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Qualitative Action Research on the Benefits of Adding Humor and Aspects of Play in an Elementary Art Education Classroom with Sixth Graders

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Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Education

A Master's Project in Art Education

Qualitative Action Research on the Benefits of Adding Humor and Aspects of Play in an
Elementary Art Education Classroom with Sixth Graders

by

Kelly Macagnone

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Masters of Science in Education
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Approved by:

Dr. Shirley Hayes
Project Advisor

Date:

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Abstract

This qualitative action research study explored the benefits of using humor and aspects of play as teaching strategies in the art classroom. This study was conducted in a small Catholic elementary school located in Western New York. One sixth grade class, composed of nine students, participated in this study. Data was collected and analyzed over a period of ten weeks. Conducted through the theory of constructivism, students were engaged and encouraged to construct deep understandings of important concepts in the art classroom through the tools of humor and play. My focus was how the students' perceived humor and play in the classroom, how humor and play could be used to assist in instruction, and what I, and perhaps other teachers, would learn from this inclusion as the art teacher. I collected data through field notes, observations, class dialogue, questionnaires, and student artwork. After consistently reading through and triangulating the data, I formed groups of categories which became my findings, which include: humor and play generate motivation and engagement in students, humor and play function as teaching tools, and kid culture is important to incorporate in the classroom.

My findings demonstrate the various benefits of using humor and the aspects of play into the art classroom. I discovered that by using these often unconventional tools to aid in classroom and curriculum construction, student engage in concepts they need to learn. In addition, through the creation of a positive and playful classroom environment, students build relationships with one another and connect through shared laughter and humor connections. As a teacher, this unit also helped me discover the importance of humor in the role of stress and anxiety relief for both students and teacher.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background Narrative

As a first time art teacher I finally have the opportunity to excite my students about the world of art. I use “excite” rather than “teach” to emphasize the experience of learning and creating art in a constructive and motivating environment. As a new teacher I want to add flare and energy to the classroom, and liven up or electrify old concepts, materials, and approaches in the art room. This desire to enliven the norm can go hand in hand with the experience of being a new teacher in a school community. One must dust off the old classroom, sort through what was left behind, and fix up what is left to make it unique and your own.

I always dreamed of being the teacher who excites her students and makes them look forward to learning something new each day. I want to be that teacher who goes against the grain by using untraditional teaching strategies to reach each of her students, who uses outrageous extraordinary examples or activities to drive home a lesson, and who really takes the time to not only teach students but also learn who they are as individuals. This classroom, a place where students are engaged and encouraged to construct deep understandings of important concepts follows the theory of Constructivism. Jacqueline Grennon Brooks and Martin Brooks, educational theorists, state that constructivist teachers embed student relevance, meaning, and the interests of their learners within the subjects being taught in a classroom (1996, p. ix). In addition, a constructivist teacher structures their classroom experience to foster the creation of personal meanings for their students (1996, p. ix). For me, laughter and humor is like a second language that bridges classroom learning to the lives of my students. My dream

classroom is not only cheerful, colorful, and warm, but exudes a positive space for children to question, create, imagine, and dream. Following the tenets of constructivism, in this classroom, students can create their own knowledge and personal meanings of art through lessons aided by relevant examples that are interesting.

I finally have the opportunity to live out that dream. As a new art teacher at a prekindergarten to eighth grade private elementary school I am looking to enliven the preconceived notions of art to which the students and staff might have been accustomed. When first entering the art room I was surrounded by a sea of cardboard boxes stacked so high all along the countertops they almost touched the ceiling, limitless cob webs, dried out markers, and a dusty projector. To me, creativity seemed trapped and stifled in the completely beige, cluttered classroom. I spent weeks sorting through boxes upon boxes of old dried clay, leaky ink bottles, foul smelling tempera paint, and magazines older than myself. Little by little I started constructing that dream classroom. Bright and colorful bulletin boards gave the bleak walls some life. I tossed boxes away, leaving the space more inviting and open. Inspiring quotes, positive classroom rules, kid friendly supply labels, and cheerful artwork tied the room together, making it the space of which I always dreamed. The only thing missing were the students.

Beginning my role as the new art teacher, I was not sure what to expect. While my student teaching experiences were enjoyable, I was now the sole art teacher. I had no idea what the students were previously exposed to in the sense of artists, artworks, or materials. In addition, students did not know who I was, my teaching style, or how I managed a classroom. What I found successful from the first meetings with students was my enthusiasm. When teaching I strive to be energetic, excited about art, and to have

enthusiasm for whatever the topic is about. The response was positive and contagious. Over time students were able to open up about their previous art experiences, all of which set the tone for my research.

Many students admitted that they previously did not enjoy their art classes. Lessons were strongly based in reproducing master painter's work, constructing craft-like construction paper projects, and listening to lectures. Students expressed that they always would feel discouraged in art and that their work was previously said to be "too cartoonish" and not good enough. Staff members even expressed their feelings about the prior art program saying that it was bland and that students only produced about two projects a year. Even some school parents communicated that their child felt put down or discouraged in their overall experiences in art. I was even more surprised at the learning when reviewing artists and famous artworks with the students to get a sense of their prior art knowledge. Students had not been exposed to Pop Art, Andy Warhol, or even Pablo Picasso, let alone any well-known contemporary artists. Student grades also had suffered due to lengthy vocabulary tests every month, which limited time for creative freedom in projects and resulted in their overall disdain for art. With a school day bombarded with tests, academic pressures, no recess time, and limited time to socialize or be a kid, students, from my perspective, needed a place in school to artistically think, create, and enjoy. Like tackling the dusty art room, I began to take on this new mission. I had the opportunity to liven up the world of art for the students and staff through a new curriculum, which could create new meaning and understanding of art.

The art world can be so broad, beautiful, and inspiring. From the masters of the Renaissance to contemporary street artists, all artists create art to express themselves,

share ideas, and articulate their views on the world around them. Whether the artist uses fine marble to create a sculpture or paints a picture using old hamburger grease, the artists use tools that can be traditional, or vast and virtually limitless. In my view, the art of ancient history is just as important as contemporary art. The art world has so much to offer students. The fact that students have not been exposed to those wonders is both troubling and exciting, since I have the opportunity to reawaken art at this school.

Having the opportunity to develop the art curriculum, I wanted to go beyond traditional art lessons. Along with the positive, upbeat environment, I needed to create a curriculum that would mirror that jovial and fun attitude. A well-balanced art curriculum should build a connection between the art world and student's lives (Milbrandt, 2002). Like mending a relationship, I needed to create harmony between subject matter, art making, and student lives.

To create that harmony, I thought that humor could be used as bonding agent to motivate and engage students, as well as further learning opportunities. How could one connect humor and art in a positive way to promote learning? I wondered if using humor, such as jokes, art parodies, comedic works of art, or artist's using humorous subject matter, and other amusing activities would benefit the students in the art classroom. Could this playfulness and laughter help reengage these students? These questions and ideas lead me to the purpose of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the benefits of using humor in developing curriculum and as a teaching strategy in the art classroom. In the curriculum and through teaching strategies, my feeling is that humor can be a tool to build student's ideas, and

concepts about art history, contemporary art, visual culture, and student's own art making. In this research project, I will explore using humor and aspects of play as a teaching strategy in seeking to foster student engagement and motivation in the art classroom. In addressing student responses to humor and play in the classroom, I also hope to uncover deeper understanding about what can foster humor and play in my own teaching.

Problem Statement

The problem that challenged me was the lack of motivation and enthusiasm for art education. Students in my school were previously subjected to an art program that lacked excitement and motivation due to dry lessons and disconnect to student-relevant curriculum.

The school day at our school is bombarded with seat work, and testing with limited time for movement or creativity, which creates pressure for students and teachers alike. John Dewey believed that aspects of play could relieve the strain of schoolwork and be an effective learning strategy (1916). Dewey states, "Experience has shown that when children have a chance at physical activities which bring their natural impulses into play, going to school is a joy, management is less of a burden, and learning is easier" (1916, p. 195). Through play, students may find more opportunities to be engaged by school content.

I want to find out ways to electrify content while motivating and engaging students by altering classroom environment and curriculum through using humor and aspects of play. According to Jon Erwin (2005) fun is an integral part of learning and motivation and one of the five basic human needs illustrated by Dr. William Glasser

(1999). Fun, as described by Glasser, is the ability to find enjoyment in life by learning and playing (1999). My belief is that art can be more fun if one breaks tradition with lessons, artists, and art making projects that hold humor and playful approaches. Humor and play can result in fun opportunities in the art room.

So the problem for my research project is that traditional art teaching has left poor perceptions of art education, taking away the fun and playfulness that art can hold. My challenge became a question of what, whether, and how the introduction of humor and aspects of play as teaching strategies can benefit students, improve classroom climate, enhance learning, and improve their perceptions of art education for the sixth grade in the prekindergarten-eighth grade school setting. In the following section I state the questions which I will base my research.

Research Questions

- What are the benefits of using humor and aspects of play as teaching strategies in the art classroom?
- How can using humor in my classroom create a positive atmosphere where students are excited about learning in art?
- How can humor enhance student ability to make connections among art history, contemporary art, visual culture, and their own art making?
- How do students respond to using humor and play in my art classroom?
- What can I learn by implementing humor and play into my classroom?

Significance of the Study

I anticipate that students can benefit from this study with a growing appreciation for the visual arts in the world around them. They will be able to personally and meaningfully connect to the topics and content covered in class with the aid of humor and play. From this study, teachers will have an example of a collection of various teaching

tools and strategies for incorporating aspects of humor and play in an art curriculum and classroom setting. As a teacher, I will benefit from this study by expanding my knowledge about art education practices and strategies grounded in humor and play and their use in the curriculum.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited due to time restraints within a college course. This study will take place during the course of ten weeks within a semester which limits the amount of content that can be covered. This study will be done in with one, small class size of nine, in one school, located in one region of Western New York.

Another limitation of the study might be the perceptions of different types of humor. What I believe might be funny, might not be as humorous to the students and vice-versa. I am eager to test the different types of humor and play additions in the classroom and curriculum to find what works and what is less effective.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are to help the reader understand the terms discussed in the context of my study.

- **Humor:** Humor is the quality that makes something amusing or laughable. While a sense of humor is the capacity of a human being to respond to life challenges with optimistic enjoyment (Morrison, 2005 & 2010).
- **Visual Humor:** Images that depict humorous qualities or styles such as parody, pun, paradox, and satire (Klein, 1997).
- **Play:** According to John Dewey, play is an activity not consciously performed for any sake beyond itself whereas work is an activity in which the interest lies in its

outcome. Play, such as adult recreation, is the recuperation of energy. “Persons who play are not just doing something (pure physical movement); they are trying to do or effect something, an attitude that involves anticipatory forecasts which stimulate their present responses” (1916, p. 206). In my study, play includes physical and mental games based around art and learning.

- **Aesthetic Experience:** The aesthetic experience consists of interpreting, constructing meaning, and engaging in dialogue with nature or art (Gordon, 2012). “Aesthetic responses are a function of the suggestions embedded in artworks and the connections made by viewers given their knowledge about art, past experiences, traits, and affective states. Layered elements in artworks can suggest an ironic comment on the world, stimulate creative thinking, or reach into the unconscious to reveal personal meanings” (Cupchick & Gignac, 2007, p. 56).
- **Visual Culture:** Visual culture embodies images from the art world and daily life such as mass media including television, advertisements, magazines, and music videos. These images create meanings and visions of today’s society (Ballengee-Morris & Taylor, 2003). “The term ‘visual culture’ actually refers to visual cultures; it is multicultural, multi-modal, intercultural, and interdisciplinary. Visual culture is social, political, and economic, as well as personal, and involves the connections between and among various contemporary and historical forms” (Freedman, 2003, p. 39).

Conclusion

As a new art teacher in an elementary school where art was just another “specials class,” I set out to excite and enliven students’ art education experiences. Could

implementing humor and laughter in the classroom alter student's perceptions or add excitement to art and their own art making? As stated above, this study will research the benefits of using humor and aspects of play in developing curriculum and as teaching strategies in the art classroom. The following chapter builds the framework for my study and provides information that grounds the direction and content of the study.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Introduction

This literature review will focus on research that highlights humor and play in the field of education and establish a foundation for my research project, which is to study the benefits of humor and play in the art classroom. In this review of literature I examine the history of humor in education and the benefits of humor in a classroom. I investigate different ways teachers use humor as a teaching strategy to further student learning. In addition to adding humor into the classroom, I examine the theory of play in this review. Finally, I discuss the need of blending humor and play into the art classroom. This review of literature will set a framework to discover how humor and play can aid art education.

Humor and Education

In traditional classrooms of the past, laughter was seen as taboo (Morreall, 1981). Humor historically was perceived as having no place in school, as it was seen to be virtually useless and a major distraction (Lin, McMorris, & Torok, 2004). Some educators also feel that their role as a teacher or the topics they have to teach are too serious to engage humor or they find humor as merely a disruption to their classroom (Garner, 2006). Humor has not always been looked on in a positive way in academia. Once thought as a ‘frivolous commentary’ in serious education, today adding humor is more of an accepted teaching strategy (Girdefanny, 2004; Skinner, 2010). In numerous articles (Fowler, 2006; Garner, 2006; Hunsaker, 1988) authors are stressing the need for teachers to adopt humor into their teachings: “If teachers want students to learn then they should consider making learning more palatable, even enjoyable” (Lin, McMorris, & Torok, 2004; p. 14). Over history, a change of attitude about humor in society and in the

classroom has come about which coincides with the classroom of today.

According to Jonathan C. Erwin (2005), an author and educational consultant, today students' are becoming disconnected from school has become an ever-increasing problem. Erwin states, that many students lack motivation and some may even say that they hate school (2005). In addition, the focus of education has shifted to raising standards and increasing numbers on test scores. High stakes testing, an enormous pressure on students, dictates the tone in classrooms across the nation. Erwin advises teachers to make their class fun, which would help motivate and reengage students (2005). The educator creates a fun learning environment in his classroom by adding a variety of instructional strategies that incorporate play into teaching. These strategies include a Jeopardy-style review of gaming and skits as a form of presentation to portray student learning (Erwin, 2005). I hope to add to this repertoire of strategies. In my research, I want to expand the ways humor and play are used to connect students to the subjects being taught in art. The various benefits to using humor in the classroom are seen in the next section.

Benefits of Using Humor in the Classroom

Many authors wrote about the positive physiological and psychological effects of humor (Garner, 2006; Lin, McMorris, & Torok, 2004; Skinner, 2010). They noted that adding humor to one's classroom can aid in the health of his or her students. Physical benefits include improved respiration and circulation, lower pulse and blood pressure, and added endorphins in the blood stream (Garner, 2006). "Humor appropriately used, has the potential to humanize, illustrate, defuse, encourage, reduce anxiety, and keep people thinking" (Lin, McMorris, & Torok, 2004; p. 14). Humor can also help decrease

stress and reduce anxiety (Garner, 2006; Skinner, 2010).

Michael Skinner (2010), a professor and researcher of effective educational programming, states that humor can also enhance student interest in the subject matter, which means that they will learn more. In his research, Skinner explains that course-specific content, when mixed with humor, will be more likely retained by students due to their personal connection with that humorous experience (2010). Humor can be especially effective when teaching difficult subject matter as well as facilitate and maintain interest in a difficult course (Skinner, 2010). If Skinner is correct, then humor should enhance student's abilities to retain their learning in art.

In an article promoting the benefits of using humor in the classroom, Dr. Johanna Hunsaker (1988), a Professor of Management and Organizational Behavior at the University of San Diego, states the main value of humor is to stimulate, illustrate, motivate, and ease tensions. Hunsaker also affirms that humor can be used to emphasize a point, illustrate a situation, and break down resistance to ideas (1988). In addition, humor is a powerful tool for teachers to build relationships between the teacher and student (Garner, 2006), build morale, enhance motivation, and encourage creative problem solving (Hunsaker, 1988). One can make learning fun, infused with laughter, and quality work and use it as a tool to impact the way students perceive school and learn (Erwin, 2005). So several authors agree to the benefits of humor in various life circumstances.

