sloppy copy, and then a final copy.” It wasn’t the case with Mark. I mean, you could see the effort in his writing and in his drawings.

Q: When he was drawing was it mainly pencil or did he enjoy incorporating other media, markers, or did he make crafty type things?

A: We did do some crafty things. But yeah, he did enjoy using markers, colored pencils, and crayons. And I tried to get them to at least draw in pencil first that way they could make erasures and come back and everything, but yeah, he enjoyed it all.

Q: Do you think that Mark was a creative child? In what ways do you think he is creative?

A: I think he was creative in the ways he viewed things. I would give an assignment and he would ask for clarification on some occasions and then he would just put his own slant on it so to speak. So I considered that to be very creative. It wasn’t what I wanted, let me just clarify that, I would tell them what I wanted and I would leave it open ended. And he was very creative where as some children would say, “But you want us to do what?” Think about it for a minute and then do what you want with it. You know, I didn’t want them to say you gotta do this, this, this as far as drawing- I left it up to their discretion

and creativity. I didn't want to outline everything for them. You know they are individuals. These students are individuals and I didn't want to interfere with that, or you know, make as little impact I suppose on their creativity as I possibly could.

Q: What type of creative attributes did Mark show in his work or his problem solving, like how you said he would take the idea and expand it. Can you think of any other ways like in his work habits?

A: I just… he had higher level thinking truly. When they can catch my sense of humor, just little comments, and they would look at me and smile, its definitely higher level thinking and that was…, he brought that to everything he did-academics, be it creating whatever in here, he just brought it with him. That's part of him.

Q: Do you have any last characterizations of Mark to add.

A: He's a very well rounded, very secure, very stable, very confident, in his own self. He is happy with who he is, but he is a very bright young man, he truly is. If I had to label him I would have to say he is a very bright, creative, outgoing, young man. And that it just shines through in whatever he does. And I don't think that will ever change. I hope that it never changes. I mean he is a great little guy…he comes in every morning for a hug.

Q: What do you think about the role of art, imagination, and creativity in your classroom, in a general education classroom?

A: I think art and creativity go hand and hand. It's a must. Unfortunately sometimes with our curriculum and everything we are required to cover, a lot of teachers are not as creative, and I am speaking that because I know several teachers around me, they are not as creative as they would like to be. We have a certain time frame that we are required to do everything, but art and creativity go hand and hand and they have to go hand and hand in my mind, otherwise the students, the kids, are losing out. Plain and simple. You know if you don't do artsy/craftsy, things in the classroom, or at least give them a chance to, you know, the fun is gone.

Q: Did you have any experiences growing up that influenced you in your own schooling, or in your teacher preparation?

A: A lot of it in teacher preparation, but I have strong memories of elementary school, of which the smell of that paste glue (ha…ha…) during arts and crafts. You know it came in this container with that stick. You know they didn't have the glue they have nowadays. But, yeah, my teachers in elementary, from what I can remember, were very into the arts and crafts. You know, and as far as the teacher program, yeah, they were very big into it. Yeah, it's a must. You know, to keep the children interested, and they have to be children. That was just stated as matter of factly.

Q: Do you find that being an interesting interplay now being in you talked about the rigidity of the program that our school is under.

A: Yeah, you have to find a balance of what makes you happy and what makes the children happy. That's the only way you can maintain sanity. Truly, I mean you know.

And I told the kids this week we worked hard up to this point…We're playing, you know. We'll do a little reading and a little writing, but we're playing these next few days. You know I have put it off and I've been good, but they have to have it. You know, so they are making ornaments and things like that. But as far as our schedule, there has to be a balance. I mean you have to get it in where you feel comfortable. What keeps the teacher happy, and what keeps the students happy. There has to be a balance. You have to have it.

Interview with Maria Martinez's teacher, Ms. Morgan

Location: Green Acres Elementary School

Q: How would you describe Maria?

A: I would say that things come easily for her and she is very detail oriented, somewhat of a perfectionist. But the main thing I noticed about her is that she is a leader. She is not afraid to go outside of the box. And the other kids a lot of times copy what she does. So I always thought that was kind of neat that she was sort of her own person and wasn't afraid to do things a little bit different.

Q: Did you find that it was consistent throughout the year?

