

Art Immersion in Preschools

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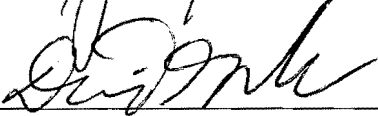
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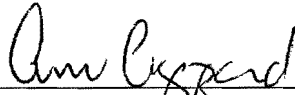
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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	5
Conceptual Framework.....	6
Preschool Common Core Standards.....	7
The Benefits of Embedding the Arts into Preschool Curriculum.....	9
Literature Review.....	13
Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Curriculum Approaches.....	14
Philosophical Approaches that Emphasize the Arts in the Classroom.....	16
Integrating the Arts in the Preschool Curriculum.....	19
Materials.....	20
Family Influence and Involvement in Preschool.....	21
Training and Support for Early Childhood Teachers.....	22
Challenges for Integrating the Arts into the Classroom.....	24
Method.....	26
Participants.....	26
Design.....	27
Materials.....	27
Flyer.....	27
Consent form.....	27
Demographic form.....	28
Interview questions.....	28
Procedure.....	28
Results.....	29

Discussion.....	38
Strategies and Materials.....	38
Programs.....	39
Family Influence.....	40
Training and Professional Development.....	41
Challenges.....	42
Common Core Standards.....	42
Limitations.....	43
Conclusion.....	44
References.....	46
Appendices.....	49
Appendix A.....	49
Appendix B.....	50
Appendix C.....	51
Appendix D.....	54

Abstract

This study examined how early child educators are immersing the arts into their curriculum in a standards based era while considering what approaches if any are followed. Through the utilization of research and interview questions developed and facilitated by the researcher, five early childhood educators provided information about variables impacting the way the arts were immersed in early childhood. The results of this study confirmed the impact that knowledge about early childhood approaches that utilize art can have on the selection of strategies and techniques that are embed in classroom practices in a standard space era.

Conceptual Framework

The incorporation of arts during preschool years is considered fundamental by many educators knowledgeable in developmentally appropriate practices that impacts student learning. Art is often utilized as a medium for socio-emotional and cognitive growth and can help develop important skills for the academic success of all children. The arts provide socio-emotional and academic growth in young children. Children are naturally interested in the arts which can provide them with opportunities to express their emotions in a positive way. It allows children of diverse backgrounds to share their emotions and experiences with the class. The arts help to foster positive emotions for children with development difficulties as well. When young children are comfortable socio-emotionally, they are likely to have substantial academic growth. Children who have exposure to the arts in a school setting are more likely to grow academically as well (Brown, 2013).

Preschools often rely on National Association of Early Childhood education standards and/or district, state, and national standards to serve as a guide for appropriate learning goals for their young students. The types of art that are listed by the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core standards are visual arts, music, movement, and dramatic play (The New York State Education Department, 2011). These standards are listed on the New York State Education Department website. Teachers throughout the New York have used them in an assortment of ways in their classrooms. Using these arts in the classroom can be beneficial to young students both developmentally and academically. Preschool teachers need to take into consideration the positive affects and the possible challenges faced when making the arts an addition to

classroom curriculum. Due to the availability of a variety of resources related to appropriate art programs in early childhood settings, factors influencing the decision making process must be considered (Brown, 2013).

Preschool Common Core Standards

The Common Core Standards, which were published in 2010, are intended to replace the current state standards. Many argue that schools' focus on academic performance can often limit the amount of focus on other disciplines children can explore. Often, schools lack access information and resources to select and incorporate the arts into an early childhood setting (Brown, 2013). Despite the fact that the common core standards are designed to ensure every student who graduates is ready for work and college, there are challenges for early childhood educators (Zubrzycki, 2011). Early educators are now attempting to find the best way to use the common core standards while addressing the developmental needs of children. The emphasis of the Common Core Standards in college readiness as caused a challenge for early childhood educators interested in encouraging t play, the arts, social skills, and integrated instruction in the early years (Zubrzycki, 2011).

The United States Department of Education believes that college and career readiness starts before children even enter kindergarten. 35 states have accepted the department's offer of \$500 million in exchange that each state plans to change and improve their early childhood programs. Most of the states have adopted the common core standards and therefore their early childhood program plans have to include the new standards (Zubrzycki, 2011). States have begun to create their own guidelines for

preschool programs that include common core standards, existing guidelines, and the Head Start framework. However, there are still no plans to make nationwide common core standards. Michael Cohen, the president of Achieve states

“There’s no doubt that what goes on in early-childhood programs needs to be informed, shaped, and aligned with what students are going to start with in kindergarten, but there’s not a national plan”(Zubrzycki, 2011).

The Common Core Standards allow for art to be immersed; however many educators feel that these standards downgrade the arts and create injustices for many children who flourish when engaged in the arts (Wexler, 2014). New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core has developed a list of domains and standards that early childhood learners are expected to be able to perform. There are five domains, each related to a subject required for preschool students. Within each domain there are more specific areas of each subject with standards that a preschool child is expected to reach and demonstrate knowledge of. Domain 5, which is titled Cognition and Knowledge of the World focuses on a variety of valuable subjects for preschoolers, including the arts. In an overview of Domain 5, the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core states that there are numerous ways students can express themselves, which includes dramatic play, visual arts, music, and movement. Children use the arts to process their world and emotions.

Research findings from the New York State Education Department demonstrate a link between dramatic play and a student’s cognitive, language, and social development. Also, experts in the field of early education agree that when children participate in music and movement these interventions helps them to do better in reading, math, and even their social interactions. Even just listening to music has positive effects on children’s

learning (The New York State Education Department, 2011). There are specific standards for visual arts, music, dramatic play, and dance. These standards include children demonstrating understanding, participating, collecting arts materials, and expressing themselves in appropriate ways for each of the arts listed (The New York State Education Department, 2011). The incorporation of developmentally appropriate practices, together with the utilization of standards, can provide educators with a frame of reference regarding evidence based practices and arts immersed curriculum.

Evidence-based practices include what has been shown to be developmentally appropriate for young learners (Salvin, 2002). Child educators should be mindful that children from different backgrounds may develop at different paces impacting the way the curriculum needs to be implemented and considered. It is best practice for teachers to create different learning materials and strategies to best suit the diversity of the classroom (Jambunathan, 2012). The arts have the potential power to aid students in their cognitive skills. Cognitive skills such as imagination and sensory perception are developed through arts education and help children to develop new and different ways of thinking.

Understanding art is also part of cognition and cognitive development. The ability to create art takes cognitive skill as the arts help the mind to grow (Melnick, 2011).

