

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

---

Theses

Theses & Dissertations

---

12-2021

## Cultural Connection: The Value of Art History in Early Childhood Development and Education

Sara Ashley Turner

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/theses>



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

---

CULTURAL CONNECTION: THE VALUE OF ART HISTORY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

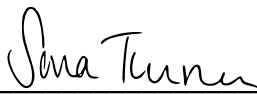
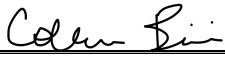

by

Sara Ashley Turner

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Art in Art History and Visual Culture  
at  
Lindenwood University

© December 2021, Sara Ashley Turner

The author hereby grants Lindenwood University permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly paper and electronic thesis copies of document in whole or in part in any medium now known or hereafter created.

<u>Sara Turner</u> Author		<u>Dec. 2021</u>
<u>Dr. Piper Hutson</u> Committee chair	<u>Piper Hutson</u>	<u>Dec. 2021</u>
<u>Dr. Colleen Biri</u> Committee member		<u>Dec. 2021</u>
<u>Dr. Khristin Landry-Montes</u> Committee member		<u>Dec. 2021</u>

CULTURAL CONNECTION: THE VALUE OF ART HISTORY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Arts, Media, and Communications  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master in Art History and Visual Culture  
at  
Lindenwood University

By

Sara Ashley Turner

Saint Charles, Missouri

December 2021

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Cultural Connection: The Value of Art History in Early Childhood Development and Education

Sara Ashley Turner, Master of Art History and Visual Culture, 2021

Thesis Directed by: Dr. Piper Hutson

This thesis focuses on the utilization of art historical inquiry to improve the relationship and narrative of culture within appropriate settings. Although this thesis will prove the beneficial and important role that the subject matter of art history can have in early education, the subject matter will also show the specific possibilities of using such inquiries in art therapy, museum education, and in general education classrooms. The aim of the thesis is to present these practical and useful employments of art historical inquiry, within subject matter for young children, to be a tool for finding cultural identity and inclusivity in the classroom and in community. Thusly, this thesis will also present a new historicism that could change the narrative of art history for future generations.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my encouraging and patient thesis committee at Lindenwood University. I really lucked out with their guidance, willingness to participate, and edit all the times I used the term “that” in my thesis. I would also like to thank the professors at Lindenwood University for guiding me and being so incredibly available to answer questions to the best of their ability. I would also like to thank my amazing family and friends who edited and read countless versions of this thesis and the papers that preceded it.

I like to dedicate this thesis to my sweet and supportive husband, John Turner, who encouraged me, reminded me to take a break every now and then, and celebrated each milestone with me.

**Table of Contents**

Acknowledgements .....	iv
Introduction .....	1
Context/Literature Review .....	9
Methodology .....	25
Conclusions.....	41
Postscript.....	43
Illustrations.....	46
Bibliography.....	53
Appendices.....	57

## Introduction

Early education has been discussed or debated since society moved from hunting and gathering into increasingly intangible jobs based on knowledge rather than physical work. In the peak of the Roman Empire, Roman parents entrusted the education of their young to literate Greek slaves.<sup>1</sup> Historians have even argued the failure of educating their own children caused the decline of the empire.<sup>2</sup> It might be apt to say that the passing on of culture to young people, and paying attention to learning styles, is important for the traditions, philosophies, education, and life of a culture. It is important to take part in the resuscitation of all aspects of history so that the understanding of where society or culture originated from can help in the vision of seeing where our society is going from generation to generation. North America, in particular, is continually becoming a melting pot of cultures, and while educators continue to focus on and cater to a unified culture, it can thus become difficult to even remember the transformative understandings students gain when they take ownership of their own cultural identity and share it with others.<sup>3</sup>

What this means for education, and what is proposed in this paper, is that educators must become more aware of the cultural backgrounds which students may bring to the metaphorical table of an early childhood classroom to meet educational goals and needs through art historical inquiry. In one study that highlighted the connections between culture and education, Rita Irwin, Tony Rogers, and Yuh-Yao Wan address the specific need for making connections between and

---

<sup>1</sup> Ann Lewin-Benham, *Infants and Toddlers at Work: Using Reggio-Inspired Materials to Support Brain Development*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010), ix.

<sup>2</sup> Lewin-Benham, *Infants and Toddlers at Work*, ix.

<sup>3</sup> James W. Bequette, "Culture-Based Arts Education That Teaches Against the Grain: A Model for Place-Specific Material Culture Studies," *Studies in Art Education* 55 (2014): 214. doi:10.1080/00393541.2014.11518931.

among cultures.<sup>4</sup> The authors note that coming to understand another culture is an act of cultural translation, and while students and educators learn to recognize and honor cultural aspects, educators may be better able to act as a cultural translator alongside members of certain cultural groups who wish to engage students in learning about other cultures.<sup>5</sup> To encourage this in education, scholars have continually noted the need for arts in early education through the admittance of the needs that children have for organized, material-rich environments which invite imagination and relationship with educators who value diverse abilities, interests, questions, ideas, and cultural experiences.<sup>6</sup>

Further, one can assume that for a society to develop and grow, education is of utmost importance and could be the vehicle which fosters natural growth, cohesion, and peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, in early childhood education, we find a bedrock upon which all other levels of education are anchored, which determines how subsequent children advance through other levels of education and, consequently, find a space to comprehend cultures that they may or may not be a part of.<sup>8</sup> It is apt to note, as is proposed in the

---

<sup>4</sup> Rita L. Irwin, Tony Rogers, and Yuh-yao Wan, "Making Connections through Cultural Memory, Cultural Performance, and Cultural Translation," *Studies in Art Education* 40 (1999): 198, doi:10.2307/1320862.

<sup>5</sup> Irwin, Rogers, and Wan, "Making Connections", 198.

<sup>6</sup> Marissa McClure, et al, "Defining Quality in Visual Art Education for Young Children: Building on the Position Statement of the Early Childhood Art Educators," *Arts Education Policy Review* 118, no. 3 (July 2017): 154, doi: 10.1080/10632913.2016.1245167.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Chinyere Ukala and Ogar G. Agabi, "Linking Early Childhood Education with Indigenous Education using Gamification: The Case of Maintaining Cultural Value and Identity," *Journal of International Education Research* 13, no. 1 (2017), 17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.19030/jier.v13i1.9960>.

<sup>8</sup>Ukala and Agabi, "Linking Early Childhood Education," 18.



following research, how preschool educational philosophies which promote this type of cultural education should be advocated for if a society desires to equip their newest generation with adequate knowledge to grow into their identity in their community. Such advocacy could also help a people become more aware of other cultures and how these cultures find a place in society. Culture, as defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, is the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group of people.<sup>9</sup> It is the researcher's opinion that there is possibility for young generations to be culturally literate from an early age. However, the topic of early childhood cultural literacy does bring up the questions of how culture can be translated within early education, why it would be beneficial to the students and their education, and whether we can practically give suitable opportunities for students to be cultural translators. It is also the researcher's opinion that it is not until educators give such chances to learn to be culturally literate that we can fully measure the student's grade of developmental, social, and educational growth which would coincide with the exposure to culture through art historical inquiry. As per the researcher, art historical inquiry is a phrase used to indicate the use of art or artifacts in early childhood education to introduce conversations on elements of art, principles of art, culture, history, and project inspiration.

For many education systems, the lack of culturally responsive training for educators is the fundamental problem which would delay using the arts education at preschool level and would halt the implementation of such learning, as proven in many venues.<sup>10</sup> Scholars write about the

---

<sup>9</sup> Oxford Learner's Dictionary, s.v. "Culture," accessed July 20, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Merce Fernandez Santín and Maria Feliu Torruella, "Reggio Emilia: An Essential Tool to Develop Critical Thinking in Early Childhood," *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research* 6, no. 1 (01, 2017): 50 <http://dx.doi.org/10.7821/naer.2017.1.207>

specific school systems in the United States that have significantly reduced or even eliminated art education programs and positions, in spite of the cognitive, emotional, and social benefits for students which will be addressed later in this thesis.<sup>11</sup> It would be difficult, presumably, to train teachers in the way they would need to educate children without baseline recognition of the value in such subjects as the arts or humanities. A teacher's training in arts education, as noted by Merce Fernandez Santin and Maria Feliu Torruella, is key to supporting the arts, as they are adopted through different approaches in the classroom.<sup>12</sup> It is the researcher's opinion that studies such as this one unfortunately come down to a battle for power around the role and purpose of education. Consequently, values and traditions (also known as culture) are being snuffed out of students' lives, and the notion of value-free learning disregards how people engage in the world.<sup>13</sup> The absence of understanding how people engage in the world, and how they are engaged by it, is also the absence of understanding the tension of around how people from different cultures engage in the process of education.<sup>14</sup> This lack of comprehension leads to a narrowing of education under a broad idea of teaching and learning, which voids out the concept, as highlighted by Scholar Bryan Brayboy, of "epic learning" which recognizes

---

<sup>11</sup> Nicole Denise O'Shea, "Perceptions of Art Education: An Exploration of Perspectives Held by Critical Stakeholders regarding the Value of Art Education," Order No. 28090413, Northcentral University, 2020, 4. <https://search.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/preceptions-art-education-exploration/docview/2447517190/se-2?accountid=12104>.

<sup>12</sup> Santin and Torruella, "Reggio Emilia: An Essential Tool to Develop Critical Thinking in Early Childhood," p. 50.

<sup>13</sup> Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, "Culture, Place, and Power: Engaging the Histories and Possibilities of American Indian Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2014): 399, Accessed September 10, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24482187>.

<sup>14</sup> Brayboy, "Culture, Place, and Power," 399.

knowledge passed down across generations, so individuals and communities learn from their mistakes.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, we find ourselves in a conundrum if we cannot teach the importance of the arts in child development to our educators and provide children with the benefits of the offering of such subjects.

