

ARTISTICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE  
“SMART”’: AN ANALYSIS OF INTELLIGENCE AND  
TALENT IN SECONDARY ART EDUCATION

By

JASON MEMOLI

Bachelor of Fine Arts  
University of Central Oklahoma  
Edmond, OK  
2002

Masters of Education  
University of Central Oklahoma  
Edmond, OK  
2005

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
August, 2017

ARTISTICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE  
“SMART”: AN ANALYSIS OF INTELLIGENCE AND  
TALENT IN SECONDARY ART EDUCATION

Dissertation Approved:

Dr. Jennifer Job  
Dissertation Adviser

---

Dr. Gayla Foster  
Committee Member

---

Dr. Hongyu Wang  
Committee Member

---

Dr. Denise Blum  
Outside Committee Member

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those who were instrumental to me completing this journey to receiving my doctorate. First, I would like to say thank you to my wife, Carly and kids, Easton and Parklyn who loved and supported me unconditionally even through my long days and nights writing and researching in my office. To my Mom, Betty Peery who believed in me always and my Dad, Ken Memoli who has never been afraid to live his dreams and to both who have always encouraged me as an artist, teacher, and scholar. I would also like to say thank you to my family, friends, and colleagues for their excitement and support through this process. I would further like to acknowledge my professors who throughout my academic career have encouraged my progression and from who I have learned so much. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. Wang, Dr. Blum, and Dr. Foster for their support and specifically Dr. Jennifer Job who guided me through this final step. I would also like to extend great appreciation to Dr. Seungho Moon, my first adviser who always communicated belief in me. I would finally like to thank God for the many blessings in my life and affording me this opportunity to complete a journey many thought I would never be able to do. Thank you to all.

Name: JASON MEMOLI

Date of Degree: August, 2017

Title of Study: ARTISTICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF  
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "SMART": AN ANALYSIS OF  
INTELLIGENCE AND TALENT IN SECONDARY ART EDUCATION

Major Field: EDUCATION

Abstract:

The following study developed from personal and professional experiences identifying as an artistically talented individual and working in art education. From these experiences as an artist, art teacher, and fine arts administrator, there has been a consistent disconnect with notions of talent, art education, and intelligence. From this disconnect, I often found myself advocating for art education and talent to be understood from the perspective of an intellectual domain, yet school policies, administrators, teachers and students seemed to maintain art and art education as being something other than intellectual. In response to this, the following study was designed to investigate artistically talented art students' perceptions of intelligence in relation to their talents and their willingness or unwillingness to self-identify as "smart". This was to study this disconnect from the students that would be directly impacted by such a view. This study also examined artistically talented students' perceptions of intelligence in relation to art creation and art education as it pertains to students' beliefs in their academic abilities. This study further examined, the system of schooling that fosters a bias paradigm in which a students' claim to intelligence is restrictive through educational practices, and constructed norms. This study was conducted at three inner-city high schools with twelve identified artistically talented students participating in an advanced art class. This study utilized arts-based educational research as its methodology. Artwork, sketch journals, and interviews were the method of data collection. Through the analysis, four themes emerged that reflects the participants' perception. These themes are; 1) intelligence is perceived as a "matter of mind" and is distinct from talent which is perceived as "a skill developed through effort", 2) art education's value is within its emotional and expressive aspects, 3) art education is perceived by others as limiting and not valued, and 4) participant perceptions of their academic confidence is described by their "effort". This study concluded with interpretations and implications of these findings regarding multiple intelligence theory, relational aspects of talent and intelligence and the "art kid", implications for gifted education, academic self-efficacy, and art education.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Problem .....	4
Talent and Intelligence: What’s the Difference .....	4
Regarding Talent.....	6
Multiple Intelligence Theory .....	6
Artistic Intelligence.....	7
A Juxtaposition with Neurological Intelligence .....	7
Smart or Intelligent? .....	9
Part of the Core and Well-Rounded Education.....	9
Art Education as Intellectual.....	10
Student Perceptions and Self-Efficacy.....	11
Statement of the Problem.....	12
Research Questions.....	12
Purpose of the Study .....	13
Research Framework .....	13
Significance of the Study .....	15
Defining of Key Terms .....	15
Research Subjectivity.....	17
Assumptions.....	18
Nature of the Study .....	18
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	20
Multiple Intelligence Theory .....	22
Singular to Pluralized Intelligence.....	24
Critics of MI Theory .....	25
Is it Talent or Intelligence? .....	26
Understanding Talent Through Gifted & Talented Education .....	27
The Value, (or Not) of Art Education & Intelligence.....	29
Academic Self-Efficacy .....	30
Student Perceptions of Academic Achievement.....	31
Art Education as More than a Recreational Craft.....	33
Aesthetics in Art Education .....	36

Art as an Intellectual Domain in Public Education.....	37
Fine Arts Impact on Holistic Learning .....	40
Champions of Change.....	40
Oklahoma A+ Schools.....	41
An Influential Scholar.....	43
III. METHODOLOGY .....	45
The Research Questions.....	46
Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER) .....	47
Criteria for Judging ABER .....	49
Illumination.....	49
Generativity.....	49
Incisiveness .....	50
The Research Design .....	51
Context of the Study .....	53
Research Participants.....	54
The Visual Nature of the Participants.....	55
Methods of Data Collection.....	56
Interviews.....	57
The Interview Questions.....	58
Sketch Journals .....	59
Art Creation as Research .....	60
Artist/Researcher/Teacher.....	61
The Researcher’s Role .....	62
Data Collection Implementation .....	63
Data Analysis.....	65
Data Analysis Plan.....	66
Values Coding.....	66
Descriptive Coding .....	67
Visual Discourse Analysis.....	67
Validating the Data .....	68
Ethical Considerations .....	69
Limitations of the Study.....	71
IV. ANALYSIS AND DATA PRESENTATION .....	72
Research Questions.....	73
Description and Characteristics of the Participants .....	74
Qualitative Data Analysis .....	76
Data Collection (Interviews and Artwork) .....	76
The Analysis Process (Text and Visual).....	78
Coding and Visual Discourse Analysis.....	79
Data Presentation through Emerging Themes .....	80
Theme 1: Intelligence is Perceived as a “Matter of Mind” and is Distinct from	

Talent which is Perceived as a “Skill Developed Through Effort” .....	82
Talent Comes from “Effort” and “Hard Work” .....	83
Intelligence is “of the Mind” and Associated with Understandings of “Academics” .....	88
Talent and Intelligence are Perceived as Fundamentally Different .....	90
Theme 2: The Value of Art Education is Within its Expressive and Emotional Aspects .....	93
Art Education is About Expression .....	93
Art Education is an Emotional Outlet .....	96
Theme 3: Art Education is Perceived by Others as Limiting and not Valued ..	97
Art Education is Different from “Academics” .....	98
Art Education is Recreational .....	101
Art education is not Valued by “Others” .....	103
Theme 4: Participant Perceptions of Their Academic Confidence is Described By Their “Effort” .....	105
Confident but Could Work Harder .....	106
Confident Because of Hard Work .....	106
Summary .....	107
 V. CONCLUSION .....	 109
A Summary of the Study .....	110
Addressing the Research Questions .....	112
Understanding and Implications for Multiple Intelligence Theory .....	114
Implications for Diversity .....	119
“Thinking” Art Education .....	120
Where is the Intellect in Art .....	121
An Undervaluing of Aesthetics in Education .....	123
The Value of Expression and Emotions in Art Education .....	125
Talent, Intelligence and the “Art Kid” .....	126
A Context of Narrowed Emphasis .....	129
Implications for Understanding of Giftedness in Education .....	131
Academic Self-Efficacy and Effort .....	132
The Unexpected .....	135
Illumination & Generativity .....	137
Recommendations .....	139
Suggestions for Further Research .....	140
Research Conclusion .....	141
 REFERENCES .....	 143
 APPENDICES .....	 153

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Participants and Site Characteristics.....	74
2 Data Presentation Through Themes and Supporting Categories.....	80



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Literature Review Flow Graphic .....	21
2 Graphic of Research Design .....	52
3 Data Analysis Process.....	78
4 Olivia’s Artwork.....	85
5 Noah’s Sketch.....	86
6 Oliver’s Sketch a.....	87
7 Oliver’s Sketch b.....	87
8 Oliver’s Sketch c.....	89
9 Oliver’s Sketch d.....	90
10 Ella’s Sketch .....	92
11 Ava’s Artwork .....	95
12 Mia’s Sketch .....	99
13 Mia’s Sketchbook List .....	103

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The following study explored questions that have developed throughout my personal experiences identifying as an artist and an art educator. Both personally and professionally, I have been confronted with questions about the purpose and value of art in education. In addressing such inquiry, I have inevitably found myself having to work the explanation from the ground up, meaning representing art education from “low ground” recreational craft or non-intellectual to something of “high ground” academic and intellectual substance. As a current fine arts curriculum specialist for a large intercity school district, this continual experience of clarifying and advocating for the arts’ purpose in education led me to think about how such perceptions affects the students that identify with being artistically talented. These experiences also caused me to reflect on my thinking as I became increasingly aware of how this disconnect, between art education and intellectual study, has shaped my life.

As a student in public school, I was known as the “artistically talented one” or the “art kid” the student who drew during class time and marked up his worksheets with doodles. As I am from a small rural school in Oklahoma in which there was no art program, I had no creative outlet other than this doodle time in my regular classes. Although this sometimes led to a visit to the principal’s office, I always maintained the drive to keep drawing and creating art.

Throughout my public school experience as a student, I maintained the label of the “art kid” and I never felt myself or had been identified by others as “smart” or intelligent. However, this changed when I went to college for a fine arts degree. At the university from which I received my undergraduate degree, the arts were viewed as a valued field of study and not something of a “low ground” craft. This experience affected me holistically. In high school I struggled academically, and in college I excelled, ultimately graduating with honors and as a result altering my perceptions of my capabilities.

Throughout my personal experience and professional career, I continue to observe this disconnect and hesitation for one to connect what it means to be “intelligent” and the talent of art making and the study in art education. I observed this disconnect not only from reflecting on my past experiences but also from my current experiences as an art educator and an arts administrator. This disconnect has been evident through discourse with public school administrators, educators and those within the community. Even more alarming was that I observed this disconnect from the very talented students I taught when I was a classroom art teacher teaching advanced placement (AP) studio art classes. This observation was a similar disconnect I had experienced as a student in public school in that the talented students I taught had an unwillingness to identify as “smart” in regards to their talent.

This disconnect in the concept and understandings of intelligence, talent, and art education carries social connotations regarding student self-concepts and student academic self-efficacy, ultimately shaping individual student identities. Therefore, the purpose of the following study was to investigate artistically talented student's perceptions of intelligence, talent, and academic self-efficacy, as well as their contextual willingness or unwillingness to self-identify as "smart". By utilizing arts-based educational research (ABER) methodology and methods, this study aimed to extend understandings through the process of art making and discourse, as to how such students view art education with respect to identity, as well as unveil existing perceptions on constructed academic systems regarding intelligence or "smartness" in relation with art talent and art academics in public schools.

The title of this research is *Artistically talented students' perceptions of what it means to be "smart"; an analysis of intelligence and talent in secondary art education*. This title highlights the intent of the research by listing the participants (artistically talented students in secondary art education) as well as what was studied (perceptions) and in relation to an analysis of intelligence and talent. Artistically talented high school students were chosen for this study because of the connections they have to identifying and being identified as talented as well as their experience studying art in school. Studying the perceptions from such students allows for an insight and illumination in the values, beliefs, and attitudes regarding understandings of intelligence, talent, systems of schooling and art education as well as insight into such students' academic self-efficacy. Conversely, the word "smart" in the title of this research is in quotations to denote the targeted population's perceptions of the meaning of intelligence in relation to their talents and the study of art education.

## **Background of the Problem**

In providing a background for this study, there are key elements that needed to be addressed. These key elements are intelligence as it relates to talent, art education in public schools, and student perceptions and academic self-efficacy. Each of these areas establishes a contextual backing to investigate the purpose of this study. Additionally, the setting for this study was within the discipline of art education. Art education as an academic study in public schools began in the West in the middle to later parts of the nineteenth century (Freedman & Popkewitz, 1988; Wyagant, 1983). However, social perceptions of art education as a valued intellectual part of the education system has varied (Arnheim, 1989; Eisner, 1988, 2008; Gardner, 1990). Although art education remains established as a core subject in academia, it also exists as an embattled one (Arnheim, 1989; Eisner, 1988, 2008; Gardner, 1990). Regardless of art as a core class in education, scholars continue to assert advocacy for the importance of art education's validity illustrating a need to defend its continual existence in education and as an intellectual mode of thought and study (Eisner, 1988, 2008; Freedman, 2011; Gardner, 1990). This embattled existence of art education in public school points to the disconnected understanding of the purpose and importance of art education and how such an educational experience relates to the intellectual growth of individuals.

### **Talent and Intelligence: What's the Difference**

Within this embattled field of arts education, the view of intelligence in the visual arts is often defined as one with talent in the art making process rather than one of intelligence about art itself (Eisner, 1988; Perkins, 1994). Although talent is a component of a student demonstrating intelligence in art, the reluctance to connect the concepts of art talent with the notion of intelligence may produce an academic environment where such students may not

be allowed to identify with being intelligent or likewise identify as being a “smart” person. This is reflective of my experience as an “art kid” in high school as well as reflected in the talented students I would teach later in my career.

Part of this disconnect is a confusion between talent and intelligence. What is talent in relation to intelligence? Part of the disconnect is in associating intelligence with the “mind” and talent with the “hand”. Eliot Eisner (1988) once made this association by stating that intelligence was a “matter of mind” and talent was a “matter of hand”. Eisner (1988) further explained that talented individuals are those who perform well at specific tasks, while “those who are truly intelligent are good at abstract reasoning and solving difficult problems” (p. 10). Although Eisner describes intelligence as a “matter of mind” and talent as a “matter of hand”, they are fundamentally one and the same. Later, Eisner himself refers to the relationship of the two as “artistically rooted forms of intelligence” (Eisner, 2002, p. 5), meaning art is “rooted” in intelligence and intelligence is “rooted” in art.