The Benefits of Embedding the Arts into Preschool Curriculum

Teaching the arts to early learners presents many benefits to their development, social and emotional needs, and overall understanding of content being taught to them. Embedding the arts into preschool curriculum is extremely effective. Children

experience the world they live in by exploring it. Children can accomplish this through the arts (Lorenzo-Lasa, Ideishi, & Ideishi, 2007).

Developmentally, the arts play a crucial role for young children. Music is supportive in early learners' brain development and can even stimulate the growth of the connection of nerves in the brain cells for cognitive development. Studies have found that music provides children with improved reasoning abilities. Additionally, music education has been found to be a valuable tool to early childhood students, as it can enhance their mental capacity and intelligence (Harris, 2008).

Dance and movement create sensory experiences for students and that allows them work on their body awareness. Movement can help children to facilitate their developing motor and other skills while learning and playing at the same time. Motor skills for early learners can be developed through dance and movement (Lorenzo-Lasa, 2007). Also, the visual arts play a key role in a preschool child's development. Allowing students access to visual art throughout their day helps them to reach their development needs through self-expression (Griebeling, 2011).

When it comes to preparing and guiding children through academic understanding, the arts play a key role in early education. When a child is engaged, they are completely involved physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. The arts can be used as a method to engage the students throughout the curriculum. When children are engaged they are more likely to both understand and remember the content they are learning (Harris, 2008). Through music education students develop and use logical thought, which helps them to use those skills to problem solve. There is a high correlation between music and academic achievement, especially in mathematics. Music

can help students to learn their math skills, such as tables and formulas, with more ease (Harris, 2008). Like music, movement with rhythm also helps students in the subject of math (Lorenzo-Lasa, 2007). The visual arts, such as drawing and painting, are used to help children deepen their understanding of the topic they are learning about. Visual arts allow them to show that they know and have learned in a concrete way (Griebing, 2011). Studies have found that arts can impact the ways children with different needs and abilities learn (Harris, 2008). Music and movement can be especially valuable in inclusive settings because children can participate no matter their abilities and are still being part of the group experience. A dance and movement program in a preschool can include body awareness, counting, rhythm, exercise, and expression. This allows children of all different abilities to participate and be engaged (Lorenzo-Lasa, Ideishi, & Ideishi, 2007). Dramatic play is also a tool to give differentiated lessons to students who might struggle in other assessment areas. Regardless of developmental level, almost all children are able to successfully and appropriately participate in the drama activity one way or another. The arts are engaging to students, especially early education learners whose focus is easily shifted (Wright, Diener, & Kemp, 2013).

Possibly the most noticeable benefit the arts provide to preschool students is to their social and emotional development. Arts programs that include motor, cognitive, social, and emotional skills give children the opportunity to learn proper behavior and responses through those experiences (Lorenzo-Lasa, 2007). Children build relationships through these shared experiences and this helps them to develop their social skills (Wright, 2013). Children grow in their social and emotional needs through arts like dance and movement because they are usually participating and working as a whole

group which gives them opportunities to foster relationships with peers (Lorenzo-Lasa, 2007). Young students have not developed formal writing skills and therefore the visual arts allow them to master the expression of themselves. Children can often make relationships with peers through the arts. Children socialize through playing and become part of a community where they can feel needed and a sense of belonging. Visual arts provide children with ways to learn self-respect and respect for their community by working together and accepting others expressions (Griebing, 2011).

Using dramatic play in an early childhood setting helps students to create leadership skills. This helps them develop skills in responsibility and collaboration. With dramatic play children learn the sense of belonging to a community. Dramatic play encourages students to use their imagination and also adopt the ideas of their peers into playtime situations. Therefore through dramatic play, students gain the skills to work in groups and also make their ideas known. Having students act situations out and play dress up allows them to become more outgoing as they become more comfortable sharing their ideas with peers. Through dramatic play performance, students can develop a confidence and learn to voice their thoughts and feelings more often and clearly. Play lets children show their strength in a situation by giving them the chances to express themselves in a safe way. This helps students develop their self-worth (Wright, 2013). Similarly, movement allows students to become more self-aware and gain personal identity (Lorenzo-Lasa, 2007). As children grow, they typically gain more independence. Through art making, children learn how to work independently and control the outcome of their art because they decide what to make and how to make it (Griebing, 2011). Music therapists have even found that music is powerful in ways that can often lessen the

effects of depression and autism (Harris, 2008). Overall, the arts are a language for children to learn and express social and emotional needs (Griebeling, 2011).

Although the benefits of using art for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children has been clearly stated in the research related to early childhood education, the challenges many early childhood educators are facing to meet the needs outlined by the standards adapted in schools calls for studies seeking ways to understand how arts are incorporated in schools.

This study seeks to understand early childhood educators' decision-making process in the identification, selection, and implementation of the arts in a common core age. This study also examines the considerations of the use of the arts in their curriculum. Essential questions to this research are as follows:

- 1) What art approaches or strategies are early childhood educators utilizing that are beneficial to their classrooms?
- 2) How knowledgeable are early childhood educators about ways the Common Core Standards may impact the selection and utilization of arts and art programs in classrooms?
- 3) How are early childhood educators describing the benefits of the use of the arts in their classrooms?
- 4) What challenges are teachers facing while including the arts into their classroom?
- 5) What professional development related to the arts may impact the way early childhood educators effectively use the arts or a specific arts program in their classrooms?

Literature Review

It's important as educators to keep in mind the need of creating the right learning environment for our students. Part of a child's learning environment includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices and curriculum approaches for early childhood learners (Chen, 1998). Developmentally appropriate practices are necessary for the

growth and development of young students to foster proper learning rather than hurried learning. There are a variety of approaches for preschool education, but two in particular that are often utilized are the Reggio Emilia and Montessori approach. The Montessori method and the Reggio Emilia approach follow philosophies that believe strongly in the benefits of the arts for early childhood learners where developmentally appropriate practices are also considered. These approaches are intended to make children independent and prepare a classroom environment that supports child development (Kayili, 2011). In order for these programs to be used properly in schools, a variety of appropriate materials are needed so that the arts can be embedded into the preschool curriculum. In order to implement these practices correctly and include the arts in the curriculum, teachers need to be trained and prepared. However, trainings and professional development in the arts for early childhood educators is not easily found or accessible. Furthermore, there are an assortment of other challenges faced when integrating the arts into preschool curriculum including the new common core standards, school and district policies, assessments, and budget cuts.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Curriculum Approaches

Developmentally appropriate practices, as defined by the National Association of the Education of Young Children, are “teaching practices that are age appropriate, individually appropriate, and culturally appropriate” (Jambunathan, 2012). While developmentally appropriate practices are considered a significant notion in early childhood education, there are assorted interpretations and understandings of how developmentally appropriate practices can be implemented and how important they are to classrooms (Kim, 2011). Developmentally appropriate practices, particularly in the

earliest learning years, have the greatest benefits and success for students as they progress through their education. Documented in two studies, Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, & Rescorla (1990), and Burts (1990) it was found that children experience more stress in didactic environments rather than in child-initiated environments (Dunn, 1997). Children enrolled in preschools that were more child-initiated exhibited less test anxiety than those in more academic programs. Children struggled to learn, develop, and grow socially and emotional in the more academic environments, showing that children, especially in the early childhood years, need less structure and hurried classrooms. When classrooms allow child initiation, they better aid the development of the child.