One way to change the perspective of the view of the arts in early education is to better understand the different educational philosophies that prioritize art education for young children. The researcher would like to bring attention to Reggio Emilia, a noteworthy educational philosophy founded by Loris Malaguzzi, originating in Italy. The Reggio Emilia philosophy is a system that has evolved philosophical assumptions, curriculum and pedagogy, methods of school organization, and design of environments.<sup>16</sup> In the December 2, 1991 *Newsweek*, this philosophy was recognized as one of the best systems of education in the world, and still continues to gain popularity today.<sup>17</sup> The approach essentially nurtures children's intellectual development through a systematic focus on symbolic representation.<sup>18</sup> From that definition, it can be assumed that art has much to do with the curriculum of a Reggio Emilia classroom, and that children are encouraged to express and explain their own human experience through different avenues. Examining education systems in the United States, the arts have been all too often set aside to meet federal or state governed requirements and regulations in order to acquire funding. Reggio Emilia is a radical philosophy that could be used in more ways than one within a classroom and

---

<sup>15</sup> Brayboy, 401.

<sup>16</sup> Carolyn P. Edwards, George E. Foreman, and Lella Gandini, *The Hundred Languages of Children* (Westport: Ablex, 1998), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Edwards, *The Hundred Languages of Children*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Edwards, 3.

could help educate our students in the importance of art and the representation of culture from their point of view.

To better understand the Reggio Emilia philosophy, one might take the origins of such an education system into account. After World War II, Malaguzzi founded a network of municipal schools in the Reggio Emilia region of Italy.<sup>19</sup> Through the desire and enthusiasm of the Reggio Emilia community, a school was born that was considered a unitary living organism where children could think, discuss, and learn how to work by trying to reconcile what they know and what they do not know.<sup>20</sup> One very important aspect of this education philosophy, which could separate it from other educational philosophies, is the aspect of viewing the child as a powerful, competent, creative, curious, and ambitious entity, and one full of potential.<sup>21</sup> It is the researcher's belief that the perception of the child in this way would lead educators and/or the community to include the child in educational decisions and to use the child's interests as basepoints for exploration into different subject matters. More specifically, and in the instance of this thesis, the researcher is working to prove the particular use of art history, or art historical inquiry, as a foundational subject matter for children to grow, learn, and explore. This paper's innovation lies in the provision of evidence that there are developmental, cultural, and social benefits to be gained from including the arts, specifically art history, in early education.

To understand the way in which the Reggio Emilia philosophy honors the arts in early childhood education, one must look at the inclusion of the *atelier*. The atelier is defined as the

---

<sup>19</sup> Edwards, 53.

<sup>20</sup> Edwards, 53.

<sup>21</sup> Edwards, 53.

workshop or studio, furnished with a variety of resource materials used by the children and adults of the school. It is the space where the *atelierista* guides the students in exploration with provocations and child-led projects.<sup>22</sup> Malaguzzi notes the importance of the atelier in more ways than one. He comes to the conclusion that the atelier is a place for research and helps children and teachers transition from expressing images in symbols to decoding them.<sup>23</sup> This is where the researcher would like to begin building the basis of the argument towards the practicality of using art history in an early childhood development. By implementing such a space as the *atelier*, from a Reggio Emilia standpoint, educators can create opportunity for the children to explore the self-expression, alongside the process of deciphering of others' self-expression.

As discussed above, the search continues for connections between child development and art historical inquiry. The researcher proposes a study of multicultural education which would be sensitive to the backgrounds of the students. More specifically, the use of Reggio Emilia as a form of multicultural education in classrooms to provide cultural inclusivity and awareness. This utilization will prove the strong connections that can be made between child development and art historical inquiry via it's curriculum. This work is significant to the fields of education and art history through the action of addressing the benefits, on a psychological level, for students of early education. The researcher will provide evidence to show the connection to art history and the development of the child through the use of the atelier, which promotes the acknowledgement of the child as a capable, contributing part of their own education, so that readers can visualize how educators could create space for specific developmental tributes.

---

<sup>22</sup> Edwards, 313.

<sup>23</sup> Edwards, 69.

These may include, but are not limited to, cognitive and social skills.<sup>24</sup> Further, there will be research applied to education, museum education, and art therapy venues, all of which will be addressed under the overall theme of art historical inquiry as a form of multicultural education to reach the goals of this thesis.

The following important terms, to add onto the aforementioned *atelier* and *atelierista*, also pertain to the Reggio Emilia philosophy and might be helpful in this reading. The terms *provocations*, *child-led curriculum*, and the concept of *guide*. *Provocations*, in the Reggio Emilia tradition, would be spaces within the classroom that are dedicated to a subject matter for the children to explore. Depending on the subject matter and the goals of the educator, these provocations can be permanent or temporary and accomplish an array of goals in accordance with subjects such as different forms of art, math, science, history, geography, or even social studies. *Child-led curriculum* is the ways in which the educator, or guide, would approach subject matter with students. Typically, in a child-led classroom, the students find common or uncommon interest in objects or subjects which can be used or extorted to meet developmental or educational goals. The child-led classroom works to make subject matters relevant in the life experience of the students. Finally, we have *guides*, which are an integral part of the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Educators or teachers might be addressed synonymously with guides, but they have different roles which has the potential to change the perspective of both the students and the educators. Guides are there to assist students in their learning, not necessarily leading or bringing students into new subject matter, but rather working together with the students and open

---

<sup>24</sup> O'Shea, "Perceptions of Art Education: An Exploration of Perspectives Held by Critical Stakeholders regarding the Value of Art Education," 15.

to opportunities for their own learning as they provide information and instruction beside the students.

Additional definitions that would help with the context of the subject matter to follow would be definitions set out by the author for *Art History* and *Culture*. Art History, as is defined by Oxford Learner's Dictionary, is the study of the history of painting, sculpture, etc.<sup>25</sup> A very important and extensive argument can be made between what would be considered "Art" or "Artifact" or "Craft" as a product of endeavors set out by craftsman, artists, or artisans. What is most essential to point out for the context of this thesis is that the subject matter of art history, or art historical inquiry, will be based on artworks or artifacts that are created to exemplify the human experience or a perspective that is expressed by a member of a culture. Culture, has already been defined by Oxford Learner's Dictionary and is highlighted in this thesis on page three. Pertinently, it is the author's desire to exonerate the term because it merits an explanation in lieu of the subject matter. Culture is defined by the author as the human experience as it pertains to each individual in the community from which they come. As it will be addressed later in this article, culture is considered to be derived from the circumstances that surround an individual person and can be expressed, from the person's perspective, through artwork or artifacts that will then exhibit to its audience a particular aspect of their culture. All the terms mentioned above of which the author defined can be revisited in the appendix.

## **Literature Review**

Through the articles and studies researched, implied implications of not having the opportunity for an early childhood art education would be a lack of opportunity to develop

---

<sup>25</sup> Oxford Learner's Dictionary, s.v. "Art History," accessed July 20, 2020.

critical and scientific thinking through artistic work, stimulating values, encouraging children to express their feelings, promoting the development of communication and social skills, and motivating cooperative work and discussion as key elements in a free and democratic society.<sup>26</sup> Ironically, there are many national art education groups, or organizations, that consistently state the need for arts and the accumulative benefits. The National Art Education Association (NAEA) has a great point of view on the matter. The NAEA released a position statement on Early Childhood Art Education in 2010, and it states in the very first sentence: “The visual arts are essential to early learning.”<sup>27</sup> Later in the position, they also note: “The arts enrich a young child’s understanding of diverse cultures. Early childhood art programs should be comprehensive in scope, including studio experiences, interactions with artists, real and virtual visits to museums and art galleries, and opportunities to respond to art through conversation, storytelling, play, dramatics, movement, music, and art making.”<sup>28</sup> The NAEA, the leading professional membership organization exclusively for visual arts educators, is taking an obvious stance in argument of the importance of art as a way of learning culture and how it is essential. There is an awareness already out there that art is an important part of a child’s education; it’s just a matter of practicality for the education systems in place and who can be persuaded to implement this change. For the sake of this thesis, it might also be assumed that understanding culture cannot be done unless there is a piece of history or culture from which to learn.

---

<sup>26</sup> Santin and Toruella, 51.

<sup>27</sup> “Position Statement on Early Childhood Art Education,” NAEA website, last modified March 2016, <https://www.arteducators.org/advocacy/articles/513-naea-position-statement-on-early-childhood-art-education>.

<sup>28</sup> “Position Statement on Early Childhood Art Education,” NAEA website.



Nicole Denise O’Shea, a doctor of education and scholar of art education, writes in her article of the many ways that we can use the arts as a vehicle for such learning, and thus initiates the conversation.<sup>29</sup> O’Shea claims art is an enormous part of any culture, as it indicates diverse aspects of communal identity and provides a deeper understanding of emotions and self-awareness.<sup>30</sup> Art education and art historical inquiry can be utilized to extend beyond the borders of academic learning and influence societies by changing opinions, instilling values, and translating experiences.<sup>31</sup> Research on culturally responsive teaching asserts the notion that students learn better and achieve greater educational goals when teachers, as Angelina Castagno states, “...engage them with curricula that is connected to their everyday lives, employ pedagogical techniques that correspond to their own cultural norms, and integrate an ethic of care and social justice into their classrooms.”<sup>32</sup> Castagno continues in her article on the analysis of an Indigenous American teacher preparation program, and lays out examples of research which attest to the notion of having a dedicated educator, equipped with specific training, who is willing to advocate for the cultures and languages of their students.<sup>33</sup> To further emphasize the importance of educators in the roles of cultural advocacy, in James Bequette’s study on the analysis of the Native Arts program in California, he positions that “Educators must either take

---

<sup>29</sup> O’Shea, 1.

<sup>30</sup> O’Shea, 1.

<sup>31</sup> O’Shea, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Angelina E. Castagno, ““They Prepared Me to Be a Teacher, But Not a Culturally Responsive Navajo Teacher for Navajo Kids”: A Tribal Critical Race Theory Analysis of an Indigenous Teacher Preparation Program,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 51, no. 1 (2012): 3-21. Accessed September 10, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43608618>.