The following paragraph paraphrases a study performed by Lin, McMorris, & Torok (2004) in which the authors investigated the uses of humor in higher education settings. This study observed how professors incorporated humor into their lectures to further competence and effectiveness. It also observed student perceptions to various

types of humor and how humor improved the overall learning experience. Like Skinner (2010), Lin, McMorris, & Torok found that students learn and retain more when humor is used in the classroom. When used in lessons or lectures, humor can help facilitate retention, improve problem solving skills, and increase student perceptions of teacher credibility. In their study, Lin, McMorris, & Torok observed three different college courses including Biology, Educational Psychology, and Theatre. The researchers gave surveys to the college students in these courses which focused on the addition of humor in the classroom through a professor's curriculum. The surveys also allowed students to classify types of humor used by their professors while assessing the students' perceptions and attitudes on positive or negative humor in the classroom. From their data, the researchers found that students favored their professors and courses where positive humor was incorporated into the curriculum. The curriculums observed showed that humor ranged from funny stories or comments, jokes, professional humor, or cartoons. It was also shown that student attention is maintained with the help of humorous instructional techniques. Other authors mentioned below also indicate that humor can aid in classroom management and teaching outcomes.

As a classroom management tool, William Boerman-Cornell (1999) an assistant Professor of Education at Trinity Christian College, states that humor can create a positive environment for learning. Humor sets up a healthy climate where students can feel valued, emotionally safe, and free to creatively participate and experiment (Boerman-Cornell, 1999). According to Skinner (2010), in a humorous setting learning is maximized. Thus, students are more likely to focus, show respect, and listen in a positive classroom environment (Boerman-Cornell, 1999). Students are more likely to engage in

the learning process in school as humor creates a positive emotional and social environment (Garner, 2006). Garner means that student defenses are lowered and students have an easier time focusing on information as well. Fowler (2006) discusses this bridge between teacher and student by which humor is based on a shared meaning, feeling, or emotion: “Laughter is the ‘magic glue’ that binds us together in the classroom” (p. 46).

Kakela and Robinson (2006) stress the importance of creating a learning environment that is supported by humor. Dr. Peter Kakela, a Professor in the Department of Resource Development at Michigan State University, and Carole F. Robinson, an assistant professor at Michigan State University, say , “By creating a space for fun, interaction, and trust, teachers and students together can build a learning environment that promotes engagement, deep learning, and meanings” (p. 202). They noticed that humor can aid in the process of creating a trusting, safe environment for students “in a classroom environment where there is trust, personalization, and interaction, students gain self confidence” (Kakela & Robinson, 2006, p. 206). Students will be more willing to take risks in the learning process since mistakes are more acceptable in this atmosphere (Girdefanny, 2004).

Various strategies that teachers can use in their classrooms as illustrated by authors Hunsaker (1988), Minchew and Hopper (2008), and Klein (1997), which are summarized in this paragraph. To set up a humorous environment for learning, Hunsaker (1988) suggests adding items as cartoons, funny photos, and humorous quotes to help renew student enthusiasm. One could put up a humorous bulletin board, add props to their classroom, or use strange or funny resources for classroom exercises. Former middle

and high school English teachers, authors Sue Minchew and Peggy Hopper (2008) suggest incorporating games to enhance student learning, such as a test review; and they note that word play and exaggerations can also be used to make regular lessons more memorable. Trying different learning methods (rap songs, students-as-teachers, trivia, etc.) can make learning exciting and unique (Girdefanny, 2004). In a study based on children's response to visual humor, Klein (1997) used parodies, puns, paradoxes, and satire in the classroom setting to appropriate humor based art. "Visual humor can expand their concepts of art" (Klein, 1997, p. 49). These visuals can add different aspects of humor to the classroom.

When teaching humor, Cathy Fowler (2006), an American Montessori School instructor and author, also stresses how teachers must know about "kid culture" to create a positive, humor-based environment. To be an effective teacher one needs to know what students are watching from mass media and reading. By knowing student culture teachers can relate to them. Fowler states that knowledge leads to a better understanding, which can clarify misconceptions. Teachers could use those shared meanings and humor to further learning (Fowler, 2006). This means that if a teacher adds kid culture to their curriculum, there is a chance that students will be motivated, furthering learning opportunities. Merging humor with kid culture, as seen in the research of Lin, McMorris, & Torok (2004), can be used as a tool in the classroom.

As stated in this section, humor, when appropriately used has the ability to improve the learning experience of students through retention (Lin, McMorris, & Torok, 2004), motivation (Garner, 2006), and stress-reduction (Skinner, 2010). Numerous strategies can be employed by teachers when incorporating humor into their teachings

such as using visual humor (Klein, 1997), games (Minchew & Hopper, 2008), and humorous quotes (Hunsaker, 1988). Various strategies should be considered when adding humor to the classroom and curriculum, all which are covered in the next section.

Types of Humor

Jennifer Cunningham (2004), a longtime investigator of humor and educational research, explains how the world of humor is complex. From puns, wordplays, or riddles to physical comedy, slapstick and mimicry, humor comes in numerous forms. Cunningham (2004) explains that individuals can have different responses or preferences to humorous stimuli. “What makes a person laugh depends on many factors, including personality, culture, and past experience” (Cunningham, 2004, p. 94); and, while someone may think something is funny, others might not. So these authors make it clear that deciding on types of humor to use in teaching can be tricky.

The following paragraph reviews an article by R.L. Garner (2006), a Professor of Behavioral Science for the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University, which outlines various curriculum-specific humors that educators can consider and use in the classroom. Before a teacher uses humor in the classroom, Garner cautions that it is important to reflect on the different types of humor one can use in the classroom. When one uses humor, positive or negative outcomes can occur. Humor may be highly personal, subjective, and contextual and one cannot predict the way it will be received by students. In addition, Garner stresses the importance of using humor that is positive, never negative in the classroom environment (2006). People may have different preferences when it comes to which form of humor they might like or dislike. Fowler (2006) adds that educators should know their students’ interests and humor preferences to

enhance the use of humor in their classroom.

William Boerman-Cornell (1999) furthers the discussion of humor categories in the classroom, dividing humor into a productive and counterproductive realm. The following paragraphs reflect the ideas of Boerman-Cornell and his experiences with humor in education as a student and as an educator. “Humor is one of the most powerful tools teachers have at their disposal. It can build up students and classes and make them excited...or it can rip them apart” (Boerman-Cornell, 1999, p. 66). Humor that could mock students or put them down, such as sarcasm, would be deemed as counterproductive in the classroom. Boerman-Cornell says that mockery can anger students or send a negative message of what they are learning is not important (1999). Boerman-Cornell also note that insults or humor that hurts your audience stifles creativity, class participation, and creates an atmosphere of fear. As teachers we need to be cautious in the use of humor because “Funny stuff isn’t funny stuff if it hurts your audience” (Boerman-Cornell, 1999, p. 68).

Boerman-Cornell states that productive humor in your classroom can aid in student learning. In addition, productive humor can be drawn from the curriculum. Curriculum-based humor can build on student understanding and connect learning with their own personal experiences. Lesson topics can be overtly humorous, even when the intent to do so is not there. Humor can build up a student, or even shape identity. For classroom management, Boerman-Cornell also discusses how humor can diffuse classroom tension: “Humor is a good way to turn a showdown between teacher and students into a matter of confidence and success” (1999, p. 69).

Humor can be a useful tool to add to a classroom and curriculum (Garner, 2006).

While there are various types of humor (Cunningham, 2004), educators should implement positive productive humor in their teachings to aid in student learning (Boerman-Cornell, 1999). Humor can also positively impact teacher morale (Evans-Palmer, 2010) as reflected in the following section.

Effects of Humor on Teacher Morale

This section highlights a qualitative study, conducted by Evans-Palmer (2010), who researched the connection between self-efficacy and stress levels of art teachers who use humor in their classrooms to deliver instruction and engage students. According to Evans-Palmer, stressors are varied and unique to art teachers and can cause them to lose heart in such a way that their ability to teach can be compromised (2010). A lack of support, a diminishing art budget, narrowing of curriculum, and a high-stakes testing environment can all distress an art teacher. In addition to these problems, students are usually pulled from their elective classes, such as art, for numerous reasons, so teachers have to scramble to fill in concept gaps. Art teachers also have to teach a broad range of skills in one class as well. These factors can all lead to stress, which shakes the teacher's belief that he or she can teach effectively. So stressors can impact quality teaching.

According to Teri Evans-Palmer's (2010) research, humor has the ability to eliminate stress for the students and teachers alike as it has become a coping strategy. Evans-Palmer, an assistant professor of Art Education at Texas State University-San Marcos, state that humor helps maintain positive relationships and can defuse student anger and hostility in a positive classroom environment (2010). The study shows that teachers who use humor are more flexible, relaxed, and willing to try new ideas in their teachings. Humor is also effective in raising teacher's resiliency. Relaxed teachers, as

Evans-Palmer states, may be more likely to put their heart into their work and stay in the profession longer (2010). From this study, Evans-Palmer encourages humor to novice teachers to benefit both themselves and their students.

In addition to adding humor into one's teaching, adding aspects of play into the classroom can be highly beneficial (Stone, 1995; Kakela & Robinson, 2006). Like humor, there are numerous benefits to play such as improved problem solving skills (Stone, 1995) and increased student engagement (Kakela & Robinson, 2006). The following section addresses the aspects of play in work and education.

Play and Work

Play is a natural activity of children (Saracho & Spodek, 1995). Many authors (Ortlieb, 2010; Dewey, 1916; Saracho & Spodek, 1995; Stone, 1995) believe that play is a beneficial method of teaching for education. Their combined research, which I summarize in the following section, displays the importance of play for teaching contemporary students.

Play has been interpreted differently throughout history (Saracho & Spodek, 1995). One can learn about play in early eras by looking at the visual arts and literature from that time to see how play was represented (Ortlieb, 2010). Dr. Evan Ortlieb (2010), an assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, states that throughout the history of American education there has been a separation of work and play beginning in colonial America: "Work while you work, play while you play. One thing each time, that is the way" (p. 242). In the 1950's, traditional classrooms consisted of lecture and memorization, while students worked in silence (Ortlieb, 2010). While those traditional classrooms and methods did not provide

for optimal learning experiences, many educators still implement this style of teaching (Ortlieb, 2010).

Ortlieb (2010) describes that today “many students find school boring and do not exert any effort to learn within the confines of school; yet, when they go home, they play with their friends and are excited at the opportunity to participate in activities” (p. 242). Ortlieb expresses a need for educators to harness aspects of play so that school can become more meaningful to students (2010). In order for children to learn at their potential, Ortlieb expresses that children must be engaged. This idea strongly relates to John Dewey’s ideas during the early 1900s. Dewey believed that play was an effective strategy for educational purposes.

If education does not afford opportunity for wholesome recreation and train capacity for seeking and finding it, the suppressed instincts find all sorts of illicit outlets, sometimes overt, sometimes confined to indulgence of the imagination. Education has no more serious responsibility than making adequate provision for enjoyment of recreative leisure; not only for the sake of immediate health, but still more if possible for the sake of its lasting effect upon habits of mind. (1916, p. 208)

Dewey’s point is that both play and work were needed in a curriculum to engage students. He states that students have natural tendencies to explore, manipulate tools and materials, and construct. In addition, when these are used in school as a form of play in the curriculum, the whole pupil is engaged. Play offers an opportunity for students to make mistakes and learn through experiences (Dewey, 1916).

Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, was an early advocate for play in education

(Moss, 1974). The Piagetian Approach, as illustrated by author Ruth Moss, is a practice in education where Piaget's ideas are implemented in the school setting. Moss (1974) wrote about a Chicago preschool that practiced Piaget's theoretical ideas about play as a stimulant for creativity in education. In this article, that I paraphrase, Dr. Rheta DeVries and Dr. Constance Kamii are two of Piaget's proponents who ran this school based on the business of play. Piaget's theory of play was based on the idea that play is the construction of knowledge. When children play, they are becoming aware of their surroundings and actions. This transpires in gained knowledge and intelligence. The more a child plays, the more he or she has chances to gain knowledge and develop their intelligence. Piaget believed that children build their own knowledge through play and experiences. Piaget, as quoted in Moss (1974), stated that:

The principle goal of education is to create men [*sic*] who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done –who are creative, inventive, and discoverers. The second goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything they are offered. The great danger today is of slogans, collective opinions, ready-made trends of thought. We have to be able to resist individually, to criticize, and to distinguish between what is proven and what is not. So we need pupils who are active, who learn early to find out by themselves, partly by their own spontaneous activity and partly thru material we set up for them; who learn early to tell what is verifiable and what is simply the first idea to come to them (p. 5).

Piaget's point is that as educators, we need to help students to be creative thinkers.

Students who are capable of thinking spontaneously, using trial and error, and employing

critical thinking skills will be accomplished and well developed (Moss, 1974).

Piaget theorized that intelligence develops in stages related to age (McLeod, 2009). Author Saul McLeod outlined Piaget's stages of development, which I have paraphrased in this paragraph. The first stage in a child's intellectual development, birth to two years, is sensory-motor period, in which the child develops his abilities to construct and reconstruct objects. Between two and seven years, repeated play and experiences the child develops an understanding of symbols, language, begins drawing, and play. This stage is known as the preoperational stage. The ages of seven to eleven experience the period of operational thinking known as concrete operations. During the operational thinking stage, the child begins using logical thought to sense concrete objects and more rational and organized thinking. The final stage is known as the stage of formal operations for children older than eleven. During this stage, people develop the ability to think about abstract concepts, deductive reasoning, and systematic planning. Abstract concepts such as moral, philosophical, social, and political issues are important to address with students at this level. For my research, I expect that students will be functioning between the concrete operations stage and the formal operations stage while at the sixth grade level. Piaget's stages of development are beneficial to my study so that I can create a curriculum that can correlate with the expectations for the varied levels of thinking of my students.

While play has been traditionally separated from work and education (Ortlieb, 2010), over the past decade educators and authors have deemed play as a useful teaching method (Dewey, 1916; Moss, 1974; Ortlieb, 2010). Other researchers also link the numerous benefits and strategies for incorporating play into the curriculum.

Integrating Play into the Curriculum

Incorporating play into the educational setting can benefit children of all ages as they develop cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills through the aspects of play (Stone, 1995). Play can enrich thinking as well as provide students with the opportunity to create, invent, reason (Stone, 1995), and problem solve (Ortlieb, 2010). Ortlieb states that play allow humans to stay mentally and physically healthy (2010). In addition, problem solving and social skills are tuned during play as well as confidence (Ortlieb, 2010). Play is crucial for motivation as it allows students to realize that they can excel without having to worry about being wrong (Ortlieb, 2010).

Sandra Stone (1995), a professor and author on play in the curriculum, states that play is beneficial for children of all ages, especially in the educational setting.

Wasserman (1992), a teacher education author, values play in education as a tool for teaching across the curriculum (cross-curriculum learning), which is when topics and lessons are taught in multiple subjects to build on concepts. As quoted by Stone (1995), Wasserman states that “virtually every important concept to be taught – whether it be at the primary, intermediate or graduate level or whether it be in science, math, economics or business management – can be taught through the medium of serious play” (p. 104).

Stone supports Wasserman’s idea of cross-curriculum learning aided by play: “If play is incorporated into an integrated curriculum, children can explore, discover, problem solve, invent, experiment, imitate, dramatize and enjoy both the content and the process of learning experiences” (1995, p. 206). Stone is expressing that children will enjoy what is being taught as well as the learning process of a lesson if play is incorporated. Play is also a way that teachers can harness and incorporate fun into the classroom (Kakela &

Robinson, 2006), as illustrated in the following paragraph.

