Collaboration between Art Teachers and School Counselors of the Johnson City Elementary Schools to Assist At-Risk Students: An Art Experiences Model.

Caroline Dover Jackson
East Tennessee State University

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Collaboration Between Art Teachers and School Counselors of the
Johnson City Elementary Schools to Assist At-Risk Students:
An Art Experiences Model

A dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by
Caroline D. Jackson
May 2003

Dr. Terrence A. Tollefson, Chair
Dr. Louise L. MacKay
Dr. Russell O. Mays
Dr. James C. Mills

Keywords:  Art Therapy, At-Risk Students, Elementary School Students, Art Teacher, School Counselor
ABSTRACT

Collaboration Between Art Teachers and School Counselors of the Johnson City Elementary Schools to Assist At-Risk Students: An Art Experiences Model

by

Caroline D. Jackson

Art has been used for centuries as a healing tool for adults and children; however, the use of art therapy in schools is a recent development. Art therapy, encompassing art, psychology, and therapy, is by nature interdisciplinary. Art experiences provided to students at risk of failing or dropping out of school may offer non-verbal communication that can be used effectively to satisfy a variety of developmental, social, or emotional needs. The purpose of this qualitative study was to develop an art experiences model, combining the skills of art teachers and school counselors. Data were collected through a focus group consisting of seven art teachers and five school counselors representing the eight elementary schools in Johnson City, Tennessee.

These elementary school specialists agreed that at-risk students could benefit from the use of art experiences that were suggested in the study. Four major issues were discussed regarding the mechanics of the proposed alliances of art teachers and school counselors: (a) identification of at-risk students, (b) the opportunity for collaborative time, (c) pulling at-risk students out of self-contained classrooms for art experiences, and (d) the additional space needed for consistency of the art experiences.

Some suggested strategies for specific issues in the focus group were as follows: (a) to establish a clear method for identifying at-risk students, (b) to manage time schedules to allow opportunities for collaboration, (c) to organize in-service opportunities for the self-contained
classroom teachers, and (d) to seek out in each participating school an appropriate area for use by the art teacher and school counselor.

The results of this study suggested that collaboration of two elementary school specialists, an art teacher, and a school counselor in each school, could provide therapeutic art experiences for children identified as being at risk. Consequently, I have concluded that my proposed art experiences model could be adopted by almost any elementary school that has an art teacher and a school counselor without requiring any additional personnel.
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DEDICATION

“The tougher the circumstances a young person has growing up, the more imagination and creativity are the key to his or her healing and empowerment.”
-Matthew Fox

To the art teachers and school counselors who shared with me their concern for their students by contributing their ideas for healing those troubled spirits.
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This document is the culmination of a long journey, one that I have not made alone.

My initial interest in this project began while I was affiliated with the Department of Art & Design, and from the very beginning Professor David Logan has shared my vision. I am grateful for his dedication to our mutual goal and for sharing his wisdom as an artist and teacher.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In this study I explored combining the skills of two types of existing specialists; art teachers and school counselors, so that together they can provide art experiences for at-risk elementary school students to facilitate personal and academic development in ways that are not addressed by traditional teaching methods.

The practice of using art experiences is built upon the belief that art is a reflection of the subconscious mind. Art experiences are promoted as a way to give vent to a person’s deepest feelings, emotions, and thoughts. Each individual’s artistic expression is a uniquely personal testament that reflects the many facets of personality and behavior. Studies and observations by Lowenfeld (1947), often called the father of art education, was trained as a child psychologist in Austria. He indicated that spontaneous drawings and paintings revealed children’s thoughts and feelings. He noted that creative expression showed not only the needs and emotions of children, but also the more deep-seated and lasting characteristic known as personality.

The use of art therapy (art combined with psychotherapy) in the healing process has been gaining widespread popularity (Coleman & Farris-Dufrene, 1996). “Art is not just a series of pretty objects; rather it is a way we have of articulating our interior lives” (Parsons, 1987, p. 13). Art experiences in an educational setting offer a means of non-verbal communication that can be used effectively to satisfy a variety of developmental, learning, and social or emotional needs of students (Stanley & Miller, 1993). Art therapy-type techniques can promote the idea that, just as a canvas can be repainted until a desired image is achieved, so can the patterns of behavior, response, and perception be changed to enhance one’s life image.

The ability to learn differs from one age to another and from individual to individual. The essence of the multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 1991) is to respect the many
differences among children and the multiple variations in the ways they learn. Learning involves not only intellectual capacity but also social, emotional, perceptual, physical, and psychological factors. The process of learning is very complex, and therefore, there may be no single best teaching method. Lowenfeld (1947) suggested that one of the basic abilities that should be taught in our public schools is the ability to search for and discover answers, instead of encouraging students to wait passively for answers and direction from the teacher. Traditionally education has placed a strong emphasis on the development and use of verbal and mathematical intelligences. Gardner (1991) asserted that human cognitive competence was best described as a set of abilities, talents, and mental skills that are developed at different rates based on biological and cultural influences. These “intelligences” include music, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences (pp. 11-12). Gardner (1993) argued that these seven “intelligences” rarely operated independently and that all seven were needed to productively function in society. Teachers, therefore, should think of all the “intelligences” as equally important. Gardner’s theory acknowledges that while not all students are verbally or mathematically gifted, some children may have talents in other areas. Recognizing different intelligences among students helps to promote a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. Gardner proposed developing teacher teams to implement interdisciplinary approaches in schools.

The nation has experienced shifts in social and economic patterns in the last 20 years. As a result, homelessness, unemployment, and violence are no longer invisible problems. One emergent segment of the population with special needs is elementary school children. Many of them have a poor sense of self, low achievement, and frustration due to stressful home or community environments, social situations, and other circumstances beyond their control. These factors put many Appalachian children’s academic futures at risk. Stern of East Tennessee State University’s James H. Quillen College of Medicine, stated, “Schools have become our hospitals for psychosocial disorders” (Stern, 2001).
While the literature reviewed in this study focuses on the traits of the local Appalachian natives and the resulting emotional and educational issues that may arise, the model is by no means limited to the region itself. Unfortunately, issues of poverty, abuse, or indifference, combined with stubborn pride or ignorance, are found in all sections of America. The needs of all American children in crisis remain paramount.

The local Appalachian culture has always demonstrated a spirit of independence (Weller, 1965). However, this very sense of independence can become a liability rather than an asset to the youngest residents. Historically, many families have been reluctant to seek help, holding staunchly to the idea that everything can be taken care of within the family structure.

**Statement of Problem**

There is currently no readily identifiable or validated model to be applied collaboratively by the art teacher and the school counselor to enhance and facilitate at-risk students’ educational process in a local elementary school. The purpose of this study was to develop an art experiences model involving collaboration between art teachers and school counselors in local elementary schools that can be implemented in the schools without additional personnel. Together these educational specialists can provide the students with art therapy related experiences. Art therapy is by nature interdisciplinary; encompassing art, psychology, and therapy. Therefore, it would be reasonable for alignments to occur between visually oriented art teachers and the verbally oriented school counselors (Coleman & Farris-Dufrene, 1996).

Due to budgetary constraints, there are no specialists providing art therapy employed in the local public elementary schools and little hope there will be any in the near future. However, most schools do have art teachers and school counselors. By combining the skills of the art teachers and school counselors, art therapy types of experiences could be provided to the elementary school children. The aim of this proposed model is meant in no way as a substitute
for traditional art therapy. It is rather a way to implement immediate assistance to a population and a system that are without an art therapy option for the foreseeable future.

There is a significant body of literature on the use of art therapy with children in specialized treatment settings, such as residential facilities, mental health agencies, and private psychiatric practice. However, there is little in the literature that addresses the use of art therapy in public schools (Frostig & Essex, 1998). The use of art therapy type techniques for those children who have not been identified for specialized treatment may be of equal importance. Such children often experience difficulty at school resulting from social or emotional problems stemming from family crises, the deaths of significant persons, a divorce, or abuse and they, as well as identified at-risk youths, could benefit from the use of art therapy (Bush, 1997). Comparable data are not available, thus increasing the need for this study.

**Significance of the Study**

The art teachers and school counselors in the area’s elementary schools were contacted and invited to participate in an informational focus group interview on professional collaboration using art experiences with the children at their schools.

The roles of the art teacher and the school counselor have always been separate. Nevertheless, the idea of team teaching in elementary schools has become widely accepted to enable schools to take advantage of a range of instructional skills among school specialists. The focus-group discussions centered on the collaboration of two elementary school specialists (the art teacher and the school counselor) in an effort to provide therapeutic art experiences for children identified as being at risk.

**Definitions of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used:

**Art Teacher**
The art teacher is a certified visual arts specialist who designs and implements learning experiences using the visual arts to stimulate creativity as a means of expressing ideas. (Tennessee State Department of Education, 1999, pp. 17-1--17-4)

Art Therapy

Art therapy is a human service profession that utilizes art media, images, the creative art process, and client responses to the created products as reflections of an individual’s development, abilities, personality, interests, concerns, and conflicts. Art therapy practice is based on knowledge of human development and psychological theories which are implemented in the full spectrum of models of assessment and treatment including educational, psychodynamic, cognitive, transpersonal, and other therapeutic means of reconciling emotional conflicts, fostering self-awareness, developing social skills, managing behavior, solving problems, reducing anxiety, aiding reality orientation, and increasing self-esteem. (American Art Therapy Association, 2001, p. 3)

Art Therapy Techniques

Art therapy techniques use various art materials to involve students in self-discovery and self-expression. The focus of the use of art media is on the process rather than the product. (Evette, 2001, p. 2)

At-Risk Youths

At-risk youths are children and adolescents prone to academic failure due to a variety of “risk factors,” that include: emotional disturbance and/or social adjustment problems, which can be further compounded by family issues of neglect, violence, and/or poverty. (Frostig & Essex, 1998, p. xvi)

School Art Therapist

School art therapists are professionals trained in art and psychology to work with children, their teachers and their families. They provide mental health services to help youngsters at risk reach their academic and emotional potential. (Art Therapy, 2001)

School Counselor

School counselors support teachers, other professional personnel, and parents in addressing the needs of students related to academic and career preparation and personal growth and development. School counselors serve in consultative roles as resource persons to facilitate the understanding of growth and development and problems, and to aid in understanding how some non-school factors affect learning and achievement of children. (Tennessee State Department of Education, 1999, pp. 35-1--35-4)

Focus Group
A focus group is defined as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. (Krueger, 1988, p. 18)

Chapter 2 includes a presentation of an overview of the literature related to this study. It includes summaries of important studies from five bodies of literature: (a) history of art education, (b) history of art therapy, (c) theory and research regarding the use of art therapy in school settings, (d) types of problems children face, and (e) local southern Appalachian cultural values.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Five bodies of literature were pertinent to this study: (a) history of art education, (b) history of art therapy, (c) theory and research regarding the use of art therapy in school settings, (d) types of problems children encounter, and (e) local southern Appalachian cultural values. Common themes in the literature documented the use of art therapy as being a valid and effective healing tool.

History of Art Education

Art classes in the elementary schools are taken for granted today. This has not always been the case. Before the 19th century, art education was virtually unknown in America. In the American colonies, children grew up in schools that taught basic literacy and the Bible. The Puritan work ethic left little time for art, let alone teaching it in the schools.

Art education in America allegedly was established to serve the needs of industry in the northeast. After the Civil War, textile mills in America began to lose much of their share of the market to foreign competitors. At the world’s fair in Paris in 1867, many visitors reportedly said they thought that the textile products of America were losing out because of inferior design. Earlier educators in England apparently had solved this dilemma by teaching drawing in their schools. The assumption was that textile workers could create better designs if they were taught art in school. Consequently, the Massachusetts Board of Education passed the Drawing Act of 1870, and the school board in Boston hired Walter Smith, an English drawing master, as an art teacher and art education supervisor for the state of Massachusetts. He was the first person to establish art as a regular subject in the schools. Smith’s program was rigorous and required the younger children to copy simple geometric patterns drawn by the teacher; older children drew
more complex patterns (Hobbs & Rush, 1997). The art program’s role was to prepare students to enter the trades, especially textile design. Considering the current artistic emphasis of freedom of expression, it is ironic that the first art classes were based solely on copy work.

The child-centered approach to art education grew slowly from the mass of ideas bequeathed to it by psychologists and educators (Logan, 1955). Around 1800, educators began to study the teaching methods of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the famous Swiss educational reformer. Pestalozzi is remembered for being the prophet and initiator of “child-centered” education. He advocated the teaching of art in the schools. Friedrich Froebel echoed Pestalozzi’s beliefs about the sanctity of the child and was the first educator to write about the value of play in education. Froebel started a special school for young children that he called “kindergarten” (children’s garden) designed to stimulate learning through directed play (Wygant, 1983).

Horace Mann (1796-1859), the great American educator, traveled to Prussia to learn about that country’s methods of teaching drawing. He published his observations in an 1884 volume of the Common School Journal (Mann, 1884). Later, G. Stanley Hall led the “child-centered” movement and launched the American Journal of Psychology. In a monograph entitled “The Content of Children’s Minds” (1891), he noted his discovery that children thought more in pictures than they did in words. Hall was interested in child art for its therapeutic values rather than its artistic value. Art education and art therapy are indebted to Hall for his pioneering work. Art classes for young children today are based more on Hall’s ideas than on those of Walter Smith (Wygant, 1983).