<sup>33</sup> Castagno, “The Prepared Me to Be a Teacher,”5.

time to learn the norms of another culture via study and research or seek assistance from a cultural expert to make that learning immeasurably easier.”<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, the Texas Education Agency reports less than satisfactory results when searching for any indication of fine arts on their site or otherwise. It has proven difficult to find traces of the importance of the fine arts in public education in Texas. Ms. Domonique Vallejo speaks to this in her interview as a Texas educator.<sup>35</sup> She states: “I think [the arts] are extremely important in education in general. It is critical to provide our students with a well-rounded education. Due to state mandates, the arts seem to be put on the back burner. I do my best to weave them into as many other subjects as possible. Our students deserve to know more than what the state of Texas deems as ‘having them college ready’.”<sup>36</sup> Through the interviews with educators of different circumstances, the researcher continues to find that this is the general narrative. Educators such as Ms. Vallejo also seem to have to be creative in the classroom in order to push the artistic/creative projects into play. Congruently, Stephanie Payton finds that she must be creative as a homeschooling mother in Texas.<sup>37</sup> Stephanie positions that she enjoys including the arts and wishes for practical ways to use the subject matter, namely because she believes that children remember things by doing.<sup>38</sup> She explains that, “By learning facts in song

---

<sup>34</sup> James W. Bequette, “Tapping a Postcolonial Community’s Cultural Capital: Empowering Native Artists to Engage More Fully with Traditional Culture and Their Children’s Art Education.” *Visual Arts Research* 35 (2009): 87.  
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=aft&AN=505439929&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>35</sup> Domonique Vallejo, email interview with Sara Turner, April 22, 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Domonique Vallejo, email interview with Sara Turner, April 22, 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Stephanie Payton, email interview with Sara Turner, April 23, 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Stephanie Payton, email interview with Sara Turner, April 23, 2020.

form, rhyming, or even painting like a famous artist used to, this helps them to retain information [in my experience].”<sup>39</sup> In literature, readers might find that scholars have a similar chronicle as these two types of educators.

Scholar Juuso Tervo states poetically, “...art and its education actualize the potentialities for humanness that reside in every individual, and, subsequently, serve as the backdrop for a just society.”<sup>40</sup> Going deeper into the subject of cultural literacy and identity, Nara Kim studied how a culturally diverse classroom could use art practices to empower children to tell their own personal experiences, and the resulting data showed the children tried to create space for belonging and understanding while forging social relationships in their schools.<sup>41</sup> To define the study of art history in an early education context, the researcher would like to note that the study would be described as the observation and construction of meaning from visual objects, which would bring about conversation on context and personal perspective.

In a more specific perspective on multicultural education, there have been many studies reported on the use of art education in indigenous cultures and how the culture was enlivened for students and those who taught in specific circumstances. The study of education and curriculum has been historically flawed in America as it pertains to the dismissal of Indigenous knowledge,

---

<sup>39</sup> Stephanie Payton, email interview with Sara Turner, April 23, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Juuso Tervo, "On the Impossibility of Life in Art and Education," *Visual Arts Research* 42, no. 1 (2016): 105. Accessed April 29, 2021, doi:10.5406/visuartsrese.42.1.0104.

<sup>41</sup> Nara Kim, "Exploring Nuances of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children's Voices through Art and Play," Order No. 28022713, University of Georgia, 2020, p.2, <https://search.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/exploring-nuances-culturally-linguistically/docview/2446734177/se-2?accountid=12104>.

and this dismissal has not served any cultures well.<sup>42</sup> As an example of the connection between cultural awareness and art historical inquiry, Angelina Castagno notes in the *Journal of American Indian Education*, that the American Indian education across the United States has historically been, and is, a way of assimilation with consequential language and culture loss.<sup>43</sup> The flawed system, and narrowed study, of curriculum creation has not been using research which highlights the importance of tribal culture in Indian education, and thusly students of Indigenous descent are continually forced to justify the value of their knowledge of their culture and values they hold.<sup>44</sup> The quest for developing culturally relevant curriculum, where indigenous culture and ways of learning should be working to seamlessly weave into daily practice for educators, is ostensibly just beginning.<sup>45</sup> This is where the researcher would propose to insert different philosophies, and art historical inquiry, in order to create a more conducive environment for multicultural education. The research has pointed back to the importance of involving culture in education, it is proposed that educators should respond with cultural inclusivity.

---

<sup>42</sup> Billie Graham Harrington and Chixapkaid (D. Michael Pavel), "Using Indigenous Educational Research to Transform Mainstream Education: A Guide for P–12 School Leaders," *American Journal of Education* 119, no. 4 (2013): 487, doi:10.1086/670962.

<sup>43</sup> Castagno, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Harrington and Chixapkaid, "Using Indigenous Educational Research to Transform Mainstream Education: A Guide for P–12 School Leaders," 487-488.

<sup>45</sup> Sheryl Smith-Gilman, "Culture Matters: The Arts, the Classroom Environment, and a Pedagogy of Entewate'Nikonri:Sake : A Study in a First Nations Pre-School." *Canadian Review of Art Education: Research & Issues* 42, no. 2 (July 2015): 53, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=asn&AN=125113314&site=ehost-live>.

If an educator chooses to utilize the Reggio Emilia philosophy, they will find the program would be more committed to the development of creative, critically thinking and collaboratively engaged citizens.<sup>46</sup> Although, it might call for a change in perspective for some educators. This type of curriculum is the child-led sort, where the students explore and come up with subjects to expand on, and it is the guide's job to help them expand and supervise direction of the curriculum. The curriculum is also shifted by the guide in certain instances, as they would ask provoking questions and start conversation towards subjects that would be helpful for learning. A great literary explanation of the classroom is done by Amelia Gambetti and Lella Gandini, quote:

Time has high value. [In a Reggio Emilia classroom] one sees that in such an environment there is no sense of being rushed; one can explore, construct, solve a problem, or simply enjoy shared moments. Teachers leave time and take time. They have the responsibility and the right to have time to reflect and question what is happening, and also to explore with the children what shared steps ought to be taken. All this is part of an attitude of research in order to connect and construct processes of reciprocal awareness and assess the learning taking place in an authentic and respectful way.<sup>47</sup>

The perspective shift would be noted as the time management perspective. The lack of rushing does not usually bode well with the nature of education systems that were built to work like a factory, much like that of the United States.

In one recent study, Sheryl Smith-Gilman records the close relationship between culture, learning, and the arts, as they are brought together through the provocation of the Reggio Emilia approach.<sup>48</sup> The research here is to show the importance and value of teaching students

---

<sup>46</sup> Santín and Torruella, 51.

<sup>47</sup> Carla Rinaldi, Amelia Gambetti, Lella Gandini, and Leslie Morrow, *The Hundred Languages in Ministories: Told by Teachers and Children from Reggio Emilia* (Worcester, MA: Davis Publications, Inc., 2016), xi.

<sup>48</sup> Smith-Gilman, "Culture Matters," 53.

accordingly when it comes to their cultural backgrounds and how this might be achieved through the education of teachers and use of educational philosophies such as Reggio Emilia and the art history from certain cultures. To prioritize cultural value and identity, it would be apt to define such characteristics first. Catherine Chinyere Ukala notes that cultural values and identities remain the benchmark for national identity, cohesion, patriotism, and harmonious co-existence in any society.<sup>49</sup> If education is truly the imparting and acquiring of general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgement, and generally preparing oneself intellectually for mature life, then educators can use their positions to create space for children to not only decipher visual culture but also make their own.<sup>50</sup> Visual culture, in the context of this thesis, would be defined by the researcher as the working knowledge of the how artworks functioned in the society of which they were created.

Scholars have studied such topics to find that children as young as 3 and 4 years of age can and will prioritize the artist's intentions over the drawing's appearance.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, children can recognize and label paintings, drawings, or sculpture as artwork only if the item was intentionally created as such.<sup>52</sup> When a child presented with artworks that represent certain time periods and the child then makes a mission out of finding the artwork's functionality, or the

---

<sup>49</sup> Ukala and Agabi. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Ukala and Agabi, 17.

<sup>51</sup> Nicolas J. Bullot and Rolf Reber, "The Artful Mind Meets Art History: Toward a Psycho-Historical Framework for the Science of Art Appreciation," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 36, no. 2 (04, 2013): 153. <https://search.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/artful-mind-meets-art-history-toward-psycho/docview/1317497785/se-2?accountid=12104>.

<sup>52</sup> Bullot and Reber, "The Artful Mind Meets Art History," 143.

artist's intentions, there is opportunity for the child to become more fluent in representing thoughts, ideas and visions that might be difficult to be articulated outside of art education.<sup>53</sup> When students and teachers engage in conversations about experiences, interests, and knowledge, curriculum can become very powerful because the theoretical perspectives of visual cultures in art education provide students with opportunities to observe, question, and reflect upon concepts of the contemporary visual cultures of which they live and create.<sup>54</sup>

The National Arts Standards website indicates that there are national core arts standards which educators can strive for in the realm of art education.<sup>55</sup> This website, as it is overseen by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, shows the four major categories of which to account for in the standards of which to guide children in arts education. These categories include creating, performing/presenting, responding, and connecting.<sup>56</sup> By the preschool age, these standards suggest children are able to create and tell about art that communicates a story about a familiar place or object, share and talk about personal artwork, identify reasons for saving and displaying artifacts and artwork, identify places of displaying artwork outside and inside school, recognize art in one's environment, identifying and describing art to interpret it,

---

<sup>53</sup> O'Shea, 9.

<sup>54</sup> Eunjung Chang, Maria Lim, and Minam Kim, "Three Approaches to Teaching Art Methods Courses: Child Art, Visual Culture, and Issues-Based Art Education," *Art Education* 65, no. 3 (2012): pg. 24. Accessed March 22, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24765913>.

<sup>55</sup> National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. "National Core Arts Standards." Nationalartsstandards.org, 2014. Accessed November 2, 2021. <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Visual%20Arts%20at%20a%20Glance%20-%20new%20copyright%20info.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. "National Core Arts Standards."

and recognize that people make art.<sup>57</sup> Also indicated in the website, the conceptual framework for creating such standards came from some relevant philosophical foundations.<sup>58</sup> The philosophical foundation of note would be that of the Arts as Culture, History, and Connectors.<sup>59</sup>

The website states:

Throughout history the arts have provided essential means for individuals and communities to express their ideas, experiences, feelings, and deepest beliefs. Each discipline shares common goals but approaches them through distinct media and techniques. Understanding artwork provides insights into individuals' own and others' cultures and societies, while also providing opportunities to access, express, and integrate meaning across a variety of content areas.<sup>60</sup>

This philosophy was created from the research conducted in terms of child development and arts education, and the literature review indicates influences from scholars of Reggio Emilia.<sup>61</sup>

In congruency, in a recent interview with Dr. Ena Shelley who is a retired education professor who spent most of her career studying and professing the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia, she stated that young preschool age children are communicating in ways of which we don't yet know.<sup>62</sup> Dr. Shelley continued by asserting that educators need to understand the notion of children as extremely capable of learning about the world through art history;

---

<sup>57</sup> National Coalition for Core Arts.