A: Actually it built, I think at the beginning when they are all meeting all new friends, and they are adjusting to, she wasn't in the family so this was a new class for her where the other kids were, came up from first. So she went through that adjustment period. And then once she got comfortable with everyone and herself, she, you know, and I guess with maturity too, she just experimented more and more as she went on. I think she realized that other kids were mimicking what she was doing. You know it didn't bother her at all.

Q: Can you think of anything particular that sticks out in your mind?

A: Like she would pick certain topics to write stories on and then everyone at her table would be writing a similar story, similar to hers. You know we have sharing times, and they would hear it, and they would write a story similar, or she would use students names in her stories and then the other kids would start to do that. Which that might be partly a

developmental thing that they learn. They experiment with that in second grade. When they would have free time, and they would have free centers, she would get kind of creative with the manipulatives and stuff and yeah…just get the other kids involved. But she was never bossy. She was never trying to be like a show it all. She just used her creativeness I guess.

Q: Is there a prompt in the creation of the stories, and then the child takes that prompt and elaborates on it?

A: Oh, yeah, not during narrative they can write anything they want. No, I really don't give prompts. The only prompts they have are the three that are required at the beginning, middle, and end of the year by the administration. Other than that I don't like to give prompts because it limits their creativity. So, that is always her own doing.

Q: Have you personally had experience with creative things and do you utilize that in your classroom?

A: Yeah, I prefer a much more creative, hands on, self teach type of… but, America's Plan, (school improvement plan), really limits that. I can incorporate a little bit, but I like to watch them discover things for themselves. I prefer not to give them answers to things. But sometimes it is tough. With the diversity at this school, sometimes there are kids that I have to teach… and that is where she (Maria) got more of a chance to be creative because she was in the high group. She actually sat here with three other people that were at her level and they could come up with things on their own.

Q: You were talking about the narrative as a format that was open, was there another format that was not as open? How did Maria react to that?

A: She did well. That was just one of the standards. Another one was poetry. She got into poetry. Report writing, she really got! She did this report on money. She really got into it; very detailed. She cut out and printed pictures off the internet of money. It looked really nice when she was done. Then they do informational writing where they have to write steps on how to do something. Her's was pretty basic. You know how to make an ice cream cone or something. It was just like all the other kids. Narrative and report writing for her was where she showed the most I guess her creative writing skills. It came out more.

Q: Did you ever see her get frustrated with any type of activity?

A: No, she is such an even keeled, she would, just like spelling tests, she wanted to get every single one right every week. And if she didn't, she just wanted to know what she missed. She wanted to see it to sort of confirm with herself that she really did get it wrong. So, but I guess that is her perfectionist side. But not rally frustrated at all.

Q: How would you describe her, is she a good student academically?

A: Oh yeah, she is in ALP and yeah, and behavior, performed well on her report card, and participation, and in all of that. She always got E's, excellence.

Q: You talked about how other kids would copy her. Tell me about her socially. Tell me how she would relate to others in the classroom?

A: That group of girls was sort of tight knit, so they would do the typical she's not playing with me, they would partner up, and she did caught up in that. She was not an exception. She would play right along with that, so in that respects she was just like all the other girls. She would partner up with someone and they would I guess not treat them as nicely and it would come back to get her. I had the whole year like that. It was just a bad thing going on. But she was right in there with them so…

Q: Would you say that she was motivated to be a part of a group? Was that something she was into? Was that important to her?

A: Oh yeah, definitely. There were maybe five of them that were like a core group…oh yeah, it was very important that she was part of that. If she was the one that was left out she was right up to me immediately…"so-in-so is not…" you know, or said this, and sometimes I wondered if she started things. She's not innocent, so yeah.

Q: Was there a leader of the group?

A: There really wasn't a main leader yeah, that may have been part of the problem, (ha…ha) they all wanted to be in charge. So, yeah. And they still are together!

Q: Tell me how Maria made artwork in your classroom.

A: How she did art work? We incorporated it as much as possible like, stuff like those things that hang, I don't know if that is really considered art work, but we did Australia and they would have to decorate it with a kangaroo. During free center time she almost always chose to go to the drawing table and would use markers and paper.

Q: Tell me about your drawing table? What does it entail?