John Dewey studied under Hall at Johns Hopkins. In 1884, Dewey accepted a position at the University of Chicago and began to publish his ideas about education. He contended that the students, not the teachers, should set the school agendas. Dewey later continued his writing from a new position at Columbia University. By the 1920s, a journal called the Progressive
Education was published (Hobbs & Rush, 1997). It included such words and phrases as “creativity,” “self-expression,” and “child-artist” (p. 7).

In the early 1900s, an art education movement called “Picture Study” was introduced into the schools. “The Boston Public School Art League was founded to decorate schoolrooms with reproductions of artwork, with the object of promoting artistic culture” (Efland, 1990, p. 145). The movement soon waned (Hobbs & Rush, 1997).

Arthur Wesley Dow’s art program, based on the elements and principles of design, lasted longer. His art lessons produced “art for daily living,” an attempt to elevate artistic tastes in the home and the workplace. Still, the predominant trend for art in the schools continued to revolve around a hands-on “child-centered” approach (Efland, 1990, p. 228).

During World War II, Viktor Lowenfeld fled his native Austria and came to America. In 1947, he published his classic art education textbook, Creative and Mental Growth. On the first page, he stated that there was a direct connection between spontaneous creativity and mental health. He said, “Don’t impose your own images on a child . . . never let a child copy anything. If children developed without interference, every child would use his deeply rooted creative impulse, confident in his own expression” (Lowenfeld, 1947, p. 1). Lowenfeld’s major thesis was that art education should be used to foster the creative and mental growth of children. He proposed the theory that art influenced children’s abilities to make emotional adjustments and provided avenues for richer lives. His ideas about teaching art were vivid. The evangelical tone of his “leave-the-children-alone” writing captured the imagination of a whole generation of art teachers. Almost 20 years later, Hoepfner and Silverman (1969) connected Lowenfeld’s ideas to multicultural at-risk students by stating that art education could have important influences upon perceptual, cognitive, and attitudinal behaviors that predisposed the culturally different youths to success or failure in our schools. They said that it was the task of schools to acknowledge and deal with culturally different students.
American education experienced a change of direction in the late 1950s with the launching of the first earth-orbiting satellite, “Sputnik,” by the Soviet Union. A “back-to-basics” academic approach to school was advocated. To survive, art educators began to change their rhetoric. Keeping their hands-on approach they began to use such terms as “creativity” and “problem solving” instead of “self-expression” and “mental health” (Hobbs & Rush, 1997).

Reacting to Lowenfeld’s ideas in 1949, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) stated that . . . “Art is less a body of subject matter than a development activity.” However, in 1964 the NAEA did a complete about-face and declared that “art is a body of knowledge” (Efland, 1990).

In 1965, an influential conference took place at Pennsylvania State University. The ideas from a publication called *The Penn State Papers* influenced a movement called “Aesthetic Education” (Efland, 1990). Aesthetic education proposed the inclusion of art history and art criticism in school art programs. Many art educators still championed Lowenfeld’s hands-on approach because it was in tune with the “open classroom” movement of the late 1960s.

The mid-1970s saw another strong movement of “back-to-basics” education. Lack of sufficient funding for schools forced many school districts to make painful choices and one result was that many art teachers across America lost their jobs.

In a 1984 article published in *Studies in Art Education*, Greer set forth the principles of what he called “Discipline Based Art Education” (DBAE). It stated that art was an academic discipline, just as mathematics, history, English, etc. were academic disciplines. Furthermore, he stated that the four components of art as an academic discipline were: (a) aesthetics, (b) studio production, (c) art criticism, and (d) art history. He proposed that every art teacher should teach these components . . . “by means of a formal, continuous curriculum in the same way as other academic subjects” (Greer, 1984, p. 215). DBAE became the dominating idea in art education, largely because of the financial backing it received from the J. Paul Getty Trust. Still today,
many art educators criticize DBAE for being too structured, too teacher-centered, too elitist, and too much of an “all-talk” approach to teaching art (Mills, 2001).

In 1993, Congress passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. It was significant that the arts were acknowledged as a core subject; as important as English, mathematics, history, civics and government, geography, sciences, and foreign language. The wording of the act is not the same as DBAE, but it clearly reflects the ideas and principles of DBAE (Hobbs & Rush, 1997).

Art education in the schools has gone through many changes in direction. At one time or another, it has emphasized drawing, manual training, picture study, mental health, creativity, and academics, as its leaders have reacted to other changes in public education. In summary, art education in America appears to have manifested itself in three major themes, namely: (a) industry-centered, (b) child-centered, and (c) subject-centered curricula. The industry-centered art curriculum focused on art as a vehicle for training workers to design factory-made products. The child-centered approach envisioned the most desirable type of educational program in art as one that was used primarily to unlock the potential that each child possessed. The subject-centered concept put emphasis upon the subject matter and viewed art as an academic body of knowledge to be learned by students (Ecker & Eisner, 1970, pp. 58-59).

Our nation is being challenged to develop new conceptualizations, paradigms, definitions, strategies, and techniques for surviving in the intense, competitive global economy. Because these changes impact all individuals, it has become necessary for school professionals to expand their knowledge of the therapeutic approaches to using the arts (Coleman & Farris-Dufrene, 1996).

History of Art Therapy

Many important Western thinkers have made reference to art in their writing on education. Between 384 and 322 B.C., Aristotle wrote that drawing was an important skill for a
useful life (Saunders, 1970). In the 14th century the writings of Opicinius de Canastrius described how he used his artistic images to heal people from illness. In 1872, psychiatrist Ambroise-Auguste Tardieu began taking an interest in the artwork of the mentally ill. In 1922, Hans Prinzorn, a Viennese psychiatrist and art historian, published his book, *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, which featured a collection of drawings and paintings produced by mental patients throughout Europe (Rubin, 1984). At about the same time, Sigmund Freud was also studying the unconscious and dreams, and he brought the mental states of children to public awareness in his book, *On the Interpretation of Dreams*. It inaugurated the therapeutic use of art in schools and laid the foundation for programs in art therapy. Art became a recognized way for children to communicate stress and other problems. In the same period, Carl Jung was studying archetypal symbolism. Jung, while a commandant of a prisoner-of-war camp in Switzerland during World War I, sketched mandalas in a notebook. He wrote that those images described his “. . . inner situation at the time” (Jung, 1961, p. 195) and how he could use the drawings to observe daily psychic changes.

On the North American continent in the 1930s, Margaret Naumburg, a psychoanalyst, developed the clinical techniques that established art therapy as a psychotherapeutic discipline. Her theory was based on releasing the unconscious mind through spontaneous art expression. In “dynamically oriented art therapy,” disturbed children were encouraged to draw pictures and then talk about them, thus combining the art making with verbal therapy. Additionally, drawing was seen as an alternate form of expression for children who were too young to verbalize their thoughts and feelings (Rubin, 1984). Her sister, Florence Cane, an art educator, focused on what happened during image making. Her work was based on the belief that the creative process of producing aesthetic objects was therapeutic. The two women are considered pioneers in the development of art therapy.

A decade later, Edith Kramer, who was to become another leading figure in art therapy, defined the goals of art therapy as those leading toward personality growth and rehabilitation.
Art as therapy is . . . “conceived of primarily as a means of supporting the ego, fostering the development of sense of identity, and promoting maturation in general” (Kramer, 1971, p. xiii). Kramer concentrated on the therapeutic values inherent in art. With this method, patients usually were seen in groups and their art activities were integral parts of the therapeutic milieu. Kramer’s work was primarily with emotionally disturbed children in New York school and hospital settings (Rubin, 1984).

The 1940s brought different directions for the theory. The Menninger Clinic, a world-famous psychiatric facility, was particularly influential in the early development of art therapy as a distinct field. The founders, psychiatrists Charles Menninger and his sons, Karl and William, incorporated adjunctive therapies as an integral part of hospital treatment (Menninger Foundation, 1987).

Viktor Lowenfeld coined the term “art education therapy” to describe the use of art activities in nonpsychiatric settings, such as special education classes (Menninger Foundation, 1987). Lowenfeld’s work established baseline data on the art of normal children and it has provided criteria for use when analyzing the art of emotionally or mentally disturbed clients. His research in this area continues to be regarded with respect by educators and scientists.

Art therapy today is approached from many philosophical perspectives and is used with individuals and groups in a variety of settings. The various theories are rooted in the common principle that art offers an alternative means of communication that does not involve sophisticated speech. The art process offers another “language,” non-verbal and symbolic, through which expressions of feelings, wishes, fears, and dreams that are central to “inner experience” can be manifested. The result of the art process offers visual data to be used for therapeutic purposes.
Use of Art Therapy in a School Setting

School art therapy is a recent phenomenon that has grown out of a specific need in school systems for the identification and remediation of students with learning problems (Bush, 1997). Until very recently, there was little in the literature that addressed the development of the role of art therapy in public schools, the integration of it into the main school program, or the collaborative effort between the art teacher and the school counselor.

In 1975, a Texas school district introduced art therapy. The services were designed to provide research on the possibility of using art therapy as a diagnostic, screening, and therapeutic tool within a behavior modification model. According to Bush (1997), the project was funded for only a few months and no reliable or valid conclusions were drawn. In June 1977, a three-year study was concluded in the public schools in West Allis, Wisconsin. The study attested to the value of art therapy and the art experience as a remedial procedure that extended beyond the corrective treatment area into the preventive area.

In 1979, the Dade County Public Schools in Florida introduced a pilot art therapy program (Bush, 1997), which is still in existence today. It has moved out of the art education realm and is currently using art therapists to provide diagnostic and treatment services for youngsters who have been identified as severely emotionally disturbed.

Bush (1997) found that traditional classroom educational values and well-established programs were coming under scrutiny. She concluded that the push for accountability, as measured by student performance outcomes, was increasing. She said that educators must be prepared to ensure that educational achievement by all students would become a realistic expectation. Bush said that educators needed to prove that the education system could respond to the pressures in a positive way, that it could improve performance in the schools, and that it could have a telling impact on the future success of the children served by the schools. Bush contended that art therapy could help meet the challenge and assist at-risk youngsters in their efforts toward academic and emotional reconstruction. Bush reported that art therapy offered the
children a better understanding of themselves and how they functioned as individuals, as well as parts of a group system. In a school setting, art therapy offered children the opportunity to work through obstacles that were impeding their educational progress, and it also facilitated appropriate social behavior and promoted healthy emotional development.

Frostig and Essex (1998) stressed that in the climate of dwindling social services resources, referral to inpatient treatment, residential facilities, and mental health agencies had become increasingly difficult. Only those children in the most acute distress could receive time-limited services at such facilities. The result was that greater numbers of more disturbed children remain in the classroom of the public schools. Frostig and Essex described the then-current cultural climate of the schools as being expected to handle children who faced serious, complicated, challenging issues from home and social environments that made it difficult for them to focus and learn in classroom settings. They said that schools and school professionals were being expected to do more with less money and fewer resources available to them.

In related literature, Kahn (1999) suggested that school counselors were among the professionals finding more demands being made on their time. They were required to provide personal counseling and career guidance to individual students and to assist teachers in their roles as advisors. The counselors also were required to identify learning problems and work with teachers and parents in responding to counseling and guidance interventions with students. In addition, the counselors were expected to have an understanding of the processes of social and cultural change with respect to various racial, gender, and ethnic groups, and knowledge of differing cultural and lifestyle patterns. Counselors were also called upon to develop plans and programs to prevent personal and substance abuse, ethnic discrimination, and dropping out of school.

Counselors have found less time available for individual and small-group counseling, due to larger caseloads and mounting paperwork involving referrals and scheduling. One solution to
this dilemma has been the increased use of brief or time-limited counseling techniques incorporating art therapy techniques (Kahn, 1999).

Shostak (1985) asserted that art therapy was . . . “a psychoeducational therapeutic intervention that focuses upon art media as primary expressive and communicative channels” (p. 19). Through the art therapy process, students explored personal problems and developmental potential through nonverbal and verbal expression. Art therapy was used with a myriad of school problems, including academic difficulties, peer pressure, conflicts with teachers, and career exploration. It was also used with home-related problems such as divorce and separation, death of a parent, addiction, and abuse (Shostak, 1985). Naumburg (1966) suggested that counselors could serve as interpreters in this art-in-therapy approach.

Riley (1988) contended that contemporary children lived in a world of images; therefore, they were comfortable with a therapy process utilizing images. In nonverbal processes, counselors were not as likely to be drawn into roles of authority figures. Kahn (1999) concluded that art further enhanced counseling with adolescents, because it could easily be used in school settings, employed with students of varied learning and social needs, and integrated into numerous counseling theories. Kahn suggested that the use of art therapy opened a new arena of effective counseling.

Types of Problems Children Face

As we entered the 21st century, schools were expected to handle children who faced serious, complicated, challenging problems from home and social environments that made it difficult for them to focus and learn in classroom settings. Schools were expected to do more with less money and fewer resources available to them. It became increasingly clear that the severity of problems that children brought into school settings was rising dramatically (Frostig & Essex, 1998). Violence, sexual abuse, suicide, substance abuse, poverty, and the decay of family and community structures were just some of the numerous problems affecting children across the
country and in our own region. Art therapy frequently has helped reach children who do not
easily respond to traditional talk therapy. Frostig and Essex (1998) concluded that a compelling
reason for providing school-based art therapy was that there is a large population of underserved
children who never made it through the door of a community mental health center or a private
practice office.

Public schools were reluctant to provide clinical services, preferring instead to refer
children back to community mental health agencies for treatment. However, the traditional
Appalachian mindset of keeping “family business” private in dealing with social problems
within the family may preclude following through with recommended visits to such agencies.
With the decline of state and federal funds for education and the emphasis on an inclusion model
of education, public schools began to incorporate more school-based services. Formation of
therapeutic alliances frequently have been deemed more successful than those in clinics or
private practice therapy (Frostig & Essex, 1998).