Incorporating play into one's teaching can lead to a positive, trusting, classroom environment (Kakela & Robinson, 2006). Kakela and Robinson (2006) built a classroom and curriculum around the ideas of adding fun to their teaching to aid in enhancing the learning environment and student engagement. Kakela and Robinson noted, "By creating a space for fun, interaction, and trust, teachers and students together can build a learning environment that promotes engagement, deep learning, and meanings" (2006, p. 202). The educators used aspects of play in their classroom incorporating playful and interactive approaches as teaching strategies such as jokes and puns. As a result of a fun and personalized learning environment, Kakela and Robinson (2006) noted that student self-confidence grew as well as their creative and critical thinking skills.

While incorporating play into the classroom and curriculum has many benefits, play is also opposed in education (Ortlieb, 2010). In an article on the pursuit of play in education, Ortlieb (2010), states that many teachers believe that play cannot be beneficial, productive, or meaningful in the classroom setting, hence they do not devote time for play. In my experience, many schools do not have recess because the school day is solely devoted to school work time. Educators believe that work and play are two different things and should be kept that way (Ortlieb, 2010). In addition, teachers deal with the pressures of student performance on standardized testing, which has become another reason to cut or demolish play from valuable teaching time (Ortlieb, 2010). Stone (1995) adds that many educators are reluctant to include play into their curriculums stating that it is not serious nor pertains to subject matter taught in school. For my research, I am hoping to explore various ways teachers can incorporate play into the

classroom through various classroom management and teaching strategies to challenge the reluctance of play in education. In addition to humor and play in the curriculum, there are many connections between humor and art that I illustrate in the following section.

Humor and Art

In the following paragraph I paraphrase the ideas of humor theorist, John Morreall (1981), in which he states that humor is a kind of aesthetic experience, an important part of the human experience, and it deserves a role in education. Morreall argues for the integration of humor into education, stating that humor is virtually ignored in art appreciation classes (1981). Aesthetic experience, defined by Morreall, is the attending to some object of awareness for the sake of the experience itself. Humor, can be compared to the aesthetic experience of viewing an artwork. Morreall states, “Humor takes us out of the role of mere passive observers of a world already given and lets us become- like the artist- creators of a new kind of reality” (p. 65). Humor and aesthetic experience both hold intrinsic value and are pleasurable experiences contributing to one’s personal enjoyment. According to Morreall, humor and aesthetic experience in school can benefit sensory stimulation, liberation and imagination in students. Morreall suggests that using art containing visual jokes or playful visual realities such as Pablo Picasso’s *Bull Head* sculpture or Surrealism artists Salvador Dali and René Magritte can be helpful and humorous exercises for the classroom.

Extending Morreall’s ideas about humor and aesthetic experience, Mordechai Gordon (2012), a Professor of Education at Quinnipiac University, further examines the connections, the similarities and differences, of humor and aesthetics. Gordon’s expansion of humor and aesthetic experience is recorded in this paragraph. While Gordon

expresses similar ideas to Morreall, he also stresses that humor and aesthetic experience are different as well. Different standards or criteria can judge humor and aesthetic experiences. Humor is intended to make us laugh and is a social experience, while one does not need to be in a group setting to have an aesthetic experience or to appreciate art. According to Gordon, humor and aesthetics share a playful attitude, which are based on personal preferences and tastes, and are beneficial for providing social criticism. “Using comedy is a very effective way to communicate the truth because it transforms frankness into a less threatening and confrontational style of discourse” (Gordon, 2012, p. 114). In addition, both humor and aesthetics are experiences that involve a play of the imagination, as we view ordinary objects in different ways. Gordon and Morreall both share ideas that will be beneficial for my research. Humor and the aesthetic experience, while different, can share a playful attitude, something that I would like to find out or explore through my study.

Similar to the ideas of Morreall (1981) and Gordon (2012), Sheri Klein (1997) believes that humor is a powerful tool for Art Education. The following paragraph highlights Klein’s research. A professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Klein conducted a study examining the responses of students to visual humor in fine art and popular culture. In this study, Klein exposed students to a variety of visual humor, such as parody, pun, paradox, and satire (1997). Art shown to students ranged from popular culture-centered art such as cartoons to fine art. Klein’s study revealed that students found the popular culture art more humorous than fine art (1997). From her study, Klein concluded that the art with contemporary issues and ideas were more tangible or familiar to children than the fine art created prior to the 1950s. “Visual humor in popular culture

offers opportunities for children to discuss post-modern aesthetic issues such as image appropriation, art and non-art, reproduction vs. original, and the worth, value, and meaning of the parody of cultural icons” (p. 54). So dialogue becomes important in debating the merits or foibles of the art in terms of aesthetics. In addition, Klein reflects that art, when combined with humor, can strongly convey ideas and issues to students.

Today, humor is a relevant theme in various forms of contemporary art as seen in the PBS program, *Art in the 21st Century*, or *Art21*. Humor and satire can stimulate laughter and be a way to explore serious subject matter in art (Tatge, 2003). Artists creating visual humor, as covered in the program, found their influence in the history of humor and comedy, such as vaudeville, cartoons, and comics (Tatge, 2003). In relation, art holds similar characteristics to humor (Morreall, 1981; Gordon, 2012). When combined, art and humor are powerful tools for teachers to convey lesson concepts and to tap the imagination of students (Morreall, 1981; Klein, 1997). Popular culture and contemporary issues are more tangible and relevant to students, all which can benefit the art classroom (Klein, 1997). Humor can be a positive approach to teaching art as there are many different ways humor can benefit the classroom. The next section of this chapter explores the variables, importance, and successes of creating a student-relevant art curriculum.

Relevant Art Curriculum

Authors such as Duncum (2003), Ballengee-Morris and Taylor (2003), and Klein (1997) agree that the study of visual culture hold importance to art education for today’s learners. The inclusion of contemporary visual culture in the art classroom can make learning more relevant and exciting for 21st century students (Ballengee-Morris & Taylor,

2003). In addition, the study of postmodern art can be personally and socially meaningful to students' lives (Milbrandt, 2003). Their combined research, which I summarize in the following paragraphs, displays the impact contemporary issues and art have on contemporary practices in art education.

The study of visual culture in the art classroom is relatively new topic for educators (Duncum, 2003). "Visual culture in its broadest sense comprises the human-made or human-designed environment. It includes clothing, automobiles, shopping malls, advertisements, television, motion pictures, computer graphics and computer games, and much more" (Smith, 2003, p. 3). According to Paul Duncum, a highly published art education professor, visual culture can depict a critical view of a society's culture. Duncum breaks the approaches to visual culture into two separate practices, visual culture studies and material culture studies. Visual culture studies, as illustrated by Duncum, refer to the aspects of culture that manifest in visual form such as television and magazine advertisements. The primary concern of material culture studies is to explore the underlying meaning of objects in our everyday environment that inadvertently express patterns of belief and feeling in people (Duncum, 2003). When one blends the study of visual culture and material culture in their teachings, they enable their students to practice these skills to become a more knowledgeable participant in the world (Duncum, 2003). The critical analysis of visual and material culture studies, when used in the classroom, can aid in critical thinking skills when linked to contemporary issues in the world (Duncum, 2003).

Ballengee-Morris and Taylor (2003) make a case for teachers to incorporate contemporary visual culture into the study of art history to make connections on how past

ideologies and styles of visual culture can influence visual culture in current society. Ballengee-Morris and Taylor use Pop Art artists like Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and the rapper Eminem in a lesson example for connecting art and visual culture. With political and culture references, Eminem has used Lichtenstein-styled comics in his music videos. He uses himself as the subject matter of his work and comments on consumerist, sensation-seeking, celebrity society like Andy Warhol. The connections, as the author's state, can teach students about art, contemporary visual culture, and the issues in the world in which they live. A curriculum founded in the mixture of humor, play, and contemporary visual culture could benefit students in the art room and become foundational to the curriculum in my classroom.

For my research, I will design my curriculum using the backwards design method (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In the following paragraph I summarize the ideas of backwards design by Wiggins and McTighe (2005). Backwards design is a method of designing a curriculum focused on setting goals and learning outcomes before instructional methods or assessments. According to Wiggins and McTighe, "An essential act of our profession is the crafting of curriculum and learning experiences to meet specified purposes" (2005, p. 13). This means that as educators, we design our curriculum and activities to meet learning goals for our students. The authors argue that these learning goals are important and should be taught towards the outcomes of teachings and curriculum, rather than be the learning goals. Backwards design focuses on creating a curriculum where student learning and understanding is the most important aspect to a lesson. In their three stages of backwards design, Wiggins and McTighe describe how one should identify the desired results first. Evidence of learning through

assessments will then determine if students have attained the desired understandings one wished to accomplish. The final stage of backwards design is planning the learning experiences and instruction, or what will actually be taught in the particular lesson. Backwards design will be beneficial to my research when I am creating a new curriculum founded in humor and play during my study. I will be interested in learning how this planning process plays out in my research.

Conclusion

The research reviewed in this chapter established the importance of adding humor and aspects of play into an educational setting. In past traditional classrooms humor and play were considered distractions and not were not important components of learning. With many of today's students becoming disconnected or lacking motivation in school, authors cited in this review believe that humor and play can be beneficial additions to a classroom setting and curriculum. Authors claim that humor has health benefits such as reducing stress and anxiety and that humor can enhance motivation and problem solving skills. Productive and positive humor can be used as a classroom motivation tool and can also create a positive learning environment. Play, a natural experience for children, has the ability to stimulate student creativity and make education more meaningful to students. When mixed with work, play in the curriculum can create engaged students. For curriculum purposes, there are many ways a teacher can combine humor, play, and art in an art classroom. Contemporary artists, as well as art from history, can have themes of play or humor featured in their work. Using visual humor can engage and motivate students in the art classroom. In addition, incorporating visual culture can further student learning and motivation for the 21st century learner. For curriculum design, backwards

design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) can be used to address specific student learning goals when creating lessons.

This review of literature has taught me that the inclusion of humor and play in the classroom is a relatively new educational phenomenon. While history has shown that humor was deemed a frivolous distraction in the classroom, contemporary use of humor in education could hold numerous benefits for students and teachers alike. My research will study how humor structured through various means including visuals, jokes, and parodies can benefit my art classroom and curriculum. Research methods are illustrated in the following chapter.

Chapter III: Methodology and Procedures

Methodology of Study

For my study I will conduct a qualitative action research (Grundy, 1995) project based on the goal of creating a more engaging sixth grade art classroom using humor and play. Sharan B. Merriam, a professor of adult and continuing education at the University of Georgia in Athens, focuses much of her research in qualitative research methods. For Merriam (2009), action research has a goal to address a specific problem within a specific setting, such as a classroom. As a form of applied research, action research sets out to improve the practice of a particular discipline (Merriam, 2009). In my research, the problem I face is a lack of motivation for art in my school. I hope to uncover ways that humor can change student perceptions of art and behavior in art class. Shirley Grundy (1995), an Australian educator, states that action research is a “process of change, but not just for change’s sake; it is change specifically directed towards improvement” (p.10). The change that I seek to accomplish through my research directly correlates with the goals of action research.

This study seeks to explore the benefits of adding humor and aspects of play into a sixth grade elementary art class in which I am the art teacher. In action research, like many other forms of qualitative research, Merriam (2009) states the researcher is the “primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (p. 15). The following section will describe my role as the teacher and researcher during this study.

Role of Researcher

As the teacher of the classroom, I take on the role of participant as observer during this study. Merriam (2009) describes the role of a participant observer as a

researcher who is an active participant in a setting while the act of observing becomes secondary. With this role, I assume the identity of teacher and observer.

As an art teacher, I strive to make learning about, talking about, and creating art an exciting and engaging adventure. My goal is for students to learn, create, and have fun. Through this study, I will try to work toward that goal by adding humor and play to my curriculum, teaching strategies, and classroom management. Over the past year, I have added some aspects of humor to my classroom. During lesson introductions, I have shown art parodies art as well as humorous YouTube videos such as a contemporary artist drawing the Mona Lisa using hamburger grease. While students have enjoyed these few occurrences of humor in the classroom, my research will study what happens when I try to use consistent humor and play in all aspects of my teaching.

As the researcher, I also take on the role of observer. As an observer, I will be studying my classroom, curriculum, student artwork, and my own teaching to uncover the benefits of using humor and play in the art classroom. Having prior teaching experiences with the participants, being the observer, and reflecting on my own teachings can help me grow as a teacher.

Site of Study

Since my project is based on changes to teaching strategies and curriculum, as well as student responses to those changes, the most convenient site for my study is the school where I have been teaching for the past year. Saint Bernard's (pseudonym) is a private Catholic elementary school located in a suburban town in western NY. Situated off a busy road lined with small businesses and residential streets, Saint Bernard is nestled quietly behind the school's church. This private setting helps create a tight knit

community in the school. Built in 1960, the tawny brick building houses 220 students grades prekindergarten to eight. Students come from various surrounding towns to attend school; some even have a 30-minute drive. The population of students is 98 percent Caucasian, with the remaining two percent are Asian and African American students.

Families, students, and staff hold a real sense of dedication to the school. Many students enter Saint Bernard in prekindergarten and attend straight through to eighth grade. Families generally send all of their children to this school. A handful of parents are even alumni of the school themselves. With a long history of education, the school proudly hangs pictures of all of their graduating classes in their main hallway. Black and white photographs of a former all-boy school scans fashion trends and styles to modern co-ed students. Saint Bernard's history can be seen in the school structure as well.

The school has two floors designed like a split-level house. The first floor is more like a basement, as it is partially underground. Windows give a view parallel to the lawn. The second floor is more of a main floor to the school, hosting the younger grades and school office. Grades pre-kindergarten to sixth grade, the library, and computer room have classrooms on this floor while the seventh and eighth grades share the lower floor with the art room and the cafeteria.

Saint Bernard has a modest interior design, reflecting the original color scheme from when it was first built. Large, light sea green tiles line all of the walls of the school. Doorframes, large supporting structure poles, and all staircases are thickly painted a darker sea green. Schoolwork from art class and classroom projects help add color and cheer to the hallways of the school. Team trophies also line the hallways, adding school pride and accomplishment to the atmosphere.

On a typical school day, you can see and hear the steady stream of students hustling off the morning buses and congregating by grade in the school's cafeteria. Students excitedly chat with their classmates about television episodes from the prior night or animatedly describe a play from last night's hockey game. Once they are dismissed to their classrooms, the school becomes alive with jovial elementary students shuffling their colorful backpacks up the sea green staircases. Saint Bernard has a specific dress code for students to abide. Girls wear a plaid jumper or a plain skirt with a white or light blue dress shirt. Boy's uniforms include a navy blue dress pants with a dress shirt, either light blue or white. During the colder months, students also have the option to wear a school issued sweatshirt or solid colored sweater. After morning prayers and announcements, students begin a day of learning. By lunch time students reassemble in the cafeteria in a large roar, as the smell of chicken nuggets engulfs my nearby classroom.

One can find the art room tucked into a busy corner of the school next to the lively seventh and eighth grade classrooms and across from a quiet hallway and small staircase. When I first entered the classroom after getting the job as the school art teacher, the room was dull and beige. After much change, today's classroom is bursting with color and cheer, an atmosphere appropriate for exciting elementary art programming. As a second year teacher, I have prior knowledge of majority of the students at St. Bernard's. With this knowledge, the sixth graders were chosen to be the participants in my study.

Participants

Transitioning between the elementary and middle school aged students, this class, as participants, was chosen for various reasons. First the sixth grade class is small in size,

with only nine students. The small student to teacher ratio would be beneficial for my study since I have a better opportunity to work and focus on all students during the short class times. A small class will be more manageable and in depth to study a smaller group of students. The class is made up of four female and five male students. Having an almost equal ratio of females to males also could benefit my study since both genders are well represented in the class.