Classrooms that allow the students to direct their learning more often had higher measures of creativity than children in more academic centered program (Dunn, 1997). Using developmentally appropriate practices that allow children to have more involvement in their learning also helps in the development of language. In a study by Rebecca Marcon (1992), progress reports from public preschools indicated that children in child-initiated classrooms had better verbal and receptive language skills (Dunn, 1997). Including the families of students in the classroom is another developmentally appropriate approach that is beneficial to students (Morrison, 2011). Additionally, children who are in developmentally appropriate programs, where child involvement is valued, tend to be more confident in their cognitive skills. While occasionally academic environments can elicit higher levels of achievement, those practices can be an emotional cost on the student. It is overall more constructive to use developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood settings to enhance both the development and the academic growth of the child (Dunn, 1997).

Philosophical Approaches that Emphasize the Arts in the Classroom

There are a variety of approaches and programs that believe the arts to be a valuable aspect of preschool education. Two developmentally appropriate early childhood approaches often used as models in early childhood settings are Reggio and Montessori. These two approaches have been shown to be extremely effective in embedding the arts in an interdisciplinary way to focus on children's growth.

The Reggio Emilia Approach follows an educational philosophy that values the arts and children's experiences for learning. Reggio Emilia uses the concept of "100 languages of children", which means there are many different ways children use expression communication. That communication can be thought a child's spoken language, symbols, or through expression in the arts (Edwards, 2011). Although the Reggio Emilia approach was developed in Italy, it is not uncommon for American teachers to follow this approach and make adaptations to meet individual school needs (Sassalos, 1999). The concept of embedding art throughout the curriculum to foster creativity and higher level thinking as the Reggio approach suggests has been successfully implemented in many schools following this philosophy. Independence and those types of experiences, using the right materials, help children develop cognitive skills and become more self-sufficient (Sassalos, 1999). In a study conducted by Griebing (2011) related to the Reggio approach for needs of children: mastery, belonging, independence, and generosity were suggested as four components to allow children to develop independently with the arts playing a crucial role. Looking into the need of mastery, children need to develop a feeling of competency in what they do. Teachers in this study provided students with material and time to create experiences and

master the use of the materials. Teachers would model the uses of the materials and offer suggestions to the students in their creations. The need of belonging is important to children because they need to know they are significant in their family and community. The school community is an important one for children. Teachers used the Reggio approach and created an arts experience for their students. They created a drama center where children acted out scenarios in social situations. This was a visual activity that connected children's experiences to the learning. Children need to feel that they can make contributions to their community, and this is developed through generosity. This study finds that visual arts can provide children with a way to act generously. Children in the classroom made artwork for the classroom and also for their families at home. Children also gave their time to help tend to the class garden. Additionally, independence for a child is having a sense of control over aspects in their lives. Teachers gave students outlets for this through the arts in this study. They gave their students choices in the materials used, the type of art used, and what the final product was. Through the Reggio approach, teachers can give students learning opportunities that help develop their skills and sense of self while learning content in an engaging manner (Griebeling, 2011).

Another approach often utilized in early childhood educational settings is the Montessori approach. Similar to the Reggio approach, Montessori places emphasis on the arts in early childhood education and the materials that children with a variety of needs utilize. The importance of children's independence and social and emotional development is fundamental and developmentally appropriate techniques and materials are essential.

The Montessori approach believes that children need to develop their personalities and that helps to develop their intelligence. Negru, (2012) explained how the first thing a teacher should do is consider the objectives for the program they will be using in their classroom. Because Montessori follows a student-centered approach, the teacher should plan on guiding their students because children learn by experiences and are active and self-sufficient. Montessori education focused on self-confidence, initiative, independence, cooperation, and respect. This approach lets the child be fully independent aside from technical restrictions for education. Montessori finds that education is a process in which the child's individual personality and skills increase the success of their performance. The creative process involves using students past experience in learning new things. Art education liberates the student and develops their creativity, self-confidence, and views.

“Art education in Montessori classes comes into prominence with the activities performed by the children for supporting the esthetics and creativity development (Negru, 2012).”

Arts like painting, which requires movement and color, can teach children to self-motivate and contributes to their bodily, mental, emotional, and cogitative development. In a Montessori classroom, the student has the freedom to explore his or her own thoughts and ideas. At all stages of a child's education, it is expected that they direct their own learning. Children's intelligence is developed by the child's personality. The Montessori approach strives to allow children to develop their own intelligence and personality thought self-guidance and learning. The Montessori approach is an education process that allows the child to direct their own creative activities and express their views while gaining a meaningful education (Negru, 2012).

Integrating the Arts in the Preschool Curriculum

The article “Music Learning in the Early Years: Interdisciplinary Approaches Based on Multiple Intelligences” recognizes that integrating approaches like the arts in classrooms has become more common than ever before over the past decade. According to this article, more research is showing the importance of art in the lives and education of children, particularly early childhood learners. Young children do not separate art from their daily lives.

“They sing and dance spontaneously, experiment with colors and shapes without being afraid of criticism (Economidou Stavrou, 2011).”

Therefore, the integration of arts into the learning process is natural to children. The arts provide children with a variety of different ways to do and see. The arts are used to create classroom environments, build community relationships, and teach concepts and practices in other disciplines. The goal, however, is to incorporate the arts into other subjects in the preschool curriculum. The first step to this is creating connections between the arts and the subjects that are being taught. Connections made with concepts found in a variety of subjects with the arts leads to deeper understanding and can be applied through the students’ experiences (Economidou Stavrou, 2011).”

An article by Mary Armistead (1996) looks at a constructivist approach to preschool education. Armistead believes that art is central to early learning and that an arts education can bring constructivism into the classroom. A curriculum enriched with art is associated with improved learning in subjects such as math and cognitive processing. The arts can act as connections to other subjects; for example, visual arts can act as math manipulatives or a science observation document. Children construct and use

their basic knowledge and combine them with arts materials to produce results. Also, this author finds that similar to the visual arts, music and movement is helpful in teacher math, language, and culture. Teachers can use constructivism and the arts to help students gain a well-rounded and meaningful education in all subjects (Armistead, 1996).