Appalachian Cultural Values

To understand the cultural values of southern Appalachia, one must first examine how
and why a distinct Appalachian culture evolved. Appalachia is one of the oldest names on North
American maps, dating from the early Spanish exploration of the southeastern United States. In
1540, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto became lost in what are now named the southern Blue
Ridge Mountains, reportedly naming the mountains for the Apalachee Indians who hindered his
approach into the area. By 1650, English traders were regularly traveling through the mountains
and, by 1750, the various Appalachian ridges were being accurately situated on maps (McNeil,
1989). It was over a century after the establishment of the first English colonies along the
Atlantic seaboard before Europeans began to settle the Appalachians. The middle of the 18th
century saw whites moving into the Appalachians. The earliest settlements in southern
Appalachia were in the valley regions. The settlers came mostly from Ireland and Scotland, with a few Welsh and some English (Best, 1977).

One recent definition of southern Appalachia restricts the area to the mountain mass that includes southwest Virginia, western North Carolina, southeast Kentucky, and east Tennessee. This region has developed a culture of its own, varying in customs, speech, and religious beliefs from the rest of Appalachia (Essin, 1975).

While the southern highlanders were living in their own isolated world, America was developing into an industrialized nation. When the country eventually turned to the regions it had earlier neglected, it discovered Appalachia, a wilderness rich in virgin timber, thick veins of coal, and other valuable minerals. Two centuries of isolation ended as steel tracks and graded roads came to the mountains (Cate, Ussery, & Armstrong, 1974).

Although isolation ended, according to Best (1977), southern Appalachia was described as consisting of “backyards of the states” (p. 28), and the states preferred to use what political influence they had in Washington for improving their front yards. Because of this, there was little sustained and powerful political pressure to improve conditions in Appalachia as a whole.

The peoples of southern Appalachia developed strong family traditions and ties. Family members depended on each other for services, for advice and counsel, for recreation, for guidance of children, and for support. Some sociologists called it “Familism” (Essin, 1975). Appalachian Familism emphasizes maintaining close ties with an extended network of kin beyond the nuclear family (Blaustein, 2000). This interrelationship of families reportedly was a very important part of the societal structure in the mountains. The literal isolation of living divided from neighbors by the high ridges and mountains necessitated an independent way of living, where self-sufficiency was its own reward. Relationships with neighbors and others were determined by the principle that “blood is thicker than water” (Paxton, 1978, p. 103).

The temptation to generalize about the southern Appalachian people has existed for some time. While some observations on predominant behaviors can be made accurately, “Appalachia
is not an isolated island which can be identified and observed indefinitely, while the world and America changes all around it” (Ayer, 1992, p. 3).

According to Weller (1995), people of Appalachia have, through many years, developed as a people apart. Their culture was different in many ways from the dominant middle-class culture of America (Weller). The pattern of each culture, depending upon individual talents, strengths, and resourcefulness, had become deeply ingrained. Through the generations, a subtle change had taken place. Independence had become individualism for the peoples of the Appalachians (Weller). According to this view, the corruption of this virtue, which was once the foundation of the mountain people’s way of life, later proved to be a great stumbling block to finding their place in our increasingly complex and cooperative society. The individualism of the past was strong enough to hold back the development of a spirit of cooperation (Weller).

Middle-class Appalachian children were helped along the way by their parents with encouragement and the expectation that they would succeed. Mountain children normally had few contacts with people who fit society’s definition of successful adults and often received little or no familial support with regard to educational achievement. Tennessee is 48th among the 50 U.S. states in the percentages of over 25-year-olds with at least a high school diploma, 50th in home and community-based care, 47th in per capita expenditures on services, 45th in the “Condition of Children” index, and 44th in overall health ranking (Southern Regional Education Board, 2000). Tennessee also has a higher percentage of children living in poverty than the national average, as well as a higher percentage of children from working poor families and from single-parent households (O’Hare, 2001).

Miller (1977) suggested that the Appalachian region had a “triple history”: first, a history shared with the rest of America; second, a history shared with the rest of the South; and, third, a relatively unknown history that was all its own. It is arguable that the private Appalachian history, unknown to most all but those who have come from it, has put Appalachian students at risk of being marginalized by our education system.
Traditionally, the Appalachian school systems have not been very effective, as there is still a high number of students who drop out before graduation (O’Hare, 2001). While many social commentators have written about the weaknesses of education in Appalachia, ethnographic research on education in this region is rare. “The observations from these studies suggest that schools in Appalachia do have many of the same problems that face other schools serving more familiar ethnic groups” (Reck, Keefe, & Reck, 1987, p. 150). Caudill (1976) charged that, in spite of the good done by the schools and colleges in the region, the Appalachian institutions of learning educated students only for the outside world and not for building prosperity at home. Conversely, there were observers who contended that Appalachian children had been discouraged from aspiring to educational and professional achievement by educators who deemed them worthy of only manual labor (Shackelford & Weinberg, 1977).

According to Holland (1987), “Children in Appalachia have unique problems because teachers and principals held strong attitudes against their culture, especially concerning the children’s attitude toward education, their high degree of mobility, persistent absenteeism, high drop-out rate, and cultural language problems” (p. 97). This discrimination was particularly evident in regions bordering Appalachia, where there were substantial numbers of Appalachian students mingling with larger numbers of students from other cultural groups. “Rural, poor, and Appalachian students are perceived by others to be culturally and intellectually inferior and are socially isolated in the school system” (Reck, et al. 1987, p. 21). Additionally, the average levels of educational attainment among mountain adults were, on the average, three or four years below city levels (Essin, 1975).

Is this lack of achievement due to low intelligence on the students’ part or the low expectations of school officials? Although a majority of Appalachians may still fill so-called unskilled jobs, it may be anticipated that as the general economic level of the inhabitants rises, a deepening awareness of education’s importance to present and future generations will be manifested.
The popularity of the qualitative paradigm in research and the methods associated with it have made investigations such as this study possible. A description of the methods commonly used in qualitative research and their application to the question in this study are presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

History of Qualitative Research

By definition, qualitative research is participant oriented. It involves collecting observations and interviews to create impressions or making diagnostic predictions and is inductive in nature. Qualitative research usually focuses on a problem or issue at hand, with little reference to previous research findings (Spafford, Pesce, & Grosser, 1998, p. 230). Gilgun (1992) defined qualitative research as “processes used to make sense of data that are represented by words or pictures and not by numbers” (p. 404).

Qualitative methodology can be traced to Frederick LePlay’s observational study of European families and communities in the early 19th century. Qualitative research emerged from questions that could not easily be answered by the traditional research design used up to that point. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “Ancient questions are not so easily stilled” (p. 1). Cracks began to appear in the old paradigm when concerns arose that could not be explained by means of the traditional “scientific” research design. In the beginning of the 20th century, qualitative methodology came into its own in European and American anthropological research. Qualitative methods became popular in American sociology, based on the work of the sociology department at the University of Chicago, known as the “Chicago School.” Margaret Mead has been credited with the earliest substantive application of anthropology to U. S. education (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In the 1920s and 1930s, members of this group of researchers who were teaching and learning contributed significantly to the development of qualitative research. Consequently, they established the importance of qualitative research for the study of human group life. In 1954, Congress passed the Cooperative Research Act, which provided grants to support educational research. However, qualitative research in education did not gain popularity
until the late 1960s. The importance of a more participatory method of research designed to suggest new and different answers was appropriately illustrated by Eisner (1981), who said, “To know a rose by its Latin name and yet to miss its fragrance is to miss much of the rose’s meaning” (p. 9). The nature of some research dictates that it be more descriptive. When people are reduced to statistical aggregates, the subjective nature of human behavior is lost. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) also suggested that numbers were often inadequate in some types of research. “Concepts such as beauty, pain, faith, suffering, frustration, hope, and love can be studied as they are defined and experienced by real people in their everyday lives” (p. 2).

Qualitative research, as defined by Creswell (1998), “is a process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher conducting the study builds a complex holistic picture, analyzes words, and reports detailed views of informants all in natural settings” (p. 15). “A hallmark of qualitative research today is the deep involvement in issues regarding gender, culture, and marginalized groups. The topics are generally emotion-laden, close to the people, and practical” (p. 19).

**Design**

Many children are coming to school today with myriad social and emotional struggles that place them at risk of developing problems limiting their ability to learn. Members of at-risk student populations reportedly have certain educational needs that often are not addressed by schools. Guesnell (1996) suggested, “Changing the way schools work not only to teach the academics, but also to reach the emotional demands that challenge the at-risk student’s growth is important” (p. 1). Guesnell further explained “. . . providing therapeutic art activities on a school campus might provide an early intervention that could help to address the emotional issues that at-risk students have so that they can be productive learners” (p. 1).

The goal of this study was to gather the information necessary to develop an art experiences model to combine the skills of art teachers and school counselors in providing art
activities for local elementary school children who have been identified as being at risk. The purpose of the focus group technique for this study was to generate a consensus on which to propose an art experiences model. My review of the literature in the ERIC database, Dissertation Abstracts Online, and WorldCat for books and theses revealed no existing model combining the skills of the art teacher and the school counselor. The model to be proposed is one that can be used by existing school personnel. The focus group was used to gather information on their current use of art activities, the value placed on using art as a healing tool and to enhance this new art curriculum concept.

Qualitative research embraces many different methodologies. Naturalistic studies are difficult to design in a definite way prior to their actually being undertaken. Several factors indicate that the choice of naturalistic inquiry was the preferred method for this study:

1. The task of combining the professional skills of the art teacher and the school counselor is complex;
2. The context of each local school is expected to vary from others in ways that cannot be determined prior to the focus group encounters;
3. In naturalistic inquiry, the interviewer discovers methods and techniques that cannot possibly be planned in advance; and
4. The values of the participants are likely to be influential and essential in developing the proposed program.

For the aforementioned reasons, I concluded that qualitative research and, more specifically, naturalistic inquiry was the most appropriate method of inquiry for gathering the information needed for the development of the art experiences model (Lincoln & Guba, 1981). An additional methodology that is appropriate to gather data for this art experiences model study was “responsive evaluation” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Responsive evaluation focuses on addressing the concerns and issues of stakeholders. Guba and Lincoln identified four major phases that occurred in responsive evaluation:
Responsive evaluation does not specify a research design at the outset. Rather, it uses emergent design, meaning that the design of the research changes as the evaluator gains new insights into the concerns and issues of stakeholders. A responsive evaluation model is appropriate for this study because the model could not be designed beforehand. The task was to gather and evaluate information concerning a prospective curriculum-based model that will combine the skills of two professional educators (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The use of this methodology with the issues and concerns of the stakeholders permits the expressions of their different values in a focus group setting. The intent was to let the program emerge out of qualitative interaction with potential information-rich participants (Gall, et al., 1996).

Considering the purpose and process of this study, the use of focus groups appeared to have the degree of fit necessary for the atmosphere needed. Hayes and Tatham (1989) suggested that focus group interviewing was a research tool that allowed the researcher to, “go beyond counting noses and delve into the complexities of the human soul” (p. vii). Focus-group discussion provided the opportunity for the art teachers and the school counselors to share insights freely concerning their ideas about the use of art activities with at-risk students and proposed an art activities-based model for at-risk students.

The purpose of focus-group research is to provide a qualitative approach for collecting data from a focused discussion on a particular topic. The focus-group technique grew out of the group therapy method traditionally used by psychiatrists (Hayes & Tatham, 1989). Focus-group interviews are based on the assumption that participants are more willing to talk openly about a problem in the midst of others who share that problem. In other words, it is a way to obtain in-depth information concerning a specific topic in a discussion-group climate. A focus-group
allows the investigator to record subtle insights pertaining to the thinking of the group members. A structured question-and-answer methodology is not used. Rather, focus group research is designed to encourage the participants to discuss feelings, attitudes, and perceptions concerning the chosen topic.

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) suggested advantages of using focus groups for this type of study:

1. They provide a quick and low-cost source of information;
2. The investigator interacts directly with the participants;
3. The participants can qualify their answers or give contingent responses to questions;
4. The investigator can observe nonverbal responses such as gestures, smiles, or frowns, which may carry information that supplements the verbal responses of others in the groups; and
5. The focus groups can be synergistic, in that they will allow the participants to react to, and thus build upon responses of others in the group (p. 16).

Krueger (1988) suggested that limitations of focus groups included the following:

1. The investigator has less control. Focus groups allow participants to interact and thus influence each other’s opinions;
2. Data are more difficult to analyze; and
3. Groups are difficult to assemble at a prescribed time and place and may require participant incentives (p. 46).

The following steps were used in formulating this focus group:

1. An Approval Form for Research Proposals for the Johnson City School System was completed and submitted to the Curriculum Director for approval.
2. Upon receiving the approval to continue and as required, a letter clearly outlining the purpose of the study was sent to each of the eight principals of the Johnson City elementary schools.
3. A follow-up on-site visit was made to each school to obtain the signature of each principal on the original approval form.

4. The signed documents were returned to the Director of Schools for a final approval and signature.

5. A letter clearly outlining the purpose of the study and location was sent to the art teachers and school counselors one month prior to the first session.

6. A follow-up letter to the participants was mailed two weeks prior to the focus-group session.

7. The focus-group session was preceded with an in-depth informational period on the history of using art activities therapeutically and how they can be used in school settings for at-risk children.