One of the main reasons in which I chose to study the sixth grade class was due to their history with issues of bullying over the past year. As a small class, a handful of students are new to the school and the others have been enrolled since prekindergarten. At times one can see the divide between the new group and the old group through numerous accounts of bullying and teasing other students. Instances have ranged from picking on students who are deemed different to negative name-calling. Even though there have been numerous talks and consequences from classroom teachers and the administration of the school, the sixth grade students are still having problems with classroom friendship and respect. While not every student is responsible for these sorts of actions, there has not been much progress in deterring the actions of certain students.

I thought this would be an interesting group to work with in this study. Humor has many physiological and psychological benefits (Garner, 2006; Lin, McMorris, & Torok, 2004; Skinner, 2010). As sixth graders, students are eleven or twelve years old. Heading towards adolescence, this age group is undergoing various development changes and growth. According to the American Psychological Association (2002), or the APA, the age range of adolescence begins around the time of physical puberty to adulthood.

Socially, adolescents, or humans in general, seek to belong (Cunningham, 2004).

During adolescent development, relating to peers becomes a prominent part of life (APA, 2002). School allows adolescents to relate to and develop relationships with their peers (APA, 2002). Humor is a social phenomenon, “a way of connecting with friends and a way of understanding the world around us” (Cunningham, 2004, p. 95). Cunningham means that humor can be used to create friendships or group bonds among peers.

Harnessing humor in the art classroom could potentially help build bonds among these students, and perhaps help build friendships founded upon the common ground of humor.

In addition, as a social tool, students can use humor to ease tensions (Hunsaker, 1988), conceal discomfort, or ease embarrassment (Cunningham, 2004) in the classroom.

Through the inclusion of humor and play in the art classroom, I will collect various forms of data while working with this sixth-grade group.

Data Collection Methods

According to Merriam (2009), observations are a major means of collecting data in qualitative research. Observations offer “a firsthand account of the situation under study” (p. 136). Field notes are written documentation of direct observations seen in the art classroom (Hubbard, 2003). Observations will be conducted in two ways. Field notes will be recorded to document the happenings of the day. I will keep a small reflective journal with me while I teach to document any field notes for that moment and prior to a lesson. The field notes, where I will make observer comments about what is happening, will be used as a reflective and analytic summary of the circumstances throughout my research.

In addition to my observations, a digital video will be recorded of each class session with the sixth grade students. This will serve as an additional viewpoint of the

class to help me see different happenings that I might have missed while teaching. Video recordings will be beneficial to my study so that I can review the taped sessions and cross reference my field notes after the class session. In addition, through the videotape I will be able to capture any quotes or scenarios from the class that I might have missed while teaching. Observations will focus in great measure on student engagement, responses to curriculum, teaching strategies, and classroom management techniques, and the overall atmosphere of my classroom when humor is interwoven with the curriculum.

Another form of data collection will include the analysis of documents. According to Merriam (2009), documents are a source of data that “is broadly defined to include public records, personal papers, popular culture documents, visual documents, and physical material and artifacts” (p. 162). Student artworks are a form of document that will help me determine whether students have learned or understood the content of the lessons. Written student reflections will accompany each project to further explain their learning during the lesson. I will photograph artworks as a reference for my study. Artwork will include class projects and homework assignments. Lesson plans created will also be included in the document analysis.

Lastly, student questionnaires will be used as a form of data collection. These casual questionnaires, as class assignments, will serve as a form of written communication between the student and teacher, addressing topics about the curriculum, classroom environment, and their own opinions about the lessons to be taught. These responses will help me understand the motivation and engagement of the students as well as get feedback on their humor preferences as well as their interests so that I can create a more relevant art curriculum. Questionnaires will be given prior to my research to capture

student perceptions on humor, after my research to uncover any growth or change of feelings towards humor from the students, and during research to gain understanding of student ideas on the humor being discussed during lessons. Data collected will be organized, managed, and analyzed, all of which will uncover my researching findings about humor in the art classroom.

Data Management and Analysis Strategies

Organizing data collected during research will be an important step for processing and managing my data. For physical organization, hard copies of all field notes, transcriptions, questionnaires, lesson plan materials, and data collected will be kept in an accordion file organizer. In addition, all video recorded transcriptions will be kept on the computer and kept on backup files on a zip disk to provide additional back up of those files for my research.

Data analysis is the “process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them to enable you to present what you have discovered to others” (Bogden & Bilken, 1998, p. 157). Triangulation will be used as a strategy for data analysis. Triangulation is when a researcher uses multiple sources of data and collection methods to uncover emerging findings within their study (Merriam, 2009). This means that I will find connections or links between the different forms of data to find trends or emerging patterns that are seen in multiple forms in this study. For triangulation I will compare and cross check my data of observations, document analysis, and student questionnaires in my study. Triangulation, a strategy for internal validity, will coincide with the imperative ethics portion of my research.

Ethics

Authenticity and trustworthiness are important aspects of a qualitative study (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam, “Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical matter” (p. 209).

Confidentiality is a critical component in my research. Prior to research, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved my study. The IRB gave strict guidelines that I will follow to ensure the safety of my participants. Names of participants and the site were changed to a pseudonym to provide protection for the students and the school. The administration approved and signed consent forms that described my research plans prior to the study. A letter of consent and student assent was also mailed to parents asking for permission for their child to participate in the research study. Students also signed this letter which contained information about the study and permission to videotape classroom sessions for educational research purposes. All data will also be stored in a safe, secure location away from the classroom for a minimal of three years based on federal guidelines.

Conclusion

The study that I will conduct will be a qualitative action project. This study will uncover the benefits of using humor and aspects of play in a sixth grade art classroom in a small suburban elementary school. As a researcher who is a participant observer, I will be teaching while I observe. All parties involved in this study signed consent forms giving permission to participate in the research process. Art lessons, homework assignments, classroom layout, and various teaching strategies were created and used to attain the goals of my research. As the researcher, throughout the course of the study I recorded classroom discussions and examined student responses, attitudes, and artwork.

In addition to my data collection methods, students filled out questionnaires, discussion questions, and artist statements for supplementary insight. Data collected from this study will include observations, document analysis, and student questionnaires. Triangulation, a data analysis strategy, will be used to find emerging trends that will become my findings. Through these findings, I hope to discover various benefits of humor in my art classroom to benefit the students of Saint Bernard Elementary School. The next chapter focuses on my research findings of incorporating humor and play in the art classroom.

Chapter IV: Results of the Study

Introduction

As a second year teacher, I have sporadically used humor in my classroom through lesson introductions and discussions. During presentations introducing new projects inspired by various themes and artists, I have shown parodies that correlate to what is being taught. For example, in a first grade lesson about Pointillism, I followed an image of Georges Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* with a parody of the painting with characters from the popular show *SpongeBob SquarePants*. Students loved the humorous image inspired by art and still remind each other about the "paintings made up of dots." Using rhyming phrases also helped students remember the artist and the movement, "dot...dot...like Seurat!" Inspired by the connection of humor, student enthusiasm, and the link to fine art, I wanted to create a classroom where humor was utilized in various roles of teaching. The study of humor in a visual arts classroom can play a role in fostering creativity (Klein, 2013). In addition to humor, I was curious if play could be used in school. Something usually enjoyed outside of the classroom, play could help enliven learning. Could a classroom grounded in humor and play be a positive and productive environment that engages students while promoting learning?

Facilitating this classroom space, I fell under the title of "trickster-pedagogue" or one who "believes that humor is a valuable source of knowledge and understanding, and both values and enjoys laughter" (Klein, 2013, p. 36). This teacher, that I would exemplify, would seek to direct student's engagement through humor (Klein, 2013). In the fall of 2013, while beginning my second year at St. Bernard's, I decided to test my

theory and create a classroom encouraging humor and play while embracing laughter, and promoting fun in school.

Art at Saint Bernard's Elementary School

The sky is still dark as I leave for work; another day of teaching has begun along with another day of morning traffic. I set out relatively early to allow ample amount of time on the roads, as St. Bernard's is a twenty-five minute commute from my apartment. During this time, as radio hosts chatter away, I reflect on the day ahead by sorting out my to-do list and reviewing my upcoming classes. Before I know it, I'm turning off of a busy road and down a long driveway towards St. Bernard's Elementary School, nestled behind the parish's church. In the mornings, students are dropped off by bus and enter through the cafeteria doors. I follow the stairs down into the cafeteria and am immediately greeted by a few second graders eagerly waiting to help teachers with their belongings. Carrying my large bags almost as big as their small frames, the students walk me away from the cafeteria along the long wide hallway. After passing a set of bathrooms, a prekindergarten classroom, rows of lockers, the maintenance room, and the seventh and eighth grade classrooms, we finally reach the art room. Fashioned with bright construction paper paint blobs, the art room door is propped wide open, welcoming all to a new day of learning.

The familiar smell of dried paint, construction paper, and crayons lingers each day in the art room greeting you with the smell of art. The sky, now a shade of periwinkle, contrasts the bright florescent lighting of the room. The back wall is lined with high thick windows, giving a unique view a foot off the ground. On fair weather days, students outside can be seen crouching down into the window to say hello during recess or can

get close up view of the lawn mower driving by. On quiet dewy mornings, a family of deer can be tranquilly spotted in the distance across the great lawn. Ample light fills the room, especially during the early hours at school, casting sunlight across four clusters of tables set strategically around the middle of the classroom.

Students are assigned seats at the color coordinated tables. Plastic supply totes and large papier-mâché colored pencils hang by fishing line over each table to identify the table colors of red, yellow, green, and blue. Students share the responsibility of keeping a clean workspace with their fellow table mates. Glossy brown tiles, scratched and worn in different areas, cover the floors. A mismatched array of cabinets and shelving units surround the space. Endless supplies, old magazines, and various props fill the shelves. On one cabinet, a group of manikins stand in poses like proud trophies. On another, sits a bright pink papier-mâché pig, Pablo Pigasso, the ever-loved classroom mascot (see Figure D). Plaster pizza slices, sock puppets, and a box decorated like a monster, all add to the art room menagerie.

To brighten the beige room, a row of cabinets have fresh paint for the school year; each sliding door hosts a different color of the rainbow. The top of those cabinets, which are splattered with dried paint, houses the classroom drying rack and supply storage drawers, all cheerfully labeled and accessible for student use. A vivid blue bulletin board, trimmed with a rainbow-scalloped border hangs on the wall over the long cabinets. A Word Wall, which covers half of the board, is home to the elements and principles of art. Here, students can find recognizable words and examples discussed in art lessons. The walls, which were newly updated with crisp paint for a school year, are beige on the bottom and white towards the top half. Plastered on the walls are handmade art posters

and charts, classroom rules, fine art reproductions, and motivational quotes from artists, athletes, and even Walt Disney.

The remaining two walls are lined with long white boards and a Smart Board. The white boards are filled with student doodles, lesson instructions, and important student reminders. Thin cork boarders on top of the boards are filled with pinned artist examples and student artwork that cascade in an organized fashion. In the opposite corner sits the teacher's desk, and like the student's tables, a large papier-mâché pencil dangles overhead. The desk is angled, overlooking the entire classroom. Behind the desk sits an old metal supply closet and two bookshelves filled with books, binders, and more supplies. To liven up the olive colored metal closet, I drew a large reproduction of Van Gogh's *Starry Night* using brightly colored window crayons. Hanging next to the desk along the whiteboard are rubrics, a behavior chart, and a game board. The game board, which vibrantly snakes around a large poster, is a way to track classroom behavior among grades. Each grade has a game piece that can move spaces on the game board based on good behavior, listening, and progress during each class. If a class makes it to the end of the game board, they are rewarded with a special art project. Exiting the classroom, above the clock, sits a sign that reads "Time flies when you're making art." Time can certainly escape us in the art room.

The morning passes by quickly while I scurry around the classroom getting supplies ready for the first few classes of the day. The room was not originally built as an art room, hence, the biggest obstacle I face is the lack of sink in the classroom. Luckily, bathrooms are located close to the art room for hand washing after messy projects. Students are always seen roaming the hallway with paint-covered fingers and oversized

smocks. After making a trip to the maintenance room sink to fill up water jugs, setting out paint palettes and brushes, and organizing class portfolios busting with student art, the loud speaker chimes with the morning announcements, signaling that the school day has officially started. The day is full with the sounds of clanking metal lockers, bubbling laughter, and the occasional student popping their head into my classroom to say hello or to borrow a pencil. Throughout the day teachers bring their students down to the art room for class. Like a long circus parade, children march in a straight line and juggle art boxes while slowly snaking their way through the crowd of older students. After being instructed to say hello by their teacher, students quietly file into the art room, taking their seats at their assigned spots.

Creating a Playful Environment

Before my research started I needed to focus on setting up my classroom for the new school year. For my second year teaching, I wanted to brighten up the classroom space with bright colors bulletin boards, fun artist reproductions, and quirky visuals (see Figure A). Along with the usual classroom rules, word wall, and anchor charts, I also felt the need to incorporate an area of my classroom devoted to my research. Since my research was about the benefits of humor and play in the art room, I thought it would be beneficial to create an environment that fully illustrates that plan. Physically, the classroom could promote humor, play, and interaction among students. To establish this environment, a few changes were made to my room layout and class design. Physically the classroom, the Comedy Corner was created.

Inspired by social media, where people can share inspiration, pictures, and thoughts, the Comedy Corner is an area in the classroom where students can post jokes

directly on the walls (see Figure B). Styled like an exposed brick wall using bright red construction paper, this area encourages students to share jokes, cartoons, and experience communal laughter in a noninvasive way as to not interrupt class time. The Giggle Gallery is an area in the corner for visual humor images (see Figure C). The gallery is host to Internet memes, cartoons inspired by famous artists, and student drawings. Students eagerly scan the walls for new material at the beginning or end of classes. By the end of my research the corner was full of punch-lined Post-It's, funny doodles, and magazine clips of silly advertisements.

Also in this area is the "I'm Done Activity Zone" which encompasses a short bookshelf with various cubbies filled with drawing paper, coloring and design sheets, books, puzzles, and card games (see Figure B). If students are finished with their work, they have the opportunity to work in The Zone. This Zone promotes independent play among students, giving them a chance to experience new media, different games, and art-based activities. The puzzles, some purchased or donated to the classroom, are of fine art reproductions, paint splatters, and color wheel charts. Outlined print outs of famous artworks are available for coloring. Design sheets allow students to create different popular items such as Lego people, shoes, sport jerseys, or sports cars. Wacky drawing scenarios are listed for students who want to draw, but need inspiration. Popular scenarios, which are added by students, include drawing a giant broccoli monster or a rock band made of animals. Card games were created using index cards and color copy images of fine art reproductions, two of each print. Students can play a memory game using the cards. Books are also available for students to read, highlighting various artists and movements.

Over the course of my research I found that the “I’m Done Activity Zone” is a way for students to try different projects using creative thinking. The independent play allows free choice of activity, which intends to engage and motivate additional learning and fun in the art room. For classroom management, The Zone eliminates excessive distractions from students finished with their artwork. With The Zone, students do not have to sit around the room aimlessly. Even with limited class time, projects are always at various stages of completion.