Materials

Selecting the correct materials for use in arts implementation is key to the success of the lesson (Lim, 2005). The right materials enhance the students' learning experience and helps to keep them engaged in the lesson. Children need to be taught the purpose of the materials, how to use them, and how to respect them so they can be used properly and many times over. When students are given developmentally appropriate materials and are encouraged to use them they use their aesthetic senses to create products that show their understanding of what they are currently learning. Teachers find that putting the energy in selecting good quality and appropriate materials almost always pays off in their students' learning. Materials are critical for more than just visual arts but also music and movement as well. Choosing the more suitable music, props, and instruments provides a better and more likely successful experience for the children. Lim (2005) discusses many key points as to why selecting high-quality and developmentally appropriate materials for arts implementation is so essential. The discussion lacking in this article is specific materials needed and what materials to avoid.

Family Influence and Involvement in Preschool

Family involvement in early childhood classrooms is beneficial to almost all involved, most importantly the students and their families. When a parent or other family member is involved in the child's classroom, they are involved in the child's education.

Participation can occur in the classroom itself or even out side of school through communication. Family involvement can occur through support for the student's learning process in all areas (including home, community, and classroom) and through offering opportunities to participate in decisions in the child's education. One may ask why family involvement is so important? According to Morrison (2011), there are several benefits of family involvement. These benefits include better social, academic, and behavioral outcomes for all children. It is critical to cognitive and emotional resilience. Families and teachers who regularly communicate are more likely to learn about each other's interests and cultures and using that knowledge within the classroom, provide a more varied curriculum. There are a number of factors that affect family involvement in the classroom. According to Morrison, in the past parents were not encouraged to be involved. Also, due to language and cultural differences, many parents may feel unwelcome or unable to become involved. Time is also a major factor for many families because often both parents work and are unable to take time off.

According to Epstein's framework mentioned in the article by Morrison, there are six types of family involvement. These include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Teachers can encourage families to become involved in whatever way is most convenient for them (Morrison, 2011).

Teachers can invite families to share the roles and participate in arts activities with their children. Parent involvement can be extremely beneficial to children in all aspects, including areas such as the arts. Families can become involved by even helping with projects that support learning and the arts at home. The arts have been known to help children communicate their thoughts and ideas. Parent involvement in the classroom community allows them to communicate with their children as their children communicate to them, often through the arts. Parents often use the art, particularly music, to communicate with their children when they are infants. However, even through early childhood ages the arts are a meaningful and powerful means to promote engagement in the brain, which can foster social interaction and academic knowledge. Family involvement is crucial in all aspects of education, including education in the arts for young children (Harris, 2011).

Training and Support for Early Childhood Teachers

In order to integrate the arts properly into a preschool curriculum, educators must be prepared and knowledgeable on the subject and the appropriate means of implementing them in the classroom. Professional development is always growing and changing. After being exposed to the approaches of Reggio Emilia, more educators have become aware of the importance of the arts in early education. However, many educators are still uncertain on how to include the arts in their curriculum in a meaningful and successful way for their students. There is a traveling exhibit called Hundred Languages of Children exhibition, which provides professional development for early childhood teachers through team teaching, modeling, observation, and hands on projects. This

exhibit has illustrated the many ideas of Reggio to educators and how they can use the arts in their practices. In Reggio professional development, the artist assists the teacher in assisting the students to become familiar with the arts. Students learn to document their work through visual and expressive art and teachers are encouraged to share with the school community. Collaboration is necessary in early education classrooms so that all involved can learn and grow in their understanding of the content. Professional development training for teachers is intended to help develop their background knowledge in the arts. All of these valuable lessons are important for teachers to gain through professional development. Professional development in the ideas of Reggio teaches the educator to view the child as a powerful learner and that the teacher must be prepared to display different roles in order to be effective. The ideas of Reggio professional development for teachers learning how to integrate the arts also values the personal and professional growth of the teacher and their partnerships as well as deeper learning for children (Abramson, 2000). While the professional development provided by Reggio is interesting, it may not be fitting for all educators because they may have other outlooks or ideas on how to provide an arts education in their classrooms. Also, this program is only offered in certain areas of the United States, so many educators do not have access to it and therefore cannot learn or gain all the information offered.

Another professional development program for teachers who aspire to include the arts into their classroom is called the Artist-in-residence program. Artist-in-residence programs serve to bring new life to arts programs in schools that are becoming old and ineffective. This program recognizes that because art specialists for schools are almost never hired anymore, the responsibility to include and teach the arts falls solely on the

classroom teacher. Artist-in-residence created an initiative for teachers called Learning Through The Arts or LTTA. LTTA, is a program sponsored by a conservatory in Canada for Canadian schools. It brings specialists in dance, theater, music, and visual arts into the classrooms of teachers and students. Its purpose is to provide a professional development model for early childhood teachers to learn how to include the arts into all subject areas and provides their students with opportunities to experience the arts through learning. LTTA brings three specialists into a school to work with teachers. Teachers and artists work together to influence each other's views and help to shape experiences and practices to help future participants. LTTA embraces both teacher and artist learning to create success in the classroom for students (Kind, Cosson, Irwin, Grauer, 2007). While this professional development program has positive qualities to it, there are some possible flaws. The first flaw is that this is a program for Canada; therefore United States teachers are not given an opportunity such as this one to develop their arts skills for the classroom curriculum. Other possible obstacles for this type of professional development include tensions between artist and teacher and finding time to carry out this program while there are other time pressing matters.

There is a lack of literature on the professional development for teachers that need education on arts education, which leads to the belief that there is a need for this type of professional development.

Challenges for Integrating the Arts into the Classroom

Integrating the arts into classroom teachings has become more of an obstacle over the years for early childhood teachers. With changes in the standards, budget cuts, and

lack of resources students are missing out on valuable experiences through art education. In today's standards-based system of education, school children's developmental needs are often overlooked (Harris, 2008).

Common core standards are made to help prepare students for college and work, and an effect of this focus on standards and testing is the dwindling down the use of arts in the classroom by enforcing strict demands on students' performance. Educators are facing issues as they attempt to use the Common Core Standards. They are unsure how academic rigor looks in young classrooms. While teachers look to add the new standards, integration of the arts falls on the back burner. Currently, only math and literacy are addressed by the common core standards leaving all other subjects without common core guidelines. The arts have no place in the common core standards so essential development through the arts is becoming over looked (Zubrzycki, 2011).