A: There is markers and paper and then a lot of times they get construction paper out and scissors, and they just can make whatever they want. I mean its just twenty minutes of just relax, have fun, free time. And so I never knew what they were going to get out of it. A lot of times they would make cards or pictures for people…I just never knew what any of them were going to do. They would get on these kicks where they would do the same thing over and over, whatever that "S" thing is, yeah and then they would move on to drawing brat dolls, ha…ha… so she didn't do anything that was above and beyond what anyone else was doing during that time, but when we did things as a class like I said she was very particular about everything that she did, everything that she did just looked neat. And her handwriting and everything. So, yeah.

Q: So when kids create work at the art center, what would they usually do with the work?

A: Give it to a teacher, a lost of time they would give it to teachers. Or she took it home, she made a lot of stuff for her parents, her brother. She would make pictures for him. Yeah, it went somewhere. No, I don't always know who she gave it too.

Q: So I see that sometimes when you make art work you put it up on the walls? Is that something you do?

A: Yeah I try too. I am probably not as good as some of the classrooms where you walk in and there is just stuff everywhere, but yeah, I mean I like for them to look at what

everyone is doing. And even their book of the month responses I mean its something they can look at and see.

Q: Can you think of anything in particular that Maria made in your classroom?

A: I can't think of anything.

Q: Do you think that Maria was a creative child?

A: Yeah, I do.

Q: In what ways?

A: I think it had a lot to do with the fact that she dared to try things. Kids get stuck in drawing the same thing over and over and they add a little of this and a little of that. But, she just did things a little differently sometimes. I remember that she brought a paper… they made, in learning clubs place mats, and she brought it to me. And she had some things sticking out of it that she had created. Maybe she had saw someone else do it. It wasn't my learning clubs but she was proud of that and she brought it and I had it hanging last year. But, I guess just the fact that she is mature to not worry about what the other kids think. So that leads into her experimenting a little bit.

Q: Is there anything else you wanted to add about her as a person or creative individual?

A: I think that she is always wanting to please. Even her parents. Her mother would come in for conferences and spoke some English, Maria would help me translate. Her mom always wanted to know what everything meant. So I could see where Maria got

that some of her personality from her mother wanting everything to be just so. She was just a good student.

Q: I have always noticed as I have walked down the hall that your displays outside your room are artistic. Tell me about the creation of those?

A: I don't know. Well, I guess that I have a little creative side to me. Sometimes I get stuck in that stuff and I just… I mean I would love to have the kids do that stuff all the time but sometimes I get nervous when I giving them all this fun and then Donald (the principal) walks in. And if he isn't that type of teacher, he may think it is a lot of playing going on where my thinking is that by doing you learn so much more. So, I do what I can.

Q: Did you have experiences like that growing up in school or in your teacher preparation?

A: We had to do a lot of projects at Georgia State. I just remember that in my elementary, I couldn't wait for the art teacher to come in. It was just… she probably came only once a week. I don't remember how often we went, but I just like that stuff so I think that it just carries over into my teaching. Like last year we made communities and I just picked up large butcher paper and they had milk cartons or whatever they could find in the room. They worked on it for a couple of weeks and they could tell me everything about a community. They could list everything just from doing that and that was a lot of fun. I try to think of things like that to do.

Q: What do you think Donald would have said if he came in while you were working on that project?

A: Well, I think he did actually. He gets excited about it but then that whole America's Plan; shouldn't you be doing this or shouldn't you be doing that. Well, we have already done that. I mean we do do that. But I don't know what he thinks and that is probably just me worrying a little more than I should. You know, I don't know what he is thinking; because it is loud in here, but that is okay with me because they are working and they are excited about what they are doing.

Q: Okay, pretend the restraints are off; America's Plan is off, what does your classroom look like in regards to some of the things that we are talking about?

A: I think that we would do a lot. You know it has been so long since I have had that freedom (jokingly). Well, with writing, we have the ten minute mini lesson and the forty minutes of writing, there are different ways that you can make posters and do research and have your writing on these posters and not have to worry about what standard is that. You are learning through different ways. I guess I would do more projects and more cooperative learning. It is hard though when you have to conference individually all the time. Everything is individual, individual. I like more of the collaborative groups. That is what I would do if I was not so restricted to conferencing individually. But, it is what it is.