Other additions to the classroom that create a sense of play and humor are the various props I have collected or created over the course of two years. These props range from silly hats and papier-mâché sculptures to stuffed animals. These props are scattered throughout the classroom on top of bookcases, inside shelves, attached to the walls and even hanging from the ceiling (see Figure D). Pablo Picasso, the papier-mâché pig, gets moved around the classroom weekly. Students, especially in the younger grades, enter the classroom and wildly try to locate Pablo’s newest hiding spot. A pizza sculpture, made as a teacher example, is a popular talking point for students. A homemade purple fuzzy sock puppet dragon, Mr. Dragon, adds another sense of fun inside of the classroom as students joyfully play and interact with the puppet during free time. Hats are also a popular prop in the classroom. As teacher, I wear different hats during class time to add to the merriment and excitement of students. Students know and love the plastic fireman’s helmet that was a hand-me-down from a career day, and turkey hat, worn each year during the Thanksgiving time. Having a playful disposition as a teacher adds a flare of excitement and joy to any lesson.

Art classes are forty minutes long and taught once a week for each grade. This can

be challenging since school art scheduling can always change for mass at the church, any special school activities, or half days. At times, a class can miss art two or three weeks in a row due to various scheduling changes. Yet, classroom teachers are usually very accommodating if their class misses art time, meaning the classroom teacher will allow for her class to make up any missed art session due to scheduling differences. Teachers are very willing to switch around schedules to make sure that their classes get art.

Time is highly valuable in the art room. Class immediately begins with a review of the current lesson being taught. This review contains key information about the lesson, goals and objectives for the art making process, and the occasional demonstration on the materials being used. The materials are already laid out for students and the remainder of class time is largely made up of student art making. During that time, I make my way around the room, talking with students and aiding them with any assistance needed. At the end of class, students are responsible for cleaning their areas around their tables, putting materials back in their correct areas around the room, and piling their artwork in the drying rack. “Art goes by way too fast,” students occasionally sigh as they clean up. I bring closure to the class with a short review as students’ line up to be taken by their classroom.

In addition to the physical additions of play in the classroom, I experimented with a variety of classroom management strategies. In a usual class, the same few students raised their hands to answer questions, the same students would have side bar conversations, and the same few students would not talk at all. Games were used during discussions to build student engagement, motivation, and aid in class participation.

Plink. The sound of a marble hits the bottom of an empty plastic tub. I ask another

question to the class and all hands fly into the air. Students are eager to voice their opinions, answer questions, and add their thoughts to our conversation. *Plink*. Another student answers a question, another marble falls into the tub. Students are excited yet remain silent; all knowing that distracting chatter could result in a marble subtracted from the tub. The Marble Game, as the students named it, is a simple way to contain talking while encouraging participation. The more the students participate in class, the more marbles they will accumulate. Each class, students were excited to try and collect more marbles than the class prior. The aspect of competition, or getting more marbles each class, was exciting to students. This idea of a goal, working together to obtain more marbles, had students listening and active in class.

More chaotic, but nevertheless exciting and unique, was the yarn toss game. Student attentiveness was peaked right away, as I held the big bright blue ball of yarn in front of the class. Like kittens, their eyes expanded and their heads moved eagerly in each direction the ball moved as it was held securely in my grasp. The yarn ball was used as an experiment during class to combat excessive chattiness and calling out during lesson introductions and general art discussion.

During this game I tossed the yarn ball to whichever student answered a discussion question. When asked another question, a different student would answer, the former student would throw the ball to the new student while they held onto their part of the string. By the end of the discussion a blue gangly web of yarn laid about haphazardly around my classroom. "I think it got the class more involved and it was very fun," Jim wrote about his thoughts on the yarn game.

The only setback to this game was the amount of time it took away from class to

remind students to not tug or pull their sections of string. At times students appeared preoccupied with the string in their hands and where it lay. The game worked well with a small class size, giving students ample space for movement. Also, the limited amount of students allowed for all students to get a chance to answer questions and play the game. I solicited solid responses from the students, they kept talking out of turn to a minimum, and there were a lot of shared moments of laughter.

“Miss M,” Jim beckoned. “I just gotta tell you this joke!” Building a teacher-student rapport was the final puzzle piece to my playful classroom environment. Having known the sixth grade class for over a year, I had prior knowledge about their personalities, interests, and who they are as students. Saying hello in the hallway, asking about their weekend, talking about school, sharing a joke and laughter helped me build rapport with my students. Being approachable and accepting to students in this environment helped build the ground work for trust, understanding, and fun.

In this playful classroom environment students were able to not only express themselves through their art, but through jokes, stories, and the occasional song. Humorous stories were supported during class time and not looked down upon as a distraction. This philosophy, as I discovered, required some give and take which is discussed in Chapter 5. Creating an art classroom that was not stuffy or strict was an important goal of mine. An interactive space encouraged students to walk around the classroom, experiencing different games and jokes. These games, that required throwing yarn and having a discussion in an unconventional way, allowed students to be active and have fun, all while still learning. Many times during my study, students were so enthusiastic about what they were creating that they could not contain their out loud

laughter. Chuckles, cackles, snorts, and giggles formed a soundtrack for the sixth grade class.

The Sixth Grade Class

Choosing a class to participate in this study was a difficult decision. While each class has different variables that make them all unique, ultimately, the sixth grade was chosen for their small class size and age. As sixth graders, students are transitioning from the elementary level to the middle school division of the school.

The sixth grade class, the smallest in the school, is composed of nine students. In this class the boys barely outnumber the girls; five male students and four female students. Out of the nine students, six of them are “lifers” at St. Bernard’s, meaning they have attended the school since Kindergarten. Jim, Kathy, Michelle, Jack, Brian, and Chris (pseudonyms) have known each other for at least seven years. The remaining three students, Stacey, Vicki, and Alvin, were all new to St. Bernard’s last year. At first it took a while for the new students to become acquainted with the lifers. Last year there were many instances of isolated groups among the new students and the old veteran ones. New students generally sat with new students, while the veterans kept to themselves, reminiscing about things happening in prior years at school. This year, the group is more homogeneous, holding a strong familiarity with one another.

Sixth graders have art on Wednesday afternoons. Coming from their Spanish class across the school, the group often runs behind schedule. With their homeroom the floor above the art classroom, I can hear them bustle into their room to drop off their books; the loud charge of footsteps overhead lets me know they are on their way to art. Sure enough, seconds later, they excitedly enter the art room. In any given art class the scene

is always the same: students enter and chatter away about their previous class, television shows, or playfully tease each other. The classroom teacher drops them off, giving me forty minutes to refresh the students on their project, demonstrate any new materials that we will be using, allow for ample studio time, clean up with five minutes left, and quickly review the class session before their teacher promptly collects them.

In the past, during a typical art class, instruction was always interrupted by constant talking, calling out, and side conversations. While students were allowed to talk quietly during the art making process, many of the sixth graders had loud conversations with one another across the room to one another. The excessive talking affected the productiveness of students as well as took up time during class discussions. Through observing student interactions and classroom behavior I discovered how students reacted to humor and play in the classroom, and how changes in teaching strategies could influence student engagement and motivation in art. The following sections relate the findings of this study.

Student Perceptions of Humor and Play in School

While still a young teacher, I consider myself well versed in young audience interests, enjoying many of the television shows or musical groups that my students like. I began my research with a brief questionnaire about student perceptions on humor, specifically to uncover what the group thought to be funny. Through this I learned that many students have mixed thoughts about using humor, what they find is humorous, and their feelings about school and humor.

When asked about their thoughts about the chance to experiment with humor in school, all students were excited for the upcoming art unit. “I think it will make it more

fun,” one student wrote anonymously. “I am excited because it will be so much fun,” another wrote. Students connected the word humor to fun and implied that having fun would help create better experiences and excitement in school.

All students agreed that they enjoy sharing jokes, humor, and laughter with classmates and friends. Five of the nine also agree that laughter and humor can make them feel better if they are sad or angry; while the other four said that they somewhat agree. Only three students thought that they were funny: Stacey, Alvin, and Brian. The remaining six, Michelle, Cathy, Vicky, Kevin, Jim, and Will, felt that they were sometimes funny. When asked if some types of humor could be negative or hurt someone’s feelings, everyone but Kevin and Will answered that they agreed. Kevin, an outspoken student, was eager to share his favorite types of jokes on the first day of class, “Yo mamma ones are the best!” Will and Jim agreed and shared their favorite jokes like “Yo mamma’s so fat her blood type is Rocky Road.” This brought up a discussion point and the first rule of the classroom, there will be zero tolerance for negative humor. “But I wasn’t talking about someone’s real mom,” Kevin replied. “Negative jokes that you might think are funny... but they might just be mean and hurt someone,” Stacey chimed in. In the end, students all agreed that negative humor could make someone feel upset. To create a positive environment for open sharing and common laughter, negative humor would not be used in class.

“I just want to know what you do or find that is funny,” I explained while students were filling out the questionnaires. “What kinds of things do you like to watch on television?” Without hesitation Jim, Alvin, and Brian screamed in unison, “SpongeBob!” SpongeBob SquarePants is a popular cartoon on The Nickelodeon Channel. Featuring a

jovial talking fry cook sea sponge that lives in a pineapple house in the bottom of the ocean as a main character, *SpongeBob SquarePants* has been a popular show for over ten seasons. Students seemed very eager to share their thoughts and feelings about the wacky television show. Their eyes lit up with delight as they shared their favorite episodes. Could I channel this excitement and harness it in the classroom to aid in learning?

I was extremely excited to introduce this unit of humor and art to the sixth grade class. After working on the different lessons, discussion points, and homework assignments for a whole summer, I would finally get the chance to try it out in the art room. Students were running behind schedule on the first day of my research. Coming from Spanish, with a teacher new to the school, they showed up around ten minutes late. The students bustled in to the art room, and even before they took their seats the fire alarm rang out, signaling for students to exit the building. We hurried through the long hallway and out of the cafeteria into the warm fresh air. Already anxious over my unit, my research started out in an unplanned and chaotic way. As we made our way back into the building to the art room, I hoped that my research would not unfold this way-haphazard and slightly frenzied.

Back in the classroom after ten minutes, I was able to start my lesson titled: “The Modern *Mona Lisa*”. This lesson studies different ways people create parodies of famous works of art. In this lesson students learned about art history and contemporary popular culture, all infused with visual humor in the form of parody (see Appendix D). Students sat together at a table situated close to the Smart Board. For this lesson, I introduced information on the topic through an online presentation website called Prezi.com. An alternative to Power Point, Prezi allows for all presentation slides to be featured on one

unlimited digital canvas. The user has the ability to zoom into and out of various slides, threading together a flowing path of interactive and nonlinear bits of information. This presentation tool adds an aspect of play into the classroom. “Whoa,” is an instant student reaction upon seeing a presentation slide flip and zoom onto another slide. Throughout my experiences with Prezi I have noticed that students show a sense of engagement during the interactive presentations. This playful presentation tool was utilized during each class during my research for lesson introductions, class discussions, and to illustrate homework assignments.

“Has anyone ever heard of Leonardo da Vinci before?” I asked students with blank expressions on their faces. “He’s a Ninja Turtle.” Will smiled. “Leonardo...” Completely thrown off and impressed with his quick wit, I burst out laughing, holding my hand out for a high five. The other students laughed as Brian begins to sing the theme song to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles show.

“Yes, well, the Mutant Ninja Turtles, they were named after four famous artists,” I began introducing da Vinci quickly after the short humorous interaction. This playful banter allowed for students to make connections between the Renaissance artist, Leonardo da Vinci, and the crime fighting television character, Leonardo. Jim furthered the connection between the artists and the show as he reflected on a religion test where students had to know the name of the artist who painted the *Sistine Chapel*. “Michelangelo,” he said with a grin. These students had made their own visual culture connections to art history. Through this data, I learned that these small connections added into a lesson introduction can help students remember important details due to their personal connections with the subject matter.

Continuing through the lesson introduction students learned about the mystery and history behind the painting of the *Mona Lisa*, her safeguarded space at the Louvre in Paris, and the painting's infamous place in visual culture as one of the world's most recognizable pieces of art. Students also learned that the *Mona Lisa* also inspired parodies. I flipped to the next slide which caused an eruption of laughter from the class. Students chuckled and called out in glee as their attention perked over the sight of different humorous images and renderings of the *Mona Lisa*. "A parody," I explained, "imitates or exaggerates something. It can be a parody of a song, a movie, or even a painting." The students could barely contain their excitement over this part of the Prezi presentation as this section showed a variety of parodies all inspired by the *Mona Lisa* including those below.

The parodies shown during this lesson introduction highlighted a variety of scenarios that juxtaposed the image of the *Mona Lisa*. One parody took *Mona Lisa* out of the old portrait, putting her face onto the façade of the United States landmark of Mount Rushmore. An additional modern parody showed a bright red drum kit that is superimposed into the original image of the painting, giving the illusion that *Mona Lisa* is playing the drums while getting her portrait painted. Another parody that students enjoyed was the *Mona Lisa* made by buttons, an unconventional art material. A parody painted by contemporary artist Romero Britto was entitled *Mona Cat*. In this parody, *Mona Lisa* is a cartoon cat painted with bright colors and bold shapes, signature to the artist's style. Similar to *Mona Cat*, *Mona Lisa* is transformed into the popular cartoon character, SpongeBob SquarePants, in a popular culture parody.

Student reactions to parody as a form of visual humor were unanimously positive.

The thoughts and reactions of the students were recorded and analyzed. From my research I collected the following thoughts on parody:

- “They were laugh out loud funny.” –Cathy
- “They are really fun to look at.” –Stacey
- “*SpongeBob Mona Lisa* made the picture into a TV character everyone knows.” – Will
- Kevin liked the parodies because it took “boring stuff and made it funny.”
- In parodies “you are combining something old and something hilarious,” Vicki explained.

Students believed that majority of the parodies that were shown of the *Mona Lisa* were humorous. 8 of the 9 students found the SpongeBob parody to be most humorous. SpongeBob was Jim’s favorite *Mona Lisa* parody because “SpongeBob is not that smart and fancy.” The juxtaposition of this television character in a formal and more serious setting such as a painting from the 1500’s made for a humorous, somewhat ironic, parody. Jim also stated that he thought SpongeBob was so humorous because it was in the style of the original painting but contained imagery from the famed television show. While students were able to recognize the television character, they were also able to make the connection to the *Mona Lisa* due to the similar imagery. “It’s something that everybody knows about,” Brian explained. This connection, as I learned, would be an important aspect to obtaining student interest and engagement in art.

The subject of SpongeBob SquarePants was a reoccurring discussion topic in this project and during different times during this unit on humor. Students expressed their obsessions with the cartoon television show even before they were shown images of the

main character in the *Mona Lisa* parody. Dubbed a “popular culture tsunami” SpongeBob SquarePants shows capture over fifteen million viewers a week (Rice, 1092). A top rated children’s show aimed at children between ages 2-11, SpongeBob SquarePants contains a mixture of good humored fun, lessons, and nautical nonsense. The slapstick style of humor, infused with life lessons, helps audiences identify with “a silly little sponge who tries his best to live a good and respectable life (Rice, p. 1106). From this data I learned that SpongeBob, and other visual culture icons, are popular among adolescents. This popularity and familiarity of the shows or subjects can engage students. This engagement in class discussions or in a subject matter can help students gain awareness and motivation. Hence, harnessing popular culture in lessons can be used as a positive teaching strategy in school. Parodies, as it was shown, were a way to bring visual culture and humor into my lesson.

While the students laughed out loud at the parodies shown of the *Mona Lisa*, they were not laughing at the original painting by Leonardo da Vinci. The students showed an increased interest in the lesson and discussion when parodies were shown. When I inquired about their thoughts on the infamous painting, all of the students said that the painting was not visually funny. Asked to anonymously write their opinions on the *Mona Lisa*, students shared their thoughts. “This is not funny. It looks very serious. I think the parodies are funny. But, the *Mona Lisa* is really not funny AT ALL. Lisa is very serious.” The tone was similar throughout their responses. Many students perceived the original painting to be very serious and seriousness, as my research showed, meant not funny. Funny scenes in art, as it was emerging, would encompass outrageous scenarios. “If you were to put, like, a flying cow in the painting, then it would be funny.” Although students

did not find the original painting to be funny, they were very eager to be creating their funny parodies.