When Eisner made the distinction between “mind” and “hand” it followed the misunderstandings of intelligence and talents. Even if not intended, such distinctions create a false dichotomy between the two “mind & hand” or “intelligence” and “talent”. A matter of mind positions within cognition and matter of hand positions within the manifestation from cognition (Anghel, 2016). Thus, cognition and manifestation can be defined as illustrations of one’s overall intelligence. Although talent is characterized as a set of abilities in relation to a specific area of human activity, it is postulated in this study that talent and intelligence are not separate, but rather indices of the same thing (Gardner, 1999; Anghel, 2016).

## **Regarding Talent**

In public education, notions of talent can be expressed through theories of gifted and talented education. John Feldhusen (1986), an educational psychologist in the field of gifted and talented education, describes talent as a representation of abilities in relation to a specific area of human activity and can be evaluated based on proved performances on authentic tasks. This study acknowledges that there are many different fields from which talent can be displayed; however, for this research “talent” is understood, from Feldhusen’s (1986) description, as demonstrating artistic abilities within an art class and from which individual work has been evaluated based on authentic tasks. Authentic tasks is described as advanced art projects and assessments evaluated by a certified visual art instructor.

## **Multiple Intelligence Theory**

The multiple abilities that manifest themselves through cognitive abilities in specific areas of human activity, such as school subjects or domains of study, can be explained in terms of intelligence through an application of Howard Gardner’s (1983) theory of Multiple Intelligence.

Gardner’s (1999) Multiple Intelligence theory, expresses intelligence as “a potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” (p. 34). This theory brings to the forefront the assertion that intelligence is pluralistic and dynamically expressed through “process”, “activation” and “cultural value” which provide a base for this study’s assertion on intelligence regarding talent. Art activity being deemed as “talent”; having “process”, requiring “activation” and having “cultural value” is, therefore, viewed in this study as an intelligence.

**Artistic intelligence.** In regards to artistic intelligence, Gardner (1993) does not go as far as to claim that there is an “artistic intelligence”. Rather, Gardner claims, “each of these forms of intelligence can be directed toward artistic ends” (p. 93). Therefore, “whether an intelligence is mobilized for aesthetic or non-aesthetic ends turns out to be an individual or a cultural decision (Gardner, 1993, p. 139). Although “artistic intelligence” is not specifically asserted in Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory, the pluralistic nature of multiple intelligence theory provides for a mixture of talents, aptitudes, and dispositions that, when applied in culturally constructed academic settings, will manifest as an intelligence within a specific field of study or domain such as art education. Accordingly, identifying one as “artistically intelligent” is in line with the historically, social and cultural understandings of “linguistic and logical-mathematical” ties to English language arts (ELA) and math academics. Moreover, if the definition of intelligence holds true to “cultural relevance” then artistic means, demonstrated through talent, specifically in education, can be identified as an intelligent activity.

**A juxtaposition with neurological intelligence.** As this study establishes an understanding of the definition of intelligence, based on the work of Howard Gardner (1999) in his book *Intelligence Reframed*, this study does recognize the storied history of the meaning of intelligence and its current dynamic and evolving understandings. It is important to juxtapose the approach to intelligence as one from which Howard Gardner’s definition of intelligence is positioned and discussed above to one with the understanding of intelligence as measured as a fixed intelligence quotient (IQ).

Intelligence quotient (IQ) is understood to be “a theoretical construct used by psychologists within standardized tests as a means of describing one’s intelligence level”



(Grohol, 2016). IQ generally measures fluid intelligence (Gf) “or the ability to solve novel problems by using reasoning” as well as crystallized intelligence (Gc) or “a knowledge-based ability that is highly dependent on education and acculturation (Kaufman & Plucker, 2013).

From this standardized defining of an individual’s intelligence, it is important to note the understanding of the IQ to be, as stated, a “construct” and that it is simply a philosophical creation to describe a subset of human functions that psychologists believe to be subjectively important in modern society (Grohol, 2016). Such understandings of intelligence for an IQ measure, of “fluid” and “crystallized” has established itself as the common definition of intelligence.

Intelligence quotient (IQ) derives from a theory of neural intelligence which is the contribution of the efficiency and precision of the nervous system to intelligent behavior (Perkins, 1994, p. 13). This theory of intelligence is where Howard Gardner (1999) positions Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory, which is reliant on the biology of the brain and plays a key part in identifying types of intelligence (pp. 35 – 41). However, Gardner’s (1999) theory, argues for additional abilities within the traditional “fixed – fluid and crystallized” understanding of intelligence (such as creative to kinesthetic abilities) to be treated with the same importance as the standard analytic abilities measured by such IQ tests.

Holistically, the view of intelligence as measured by “IQ” is limiting to the understanding of intelligence by singularizing its function (Perkins, 1994; Gardner 1999). This departure from a singular intelligence view is summed up well by Howard Gardner (1999) when he states that “intelligence, as a construct to be defined and a capacity to be measured, is no longer the property of a specific group of scholars who view it from a narrowly psychometric perspective” (pp. 24-25). The understanding and defining of

intelligence now needs to be expanded and thus further studied. One thing is clear as corroborated by Perkins (1994) is that our “stereotypes about human intelligence plague our attitudes toward it” (p. 15). Such a stereotype can affect those who may not have the privilege to identify as intelligent.

**Smart or intelligent?** In the title of this study, the word “smart” is in quotations to stress the semantic connection between the two words “smart” and “intelligence”. Although this study’s understanding of intelligence is established within the social sciences and psychology, the use of the word “smart” is understood to be a part of everyday language, often used informally for the word “intelligence”.

### **Part of the Core and Well-Rounded Education**

Just as the same as English language arts and math, art academics in public education is legally established as a core curriculum. Academic study in public school systems across the nation is outlined by core curriculum as recognized by the United States and individual State statutes. The core curriculum, therefore, defines how society perceives achievement in public schools. Core curriculum as defined by the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) (2001), as well as the most recent school reform law *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) (2016), defines art as part of the “core” and a “well-rounded” education. Additionally, in the State of Oklahoma, in which this study is based, education legislation likewise lists art as part of the Oklahoma Core Curriculum (OCC) (Oklahoma State Department of Education: 2015 School Law Book, 2015). Consequently, these legislative actions that establish the “core” or “subjects” in the public school system concurrently establish definitions that provide structures for socially formed constructs pertaining to student achievement and therefore claims to intelligence. Although Gardner (1999) explains that intelligence is not the same as

a domain or a discipline [i.e. core class] there are perceived social ties to domains and disciplines as expressed by Feldhusen (1986).

Perceptions of intelligence are social constructs and such perceptions are tied to achievement in school subjects, which as positioned, carries connotations and social value in such perceptions. Therefore, such intelligent activity is recognizable in the context of domains, activities and courses within the public school system (Robinson, Shore, & Enersen, 2007, p. 91). Within this study “value” is understood as the valuing of academic domains, activities and courses and the achievement within them. It is important to note that this “valuing” of curricular domains, activities and courses carries social equity for students who achieve within them (Covington, 1989; Eisner, 2008; Issaieva, 2016; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

### **Art Education as Intellectual**

As a long-time art educator, it has been my experience that defining or understanding art education, in general, is not a straightforward concept. Therefore, it was important for this study to discuss how art education is essentially defined as a field of study specifically related to human intellect. “Art in education is intelligent activity” in that it is extending the learning process to something other than objective learning (Dorn, 1994, p. 178). This assertion from Charles Dorn (1994) in his book *Thinking in Art: A Philosophical Approach to Art Education*, expresses well that the “thinking” about art has more to do with thinking and aesthetics than to what most seem to allude. Even though both understandings, thinking and aesthetics, are tied to fine arts education, many fail to make this imperative multidimensional connection do to the inability of most to look through the “fun,” “crafty,” or “recreational” aspects of fine arts education and not see art as “one of the primary places

where an ecological mode of learning with emphasis on knowledge constructions occurs” (Slattery, 2013, p. 206).

Viewing art education as an intellectual study is not to diminish the multitude of benefits and significance art education has regarding a well-rounded education in the notions of recreational craft, cultural relevance, developmental necessities and historical representations. This assertion of arts as an intelligent form of study and therefore fostering intelligent individuals is meant to broaden the understandings of art education within society, culture and specifically systems of schooling. Purposely, for this study, the literature provided for an understanding of art education that complements the complexity of intelligence by extending art education as a multi-dimensional intellectual field matching similarly multi-dimensional intellectual students.

### **Student Perceptions and Self-Efficacy**

Such student perceptions of intelligence are shown to have an effect on student self-efficacy. A recent empirical study titled *Conceptions of intelligence and learning and perceptions of self-efficacy among students at the end of primary school* (Issaieva, 2016), asserts that perceptions of intelligence, or identifying oneself as being intellectual, has “causal power” on “student goals, perceptions of self-regulation and self-efficacy” (pp. 114 - 118). A further study known as the “Pygmalion effect” or “self-fulfilling prophecy” states that what is expected from or believed about a student’s ability influences how students perform and do affect student outcomes (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). With this understanding of perceptions and how they affect a student’s “self-outcomes”, a connection between the social perceptions regarding art education as not an intellectual mode of study

and therefore high achievement or talent within art education as not being a demonstration of intelligence, presented a need to further understand such constructs.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Concepts of art education, intelligence and how such concepts are being perceived by students as well as how such perceptions effects students' identity, motivation, achievement, confidence, and self-efficacy, need discourse to problematize such perceptions in order to analyze and reveal such relations in established systems of schooling. Additionally, within social constructs is the issue of the system of public schools fostering a biased environment affording limited areas of academic study, claims on intelligence and thus limiting students' claims to being "smart". Arts education in public schools is perceived as being on the outside of intellectual study and therefore artistically intelligent students' identities are being constructed within an exclusionary paradigm. This study aimed to provide insight into what these perceptions are, to analyze how such perceptions may affect students' understandings about "self", and to create a platform for further scholarship.

### **Research Questions**

From the statement of the problem, two main research questions emerge that will anchor and guide this research. The two main research questions for this study are:

1. What are artistically talented student's perceptions regarding intelligence and its relation to art talent and art education and how do these perceptions relate to academic achievement within the public school system?
2. How do artistically talented students describe themselves regarding talent and intelligence?

These two research questions target two aspects from the stated purpose of this research; a question about the “system” from which participants’ perceptions, beliefs and values are constructed and a question about “themselves” where their individualized perceptions, beliefs and values are understood. These two research questions provide for an extrinsic and intrinsic look into art education programs within public schools and the artistically intelligent students that participant in them.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate artistically talented art students’ perceptions of intelligence in relation to their talents and their willingness or unwillingness to self-identify as “smart”. This study also examines the notion of intelligence in relation to art creation and art academics as it pertains to students’ beliefs in their own abilities. This study further examined such systems of schooling that foster a bias paradigm in which a students’ claim to intelligence is restrictive through current educational practices and constructed norms.

### **Research Framework**

The approach for this study was based on an arts-based educational research (ABER) framework. As an artist/teacher/researcher, it is within the methodology of ABER that I can bring my talents and passions for the arts to my research. Barone and Eisner’s (2012) writings on arts-based educational research provide the guidance and framework in this investigation. Barone and Eisner (2012) elaborate on three criteria that one needs to give merit within the approach of arts-based educational research and around which this study is constructed. These are criteria in which to “judge” arts-based research in order to establish

“merits of research” (Barone & Eisner, 2012). These criteria are to judge the research by its illumination effect, generativity, and its incisiveness.

In this ABER approach, to judge the research by its illumination effect is to judge its ability to reveal what had not been noticed before (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 102). In this sense, arts-based research intends to provide an insight to a viewer or reviewer into a social phenomenon that is being studied through artistic and aesthetic means. This is to make the insignificant significant. In other words, its aim is to reveal what had not been noticed or needs noticing utilizing fine arts mediums, or in simpler terms, to “shed light on the phenomena explored” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 102).

Generativity in arts-based educational research, further described by Barone and Eisner (2012), is the second criteria in the application. Generativity is the ability of art based research to promote new questions (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 102). This criterion is meant to expand understanding by disrupting perceived understanding thus providing the “generativity” described. “One of the most important functions of arts-based research is that it is to raise more questions than it answers” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 102).

Thirdly, incisiveness, in arts-based educational research, is the ability for the research to focus on salient issues and questions (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Specifically, in this case, education is the focus. This focus can be determined by the achievement of validity and reliability. With validity, it is expected that arts-based educational research addresses what the inquiry intends to address via the methodology regarding aesthetics, art making and education.

Arts-based educational research accomplishes this “revealing” through providing an experience encompassing the researcher, participant, and viewer in an artistic space of

inquiry. Arts-based educational research holds the understanding that there is more to be said that can be said and more to be written that can be written.

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study have the potential to broaden the conceptual understandings regarding perceptions of intelligence in public education settings and how students identify, view and value art creation and art education within the larger social construct as well as provide further understandings into human intellect as a multi-dimensional concept from the students' view. Additionally, the data provides insight into systems of education that separate, and categorize disciplines or domains creating a bias on claims of intelligence in public schools.

### **Defining of Key Terms**

- Art education – The National Art Educators Association (NAEA) defines art education as a core subject that includes rigorous, high quality, comprehensive, sequential and authentic visual art experiences that integrates the study of aesthetics, art criticism, art history and art production, as well as provides every student opportunity to develop the global 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving. Visual arts education further provides richness and complexity to learning by engaging students in the study of artistic processes, the construction of knowledge, and critical reflection.
- Arts-based educational research (ABER) – Arts-based educational research as describe by Elliot Eisner and Tom Barone (2012) is first engaged in research utilizing artistic activity and is meant to enhance perspectives pertaining to certain human activities. Specifically, for ABER the activities are educational in character. Second



ABER is defined by the presence of certain aesthetic qualities or design elements that infuse the inquiry process and the research “text”.

- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – The *Every Student Succeeds Act* is a reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which establishes legislation for the federal government’s expanded role in funding public education through federal mandates. ESSA emphasizes the need for all students to have access to a well-rounded education that includes the arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, English and mathematics (Jones & Workman, 2016)
- Intelligence – In defining intelligence this study utilizes Gardner’s (1999) definition that intelligence is conceptualized as a bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture.
- Multiple intelligence theory – Multiple intelligence theory is a theory of intelligence that differentiates and pluralizes intelligence into specific modalities, rather than seeing intelligence as dominated by a single general ability (Gardner, 1999).
- Oklahoma core curriculum – The Oklahoma core curriculum is established under the Oklahoma School Law (2015) as being the subjects of social studies, literature, languages, the arts, mathematics and science and includes skill development in reading, writing, speaking, computing and critical thinking (pp. 338 – 340)
- Academic self-efficacy - This study elaborates on a student’s self-efficacy in regards to academics and is understood to refer to a person’s judgment of their

capability to perform a specific academic task or behavior in a given context (Bandura, 1993).

- Talent – In this study talents represent the set of abilities in relation to a specific area of human activity and can be evaluated based on proved performances on authentic tasks. Talent, within this view, is also suggested as being in relation to curriculum areas (Feldhusen, 1986, pp. 112 – 127).

### **Research Subjectivity**

This subjectivity statement is provided so that, as the primary investigator, my related experiences with the research topics are presented transparently. This statement is to illuminate any bias I may bring to this study thus contributing to the validity of the research itself. Given the research topics, it is understood in this study that as an artist/researcher/teacher, I bring personal experiences and biases to the study. As a researcher engaging in studying perceptions of intelligence, talent, and, art education, I have many life experiences that have shaped my view of each of these topics which must be bracketed in order to accurately represent individual student narratives.

As an artist, I bring a view of personal value from an insider's perspective in that I view art as a key social function for all human life. I identified as an artist at an early age and to this day continue to work as a professional artist in-between teaching and my doctoral studies.

A major part of my career has been as an art educator teaching students, as well as others about art in regards to content knowledge and process skills. In addition to teaching art knowledge and skills, I have spent my career advocating for the importance and inclusion of art education to remain a key component in public education as well as promoting art

education as an imperative intellectual field of study for everyone. My current position as a curriculum specialist for fine arts and gifted and talented further positions me to support, advocate, and study art education in public schools.

### **Assumptions**

The assumptions of this study are stated to provide a conceptual base for gauging the research findings. There were three assumptions of this study. The first assumption was that the participants will not make the connection between intelligence and talent. This assumption was based on an assumed disconnect and non-relational connections, from talented high school art students, on the concept of a talent being a manifestation of an intelligence. The second assumption was that students will not make a connection between art academics and intellectual study. The assumption was based on the “recreational” aspect of art education and assumes that participants’ perception of art education in public schools is less of an intellectual mode of study than other core curriculum fields. The third assumption was that this disconnect impacts a student’s self-perceptions of abilities and achievements through an unwillingness to identify with being a “smart” person and thusly will be evident within an analysis of their perceptions.

### **Nature of the Study**

This study was designed as a qualitative arts-based educational research (ABER) project consisting of interviews, sketch journals and participant artwork to communicate student perceptions, beliefs, and values. It was conducted in a suburban school district in Oklahoma City with participants from three different high schools. The participants were composed of advanced level art students participating in an advanced level art class with high

scores and who had been identified by their teachers as highly talented. Such a talented art student was understood to be a student having displayed skill and creativity in the visual arts.

This study aimed for students who either identify with being an artistically “talented” person or who have been identified as an artistically “talented” person. This research was qualitative in nature as it strives to explore perceptions of these students regarding experiences, values, beliefs, and phenomenon by means of a participant’s personal understandings through words and images. An analysis of discourse and visual representations regarding the research questions provided illumination and insight into the purpose of this study.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In chapter one, I introduced my interest in studying talented student's perceptions of intelligence, talent, and art education as well as to create discourse on how such perceptions may affect students' academic self-efficacy. Chapter one also discussed the background for this study and briefly its research framework. In chapter two I present a review of the literature on multiple intelligence theory as well as discuss the literature regarding key concepts for which this study is situated. These key concepts are intelligence and talent, art education in public schools, academic self-efficacy, and perceptions of achievement.

These concepts are key in that my study aims to investigate perceptions of intelligence in pluralized ways for which artistic activities can be seen as manifestations of an intelligent measure. This study further aims to meld the concepts of intelligence and talent in order to define intelligent activity within arts education as well as establish art education as a field in which intelligent behavior is demonstrated. This study

additionally, aims to highlight art education as an established part of the American public school system to juxtapose students' perceptions of intelligence with other established academic areas of study. The following is a review of literature from which the theoretical framework and key concepts are grounded.

Figure 1, titled *Literature Review Flow*, provides a visualization of the following literature review to capture, visually, the structure of this chapter and its sections and how they relate to this study.

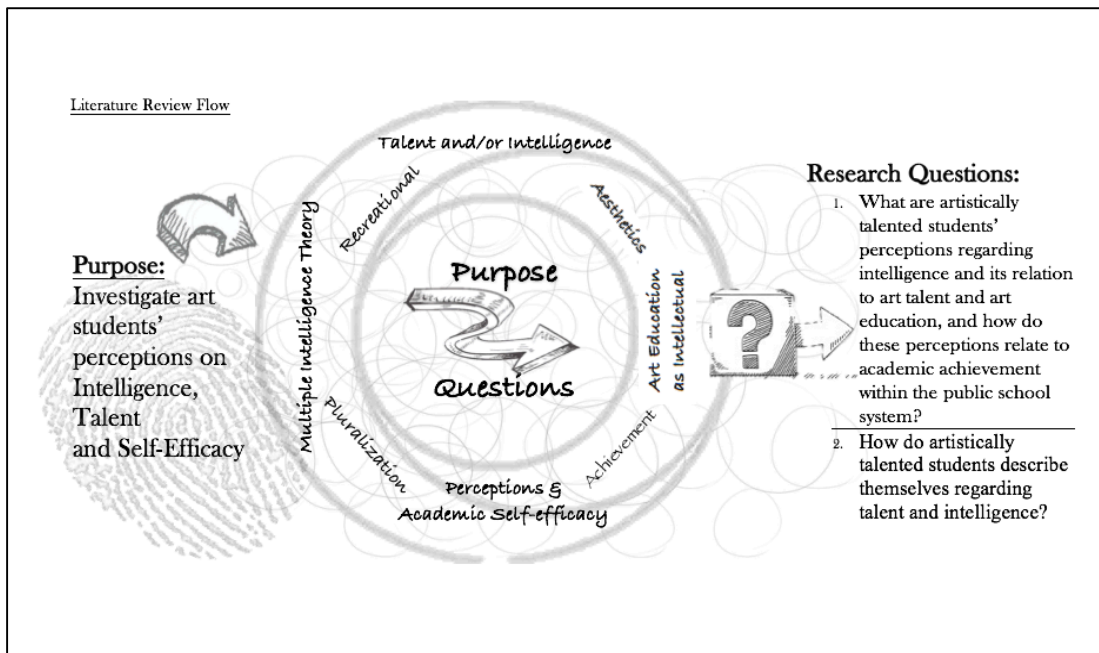


Figure 1. Literature Review Flow. This figure provides an overall visualization of the key concepts within the literature review that derive from the purpose of the study to its two fundamental questions.

Figure 1 begins with the stated purpose of this research with the backdrop of a fingerprint. The fingerprint represents the purpose of investigating artistically talented high school students' perceptions which reflect and provides insight into elements of their constructed identities. The arrow directs the purpose to the interweaving key elements of the study. This illustration provides a visualization of how the key concepts are framed in

relationship to this studies purpose through the theoretical framework, and into the subsequent research questions. The key concepts are represented by the interconnected rings from which the key concepts are coupled and ultimately, from which the research questions emerge. The research questions are illustrated to the right of the concepts as the key concepts will be utilized in addressing the research questions. The below sections elaborate on each of the represented key concepts.

### **Multiple Intelligence Theory**

This study utilizes Howard Gardner’s (1999) multiple intelligence theory to provide a grounded basis for investigating art students’ perceptions of intelligence, identity, and the system of education. Multiple intelligence theory offers a multi-faceted model of human intelligence hence providing a context for the process, and grounding the logic and criteria for which this study is situated. Gardner (1983), in his book *Frames of Mind*, claims that intelligence cannot be characterized by a single, quantifiable test score. Rather, intelligence consists of several discrete abilities. In Gardner’s (1999) later book *Intelligence Reframed*, he asserts that multiple intelligence theory conceptualizes intelligence “as a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” (Gardner, 1999, pp. 33-34).

Multiple intelligence theory provides a way to perceive individuals, student aptitudes, and systems of education in a way that allows for a critique of culturally constructed understandings and perceptions of what it means to be intelligent. It further provides a basis for problematizing current cultural norms and systems of schooling regarding fixed understandings of what it means to be “smart” in art education. Multiple

intelligence theory informs and supports the purpose of this study by allowing for a view of intelligence in ways other than that of traditional understandings especially in public schooling (Campbell & Campbell, 1999; Presseisen, 2008).

Gardner (1983) originally identified seven forms of human intelligence, adding an eighth intelligence in 1995. Although the eight intelligences remain the backbone of multiple intelligence theory, Gardner does recognize the possibility of others (Gardner, 1999). The eight intelligences are briefly described by Gardner (1999) as:

- Linguistic intelligence; the ability to think in words and use language to express and appreciate complex meanings;
- Logical-mathematical intelligence; the capacity to calculate, quantify, consider propositions and hypotheses, and carryout complex mathematical operations;
- Visual-spatial intelligence; the capacity to recognize and manipulate the patterns of spaces both wide and confined;
- Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence; the skills of manipulating objects and fine tuning physical performances;
- Musical intelligence; the capacity to perceive pitch, melody, rhythm, and tone.
- Interpersonal intelligence; the ability to understand and interact effectively with others;
- Intrapersonal intelligence; the capacity to construct an accurate perception of oneself and to use such knowledge in planning and directing one's life;



- Naturalist intelligence; the ability to observe patterns in nature, classify objectives and understand natural and human-made systems (pp. 41-52)

According to Howard Gardner's (1999) multiple intelligence theory, intelligence is a makeup of several specific individualized aptitudes that differ in every person and is tied to cultural relevance. Gardner (1999) defines intelligence as "a potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (p. 34). Specifically, Gardner's (1999) multiple intelligence theory breaks from traditional "singular" assertions of fixed intelligence to a "pluralized" understanding of intelligence (pp. 11 - 25). Such understandings of human intelligence as multiple allow for an investigation into the perceptions of multiple manifestations of intelligent behaviors, such as artistic activities, from which this study aims to analyze perceptions of intelligence.

### **Singular to Pluralized Intelligence**

The view of intelligence as singular derives from the concepts of the intelligence quotient (IQ) score and its development and use throughout the early 1900's to today (Gardner, 1999; Horn, 1989; Perkins, 1994). Within the framework of a singular or "general intelligence" stance, intelligence can be tested and measured through standardized methods. Such testing methods can, therefore, quantify a person's intelligence, resulting in an intelligence quotient (IQ) score. Such IQ testing is dominated by linguistic and logical intelligence faculties (which is greatly limiting to human capabilities) (Gardner, 1999, pp. 42 – 43). Gardner further asserts that logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligence are overemphasized in traditional models of

human intelligence (IQ), and with that overemphasis carries over to the design of teaching and curriculum in most schools (Gardner, 1993).

Howard Gardner (1999), as well as psychometrician John Horn (1989), have written in the defense of the view of multiple intelligences, as different kinds of intelligence that reside within the same individual. Psychologist Robert Sternberg (1985) has also offered a “triarchic” theory of intelligence that honors such traits as creativity, the role of experience, and practical savvy, all of which the traditional singular views of intelligence neglect. A common theme within these approaches to intelligence is that intelligence is multiple, complex and tied to types of human behavior in a multitude of ways.

### **Critics of MI Theory**

Multiple intelligence theory is not without its critics. Critics of MI theory have suggested that such a theory is an artificial “feel-good” theory or that it does not stand up to such evidentiary claims for substantiation and has the approach where every student is told or can claim to be smart (Barnett, & Williams, 2006). Barnett and Williams (2006), in their book chapter, *Is the ability to make a bacon sandwich a mark of intelligence? And other issues: Some reflections on Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences*, who write critically of multiple intelligence theory, express that “mere re-labeling may not have a permanent curative effect. Focusing on the label rather than on meaningful performances that demonstrate skill may lead children to become further disillusioned once the first blush passes.” They indicate that “the focus must be on displaying meaningful skills and competencies, not simply on feeling that one is smart” (p. 101).

Although this study does not agree with such criticism, it does acknowledge that such alternative stances to intelligence theory exist.

The theory of multiple intelligences theorizes that individuals possess eight or more relatively autonomous intelligences as discussed above. Individuals draw on these intelligences, individually and cooperatively, to create products and solve problems that are relevant to the societies in which they live (Gardner, 1993, 1999). These labels within MI theory are directly tied to meaningful performances illustrated in a broad array of human activity. As this study views intelligence, as “multiple” and manifested in many different ways, and specifically, artistically in art education classrooms, multiple intelligence theory provides for an appropriate approach to fulfilling the purpose of this study and answering its subsequent research questions.