One study by Sabol(2010), looked at policy effects on art education. In this study the policy looked at was No Child Left Behind (NCLB). He surveyed teachers throughout the United States and asked them a variety of questions pertaining to No Child Left Behind and the arts in education. The study found that while policies like NCLB did not negatively effect teaching loads or enrollment, it did negatively effect scheduling, workloads, and funding for their arts education. Teachers have found that policies like NCLB had disturbed their usual arts teachings and that students are being required to carry heavier workloads through art curriculum content changes. Many teachers also reported that their funding, especially for arts materials, has been majorly decreased. Limitations to his study include that teachers were unable to explain their opinion fully as questions didn't ask them to explain (Sabol, 2010). Other challenges

include the lack of professional development in the arts available to teachers. Challenges that influence classroom conditions and hinder early childhood educators' ability to include the arts in their classroom also hinders student's success in future academic and work related situations.

METHOD

Participants

Recruitment of participants for this study was done through the utilization of a flyer that was sent out to the directors of four preschools in the Hudson Valley and New York City area. The researcher chose the preschools through recommendations by peers and advisors. In order to make the study more attractive to possible participants, the researcher made a raffle for all teachers who participated to have the possibility to win books for their early childhood classrooms. The prize consisted of six early childhood appropriate books and the winner was selected at random using a random generator website.

Five teachers expressed interest and all five of those teachers continued to participate throughout the entirety of the study. The five participants were diverse in their years of experience, education, age, and arts training. The teachers that participated in this study are from a variety of preschools in the areas of New York City and the Hudson Valley of New York.

Design

This qualitative study examined the decision making process of preschool teachers when immersing art into their classrooms and the impact a standards based era can have on the curricular decisions being made related to arts and developmentally appropriate practices. Through an in person interview, early childhood educators' readiness to teach the arts, how they feel about the new common core standards in relation to arts implementation, and resources utilized were considered.

Materials

The materials utilized for this study were constructed by the researcher after an extensive literature review. Materials the researcher used in this study include a flyer for solicitation of participants, a consent form, a demographics form completed by the participants, and an interview with seventeen questions developed by the researcher.

Flyer

The flyer was designed by the researcher in order to generate interest of possible participants. The flyer explained the purpose of the study and ways to participate. It also included information about the possibility of participants winning books for their classrooms as a thank you for their time (Appendix A).

Consent Form

The consent form was used to give participants information about the study and what the researcher was examining. In addition to information about the study, the form included

contact information for the researcher and the advisor, foreseeable risks and the clearly stated option to withdraw from the study at any point (Appendix B).

Demographic Form

Information related to participants' backgrounds was collected through the use of a form participants completed after the consent form was signed and before the interviews began. The age, gender, experience working in the education field, education, and training in arts and professional development of the participants to further understand the variety of participants and their use of the arts in the classroom was requested (Appendix C).

Interview Questions

Interview questions were developed by the researcher after an extensive literature review. Questions related to early childhood practices, arts education in the early years, standards, curriculum, and evidence based practices related to children's growth were considered. In order to assure the validity and reliability of the materials, peers and experts on the subject examined the interview questions and provided feedback prior to the interview being conducted. The researcher used the feedback provided to revise the interview questions (Appendix D).

Procedure

In March of 2014, the researcher contacted various directors of preschools in New York State, specifically in the Hudson Valley and New York City area to request permission to

interview their teachers and distribute the flyer. These areas were selected due to the convenience of the researcher. After preschools expressed interest in participating, the researcher provided flyers to the teachers providing contacting information to schedule an in-person interview. The interviews for each participant took place in March 2014 and lasted approximately ten to fifteen minutes, depending on the length of responses from the participants. These interviews were conducted individually and the discussion, recorded through field notes, were analyzed. Before the interview started, the researcher had the participants sign the consent form, then interviewed the teacher with the developed questions, and got his or her demographic information. Interviews took place one-on-one and each interview took approximately fifteen to twenty minutes. After carefully reviewing the field notes and all materials collected, information was compiled, organized, and analyzed.

Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate and understand early childhood educators' decision-making process in the identification, selection of types of art forms, and immersion of the arts in a standards based era. A close examination of variables impacting the decision making process related to ways the arts are immersed in early childhood programs allowed for the following questions to be answered:

- 1) What art programs or strategies are early childhood educators utilizing that are beneficial to their classrooms?

- 2) How knowledgeable are early childhood educators about ways the Common Core Standards may impact the selection and utilization of arts and art programs in classrooms?
- 3) How are early childhood educators describing the benefits of the use of the arts in their classrooms?
- 4) What challenges are teachers facing while including the arts into their classroom?
- 5) What professional development related to the arts may impact the way early childhood educators effectively use the arts or a specific arts program in their classrooms?

A review of the data collected indicated the ages of the teachers that participated were between twenty-one to sixty years old. Four out of the five participants were female. Two of the participants had an associate's degree, two had a bachelor's degree, and one had a master's degree. All the degrees of the participants were in the educational field. Two of the participants had less than five years of experience as teachers in a preschool setting; the other participants had a total of eight years, twelve years, or thirty-three years of teaching experience. All of the participants had some form of training or professional development throughout their education and career. One of the participants had been a dance instructor and had a variety of professional development through their preschool. Four of the participants had professional development, such as classroom management workshops or conferences, but no official training in the arts or arts implantation. However, three participants had more training that pertains to arts and arts education than the other two participants did. Table 1 provides information about the demographics of participants and a description of the experiences they had related to training using art in the classroom.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participants	Age/Gender	Education	Experience	Professional Development and Training
Participant #1	47 years old Female	MSED	8 years experience	Annual professional development through employer, certified dance teacher
Participant #2	60 Years old Female	Associates	33 years experience	Annual professional development through employer, training in piano
Participant #3	21 Years old Female	Child Development Associate	2 years experience	Annual professional development through employer
Participant #4	23 years old Female	Associates of Science in Early Education	2 years experience	Annual professional development through employer, NYSTCE conferences
Participant #5	31 Years old Male	B.A. Early Childhood Education	8 years experience	Unspecified training in arts and professional development

The first essential interview question was designed to gain insight into what art programs or strategies early childhood educators are utilizing that are beneficial to their classrooms. Only one participant utilized specific arts programs, and even then participant #4 only used “bit and pieces” of what she finds to be most beneficial to her classroom. It appears that there is a lack of knowledge about arts programs and their possible benefits based on the responses from the participants. Participant #2 said “I’m not well versed or familiar with any arts programs and I have no training or true experience in the arts to make a choice in using one in my classroom.” Participant #1 stated, “I wish there were more programs out there that were easily available to teachers.” However, all the participants had multiple strategies they found beneficial to use when including the arts in their classroom curriculum. Participant #5 found drawing beneficial in his classroom. “Especially at this age since they are not at the age of writing. They are using their creative representation through drawing.” Three out of five of the participants noted that they selected the strategies through experience and finding what was effective

through trial and error. The other two participants did not specify how they choose their preferred strategies to include arts in their preschool setting. A description of art programs and strategies participants used can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Art Programs and Strategies