<sup>58</sup> "What Are The Standards?" National Core Arts Standards. Accessed November 2, 2021. <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org>

<sup>59</sup> Nationalartsstandards.org

<sup>60</sup> National Core Arts Standards.

<sup>61</sup> The College Board. "Child Development and Arts Education." Nationalartstandards.org, 2012. Accessed November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. [https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/College%20Board%20 Research%20-%20Child%20Development%20Report.pdf](https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/College%20Board%20Research%20-%20Child%20Development%20Report.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Dr. Ena Shelley, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner, April 14, 2021.



students just need to be afforded the opportunity.<sup>63</sup> It is confirmed by Dr. Ena Shelley, and by aforementioned scholars, there is space to bring art history into a preschool classroom and this implementation would reap benefits to children. These include the ability to grow communication skills and critical thinking which could aid in other subjects.<sup>64</sup> The researcher would progressively suggest that without the implementation of the arts in early education, particularly art history, educators risk the lack of specific opportunities for children to engage in the reflection and observation of visual cultures, the participation and understanding of creating visual culture, and the communication skills needed to articulate their own visual culture.

By bringing artworks into the classroom from different cultures and time periods, educators can use art-based inquiry to bring the conversation of culture and what it means to each of the students. In a resource by Laura Levine and Joyce Munsch, the authors note the connection between culture and child development.<sup>65</sup> The book states, "...children actively shape their experiences by choosing environments that, in turn, enhance or inhibit the characteristics which initially attracted the child to the specific environment."<sup>66</sup> In the same lieu of thought, while children don't pick their environments every time, the environments do significantly impact and shape their development.<sup>67</sup> Through Vygotsky's theory, which is highlighted in the book *Child Development from Infancy to Adolescence: An Active Learning Approach*, it is

---

<sup>63</sup> Dr. Ena Shelley, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner, April 14, 2021.

<sup>64</sup> Dr. Ena Shelley, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner, April 14, 2021.

<sup>65</sup> Laura E. Levine and Joyce Munsch, *Child Development from Infancy to Adolescence: An Active Learning Approach*, Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2016, Pg. 16.

<sup>66</sup> Levine and Munsch, *Child Development from Infancy to Adolescence*, 13.

<sup>67</sup> Levine, 13.

understood that the environment in the form of culture and social influence can drive development of cognitive processes.<sup>68</sup> Cultural values that are presented in environments, such as a classroom of which the student would acquaint daily, can be connected to the cognitive development of a child by simply understanding their sense of self or personal identity starts from infancy.<sup>69</sup> Between the aforementioned personal accounts of professors in the field of education, the many scholars who have written on the culturally important work that art historical inquiry brings to curriculum, and the understanding of the foundational developments which children understand from infancy—the author proposes the arts education that would involve art historical inquiry could change the narrative of cultural inclusivity and identity for students as young as pre-school age and perhaps younger.

What this might look like for museum education will vary per the collections available at the institutions. For the specific case of the San Antonio Museum of Art (SAMA), the author interviewed Carrie Avery, the Teacher and School Programs Manager who also holds a master's in art education. Avery noted that she doesn't see a space where art cannot be used in education.<sup>70</sup> She also states that, "Looking at art from other cultures makes us realize we are humans and that we have shared experiences. Art is made by humans, and we all reflect in some way or another... that alone can help make meaning of this complex world we live in, and in ways that I don't think anything else can."<sup>71</sup> Mrs. Avery's experience with programs at the

---

<sup>68</sup> Levine, 51.

<sup>69</sup> Levine, 245.

<sup>70</sup> Carrie Avery, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner on November 15, 2021.

<sup>71</sup> Carrie Avery, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner on November 15, 2021.

SAMA have shown her many aspects of learning that would lead her to believe that art is irreplaceable in the realm of education. Further, she also comes to conclude that there is space for simpler inclusions of art in the classroom, as well as in a museum. Museum education, as it pertains to early childhood development and education, has much more space for creativity and less structure as there would be in a classroom, but the author proposes that this might be a perfect circumstance to introduce students to artwork and the institution that would collect or hold the artwork.

Another employee of the SAMA, Chris Torgerson, is a museum educator who assembles museum play dates and infant to pre-school education programs in the SAMA and agrees with Avery in a separate interview as she states that art helps us make sense of the world because we find common ground through study of other cultures through their experiences they depict in artwork.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, Torgerson has found that museum education creates space for children and adults alike to think of the museum as “theirs” instead of another culture or socio-economic group.<sup>73</sup> Torgerson has continually experienced children entering the museum and finding a welcoming environment and pride in the culture they find that connects to their own – they find identity in the artwork.<sup>74</sup>

Outside the realm of simply looking at artwork, there is also appeal in the participation of the culture that artwork represents. Dr. Edyta Skoczylas-Krotla takes note of the importance of participation in culture for early school age children as he states:

---

<sup>72</sup> Chris Torgerson, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner on November 3, 2021.

<sup>73</sup> Chris Torgerson, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner on November 3, 2021.

<sup>74</sup> Chris Torgerson, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner on November 3, 2021.

Participation in culture is a very important element in the proper development of children...it allows every individual to acquire and develop his or her personal cultural competencies, opens new perspectives of a rich, multifaceted, reflexive, expressive, and creative development as well as increased aesthetic sensitivity and general level of knowledge. Participating in culture develops the ability to communicate with other people, sensitizes one to their otherness and shapes up a wide perspective of the surrounding multilevel reality.<sup>75</sup>

This tells us that the cultural education of children, even in early childhood, should be of utmost importance and have a pronounced place in curriculum. When we create cultural translators in the classroom through multicultural education that includes art historical inquiry, we then encourage understanding, respect, and appreciation for culture. Educators also give students different places to look for cultural and historical expressions of experience, different ways to look at people and locations, and ways to express their own understanding. To involve art history is much like bringing another guide or teacher into the mix that could not be fulfilled in any other way.

Seeing the subject of arts education from the following psychological standpoint will give readers a chance to find the validity in benefits that would follow the implementation of curriculum or projects based on humanities. Scholars Nicolas J. Bullot and Rolf Reber produced psychological study of the interpretation of art in adults and children, and results of the article showed that young children classify paintings according to the represented content, while also believing that objects, including natural formations such as mountains and flowers, were made with purpose.<sup>76</sup> The study also notes the insistence of children to know the origin of a drawing

---

<sup>75</sup> Edyta Skoczylas-Krotla, "Forms of Participation in the Culture of Children in Early School Age," *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences & Arts SGEM 5* (January 2018): 355, doi:10.5593/sgemsocial2018/3.5

<sup>76</sup> Bullot and Reber, 128, 139.

before deciding what it depicts.<sup>77</sup> It is then assumed by the researcher through this recorded observation of children, and of the national core standards created through research on child development through arts education, that the consumption and discussion of objects from art history will be not only be important and relatable to children, but educators can also be confident in the notion of children being capable of understanding context from which the artwork came.

More importantly, for the psychological standpoint, the visual arts have been proven to be much like multicultural education in the way that it plays a vital role of understanding diverse human experiences.<sup>78</sup> This is a case to make for the realm of art therapy because it gives way to the theory that children could learn more about themselves and their roles in society through the visual arts. Desai Dipti and Chelsea Bailey, New York University professors of education and art, state the following in their article on visual arts and education.

“Students [of all ages] need to comprehend multiple perspectives that emerge from their own culture and from the Vantage points of the diverse cultural groups within their society and with whom the society may interact. These understandings allow them to make appropriate sense of the actions, ideas, and products of others as well as to relate to and interact with people within their diverse society and throughout the world.”<sup>79</sup>

At this point it is pertinent to say that the visual arts have a particular capacity, which other subjects do not host, to force confrontation between an imperfect world and our responses to it.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Bullo and Reber, 143.

<sup>78</sup> Chelsea Bailey, and Dipti Desai. “Visual Art and Education: Engaged Visions of History and Community,” *Multicultural Perspectives* 7, no. 1 (January 2005): 39, Accessed May 27, 2020. doi:10.1207/s15327892mcp0701\_7.

<sup>79</sup> Bailey and Desai, “Visual Art and Education,” 39.

<sup>80</sup> Bailey and Desai, 42.

The arts, as further explained by Bailey and Desai, have a visceral nature that can create a state of discomfort through which we are required to respond to powerful feelings.<sup>81</sup> The article contains a specific provocation used to study responses to complex issues through the arts, and the authors thus conclude with the claim that the arts have a compelling role as a powerful tool for creating material practices for “other ways of being.”<sup>82</sup> If the visual arts hold properties that could shift perspective as such explained, there is room to believe that children can respond to art and simultaneously learn about how their responses and processes are important to their own narrative as well as the cumulative narrative of history. Accordingly, the researcher then assumes a stance of the visual arts as realization of self, which can be used as a therapeutic tool for children to better understand themselves and the world they’re living in.

Loris Malaguzzi’s experience of observing children in the Reggio Emilia classroom explains that children are the best evaluators and most sensitive judges of the values and usefulness of creativity because they have the privilege of not being excessively attached to their own ideas.<sup>83</sup> They are apt to explore and make discoveries, change their point of view, and fall in love with forms and meanings which would transform themselves.<sup>84</sup> If art psychologists were to use art history as a study of visual culture and base their curriculum on this idea about children as explorers and advocators for their own education of their culture, readers might now assume that there would be much room for the child to make their own decisions about artwork that would tell caregivers and educators about the child as a person who experiences the world in a unique

---

<sup>81</sup> Bailey and Desai, 42.