### **Is it Talent or Intelligence?**

In regards to talent and how it positions within multiple intelligence theory and how it is viewed within this research study; talent is viewed as a component of intelligence. In his writing on intelligence, Gardner (1999) asserts that intelligence and talent should be viewed as the same and any “hierarchy among the capacities must be avoided” (p. 83). Viewing intelligence and talent as the same or talent as an intellectual behavior is further illustrated in the book by Linda Campbell and Bruce Campbell (1999) titled *Multiple intelligences and student achievement: Success stories from six schools*, in which they write on multiple intelligence education, and how “many teachers claim that multiple intelligence theory provides a language or vocabulary to perceive and articulate a broader array of student talent” (p. 5). This understanding of a broader array of demonstrations of intelligence through student talent is fundamental to connecting the

understanding of artistic talent to intelligent activities. This defining of intelligence and stance in the relationship between intelligence and talent is key in creating such discourse regarding social perceptions of intelligence, talent, and the approach to art education as an intellectual mode of study.

### **Understanding talent through the scholarship of gifted & talented education.**

This study utilizes the term artistic intelligence to denote a person who possesses the disposition in which intelligence is manifested through artistic activity. Specifically, for this study, artistic intelligence is focused on the visual arts which are demonstrated within an art education program in a public school setting and from which participants for this study will be identified. As touched on before, this study sees performances portraying intelligence and performances portraying talent to be synonymous. It is appropriate then to discuss the concept of artistic intelligence within the context of artistic talent. To illustrate this, I turn to the field of gifted and talented education, which helps provide a working definition of artistic talent as an intelligence.

Gifted and talented education is the identification of a student as being gifted and talented within a certain domain such as academics, fine arts, leadership and creative thinking (Oklahoma State Department of Education: School Law Book, 2015). This identification is rooted in theories of giftedness for which there are a multitude. However, most theories maintain a general consensus of what gifted thinking means cognitively and how to identify students as gifted and talented. Francoys Gagne' (1985) is one scholar who provides us with a general definition. In his article, "Giftedness and talent: Reexamining a reexamination of the definitions", he proclaims "the term giftedness designates the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed natural

abilities in at least one ability domain to a degree that places a child among the top 10% of his or her age peers” (Gagne’, 1985, p. 104). This “natural ability” is approached as being an innate disposition in the individual demonstrating giftedness. It is also understood that gifted children are found in all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural groups (Naglieri, Brulles & Lansdowne, 2008).

In the context of giftedness, talent is considered to be a component of giftedness or the concept of giftedness and talent are discussed as synonymous (Feldhusen, 1986; Heller, 2005; Tanenbaum, 1986; Renzulli, 1986). Although there are several scholars within this field that maintain a definition to gifted artistic talent (Feldhusen, 1986; Tanenbaum, 1986; Renzulli, 1986; Heller, 2005), this study utilizes Feldhusen’s (1986) description from his book *A conception of giftedness*, as it ties the concept of artistic talent to the relationship within curriculum areas. In explaining giftedness, Feldhusen (1986) describes its main components and talent is one of those components along with intellectual abilities, positive self-concept and achievement motivation.

Therefore, under Feldhusen’s (1986) understanding of giftedness (or artistic talent), talents represent the set of abilities in relation to a specific area of human activity, specifically artistic activity and can be evaluated based on proved performances on authentic tasks. Feldhusen, here, points to the relational aspect from which public school curricular areas provide for these performance activities and therefore respectively define social areas and demonstrations of talent, giftedness, and intelligence.

Although talent is appropriated here as identified abilities within an art classroom relating to art creation and understanding this study acknowledges that talent can be demonstrated by a multitude of human activities and that there are varying degrees and

types of talent. A highly artistically talented student can display and grow intellectually through the study of art education just as an individual with claims to no talent at all. Thinking of talent as an intelligence through an understanding of multiple intelligence theory allows for an understanding of such a spectrum of capabilities to exist. However, it is essential for this research to study students that have been identified as talented in order to explore student perceptual connections or disconnections of talent, intelligence and art education.

### **The Value, (or Not) of Art Education & Intelligence**

As elaborated previously, Gardner (1999) identifies eight intelligences. However, according to Gardner's (1999) analysis, historically "only two intelligences—linguistic and logical-mathematical—have been valued and tested for in modern secular schools" (p. 41). Other scholars have also expressed a similar concern with the inattentiveness to the arts and the arts role in education (Arnheim, 1989; Eisner, 2008, 1988; Perkins, 1994; Greene, 2001). These intelligences, linguistic and mathematical, lend themselves to core subjects of English language arts (ELA), math and the sciences and are not academically associated with art study and as a result, narrowing the view of what it means to be intelligent or "smart". Consequently, the "narrow view of intelligence" that impacts our schools limits the appreciation and the scope of the mind and the many ways in which truly intelligent behavior is displayed and understood (Eisner, 1988, p. 11).

Furthermore, for school communities to define intelligence or intellect in terms of verbal or mathematical reasoning disregards the variety of intelligences that students possess and that place those whose strongest abilities are in the arts in a disadvantaged position (Eisner, 1988, p. 11).

When evaluating multiple intelligences and student achievement, researchers Linda Campbell and Bruce Campbell (1999), further confirm the limitations of such defined intelligence by asserting that schools that maintain a traditional notion of intelligence as well as schools that identify certain skills as basic or essential, and demean others such as art education, by labeling them as frills is limiting. Narrowly defined limits of intelligent behavior make students who do not excel in linguistic or mathematical disciplines perceive their talents to be of little use (Campbell & Campbell, 1999, p. 7). Student perceptions of their abilities being of “little use” or “not of value” puts such students at a disadvantage. Such disadvantages can be illustrated through an evaluation of a student’s academic self-efficacy.

### **Academic Self-Efficacy**

The disadvantaged and devaluing as discussed above, affects a student’s academic self-efficacy in a way that limits goal setting, aspirations, and overall identity creation when perceiving themselves as competent, capable or valued. The significance here is that focusing and projecting an importance or intelligence on only certain areas in education, significantly devalues developmental, educational, and cultural core subjects that are an integral part of society, such as the arts, and thus the students that excel in such an area (Eisner, 1988; Gardner, 1990; Greene, 2001).

This understanding and valuing of multiple intelligences and therefore, multiple subjects of study as intelligent, valued study, provides students with an environment that values their abilities, their talents, and their intelligences. This view ultimately supports and enriches the multitude of studied disciplines and domains within society by

producing committed, knowledgeable and skilled individuals to work, grow and create within society.

In such a paradigm in which art education and artistic intelligence are misunderstood or devalued, a student's outlook on self-capabilities and motivation for achievement can be affected. A student's beliefs in self-efficacy can be developed through accomplishments, support from others, and perceived achievement within tasks in areas of study. In this study, art education is the focus. In an educational setting, this is more specifically known as academic self-efficacy which refers to a person's judgment of their capability to perform a specific academic task or behavior in a given context (Bandura, 1993). A student with a higher sense of academic self-efficacy tends to perform better on academic tasks than a student with a lower sense of academic self-efficacy even when the actual academic ability is similar (Baird, Scott, Dearing, & Hamill, 2009). When a student with high levels of artistic intelligence is undervalued and positions in such a locus of non-importance, or non-value then one's self-efficacy is affected and thus effects such a student's understanding of self-capabilities in academic achievements.

### **Student Perceptions of Academic Achievement**

In this study, student perceptions are understood to be an awareness tied to a student's self-concept. According to Covington (1989) in his writings titled *Self-esteem and failure in school: Analysis and policy implications*, he emphasizes that "of all the traditional dimensions of self-concept, the one that bears the highest relationship to achievement is perception of one's ability" (p. 86). In this study, a students' self-concept is Specifically tied to the value of one's abilities in context with art talent, intelligence,



and art education. Student perceptions of their abilities identified as talents, and as understood in the context of schooling, is shown to affect a student's academic self-efficacy as discussed above. Furthermore, according to Brown & Weiner (1984), students believe that their ability contributes to social status even more so than hard work, and want to attribute success to their abilities and not their efforts (pp. 146-158).

With this understanding, from Brown & Weiner (1984) a student's social value of being "intelligent" in art outweighs the social value of a student "working hard" in art when it comes to achievement. As discussed above, art education struggles to be seen as intellectual in nature within public school systems therefor limiting the achievement for students that excel within it. Covington (1989), in his book chapter, goes on to say that "perceptions of ability profoundly influence virtually all aspects of the achievement process as it unfolds in the classroom" (p. 87). Such a profound influence can then possibly extend to whole school achievement and beyond for students.

With this understanding of perceptions of abilities and their effect on students' achievement, a need becomes apparent in evaluating the value and understanding of abilities, such as artistic abilities, within the social system of schooling. Understanding artistic talent as an ability and an intelligence and art education as an intellectual mode of study within this understanding of perception, provides a locus positively impacting an artistically talented student's overall self-perceptions of ability to achieve. Therefore, this study targets students' perceptions in order to create discourse and analyze such self-concepts from a students' point of view.

## **Art Education as More Than a Recreational Craft**

The value of art education in public school instruction may seem straight-forward as art education, as illustrated above, is written into not only Federal mandates but State laws as well. These mandates and laws establish art education as part of the core or well-rounded curriculum. However, this assertion of the value of art education is more complex and undefined, and from my experiences as a public school art teacher and fine arts administrator, the understanding varies greatly from person to person. Accordingly, this variance provides for obscurity and consequently an undervaluing of art education and its purpose. As stated above, this research does not intend to claim a singular or limited purpose for art education. What this research does intend is to build discourse through which to analyze perceptions in relation to concepts of intelligence, talent and of art education.

Over the course of my career, I have heard many times that the arts enhance creative thinking and problem-solving skills thus providing important abilities for life and supports the furthering of academia in all areas conversely providing justification for art programs. I have used those descriptors myself in presenting to school boards, professional organizations and in personal conversations regarding art education. The two descriptions of what art education offers: creative thinking and problem-solving skills, are components and products of engaging in art education; however, they can be vague and devaluing when used singularly.

In the text, *Thinking in art: A philosophical approach to art education*, Charles Dorn (1994) describes art education in this way by wrapping creative thinking and problem-solving skills into a description of art education as an “intelligent activity” (pp. 1

- 13). The problem positions in the ambiguity and limitations of the descriptions above, perpetuating the miss-understanding, non-understanding and undervaluing of art education in modern society. In other words, understanding art education as recreational only.

The above description, or non-description, of art education further complicates things, especially when trying to define art education's place within an education system. Elliot Eisner (1998), an art education scholar, describes the above skills, creative thinking and problem solving, as "ancillary outcomes of arts education" (p. 10). The ancillary outcome is only one of three described as important outcomes of art education by Eisner (1998). The others being outcomes of art education and arts-related outcomes (Eisner, 1998). It is this ancillary outcome, however, that Eisner (1998) describes as the lesser of the three; yet conversely, as described above, it is the primary descriptor in understanding art education in academia.

Understanding in thinking can be directly related to fine arts education's ability to promote experiences in creative thinking, divergent thinking, critical analysis and problem-solving (Clawson & Coolbaugh, 2001; Stevens, 2000). Each of these types of "thinking" captures essential skills needed for the 21st-century student. As information is readily available students in today's world will need to be able to analyze and synthesize information contextually and creatively (Freedman, 2003). This need is framed well by the assertion by John Kao (1996) in his book, *Jamming – The art and discipline of business creativity*, in which he states,

This is the age of creativity because the subtext of global competition is increasingly about a nation's ability to mobilize its ideas, talents, and creative

organizations. A company that ignores the global creativity map is spurning an important set of strategic considerations (p. 16).

Fine arts education provides students with situations of uncertainty and disequilibrium where the only way to move forward is to extend known information or acquired skills to create something creative or “new” and to recognize patterns and develop new patterns to establish re-equilibrium or regain certainty, usually in a completed project or achieved performance. These experiences are inherent in fine arts education and are increasingly inherent in today's global community.

The experience of “understanding of thinking” is related to Eliot Eisner’s (1988) “brain to mind” concept (p. 3). In this concept, the educational process moves from filling the brain of students with knowledge to students thinking about the knowledge contextually, socially, culturally, individually, and so forth. More directly put, “schools provide the conditions through which the mental capacities of the young are brought to realization” (Eisner, 1988, p. 3). Eisner (1988) goes on to further assert that among the most important resources for this is are the “arts” (p. 3). In Howard Gardner’s (2008) book *5 Minds for the Future* he describes five minds that he perceives to be essential to thrive in the world during the years to come. The five minds indicated are the disciplined mind, the synthesizing mind, the creating mind, the respectful mind and the ethical mind. Out of these five minds, the creative mind and its importance as stated by Gardner is a correlation to the essential need for inquiry on aesthetic attainment in teaching and learning.

## **Aesthetics in Art Education**

In aesthetic understanding, students gain insight on cultural, social and individual frameworks. Although aesthetic knowledge has been represented at times as being frivolous or trivial, it is actually a critically important type of practical knowledge (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 5). This understanding of aesthetics is profound in that it educates students far beyond the institution of schooling and directly grows not only knowledgeable, but also socially and culturally literate humans. The educational philosopher Maxine Greene has written extensively on the subject.

Greene's focus on human experiences and aesthetics as being invaluable to learning is stated multiple times in her publications. As Greene explains, "the aesthetic experience is needed to stimulate the kinds of learning all hope to see" (Greene 1994, p. 495). In her book, *Variations on a Blue Guitar* (2001), Greene specifically addresses aesthetic education through perception, sensation, imagination and how it relates to knowing, understanding and feeling. Greene (2001), as in other publications, sees aesthetics as being achieved through the arts. She states, "aesthetic, of course, is an adjective used to describe or single out the mode of experience brought into being by encounters with works of art" (p. 5).

Likewise, in the book *Aesthetics and the good life*, Marcia M. Eaton (1989), a philosopher of art who regularly addresses art education, states her conviction that aesthetic activities and experiences are not only a very important aspect of living, they are part of what it means to lead a moral and rational life. Our culture is filled with a variety of forms of representation because humans have found it necessary to invent such forms to express what they want to convey. The curricula of our schools are then a

journey through which students learn the “languages” of these forms, and it is by learning these languages that they gain access to the kinds of experience that the forms make possible. Understanding of thinking and understanding of aesthetics is essential to education in school and throughout life. In schools in which such as progressive framework of curriculum exists, children throughout the educational system benefit. It is, therefore, an understanding that such a curricular experience should, and indeed must, remain in place for all students’ success both in and out of schooling.