From the brainstorm activity and beyond, students stayed motivated through the various stages of the art making process. With a task of creating their own parody of the *Mona Lisa* in a modern context, students had the opportunity to draw a variety of settings and scenarios for Lisa, as we referred to her, based on their interests during the 21st century. From drawing Lisa enjoying local sporting events and concerts, to experiencing modern day foods and activities, the sixth graders created a wide variety of parodies all reflecting their own personalities (see Figures E, F, and G).

“*Mona Lisa* at the Bills game,” Jim would proudly boast over his concept. “I love the Bills!” Jim, a huge sports fan, can always be heard discussing the latest football or hockey game, especially during art class. Over the past two years, Jim has run into different issues staying motivated in various subjects in school. Classroom teachers struggle to get Jim to finish his work, stop talking, or focus during lessons. Last year Jim’s art work would slowly pile up, half finished, due to his disinterest in school. “She’s gonna have a Bill’s jersey on, a chicken wing hat, and a cola in her hand. She’s gonna be like YOOOOOOOOOOO!” Jim’s interests were reflected in his art choices as a fan of chicken wings, football games, and soda pop. Decked out wearing the team colors, face paint, and wearing a #1 fan foam finger Jim’s parody of the *Mona Lisa* possesses pride in his fandom of his favorite professional football team and sports player (see Figure E). Jim was excited to have the chance to portray his passions in his art work. During this project, Jim was engaged in the subject matter and motivated to finish his artwork.

Stacey, a quiet but creative sixth grader, enjoys popular trendy music. Her

favorite band that she is self proclaimed “obsessed” with is the British boy-band group One Direction. Like many girl students in the school, Stacey’s notebooks, folders, and even her locker is full of images of the band members and their song lyrics. On dress down days, Stacey can always be seen wearing her newest band t-shirt. Her *Mona Lisa* parody reflected her interest in the band and their music (see Figure F). “Big surprise there,” Jim, her table mate, joked when she revealed her idea. “I got to dress her up like she was going to a One Direction concert,” Stacey explained. “Well, I thought it would be funny to see *Mona Lisa* at a One Direction concert and meet a band member!” Lisa, in this parody, is wearing modern fashions, such as skinny jeans and make up. Like Stacey, she is proudly wearing her One Direction t-shirt. Next to her stands one of the members of the boy band which reflects Stacey’s own dreams of one day meeting the musicians. This drawing of Stacey’s that depicted her wish of the future coincides with Brent and Marjorie Wilson’s account on the basic reasons children draw (1982). Children draw to document the present or anticipate the future that is compelling to them (Wilson & Wilson, 1982). Stacey enjoyed learning about parodies and experiencing a variety of parodies because “they were really fun to look at.”

Cathy, a long term member of the group, is a friend to all. Always enthusiastic and outgoing, Cathy wanted to express her love of soccer in her parody. “Mine can play soccer!” Wilson and Wilson (1982) also discuss that children draw to capture their reality, something that is present in Cathy’s art. She immediately exclaimed upon learning about the assignment. “I play soccer!” Her parody was drawn wearing a colorful soccer uniform (see Figure G). A detailed drawing, the figure is standing on a soccer field, a net shown in the distance. Wanting to add a personal touch to her parody, Cathy

decided to color Lisa's hair blonde, like hers. Another detail in this drawing is Lisa's jersey number, 93. This is also Cathy's number on her soccer team. This parody helped others learn about Cathy's interests outside of school. Cathy thought that the parody was the most humorous assignment in his unit. "They were laugh out loud funny," she wrote.

Through this lesson and art making process, students were able to create humorous drawings inspired by the famous image of the *Mona Lisa*. Students learned about art history through discussions on Leonardo da Vinci, life in the 1500's, and the painting's significance. Dialogues about modern parodies of the painting connected humor and contemporary visual culture to the lesson. This project, well valued by students, allowed them to express themselves, humors, and their interests through this art making opportunity. Their interests and popular culture influences were important components in creating an engaging and exciting classroom experience for both the students and me. Children find pleasure, amusement, and interest in looking at visual humor in popular culture (Klein, 1997). Popular culture or what is popular to the culture of a sixth grader would become an important factor in gauging the relevant humors and experiences shared in my art classroom.

The Student Relevant Experience

Throughout this study I was trying to teach students about art and develop art skills while infusing my lessons with humor and play. I introduced various artists that created art founded in humor, art that could make students laugh, and humor inspired by art. From my data I found that some of the art that I thought was humorous was not humorous to the sixth grade participants. While the student perceptions of humor was thought to be a positive addition to the classroom, finding instances of humor that could

be taught in art was, at times, a challenge. Each class session in this unit focused on a different artist. For about five minutes before each class we discussed the work or works in a class wide forum. Students learn about the work and share their thoughts and perceptions about the humor portrayed.

In a painting by Jehan Georges Vibert, c. 1890, a humorous scene unfolds between a Cardinal and chef in a late nineteenth century kitchen. Students did not find the setting of the *Marvelous Sauce* to be humorous. Jim said that the background, the copper toned regal kitchen, was too serious and fancy. In the painting, a Cardinal has made a pot of sauce. He proudly smiles, as the chef who has tasted the sauce looks slightly revolted. We discussed the characters' gestures and expressions. "The Cardinal looks like he's pleased and the chef's kinda like yea this is real bad," Stacey described her thoughts behind the two subjects. In this painting, Vibert criticizes the clergy by hinting that instead of consuming time in a kitchen, focus should be on their work. Even after discussing the story behind the work students did not comprehend the message Vibert was subtly suggesting. This level of abstract thinking falls into formal operations in Piaget's developmental levels (McLeod, 2009). The idea may have been too sophisticated for students, even though the concept was explained. This data informed me that students were not ready for this level of abstraction.

Many students were more eager to share what they thought the chef and Cardinal were thinking, creating clever stories about sauce cook offs, drama, and jealousy. Brian, unsure of his feelings about the painting, shrugged. "I think the artist made this because he was very hungry. Yea and he was in the mood for spaghetti."

Students are more likely to find something humorous that is slapstick or parody,

something more visually funny rather than find the hidden meanings and innuendos of humor in art. And the reasons might be in their developmental level as explained in the comment.

Another classroom discussion highlighted work by Robert Therrien, a contemporary artist creating two-dimensional drawings and three-dimensional sculptures. The piece shown to students was a massive replica of a metal beige folding table and chairs. The table stands at over ten feet tall, as the structure was three and a half times larger than a standard table and chairs. The scale of the work, which makes the viewer feel overwhelmingly miniature standing under this giant table, is humorous and surreal. The images, shown to students, began with the table and chairs shown in an empty gallery room. Students were unaware of the scale of the piece at the beginning of the discussion. For my questioning sequence, asking one question at a time was the best strategy to obtain information from all students to break down the elements in the artwork and obtain information from all students. When developing these questions I think through how to ask the best way possible to make the question clear. Then I ask probing questions that become more and more specific to each person's response. The following conversation ensued. (Throughout class transcriptions I refer to myself as Miss M.)

Miss M: “What are your thoughts on this image of a table and chairs?”

Cathy: “It’s kind of boring.”

Miss M: “Kind of boring- and why do you say boring?”

Cathy: “Well, because it’s just a table and chairs. It’s not really exciting.”

Kevin: “It’s boring because people sit at tables for long hours and talk about things... but most of the time it’s business.”

Miss M: “What do you think Robert is trying to tell us about this table and chairs?”

Kevin: “I think it’s a cry for help that he’s really bored.”

Miss M: “What would you think if you walked into a gallery and saw this table and chairs?”

Brian: “I think its art because they put it in a gallery. They wouldn’t put ‘not art’ in a gallery...”

After discussing the image of the table and chairs in the empty gallery space, I flipped to the next slide which showed me standing under the structure. The class burst out in laughter.

Miss M: “What if I told you that this isn’t an ordinary table and chairs. It’s in a gallery but there’s something special about it... its massive! It is giant!”

Cathy: “That’s awesome!”

Miss M: “The artist is playing with scale. Does the play on scale, making something larger, does it change the art? Does it make it more humorous?”

Stacey: “I think so because it’s funny to see a tiny person against a giant chair.”

Kevin: “Um, you’d think it was a regular table and chairs but you’d never guess that you could go under it.”

The students found humor in the scale of the art. While they believed that the subject matter was boring, the size of the object was deemed funny. The outrageousness of the art, a giant table and chairs, juxtaposed in a typically serious setting, made students laugh- the creation of an outrageous, unbelievable, and out of the ordinary surrealist experience. Students enjoyed how some artists make things funny by being outrageous

and exaggerating things. Reflecting on my own teaching, I have used exaggerations and outrageous behaviors during discussions to be humorous. For example, when discussing the French artist Henri Matisse, I have introduced the lesson with a faux French accent while wearing a fake mustache. I believe that by increasing these scenarios I could strengthen the notion of play and humor in my classroom.

Boring subject matter but humorous idea... after this class I found myself struggling over what kind of art students would find completely humorous. Data collection had shown me that some art that I found funny was not amusing for the same reasons to students. Students labeled paintings from older periods of time as serious imagery describing them and the table and chairs as boring. Even in the *Mona Lisa* project, students did show interest in the original painting of the *Mona Lisa*, primarily engaging with the modern parodies of the painting. Even more so students were connected to their art when creating their own parodies of drawing Lisa participating in recreation that was relevant to them. At that point, I wondered whether more contemporary art imagery be more appealing to the sixth graders? I decided to introduce Surrealist works.

Surrealism, an art movement full of wacky and outrageous imagery from the 1930s, captured student's attention. Salvador Dali's dreamlike images that are realistically painted balance fantasy and reality. Dali's artwork was broken down by students during an introduction for their second project. Students focused in on the different images and objects in his work. "I think it's kind of funny because you don't have that serious of an image with that nose and eye lashes and melted clocks," Michelle said referring to Dali's painting, *The Persistence of Memory*. Although students thought

the images were somewhat funny, Dali's style of painting still did not connect with some students. "I don't know about everyone else," Kevin said while discussing *Swans Reflecting Elephants*, "but I like brighter pictures and colors and these are pretty dark and hard to find everything. And I like it because a guy just paints swans that have reflections of elephants that no one would ever think of and it's different." Vicky's favorite humor topic was the Surrealist lesson. "It is not real and doesn't make any sense and it was my favorite because of the wackiness. The tone in the work, while dreamlike, still fell under the label of serious art due to the style in which was painted and the choice of images in the work.

After the Dali discussion, I introduced Eric Joyner's work, c. 2000-present, to students establishing a connection between the Surrealist images from 1930's art history to the contemporary world of art. Joyner's paintings depict toy robots personified in human like scenarios. Included in the bright and cheerful paintings are images of donuts and other toys, things that the artist enjoys. Immediately students were excited over Joyner's work.

- "Whoa! He has motorcycles, robots, and donuts in his art!" –Will
- "I see a robot driving a really cool motorcycle in front of giant donuts!" –Cathy
- "It looks humorous because it's a robot driving a motorcycle with a patch of donuts behind it. Like, it looks outrageous." –Michelle

When asked to compare the work of Joyner to Dali's, students heavily favored Joyner's playful compositions.

- "I liked the robot one because he's more funny." –Vicky

- “It’s a robot riding a motorcycle, jumping over a donut. Come on, that’s funny! I am obsessed with donuts!” –Stacey
- “I like him more than Salvador Dali because you can actually see what’s going on. You can see what’s happening instead of trying to figure it all out.” -Michelle

“Um, well, it’s stuff we like,” Will quietly spoke up. “Yea,” a chorus of students agreed. “We know what it is, over the older stuff in the paintings. Like headphones,” Jim explained. While both artists painted dreamlike and off-the-wall imagery, students favored Joyner’s contemporary paintings due to the bright colors and modern objects. Toys, donuts, and motorcycles are images relevant and accessible to students. Students could recognize and make connections to the images in Joyner’s paintings. So students’ preferred the contemporary Surrealist art over the art from the 1930’s due to the recognizable kid culture images.

For the art making part of the lesson students created their own Surrealist painting personifying robots inspired by Eric Joyner’s work (see Appendix E). Again, like the Modern *Mona Lisa* project, students had the choice to create any scene that they wanted. As recorded in my field notes, students seemed excited to paint their Surrealist scenes of this playful task.

Students brainstormed various mundane activities in which people partake. The assignment asked them to personify robotic toys into everyday scenarios to create a sense of Surrealism to their paintings as Joyner’s work. Michelle chose to paint her robot grocery shopping (see Figure H). The robot, which fills the large picture, is browsing a wide variety of donuts. “It’s like he’s food shopping, but only wants to buy donuts,” Michelle explained when drawing her concept. “I love donuts,” she gushed during one

class discussion. The variety of donuts that Michelle drew correlated with her obsession over the sweet treat. The close cropped image in her painting was a unique aspect about her painting, as other students chose to create a full scene.

Will focused on adding numerous details in his artwork. Will, a basketball fanatic, chose to incorporate one of his favorite sports in his artwork. In Will's scene, a group of robots play basketball against each other in the RBA, or Robot Basketball Association (see Figure I). In my observations I noticed that Will showed increased focus on this artwork even with all of the details he had created. Mirroring his own life, Will, a player on the school's basketball team, painted the floor in the style of the school's gym. This work, as I recorded, was highly favored by the other students in class. They enjoyed the details of the robot figures, from the players on the court to the broadcasters on the sideline.

Similar to his work on the parody projects, Jim was inspired by his own personal interests, specifically sports. "He's going to be shooting a free throw, but instead of a ball, he throw a donut," the personification of the robot as an athlete made Jim laugh (see Figure J). Jim's artwork, like the parody, was also lacked details in the background space. While he had added fewer details than Will, the fact that Jim finished his drawing and painting in this artwork showed his continued interest and motivation in this project. In my field notes I also observed that throughout this project Jim stayed in his seat and was consistently on task. Having a project that incorporated student interests and humor allowed for students to stay engaged in their artwork and stay committed to their final product.

I observed an increase in productivity during this lesson. This talkative group would usually work slowly, taking their time and chattering away with one another. At times, I noticed that motivation was increased as students were enjoying their project and felt the need to finish it with fine craftsmanship. Students created art at a faster rate even with the larger scale paper and watercolor materials. This playful and imaginative project added engagement and excitement to the art room.

Humorous Homework

Sketchbook assignments are an important aspect in the art curriculum this year for all of the upper grades in school. Each semester, five sketches are due for a grade in art. I decided to give separate assignments to the sixth grade that reflect the humor unit. After introducing a different set of sketchbook assignments to other grades at school that were not a part of the humor unit, I was expecting to be welcomed with a cascade of groans by the sixth graders. I was surprised that the students were actually excited for their homework assignments.

With a limited amount of time in the college course, the homework assignments allowed students to explore various realms of visual humor. Each week at the end of each class, students learn about their assignment and see some images supporting their task. Assignments ranged from illustrating a joke to creating a caricature self-portrait. Overall, the students welcomed each assignment and completed them on time.

“They were fun to draw, especially the wacky scenario,” Vicky shared her favorite homework assignment. “I got to draw anything I wanted, but wacky!” The wacky scenario was inspired by an activity in the “I’m Done Zone.” A long piece of paper hangs on the wall filled with various drawing ideas, often including wacky and

humorous scenarios. If a student does not know what to draw, they can refer to the list. Scenarios featured on the list include broccoli monsters attacking a city to a rock band made up of animal musicians. Vicky's wacky scenario featured a unicorn drumming on a book in my classroom. This assignment, which focused on the creation of abstract and off the wall art, embodied slapstick humor. In my observations and analysis of this homework assignment, I found that students responded well to this type of humor. Creating slapstick humor in the form of a wacky scenario allowed students to gain a different idea of homework, a fun one.