Selection of Participants

The participants in the study were the art teachers and the school counselors from the eight Johnson City elementary schools. The study’s participants consisted of eight school counselors and seven art teachers from the Johnson City elementary schools. One school did not have an art teacher. The art position was forfeited to employ a foreign language teacher. Of the 15 participants invited to participate, 93% (14) agreed to participate. Of those who agreed to participate, 80% (12) did so. This represented 62% of the school counselors and 100% of the art teachers. These information-rich stakeholders provided valuable insights and ideas for the refinement of a workable model using art activities with students who have been identified as being at risk. An art therapist conducted an informational session and was present during the focus-group interview session to provide expertise as needed.
Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1981) contended that conventional criteria for trustworthiness, internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity should be redefined for the naturalistic paradigm. The four alternative constructs that Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested as reflecting the assumptions of the naturalistic epistemology were: “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability” (p. 296).

Appropriate techniques for use in this study to establish credibility, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1981), are peer debriefing and member-checking. To facilitate transferability, they suggested “thick description,” which leads to a richly detailed report that recreates a situation as much as possible and auditing to establish dependability and confirmability.

Peer debriefing, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), enhances the credibility of a naturalistic inquiry (p. 308). For the purpose of this study, I requested the assistance of an adjunct faculty member to provide methodological guidance. Jane Martin is knowledgeable in the counseling field and uses art activities on a regular basis in her teaching. The purposes of the debriefing include asking difficult questions that the investigator might otherwise avoid (“to keep the investigator honest”) and providing a listening point for personal catharsis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 283). The faculty member was not part of the population being studied.

Member checks represent the most crucial technique for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). Member-checking was accomplished by enlisting the assistance of a recorder for the focus-group session. Denise Mickalites, a counselor at East Tennessee State University, served as the recorder for the focus-group meeting. At the end of the group session, she summarized the discussion. The participants were asked to confirm that the major points of the session were accurately captured and given the opportunity to add further comments that can be used in the development of the model.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) maintained that it was the investigator’s responsibility to provide the database to make transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers.
Thick description is necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (p. 316). The selected participants are expected to provide enough rich information necessary to formulate a successful model.

As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 318), the confirmability audit is the major technique for establishing confirmability. I enlisted the aid of a university professor, David G. Logan, to fulfill that function. That professor possesses the characteristics outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). He is knowledgeable in the techniques of naturalistic inquiry, has knowledge about the subject matter, and has recognized integrity. I have decided to involve the auditor at the termination of the study, as discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). At the end of the audit process, the auditor furnished a “letter of attestation” to be included with the study (p. 380). (See Appendix A for the Auditor’s Report.)

Data Analysis

Marshall and Rossman (1995) described the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to collected data as a “…messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process” (p. 111). A professional transcription service was employed to transcribe the audiotapes made during the focus-group meeting. This visual copy of the focus-group proceedings, along with the recorder’s notes and original tapes, provide documentation for audit and review purposes. The transcribed electronic recordings and field notes were organized into “manageable chunks” to bring meaning and insight in identifying emergent patterns and themes as suggested by Marshall and Rossman (p. 112). Marshall and Rossman suggested, “…qualitative data are exceedingly complex and that tightly structured, high organized data gathering and analyzing schemes often filter out the unusual and the serendipitous” (p. 111). Thus, the investigator strived for a balance between efficiency considerations and design flexibility during the course of data collection.
Research Questions

The questioning route (Krueger, 1988) was arranged in a natural, logical sequence that helped establish a common base of communication. The questions were designed to underscore the common characteristics of the participants. Questions 1, 2, and 3 were introductory questions designed to be answered quickly and to establish familiarity and rapport, as well as identify their position in each school system.

Question 1. What is your name and what is your official title at the school?

Question 2. What education degree(s) do you have and from what institution(s)?

Question 3. What certification(s) or licensure(s) do you have?

Questions 4 and 5 were transitional questions to provide baseline information on the timetable of each school and procedural processes regarding at-risk students.

Question 4. Does your school have a traditional calendar of year-around programs?

Question 5. How does your school identify at-risk students?

Questions 6, 7, and 8 were designed to afford the opportunity for multiple interaction among the participants in the group concerning their current use of art activities with at-risk students.

Question 6. Do you use, or have you used in the past, art activities with at-risk students? If yes, please give an example.

Question 7. Have you collaborated with the school counselor or art teacher concerning at-risk students? If yes, please describe.

Question 8. What suggestions do you have to enhance the effectiveness of the art teacher and school counselor working together using art activities with at-risk children?

Question 9 was used to check with participants for an issue(s) that they would like to have discussed as well as bring closure to the focus group meeting.

Question 9. Are there other ideas or concerns that we should discuss relevant to this topic? (See Appendix B for Focus Group Guide.)
Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted using the “dyad-type” of in-depth qualitative research. This technique is particularly appropriate when two persons are relatively equal partners in making a decision (Greenbaum, 1998, p. 246). That description was the perfect fit for this study, because in each dyad the art teacher and the school counselor are involved in the decision-making process regarding a usable model. The individuals teach in the same school system and were familiar with the use of art therapy activities. The pilot study enabled the investigator to hone interviewing skills and gain background information on the current use of art activities. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) suggested that a pilot study provided the opportunity to determine if the wording of a question was appropriate, whether the question elicited discussion, and which if any were not clear. The pilot study participants confirmed that the research questions were appropriate and valid.

Summary

There was no readily identifiable model combining the skills of art teachers with the skills of school counselors to use art activities to help at-risk children. Although extensive literature is available on the use of art activities in different settings (e.g., mentally handicapped, abused), this information has not been incorporated into an explicit model. Qualitative research offered the best approach for the development of an art experiences model that will combine the skills of art teachers and those of school counselors in ways that could be incorporated into the public schools.
CHAPTER 4
FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the focus group session. All eight elementary schools in the Johnson City School System were represented at the focus group session. Those systems included Cherokee Elementary School, Lake Ridge Elementary School, Fairmont Elementary School, Mountain View Elementary School, North Side Elementary School, South Side Elementary School, Town Acres Elementary School, and Woodland Elementary School. This section is divided into two areas for the purpose of discussion: participants’ responses and summary of major emergent themes.

Prior to the research question-and-answer period, an informational session on the use of art therapy was presented by a registered art therapist. The information period provided the opportunity for those participants who were not familiar with the use of art as a therapeutic tool to gain some insight into the subject.

Participants’ Responses

Participants’ responses to questions often led them to recollections of other related situations in their schools. These recollections are included as an important part of their experience with at-risk students.

Professional Classification, Educational Background and Related Associations

Question 1, “What is your name and what is your official title at the school?” 2, “What educational degree(s) do you have and from what institution(s)?” and 3, “What certification(s) or licensure(s) do you have?” the following information was revealed:

58% were art teachers.
42% were school counselors.

100% held master’s degrees.

92% indicated that they were certificated in their particular academic disciplines.

50% held undergraduate degrees from East Tennessee State University.

Other undergraduate schools represented were University of North Carolina, Virginia Commonwealth, Wichita State University, and University of Tennessee.

75% held master’s degrees from East Tennessee State University.

Other graduate schools represented were Tusculum College, University of Tennessee, and Milligan College.

The areas of undergraduate disciplines included art education, studio art, special education, science, elementary education, related arts and crafts, German literature, and education psychology. The master’s degree areas included MA in Art Education, M.Ed. in Counseling, M.A.T., and M.Ed. in Supervision and Administration.

School Calendar

Question 4, “Does your school have a traditional calendar or year-round program?”

Responses indicated that although all of the elementary schools represented are within the Johnson City school system, 75% of the schools are on a traditional calendar with 25% now on a year-round schedule.

Identification of At-Risk Students

Question 5, “How does your school identify at-risk students?”

Discussion revealed both formal and informal paths of identification. At this point it should be noted that early usage of the term “at-risk” tended to focus on physical characteristics such as blindness, deafness, and mobility difficulties (Gordon & Yowell, 1994). The authors
pointed out that health was highly correlated with school attendance and, consequently, with appropriate school behaviors, learning, and dropping out. Nonetheless, a move toward examining such social classifications as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity in defining who is at risk is now occurring. “At risk” has a broader definition and is now referred to as a category of persons whose personal characteristics, conditions of life, situational circumstances, and interactions with each other make it likely that their development and/or education will be less than optimal” (p. 53).

Students at the elementary schools (in Johnson City) are identified as at-risk for various reasons, including academically challenged with special needs, emotionally challenged, and behavior problems. A notable factor is the fact that some of the schools are classified Title I schools which serve greater numbers of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. One counselor noted that “75% of our students receive free or reduced lunches” and a large number are from single-parent homes, in particular African-American families with absent fathers. Kronick (1997) suggests that individuals, including teachers, should be familiar with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The Maslow system states that the child’s lower needs should be met before addressing the higher-level needs. The child must come to school fed, clothed, rested, and unafraid before learning can be attempted. He suggests that the school system play a meaningful role in the holistic care of the children.

The Johnson City elementary schools vary in the method of referral to the counselor. One example of an informal method of identification was reported by one art teacher whose school, though not a Title I school, had a lot of at-risk students. These students are identified through everyone’s keeping their eyes open and their ears listening and referring these students to the school counselor. Teachers, parents, and other students are at liberty to make referrals. Children at a young age are even aware that they need help and have the opportunity for self-referral. One school has a formal referral system. The principal at that particular school has
every classroom teacher prioritize which children are at risk for any reason that year and, in turn, refer them, if needed, to the school counselor.

An additional factor in the identification of at-risk children is absenteeism. Brooks (1998) suggested that “absenteeism is an issue that at times can be tied to the importance of familial relationship. Appalachian families consider familial relationship should come before anything else, so, when the children are needed or wanted at home, family activities take precedence over school attendance” (p. 101). One art teacher reported that absenteeism has improved somewhat since the school system can take families to court for chronic absenteeism. A Safety Officer is now present at all schools at least one day a week, which has contributed to decreased absenteeism.

Two art teachers mentioned that “we are the ‘welcome ladies’... meaning we greet the children as they get off the buses in the morning.” This gives them unique access to the children and they can observe the children’s demeanor and attend to or refer those who need help to the counselor. One described noticing a child getting off the bus who always arrived with one sheet of paper, no backpack, and never smiled, so she notified the counselor who stepped in to talk with the student.

In closing of the discussion of Question 5, identification of at-risk students, one school counselor agreed with another counselor that she, too, thinks all children are at risk, some just more than others.

Use of Art Activities with At-Risk Students

Question 6, “Do you use, or have you used in the past, art activities with at-risk students?” If yes, please give an example.

One art teacher mentioned that she works closely with the counselor. She pointed out that art is unique in that students get to touch you and talk with you and other students during class.

At-risk students are often more comfortable with the activities in art and, when the
student is involved in an art project, they sometimes relax enough to talk about issues that are causing them stress.

Another art teacher agreed that the art room allowed for talking and related her experience at a previous school. The psychiatric social worker that was on duty would come to the art room everyday and make herself a cup of tea and meticulously stir and stir and stir the tea and listen to what kids were saying. She told the art teacher that she got “much more insight into what the students were feeling” than she ever did one to one in her office.

Many at-risk students show unusual ability in art and art teachers make them feel special. Sometimes, for these students, an extra art class or music class is used to motivate them (e.g., if the student gets his/her work done, they can have an extra art class). This seems to work well with a variety of at-risk students with emotional, behavior, or academic problems.

Collaboration Concerning At-Risk Students

Question 7, “Have you collaborated with the school counselor and/or art teacher concerning at-risk students?” If yes, please describe.

At one school, the art teacher and counselor said they have a unique open-door policy and the special teachers and counselor work together as a team.

One art teacher mentioned that the school is spread out and that the counselor’s office is far away from the art room. This factor and a “tight schedule for all limits the interaction” between the two unless there is a specific problem. For example, if a child starts acting differently or if discipline is not working, she will refer the child to the counselor. However, it is usually a very specific situation.

Art teachers at different schools have also communicated with each other when a student is transferring from one school to the other to share relevant information.
Kronick (1994) notes that teamwork is an important concept for human service workers and teachers alike in providing services for the at-risk child. Teamwork can provide opportunities for the delivery of a wide variety of services.

Suggestions to Enhance the Effectiveness of the Art Teacher and School Counselor Working Together Using Art Activities with At-Risk Children

Question 8, “What suggestions do you have to enhance the effectiveness of the art teacher and school counselor working together using art activities with at-risk children?”

One art teacher brought up the need for a flexible schedule, and others confirmed this. Without the time to work with students, teachers lose compassion. She added that “too many other requirements and demands are placed on all the teachers, including art teachers,” requiring evaluative procedures that do not help the students.

Several participants said small groups are effective when teaching art.

Many statements were made to reinforce the value of art with at-risk students. Art is non-threatening; students can’t make mistakes; there is always another chance; a paper has two sides. In the art room kids are allowed to talk. Thus, art teachers hear a lot about students and their problems, sometimes more than they would like to hear. More than one art teacher expressed appreciation for “having a counselor available to refer students to” and that they could talk to them about how to deal with children who have problems.

One art teacher mentioned using art in a therapeutic way with an oppositional defiant student to help him express himself safely.

One counselor voiced the problem that in some schools counselors are not used as counselors. They have back-to-back classes and no flexibility, which is needed to serve the students in need. She noted that episodes of “acting out or anxiety do not always follow an academic schedule.”
One art teacher discussed the “Make a Difference” class, which takes children with behavior problems from other schools. This is a self-contained class and she likes using building activities rather than traditional art with these students; she sometimes feels like she is doing therapy.