Art education in public schools is so much more than a “low ground” recreational or an axillary activity in curriculum. As demonstrated above, it is multi-dimensional and critical to the social development of young people. It further illustrates a “logic” for which art education can be established as an intellectual field of study. Such logic is required when aiming to define an intellectual field of study that fits within society (Freedman, 2003, p. 7). Moreover, it is this logic that defines certain practices in an intellectual field that lead people to think and act in ways consistent with the education connected to the field. These ways of thinking and acting then become part of the social and historical structure that form the medium for professional practice (Bourdieu, 1993).

### **Art as an Intellectual Domain in Public Education**

The following section aims to establish art education in public schools, not concretely, but as a position from which to conduct this study. There are many approaches to art education, from subject based to cultural and to the affective, aesthetic understandings of individuals and societies (Eisner, 1988; Perkins, 1994). Therefore, the following will elaborate on art education from the federal and state levels legislatively positioning art education culturally and as a well-established subject within public

schools and through legislation. It is important in this study to position art education as a core class in that it provides a basis to illustrate a juxtaposition between perceptions of art education with other subjects, such as ELA, math, and science, as core classes in the same educational system.

For this study, I must first look at education holistically as well as politically. In short, education is defined socially through legislative actions, laws, and statutes that ultimately govern public schooling and create the “system” in which students participate and from which public views are constructed. Recently the United States enacted the *Every Student Succeeds Act* [ESSA] (2015) which articulates a “well-rounded education” as being key to student success, a term that has replaced the running definition of “core academic subjects” that was established by the *No Child Left Behind Act* [NCLB] (2001). Both past and current legislation of NCLB and ESSA, publicly established “art” as a “core” subject or part of the “well-rounded” education thus defining art education as part of the overall definition of education for schools.

At the State level in Oklahoma, as Oklahoma is where this study was conducted, Oklahoma House Bill 1017 established art as “core curriculum” and hence a legal part of the whole definition of an educational experience (Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE): School Law Book, 2015). Furthermore, Oklahoma state law requires students to complete two credits of fine arts (visual arts or music) as core curriculum for graduation or one credit if on a “college preparatory” curriculum (OSDE: School Law Book, 2015). Both the federal government and Oklahoma State statutes have established criterion for defining education pointing to the concept of a creative and transformative theory of education where there is a diverse opportunity for academic studies, including

art as a key element to student education and academic success as well as defining the curricular subjects for public schools. Indeed, in creative and transformative education, there is a spectrum of learning (Doll, 1993).

From the scientific to the aesthetic, students must be engaged in the multiple aspects that construct their lives, both socially and individually. For this to be achieved, “a curriculum that is creative and transformative must combine the scientific with the aesthetic” (Doll, 1993, p. 6). This assertion from William Doll (1993) in his book, *A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum* provides for an understanding of an educational theory that supports the diversity of intelligent individuals. Such a spectrum of learning is understood only to be provided with a multitude of experiences. Moreover, every experience lives on in further experiences and together builds a holistic educational experience (Dewey, 1938, p. 14). This combination of creative and transformative to scientific and aesthetic experiences is essential and embedded in the idea of education and its multiple core classes and is imperative to growing holistic students. This study views a “holistic education” as not only skills based in language, mathematics, and the sciences, but also to cultivate students who use creative and divergent thinking, as well as demonstrate aesthetic and cultural literacy.

Essentially, “the curriculum of the school defines for students the opportunities they will have to develop their thinking skills as individuals and gives them access to the intellectual wealth of their ever-expanding culture” (Eisner, 1988, p. 3). Barbara Presseisen, (2008) in the book *Teaching for Intelligence*, asserts that the content or subjects of schooling, such as art education being well established in public education, are also intertwined with a student’s intelligent pursuit. Such intelligent pursuits as in



multiple areas of study. As these pursuits have “long been associated with learning the disciplines of knowledge” (Presseisen, 2008, p. 5), they should be valued and encouraged and not neglected and discouraged, even from systems of non-acknowledgment.

### **Fine Arts Impact on Holistic Learning**

First, the arts “enhance the process of learning” across the curriculum and in specific ways (Jenson, 2001 p. 2). Although fundamentally, the arts should not be specifically tied to raising “other” subjects’ test scores so as to not undermine the field as auxiliary to other subjects. However, they have been shown to do just that. In order to illustrate such cross-curricular benefits, this section examines the study *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, and The Oklahoma A+ Schools Organization. Both have researched the holistic impact of the arts across school curriculum and are discussed below.

**Champions of Change.** In *Champions of Change*, the researchers of the study “Learning in and Through the Arts: Curriculum Implications” researchers from Columbia University, Teachers College conducted an investigation finding “significant relationships between rich in-school arts programs and creative, cognitive and personal competencies needed for academic success (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles, 1999 p. 36). Specific findings show that “in schools with high-arts provision, these competencies and dispositions also emerged in other subject areas when particular tasks evoked them” (Burton et al., 1999, p. 36). This study established that the arts add the kind of richness and depth to learning and instruction that is crucial to healthy development only in schools where arts experiences are promoted. This study further concluded that arts learning calls upon a constellation of capacities and dispositions which are layered and

unified in the construction of forms called the fine arts (Burton et al., 1999). This investigation asserts that many of the same competencies and dispositions established, such as in a “rich arts education experiences” extends to the students’ meaning making, insight and understandings (Burton et al., 1999, pp. 35-46).

This analysis reveals that learning in the arts is complex and multi-dimensional. It finds a set of cognitive competencies, including “elaborative and creative thinking, fluency, originality, focused perception and imagination” as aspects of fine arts learning. Burton, Horowitz & Abeles (1999) ultimately label this learning as “habits of mind” and allude to its value in cross curriculum benefits. Not that arts education directly raise achievement in other areas but that fine arts education, along with other areas of study, provides for a richer more “dynamic and iterative” educational experience (Burton et al., 1999, pp. 42 - 44).

**Oklahoma A+ Schools.** Further research conducted by the Oklahoma A+ Schools organization (OKA+) echoes such findings in a yet more direct way. The OKA+ Schools is a school reform model that utilizes the fine arts, creative thinking, experiential learning, enriched assessments and the theory of multiple intelligences to create learning opportunities for all students while also improving curriculum, infrastructure, and climate in public schools (Dell, 2010, p. 4). OKA+ Schools claims to see a “significant achievement” regarding their school sites and their reform models that are based on holistic fine arts education since 2002. OKA+ Schools uses this claim to assert that their fine arts program focus has outperformed other districts and state averages on standardized tests (OKAPLUS Schools, n.d).

These claims and assertions are also reiterated and confirmed in an independent empirical study by the Oklahoma City Public School System in which they performed an evaluative study measuring students' achievement on standardized testing regarding fine arts school reform and non-fine arts schools (Kimball, 2006). The Oklahoma City Public School system's technical memorandum titled *Achievement analyses – A+ schools vs. randomly matched OKCPS students* (Kimball, 2006) indicate a causal effect of higher achievement on the Oklahoma Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) in the areas of reading, and mathematics for OKA+ students than non-OKA+ students (p. 6 - 10). OKA+ Schools shows an observable higher achievement level than districts and state averages. A comparison chart (See Appendix A) depicts OKA+ Schools academic yearly progress (AYP) in comparison with district and state averages regarding regular academic students. The information presented in this report illustrates a continual "higher" achievement level in AYP from implementation year 2002 to year 2011 for the students participating in the A+ Schools.

An overall analysis of both the Champions of Change and the Oklahoma A+ Schools assert a direct or indirect correlation between the arts and high achievement. This correlation is again expressed through multiple aspects of fine arts education both holistically in learning and culturally through a school's social culture and climate. Either way, both studies provide for a compelling argument for the view of arts programs as an essential and beneficial aspect of the school curriculum, and a key component in one's intellectual growth.

## **An Influential Scholar**

Although I turn to many scholars throughout this study, there is one that I rely on in guiding my understanding of art education and artistic research and is worth writing about specifically. Elliot Eisner was a Professor for Stanford University and a leading scholar of arts education and arts-based educational research and influential throughout my career.

Eisner was a passionate art education advocate and actively worked throughout his career in promoting the importance of art education. Over the course of his career, Eisner promoted ways that student learning, and educational practices could benefit from the arts. An assertion Eisner wrote for the Los Angeles Times (as cited by Donald, 2014), that aligns directly with the purpose of this study is that one of the

“casualties of our preoccupation with test scores is the presence –or should I say the absence – of arts in our schools [and] when they [the arts] do appear they are usually treated as ornamental rather than substantive aspects of our children’s school experience. The arts are considered nice but not necessary” (Donald, 2014, p. 1).

Eisner maintained the necessity of art education by continually asserting the “relationship between culture and art and becoming more artistically literate as expressed above” (Donald, 2014). He also believed “children’s conceptions of what knowledge is, would be more sophisticated” (Donald, 2014). Eisner’s additional special scholarly interests are in the contributions the arts make to the development of human intelligence and the ways in which the arts help us experience and understand the world. It is because

of this shared interest and focus that I align and utilize Eisner as a key source and scholar in conducting such research.

Eisner's writings with fellow scholar Tom Barone (2012) on arts-based research (ABR) has also been influential to me as a researcher. ABR allows for me as an artist/teacher/researcher to utilize my talents and artistic intelligences in approaching research through methods of aesthetic judgments and the application of artistic criteria. ABR, through the expression of paintings and sketching, allows for an expressive form of inquiry that enables an individual to secure an empathic participation in the lives of others and in the situations studied (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This study is an arts-based educational research (ABER) study, investigating artistically talented students' perceptions of intelligence in relation to art talent and art education. This study combines traditional interview methods as well as artistic means to explore individual perceptions. As discussed in chapter one and two, this study investigates such perceptions of intelligence in relation to a student's academic self-efficacy. The methodology of ABER is complementary and appropriate to the subject, participants, and researcher of this study, as well as an appropriate way to fulfill this study's purpose and in addressing its research questions. This study sees art practice as a "creative and critical form of human engagement that can be conceptualized as research" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 19).

A combination of data in the form of dialogue through interviews and dialog through visual art creations aims to inform this research in ways that go beyond the written word to domains of understanding and discourse through aesthetics and visual

image communication. Arts-based educational research is the application of aesthetic criteria in making judgments about the character of the intended outcome (Barone & Eisner, 2012, pp. 24-25). It is with this understanding of art as research that I, as an artist/researcher/teacher investigate such perceptions.

This chapter provides an overview of the research framework through establishing ABER as a methodology, and how it is utilized within the qualitative data collection methods.

### **The Research Questions**

It is the intent of this study to investigate artistically talented students' perceptions of intelligence and, accordingly, their contextual willingness or unwillingness to self-identify as "smart". It is these perceptions that this study aims to analyze in regards to art education and student academic self-efficacy. There are two main research questions for this study; what are artistically talented student's perceptions regarding intelligence and its relation to art talent and art education and how do these perceptions relate to academic achievement within the public school system: and, how do artistically talented students describe themselves regarding talent and intelligence?

The first research question asked; what are artistically talented student's perceptions regarding intelligence and its relation to art talent and art education in regards to academic achievement within the public school system, is established as a "systems" or an extrinsic question. This "systems" question aims to provide insight from the participants' point of view, about the "system" of schooling from which their understandings of self, specifically about intelligence, talent, and their academic self-efficacy, are constructed. This research question provides for understanding about how

such a concept and construct of art education, or the study of art itself, is perceived as well as providing insight into how art education is perceived within the school system itself, such as art class in relation to other classes.

The second research question, examined how artistically talented students describe themselves regarding talent and intelligence, is established as a “themselves” question or an intrinsic question. This research question provides insight from the participant’s point of view regarding the purpose of this research in individual perceptions regarding intelligence and talent. This research question not only sets up the analysis to juxtapose perceptions from the first question concerning “system”, but also provides discourse regarding such students’ perceptions in relation with their individual academic self-efficacy.

### **Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER)**

There have been several important books published that include explorations of the role of visual research methods and the arts in qualitative research (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 2005; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Rose, 2012; Sullivan, 2005). According to Graeme Sullivan (2005), Arts Based Educational Research was influenced by John Dewey’s (1980,1934) concept of an experience and the work of Elliott Eisner (1998) at Stanford University. While the arts in research has been utilized since the 1970s, an important breakthrough came when Elliot Eisner held the first Arts-Based Research Institute for the American Educational Research Association (AERA) at Stanford University in 1993. From there Elliot Eisner and Tom Barone developed “criteria” for employing and validating such a research approach.



This research study utilizes arts-based research as a methodology as well as to guide the methods used to gather data from participants. The methodology of ABER supports the purpose of this research by including “artistic activity to enhance perspectives pertaining to certain human activities” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 95). The arts-based approach this study derives from is established in the writings of Tom Barone & Elliot Eisner (2012) in which they define ABER as “the presence of certain aesthetic qualities or design elements that infuse the inquiry process and the research “text” (p. 95). They go on to say that “although these elements are, to some degree, evident in all educational research activity, the more pronounced they are, the more the research may be characterized as arts-based” (Barone & Eisner, p. 95).

Arts-based educational research is a way for me, as an artist/researcher/teacher, to approach this investigation utilizing the “language” of these three areas I identify with. As an artist, ABER permits me to communicate, and display, through creating artwork, expressions from this investigation. ABER complements me as a researcher in that it guides the nature of the study itself as well as positions such an endeavor within the research field. As an art teacher, ABER provides me with the opportunity to share the art creating experience with my participants. ABER, to me, is a path to seeing the world, and how we understand it, differently within the approach of qualitative educational research.

ABER can be deployed in research in many different ways, and many times it is dependent on the type of medium, i.e.; arts, theater, music, that drives the arts-based research design. To help narrow this scope Barone and Eisner (2012) list genres under the ABER “umbrella” (p. 98). Genres include, narrative construction and storytelling, educational connoisseurship and criticism, and nonlinguistic forms of arts-based inquiry.