Some students created detailed drawings for their homework. This commitment to their assignments showed their enthusiasm with the projects. Will created a multiple-faceted drawing for his William Wegman inspired homework assignment. For this homework students learned about Wegman, the contemporary photographer who features his dogs, in human like poses, as the subjects of his work. Each student received an image of a dog head. Their task was to draw the human like pose for their dog. Will's drawing featured a dog hockey player (see Figure K). Will incorporated his love of sports in this artwork, capturing his favorite team and player represented through the dog. This assignment, similar to the personification in the Surrealism painting project, allowed for students to create a dreamlike image. For this project introduction I observed students enjoying the silliness of Wegman's work. "It's a dog with a wig," Vicky giggled. "Dogs don't wear those types of things!"

"They were all super fun but, I hate homework," Jim stated. Jim's favorite homework assignment was illustrating a joke. "What is a witch's favorite subject?" he asked holding up his work. "Spelling!" Jim laughed over his play on words. He was very

detailed in his homework, replacing a typical witch's broom with a pencil. Jokes that were play on words were frequently posted in the Comedy Corner section of the classroom.

Only one student, Kevin, stated that he found the homework assignments not humorous. "I don't like homework," he said. Kevin was the only student who also did not complete each homework assignment. He only handed in two of the five assignments. This, as I found, is a common occurrence with this student in his other classes. Never the less, as whole, students seemed to enjoy the humorous twist to their weekly drawing assignments. Kevin's joke illustration highlighted his love for Chuck Norris jokes (see Figure L). Chuck Norris, a television actor, is the subject of notorious jokes. These jokes are satirical one-liners that exaggerate the martial artist's toughness. "When Chuck Norris cuts onions, the onions cry." Kevin's joke implies that instead of crying when cutting onions, tough Chuck Norris makes the inanimate vegetable cry.

Throughout this study I became aware that Chuck Norris jokes were highly popular among the male students in the class, while female students did not have any knowledge of who the actor was. The male students valued exaggerated humor, while the female students gravitated towards the play on words jokes.

Overall, I noticed that students had a positive disposition about the homework assignments, with Kevin as a partial exception. While Kevin did state that he enjoyed adding Chuck Norris to his illustration, Kevin still rated the homework assignments as not humorous in a wrap up questionnaire. Although I do not know if Kevin wrote this to maintain a reputation in class, the questionnaire was written and I did not hear him say his thoughts on the homework out loud. Nevertheless, students were eager to learn about

their next visual humor assignments in addition to the classroom projects. Cathy described the overall homework assignments as very humorous and “laugh out loud” funny. After each assignment was due, students would have the opportunity to hang their visual humor creations in the Giggle Gallery. From my observations students were as excited to create their homework as they were to post and share it with others. Sharing laughter and these humorous homework assignments were an additional aspect to adding humor into the whole learning process.

The Seriousness of Humor

Throughout my research class discussions and student interactions brought about various instances in which humor was used to explore serious themes and topics, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Using humor in the form of visual images and art work allowed for the discussion of modern issues and topics in the art room.

Parodies, as seen in the lesson on the Modern *Mona Lisa*, can modernize artworks with current themes while adding a humorous twist. Students showed an increase in engagement in the subject matter when parodies were used as visual examples. Likewise, parodies can be used to aid in discussions about serious topics, open up forums on present issues or concerns in society and the world.

The sixth graders piled into class and habitually took their seats. The design of the class, where we discuss different humorous artworks before continuing the art making process, was becoming customary to the students. The Smart Board was on and beaming a reproduction of Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s 1881 painting the *Luncheon of the Boating Party*. The scene depicts a group of friends relaxing on a balcony. Dressed in fashion from the time, these party goers seem to be talking with one another on a beautiful

summer day.

Approaching discussion on this artwork, students were not told any details of the artist nor of the painting. As a class we began our discussion by talking about what was happening in the painting and the student's observations of the scene and subjects.

Miss M: "What do you all think?"

Kevin: "I don't know... maybe they are all on a cruise. Like, they are just talking to each other."

Miss M: "What would it sound like here?"

Cathy: "I think it would sound all happy... and festive!"

Miss M: "Would you want to be there?"

Vicky: "Yea, it seems like a really relaxing party!"

Miss M: "Nice, if you went to this party what would you bring?"

Will: "Chicken wings because it looks like they have boring food."

An observation was made that the students were eager to make assumptions about the painting, discussing the relaxing and festive atmosphere of the painting. Will's comment, about the food, shows his attention to detail in the painting. Once student knowledge of the painting grew and developed, I showed them a contemporary parody of the painting. This parody, which contained the original painting of the *Luncheon of the Boating Party*, had laptops, cellular phones, and tablets added into the image. Instead of friends gathered together talking, this parody depicted people more consumed with their technology than each other.

Miss M: "This is a parody of the art. What do you see in this picture?"

Alvin: “I think it’s kind of a technology convention thing. There are people on computers. One has a headset on.”

Miss M: “Alvin’s picking out things he sees that are in this image, excellent. What is the artist of this parody trying to say?”

Stacey: “He’s trying to show how times have changed...”

Michelle: “This art is about...trying to tell us that the whole world has changed since technology came in, like now everyone, instead of talking to everybody, they like, just play on their phones or computers rather than being a guest.”

Cathy: “It’s funny!”

Miss M: “Why is it funny?”

Cathy: “He took our modern technology from today and made it fit in a long time ago.”

Miss M: (referring to an image of the original painting) “Can you imagine yourself in there?”

Kevin: “No, too fancy.”

Jim: “You’ll have to drink tea with your pinky up!”

Miss M: “Do you see yourself in the parody more?”

Jim: “Yea!”

After analyzing this data I have concluded that many fine art parodies can open up classroom discussions about contemporary issues or subjects in modern culture. This parody of *Luncheon of the Boating Party* focused on the issue of technology invading personal connections and human interaction. Students were able to analyze the original painting, depicting an engaged social gathering. They also analyzed the parody, which

showed how technology can limit public communication. Through discussion, students were able to talk about how technology, while important, can consume a person's time, especially when in the presence of others. Students were able to compare and contrast the two images, highlighting the fact that this is an issue in today's society.

“Humor permeates our culture, in fun and play, in social and political commentary, and to relieve our daily and existential duress” (Dreishpoon, D., Grachos, L., Pagel, D., & Pesanti, H., 2012).” Humor, which is present in our lives, can comment on politics, social issues, and can help lighten daily pressures. Satirical art was used in the classroom to aid in the discussion of exposing additional concerns in society for the means of improvement. Satire is a type of humor that is used to expose and criticize issues in modern culture. Banksy, the illusive British graffiti artist, creates satirical street art portrays stenciled images that engage political and social themes. This form of satire was shown to students, opening up a forum of discussions on illegal graffiti and using art to voice your opinion and create improvement in the world.

A Banksy graffiti image of a vandalized a parking lot sign was shown to students. The word Parking was painted in bright red on the side of a white brick building, identifying a black top lot to be a parking lot in a city area. Banksy painted over the *-ing*, leaving the word Park on the wall. A girl, stenciled with black and white paint, carelessly swings from the letter A.

Miss M: “A lot of times Banksy will take something from normal life and change it by adding graffiti. This image is over a parking lot, but what did he do here?”

Will: “Um, it said PARKING, like a parking lot, but he covered up the ‘ING’ so now it just says PARK.”

Miss M: “Excellent! This area of land was plowed over and they made a parking lot. What do you think Banksy is trying to tell us with this?”

Kevin: “Um, well, if they had a park, people can use it. Maybe he’s saying that this should be a park.”

Students were able to break down Banksy’s satirical art to gain what meaning he was making from his art about society after discussing the elements of the artwork. In this image, he was making a commentary about the importance of land for parks and recreation rather than another parking lot. Through humorous art students can discuss these issues and raise their awareness and feelings on subjects in society.

Conclusion

Establishing a humorous and playful classroom environment in the art room was an exciting and rewarding experience. The most important part was creating lessons that involved using relevant humor to engage and motivate students. Students in a playful environment, with a curriculum grounded in humor, shared laughter, creativity, and inspiration. After sorting through and analyzing my data, I came upon some important findings.

The following chapter will further interpret these findings and discuss what I have learned as a teacher from creating and teaching this humor unit. In addition, I make recommendations that I believe will be beneficial to for further research.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

As a teacher I feel a strong commitment to the school where I work. I am always looking forward to a new day at St. Bernard's. Every day is exciting. From the warm and friendly hallways and the smell of the wooden floors in the gym to the cheerful sounds of laughter coming from the cafeteria and the comfort of my own art room, St. Bernard's is a second home. As a teacher, I strive to build a strong foundation through education all-the-while trying to make learning fun and exciting to students.

When coming up with a topic for my research, the problem I wanted to investigate was right in front of me. Students often perceive school as being a dull experience. "School is boring," a thought students were eager to share on the subject of school. I was familiar with that phrase which passed through my lips when I was a student too. What I saw was a lack of enthusiasm and motivation about the art program at St. Bernard's School. Last year, when I began teaching, I was determined to change those attitudes about school.

I wanted to excite students about the amazing world of art so I set out to explore humor in developing curriculum and as a teaching strategy in my art classroom. Through classroom design and assignments I created a curriculum founded in humor. Using the backwards design method (McTighe & Wiggins, 2005), I focused on the learning outcomes of my lessons when designing the humor curriculum. I wanted students to learn about humorous art, experience and create humor in the classroom, and understand that artists can use humor to express their thoughts. With these outcomes in mind I narrowed down which art I would show students and created lessons to meet those goals. Also of

significance was to discover the benefits of using humor and play in the classroom in regards to student engagement, motivation, and responses on the curriculum. Finally, I wanted to ascertain what I, as the teacher, could learn from researching and teaching humor and play in art. I learned many positive and exciting revelations, all which will be implemented throughout my career as an educator.

Humor and Play Generate Student Engagement and Motivation

This unit on humor and art was founded in humor and play brought about endless laughter, student motivation, and jovial community in the art classroom. At the end of my research, students filled out a final questionnaire summarizing their thoughts and feelings about the unit. The word fun filled their papers in reference to the projects completed in class: “I thought it was very humorous because we had fun lessons,” Vicki wrote. Stacey said she had a lot of fun doing the projects. “It is the best art class ever,” Kevin wrote. “Anytime we have art it makes it fun!” Michelle was in agreement, “I liked it because I loved the fun projects and homework.” The lessons, grounded in student interests, as Michelle also wrote helped motivate the group: “We didn’t just sit around and do things we didn’t want to do. “Alvin even described the unit as “super fun.”

The artists viewed captivated students. To Vicki, the unit “was wacky and fun, we looked at a lot of artists’ work.” The unit brought about excitement, as described by Alvin it “makes art awesome and fun.” The discussion format for class, where I would introduce different artists featuring humor or play in the unit, allowed students to see different art and learn about a variety of artists. “I did not know about any of the artists before you showed them to me,” Jim stated. “You showed us a lot of art,” Will agreed.

Vicki explained that humor and play changed her views of school: “It (in reference to school) is usually just learn, learn, learn. This is funny and enjoyable.”

Michelle also stated that the fun aspect of the unit “made school not boring.” Alvin stated that laughter and humor in lessons “makes school fun to come to.” “It made school less boring,” Will added. Jim wholeheartedly agreed that humor made class more fun. “All week our days are so boring,” he wrote. “But on Wednesday I look forward to coming to art because you are so funny.”

The shared opportunity for laughter was also a discussion point in the questionnaire. “It was cool because lots of people laughed,” Cathy wrote. “A lot of people laughed.” Shelby enjoyed how the class was able to joke around in class, “we get to mess around and do fun stuff.” Students were also in unanimous agreement that they would like to continue with humor in art. “It makes art funner,” Alvin explained. Stacey would also like to continue the unit so that “we could do more fun things.” Michelle shared that she “would like to continue with humor in art.” All students answered yes to the statement that they would like to continue with humor in art. “How could other aspects of school, or other subjects, use humor or play in their classes?”

When discussing the other classes in school that was humorous, many students expressed their love for a particular lesson from their math class. “Ms. Timber tried to throw Kevin’s desk out of the window while teaching us math,” Stacey, Michelle, and Cathy shared. “Our teacher lets us spit when saying ‘ths’ on numbers. I liked it,” Alvin explained. I caught up with Ms. Timber later and asked her about the lesson. She said that example always excites her classes because it’s an outrageous example that peaks students imagination. The wild thought helps students remember what the lesson is about.

These examples, while unconventional, are scenarios that are playful and add a different level of excitement to a general lesson.

From this data, I found that students enjoyed the unit on humor in the classroom. Bursting into the art room each week with smiles on their faces, the first question asked would be “what are we going to look at today?” So much for the staunch faces and seriousness that many teachers feel is necessary to “keep students in line.” This research taught me that by adding humor to my classroom and curriculum, students became enthused to learn. While a place for seriousness is important in a classroom, we might all do well to embrace humor and play as equally important.

Throughout this study I observed the work patterns of each student. Having previous knowledge of their classroom behaviors and work production, I found that students were more engaged with their work during this lesson on humor and play. Students who would normally talk for a majority of the class time and lack art production were focused on working on their projects. Students who had a difficult time finishing their art showed determination to complete their art goals. Based on this change in student attitudes, I conclude that this research project, creating a humorous and playful classroom and curriculum, was a well received change for the sixth grade participants. Student questionnaires overwhelmingly showed that students thought their lessons and projects were fun, enjoyable, and humorous. Without humor, I do not believe that a playful classroom environment would be possible. Likewise, a humorous classroom would need aspects of play to be humorous. Seeing this positive response in my classroom, I will be continuing and expanding various aspects of my research in each of

my classes. This concept on humor and play in art education will be further explored in various aspects of my teaching.

Humor and Play Teaching Tools

Incorporating humor into the classroom as a teaching tool was a helpful addition to the classroom. Using humorous art, as I found, helped create a sense of excitement in class. Cartoons and parodies of famous art were used to make connections to art history during discussions. By adding these into my lessons, I noticed an increase in student awareness of the art as well as retention of what they learned. Students made the connections between art and the visual humor that they experienced, which helped them remember key points reinforcing classroom learning.

A humorous environment was a positive physical attribute and benefit in the classroom. Sharing visual humor and jokes in the Comedy Corner built a better sense of community throughout the sixth grade class as well as the other grades in the school. In my observations I noted that students were as eager to share their jokes as they were to read new jokes posted. Sharing these jokes, laughter, and humorous experiences with one another in the classroom also helped open up dialogue between students, building upon the bonds of friendship and relations (Hunsaker, 1988). Students, who normally wouldn't interact with one another, were open to sharing jokes or complementing humorous artwork. The connections that humor created helped relieve social anxiety in students such as Alvin, who, as I observed, opened up during classroom discussions.

Kid Culture in the Classroom

Incorporating student interests in the classroom through lessons, examples, and discussions was an important finding that aided in the impact of student engagement and

excitement in art. “It’s stuff that we like.” Will’s comment summed up the strong connection between students and art that they enjoyed most. By showing images of their interests and discussing what students liked, classroom dialogue was rich with input and involvement.

Students showed a greater interest in art work made during the 21st century, as opposed to art history. When analyzing artwork with humorous themes, students showed a connection with the imagery and tones of contemporary art due to the recognizable images. The scenes, settings, and scenarios were experienced by students before, giving them knowledge of what they were viewing. This knowledge of the 21st century experience is what I call, kid culture.

Kid Culture embodies the popular culture of adolescents. Popular culture influences include such trends as food, television, celebrities, and sports. Students gained interest in the lessons that included imagery of things that they enjoyed and were modern trends. Eric Joyner’s paintings containing robots, donuts, and other toys excited students. Banksy’s street art connected with students’ own experiences passing graffiti in their own travels. Parodies containing modern scenes and television influences were also deemed popular by students in discussions. Internet memes, a popular visual form of humor that mixes satirical text with an image, was also posted numerous times in the Giggle Gallery. Students were able to include their identity of kid culture into their own art in projects such as the Modern *Mona Lisa*. Students like Jim added chicken wings, sports teams, and cola into their drawings.