An art teacher iterated the concern about time and schedules. She said the current method of scheduling is “not sensible” and causes confusion among the students and even some teachers. Adding to the problem is the lack of communication with the counselor, who is at the other end of the hall. Counselors are teaching and are not available to deal with crises.

An art teacher also mentioned a situation in which a student lost control and “went off” and even attacked the counselor. It took four people to hold him down and four police came to take him to a psychiatric facility. She and others fear what they called “little time bombs” in the classroom. None of the staff are trained in “holds” for such problems.

An art teacher reported that the counselor there does have some time to work with individuals, but she is also a “magnet,” in that all the children want to talk to her (the counselor). In this case, partnering with the art teacher could relieve some of the pressure on the counselor and provide students with another individual and method of expressing concerns.

One counselor remarked that Violet Oaklander’s classic counseling book, *Windows to Our Children*, contained wonderful material and she would love to work with the art teacher and do some of the suggested projects.

**Ideas and Concerns**

Question 9, “Are there any other ideas or concerns that we should discuss relevant to this topic?”

In response to this question, the group expressed many concerns and frustrations of a sensitive nature.
An art teacher expressed a need for change, saying that external groups such as parents, the Board of Education, and funding sources must recognize the pressures in the school and the need for flexibility and consideration of the value of the arts and counseling. There is anxiety regarding the many children with emotional and behavior problems and frustration about insufficient time and resources to address the problems.

Another concern expressed was the dilemma presented by the demand to “make good citizens out of the children,” while not imparting personal morals and values. She said the children “come in skewed” and the school staff is expected to fix them.

Some fear it may take more crises for the community to recognize the needs of the teachers and counselors.

One stated (and others seemed to agree) that they “don’t work in a nurturing environment.” Physical contact, such as hugging, is discouraged, but many of them said they do it. They added that men are more at risk when using touch as a healing tool and, therefore, they maintain distance.

An art teacher expressed gratitude for this focus-group process, saying she was glad we were doing this, but more is needed. Additionally, there is a need to be heard by administrators and the school board.

There is a general feeling of being “unimportant” in the schools because of the way guidance counselors, art and music teachers, and some others are used in classes and for trivial work. Neither the counselor nor the art teacher feels truly valued in the school.

An additional frustration is the requirement for assessments when art making inherently defies assessment and when so little time is available after attending to the students’ needs.

One art teacher stated emphatically, “It’s time to teach art for art’s sake, and it’s time to teach at-risk kids in the way they need to be taught,” which received a resounding chorus of agreement.
Summary

As evidenced by the responses of the focus group participants, an informal collaboration between the art teacher and school counselor already exists in several Johnson City elementary schools. Some of these associations have come about as part of the school’s greater plan to involve all staff in recognizing and addressing the needs of at-risk students. In schools where this cohesive approach is not present, art teachers and school counselors have naturally gravitated to each other; art teachers are able to provide a more relaxed teaching environment and both professionals can take advantage of this by observing and listening to students doing art projects. In other schools, the art teachers and school counselor collaboration has not been implemented or evolved naturally, but through the discussion in the focus group those participants shared measures that they have tried individually.

All participants involved had specific suggestions for making the most of their abilities for the benefit of their students. Chief among their discussion were the identification of at-risk students, flexibility in schedules to allow for collaborative time, the process of taking at-risk students out of self-contained classrooms for art experiences, and additional space for consistency for art activities. The findings of the focus group seem to indicate that there is a necessity for art therapy activities in the local elementary school system and a willingness to implement such a program within the ranks of the art teachers and school counselors.

Chapter 5 discusses conclusions, suggested strategies for the specific issues voiced by the focus group participants, and recommendations for further study. Conclusions include examination of early childhood intervention and recent national recognition of the use of art activities for healing. Suggested strategies deals with identification of at-risk students, opportunity for collaborative time, taking students out of self-contained classrooms, and space allocations. Recommendations suggest further studies that expand on this initial research study.
CHAPTER 5  
CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTED STRATEGIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH  

Introduction  

The nation has experienced shifts in social and economic patterns in the last 20 years. As a result, homelessness, unemployment, and violence are no longer invisible problems. One emergent segment of the population with special needs is elementary school children. Many students have a poor sense of self, low achievement, and frustration due to stress from home or community environments, social situations, and other circumstances beyond their control. These factors put many children's academic future at risk. This study combines the skills of art teachers and school counselors so that together they can provide art experiences for at-risk elementary school students to facilitate personal and academic development.

Art experiences give vent to a person’s deepest feelings, emotions, and thoughts and reflects the many facets of their personality and behavior. The use of art therapy in the healing process has been gaining widespread popularity (Coleman & Farris-Dufrene, 1996). Art experiences in an educational setting offer a means of non-verbal communication that can be used effectively to satisfy a variety of developmental, learning, and social or emotional needs of students (Stanley & Miller, 1993).

Traditionally, education has placed a strong emphasis on the development and use of verbal and mathematical intelligences. Gardner (1991) asserted that human cognitive competence is best described as a set of abilities, talents, and mental skills that are developed at different ages based on biological and cultural influences. Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory acknowledges that, while all students may not be verbally or mathematically gifted, children may have expertise in other areas. Recognizing different intelligences among students helps to promote a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. Brooks (1998) suggested that
as children become strong in art they become strong in other subjects. From the art experiences children learn how to focus and concentrate and how to observe and compare. She contends that these skills are often transferred to other academic subjects. She reported that art gives children a framework to sharpen their imaginations and to identify their thoughts and feelings, making it easier to express themselves in speech and writing.

The focus group discussions centered on the collaboration of two elementary school specialists (the art teacher and the school counselor) in an effort to provide therapeutic art experiences for children identified as being at risk. The idea of team teaching in elementary schools has become widely accepted. In his book, *The Unschooled Mind*, Gardner proposes developing teacher teams to implement interdisciplinary approaches in schools. Art therapy is by nature interdisciplinary, encompassing art, psychology, and therapy. Therefore, it would be a logical extension for alignments to occur between visually oriented art teachers and the verbally oriented school counselors (Coleman and Farris-Dufrene, 1996). This proposed model is meant in no way as a substitute for traditional art therapy. It is rather a way to implement immediate assistance to a population and a system that are without an art therapy option for the foreseeable future.

There is currently no readily identifiable or validated model to be applied collaboratively by the art teacher and the school counselor to enhance and facilitate at-risk students’ education process in the local elementary schools. The purpose of this study was to develop an art experiences model that involves collaboration between art teachers and school counselors in local elementary schools and can be implemented in the schools without additional personnel. Together, these educational specialists can provide the students with art therapy types of experiences. While this study focuses on the traits of the local Appalachian natives and the resulting emotional and education issues that may arise, the use of the proposed model is by no means limited to the region.
Art Experiences

Art experiences in an educational setting offer a means of non-verbal communication that can be used effectively to satisfy a variety of developmental, learning, and social or emotional needs of students. Brooks (1998) suggests that, “Art is a vibrant second language that is universally available to all human beings” (p. 73). This study explored combining the skills of existing specialists, art teachers, and school counselors. Together they can provide art experiences for at-risk elementary school students to facilitate personal and academic development in ways that are not addressed by traditional teaching methods. Kronick (1997) reports that the Wisconsin report *Children at Risk* (1986) concluded that low cost and simple intervention activities can be effective but only if all of the communities’ educational and service resources and efforts are used. The model in this study can be implemented using current personnel in the school system.

Early Intervention

The elementary schools were targeted for this study because research indicates that early educational intervention is critical for a child before the paralysis of discouragement sets in (Dobson, 2002). In addition, the U. S. Department of Education (1998) suggested that schools provide resources that support early intervention strategies for not only their at-risk youth but for the general student population as well. Research using the Deveraux Elementary School Behavior Rating Scale (K-6) (Kronick, 1997) confirmed that it was possible to identify children at grade levels K-6 who were at high risk for later delinquent behavior. Garbarino (2000) suggests that aggressive behavior is becoming so entrenched in children by age eight that, without intervention, problems with aggression in adulthood are predicted. Oaklander (1988) suggests that needs of children who are failing could be met in an early intervention program. The art activities curriculum-based model in this study is for use at the elementary school level
in the hope as expressed by Oaklander, “…it may help children grow strong in spite of the traumas of their lives” (p. 2).

Recent Examples of Art for Healing

The use of art for healing is probably as old as humanity; however, only in recent years has the general public become aware of it through national media. In recent tragic events, art for healing was used and publicized nationally.

The use of art therapy (art combined with psychotherapy) in the healing process has been gaining widespread popularity. In three recent tragic events, art for healing was used. In an interview with CBS following the Columbine tragedy in 1998, Dr. Scott Poland from the National Association for Victim Assistance remarked, “Sadly, there is going to be overwhelming emotionality; it is important that each and every student have the opportunity to tell their story, to express their emotions through talking, writing, art work, music, ceremonies and rituals.”

Recently, it has been reported that art became therapy for children surviving the deadly tornadoes that swept through Morgan County, Tennessee, on November 10, 2002. Students from Nazareth College in Rochester, New York, traveled to the county to help the children express their fears and talk about their experiences. The children opened up and talked while they painted pet rocks, strung beads, and made handicrafts (Johnson City Press, 2002).

Students at East Tennessee State University expressed their feelings, thoughts, and emotions through art on a 14-foot mural, “When Words Are Not Enough,” following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Art therapists provided art therapy groups for many children in the aftermath of the Pentagon attack on September 11, 2001 (Howie, Burch, Conrad, & Shambaugh, 2002). The art therapy groups were part of a comprehensive family support program provided by the Pentagon Family Assistance Center. The art therapists reported, “It was reassuring to see how a few art materials, a safe environment, and an empathetic approach were all that was required to allow these children to tap into their resilient spirits as they
expressed their feeling about their terrible losses” (p. 104). The art therapists suggested that the art interventions were important for young children who did not have the verbal capacity to integrate the experience.

**Suggested Strategies**

The four major issues of concern for the art teachers and the school counselors regarding the mechanics of the proposed alliances of art teachers and school counselors were: (a) identification of at-risk students, (b) the opportunity for collaborative time, (c) pulling at-risk students out of self-contained classrooms for art experiences, and (d) the additional space needed for consistency of the art experiences. Suggested strategies for the specific issues are discussed in the following sections.

**Identification of At-Risk Students**

Students are identified as being at-risk for various reasons. These include: academically challenged with special needs, emotionally challenged, and behavior problems. In addition, the two schools which are classified as Title I schools serve greater numbers of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which present an at-risk situation. While some schools have a formal method of identifying at-risk students, others have a more informal method of locating these students. A composite guideline furnished to the schools incorporating all of the reported forms of identification (such as observing students getting off the bus in the morning) could provide teachers with additional ideas for observation. Professional development opportunities would further expand identification skills.

**Opportunity for Collaborative Time**

The art teachers and school counselors reported that their work schedules were very demanding, leaving very little time for additional activities. Some counselors reported that they
taught classes on preventive subjects, such as drug and alcohol dependency prevention, anger management, and self-esteem, leaving little time for actual counseling whether on a group or individual basis. One possible solution to provide free periods would be to have counseling graduate students in need of internships and practicum experience teach the preventive classes. Graduate students at East Tennessee State University are used on campus for assisting professors, maintaining labs, and teaching classes on a routine basis. The same type of contractual arrangement can be made for the art teacher. Art education students are required to do student teaching and are placed in the local elementary schools during the semester. Students from both East Tennessee State University and Milligan College could be used.

Taking Students Out of Self-Contained Classrooms

It was reported in the study that the regular self-contained classroom teachers were resistant to the idea of students being pulled from the classroom for different activities. The thought is that when students are absent from the regular classes, assessment scores can drop. However, the focus group felt that pulling at-risk students out of class to do art would complement rather than compete with the regular teacher’s academic program. Providing in-service workshops for all teachers, including principals and possibly extended to school board representatives, on the use of art activities may help pave the way to a broader understanding of this alternative method of learning.

Space Allocations

Providing appropriate space for art activities is essential to this type of therapeutic intervention. A permanent and separate room would provide the necessary privacy and continuity of the program. In the focus group discussion, experiences that occurred in the art room revealed that the ambience of an art room is ideal for putting students at ease in a warm inviting area. In most schools additional space is at a premium; therefore, this issue is one of the
most difficult to resolve. Possible solutions include identifying a small room that could be
designed to emulate an art room. There should be appropriate space for displaying student art
work within the room. The room should be large enough to accommodate individual and small
group activities. Every effort should be made to minimize the outside noise level so as to reduce
chances for distraction. Adequate work surfaces should be provided, such as tables and easels, a
sink and counter space to allow for cleanup. The room can be used for both the art experience
and the counseling session. Additional uses for the room include parent-teacher conferences and
even as a place where teachers could be involved in art making, thereby relieving their stress
levels as well.

Summary of Issues

The issues of identification of at-risk students, adequate collaboration time, awareness of
the value of art as a healing tool, and appropriate physical environment are complex and will
require creative effort on the part of the public school system. The challenge is to demonstrate
and reinforce the importance of art as a healing tool and as an integral part of student services in
the educational experience.