Appendix E
Analysis Table of Student Interview Questions:

Main Ideas	Interview Questions	Sub question	Tim	Mark	Maria
Attributes of student/ artistic activity	1) How did your interest in art come about?	When did your interest in art begin? Did someone or something inspire him or her? Do you bring artwork created at school to show your parents?	-father, mother and sisters influenced him, primarily father -started at 2 years old with "scribbles" -father taught him how "to hold a pencil" and "how to draw" -Tim does bring work home, in specific example, Tim said how father related students work to work he had previously done and he liked the Tim's work	-Mark influenced by scary movies and creating drawings from these ideas -started at 7 -started making art by coloring on paper and using drawing books -Mark does bring artwork home to show parents -Mark draws scary stuff like monsters and nice stuff like his sister or mother	-started liking art at 6 years old, cousin showed her how to draw and inspired interest -mom and dad and other cousin also inspired her -Maria does bring artwork home to show parents
The home environment for artistic activity	2) Do you like to create artwork at home?	What kind of artwork do you make? Where do you create art? Where do you get your ideas from? What do you do with your artwork once you are finished with it? What do you think your parents and family feel about your artwork? Does anyone like to participate in making artwork with you?	-parents encourage Tim -Tim gets ideas from T.V. and movies and then is inspired and makes art related to these things -Tim related that his artwork is "hung for a while" once completed or placed in his art notebook -Tim relates feeling proud when parents praised work but Tim does not draw things that he's "not allowed" to draw, Tim is given freedom to create whatever he wants in accordance with appropriate subject matter	-Mark brings work home that is either "hung on a wall for people to see" or placed in specified art drawer -Mark does make artwork at home -Mark makes artwork in bedroom and around the house -Mark relates giving art to parents and it making them feel good -Mark relates having artwork beginning from kindergarten -Mark relates parents putting artwork near their desks, telling Mark "good job" on creating artwork	-parents value art and try to keep it safe out of the reach of younger siblings -Maria likes to create art at home and does it when she is bored -Maria creates art at art station she got for Christmas with multi media supplies -Maria works on projects sometimes for several days, taking breaks for homework and other distractions -Maria makes art at the kitchen table or in her room -Maria gets ideas for art from mother and other cousins and family members -Maria might hang up work when

			-Tim makes multimedia artworks -Tim relates making art all over the house -Tim seeks inspiration from father as well as his own ideas -Tim relates that sometimes dad and sister will participate in making art with him	and asking Mark to create more -Mark relates making artwork with his sister sometimes but not with his parents -Mark has free access to art materials which he shares with his sister	finished above the T.V or in the kitchen, but usually in the walls in her bedroom -Maria relates that parents are happy when she gives them art and they call her "good names" about her art, this makes her feel happy
	3) What kind of art materials do you use when making art at home?	What are your favorite art materials to work with? Do you have free access to the materials or do you have to ask for them?	-pencil -paint -crayon -marker -craft sticks -stickers -Tim has free access to materials located in his room	-pencils -drawing books -crayons -markers -Mark has free access to art materials which he shares with his sister	-pencils -paper -crayons -paint -clay -pens -Maria has free access to art materials and will ask for more for Christmas or can ask father to get more supplies at the store
Cultural Influences	4) Are there any artists in your family? If yes, who are they and tell me about their art?	Do you have any friends who are artists? Do you know anyone in the community who is an artist? What kinds of art do they make?	-Tim relates being influenced artistically by father and "watching him when he drew" -Tim relates being encouraged and influenced by mom and sisters, sisters in particular in watching them create art and cartoon characters -Tim's cousin makes art and watches Tim make art, Tim talks about his cousin being influenced by him making art; continuing a cycle of artistic influence -Tim relates having lots of friends that draw -Tim relates	-Mark relates making art with sister -Mark says his entire family are artists -Mark relates that each family member makes different types of art and that he and his dad are working on a joint model car project -Mark relates that he has a friend who is an artist -Mark relates that the artists in his community are his art teacher at school and his family	-Maria influenced by cousin who inspired her to draw, or even mom who gives her ideas of things to draw -mom participates in making art with Maria and Maria sometimes helps her brother make art -Maria considers her aunt and cousins to be artists and has several friends she considers to be artists whom she makes art with