For this study, I focus on the latter, nonlinguistic forms of arts-based inquiry, or the visual arts tradition of drawing, and painting, as part of this study's data collection.

### **Criteria for Judging ABER**

Barone and Eisner provide a frame for arts-based research (ABR) within the field of education by focusing the approach to the field of education then defining criteria to guide such an approach. Barone and Eisner (2012) elaborate on three criteria that one needs in order to give merit to the approach of arts-based educational research. These are criteria in which to "judge" ABER in order to establish "merits of research" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 101-102). These criteria are to judge the artistic artifact by its' illumination effect, its generativity, and its incisiveness.

**Illumination.** In the approach by Barone and Eisner (2012), to judge by its illumination effect is to judge its ability to reveal what had not been noticed before (p. 102). In this sense, ABER intends to provide an insight to a viewer or reviewer into a social phenomenon that is being studied through artistic and aesthetic means. This is to make the insignificant significant. In other words, ABER's aim is to reveal what had not been noticed or needs noticing through art creation, or, in simpler terms, to "shed light on the phenomena explored" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 102).

**Generativity.** Generativity in ABER, described by Barone and Eisner (2012) is the second criteria in the application. Generativity is the ability for art-based research to promote new questions (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 102). This criterion is meant to expand understanding by disrupting perceived understanding thus providing the "generativity" described. As stated above "one of the most important functions of arts-

based research is that it is to raise more questions than it answers” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 102).

**Incisiveness.** Thirdly, incisiveness, with regards to ABER, is the ability for the research to focus on salient issues and questions (Barone & Eisner, 2012). This third criterion of incisiveness is aimed specifically at focusing the subject of ABER research that is “useful” within the field of education.

Although these listed criteria by Barone and Eisner (2012) offer a “system” to apply arts-based research, they stress that they cannot be applied as formulaic criteria (p. 102) nor do all the criteria need to be present for a research effort to be regarded as a species of arts-based educational research. However, in approaching ABER as a methodology, these criteria are useful in guiding this study.

The above approach of ABER as a methodology is a way in which one can advance through research utilizing the arts with respects to aesthetic communication and art making. It is important to note that the aesthetic experience is also a component of arts-based research that is often misunderstood yet seen as essential. Barone and Eisner (2012) state that,

the aesthetic design elements that work toward a powerful transmutation of feelings, thoughts, and images into an aesthetic form is capable of persuading the participant to see phenomena in new ways and to entertain questions about them that might have otherwise been left unasked. (p. 96)

Although aesthetics was not directly present in the approaches discussed above, as aesthetics is difficult to quantify, it is understood to be present in arts-based inquiry as fundamental to the methodology. The aesthetic component within ABER derives from

the art making process and experience that potentially yields understandings to the researcher, participant, and viewer. ABER as a methodology, utilized through an application regarding systematic methods with aesthetic reflections offers avenues of insight into the social phenomenon that lead to extending our understanding, specifically, into the participant's perceptions.

### **The Research Design**

The section below will illustrate this study's research design and how arts-based educational research was applied. The research design is supported by an ABER methodology through the setting in which the research will take place (an art classroom in public high schools), through the participants (artistically talented high school art students), through the visual methods employed (sketching and art creation) along with interviews, and through the data analyses of interview coding and visual discourse analysis. The research design consisted of an initial interview session directed by an interview guide (See Appendix B). During the first interview, sketch journals were initiated that were used as prompts for the second interview sessions. These sketch journals were guided by sketchbook prompts that were also listed on the interview question guide.

A second arts-based interview took place to discuss the participants' sketchbook images they had gathered and created along with the concepts behind them. The second interview also discussed and initiated the artwork for the final interview. Finally, a third interview was conducted during which the participants presented their completed artwork.

Analysis of the data consisted of values coding of the text and description coding along with visual discourse analysis for the sketchbook images and the artwork created. From the analysis process, codes were utilized and grouped into categories. Categories were then analyzed and synthesized into major themes.

A visualization of this study’s research design is illustrated in Figure 2 titled graphic of research design. Figure 2 shows the linear progression of the data collecting process from the context to the analysis plan. This illustration provides a visualization of the overview of the research design and lists the components of the research which are described below. The graphic of the research design (Figure 2) begins with listing the context, and the participants then illustrates the move to the data collection phase that involved interviews, sketch journals, and art creation. From the triad of data collection methods, the sequence of interview progression and their subsequent methods are illustrated. From the data collection process, the data analysis strategies are established in values coding, descriptive coding, and visual discourse analysis. Thus, Figure 2

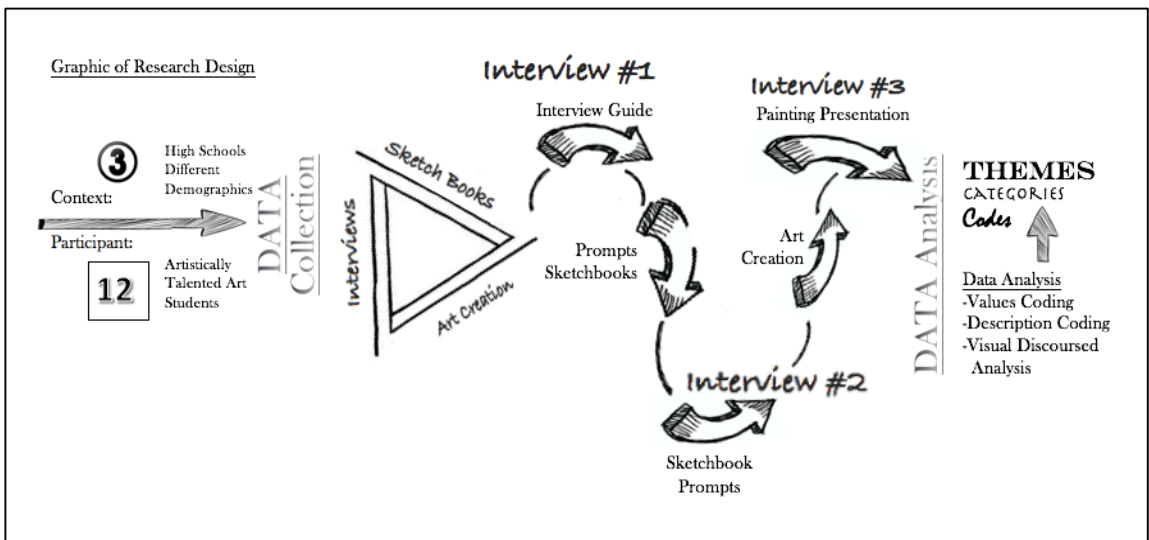


Figure 2. Graphic of Research Design. This Figure illustrates the flow of the research design process for this study. This Figure depicts each step in the research and how it pertains to the holistic design model.

visually depicts this studies research design. Below is an overview of each of the illustrated research design components.

### **Context of Study**

The setting for this study took place in a large Oklahoma urban district. Participants were chosen from three different public high schools within the district. The class setting was advanced art classes ranging from art II to the advanced placement (AP) studio art class. Within each class, students are engaged in art making and art critique. Such classes as advanced studio art classes focus on students' individual artistic styles, methods, and interests in art creation.

In this environment, students are encouraged to explore art in terms of communication and meaning making. As explained by the College Board, advanced studio art classes “are expected to demonstrate such competencies in this class as critical analysis, evidence-based decision-making, articulation of design elements and principles, systematic investigation of formal and conceptual aspects of art making, and an incorporation of expressive qualities in art making” (AP Studio Art: 2-Dimensional Design, 3-Dimensional design and Drawing, 2014). Such advanced art classes provide a suitable context to investigate perceptions of intelligence in relation to art talent and art education. Such a context further complements the methodology of arts-based educational research for which this study employs.

The demographics of the three sites for which this research was conducted and for which the participants of this study were located are described below by their socio-economics or poverty percentage as reported through free and reduced lunch programs at each site and their racial diversity. The following information is representative at the time

of this research during the 2016 -2017 school year. Site A's poverty percentage is at 65.7% and their racial diversity sets at 36.0% White, 25.2% Hispanic, 24.5% Black and 13.9% Other ("Public-schools.startclass", n.d.a); Site B's poverty percentage is at 77.2% and the their racial diversity sets at 32.7% White, 36.0% Hispanic, 20.4% Black and 10.9% Other ("Public-schools.startclass", n.d.b); and Site C's poverty percentage is at 41.9% and their racial diversity sets at 44.5% White, 8.1% Hispanic, 31.9% Black, and 15.5% Other ("Public-schools.startclass", n.d.c). The above information provide insight into each high school regarding its socioeconomic and racial diversity. Sites A and B are shown to be similar in their diversity while site C has the lowest. Site C also has the lowest percentage of reported poverty at 41.9%. Site B reports the highest percentage of poverty at 77.2% with a 35.3% poverty rate higher than site C. Site A reports a slightly lower poverty percentile than site B at 65.7% which is 23.8% higher than site C.

### **Research Participants**

This study employed purposeful sampling in choosing the participants. As this study has a central concern to originate insight from perceptions of participants regarding intelligence, art talent, art education, and self-efficacy, it was important to study participants that could provide an "interior" prospective. Purposeful sampling is a way of studying information-rich cases yielding insights and in-depth understanding (Patton, 2002, p. 230). The participants were identified by their classroom art teachers as artistically talented art students who were actively participating in an advanced level studio art class ranging from art II to advanced placement art. These advanced level art classes have students participating from the Sophomore (grade 10th) level to the Senior (grade 12th) level. The participants have demonstrated talent through evaluations and

observations from certified art teachers as well as have maintained high scores in their respective art classes. Participants were chosen using these criteria to establish a sample that was identified as talented, providing a sample of participants who self-identify or are identified as talented art students.

It was important for the participants to self-identify or be identified as being a talented art student as it is the connections between intelligence, art education and academic self-efficacy with the concept of being an artistically talented student that this study aimed to investigate. Like myself, from my experiences as a high school student, I identified with being a talented art student and was identified by others as talented, but maintained a perception that intelligence had nothing to do with my talent. Although these participants have a support system in their current high school to encourage and acknowledge their talents, in contrast to my own experience, this purposeful sampling of students provided for insight into the research questions that this study aimed to illuminate.

The opportunities provided for these participants and the availability of art study and advanced art study adds to the discourse through the context of the participants. It is understood in the research that the availability and opportunities in art study is an influential element of the research discourse. It is also postulated that such a context provides an opportunity to analyze perceptions regarding the research purpose, in perceptions of intelligence and talent, within a seemingly attentive environment for art academics and the students that participate in them.

**The visual nature of the participant.** It is important to note the visual nature of the participants in this study. Each participant was identified based on criteria regarding



their display of talent in an advanced art class, participation in the advanced art class and their demonstrated high achievement also within the advanced art class. Through these criteria, within this study, participants were then identified as being artistically intelligent. As discussed above artistic intelligence is the display of artistic talent that derives from a mixture of talents, aptitudes, and dispositions that, when applied in culturally constructed academic settings, manifests as an intelligence within a specific domain, such as art education. Equally, visual intelligence signifies an ability to see things in the mind's eye. It is an ability of visual perceptions that surrounds us and creates an artistic view of the world. Visual intelligence signifies a disposition of such individuals that utilize color, line, form and space sensibilities in themselves. According to Gardner (1983), people who possess visual intelligence are great collectors, who satisfy their need for visual impulses. They encircle themselves with images of their own imagination, as well as with objects that enchant them. The influence of the visual world and thus visual communication to them is indisputable.

The Methodology of ABER complements the visual nature of this study's participants. As they have been identified as having the disposition of visual intelligence which translates to their art creation. Such visual communicators operate within the dominant paradigm of visual communication (Nadrljanski, Buzasi & Zokic, 2009) and relying only on verbal interviews would deny such participants their full range of communication.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

The initial data gathering consisted of a beginning interview of the selected participants which included an initiation of their sketching journals. The sketch journals

were completed by the participant to collect preliminary visual information regarding the initial interview and for use as a prompt for the second interview. The second interview utilized the sketch journals as prompts to elicit discourse regarding the research topics and was used to initiate the art creation for the final interview. The final interview utilized the artwork created to elicit further dialogue with the participants.

The visual data, such as the participants' sketch journals and artwork, along with interview data, provided a thick, rich, multi-dimensional locus of communication where participants could express themselves, as well as say the un-sayable or express the indescribable (Rose, 2012). From small issues to major opinions, the "visual" artifact created by "people" or participants within societal constructs and norms holds an inexhaustible amount of data for analysis.

This artifact analysis lends itself to arts-based research as a method of qualitative inquiry. These methods are appropriate for an arts-based methodology and arts-based research, as guided by Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner (2012) in the publication titled *Arts based research* looks for how art "infuses the inquiry process and the research 'text'" (p. 95). As described above, the data collection will have three specific methods: interviewing, personal sketch journals, and art creation (drawing and painting). The following is an explanation of each of the three data collection methods.

**Interviews.** The first form of data collected from students was interviews. An interview, in this qualitative research, is approached as a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to this research study (deMarrais, 2004). These questions ask participants for their thoughts, opinions, perspectives, or descriptions of specific experiences (deMarrais, 2004). However, as true

to this study, the interview process is not simply an exchange of questions and answers by the researcher and participant, but “a form of discourse where the researcher and participant engage in co-constructing meaning within a particular type of social relationship” (Micsler, 1986, p. 35).

During the interview, an interview guide was utilized which listed questions and topics to be explored in the course of the interview (Patton, 2002). An interview guide was used to ensure that the same basic line of inquiry is pursued with each participant. The guide provided topics or subjects pertaining to the research questions but also allowed the interviewer to explore, probe, and ask questions that would illuminate perceptions on the topics and subject matter (Patton, 2002). Employing an interview guide and utilizing interviews within this research allowed for the creation and documentation of dialogue specifically pertaining to the purpose of this study. Interview sessions took place three times in this research; once during the initiation of the study, once with the sketch journals as a prompt and once at the end of an interview focused on creating the dialogue from participants created works of art.