Knowing what your students like, as I found, was extremely important in creating interesting and engaging lessons. Asking students about their interests, in the first

questionnaire, was helpful at gaining and understanding of each student. Having this knowledge I was able to include things such as SpongeBob SquarePants in the lesson on parodies and draw upon sport references to build connections with students. This acceptance to focus on kid culture in my classroom was a fairly easy challenge. I believe this is due to the fact that I am a relatively young teacher, this acceptance and knowledge of kid culture was an easy transition into my curriculum and classroom.

Additional Reflections

Laughter was the harmony of the semester. Students laughed, I laughed, and we laughed. The students learned, I learned, and we learned. While play and humor were once thought of as extracurricular activities meant for recreation outside of school, through my research I found that humor and play are useful and important tools for educators. I encourage those who read this master's project to try incorporating humor into your classroom, work place, or everyday life. Incorporating visual jokes, such as parodies, can be simple ways to add humor to any lesson. The sense of fun and jovialness in the classroom was a refreshing change for both students and me.

By experiencing humor daily, I felt a reduction in anxiety and stress. I was able to feel relaxed throughout stressful times during work and school. A reduction of anxiety and decreased stress were physical humor benefits (Garner, 2006). I was also constantly looking forward creating these lessons and discussion opportunities. I felt a surge of self esteem due to the increase in student engagement and excitement caused by this unit. I found myself as productive as my students were, as lesson plans and grading work done during this unit was completed quickly and excitedly. Sharing a joke brought me a sense

of connection and friendship with my peers, colleagues, and students.

Recommendations for Further Research

The data that I have collected from this study came from a small group of nine sixth grade students. At times, due to absences, class size would be even more limited. Since this study consisted of a small sample of participants, for further research I would further my research with a greater number of students. With a larger group of students participating in this study it is not clear if activities such as the classroom management games would be as successful in a crowded classroom. Adding new classroom games into the curriculum could also be beneficial to research. Pursuing the roles of games and group competition would also be an interesting topic to investigate if allowed more time during this research project. Additional research on exploring competition-based learning and game theory as tools for teaching and learning could support the findings of student engagement from games in class from my data.

This study focused on incorporating humor and play into a sixth grade classroom. It would be interesting to research how students would perceive humor in art in the higher or lower grades. Would students in one grade think certain types of art were more humorous than another grade of students? A study of that nature could help expand the knowledge gained in this research.

Since humor is such a broad topic, additional research of different types of humor or humorous artists would be a beneficial and exciting continuation of this research. Exploring humor in performance art, for example, would allow students to experience different aspects of the art world in relation to this unit. Due to the popularity and success of this research, I will continue to expand this humorous pedagogy.

Importance of the Study

This study is important to the field of education because it presents an alternative method of motivating and engaging students in the classroom. An unconventional approach to art education, the focus of adding humor and the aspects of play greatly influenced a positive disposition and environment for the art curriculum. My findings demonstrate that there are various benefits of using humor and the aspects of play into the art classroom. I discovered that by using these unconventional tools to aid in classroom and curriculum construction can engage students in what they are learning. In addition, through the creation of a positive and playful classroom environment, students can build relationships with one another by connecting through shared laughter and humor connections.

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Appendix A: Visual Abstract

Qualitative Action Research on the Benefits of Adding Humor and Aspects of Play in an Elementary Art Education Classroom with Sixth Graders



Problem Statement

A previous art program in an elementary school, consisting of dry lessons, lectures, and a disconnection of a student-relevant curriculum, left students feeling unmotivated with zero enthusiasm towards art.

Research Questions

What are the benefits of using humor and aspects of play as teaching strategies in the art classroom?

- How can using humor in my classroom create a positive atmosphere where students are excited about learning in art?
- How can humor enhance student ability to make connections among art history, contemporary art, visual culture, and their own art making?
- How do students respond to using humor and play in my art classroom?
- What can I learn by implementing humor and play into my classroom?

Review of Literature

- Humor and Education
- Benefits of Using Humor in the Classroom
- Types of Humor
- Effects of Humor on Teacher Morale
- Play and Work
- Integrating Play into the Curriculum
- Humor and Art
- Relevant Art Curriculum

Research Findings

- Humor, play, and the inclusion of "Kid Culture" in an art curriculum generated a positive environment which increased the motivation and engagement of students and the teacher.
- Humor can be used a tool to reinforce classroom teaching and discuss serious issues in the world.
- Sharing humor in school helps build relationships, relieve stress, and create a strong community in the classroom.
- Games can be used to aid in classroom management strategies.

Data Collection

- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Lesson Plans
- Student Artwork



Appendix B: Parent and Student Consent/ Assent Form

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

I am writing this letter to ask your permission for your son or daughter to be a part of a special art study this coming 2013-2014 school year. As a part of my Masters project in Art Education at Buffalo State College, the sixth grade will be introduced to a unit based around humor.

I am trying out new teaching strategies that focus on humor with students in the sixth grade class. My research project will document student responses for how these new strategies work. The goal of my research is to uncover the question: "What are the benefits of using humor and aspects of play to enhance teaching strategies in the art classroom?" The art room, which is already infused with laughter, will channel humor in an educational way. In each class, your child will have the opportunity to explore art with humorous themes, contemporary jokes on famous art, as well as create their own artwork using different forms of humor.

All data that is collected throughout this study is for educational purposes and will remain confidential. Fictitious names will be used throughout this study to protect your child's privacy. Photographs and videotapes will be used only for the purpose of documenting and backing up observations that are made during the study helping me to gather information for the study. Your child has the right to withdraw from this study at any time, while they will continue to participate in normal art room activities.

I appreciate your time and willingness to help me in my professional development. Thank you very much for helping me make this project possible. If you have any questions or concerns about this study please do not hesitate to contact me by email.

Please sign your name below and return to school by 09/18/2013 to give your permission to participate in this art study.

Student Name (Print): _____

Student Signature (Sign): _____

Parent/ Guardian Name (Print): _____

Parent/ Guardian Name (Sign): _____

Date: _____

Sincerely,
Kelly Macagnone

*If you are unable to reach a member of the research team and have general questions, or have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Gina Game, IRB Administrator, SUNY Research Foundation/ Buffalo State at (716)878-6700 or gameg@rf.buffalostate.edu

Appendix C: Letter of Consent for Principal

Dear Principal,

I am writing this letter to ask your permission for our students to be a part of an art study this coming 2013-2014 school year. As part of my Masters Project in Art Education at Buffalo State College, the sixth grade class will be taught using strategies that include aspects of humor and play in art.

The goal of my research is to investigate the potential benefits of adding humor and aspects of play into the art classroom. Also, students will have the opportunity to learn about various artists who use humor and play as themes in their artwork, as well as explore their own humor in art making.

During my research I will be very cautious and ensure the safety and security of our students and this school. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the study to provide confidentiality. Students have the right to withdraw from this study at any time, though they will continue to take part in normal art room activities. For my research, I will videotape classroom sessions for observational purposes and use student questionnaires as a form of reflection as data collection methods. Everything created for this research project is for educational purposes and will be kept completely confidential. Thank you for your time and help on my academic journey.

- I give permission for you to conduct this research study with our students.
- I DO NOT want our students to participate in this research project.

Please print, sign and date the line below.

Please print your name: _____

Principal Signature _____

Date _____

Sincerely,

Miss Kelly Macagnone

*If you are unable to reach a member of the research team and have general questions, or have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Gina Game, IRB Administrator, SUNY Research Foundation/Buffalo State at (716) 878-6700 or gameg@rf.buffalostate.edu

Appendix D: Modern *Mona Lisa* Lesson Plan

Grade 6: Modern *Mona Lisa*

Conceptual Basis for Lesson: Study different ways people create parodies of famous art work. Students will create their own parody of the *Mona Lisa* that connects Art History to Contemporary Visual Culture, infusing modern themes and culture into their new art. Students will imagine the scenario: “You time travel and bring *Mona Lisa* back to the year 2013. Where would you take her? What would she do? What would she wear?”

Performance Task:

- Students will discover various parodies of fine art and discuss the use of humor in parody.
- Students will learn about the *Mona Lisa* and artist Leonardo da Vinci.
- Students will create their own *Mona Lisa* image influenced by their interests in modern culture.

New York State Learning Standards and Performance Indicators:

Standard 1- Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

-Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in visual arts and participate in various roles in the arts.

Standard 2 - Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

-Students will know and use a variety of visual arts materials, techniques, and processes.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their abilities to fulfill project requirements. Craftsmanship, depiction of a modern parody, and the inclusion of the elements of line, shape, and color in regards to the creation of the *Mona Lisa* assessed in a rubric.

Art Materials:

- pencils
- Mona Lisa* template
- Markers
- Crayons or Colored Pencils (for background)

Vocabulary:

- Parody*: an imitation of a picture, song, or art for the purposes of being funny.
- Mona Lisa*: famous painting of Lisa Del Giocondo painted in the 1500s, now found at the Louvre in Paris.
- Leonardo da Vinci*: Italian Renaissance painter, inventor, sculpture

Student Learning Activity (2-3 class periods):

A Prezi will be show to students highlighting the history and mystery of the *Mona Lisa* and artist, Leonardo da Vinci. Students will discuss the painting and various parodies made to spoof the famous painting. Students will be given the task of drawing their own *Mona Lisa* as if she was a participant in the year 2013.

Students will begin their artwork using a template of the *Mona Lisa*'s face. This will be a basic outline of the face (they will also have the option of using a template that also includes her hands). Students will build around the face of the *Mona Lisa*, and then fill their subject in with marker. Students will fill in their backgrounds in crayon or colored pencil to emphasis the subject.

Distribution and Clean-up Materials: (5 minutes)

Classroom clean up will begin five minutes before the end of each class to allow an adamant amount of time to clean up their materials. Students will be responsible to clean their respected areas and put away any material they have used in their proper place. During this time, a new homework assignment will be given, due the next week.

Appendix E: Contemporary Surrealism Painting Lesson Plan

Grade 6: Eric Joyner Inspired Surrealist Painting

Conceptual Basis for Lesson: Surrealism, a popular and at times humorous art movement, captivates audiences with its realism and wacky dream-like imagery. This lesson will teach students about the important movement and Salvador Dali while connecting to contemporary artist Eric Joyner's playful paintings. Joyner's humorous work depicts toy robots in human like scenarios. Through this lesson on Surrealism students will learn about this movement, the amusing imagery, and create their own dreamlike painting using contemporary subject matter.

Performance Task:

- Students will study the art movement of Surrealism including artist, Salvador Dali.
- Students will learn about contemporary artist Eric Joyner.
- Students will compare and contrast the works of Dali and Joyner, critiquing the subject matter, imagery, and tone in their work.
- Students will create a Surrealist painting personifying robots.

New York State Learning Standards and Performance Indicators:

Standard 1- Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

-Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in visual arts and participate in various roles in the arts.

Standard 2 - Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

-Students will know and use a variety of visual arts materials, techniques, and processes.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their abilities to fulfill project requirements. Craftsmanship, depiction of a surrealist composition through the personification of robots, and the inclusion of the depth, setting, and detail in regards to the creation of their painting assessed in a rubric.

Art Materials:

- pencils
- 12x18 inch white paper
- watercolor palates
- paintbrushes
- water buckets and paper towels

Vocabulary:

- Personification:* the attribution of human characteristics to something that is not human
- Surrealism:* art movement that began in the 1920s containing dream-like imagery.

-*Eric Joyner*: contemporary American artist who predominately paints robots and donuts in playful scenarios, often personifying the robot toys.

Instructional Sequence

Student Learning Activity (3-4 class periods):

A Prezi will be show to students highlighting the history of Surrealism and Salvador Dali. Students will learn about the artist's life and artwork. In this section a brief example of his works will be discussed including *The Persistence of Memory*. Complimenting the work of Dali, a sample of paintings by contemporary artist Eric Joyner will be shown. His work will be discussed then compared to Dali's. The discussion will focus on the imagery in the paintings. Joyner's creation of personification will be highlighted in his work and talked about. Students will be given the task of creating their own Surrealist painting of personified robot toys.

Students will begin by brainstorming everyday scenarios or basic human activities. Once students chose their scenario, they will replace the human beings in the activity with robots, creating a sense of Surrealist personification in their painting. This drawing will be done on a sheet of 12x18inch paper. Once drawn, students will begin painting in their work using watercolor paints. A brief demonstration will be given to review brush care and watercolor techniques. When finished, students will create a short story based on their artwork.

Distribution and Clean-up Materials: (5 minutes)

Classroom clean up will begin five minutes before the end of each class to allow an adamant amount of time to clean up their materials. Students will be responsible to clean their respected areas and put away any material they have used in their proper place.

Figure A: Views of the Art Classroom





Figure B: Comedy Corner with the “I’m Done Zone”



Figure C: Giggle Gallery



Figure D: Examples of Classroom Props



Figure E: Jim's Parody Artwork



Figure F: Stacey's Parody Artwork



Figure G: Cathy's Parody Artwork



Figure H: Michelle's Surrealist Artwork

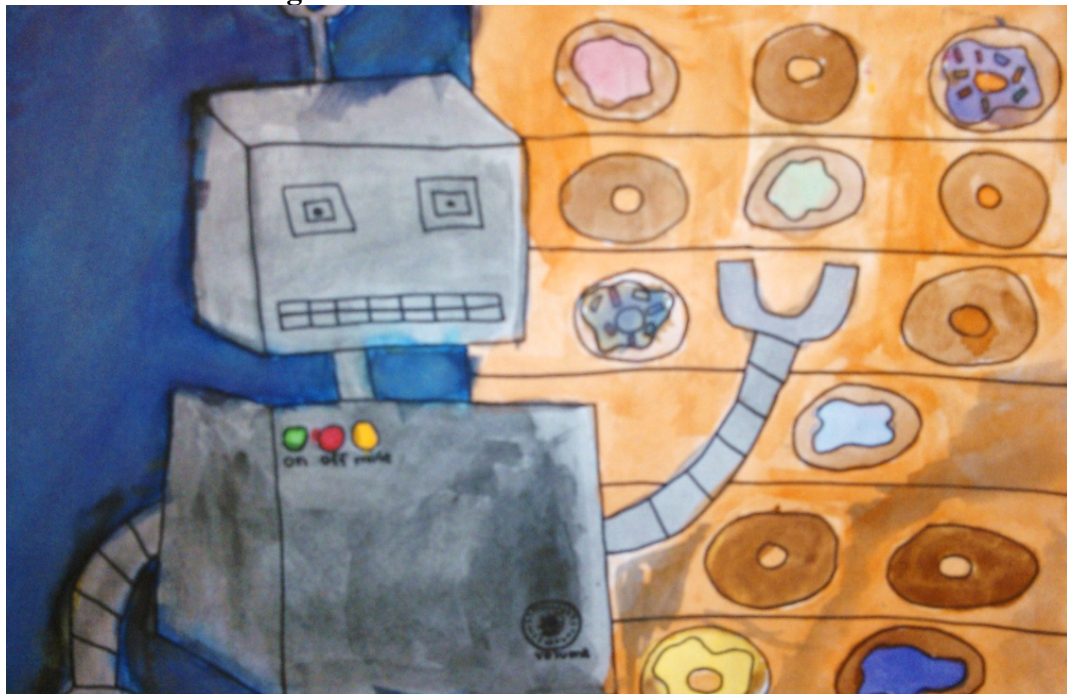


Figure I: Will's Surrealist Artwork



Figure J: Jim's Surrealist Artwork



Figure K: Will's Humorous Homework



Figure L: Kevin's Humorous Homework