Participants	Arts Programs or Approaches Utilized in the Classroom	Arts Strategies
Participant #1	-No specific arts program used	-Different mediums of art such as paints, coloring, paper and cutting, and dance and movement -Finds hands on activities most effective -Uses resources like CDs or videos as tools to help teach
Participant #2	-No specific arts program -Utilizes people in the community who are familiar with the arts	-Different mediums of art such as sand art, instruments, singing, movement, and finger plays. -Uses members of the community to teach in the classroom
Participant #3	-No specific arts program used	-Uses painting and photography -Allows children to pick own projects and mediums
Participant #4	-Combines practices from Montessori and Reggio in classroom teachings	-Uses mediums such as recycled materials, plunger paints, finger paints, and music -Uses open ended materials for children to create their own art
Participant #5	-Does not use any arts programs	-Finds hands on materials such as play dough and clay to be most useful -Uses art to teach other subjects such as mathematics -Uses art as communication

An examination of the interview questions related to the impact the Common Core Standards and standards in general have in the selection and approaches related to the immersion of arts in the early childhood curriculum revealed the impact a clear understanding of developmentally appropriate practices can have in the decision making process of early childhood educators. Participants #1, #2, #3, and #5 believed that the

Common Core and other standards would not affect their selections of an arts program because, even though they included arts in their classroom setting, they do not use an arts program or do not follow the Common Core Standards. Participants #1, #3, and #5 are all familiar with the standards in some way and understand their purpose in education but don't use a specific arts program. Participant #2 would be interested in an arts program if they became more informed about both arts programs available and the Common Core Standards. However, participant #4, who understands the purpose of the Common Core Standards, believes that it will effect her selection of an arts program and feels like it will limit child's work. There were mixed feelings about the Common Core standards and some participants were more familiar with the standards than others. Participant #1 said "Here we are lucky because we are a private preschool and don't have to follow the standards." Participant #3 felt that the Common Core Standards has both positives and negatives. "I think that the Common Core Standards has many benefits but, like all things, needs adjustments and input from teachers who have experience and teach the using the Common Core." Participant #4 felt strongly about the new standards and says, "I think it's putting a lot of pressure on the teachers and students. It's sad because I feel like it's putting a damper on their play and enjoyment." Only participant #4 believes their use of an arts program will be affected by the Common Core Standards and says "Moving forward I think it may affect our use of arts programs a bit because we will be expected to make concrete, specific products instead of products from free choice projects." Table 3 provides information about the impact the Common Core Standards can have in the selection of arts programs in early childhood settings.

Table 3. Common Core Standards and the Arts

Participants	Familiar with the Common Core Standards	Affects of the Common Core Standards on use of the arts	Affects of Common Core Standards on arts programs
Participant #1	Somewhat familiar	-No impact because of private preschool	-No impact because of private preschool and no use of arts program
Participant #2	Not very familiar	-No impact because of private preschool	-No impact because of private preschool and no use of arts program
Participant #3	Very Familiar	-Finds Common Core Standards does not allow for creative expression	-No impact on arts program because no arts program is used
Participant #4	Somewhat familiar	-Parents want less of the arts and more academic rigor	-Will affect future use of arts programs. Says it will affect the children's ability to use free choice
Participant #5	Very familiar	-Focus specific subjects and encourage more critical thinking when using the arts	-No impact because does not use an arts program

This study also investigated how early childhood educators would describe their effectiveness in including the arts through approaches and strategies in their classrooms. The five participants discussed the many different benefits they saw from including the arts into their early childhood curriculum. One benefit mentioned often was how children enjoy different arts activities during their days at school. Participant #1 "Pure enjoyment in the classroom setting. Some kids come to school just for the arts and play aspect." Also the participants discussed how art turns into a form of expression and communication for their students. Participant #5 said "Art is a form of communication for the children, especially the ones that don't have speech or language." Similarly, participant #1 stated that "Art is extremely important because it teaches children healthy ways to express themselves, it is an outlet for them." All teachers found benefits from

the arts but the students' enjoyment and expression was most heavily discussed. Table 4 provides a description of the responses related to the benefits of arts in the early childhood setting

Table 4. Arts Benefits

Participants	Benefits of the Arts
Participant #1	-Teaches child to express themselves -Children get enjoyment out of arts activities
Participant #2	-Children enjoy it -Created well-rounded individuals
Participant #3	-Outlet for creativity -Art is a versatile way for children to express themselves at any age
Participant #4	-Children develop self-esteem -Helps to think outside the box while teaching -Child enjoy it
Participant #5	-Art is a bridge over language barriers -Art is a form of communication -Art helps students express their interests -Art can help see how the children are feeling -Students take pride and ownership in their work -Teacher can get to know the child better through art

Early educators expressed that integrating the arts into the curriculum daily was a challenge. Because of the standards being a big focus of conversations in schools, many educators expressed their concern about providing an environment that focuses on perceptions of activities leading to gains in academic performances. Two of the participants mentioned how common core standards are not tailored to preschoolers and therefore is not a proper assessment to gauge learning. Another participant explained

how students are unwilling to participate in the classroom arts activities for varying reasons from not being interested to not feeling comfortable. Participant #1 said, “Sometimes the child is unwilling to participate and that can sometimes not only throw off what you are doing but the other children as well.” Those challenges make it difficult for teachers to successfully and consistently deliver an education complete with an arts immersed curriculum. Table 5 provides information about the Challenges When Including the Arts and depicts those challenges faced by the five participants.

Table 5. Challenges When Including the Arts

Participants	Challenges
Participant #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Child is sometimes unwilling to participate -Not enough time in the day -Not all teachers or students are comfortable with participating in activities that require the arts
Participant #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not familiar with any arts programs -Not familiar with how to appropriately add arts to the preschool setting
Participant #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Finds integrating other subjects, such as writing, hard in arts activities -Providing assistance but not doing the arts activity for the child
Participant #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parents often want more academic rigor and less learning through the arts. -Pressure from the Common Core Standards.
Participant #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Some children don't put their full attention or effort into their work or are unwilling to participate -The Common Core standards are not tailored to preschoolers.

With regards to the professional development needed to immerse the arts in a common core preschool curriculum all of the participants felt that there needs to be more training and development in order to provide a better education to their early learners. All five of the participants felt that more training on arts implementation is needed in order to successfully include the arts in a preschool curriculum. When asked if opportunities came up to take workshops on arts implementation participant #4 said “Absolutely, I think art is a really big deal for young children. I can’t imagine teaching without it.” Table 6 describes the Training and Professional Development and indicates participants’ responses regarding professional development needed.