<sup>82</sup> Bailey and Desai, 43.

<sup>83</sup> Edwards, 71.

<sup>84</sup> Edwards, 71.

way. As one would learn about the functionality of certain artworks in history within the artwork's historical context, there would then be room for expression and a re-telling of their own story. The researcher propositions that one could assume the child simultaneously finds space to understand their own intentions in their artwork and learn to communicate their own visual culture through the study of artwork and different venues of expression.

### **Methodology/Analysis**

This research has been a form of a case study that has created a theoretically informed and data-driven proposal that might call to action towards new curriculum or program for early childhood education. There have been several means of qualitative research accumulated to help in the production and proof of the significance and utilization of art historical inquiry as a tool to help young children develop specific skills and learn to be cultural translators. In the process of collecting literature, and the interviews with experts in the field, the researcher has come to find that the philosophy of Reggio Emilia can be a pivotal tool in the adoption of the subject of art history in a preschool education system. Particularly through the use of the *atelier*, educators in classrooms and in museums might find the student led curriculum to be more available and serviceable for children and their cognitive growth when presented with research on the specific benefits socially and cognitively. Similarly, the curriculum has potential to produce results that could be used as a form of art therapy. An apt example of this student-led curriculum might look like a general discussion at first or a set-up *provocation*. For the Reggio Emilia philosophy, it is common to design a learning environment in such a way that learners are provoked to think, explore, ask questions, and become creative.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> R.S.S. Mphahlele, "Exploring the role of Malaguzzi's "Hundred Languages of Children" in early childhood education," *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 9(1), a757, 4, <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.757>

The questions asked in interviews for the experts and professionals in the field of study were mixed and matched per the nature of the interview and the background of the interviewed persons. The following is a compiled list of specific questions asked:

1. Have you heard of the Reggio Emilia philosophy of education? If so, explain your experience.
2. Do you feel arts are important in early education? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe there is value in including artifacts or art historical inquiry in early childhood education?
4. If art or art history were subjects incorporating into daily curriculum, do you feel as though the students would have a different or better view of education or culture? Explain your thoughts.
5. What do you feel are the benefits of introducing children, even from infancy to art and art history? How do you feel art history could be used to explain or express culture?
6. Lastly, if you have all the funding needed, what would it look like to incorporate art history into curriculum? What goals could this accomplish?

These questions were created in conjunction with the topic at hand and made room for the interviewed persons to explain and elaborate on philosophies and personal experiences. The interviews, and the researcher's work with the internship gained at the San Antonio Museum of Art, gave way to an opportunity to create curriculum based on this idea of student-led curriculum with Reggio Emilia inspirations.

Through the work done with SAMA, the researcher created curriculum for as a resource for educators in partnering schools. The lessons had been formulated in juxtaposition with the National Core Arts Standards and would be offered with a kit that would include materials for



the project that would acquaint the lesson. The kit is optional to the educator, leaving room for the educator to use their own supplies or buy supplies on their own. Utilizing artwork from the collections of the SAMA, the author was able to produce a lesson plan for educators to employ in order to bring the artwork from the museum into the classroom as a standalone project or to supplement a field trip to the museum. Further work on the curriculum would connect the art historical inquiry to other subjects such as math, science, social studies, and history. Alongside the goals to explore the uses of art in other subjects, it would also be in the author's interest to meet goals of state standardized testing which would lead to a more enticing perspective of the arts for educators in public education. Ultimately, it would be the best-case scenario to make these curricula customizable for many other museums or institutions of the like and to meet education goals of the different states, and even countries, to bring more of the arts into the lives of students who would benefit from the knowledge of cultural inclusivity and cultural identity.

Below is a pre-school example, for ages 3 to 5, of curriculum that would be used by educators to bring certain artwork from the SAMA into the classroom. The lesson plan is led by the portrait by John Singer Sargent, *Portrait of Mrs. Elliott Fitch Shepard (Margaret Louisa Vanderbilt)* from the San Antonio Museum of Art collection (Fig. 7). The succeeding information would be given to educators to utilize and study in order to execute the lesson, and they are also encouraged to order the kits but are not required to.

### **Lesson One: The Portraitist**

This lesson will introduce students to portraiture through the study of a portrait from the San Antonio Museum of Art collection. The following lesson will also give students the opportunity to explore the art deeply while also giving the educator inspirations to further connect portraiture to the student's own experience with the materials.

**Portrait of Mrs. Elliott Fitch Shepard (Margaret Louisa Vanderbilt) (see Fig. 7)**

The following information would be optional to address – depending on the student’s development and at the educator’s discretion.

**Artist:** John Singer Sargent, American, 1856-1925

**Date:** 1888

**Media:** Oil on canvas

**Dimensions:** Height: 84 1/2 in. (214.6 cm); Width: 48 1/2 in. (123.2 cm)

**About the Art:** John Singer Sargent was a popular portrait painter in late 19th and early 20th century America and England. This full-length, life-size portrait depicts Margaret Louisa Vanderbilt Shepard (1845-1924), heiress to the Vanderbilt fortune. The warm, glowing red of her long satin dress is highlighted by the deeper dark red of the background. The red of the dress is further emphasized by touches of gold on the edges of the dress and the furniture, as well as the white fur rug. The use of a luxurious dress for her clothing, the scale of the portrait, and the fine furnishings emphasizes her wealth and status in society. Her soft facial features and modestly clasped hands contrast with the bold mood of her red dress.

**Topic and Standard for the lesson:** Beginning with basic questions that help the students understand what they are seeing in the portrait, the educator can then help the students start conversations about their own portrait. Relating the information, they learn about the portrait back to their own knowledge and experience.

**Supplies needed for provocation station (Comes in optional Kit):**

- Printed and laminated picture of the Portrait from SAMA
- Thick painting paper
- Tape
- Mirrors
- clip boards

- acrylic paints
- paint brushes
- pencils
- disposable aprons
- Labels for all tools/medium

**Optional add-ons:** [amazon affiliate links would accompany this section]

- Table or standing Easels
- Other printed portraits by John Singer Sargent such as *Portrait of Theodore Roosevelt*, *Mrs. Fiske Warren* or *The Misses Vickers* for 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> graders. Comparison of different portraits is a good learning experience in classifying or categorizing subject matter and expressing preferences about artwork.
- Large empty frame
- Play camera
- Artist smocks

**Example provocation station ideas:** [insert pictures of actual items from the offered kit to show or inspire educators the assemblage of provocations]

**Pre-kindergarden to Kindergarden, lesson plan elements:**

### **Creating**

Use the proposed provocation stations above or find inspiration in the examples to create your own provocation to fit your classroom and educational goals.

- Students should have space to walk into or around the space to engage with self-directed utilization of the materials.

- Leave room for more than one student to engage with the material so that they can collaborate and talk about the artwork amongst themselves.
- It would also be beneficial to have room for imaginative play. Specifically for this project, having an old frame for them to pose in for their “portrait,” a play camera, and an artist set up to pretend like they are painting a portrait of their classmates.

Before going into the project, make it clear what the expectations are with the materials in terms of safety, responsibility, and creativity

- materials are meant to be shared, but we must ask if we want to use a material that is used by another student. No might be the answer, so we will have to be patient.
- Paint is for paper, not our bodies. It is also not food....etc.

The project the students will work on will be to create a portrait, or several portraits, of themselves and their classmates.

- Pick a time of day to dedicated at least one hour of self-directed play with the materials.
- With the printed pictures of the portrait of discussion, ask the students to create their own version of themselves or of their classmates.
- Expose the students to materials – one at a time. Perhaps have them answer a question before they get access to the materials.
  - Are you doing a portrait of yourself or someone else?
  - What colors will you need?
  - What materials will help you accomplish your portrait?

Ask questions while the students are creating and create space to think about their next steps.

- Remind the students that the portrait can be in a space that is familiar or imagined.

- Ask them what they want to communicate in their portrait. What do they want to say about the person in the portrait?

Conclude the project by helping the students create captions or present their artwork to other students.

- What materials were used? Did they choose the materials or subject matter on purpose?

### **Presenting**

Presenting artwork is a very important step as it helps the students identify reasons someone might display artwork

- Explain the purpose of a portfolio and an art museum
- As it is up to the educator to whom they will present to, the students should be given time to answer the following questions:
  - Would you display this in your home?
  - Would you like to make more artwork like this?
  - What are some other places you can display this artwork?
  - Would you keep this in your portfolio?
- With the whole class, discuss:
  - Where else can we take our art?
  - Why is an art museum different from other buildings?
  - Have you been to an art museum?

### **Responding**

The next step in the project is to help students identify artwork in their own environment and to understand its uses

- Take a small tour of the classroom or the school if permissible, give the students opportunity to identify both their own work and classmates work.
- Ask questions and figure out what art is to them and why.
- Explain the uses of artwork that you find – i.e. “What does this look like?” “Wow, look at these colors. What colors do you see?”
- Explain that the woman in the reference portrait was a real life woman.
- What do the students think the portrait says about the woman? – i.e. “Who does she look like?” “Does she look happy or sad?”

Explain and use some descriptive words that the students can use to identify subject matter

- Her dress is red, what color are your clothes?
- There is a table in the portrait, do you think she makes art on it?
- What else do you see in the portrait?

### **Connecting**

Vocabulary to introduce:

**Portrait:** A work of art that represents a specific person, a group of people, or an animal.

**Portraitist:** a painter, photographer, etc. who specializes in or is particularly skilled at portraits.

**Color:** The property possessed by an object of producing different sensations the eye as a result of the way the object reflects or emits light.

**Painting:** The process of using paint in a picture, as a protective coating, or as decoration.

**Paintbrush:** a brush for applying paint.

Added project to help students use vocabulary:

Let the students use their paintings to tell a story. They can either include the painting in the story or tell the story of how the painting was created.

- Help the students understand how the painting they created relates back to their life experience.
- Also encouraging discussions on what the painting means to them. Does it serve a purpose? It is a reminder? Or is it just a record?