			knowing one friend of his father who is an artist who makes lots of money for his art, artist is sculpture based		
The value of art	5) Do you feel that art and imagination are important?	Do you believe an artist is a good choice for a job? Why or why not? Do you think that everyone is able to make art or that only certain people are able to make artwork?	-imagination is important for excitement of ideas to create and creating many ideas -artist is a good job -Tim thinks everyone can draw but not everyone wants to; Tim says a possible cure for this apathy is encouragement -Tim says some people feel they can't make art because they feel they "drawed ugly", Tim relates feeling that way before but his dad encouraged him	-Mark relates a personal involvement in taking art home and showing it to his parents as well as seeking out to hang his work up -Mark relates a sense that the colors of markers make him "feel good for some reason" -art and imagination are important in sharing ideas -art is a good job because you can make good pictures and give them to people and make a lot of money -Mark seemingly relates idea that some people are just artists but that others can look at books and practice and then "become" good artists	-parents value Maria's art and encourage her to keep it safe and nice -Maria says that art and imagination are important because it is fun and you get to make stuff you have never made before and making stuff makes memories that you can remember when you get bigger -she thinks art is a good choice for a job because you can make money because people like your art and will buy it because it is colorful and wonderful and you will feel happy that people like your art -she thinks that everyone could be a great artist if you try and if you are a great artist, you should show others how to make art
Further artistic endeavors	6) Can you think of any ways that I might encourage your artistic interest?	What kind of art activities do you think are important for art students to do?	-Tim seems to indicate idea of enjoying art at school and not knowing how to draw everything but seemingly willing to learn -Tim thinks design oriented activities are important, not just drawing because posters on the wall are famous and they are different types of art	-teacher can get pumped up and make "weird stuff" and then student can make "weird stuff" -art activities that are important?-practice every day, and then get someone to draw with	-to have fun because the most important thing about art is having fun and be happy that you made art because everybody would like your art

Analysis Table of Parental Interview Questions:

Main Ideas	Interview Questions	Sub question	Tim	Mark	Maria
Attributes of student/ artistic activity	1) What are some of your ideas about how (Student's name) interest in art came about?	When did his interest in art begin? Did someone or something inspire him? Does he bring artwork created at school to show you?	- interest began with school and interaction with sisters -began with scribbling, once he started school, he stopped and changed artistic styles -first notebook was in Kindergarten - started out drawing cartoon characters	-Inspired by video gaming and sketching characters -Started when he was four -Child does bring artwork home for parents -Parents open minded and encouraging of child's early interests	- she likes art and likes taking art at school -interest started in Pre-K -child brings art home and show mom, dad and aunt her work -parents comment they are proud of her work
The home environment for artistic activity	2) Do you know if (student's name) likes to create artwork here at home?	What kind of artwork does he make? Where does he create art? What does he do with his artwork once he is finished with it? Does anyone like to participate in making artwork with him?	-father began teaching oldest daughter to draw -it is about "interaction" and "looking at what other people have done" -child has a notebook that he uses at home to practice drawing -father- the interest of a child is built up by showing interest in "what they are doing" -child makes art, anywhere and everywhere around the house -family does not necessarily display child's work -father is proud of children's art - child copies superheroes to create own characters	-child currently brings artwork home to show family -family displays child's artwork -child creates monsters and Sci-Fi drawings -student creates art all over house but does have an area designated for artistic creations -child shows parents artwork when completed - child likes to create alone but sometimes parents participate -Parents hang original artwork in the child's room -parents encourage child's ideas and encourage them to expand them as well -investment of time is the most important aspect of encouraging the	-child makes dolls and mother works on them with the child -child draws in notebooks at home during homework time -child works in designated area in bedroom so younger brother won't tear artwork up -child displays work in the kitchen so that "everyone can see it" -to motivate parents, "find out what child is good at", sit down with child while they make art and give suggestions, be present so you can motivate child, if you are not present "child may think that you do not care" -child shows work to mom, family, and extended family(aunt)