Table 6. Training and Professional Development

Participants	Necessary Training
Participant #1	-Early childhood teachers need training in basic arts implementation
Participant #2	-More workshops on the arts needed. -Feels like in order to make changes must be better trained in the arts.
Participant #3	-More knowledge on arts programs -More workshops that educate teachers on how to include more varied arts activities
Participant #4	-Goes to NYSTCE conferences and finds theme to be a positive learning experience towards teaching. -Wants more training for arts implementation
Participants #5	-Would like more training in the arts and professional development to better self and enhance learning of students

Discussion

This study was developed to examine five essential questions that pertained to arts immersion in the preschool setting in a standards based era. Strategies and materials, approaches considered, and the impact of standards and family perception will be discussed.

Strategies and Materials

Teachers used a variety of strategies and developmentally appropriate practices to integrate the arts into their curriculum. Materials play an important role when a teacher implements the arts into their classroom. Appropriate and quality materials can make all the difference in the product that is created and the learning experience for the child (Lim, 2005). Participant #1 enjoyed using materials such as paint and crayons because she felt those materials helped children express themselves best. Participant #1 used drawing and painting for students to use as a means of expression and share their thoughts and ideas with others. She also utilized materials such as CDs with music in order to get the children familiar with new objects, such as beans bags, and get them up and active. Participant #2 prefers many different materials in her classroom such as paint, sand, feathers, and clay. She believes the students can create what they want to create best by enjoying themselves while learning. Participant #2 found the materials to be the best strategy when it came to getting students excited about learning and stay engaged. Like other participants, participant #3 found paint to be a versatile and appropriate material for her students. She used strategies to include the arts in her curriculum such as color by number finger paints because it is engaging while the

students learn and practice colors and numbers. Participant #4 used a variety of materials including recycled and upgraded materials that the students can use to create new projects. Participant #4 believed in open-ended approach strategies. Participant #5 found drawing most effective strategy to get the students engaged and to understand what they are thinking, feeling, and learning. Common materials found in participant #5's classroom include crayons, paper, and markers. By using these strategies and materials the participant are making use of developmentally appropriate practices that are helping students to develop useful skills that will carry them through early education and beyond (Dunn, 1997). Participant #4 specified that she considered the early childhood approaches she learned from the college classes taken. "I took a class on how to use arts in the classroom and it was really helpful." Participant #3 also had taken classes in college that taught how to use the arts in the classroom setting to aid children in their academics and growth. Participants #1 and #2 had personal training in the arts that they then brought into their classrooms to create a more art-immersed environment. The materials used by the participants are necessary in the education of young children as it helps them to develop and explore (Lim, 2005). The materials are both age and developmentally appropriate while they guide children in social and emotional development that will create a happier, more adjusted child that is ready to learn (Dunn, 1997).

Programs

There are a variety of arts programs available including philosophical approaches such as the Montessori method or the Reggio approach. Both of these approaches include the

arts through the program and believe that the arts are a crucial part of a child's academic and emotional development. These programs look to help children develop their independence (Sassalos, 1999). While these programs and others are accessible and are thought to be creditable, only one of the five participants interviewed for this study use any arts program in their classrooms. Participant #4 uses a combination of both the Reggio and Montessori approaches in her classroom and feels that through that combination she brings a solid education in not only the arts but in other subjects as well. However, the other four participants do not use any form of an arts program in their classes. The participants were aware of arts programs and approaches through other educators, literature, and education. Participant #2 believed that she would be interested in including an arts program if she were to be more informed about them. Other than participant #2 wanting more information before incorporating an arts program, none of the other participants specified what would influence their decision to incorporate arts into the curriculum. The other three participants are happy with how they are including the arts into their classroom curriculum already and do not believe, even with more information about any arts programs, that they would adapt one. There is a need for teachers to have a better understanding of possible art programs available to them because when educators are aware of appropriate approaches and programs, they can use them to help young learners in their academic journey (Armistead, 1996).

Family Influence in Arts Immersion

Family involvement is a crucial part to any student's education, especially at the early childhood stage. Parent involvement in the classroom can help teachers to get to know

the families of their students better and also promote arts education (Harris, 2011). Participant #2 was able to have both family involvement and arts implementation in her classroom. A parent of one of her students would come to visit the classroom and teach the children about art and artists. The parent would talk about different artists and help children to create their own version of famous artwork. Participant #2 recognized that parent involvement is one of the many ways to help make art a successful addition to the learning environment. Participant #4 had a much different experience with parent involvement and influence in preschool setting. Parents in participant #4's school were concerned about the Common Core Standards and therefore wanted more rigorous academics rather than arts in the curriculum. Participant #4 was receiving feedback and influence from the parents but not in the way she was hoping to. She was hoping for more collaboration with the parents, as that would be beneficial to all parties especially the students. She was hoping to help the students in their academics through arts immersion rather than academic rigor through the Common Core.

Training and Professional Development

Teachers are always looking for ways to better themselves and their teaching skills through professional development. However, there is limited training and development on the arts and arts implementation in the classroom, which makes it difficult for teachers to properly include the arts comfortably in their classroom. All five participants interviewed would like to receive more training and development in the arts and arts implementation.

Challenges

Challenges are to be expected for any educator from lack of resources to lack of experience or not being able to meet developmental needs (Harris, 2008). The five participants of this study also face challenges in their classrooms while trying to include arts into their curriculum. Participant #1 found that sometimes children are unwilling to participate and that can throw off not only her and the student but the student's peers as well. Sometimes the children are unwilling to participate because they are uncomfortable with the activity so she is faced with trying to find other activities the student is comfortable with. Participant #2 feels like she is unfamiliar with arts programs and that is hindering her arts inclusion. Participant #3 finds challenges in including the arts into other subjects to make those other subjects more engaging to students. Also, participant #3 struggles to find a balance between offering help to students and doing too much work for them. Participant #4 finds parent involvement and influence to be a challenge in her classroom. She feels that parents are missing the importance of the arts to a child's development. Participant #5, similar to participant #1 finds that some children can be unwilling to participate in the arts activities. All teachers face challenges and they all work to be able to better adapt and work around those challenges.

Common Core Standards and Implications for Practice- Art Immersion

The Common Core Standards are made to help students in the United States prepare for work and school. However, these standards are not made specifically for preschool settings and therefore teachers are having mixed feelings about using them (Zubrzycki, 2011). All but one of the participants interviewed for this study are familiar with the

standards and have an idea of the impact they may have on their classrooms. One of the teachers, participant #5, has already begun to use the Common Core Standards because his school is not private, unlike the other four participants. Two of the other teachers will begin to use the standards soon and the other two will not be using them at all.