The curriculum indicated above is created for pre-school to kindergarten age students, but the extensions of this lesson plan will be to cater to more age groups. Each age group would get a new form of the lesson plan to meet National Core Arts Standards for their age. Further, it is the researcher's objective to create space for a curriculum that is both age appropriate for those National Core Arts Standards and also include elements that promote learning towards the standardized testing for the state. There are many spaces for customization into different types of public school forums. For a classroom that would have less structure or would be able to begin with discussion, the researcher created another type of curriculum that might better be utilized in Reggio Emilia inspired classrooms or homeschool sessions.

The guide could start by asking the students what they did over the weekend, and a student might say they went to the supermarket. Or, if it is so common for the community, the guide could ask "Who went to the supermarket over the weekend?" So, then begins an exploration: "What happens at the supermarket?" Some directions one can take with this are for the children to draw out what they think a supermarket would look like or create a makeshift experience in the school so the children could use dramatic play to explore what they would do in a supermarket. Then, encourage them to use math for prices, art and design for planning out their supermarket, and drama for the acting out. This is all a "for instance" scenario that could then turn into an art history lesson. One artist and artwork that comes to mind is Andy Warhol's

*Campbells Soup Cans* (Fig. 6), which could kickstart a conversation and project for the students.

Here is a more detailed lesson plan for this scenario:

**Pre-primary provocation discussion: Supermarket**

**Supplies needed:** paper, markers or crayons, possibly cardboard boxes to build shelves or shopping carts, pictures of supermarkets (inside and out), various food shaped items, an apron or nametag for the grocery workers, a printed copy of Andy Warhol's *Campbells Soup Cans* picture, and possibly a book on Andy Warhol with other pictures of his artwork.

**Topic and standard:** Beginning with the question of whether they went to the supermarket, start conversations on each individual experience with the supermarket. Also, asking what they like to buy at the supermarket. Therefore elaborating.

**Essential Questions:** What does a supermarket look like? What kind of things do you find there? Does mom or dad go to the supermarket with you? Do your siblings go too? Do you have a favorite aisle? What colors are found in the produce section? Here is where you can insert questions and conversation on Andy Warhol's *Campbells* soup cans. Have you ever seen a wall of soup like this? Do you wish that \*insert your favorite snack\* lined the aisles like these soup cans? What does your snack taste like? What does it smell like? What does it look like?

**Investigate:** Field trip to a supermarket. Looking at photos of supermarkets and aisles of food. Discussions on what we have seen at supermarkets

**Construct:** Creating our own supermarket out of classroom items. Would a tiger be at the supermarket? Would an apple be at the supermarket? Continue using differentiating skills and comparing different items. What would it look like to have just our favorite foods at the supermarket? Let us draw it like Andy Warhol did.



**Art/Art History Connection:** Showing a picture of Andy Warhol and a few of his artworks, focusing on the *Campbell's soup cans*. How do you think he accomplished this? How could we accomplish it? Why do you think he made this? What if we tried this with our own favorite foods?

**Math Connection:** Money – using our handmade money in our own supermarket. Counting how many things we have on our list. How many things do we need for a recipe? How much money do we have, and how can we spend it? How much change do we owe the customer? How many soup cans do we need to build an “Andy Warhol” wall?

**Reading and Writing Connection:** Books on supermarkets – fiction or non-fiction – on going to the supermarket. Having the children tell or author their own stories with words or pictures to be collected into a book for later reading. Let the children add context to their artwork that they made in “Andy Warhol” style and document it in a book to reference later as well.

**Guide's Choice:** Exploration and elaboration of the senses – what does it look/smell/feel/look like? Perhaps leading to a new lesson on sensory and food.

The second example of curriculum, also less structured, would show a more advanced version. This starts by first setting up pictures of portraits from the Renaissance era, finding some prints to hang on the wall or display on easels. Next to the prints, the educator might have available blank sheets of paper, distinct types of mediums, a camera, a book on the Renaissance or a book on Europe, and a map. This example takes a different approach but does end up with discussion and exploration of ideas and expression. Some suggested portraits that the researcher would use for this lesson plan are *Portrait of a Young Woman* by Agnolo Bronzino (Fig. 2), *Portrait of a Man in Armour* by Emmanuel Philiburt (Fig. 1), *Painter of the German School*.

16th Century. *Portrait of a Lady* by a painter of the German School (Fig. 3), *Portrait of Machiavelli* by Rosso Fiorentino (Fig. 4), and *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo Da Vinci (Fig.5).

### **Primary Classroom Lesson Plan: Renaissance Selfie**

**Supplies needed:** paper, markers or crayons, paint, pencils, possibly cardboard frames to frame themselves for their portrait, distinct types of dress up clothes or clothing that they feel represents their culture (teacher could bring these in or children could bring in their own), map that shows Italy, printed out Italian Renaissance portraits, and a camera/phone camera.

**Topic and standard:** Beginning with the question of what culture means and what it might look like, the teacher can then ask what kind of culture they see being represented and start conversation on each individual note of how “different” the portraits are to them and asking what they believe the artist was trying to say about the person in the portrait.

**Essential Questions:** What is she/he wearing? What kind of things are they holding? [insert discussion on symbols], If they are wearing [color], do you think it is their favorite color? Why aren't they smiling? [insert discussion about how long it takes to paint a portrait] Do you think you would smile in a portrait? What kind of things are these people holding? Why? [insert discussion on what was important to people at this time period – health, wealth, marriage...etc.] Why do you think they are dressed like that? [insert discussion on the way people dressed back then and why] What do you think about the jewelry? Do you think the artist sketched it first? [insert discussion about sketches and how many times artists planned with sketches before starting]

**Investigate:** Play with the idea of having personal portraits taken. What would be in them? What would you wear? Will you smile or wear jewelry?

**Construct:** Make plans for your portrait, give children time to sketch their portraits and plan for what they would have or wear for them. Using differentiating skills and comparing different items and the way people represented themselves then and now. The teacher can ask: will your portrait be a bust or a full body?

**Art/Art History Connection:** Showing the portraits from the Italian Renaissance and comparing/contrasting the culture of that time to the present culture.

**Math Connection:** How much money do you think it costs to have a portrait painted then? How much would that be today? What kind of money did they use back then? How large would you want your portrait to be? When was the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and how long ago was that?

**Reading and Writing Connection:** Have books available about painting/portraits and Renaissance Artists– fiction or non-fiction. Have the children tell or write their own captions or thoughts to help the audience understand their portrait, which will be collected in a binder for later reference. Let the children add context to their artwork and relate it back to the Italian Renaissance portraits. How are they different? How are they similar?

**Guide's Choice:** Exploration and elaboration of the senses – what does it look/smell/feel like to be in the 16<sup>th</sup> century?

All three of the above examples show how the idea of Reggio Emilia provocation stations and the role of guides can be used to introduce art historical inquiry in early childhood education. If students find themselves more interested in the math portion of the Renaissance selfie, for example, it would be apt to introduce Leonardo Da Vinci more fully and help the students understand his work in mathematics, science, and biology. If the children seem to be more interested in the dramatic play that comes with the Campbells soup cans, there is opportunity to highlight fashion in Andy Warhol's era and ask how that has changed over time. These are

examples of the practical usage that might better help readers to understand the classroom experience as children would encounter art history in an atelier. More importantly, the discussions and collaborations of students make way for realizations and connections that might not otherwise be made.

When the introduction of artwork that represents a human experience, and the guide is apt to understand how to relate that back to the students, one might find the cultural connection needed for students to take ownership over their own culture and human experience. Further, it might also be apt to customize the educational depth in order to match other subject matters and educator plans. In an interview with Atelierista Giovonne Calenda who teaches at Lincoln School in Rhode Island, the author notes that Calenda strives to work in compliment with what other educators are teaching in their classrooms to help students have a more rounded understanding, rather than doing something that exactly relates to the other classrooms.<sup>86</sup> The author proposes, from notes on this interview, that the lesson plans above might work well as a basepoint for educators to use and customize for the culture and best function of their classroom, community, and school.

The analysis of the information found through the study led to an application of the theories within curriculum. The goal of the interviews was to collect practical substantiation for theories held by the researcher that pertained to the utilization of art historical inquiry in early childhood education. The assumptions made from the information found are that the use of art historical inquiry in early childhood education can lead to deeper understandings of culture and self-identity for children from all cultures. From the perspective of the research accomplished,

---

<sup>86</sup>Giovonne Calenda, recorded phone interview with Sara Turner, March 17, 2020.

the author also has created the assumption that there is little to no room for argument against the use of the arts, particularly the subject of art history, in education for all ages. Readers are recommended to the assumption that bringing art history discussion, and simple exposure to artworks that represent the human experience, in early childhood involvement and education can and will lead to building up the identity of the students as responsible decision-makers in their education, while also making them cultural translators.

The limitations to the research presented here have much to do with the current state of education that is regulated by those who do not see or find value in the child as a whole and capable being. Rather, the United States education systems lean towards the culmination and factory-like production of students who would all assumedly learn at the same pace. The philosophy of education must shift and accommodate the unique and various experiences of the students that are a part of the educational system. In a similar execution of the study and observation of various art curricula for Korean American children, Nara Kim found that children had the tendency to assimilate self-images with mainstream societal forms.<sup>87</sup> Finding this to be true, the curriculum might better serve the goal of supporting and empowering culturally diverse learners if they are able to share their stories and lived experiences to explore their personal and familial cultural wealth through multicultural art practices.<sup>88</sup>

Moreover, the conversion needed to incorporate art history in public schools would be difficult if they do not already have art in their curriculum. If we are to enter in art history as a subject for students in this context, the author assumes that guides, parents, other educators, or

---

<sup>87</sup> Kim, "Exploring Nuances," 7.