Recommendations for Further Study

Today’s schools require proof of efficacy for virtually every program implemented and
this will no doubt be the case for any collaborative art therapy program. Researching ways of
evaluating the effectiveness of this type of art therapy program will be important for future
study. In addition, it would be of interest to conduct longitudinal case studies of at-risk students
using art activities as a healing agent. Further possible questions to be researched include: (1) Is
art therapy more effective for a student on a one-on-one basis, and under what circumstance
would it be appropriate for a group? (2) What size should the group be? (3) Is it more effective
for one age group over another; i.e., the less literate younger students versus older students? (4)
Is it more successful for females or males? (5) Would it be more acceptable as an alternative teaching method in a large metropolitan area? and (6) Does cultural background determine the effectiveness of art therapy?

The data analysis of this research study appears to indicate the desire for art therapy type activities in the local elementary schools. The art teachers and the school counselors are supportive of a proposed art activities model combining their skills to better serve their students. The Appendices of this paper contains an art experiences model that provides a framework to assist the art teachers and school counselors in working as a team with at-risk students.
REFERENCES


Menninger Foundation. (1987). *Art therapy, the healing vision.* [Video]. Menninger Video Productions, Topeka, KS.


Poland, S. (School psychologist; member of National Crisis Team and National Association for Victim Assistance. (1998, March 19). *CBS special report: Tragedy in Littleton* [Television broadcast].


I have appreciated the opportunity to audit the information Caroline Jackson has acquired in support of her thesis. I understand my responsibility is to confirm that the information gathered is credible, dependable, and would be confirmed were additional groups confronted with the same questions.

I bring substantial experience to this task, having taught at elementary, middle, high school, and college levels for nearly forty years. During my college teaching years I have been heavily involved in teacher education which required visiting area public schools on a regular basis.

I have been provided with a draft of the dissertation, a transcript of the October 14, 2002 focus group discussion, and summaries of both that group’s discussion and of an earlier pilot study. I am persuaded that the results of the focus group does support the thesis, that the summary is an accurate reflection of the transcript, and that the conclusions drawn in the text of the dissertation are reasonable. Further, I am personally acquainted with several of the focus group participants and find their reported comments to be entirely believable.

Thus I do find the materials used in support of the thesis to be credible, dependable, and confirmable. Moreover, I would encourage those who set policy for the region’s public schools to read this material. It is, to say the least, discouraging to read the list of conditions that these educators describe as being impediments to their being able to do their best work.

Respectfully submitted,

David G. Logan
Professor of Art and Design
East Tennessee State University
January 21, 2003
APPENDIX B
FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

I. Introduction

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to join us in this group discussion on a curriculum-based art activities model combining the skills of the art teacher and the school counselor. This group discussion is the mechanism for collecting data for my dissertation. The first part of our time together will be an informational session on art therapy and the remainder of the time I will be asking questions designed to encourage discussion about the topic. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions; I just want your insights, input, and honest opinions. I request that you speak one at a time and regard the tape recorder as an instrument to help me with my memory so that I can accurately record what is said. This is Denise Mickalites. Denise is a counselor at ETSU and she is here with me to help us accurately summarize at the completion of our discussion. I would ask that you write your name on the table tent and place it in front of you. However, your names will not be used when transcribing the tape and in the final writing of the dissertation. We will turn the tape recorder on when we begin the question-and-answer part of the evening.

II. Introduce Ray Evette

I would like to introduce Ray Evette. Ray is a registered art therapist, working as an art therapist at Blount Medical Center in Maryville, TN. He is also adjunct faculty at ETSU and he teaches the Art Therapy Techniques class that is offered through the Department of Art and Design. He will present an overview of Art Therapy and its use.

III. Discussion Questions

1. What is your name and what is your official title at the school?
2. What educational degree(s) do you have and from what institution(s)?
3. What certification(s) or licensure(s) do you have?
4. Does your school have a traditional calendar or year-around program?
5. How does your school identify at-risk students?
6. Do you use or have you used in the past, art activities with at-risk students?
   If yes, please give an example.
7. Have you collaborated with the school counselor or art teacher concerning at-risk students? If yes, please describe.
8. What suggestions do you have to enhance the effectiveness of the art teacher and school counselor working together using art activities with at-risk children?
9. Are there other ideas or concerns that we should discuss relevant to this topic?

III. Closing
That concludes our discussion. I will now ask Denise to summarize to make sure that we have accurately captured the major points of our discussion. Do you have any questions? Thank you for your help.
APPENDIX C

TO: Ms. Caroline Jackson
   University Advisement Center
   P O Box 70590

FROM: James J. Fox, III, Ph.D. Chair
      ETSU Campus Institutional Review Board

DATE: Friday, May 23, 2002

SUBJECT: “Collaboration Between Art teachers and School Counselors to Assist At-Risk Students: A Curriculum Based Art Experiences Model”

IRB No.: c01-144s

This correspondence is to confirm that the changes requested by the Short Review Committee of the ETSU/VA IRB have been received. This office as of April 24, 2002 acknowledges the above noted protocol.

Your study is approved for an eleven-month period (determined by the date of submission). Please note that your study will be scheduled for continuing review in February 2003.

Projects involving VA patients, facilities or employees must also be approved by the VA Research & Development Committee prior to initiating the study.

If you have any questions please call Pat Myrick, Compliance Manager, at 439-6134.

*Approved Consent Version 2/18/02 (stamp date: 03/0702) – Date of Expiration
   February 7, 2003
APPENDIX D

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APPROVAL FORM FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS
JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS

Requestor's Name: Caroline D. Jackson

Title of Research Proposal: Collaboration Between Art Teachers and School Counselors To Assist At-Risk Students: A Curriculum Based Art Experiences Model

Step 1: Research Review of Curriculum Division

We temporarily withhold approval of your proposal until you address the questions we have raised about it in the attached letter. Include this form with resubmission of your proposal.

We conditionally approve your proposal and you may proceed with making contact with principal(s) of the appropriate school(s), but it is necessary for you to address the questions we have raised about your proposal in the attached letter.

We approve your proposal. Proceed with obtaining approval of the principal(s) of the appropriate school(s).

Signature, Curriculum Division Reviewer: [Signature]
Date: 7/2/02

Step 2: Principal's Evaluation

I temporarily withhold approval of your proposed research conducted in my school for reasons stated in the attached correspondence. Include this form with resubmission of your proposal.

Principal #1: [Signature] Date: [Date]
Principal #2: [Signature] Date: [Date]
Principal #3: [Signature] Date: [Date]

I approve your proposal. Please forward this form to the central office for approval of the director.

Principal #1: [Signature] Date: 8/28/02
Principal #2: [Signature] Date: [Date]
Principal #3: [Signature] Date: 8/28/02

Step 3: Director's Evaluation

I withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in our schools because the reasons stated in the attached correspondence. I am forwarding a copy of your proposal, a copy of this form, and a copy of our correspondence to the curriculum division reviewer. They will communicate with you further.

I approve your proposal. Proceed with your research according to the conditions agreed upon in the preceding sections of this form and your research proposal.

Signature of Director: [Signature]
Date: 8/28/02

NOTE: The signed copy of this form should be returned to the curriculum division for its records.

Johnson City Board of Education
APPROVAL FORM FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS
JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS

Requestor's Name: Caroline D. Jackson

Title of Research Proposal: Collaboration Between Art Teachers and School Counselors To Assist At-Risk Students: A Curriculum Based Art Experiences Model

Step 1: Research Review of Curriculum Division

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We approve your proposal. Proceed with obtaining approval of the principal(s) of the appropriate school(s).

Signature, Curriculum Division Reviewer: [Signature]
Date: 7/2/02

Step 2: Principal's Evaluation

I temporarily withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in my school for reasons stated in the attached correspondence. Include this form with the resubmission of your proposal.

Principal #1: [Signature] Date: [Date]
Principal #2: [Signature] Date: [Date]
Principal #3: [Signature] Date: [Date]

I approve your proposal. Please forward this form to the central office for approval of the director.

Principal #4: [Signature] Date: 8/28/02
Principal #5: [Signature] Date: 8/28/02
Principal #6: [Signature] Date: [Date]

Step 3: Director's Evaluation

I withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in our schools for the reasons stated in the attached correspondence. I am forwarding a copy of your proposal, a copy of this form, and a copy of our correspondence to the curriculum division reviewer. They will communicate with you further.

I approve your proposal. Proceed with your research according to the conditions agreed upon in the preceding sections of this form and your research proposal.

Signature of Director: [Signature]
Date: 8/28/02

NOTE: The signed copy of this form should be returned to the curriculum division for its records.
APPROVAL FORM FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS
JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS

Requestor's Name: Caroline D. Jackson

Title of Research Proposal: Collaboration Between Art Teachers and School Counselors To Assist At-Risk Students: A Curriculum Based Art Experiences Model

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We approve your proposal. Proceed with obtaining approval of the principal(s) of the appropriate school(s).

[Signature, Curriculum Division Reviewer] 7/2/02

Step 2: Principal's Evaluation

I temporarily withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in my school for reasons stated in the attached correspondence. Include this form with the resubmission of your proposal.

[Principal #1: ] [Date: ]
[Principal #2: ] [Date: ]
[Principal #3: ] [Date: ]

I approve your proposal. Please forward this form to the central office for approval of the director.

[Principal #4: ] [Date: 8/26/02]
[Principal #5: ] [Date: 8/23/02]
[Principal #6: ] [Date: 8/23/02]

Step 3: Director's Evaluation

I withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in our schools for the reasons stated in the attached correspondence. I am forwarding a copy of your proposal, a copy of this form, and a copy of our correspondence to the curriculum division reviewer. They will communicate with you further.

I approve your proposal. Proceed with your research according to the conditions agreed upon in the preceding sections of this form and your research proposal.

[Signature of Director] 8/26/02

NOTE: The signed copy of this form should be returned to the curriculum division for its records.
APPENDIX E
LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

August 19, 2002

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxxx

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University conducting a dissertation research project. The purpose of this letter is to explain my research study and to solicit your support. I am seeking to develop a curriculum-based art experiences model that combines the skills of art teachers and school counselors to assist at-risk students. It is hoped that this type of program will facilitate students’ personal and academic development in ways that may not be addressed by traditional teaching methods. The use of art for healing is probably as old as humanity, and helping our teachers use art therapeutically in the classroom may be a beginning toward new solutions for old problems. It appears that the roles of the school art teacher and the school counselor have always been separate. However, alignments between the visually oriented art teachers and the verbally oriented school counselors would provide an interdisciplinary approach in an effort to provide therapeutic art experiences.

To gather necessary data, I plan to conduct focus group sessions. The art teachers and school counselors from elementary schools in the area will be invited to participate. Their beliefs, perceptions, and insights will be extremely valuable in formulating the curriculum-based model. I know that as an educator your first concern is how better to serve the students in your care. I appreciate your support in my efforts to further that goal.

Sincerely yours,

Caroline D. Jackson
Counselor

(423) 439-4098 – work
(423) 928-7903 – home
(423) 439-8484 – fax
APPENDIX F
LETTER TO ART TEACHERS AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS

October 7, 2002

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I am conducting a research study to develop a curriculum-based art experiences model that combines the skills of the art teacher and the school counselor. I hope to gain beliefs, perceptions, and insights from the art teachers and school counselors in the local elementary schools regarding my study. This study is my dissertation topic in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University.

I am asking that you be a participant in a focus group in your role as art teacher or school counselor to discuss your perceptions and beliefs about the proposed model. If you choose to participate, you are asked to:

1) Return the enclosed agreement form by October 11, 2002
2) Be willing to participate in a focus-group session with your colleagues.

Focus groups are estimated to last approximately one-and-one-half hours. A registered art therapist will provide an informational session prior to the beginning of the discussion period.

Please indicate your willingness to participate on the enclosed form, and return it to me by mail or by fax (423) 439-8348. If you have any questions about the study or the process, please feel free to call me at (423) 439-4098 – daytime, or (423) 928-7903 – evening. I can also be reached by e-mail at cjackson@etsu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate. Your insights will be extremely valuable. If you would like to receive a summary of the final research project results, please indicate this on the enclosed agreement form.

Sincerely

Caroline D. Jackson, Counselor
University Advisement Center

Enclosure
INFORMED CONSENT

Information About:
Collaboration between Art Teachers and School Counselors
To Assist At-Risk Students: A Curriculum-Based
Art Experiences Model

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Caroline D. Jackson, M.Ed.
East Tennessee State University
Box 70590
Johnson City, TN 37614
Phone: (423) 439-4098
Fax: (423) 439-8384
E-mail: cjackson@etsu.edu

This informed consent will explain about being a research subject in an experiment. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to develop a curriculum-based art experiences model combining the skills of the art teachers and school counselors, so that together they can provide art experiences for at-risk elementary school students.

DURATION
Your participation is needed for a focus-group discussion that should last approximately one to one-and-one-half hours. An informational session of approximately one hour in length will be held prior to the focus-group session. This session will familiarize participants with the use of art experiences with children. You may also be contacted for follow-up as the study progresses; the time involved for the follow-up discussion should not take more than approximately 30 minutes.

PROCEDURES
You are being asked to participate in a focus-group discussion in which you will be asked for ideas and insights concerning a proposed curriculum-based model. The focus-group discussion will be audiotaped and the moderator will take notes during the focus-group discussions.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS
There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts pertaining to your involvement in this study.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS
The direct benefit is working knowledge of the use of art experiences with children. In addition, the benefit to the community at large would be the enhancement of the elementary school curriculum.
FINANCIAL COSTS
There are no financial costs to you as a participant in this study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS
If you have any research-related questions or problems at any time, you may call Caroline Jackson at 423-439-4098 or Dr. Terrence Tollefson at 423-439-7617. You may call the Chair of the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6134 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Every attempt will be made to see that study results of each individual’s statements are kept confidential. The records from this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet. The records will be maintained for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a participant. The ETSU Institutional Review Board and the ETSU Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA) have access to the study records.

COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT
East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of emergency first aid for any injury which may happen as a result of your participation in this study. They will not pay for any other medical treatment. Claims against ETSU or any of its agents or employees may be submitted to the Tennessee Claims Commission. These claims will be settled to the extent allowable as provided under TCA Section 9-8-307. For more information about claims call the Chair of the ETSU Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6134.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
The nature, demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to you as well as are known and available. You understand what your participation involves. Furthermore, you understand that you are free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. You have read, or have had read to you, and fully understand the consent form. You sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been given to you.

Your study record will be maintained in strictest confidence according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

Signature of Participant  ___________________  Date  ___________________
Signature of Participant  ___________________  Date  ___________________

Participant’s Initials: _______

Version 1 (2/18/02)
APPENDIX H

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

Name _______________________________________
(Please Print)

_______ Yes, I will participate in a focus group to discuss the proposed study:
Collaboration Between Art Teachers and School Counselors to Assist
At-Risk Students: A Curriculum-Based Art Experiences Model.

_______ No, I cannot participate at this time.

Mailing address you prefer the researcher to use:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Phone number you prefer the researcher to use: E-Mail Address:
_____________________________________ __________________________________

Fax number: __________________

_______ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the results of the study.
October 28, 2002

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxxx

This letter is to confirm that _______________________ attended a two-hour informational session on art therapy and focus group discussion on October 14, 2002. The informational portion of the evening was given by Ray Evette, a registered art therapist. Please allow her the appropriate in-service credit.

I appreciate your cooperation in regard to my study combining the professional skills of the art teacher and the school counselor to assist at-risk students. Without your assistance, the study would not have been the success that it was, and hopefully someday the students of Johnson City schools will benefit from its findings.

Sincerely

Caroline D. Jackson, M.Ed.
Counselor

Attachment

cc: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
APPENDIX J

LETTER OF THANK-YOU TO ART TEACHERS AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS

(Date)

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Thank you for participating in my focus group meeting. I know that you as public school personnel have a very busy schedule, and I am appreciative of your time. Please accept the book Soul Based Art by Dr. James Mills and Becky Hope Malloy as a token of thanks for your assistance with my study.

Becky has been using art as a healing tool for some time now. I am in hopes that our efforts will lead to some changes in the system to allow you to use art as a healing tool for the students in the Johnson City Schools.

I wish you and your family a happy holiday season!

Sincerely

Caroline D. Jackson, M.Ed.
Counselor

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ART EXPERIENCES MODEL FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE ART TEACHER
AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR
ART EXPERIENCES MODEL

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the curriculum-based art experiences model is to make available quality related strategies for collaboration between the art teacher and the school counselor in working with at-risk elementary school children. Together they can facilitate personal and academic development that is not addressed by traditional teaching methods.

The practice of using art experiences is built upon the belief that art is a reflection of the subconscious. Art experiences are promoted as a way to give vent to a person’s feelings, emotions, and thoughts. Each individual’s artistic expressions are a unique personal testament that reflects the many facets of personality and behavior. Studies and observations by Viktor Lowenfeld, often called the father of art education, indicated that spontaneous drawings and paintings reveal children’s thoughts and feelings. He noted that creative expression showed not only the needs and emotions of children but also the more deep-seated and lasting characteristic known as personality.

The use of art therapy (art combined with psychotherapy) in the healing process has been gaining widespread popularity. Art experiences in an educational setting offer a means of non-verbal communication that can be used effectively to satisfy a variety of developmental, learning, and social or emotional needs of students. Art therapy techniques promote the idea that, just as a canvas can be repainted until desired image is achieved, so can the patterns of behavior, response, and perception be changed to enhance one’s life image.

The possible areas of study assessing and addressing the needs of at-risk students are numerous. This model offers strategies specifically for school districts without registered art therapists. The art teachers and school counselors will find several options for collaboration so that at-risk students’ needs may be better served. This model offers strategies for issues identified as being most frequently experienced by elementary school students. Additional art activities can be found in the reference materials.
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(Figures drawn by granddaughters, Samantha and Bronwyn, elementary school students.)
IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

Students are identified as being at-risk for various reasons, including academically challenged with special needs, emotionally challenged, and behavior problems. In addition, schools classified as Title I schools serve greater numbers of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which present an at-risk situation. Some schools have a formal method of identifying at-risk students; others have a more informal method of locating these students.

In referring students, Bush (1997) suggests, “There are indicators that can help determine the suitability of a student for art therapy” (p. 50). She offers the following list that merely highlights certain features that are often recognizable in art therapy candidates:

Behavior problems are manifested within the school milieu: for example, excessive absences, adjustment difficulties, peer pressure, poor peer interaction, difficulty with authority figures.

Other behavioral manifestations exist, such as irritability; unhappiness; depression; anger; withdrawal; foreign language barriers; excessive verbal or nonverbal communication; disruptive, destructive, and aggressive behavior; insecurity; lack of self-confidence; inappropriate or no affect; poor self-image; excessive use of fantasy.

Serious emotional or traumatic experience is associated with the nonschool environment: crisis in the home, death of a significant person, parental separation or divorce, physical or mental ailment, physical or psychological abuse.

The student has difficulty expressing thoughts and feelings verbally and appears to express thoughts and feelings more easily through art.

The student is generally withdrawn and does not seem to be a good candidate for verbal therapy.

The student shows a desire and willingness to participate in art therapy.
SAMPLE REFERRAL FORM

Student’s Name: _________________________________       Male _____  Female _____
Grade _____   Age _____       Teacher’s Name: __________________________________
Date Referred: ____________________

Issue(s) of concern:

Analysis of socioeconomic status, cultural classification, and familial relationships:

Academic and social interaction:
The following guideline describes child art growth from pre-school to grades 4-6 (Mills, 1978).

Knowing how a child grows and develops in art will help the art teacher and school counselor provide the proper art motivation and art materials at different art levels.

**Art Growth Occurs in Spurts.** Art growth, like any other aspect of a child’s growth, is not smooth and continuous but occurs in spurts. Therefore, one should evaluate art growth over a period of time.

**Art Growth Begins at Birth.** A child’s art growth begins at birth when he first starts to see, touch, hear, and smell. When a child is about one year old, he will begin to make marks. This represents his first attempts at graphic expression. As he grows older, he becomes increasingly more sophisticated in his use of art materials and in his visual expression of ideas.

**Preschoolers Need Art.** Obviously, a child who has had ample opportunity to work with art materials will feel more comfortable with them and therefore be better able to express himself visually. Some children enter nursery school and kindergarten with no experience with art materials. This is especially true today with many children growing up in apartments where there is no place to be “messy.”

**Scribbling.** When the child is about one year old, he will begin to enjoy the kinesthetic experience of scribbling on paper and pounding clay. Gradually he will gain more skill in manipulating the materials until he is able to make crude shapes at about age four.

**Parents Art Teachers.** A child’s first art teachers are his parents. Many art concepts and attitudes are formed before the child enters school. It may well be that a child’s parents influence his art growth more than his art teachers do.

**Give the Child Art Materials Early.** Give the child art materials as soon as he is able to manipulate them. If it is obvious that he cannot handle the materials, simply put them away for a later time.

**Exploring Materials.** A random and exploratory use of art materials should not be thought of as wasteful. The child is expressing himself and gaining skill in the use of
tools and materials. This skill is necessary in order that he may later learn to draw symbols.

Free Expression. Encourage the child to express himself freely. Do not ask a preschooler to draw a dog, person, tree, etc. A child of this age is not concerned with drawing objects and, furthermore, he can’t. One might as well ask him to jump over the moon.

Teach Respect for Tools and Materials. Teach the child to take care of art tools and materials. For example, teach him how to wash out his paint brushes, put away his art materials, etc.

Appropriate Art Materials. Art materials appropriate for this age are: big pencils, big crayons, watercolor felt-tip markers, finger paint, thick tempera paint, flat bristle brushes, clay, texture samples, blocks, sandbox, round-nosed scissors, and scrap materials to make collages.

Avoid Coloring Books. Do not give a child coloring books. They do not allow for freedom of expression. They create dependency, and they destroy his confidence to do his own work.

Sensory Experiences Most Important. Sensory experiences are very important at this age. Rich percepts will evolve into rich concepts. Therefore, art activities should stress concrete, sensory, perceptual experiences. In art, the major concern for the child should be a sensory manipulation of art materials.

Young Children Live in the Present. Unlike adults, children of this age are completely involved with the present, with little or no concern for the past or the future. This, in a sense, makes them more alive and their art work more alive and sensitive.

Little Motivation Needed. Little motivation is needed at this age other than providing art materials and a place to work.

Respect the Child’s Art Work. Show the child that you are interested in and respect his efforts in art. One way to do this is to display his work in the home. A good suggestion is to display his art work on the refrigerator with magnets so that the art work can be changed periodically.

Symbols Are Sometimes Not Recognizable. A parent once pointed to a child symbol for a dog and said, “That does not look like a dog!” The child pointed to the parent’s symbol, the word DOG, and said, “That does not look like a dog either.”
First Symbols. When a child is about four or five years old, he begins to invent symbols for objects in his environment. These symbols evolve out of a rather accidental combination of abstract shapes.

Symbols Are Essential to Learning. An essential element of school learning is the ability to use and understand visual symbols. A child who can manipulate and understand concrete art symbols will have little trouble manipulating and understanding more abstract visual symbols such as letters and numbers.

Details in Symbols Indicate Intelligence. A young child’s symbols represent his concepts of objects within his environment. They do not represent an attempt to copy the visual characteristics of objects; the symbols are conceptual rather than visual. For this reason, the amount of details included in a child’s symbols is an indication of his awareness and often used to measure his conceptual development.

Do Not Psychoanalyze a Child from His Art. This should be left to psychologists who are trained in such matters. As an example of how art work can be misleading, once the author asked a first grader why he did not include his father in his family portrait drawing. His reply, “Oh, he’s out of town today.”

Repeating Symbols. Once the child has found a satisfying symbol for an object, he will repeat it over and over again. The symbol will change only when his concept of the object changes. A major task of the teacher is to strive for concept enrichment which will result in the enrichment of visual symbols.

Ground Line. The first indication of a child’s attempt to order his symbols in space is the ground line. This same concept, putting symbols in a spatial order, is necessary in order to learn to read and write. Therefore, the ground line is a good indication that the child is ready for a meaningful reading and writing program. The ground line is two-dimensional in nature and can denote motion. At first the child may use the bottom of the page as the
ground line. Later he will definitely draw the line. Sometimes he uses a bent line to indicate the terrain. He may use more than one ground line in an attempt to depict three-dimensional space. Many children also include a sky line.

Elevation of Planes. A child of this age will often push a plane up, such as a table top, so that the viewer can see objects that would otherwise not be visible in the drawing.

Folding Pictures. Literally folding the drawing on the two ground lines would result in the objects facing each other in a logical three-dimensional space.

Space Depiction Is Conceptual. While the above ways of depicting space (ground line, elevation of planes, folding pictures and see-through pictures) may seem illogical to adults, it must be remembered that drawing to a child of this age is a conceptual activity with little concern for visual reality.

Use of Color. Children of this age use color sometimes emotionally and sometimes conceptually. They may color their favorite things with their favorite colors, such as coloring his mother red, or a cow purple. If the child chooses to use color conceptually, he will repeat the same colors for the same objects until his visual concepts change. All trees will be a flat green, all apples a flat red, etc., with no attempt at shading. This discovery of a definite color-object relationship is important because it indicates an ability to categorize and to make generalizations; both are important learning skills.

Different Rates of Progress. It is important to note that a child may progress at different rates in his use of symbols, space, and color. In other words, he may be advanced in his use of symbols but not in his use of space and color.

Appropriate Materials. Appropriate materials for this age are: big crayons, thick tempera paint, clay, pencils, scissors, and scraps for collages.

CHILD ART GROWTH: GRADES 4-6

Peer Group Influence. The child of this age is more peer group oriented than the younger child. He joins groups of his own sex and socially begins to break away from his parents. It is important for parents and teachers to recognize this need for peer group association and to direct the child toward groups with positive goals. Also, peer group
pressure often causes the child to conform to stereotypes in his dress, thinking, attitudes, art, etc. Therefore, creativity and individuality should be constantly encouraged during this period of the child’s life.

Desire to Depict Objects Realistically. The child of this age is extremely critical of his art work. He has a desire to depict objects realistically but does not have the skill to do so. Because of this, he is a sucker for noncreative art kits, such as paint-by-numbers, which yield a realistic product.

Three-Dimensional Crafts Are Most Satisfying. Crafts art projects should be a major part of the art program at this age because they hold up under the child’s critical judgment, they are more realistic, and they are much more creative than commercial art kits.

Art Work Is Similar to Adults. The art product of the child of this age and the art product of adults is remarkably similar. This indicates that most children’s art growth stops at this age. This may be due to a lack of art training past this age, the child giving up from frustration, or stereotyping from peer group pressure in terms of art product and art attitude.

Group Projects. Because of peer group orientation, group art projects are important at this age. There is, however, some danger in too many group projects. Group projects often promote conformity and dependence upon the group. Group projects can destroy a great deal of creativity, for to function creatively, the child must be able to function as an individual.

Draws Visually, Not Conceptually. Unlike the younger child, the child of this age draws what he sees rather than his concepts of objects. Therefore, his drawings are not a valid indication of his intelligence of conceptual development because they are more of a visual experience than a mental experience.