Participant #4 believes that the standards will take away the children's free expression and put too much pressure on her and the students she teachers. Participant #3 believes the standards just need some adjustments to be more practical for preschool. Participant #5 believes the standards, while not tailored to preschools, is beneficial because it helps students to think critically while participating in arts activities. The Common Core Standards, like all things new, will take time and practice and trial and error to become effective.

Limitations

This study included limitations that may have impacted the results found by the researcher. Only five teachers participated and were interviewed during this study. The researcher realizes that a more valid result could have been found if more participants were included. Additionally, out of the five participants only one participant was male. Once again the results found may have varied if there was more gender diversity in the participants of the study. The researcher only contacted preschools in the Hudson Valley and New York City area of New York rather than opening the study up to more locations. Results may have been different if the researcher included participants from more areas of New York or even from other parts of the United States. Teachers from other locations may have had different demographics, strategies, uses of an arts program,

professional training, and opinions on the Common Core Standards than the five participants that were included. Perhaps the biggest limitation of this study comes from the participants, which consisted of mostly private preschool teachers and only one educator from a public preschool. Had more public preschool teacher participated, responses may have differed greatly from what responses were received from the five teachers that participated. The researcher believes the knowledge, outlook, and responses to the interview questions regarding the Common Core Standards would have been diverse had more public educators participated in the study. Private preschools are not accountable for including the Common Core Standards to their curriculum unless the school chooses to do so and due to that, private preschool educators tend to have less knowledge and experience with the standards. This would effect their thoughts on the standards impact on preschool and arts education in the preschool setting.

Conclusion

Future studies should consider the implications of teacher training in the variety of art forms that can be incorporated in methods courses. In addition, access to community resources and experts experiences could also impact teachers' sense of knowledge related to ways to incorporate arts into the curriculum. Additionally, studies of preschools following different approaches should be done, in order to assess if particular approaches are better suited to meet the needs related to common core standards. This study can help teachers consider the implications of not incorporating the arts into the curriculum that the students experience since many of the educators indicated how beneficial it was in the development of interpersonal skills and socialization. Concepts related to self- regulation

and skills were mentioned but not in depth and additional studies could focus on ways these skills can impact cognition. This study provides evidence of the need to create professional development for teachers to improve their knowledge and efficacy related to art programs and arts immersion in the preschool setting.

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Appendix A

**Attention Early
Childhood
Educators:
You can
win books for your
classroom!**



Participate in a thesis research study about the arts in early childhood education and be entered for the chance to win six children's books for your classroom library.

Interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**For more information contact:
Wagner College Master's student-
Kitrina Bellucci
Kitrina.Ricci@wagner.edu**

Figure 1.

Flyer provided to chosen preschools to generate interest and inform possible participants of the study.

Appendix B

As part of my master's degree requirements at Wagner College, I am conducting research on Arts Immersion in Preschools in order to learn how educators consider the use of arts in their classrooms and what we can do to help them develop a program to embed the arts into the classroom. You are invited to participate in this research project, and this document will provide you with information that will help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. Your participation is solicited, yet strictly voluntary.

For this study I will be using an "action research" model, where participants are co-learners with me around an issue of practice. During the course of the project, I will interview preschool teachers about their teaching experiences, classroom, and how they do or do not include the arts in it. If you were to participate, I will ask you to take about half an hour to sit and complete the interview with me about your classroom and the involvement of the fine arts. All information you provide during the project will remain confidential and will not be associated with your name. My final thesis will also be cleared of any possible identifying information in order to ensure your confidentiality.

The project does not carry any foreseeable risks other than the possibility of discomfort during the interviews or observations. If for any reasons you feel uncomfortable, you can leave the study at any time with no penalty, and any information you may have provided would be destroyed.

If you have any questions concerning this study please feel free to contact me at Kitrina.Ricci@wagner.edu or Dr. Gonzalez at Katia.Gonzalez@wagner.edu. Thank you for considering being part of a study related to my research for a master's degree in Education at Wagner College.

-Kitrina Bellucci

Please sign below to indicate your understanding of the project and your consent to participate. I have provided two copies so that you may keep a duplicate for your records.

Signature of Participant

Kitrina Bellucci, Investigator

Figure 3.

Consent form given to and signed by all participants of the study prior to the interviews conducted.

Appendix C

Teacher Demographics

*This record will only be seen by the researcher. Demographic information will be used WITHOUT record of your name in the finished thesis. If you are uncomfortable filling out any portion of this demographics form feel free to withhold that information. If at anytime you no longer wish to participate in this study please alert me by email at Kitrina.Ricci@Wagner.edu and your information will be excluded from the final report.

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Education background:

Training in the arts:

Other professional Development:

Figure 3.

Demographics form developed by researcher to obtain information from the participants that may be relevant to the study (Page 1 of 2).

Appendix C

Position title:

Years of experience:

Other important information:

Figure 4.

Demographics form developed by researcher to obtain information from the participants that may be relevant to the study (Page 2 of 2).

Appendix D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THESIS ON:

Arts Immersion in Preschools

***Art:** The expression of human creative skill and imagination. The various branches of creative activity include painting, dance, music, and literature.*

***Curriculum:** The subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college.*

***Developmentally Appropriate Practices:** An approach to teaching that respects both the age and the individual needs of each child.*

What kinds of art do you enjoy either as a participant or as an observer?

What does art in the Early Childhood setting mean to you?

How do you use the arts in your classroom lessons and activities?

Which form of art do you prefer to use in your classroom? Please explain.

How comfortable would you say you are when it comes including the arts in to your early childhood curriculum? Is adding art to your students' education something you enjoy? Please elaborate.

Have you had professional development or training for arts implementation for an early childhood setting? Please explain.

Do you integrate any arts program(s) into your setting? Do you find the program(s) to be effective? Please describe.

Are any adaptation made to the program(s) used while implementing them into your classroom? Please explain.

What challenges do you face when trying to incorporate the arts onto your lessons? Please Explain.

Why do you think it is important to include the arts in a preschool child's education? What benefits have you seen by including the arts into an early childhood education?

What benefits have you, as the teacher, received through the use of arts integration into the classroom?

What changes to the addition of the arts in the preschool classrooms would you make? Please explain.

Figure 5.

Interview questions developed by the researcher pertaining to arts immersion in the preschool setting (Page 1 of 2).

Appendix D

Common Core

How familiar are you with the Common Core Standards?

Do you believe the Common Core Standards impact your selection of an arts program?
How so?

How do you think the standards are affecting your teaching and the environment of the classroom?

Do you find the Common Core to be beneficial to the art's education students receive?

Do you find the Common Core Standards to be beneficial to you students learning overall?

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Figure 6.

Interview questions developed by the researcher pertaining to arts immersion in the preschool setting (Page 2 of 2).

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