<sup>88</sup> Kim, 7.

even other students can make the lesson more in-depth if they choose to. When the children see that the community and their parents are leading them into a lesson that centers around culture and art, there becomes a deeper understanding, and it becomes a part of their learning process as it relates back to their present life. In an interview with Dr. Laura Lamper, Education Department Chair at Central Texas College, she claims that when children understand things, they value them more and while the arts in early childhood education helps to develop critical thinking skills and provides children rich opportunities to express themselves, it would also give space for students to find art valuable culturally.<sup>89</sup>

For the realms of museum education, the assumption that the limited experience of just purely being in the presence of art can fall short on the argument of this thesis. In one study executed by Jari Martikainen, the importance of also making pictures and being an active spectator to strengthen conception of art history as a dialogue between the present and the past, as well as between people and cultures.<sup>90</sup> This is where the curriculum for the SAMA, as presented above, might also bode well in the environment of the museum because of the plethora of examples of culture being exemplified through expression of the human experience. The utilization of the above curriculum has potential to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills while giving prospective instances to explore internal stories of children, which would then aid in therapeutic art practices.<sup>91</sup> The overall goal for all the environments that would utilize this type of art historical inquiry would be to do just as Nara Kim found in her study- to empower

---

<sup>89</sup> Laura Lamper, email interview with Sara Turner, April 13, 2020.

<sup>90</sup> Jari Martikainen, "Making Pictures as a Method of Teaching Art History," *International Journal of Education & the Arts* 18, no. 18/19 (April 29, 2017): 2, <http://www.ijea.org/v18n19/v18n19.pdf>

<sup>91</sup> Kim, 7.

and support diverse learners so that they might find, and place high value on, their own form of cultural self-identity.

### **Conclusions and Results**

Most, if not all, of the scholars and professionals that have been acquainted in this study are few in the scope of the research being done on the arts in education. The highlighted resources in this thesis have been found to have built confidence and trustworthiness through the types of research and methodologies that pertain to art historical inquiry as it relates to cultural literacy. For the topic of this thesis, the resources have also proved to be in congruency with the argument of the validity of the specific art historical inquiry as a cornerstone of multicultural education. The goal of the thesis was to make the connection between education and art history for early education. The assumed argument being that art historical inquiry in early childhood can lead to the accomplishment of educational goals while also creating space for students to find cultural identity and roles as cultural translators. For young students to be fully engaged with artwork from different times, it is proposed that the guide or educator would give those students space to participate in culture, or in artmaking, to express their own human experience. The creative process in particular has precedence in the development of a child. As Laura Levine and Joyce Munsch state in their book,

“Creativity is central to the ability to move beyond what we know to the realm of possibility. While people of any age can be creative, some of the neurocognitive changes that occur during adolescence are particularly important for creativity. Being cognitively flexible, being able to think through a task and anticipate the outcome and thinking hypothetically and abstractly are all essential elements of the creative process.”<sup>92</sup>

To better understand what backgrounds and experiences the students have, and to help them express those experiences, educators would need to host space to entice the students in

---

<sup>92</sup> Levine, 518.

relatable curriculum. The studies above have shown that using education that caters to multiple cultures, by including art historical inquiry practices, can accomplish this task for educators. The researcher would also like to set up a proposition to link social and cognitive skills to the assessment, appreciation, and production of art in students as young as three and four years of age. As laid out previously, there have been studies towards the idea in which children do have the capabilities needed to do such work as appreciating art and connecting it to the intentions and functionality set out by the artist (or patron) and the historical context. The question of whether children can comprehend the subject matter is not of issue, but rather, the opportunity that must be afforded young children to accomplish such understandings. The proposal of this research comes down to the education of teachers of children that need more support and open-minded advocacy if a community strives to nurture children into being better developed citizens.

Further investigation needs to be produced along the lines of the exact implications and limitations of the lack of arts, and art history, in education systems. The researcher proposes that further study would be directed in several ways, but particularly on subject matter that pertains to communities which would not have the subject of art history readily available to early education and how such communities can benefit from such insertions. The researcher would personally like to delve into further research which pertains to the development of the child and how cultural influences from caregivers would shape the child's view of the world. Along that same train of thought, the researcher would also like to introduce the art historical inquiry into more types of settings that would include homeschooling, art therapy, and museum education. The goal of such research would be to better understand ways to incorporate the arts into educational setting for cultural benefit of the child.



The larger picture will be to look at how the child, as cultural translator, can then become a leader in the change of the narrative around the indigenous or oppressed cultures that have yet to make a voice in the field of art history. Carrie Avery says it well when she states, “It is essential to show different cultures through art history... We have a lot of power to shift the narrative away from those who have been historic oppressors.”<sup>93</sup> When children are exposed to different cultures through the study of art history, they are then given responsibility to not only understand their own roles in their culture, but also how other cultures would be valuable and have a place in the narrative of the history of the world.

Teaching art history starting at a young age is just the beginning of the educational journey. Art History is a visual representation of culture through time, and it might also be defined as a representation of the human experience. When teaching this as a small side subject and neglect to understand the importance of it, school systems eliminate that knowledge from our students. By using Reggio Emilia, educators can begin to bring art historical inquiry into early childhood education. When the students incorporate these images and history into their frame of knowledge, they can do several things; think critically about the world around them, interpret the world through the lens of creativity and problem-solving, and on a bigger scale, know that they have the power to be influential enough to be a part of [art] history to future generations.

### **Postscript**

Results moving forward would indicate the need for tangible utilization of the curriculum. In lieu of this knowledge, the author presented curriculum to Mrs. Danielle Budnik,

---

<sup>93</sup> Carrie Avery, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner on November 15, 2021.

Owner and Director of Learning Their Way. Learning Their Way is a private, Christian based pre-kindergarten and kindergarten school where the curriculum offers coverage on subject matters for math, reading readiness, science, social/emotional skills, fine/gross motor skills, and most importantly, art.<sup>94</sup> When asked if art history is a plausible subject matter to introduce to early childhood education, Mrs. Budnik replied affirming that it is important to help children see that art is a way to express their feelings, thoughts, and interests.<sup>95</sup> She continues speaking to the arts as a way to be heard and the subject matter of history, in all forms, is a great way to expose children to background knowledge with which they can later make connections.<sup>96</sup>

Mrs. Budnik, after reviewing curriculum that was laid out earlier in this thesis, noted that the elements of their own curriculum at Learning Their Way does also strive to focus on self-portraits each month, much like the lesson that was directed in the curriculum.<sup>97</sup> She claims that the student's first ways of communicating are through pictures and going into kindergarten is when they help students start to create a personal narrative around their pictures.<sup>98</sup> She states that one limitation that she might encounter with the curriculum would be the modeling that would need to take place before exposing pre-kindergarten classes to the curriculum, and that educators would need to do several direct teaches before putting it into a center (or provocation as this

---

<sup>94</sup> "Learning Their Way Mission Statement," Learning Their Way Private School, Website, Accessed December 4, 2021. <https://www.learningtheirway.com/staff>.

<sup>95</sup> Danielle Budnik, email interview with Sara Turner of December 5, 2021.

<sup>96</sup> Danielle Budnik, email interview with Sara Turner of December 5, 2021.

<sup>97</sup> Danielle Budnik, email interview with Sara Turner of December 5, 2021.

<sup>98</sup> Danielle Budnik, email interview with Sara Turner of December 5, 2021.

thesis would indicate) for them to do a self-directed project.<sup>99</sup> Mrs. Budnik also suggests that the curriculum take place over several days and using tempera or watercolors.<sup>100</sup>

The author would like to note a great takeaway from the presentation of the curriculum to an educator such as Mrs. Budnik, who has a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and has sixteen years of teaching experience. The takeaway designates that the limitations for the utilization of the curriculum would be the expanse of time that educators would need to introduce the project as well as prepare for employing the project curriculum in methods that would be conducive to the culture of the classroom and the student's educational goals. Keeping this in mind for future utilization of the curriculum, it is in the author's interest to reassess after applying the lesson plans in a classroom. A later study in the next year will consist of results of this employment will be presented as a sequel to the above writings and research.

---

<sup>99</sup> Danielle Budnik, email interview with Sara Turner of December 5, 2021.

<sup>100</sup> Danielle Budnik, email interview with Sara Turner of December 5, 2021.

## Illustrations

### Fig. 1

Italian School 16th Century (Northern Italy). 1549-1551. *Portrait of a man in Armour* (possibly Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy). Place: The Courtauld Gallery, London, Provenance: Lee of Fareham, Arthur Hamilton (1st Viscount); bequest; 1947. [https://library.artstor.org/asset/ACOURTAULDIG\\_10313599056](https://library.artstor.org/asset/ACOURTAULDIG_10313599056).



**Fig. 2**

Agnolo Bronzino, Italian, 16th century. 1565. Portrait of a Young Woman. Place: Seattle Art Museum, Samuel H. Kress Collection.

[https://library.artstor.org/asset/ASEATTLEIG\\_10312599784](https://library.artstor.org/asset/ASEATTLEIG_10312599784).



**Fig. 3**

Painter of the German School. 16th Century. *Portrait of a Lady*. Place: Galleria degli Uffizi.  
[https://library.artstor.org/asset/SCALA\\_ARCHIVES\\_1039930395](https://library.artstor.org/asset/SCALA_ARCHIVES_1039930395).



**Fig. 4**

Attributed to Rosso Fiorentino. early 16th century. *Portrait of Machiavelli*. painting.  
[https://library.artstor.org/asset/SCALA\\_ARCHIVES\\_1039929502](https://library.artstor.org/asset/SCALA_ARCHIVES_1039929502).



**Fig. 5**

Leonardo da Vinci. 1503-1506. Mona Lisa. Place: Inv. 779, Museo du Louvre.  
[https://library.artstor.org/asset/LESSING\\_ART\\_1039490423](https://library.artstor.org/asset/LESSING_ART_1039490423).





Fig. 6

Andy Warhol, 1962. *Campbell's Soup Cans*. Painting. Database on-line. ARTstor.  
[https://library.artstor.org/asset/AMOMA\\_10312310947](https://library.artstor.org/asset/AMOMA_10312310947).



**Fig. 7**

John Singer Sargent, 1888. *Portrait of Mrs. Elliott Fitch Shepard (Margaret Louisa Vanderbilt)*.  
Painting. Online. San Antonio eMuseum.