**The interview questions.** The interview questions for this study were aimed at providing participants with a directed path to discussing their perceptions regarding talent, intelligence, self-efficacy and art education. To accomplish this, the study utilized three question types: background questions, feelings questions and opinion and values questions (Patton, 2002). Background questions are used to identify “characteristics” of the participants which helped this research position the participant in relation to other people (Patton, 2002, p. 351). The feeling questions aimed “at eliciting emotions or feeling responses of people to their experiences and thoughts” (Patton, 2002, p. 350).

Opinion questions were the third set of question type used to understand the “cognitive and interpretive process of people asking about opinions, judgments, and values – ‘head stuff’” (Patton, 2002, p. 350). With each of these questions, this interview process strived for an “open questions” nature to elicit the participant’s categorical worldviews (Patton, 2002, p. 351).

The research questions were also designed to probe perceptions of the research topics in two ways. The same question concepts were asked in both the feeling questions and the opinion and values questions. The first questions, pertaining to feelings, were targeted to participant self-perceptions regarding the research topics, and the second, questions, concerning opinions and values, were targeted, also regarding the research topics but from an “others” point of view. This design allowed for an analysis through comparing and contrasting perceptions regarding the same topics.

**Sketch journals.** Sketch journals were provided to the participants to document thoughts the participants may want to express in-between meetings through writing and sketching, as well as provide a discussion prompt for interview two. As creating art is a thoughtful and often time-consuming endeavor, allowing participants time to think and sketch responses regarding the initial interview allows time for a thoughtful visual dialogue to be expressed. Although sketch drawing is a form of art, a sketch journal holds the purpose for concept exploration both visually and through written discourse and is often utilized as a starting point in other, more involved, art creations.

Sketch journals also aid the participants in beginning to think about the research questions visually initiating the process of representing their perceptions in works of art. Sketch journals in this study provided written and visual representations of participant

responses during the thinking process to create the final artwork. To elicit such inquiry, a list of sketching prompts utilizing the “projection technique” (Patton, 2002, pp. 394 – 396) were provided to the participants consisting of thought-provoking words and phrases directing participants to engage in the purpose of the research intent.

The general principle here is to have the participants react to something other than interview questions, such as individual words or phrases to provide insight into the participants’ perceptions (Patton, 2002). Figure 2 represents the sketching prompts that were provided to each participant before interview two. The sketchbook prompts are at the bottom of the interview guide and both the interview guide and the sketchbook prompts were purposely kept together to provide a single document for participant review. This single document allowed for participants to reflect not only on the sketchbook prompts but also on the initial interview questions.

**Art creation as research.** The above view by Micshler (1986), on interviews, is extended in this study to the arts-based element of art creation for data collection. Communication is a complex multi-dimensional thing and restricting narrative to simply “words” restricts the methods themselves in capturing multiple modes of social meaning-making. Art creation as data informed this research in ways that words could not. The completed artwork provided a final visual artistic creation to express the participants’ perceptions, values, and beliefs regarding the research questions. The final interview consisted of the participants presenting their artwork to describe the meaning behind them.

As the sketch journals had the purpose to gather ideas and information, concurrently the artwork creation holds the purpose for participants to solidify their voice

through an involved art making process in a creative and aesthetic way. Graeme Sullivan (2002) in her book chapter titled *Painting as Research* elaborates on the idea of painting or art creating in research as a “noun and a verb” (p. 341). As a noun, a painting or piece of artwork is representative of an object that has a creative and material form with a host of interpretive outcomes it can generate. Research painting and art creation as a verb is the sense of being actively engaged in creating the work of art. Graeme Sullivan (2002) goes on to say that from this noun and verb view, “distinctions between themes such as [artist], object, and viewer melt away as the circumstance or setting influences the meanings invoked in artistic efforts and encounters” (p. 341). Moreover, that artwork “whether seen as process or product, the practice of [creating art] can be argued to be a robust form of human engagement that has the potential to reveal new insights and understandings” (p. 341). Such a method of data collection is not just data collection itself but interaction and involvement within the research questions themselves.

Such a triangulation of data, interviews, sketch journals and art creation provides for a rich, thick dialogue with participants to document and analyze perceptions. It is not the intent of arts-based research, nor this study, to provide an investigation that is generalizable as “ABER is not aimed toward a quest for certainty” its purpose “may instead be described as the enhancement of perspectives” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 96).

### **Artist/Researcher/Teacher**

As an artist, researcher, and teacher, I believe that visual artistic expressions can communicate beyond the fields of “text”. Visual communication and expression provides for a rich thick dialogue that provides multiple dimensions to the overall human discourse. From small issues to major opinions the “visual” artifact or artwork created by the

participants, within societal constructs and norms, holds an inexhaustible amount of data I intended to explore to enrich this research endeavor. This type of data analysis and creation lends itself to ABER as a method within qualitative research. As an artist, I employ myself as one that understands the process in the creation of art. Its formal qualities such as its lines, shapes, forms, colors, textures, compositions and imagery as well as its informal qualities such as metaphors, meanings, and expressions, are understood to all be forms of discourse.

As a researcher, I aim to utilize qualitative methods, in interview and arts-based, to investigate social questions such as the questions that drive the purpose of this study. As a teacher, intertwined in the field of education, I am focused on the system of education as well as the students and the art programs that exist within the system. I enter this research with an acknowledgment and an understanding of my positioning, and the influence I have, as the primary investigator, on this study. “There is an acknowledgment that art practice is not only a personal pursuit but also a public process that can change the way we understand things” (Sullivan, 2006, p. 31).

### **The Researcher’s Role**

Reflexivity in research is meant to acknowledge the presence of the researcher within the research context, “marking their interference, their participation, their desire” (Creswell, 2003). It is also acknowledged that my personal background as the primary investigator, as an artist/researcher/teacher can also be a positive and useful contribution to the research (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2000). My perceptions regarding the purpose of this study have been shaped by my personal experiences as an “art kid” in public schools, an “art student” in college, an “art teacher” in the public school system, a

fine arts administrator in the public school system, and now a researcher. Due to my previous experience, it is acknowledged that I bring with me certain biases to this study. These biases shape the way I view and understand the data I collect and the way I interpret the participants' perceptions. My experiences as the "art kid" have placed me on the "outskirts" of "academics" within my public school experience as a student. As an "art student" in college I experienced being placed in "academics" because of my art talents and as an art teacher and a fine arts administrator, I witnessed the same for others. It is through these experiences that I engage in this research study and it is these experiences that, I acknowledge, shape my overall interpretation of the research.

### **Data Collection Implementation**

Implementing the data collection for this study was multi-stepped. The data collection process for this study took place over a two-month period. As discussed above the data collection consisted of interviews, sketch journals, and art creation. Approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was received in December of 2016 (see Appendix C for IRB approval letter). The data collection process began the next Spring semester, January 2017. Permission was received from district administration as well as each of the three high school head principals during the IRB application process. This allowed for immediate implementation as soon as IRB approval was granted. In beginning the data collection process, an initial meeting was set up with each site's advanced art teacher. Permission and disclosure forms were used to inform each site teacher participating in this research, the purpose and expectations of this research study (see Appendix D for teacher recruitment letter). It was during this first meeting that a discussion and the choosing of participants took place. Each site art



teacher provided a list of students whom they identified as being highly talented as well as actively participating in and advanced art class and who are currently scoring very high. From the lists of possible participants, each student was solicited for participation.

Once a student indicated interest in participation, contact with parents or guardians was made. Full disclosure was made to the parents or guardians as to the purpose, nature, and risks of this study through consent forms (see Appendix E for parent or guardian consent forms). Once consent forms were collected from the parents or guardians assent forms were presented to the participants explaining the purpose, nature, and risks of this study (see Appendix F for participant assent forms). Assent forms were used due to the participants' age range from age 16 to age 18. At these ages, students are cognizant of their participation, and therefore participant assent is appropriate.

Out of the three sites, 14 participants were identified and agreed to participate. Two participants; however, withdrew due to time constraints before the first round of interviews leaving 12 participants in the study. High school “A” had three participants, high school “B” also had three participants and high school “C” had six participants. Scheduling and implementation of the first round of interviews began in January and were conducted at each high school site during the participant’s art class time. Each interview lasted 15 to 30 minutes. After the initial interview, participants were given a sketchbook to work in, responding to the sketchbook prompts, for the next two weeks. The second round of interviews was conducted two weeks later again at each site and lasted ten to 15 minutes. During this second round of interviews, participants were given either a canvas or bristle board for creating their artwork for the final round of interviews. Arrangements were made with each art teacher on the materials that the participants used

during the art making process. Each participant was given three to four weeks to complete their artwork. Final interviews were then scheduled and conducted at each site. The third interview consisted of discussions on the artwork the participants created and lasted ten to 15 minutes each.

Each interview session was recorded, and throughout the process of data collection, transcription of the interview data was an on-going endeavor. Visual data was also collected throughout the process. The analysis process started once data had begun to be collected, through “values” and “descriptive” coding (Saldana, 2013). Below is an explanation of the data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The guiding analysis strategy for this study is discourse analysis. According to Gillian Rose (2012) in her book *Visual Methodologies*, discourse is referred to “groups of statements that structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking” (p. 190). Furthermore, Gillian Rose (2012) explains that discourse, fundamentally, “is a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it” (Rose, 2012, p. 190). From this explanation of discourse Rose (2012) provides for an approach to analysis based on the discourse from the text and the visual image (pp. 189 – 226). Discourse analysis is aligned with the purpose of this research in that it approaches such discourses through the lens that human subjects are produced through such discourses, and a sense of our self is made through the operation of discourse (Rose, 2012).

Additionally, the diversity of forms through which a discourse can be articulated, such as written text and visual images means that “intertextuality” is important to

understanding such discourse (Rose, 2012, p. 191). Intertextuality refers to “the way that the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on the one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts” (Rose, 2012, p. 191). The aspect of intertextuality in discourse analysis provides for a melding of analysis with this study’s purpose in that it allows this data analysis a pathway to insight from the data collection methods both from the text, the image and a mixture of the two.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

This study’s data analysis plan consists of qualitative interview coding using values coding along with visual analysis using descriptive coding as described by Johnny Saldana (2013). Qualitative coding “symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2013, p. 3). This study also utilized visual discourse analysis through strategic questioning guided by Gillian Rose (2012). Each of the data analysis processes were evaluated collectively and by grouping like codes and descriptions together to identify categories. The categories were then synthesized to express the major themes that emerged from the data corpus. An elaboration of the strategies used for the data analysis follows.

**Values coding.** In beginning the analysis of the interview data, this study employed a values coding strategy. Johnny Saldana (2013) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, provided guidance in this analysis process regarding values coding. Coding of the data collected happened in multiple stages over time. The initial coding process was “values coding” of the interview text. “Values coding” is a system of

analysis developed to code qualitative data that “reflects participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives of world-views” (Saldana, 2013, p. 111).

**Descriptive coding.** Descriptive coding was used to analyze the data’s basic topics. Descriptive coding “summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun the basic topics of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldana, 2013, p. 88). It is important to note that descriptive coding is about the topic that is discussed and not just an abbreviation of the content (Tesch, 1990). Descriptive coding, in this study, was used with the artistic artifacts collected. Coding visual data is just as applicable as coding written text (Gee, 2011; Rose, 2012; Saldana, 2013). From this coding process researcher descriptions from the descriptive coding process, were juxtaposed with interview text to further analyze participant meanings and perceptions. Descriptive coding was an initial approach in analyzing and interpreting participants’ sketch journals and artwork. The second approach was through strategic questioning guided by a visual discourse analysis strategy.

**Visual discourse analysis.** Visual discourse analysis pays attention to the notions of discourse through a variety of visual images and verbal text (Rose, 2012). Visual discourse analysis “can also be used to explore how images construct specific views of the social world” (Rose, 2012). This analysis strategy aided in investigating and illuminating how social differences are constructed and perpetuated as well as to theorize on such differences and develop questions to critique such constructions.

In employing visual discourse analysis, this study utilized strategic questioning to frame and systematically investigate the sketch journals and artwork. According to Saldana (2013), “despite some pre-existing coding frameworks for visual representation,

[he feels] the best approach to analyzing visual data is a holistic, interpretive lens guided by intuitive inquiry and strategic questions” (p. 52). For this study, an intuitive inquiry was maintaining a focus on the research questions and strategic questioning such as how images are given specific meanings as well as looking at meaningful clusters of images to illuminate participants’ production of “meaning” through visual representations (Rose, 2012).

### **Validating the Data**

Choosing these types of data collection methods centers around the purpose and methodology of this study in that the interview process was followed by sketch journals created by the participants, then the development of artwork to express perceptions related to the research question. This also provided for three data collection points and three points for reliability investigation triangulation. “Data Source triangulation” offered the discourse created from this study a “strategy for reducing systematic bias and distortion during data analysis” (Patton, 2002, p. 563).

Members checks were also used after transcribing the interview and artifact data to authenticate the data further and validate the interpretations (Bloor, 1983; Creswell, 2003). Members checks allowed for the data collected, transcribed and interpreted to be corroborated with the participant as this study aimed to maintain a participative and dialogical undertaking. The member checking process was conducted with each participant in a five to ten-minute interview where the participant was given the opportunity to give feedback on the data. Each participant indicated agreement with the data and initialed for confirmation.

This study's methodology of arts-based educational research also carries with it criteria to judge the research to establish merit (Barone & Eisner, 2012). The criteria were to judge the research by its ability to "illuminate" insight into the purpose of the study, its ability to promote new questions or its "generativity" and its "incisiveness" or its ability to focus on salient issues (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study is sensitive to the many ethical issues that come with studies involving young students and the social sciences. Specific concerns this study acknowledges are that of the possibility of participants not only developing a negative outlook on the educational system, but also themselves when discussing social issues such as the issues this study aims to illuminate. Further consideration as to a teacher/researcher's unique position as influential over students will need to be taken. Care will need to be taken to ensure research interactions of this nature (teacher, student, researcher) are positive in nature. There is also a risk of participants being identified by their peers as participating in a study which may direct undue attention to the participants. To address such issues, Priscilla Alderson and Virginia Morrow (2011) have organized a framework addressing three ethics topics for assessing research for thoughtful and ethical implementation, which are duties, rights and harm-benefit (p. 17).