Use of Three-Dimensional Space. Space becomes three-dimensional through the use of overlapping planes, shading, advancing and receding colors, diminishing sizes, linear perspective, etc. This is in keeping with the child’s desire to depict things realistically.

Use of Color. The use of color becomes more realistic as the child begins to use tinting and shading techniques rather than flat color.
MEDIA DIMENSIONS

Art Therapy focuses on the process instead of the product. Therefore, a classification and qualities of the media used is appropriate. Media dimensions differentiate media into: fluid versus resistive, simple versus complex, and structured versus unstructured. Each of these pairs constitutes a continuum along which different media may be approximately placed. A particular quality of a medium depends on the individual’s interactive style and level of development or regression. (Ex: Clay used by an experienced potter may be a resistive and structured medium, while a young child who waters the same clay down to a puddle of mud gives the medium a very fluid and unstructured quality. Any designation of a medium on a continuum is approximate and may be experienced differently by individuals.

Fluid versus Resistive

The continuum from fluid to resistive refers to the particular structural qualities inherent in the material. The therapeutic aspect of these qualities is relevant for art therapy. Approximate media properties for two-dimensional media, from fluid to resistive, might be in this order: finger paint, watercolor, poster paint, chalk, felt-tipped markers, pencils.

Simple versus Complex

This refers to the number of steps or physical and mental operations required to use a particular medium. (Ex: A felt-tipped marker is simple because it may only require one step to make a line on a paper. A wood construction is a more complex experience because it requires selection; planning; use of wood, hammer, and nails; and finishing, etc.)

This differentiation of media into simple and complex is important in working with small children. An art experience that is too complex may frustrate the individual, thus increasing anxiety, destroying expression, or causing him/her to refuse to participate.

Structured versus Unstructured

This category refers to whether the art experience is directed or non-directed. If directed, the therapist specifies the medium to be used, as well as the artwork to be done. Non-directed artwork is free expression with personal choice of medium.
ART MATERIALS

Media Dimension Variables:
fluid – resistive / structured – unstructured / simple – complex

COLORED PENCILS: structured; need sharpening; won’t withstand pressure; can be simple line drawing or use shading to make more complex

CHARCOALS/CHALKS/PASTELS: fluid; unstructured; simple or complex, depending on pencil or stick form and directives; messy; regressive; break easily; fast; can be rich colors or black and white; many variables

MAGIC MARKERS: resistive; structured; simple; clear, bright colors; fast; easy to handle; won’t withstand pressure and require removing a cap

CRAYONS: between resistive and fluid; mostly structured and simple; if thick, easy to hold; sturdy

COLLAGE: structured; complex; resistive; fosters self-expression; distancing device, less threatening

FINGER PAINT: fluid; unstructured; simple; regressive, messy, loosening, easy to use, lack of detail

ACRYLICS/TEMPERA/OILS/WATERCOLOR: fluid; complex; between structured and unstructured; loosens; promotes emotional expression; multi-leveled – need a brush, ability to mix colors; require patience. Acrylics, oils and tempera can ‘fix’ mistakes when paint dries. Watercolor becomes more complex when used with crayons ‘wax resist’ or pen and ink.

WATERBASE CLAY/PLASTACINE: regressive; ventilation; promotes formed expression, can elicit loss of control or insight; requires physical dexterity/can promote regaining physical control or maintain current use; use of tools; delays gratification through length of product time; role playing encouraged
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Appropriate space for art activities is essential for this type of therapeutic intervention. A permanent and separate room provides the necessary privacy and continuity of the program. The room should be large enough to accommodate individual and small-group activities. Every effort should be made to minimize the outside noise level to reduce chances for distraction. The room should be welcoming and visually pleasing, which contributes to a feeling of stability.

A traditional classroom layout will not work for art therapy activities. An informal seating area comprised of two or more easy chairs, small table, a rug, and plants would contribute to the feeling of informality and security. Although the floor plan does not include it, ideally the sitting area should be located by a window to further promote relaxation. Adequate work surfaces should be provided (such as tables and easels), a sink and counter space to allow for easy cleanup. Children need a space where it is all right to spill without fear of scolding (Rubin, 1974). Work surfaces and floors need to be of damage-resistant material (Bush, 1997). The tables should be round, putting everyone on equal terms, and should accommodate the teacher and up to four students. In addition to worktables, sufficient open areas of durable flooring should be accessible for making posters, body drawings, and other large projects. The room should be sufficiently bright and visually pleasing and the art materials organized. Organized materials give the children quick access, making the choice of art materials easier for them. Stereo equipment should also be in place to provide soothing music, which promotes relaxation and creativity. The room can be used for both the art experience and the counseling session. Additional uses for the room include parent-teacher conferences and even as a place where teachers could be involved in art making, thereby relieving their stress levels as well. A display area in the room, as well as in other areas of the school, is desirable for exhibiting the artwork, if appropriate.
1. Open shelves. Temporary storage of students books, etc.
2. Easy chairs and low coffee table
3. Plants
4. Wall display area for art work
5. Easels
6. Work table (6' diameter) and chairs.
7. Open shelves for art materials
8. Sink
10. Teacher’s desk.
11. Counter space. Storage for work in progress and CD cabinet.
12. Open work space

Room painted in a light warm color
Crayons
   Regular
   Larger fat ones (for younger children)
Markers
Paper
   8½” x 11”
   12” x 18”
   18” x 24”
Newsprint
   Construction paper
   Roll of plain white shelf paper
Poster board
Tempera paint (poster paint)
Watercolors
Brushes
White glue
Glue sticks
Pencils
Colored pencils
Chalk
Erasers
Oil pastels
Clay
Clay Tools
Variety of magazines
Scissors
Apron/old shirt for messy projects
Socks or gloves for puppets
Felt
Plastic eyes
Yarn
Pipe cleaners
Buttons
PROCESS AND TIME LINE

**DESIGNING**

Counselor communicates identified at-risk students to art teacher. The counselor and art teacher discuss student and appropriate art activities.
   Time required – approximately one hour, depending on number of students

**IMPLEMENTING**

Art teacher facilitates art activities with student on a one-on-one basis or in small groups.
   Time required – approximately one half hour twice a week

**COLLABORATING**

Art teacher and school counselor discuss art teacher’s observations during the art activities.
   Time required – approximately one half hour

**PROCESSING**

One-on-one setting, the school counselor and student discuss and continue to process the student’s artwork.
   Time required – approximately one half hour twice a week

**EVALUATING**

Art teacher and school counselor conduct a follow-up meeting to discuss student progress, future plans, and possible changes.
   Time required – approximately one half hour

The timeline illustrates the function of the art teacher and school counselor in using art therapy techniques to benefit at-risk students. The art teacher, through the process of artwork, enables the students to become aware of their emotions and feelings. The counselor helps the student express the emotions and feelings in appropriate ways.
WARM-UP EXERCISES

To develop a rapport with the student before embarking on in-depth art activities, two simple warm-up exercises are recommended. These exercises also enable the student to have fun with lines and colors and generally become acquainted with the creative process. These exercises are best done with music softly playing in the background.

Always start with some type of warm up.

Scribbles...  

![Image of scribbles]

Taking a line for a walk...  

![Image of a line for a walk]

Remember to label the artwork: name, date, title, or any other descriptive words or phrases. In some cases you will need to write down the story that goes with the drawing. See example on page 103.
Title: Draw a Feeling

Materials: Paper, pencils, erasers, markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Conducting the Session: Ask student to draw what he/she is feeling at the present moment.

Next, ask student to do a quick drawing that represents his/her feelings of sadness, calmness, fright, or happiness.

Rationale: Student can express feelings visually because it is often easier to draw feelings than to talk about how they feel.

Creating a visual representation helps students develop an awareness of feelings.

Art is a safe way to explain their feelings.

Expressing feelings visually is a good method for getting to the real feelings and releasing them.

Title: Draw Your Home

Materials: Paper, pencils, erasers, crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Conducting the Session: Instruct student to draw the outside and inside of the place he/she lives.

Rationale: Gives students an opportunity to express themselves nonverbally.

The house often represents the self. With this exercise the student can develop self-awareness and an appreciation of his/her own needs; their environment, and their likes and dislikes.

It encourages the students to remember detail.

The drawings will provide information about the students’ developmental art growth.
I. **Title:** Color Anger

II. **Materials:** Paper, markers, crayons, or watercolors

III. **Conducting the Session:** Ask child to choose a color or colors that express anger.

Have him/her draw a picture of their anger.

IV. **Rationale:** Students learn alternative responses to anger.

The creative process helps release energy created by anger.

Helps students who are having trouble with anger, either from holding it in or erupting a classroom.

Helps them experience release of anger through art.

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I. **Title:** Clay modeling

II. **Materials:** Clay and clay tools

III. **Conducting the Session:** Encourage the student to work with a ball of clay making any shape or figure he/she desires.

IV. **Rationale:** Clay modeling can be helpful for students in providing a safe outlet for aggressive feelings.

Clay provides a safe way to pound, poke, squeeze, and cut.

Releasing energy is helpful for students and lends itself to the creation of a product.

The fun and enjoyment that children receive from play with the clay provides a unique sensory tool where feelings can be expressed in a different form.

Students who are insecure can feel a sense of control through clay.
I. **Title:** Self-Portrait Collage

II. **Materials:** Scissors, paper, a variety of magazines, construction paper, glue, crayons, and markers

III. **Conducting the Session:** Have students cut or tear out pictures or words from magazine as to how they see themselves. Have them glue these items on a large piece of paper.

IV. **Rationale:** Helps build small motor coordination skills with use of scissors.

   It is comfortable for children when drawing or painting may be intimidating.

   Helps students understand themselves better.

   Pictures from magazines provide visual reminders of different aspects of the student’s life.

   Collage is a fun activity and helps free the imagination.

   Allows the student to make a statement about him/herself.

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I. **Title:** Animal Drawing or Painting

II. **Materials:** Paper, pencils, erasers, crayons, markers, colored pencils, or watercolor, or tempera paints.

III. **Conducting the Session:** Ask the student to draw or paint themselves as an animal.

IV. **Rationale:** Helps students to learn that everyone is unique and there is only one of them.

   Shows elements of the students’ view of themselves; i.e., traits, appearance, etc.
I. **Title:** Family Portrait

II. **Materials:** Paper, pencils, erasers, crayons, markers, or colored pencils

III. **Conducting the Session:** Ask student to draw a picture of himself/herself with their family doing something. This can be the extended family or the family members they live with, including pets.

IV. **Rationale:** The exercise helps with understanding family dynamics.

   It provides a better understanding of the people in a student’s family and their influences.

   Expresses feelings about the family members and encourages an appreciation of the family.

   This is a good activity when there has been a change in family dynamics, such as divorce or death.

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I. **Title:** Spontaneous Drawing

II. **Materials:** Paper, markers, crayons, pencil and erasers, or color pencils

III. **Conducting the Session:** Ask the child to draw a picture of anything he/she would like.

IV. **Rationale:** This exercise allows the event or troublesome issue to come to the forefront of their mind. Helps express current thoughts and helps reveal feelings and unconscious emotions.

   Children need permission to concentrate on mourning, and this exercise allows the opportunity.

   The creative process allows the student to symbolically gain control over the circumstances.
PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION/SUGGESTED RESOLUTION

Documentation of Sessions

In addition to school prescribed documentation of art and counseling sessions, it is suggested that the artwork of each student be titled and dated. The work can be scanned and included in the student’s file. Providing this visual record of the art activities allows for future reference and specific follow-up comments as feedback to the student. The following example is a record of a student referred for a disruptive behavior and the school counselor’s correspondence reaffirming their session.

Dear

Thank you for talking with me so honestly last week while you were in ISS. You told me that you lost your temper in class and erupted just like a volcano. You told me that you felt like you were in a huge stadium and all the people were laughing at you and you just couldn’t control your temper. Wow - that must have been upsetting and hurtful.

I like the solutions you came up with to keep this from happening again. You know that you can’t change other people so you are going to try to take deep cleansing breaths when you start to feel tense. You are going to ask someone you trust to help you calm down or you are going to ask the teacher if you can have a time out to calm down by yourself. You can do this - I have faith in you. Remember - the good in you is stronger than anything bad in you.

I’ll talk to you again next week.

Sincerely,

(Marek, C. Behavioral Specialist, Bristol, Tennessee Schools, 2002)
ART ACTIVITIES CARD FILE

A card file is recommended to provide quick access for future art activities

I. Art Activity:

II. Materials:

III. Procedure:

IV. Goals:

V. Notes:
REFERENCES


EXPANDED REFERENCES


Menninger Foundation. (1987). *Art therapy, the healing vision.* [Video]. Menninger Video Productions, Topeka, KS.


Poland, S. (School psychologist; member of National Crisis Team and National Association for Victim Assistance. (1998, March 19). *CBS special report: Tragedy in Littleton* [Television broadcast].


VITA

CAROLYN D. JACKSON

Personal Data:  Date of Birth:  November 14, 1940
Place of Birth:  Asheville, North Carolina
Marital Status:  Single

Education:  Public Schools, Greenup, Kentucky
            Sarasota, Florida
            East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
            Communication, B.S., 1989
            East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
            Counseling, M.Ed., 1994
            East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
            Educational Leadership, Ed.D., 2003

Professional Experience:  Tax Preparer, H & R Block, Inc., Savannah, Georgia,
                        1977-1979
                        Departmental Secretary, Department of Art and Design,
                        East Tennessee State University, Johnson City,
                        Tennessee, 1979-1997
                        Counselor, University Advisement Center, East Tennessee
                        State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1988-present