			-child gains inspiration for ideas from T.V. -father- how to encourage a child- find out what they are doing and encourage them in it	child	
	3) What kind of art materials does (student's name) like to use here at home?	What are his favorite art materials to use?	-crayon -painting -watercolor -pencils -paint only in the studio	- paint -clay -computers - coke and orange juice bottles -markers -crayons, pencils	-cut and color -cut paper -drawing, pencil
Cultural Influences	4) Are there any artists in your family? If yes, who are they and tell me about their art?	Do you have any friends who are artists? Do you know anyone in the community who is an artist? What kinds of art do they make? What kinds of art experiences have you had in the arts? Did you take art in school, or create art on your own?	-father is a scientist and pharmacist from Nigeria -he took art as a hobby -father likes artwork and has some collections of art -father teaches children how to draw - father took art in elementary school in Nigeria -older sisters paint -father influenced by natural aesthetic of landscape in Nigeria, reminds him or inspired him to make art -father says other people in his family made art as children but he is the only one who has continued to make art -father could name a specific artisan who made art from his church, as well as the medium this artist used -father had a	-parents aware of art in the environment (doctor displaying child's artwork at his office) -father sees many areas of art forms; computer animation, fine arts, crafts, hairdressing, etc. - father is designing a go cart with son - father is a musician and mother makes crafts - mother makes crafts and crafts big in home country of the Philippines -father has had experience in the fine arts in school and college -child's aunt is into arts and crafts and has influenced the child -father's parents not artistic - neighbor is an artist and has given work to the child	-mom considers herself artistic -brothers are artistic -mom did not make a lot of art when she was young -Maria's baby brother taken interest in her art -mom has a brother into architecture and another into writing -mother's side of family is more educated,, more schooling, more opportunities for artistic experiences, father's side of the family, less educated, less experiences for art -does not see a lot of art shown or sold in the community -mother took art, or fine arts classes like music and poetry in high school

			collection of art at the house out displayed and Tim could remember the art being a part of his household experience -father relates that artists are held in high esteem in Nigeria and that higher educational programs fielded programs in the arts -older sisters play instruments		
The value of art	5) How might you describe the value of art and imagination?	Do you believe an artist is a good choice for a job? Why or why not? Do you think that everyone is able to make art or that only certain people are able to make artwork?	- art and imagination are important for having a balance in life -important for children to have a good time in life but be sure to be able to make money and support oneself to. -father says that art makes life better -creating allows your mind to escape from "troubles", or reality -father's answer is that abilities in art are related to interest and nurturing that interest	-father creates "environments that are conducive to learning" -music is a "neural stimulator" -father sensitive to various types of art - father sees the arts and creativity as arena to enrich brain development which affects other disciplines -father sees art as an important job, but he is "a realist" in that it is difficult to support a family on artist pay from his personal experience -father sees artists that "are born", ones that "are made" and can grow in their abilities, and "ones that don't care"	-art and creativity are important and a diversion from being involved in harmful things that kids might get involved in -mom says that everybody can make art, not just those that we classify as artistic -mom thinks Maria will continue in the arts because of her interest but also acknowledge the parents responsibility in nurturing that interest
Further artistic endeavors	6) Can you think of any ways that I might encourage (student's name) artistic interest?	What kind of art activities do you think are important for (students name) to do?	-Something that fires the imagination, give him something he can work on and practice		- Maria likes art and art class at school, seemingly because of an intrinsic motivation - teachers, focus on what kids are good at and encourage them and inspire them in that area

Analysis Table of Previous Year Teacher Interview Questions:

Main Ideas	Interview Questions	Sub question	Tim	Mark	Maria
Attributes of student/ artistic activity	1) How would you describe (student's name)?	Is she (he) a good student academically? Socially, how did they relate to others in the classroom?	-"self directed, self motivated, inquisitive", "seeks out opportunities" -entire previous year class self motivated -good student and good conduct -socially, a leader and motivated others, got along well with others and supported other students -teacher comments that parents are well mannered and respectful reflective of the home environment	-"well rounded, easy going, eager to please", "wanting to exceed, competitive", "confident in himself, outgoing" -dad a driving force in Mark's education, teacher concerned dad was pushing too much in beginning of year but they worked it out and Mark seemed to excel even more then -student did well academically -Mark did socialize with others, teacher feels this is important for a well rounded student -student wasn't shy but teacher would characterize certain aspects of Mark as a follower rather than leader	-"things come easily for her, detail oriented, perfectionist", "she is not afraid to go outside the box", she is "her own person" and not afraid to do things differently -other students would mimic or copy what Maria was doing and she might at times incorporate other students in what she was doing -she was even keeled and not easily frustrated -she was a good student -affected by group dynamics, wanting to be part of a group -teacher relates that the mother was inquisitive and detail oriented like Maria
The classroom environment for artistic activity	2) Describe how (student's name) made art in your classroom?	Can you think of specific examples of artwork made in your classroom?	-did lots of art in the classroom, poster contests, Tim created a poster and won the contest, Tim serious about his work for the contest, it wasn't play time -teacher provided opportunities for drawing to be an option to relate ideas about an assignment, teacher relates that students liked this opportunity, teacher felt that	-Mark liked to draw and build with blocks and was eager to show his teacher his creations -teacher considered Mark to be creative -Mark loved to have his art work displayed outside and the teacher relates that this seemed to be a motivating factor for him at times -Mark put effort in his work, didn't make it sloppy but	-students made art as part of projects and had an art center as part of center time, which Maria chose most of the time -at art table there are markers, paper, construction paper, scissors, and glue to create art with, students are allowed to make whatever they want, -Maria was similar to other students in free art time at centers but took class work art projects very serious and took time and

			she was fulfilling her obligations as far as the teacher and having students complete more academic aspects of project and now students could express themselves in art related to topic -in relation to poster contests, creating the artwork became more important than winning, students forgot it was a contest but were focused on the creation of the art	took great pride in it, he didn't see it as frivolous but was serious about his artistic creations -Mark made artwork in the class with crayons, pencils, markers, and colored pencils	energy and effort into making a project look nice and neat -the teacher relates that Maria would give the art she made in the class to the teachers but most of the time she took it home for her family or her brother -displaying the students artwork is something that the teacher wants to do and tries to do in and outside of her classroom
The value of art and creativity	3) Do you think that (student's name) was a creative child?	In what ways? What kind of creative attributes did (student's name) show in their work, problem solving, attitudes?	-teacher gave students more freedom academically (incorporating art or being self directed) as they showed they could handle it -teacher displays student work in and around the classroom -teacher enjoys child art and has taken some of it home to display in her own home -teacher had aspirations to be an art teacher -teacher enjoys child art and a viewer or teacher can learn about a child by viewing their art work -teacher feels her students are confident in art, she feels it is important to talk with kids about their art and to allow them freedom of expression, there is no one right	-teacher considered Mark to be creative in "the way he viewed things" -Mark was interested in clarification of teachers ideas and then elaborating on them and "putting his own slant" on the assignment -teacher concerned with open-endedness of questions and project ideas, didn't want to infringe on the child's creative expressions, saw students as individuals with personalized modes of expression -teacher viewed Mark as utilizing higher level thinking skills, teacher gives example of Mark understanding and appreciating her sense of humor -teacher thinks that art and imagination go hand in hand in the	-teacher is aware of her assignments and seeks to not limit students creative expressions -teacher prefers hand on creative teaching approaches but feels limited by constraints of school improvement program -teacher thinks that Maria is a creative child and has the confidence to try new things which aids in her creativity -teacher thinks that she has a creative side -teacher thinks that learning by doing in relation to creativity aids in deeper learning -teacher concerned that administration might see creative activity as play rather than learning -teacher felt that her art experiences as a child had an effect on her and effect her teaching- she relates to a project that her students did where

			way to make art -teacher thinks Sam is creative -creative qualities of Tim as related by the teacher: a planner, incorporation of others in the project idea, interested and attentive, willing to try new things, open to different ideas and different types of people, tolerant -teacher feels she is unique in her teaching approach, concerned about brain stimulation, and getting kids to think rather than rote practice, -teacher feels school improvement plan is limiting to creative activities -teacher conscious of and concerned about nurturing creativity in children	classroom and equates it with fun in the classroom -teacher feels constrained by the school improvement plan in regards to incorporating creative things -teacher felt that creative aspects were stressed in her teacher preparation program and that it was important to keep children interested in the subject matter	she felt deep learning had occurred -teacher is tolerant of the creative environment (loud noise level and lots of activity) -teacher says in an environment free of the restraints of the school improvement plan she would do more group projects and cooperative learning,
Further artistic endeavors					