<https://sanantonio.emuseum.com/objects/1016/margaret-louisa-vanderbilt-mrs-elliott-fitch-shepard;jsessionid=3718819F0A43C979F44DABF792CA890E?ctx=ac8efb76-4f35-49fe-a416-4e0cc1b13b43&idx=0>



## Bibliography

- Bailey, Chelsea, and Dipti Desai. "Visual Art and Education: Engaged Visions of History and Community." *Multicultural Perspectives* 7, no. 1 (January 2005): 39–43. Accessed May 27, 2020. doi:10.1207/s15327892mcp0701\_7.
- Bequette, James W. "Tapping a Postcolonial Community's Cultural Capital: Empowering Native Artists to Engage More Fully with Traditional Culture and Their Children's Art Education." *Visual Arts Research* 35 (2009): 76–90. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20715489>
- Bequette, James W. "Culture-Based Arts Education That Teaches Against the Grain: A Model for Place-Specific Material Culture Studies." *Studies in Art Education* 55 (2014): 214–26. doi:10.1080/00393541.2014.11518931.
- Brayboy, Bryan McKinley Jones. "Culture, Place, and Power: Engaging the Histories and Possibilities of American Indian Education." *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2014): 395-402. Accessed September 10, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24482187>.
- Bullot, Nicolas J. and Rolf Reber. "The Artful Mind Meets Art History: Toward a Psycho-Historical Framework for the Science of Art Appreciation." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 36, no. 2 (04, 2013): 123-137. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X12000489>.
- Castagno, Angelina E. "'They Prepared Me to Be a Teacher, But Not a Culturally Responsive Navajo Teacher for Navajo Kids': A Tribal Critical Race Theory Analysis of an Indigenous Teacher Preparation Program." *Journal of American Indian Education* 51, no. 1 (2012): 3-21. Accessed September 10, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43608618>.
- Chang, Eunjung, Maria Lim, and Minam Kim. "Three Approaches to Teaching Art Methods Courses: Child Art, Visual Culture, and Issues-Based Art Education." *Art Education* 65, no. 3 (2012): 17-24. Accessed March 22, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24765913>.
- Edwards, Carolyn P., George E. Forman, and Lella Gandini. *The Hundred Languages of Children: the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education*. Westport: Ablex, 1998.
- \*This source is not within the last 5 years, as required for education-based sources. I am using this book as a reference as it is a cornerstone to the research on Reggio Emilia. Approved by Dr. Piper Hutson via email.
- Harrington, Billie Graham, and Chixapkaid (D. Michael Pavel). "Using Indigenous Educational Research to Transform Mainstream Education: A Guide for P–12 School Leaders." *American Journal of Education* 119, no. 4 (2013): 487-511. Accessed September 10, 2021. doi:10.1086/670962.
- Irwin, Rita L., Tony Rogers, and Yuh-yao Wan. "Making Connections through Cultural Memory, Cultural Performance, and Cultural Translation." *Studies in Art Education* 40,

- no. 3 (Spring 1999): 198–212. Accessed June 8, 2020. doi:10.2307/1320862.
- Kim, Nara. "Exploring Nuances of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children's Voices through Art and Play." Order No. 28022713, University of Georgia, 2020. <https://search.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/exploring-nuances-culturally-linguistically/docview/2446734177/se-2?accountid=12104>.
- "Learning Their Way Mission Statement." Learning Their Way Private School Website. Accessed December 4, 2021. <https://www.learningtheirway.com/staff>.
- Levine, Laura E. and Joyce Munsch. *Child Development from Infancy to Adolescence: An Active Learning Approach*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2016.
- Lewin-Benham, Ann. *Infants and Toddlers at Work: Using Reggio-Inspired Materials to Support Brain Development*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2010.  
\*this source is not within the last 5 years, as required for education-based sources. I am not using this book as a primary or secondary source, it was used to help with the introduction.
- Martikainen, Jari. "Making Pictures as a Method of Teaching Art History." *International Journal of Education & the Arts* 18, no. 18/19 (April 29, 2017): 1–24. <http://www.ijea.org/v18n19/v18n19.pdf>
- McClure, Marissa, Patricia Tarr, Christine Marme N. Thompson, and Angela Eckoff. "Defining Quality in Visual Art Education for Young Children: Building on the Position Statement of the Early Childhood Art Educators." *Arts Education Policy Review*, 2017. 118 (3): 154-163. DOI: 10.1080/10632913.2016.1245167
- Mphahlele, R.S.S.. "Exploring the role of Malaguzzi's "Hundred Languages of Children" in early childhood education." *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 9(1), a757. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.757>
- National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. "National Core Arts Standards." Nationalartsstandards.org, 2014. Accessed November 2, 2021. <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Visual%20Arts%20at%20a%20Glance%20-%20new%20copyright%20info.pdf>
- O'Shea, Nicole Denise. "Preceptions of Art Education: An Exploration of Perspectives Held by Critical Stakeholders regarding the Value of Art Education." Order No. 28090413, Northcentral University, 2020. <https://search.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/preceptions-art-education-exploration/docview/2447517190/se-2?accountid=12104>.
- Oxford Learner's Dictionary, s.v. "Art History," accessed July 20, 2020. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/arhistory?q=Art+History>.
- Oxford Learner's Dictionary. s.v. "Culture." Accessed July 20, 2020.

[https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/culture\\_1](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/culture_1).

“Position Statement on Early Childhood Art Education,” NAEA website, last modified March 2016, <https://www.arteducators.org/advocacy/articles/513-naea-position-statement-on-early-childhood-art-education>.

Rinaldi, Carla, Amelia Gambetti, Lella Gandini, and Leslie Morrow. *The Hundred Languages in Ministories: Told by Teachers and Children from Reggio Emilia*. Worcester, MA: Davis Publications, Inc., 2016.

Santín, Mercè Fernández and Maria Feliu Torruella. "Reggio Emilia: An Essential Tool to Develop Critical Thinking in Early Childhood." *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research* 6, no. 1 (01, 2017): 50-60A. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7821/naer.2017.1.207>.

Skoczylas-Krotla, Edyta. “Forms of Participation in the Culture of Children in Early School Age.” *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences & Arts SGEM 5* (January 2018): 355–60. Accessed: May 27, 2020. doi:10.5593/sgemsocial2018/3.5.

Smith-Gilman, Sheryl. “Culture Matters: The Arts, the Classroom Environment, and a Pedagogy of Entewate’Nikonri:Sake : A Study in a First Nations Pre-School.” *Canadian Review of Art Education: Research & Issues* 42, no. 2 (July 2015): 53–68. Accessed: May 27, 2020. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=asn&AN=125113314&site=ehost-live>.

Tervo, Juuso. "On the Impossibility of Life in Art and Education." *Visual Arts Research* 42, no. 1 (2016): 104-16. Accessed April 29, 2021. doi:10.5406/visuartsrese.42.1.0104.

The College Board. “Child Development and Arts Education.” [Nationalartsstandards.org](https://www.nationalartsstandards.org), 2012. Accessed November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/College%20Board%20Research%20-%20Child%20Development%20Report.pdf>

Ukala, Catherine Chinyere and Ogar G. Agabi. "Linking Early Childhood Education with Indigenous Education using Gamification: The Case of Maintaining Cultural Value and Identity." *Journal of International Education Research* 13, no. 1 (2017): 17-26. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.19030/jier.v13i1.9960>.

“What Are The Standards?” National Core Arts Standards. Accessed November 2, 2021. <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org>

**Interviews:**

Carrie Avery, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner on November 15, 2021.  
Masters in Art Education, Teacher and School Programs Manager at San Antonio Museum of Art.

Chris Torgerson, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner on November 3, 2021.  
Tour and Volunteer Coordinator, Museum Educator at the San Antonio Museum of Art.

Mrs. Danielle Budnik, email interview with Sara Turner, December 5, 2021.  
Owner and Director of Learning Their Way, a private preschool in New Braunfels, TX.

Domonique Vallejo, email interview with Sara Turner, April 22, 2020.  
Elementary school teacher, Pershing Elementary School, San Antonio ISD

Giovonne Calenda, recorded phone interview with Sara Turner, March 17, 2020.  
Art teacher (Atelierista), at Lincoln School in Rhode Island.

Dr. Ena Shelley, Zoom call interview with Sara Turner, April 14, 2021.  
Retired professor of education and Reggio Emilia education philosophy.

Dr. Laura Lamper, email interview with Sara Turner, April 13, 2020.  
Department Chair at Central Texas College

Stephanie Payton, email interview with Sara Turner, April 23, 2020.  
Homeschooling mom in South Texas

## Appendices

Definitions by researcher that may aid the audience in understanding better:

**Art History** - is the study of the history of painting, sculpture, etc. The subject matter of art history, or art historical inquiry, is based on artworks or artifacts that are created to exemplify the human experience or the expression of a perspective of a member of a culture.

**Atelier** – A studio space in a Reggio Emilia school that hosts all supplies needed to support the guides of the school. The students often take lessons in art here and sometimes learn supplemental information that would complement other subjects they learn about in other parts of the school.

**Atelierista** – The guide of a Reggio Emilia school that supervises the Atelier and supports other guides and teachers with supplies, advisement, and curriculum building.

**Culture** - the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group of people. Culture is defined by the author as the human experience as it pertains to each individual in the community from which they come.

**Guide** – also known as the educator or teacher that would lead children through curriculum that the students had been initially engaged with.

**Loris Malaguzzi** – Founder of the Reggio Emilia Philosophy.

**Provocation** – a space in the classroom that is specifically crafted by guides/teachers to entice students to explore and ask questions.

**Reggio Emilia** – A philosophy originating from the Reggio Emilia region of Italy. Founded by Loris Malaguzzi, the philosophy focuses on the child as a whole, independent learner. The philosophy lets the students lead the curriculum with their interests as the guides/teachers direct

the lessons into helpful and specific subjects, such as math, reading, writing, art, play, and motor/fine motor skills. Teachers are often called guides.

**Interview Questions:**

1. Have you heard of the Reggio Emilia philosophy of education? If so, explain your experience.
2. Do you feel arts are important in early education? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe there is value in including artifacts or art historical inquiry in early childhood education?
4. If art or art history were subjects incorporating into daily curriculum, do you feel as though the students would have a different or better view of education or culture? Explain your thoughts.
5. What do you feel are the benefits of introducing children, even from infancy to art and art history? How do you feel art history could be used to explain or express culture?
6. Lastly, if you have all the funding needed, what would it look like to incorporate art history into curriculum? What goals could this accomplish?