Duties, in the ethical framework, refers to concepts or questions of fairness, respect for autonomy and addresses if the research was harmful or useless. Rights refer to protection of participants, informed consent, and non-interference. Harm-benefit refers to how researchers can reduce or prevent harm and increase the chance of benefit from the research. Alderson and Morrow (2011) further provide for a "risk, cost, harm

and benefit assessment checklist in which the above framework elements are represented in a list of questions, a researcher would need to address, to ensure each element of the framework is taken into consideration” (p. 25). Such questions from this list that this research will address are: exactly what will participants be asked to do, what direct risks might there be to them, and how are risks reduced (Alderson & Morrow, 2011, p. 25)? In addressing such concerns, communication to the participants will be through a consent letter.

This study will present and verbally explain an assent letter for each participant and a consent letter to the parent/guardian which explicitly outlines the subject’s rights, including the purpose of the study, participation expectations, confidentiality, risk assessment and the right to cease participation at any time without penalty. By signing the consent letter, individuals agree to participate in the study. Participants will be given a copy of the consent letter, which will include contact information.

Ethical issues regarding visual materials have a further concern in appropriate ethical research. According to Gillian Rose (2012), there are three main issues that must be addressed when working with visual materials in social research. These three criteria deal with consent, anonymity, and copyright.

Consent is when the participants are aware of what the research is about, what will be expected of the participants and what the intention is with the research results. The participants then should explicitly agree to participate. This is addressed in this study through the assent and consent process.

As for anonymity, this is the understanding that no participant will be identified within the research. This is a major concern with visual research as many times visual

research represents images of the participants through photography, video or, as in this study, sketching, and art creation (Rose, 2012, p. 337). Within this study, care was taken to represent de-identified data including the visual data collected.

The third criteria concern is regarding copyright laws. Copyright law becomes a part of the ethical considerations when dealing with visual research and ownership of images. It is possible to utilize existing imagery to convey new ideas; however, protected imagery would need to be addressed as “protected”. As this study stresses the use of original imagery, it is understood that art forms such as mixed media collage, photomontage, and mixed media are valid and valuable mediums of art creation.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study addressed conditions that the researcher cannot control. This study is limited by its geographical location, time constraints and a limited number of participants. It is understood that within this study no interpretive account can ever directly or completely capture lived experience (Schwandt, 2007). It is also understood that the findings of this study could be subject to other interpretations (Creswall, 2003). Moreover, all attempts to describe and explain are always at best incomplete, reductive, and insufficient, and at worst are leading, perverse, fraudulent and deceptive (Schwandt, 2007). The methodology, method, and analysis maintain this and are cognizant of this crisis as perceptions, memories, and experiences are never truly known.



## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND DATA PRESENTATION

Discussion regarding the understanding of the value and purpose of art education in the public school system continues in professional and social communities. How we, as a society, define and value arts education is reflected in the students that are currently engaged in participating in art education. Conversely, with a disconnect in the understanding of the cultural and social value and purpose of art education prolific in the public school system, students identifying and being identified as artistically talented have a problematic time constructing self-understandings about their talent, intelligence and capabilities within both a social and academic construct.

The purpose of this study was to investigate artistically talented student's perceptions of intelligence, about their talent and thus, their contextual willingness or unwillingness to self-identify as "smart". This study further examines students' understandings of the value and purpose of art education for themselves, as well as how they perceive the value of art education from others. This study examined perceptions

from twelve students from three different high schools, all of which were participating in an advanced art class and identified by their art teacher as a talented art student.

The following chapter will provide an explanation of the research analysis conducted along with a report of the findings. This chapter will also discuss the characteristics of the participants and the characteristics of the school sites that participated as well as provide a description of the data collected. This chapter will further give an explanation of the coding methods used in the analysis process in identifying categories which then were synthesized into themes. This chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

### **Research Questions**

During the investigation process, the two main research questions remained the focus of the inquiry. The research questions are: what are artistically talented student's perceptions regarding intelligence and its relation to art talent and art education and how do these perceptions relate to academic achievement within the public school system? And; how do artistically talented students describe themselves regarding talent and intelligence?

These two research questions targeted two aspects from the stated purpose of this research; a question about "themselves" how their individualized perceptions, and opinions reflect their values, beliefs, and attitudes, as well as a question about the "system" from which participants' perceptions, opinions, and values are constructed. These two research questions provided for an extrinsic and intrinsic look into art education programs within public schools from a students' perspective and the artistically intelligent students that develop an understanding of themselves and their world within

them. These two research questions fundamentally guided the research design and data analysis process.

### **Description and Characteristics of the Participants**

As this study's concern was to gain insight from perceptions of participants regarding intelligence, art talent, art education, and academic self-efficacy, it was important to study participants that could provide an "interior" perspective to such a system. The criteria for choosing participants were that the participants had to be identified by their art teacher as talented, which is described as a student having displayed skill and creativity in the visual arts, be participating in an advanced art class and have high scores within that class. Participants were chosen using these criteria to establish a sample that has been identified as talented art students. It was important for the participants to have been identified as talented art students as it is the connections between intelligence, art education and academic self-efficacy with the concept of being a talented student that this study aimed to investigate.

This study investigated perceptions of twelve participants from three different high schools with three or more participants from each site. Each participant was actively involved in an advanced art class ranging from Art II to Advanced Placement (AP) Art. The grade level for the participants ranged from tenth grade to twelfth grade. Three participants participated in this study from site A and site B, while site C had six students that participated. In selecting student participants each site's art teacher was solicited to identify high school students that they felt to be artistically talented. Site A identified three students, site B identified five students, and site C identified six students. However, two participants from site B had to withdraw due to time restraints. Although all three

school sites are close in attendance size, site B and C have larger art programs with four art teachers at both sites, while site A has three art teachers. Site C has the highest enrollment of advanced level studio art students of the three sites providing for more student participants from that site who were willing to participate in the study. All three site's participants were interviewed individually throughout the data collection process regarding their own perceptions. Therefore, the larger group from site C was not viewed as a factor in the data collection process.

Participants and school site characteristics are illustrated in Table 1. Each participant was given a pseudonym for de-identification purposes. Each site was also denoted by alphanumeric representations A, B, and C for de-identification purposes.

Participants from site A were all seniors (12<sup>th</sup> grade) and participating in an advanced placement (AP) art class. Site A's characteristics show a total population of 1704 students with 65 total students participating in an advanced art class, or 3.8% of the total population. Participants from site B are also seniors (12<sup>th</sup> grade) and participating in an advanced placement (AP) art class. Site B's characteristics show a total population of 1612 students with 131 total students participating in an advanced art class, or 8.1% of the total population. Participants from site C were all participating in an advanced art class ranging from art II to advanced placement (AP) art class with grades ranging from a Sophomore (10<sup>th</sup> grade), a Junior (11<sup>th</sup> grade) and Seniors (12<sup>th</sup> grade). Site C has a total population of 1746 students, with 159 total students participating in an advanced art class, or 9.1% of the total population.

With twice as many participants from site C than A or B, this study acknowledges that there are dynamics that are a part of student perceptions' regarding school

Table 1. *Participants and Site Characteristics*

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Type of Class</i>	<i>School Site Characteristics</i>
<i>Emma</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	Site A: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population Total = 1704</li> <li>• # of Art Teachers 3</li> <li>• # of Advanced Level Art Classes = 5</li> <li>• # of Students Enrolled in an Advanced Level Art Class = 65 or (3.8% of total population)</li> </ul>
<i>Olivia</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	
<i>Noah</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	
<i>Mason</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	Site B: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population Total = 1612</li> <li>• # of Art Teachers 4</li> <li>• # of Advanced Level Art Classes = 7</li> <li>• # of Students Enrolled in an Advanced Level Art Class = 131 or (8.1% of total population)</li> </ul>
<i>Oliver</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	
<i>Carter</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	
<i>Ava</i>	11	Art II	Site C: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population Total = 1746</li> <li>• # of Art Teachers 4</li> <li>• # of Advanced Level Art Classes = 8</li> <li>• # of Students Enrolled in an Advanced Level Art Class = 159 or (9.1% of total population)</li> </ul>
<i>Mila</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	
<i>Sophia</i>	12	Art III	
<i>Ella</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	
<i>Emily</i>	12	Advanced Placement (AP) Art	
<i>Leah</i>	10	Art II	

characteristics, yet with the main purpose of this study being to investigate artistically talented student perceptions, the larger sample of participants, rather than three per site, was selected.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

#### **Data Collection (Interviews and Artwork)**

In gathering data for this study both interviews and artistic visual data were collected at the participants' school sites. Each interview was conducted during the participants' individual class times for three sessions lasting ten to thirty minutes each to facilitate the least amount of disruption to the participants' lives outside of school. Each participant was also allowed class time to sketch and create artwork for this study. A

sketchbook and either a canvas board or bristle board to create their art, depending on the medium they chose to use (paint, pencil, ink, and charcoal), was given to each participant. The timeframe for each participant to complete phase two (sketchbooks) and phase three (art creation) was two to three weeks per phase. Each interview phase was conducted as individual interview sessions.

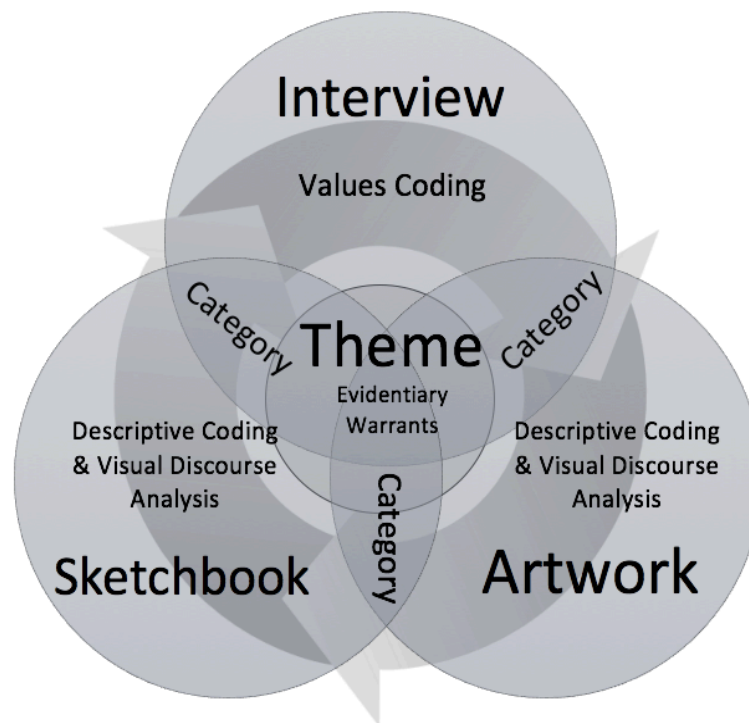
During phase one of the interview process, eleven open-ended questions were asked to all interviewees from an interview guide. The questions are grouped by the information they addressed: background, questions (one through four): feelings, questions (five through seven): and opinion and values, questions (eight through eleven) (Patton, 2002).

Each interview was later transcribed for analysis. In phase two, the sketchbook phase, participants used “sketchbook prompts” listed on the interview guide to conceptually guide their visual exploration of the topics.

Each sketchbook image was photographed and labeled for further analysis. Also during phase two, interviews were conducted to record the student’s explanation and analysis of their sketchbook images. Phase two was also transcribed and used in the analysis of the sketchbook images. Phase three was the art creation phase. For phase three, each participant was encouraged to reflect on the interview guide questions and the sketchbook prompts as well as their sketchbook images in thinking about how they want to construct their final artwork. Each artwork created in phase three was photographed and labeled for analysis. The data consisted of 161 pages of transcribed interviews and 47 images of sketches and artwork.

## The Analysis Process (Text and Visual)

The particular systematic strategy for this discourse analysis regarding both text and artistic images included both coding and visual discourse analysis. The coding method was used with both text and the art images created by the participants to identify categories from the data to address the research questions (Rose, 2012; Saldana, 2013). The interview data were coded using values coding, and the sketchbooks and artwork were coded using descriptive coding. The sketchbooks and artwork were further analyzed using strategic questioning guided by visual discourse analysis (Rose, 2012). Figure 3 provides an illustration of the analysis process. Figure 3 depicts three points of data



*Figure 3.* Data Analysis Process. Illustration of the analysis process in support of theme development

collection: interview, sketchbooks, and artwork, as well as the analysis process for each one in establishing codes that merged into categories. The categories were then synthesized into themes. Each theme is discussed below through the presentation of evidentiary warrants that have emerged from the data. Evidentiary warrants aided in confirming the theming process by providing a data corpus to validate the theme assertions (Ericson, 1988).

**Coding and visual discourse analysis.** The coding analysis process consisted of values coding with the interview text and descriptive coding of the participant's sketchbooks and artistic images (Rose, 2012; Saldana, 2013). The coding process aimed to identify words, short phrases or images that “symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual [art] data” (Saldana, 2013, p. 3). Values coding was used with the interview text and is understood in this study to be the process of applying “codes onto data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or world-view” (Saldana, 2013, p. 110). Descriptive coding was used to begin the analysis of the sketchbooks and artwork. Descriptive coding summarizes in a word or short phrase the basic topics in a set of qualitative data consisting of text or artifacts (Saldana, 2013, pp. 87-91). These topics were used to then categorize interpretations of the images with strategic questioning guided by a discourse analysis method (Gillian, 2012, pp. 189 – 226).

The strategy of strategic questioning for visual discourse analysis, as illustrated by Rose (2012) is to address specific analysis questions from the artwork created. Rose (2012) explains that visual discourse analysis can be used to explore how images



construct particular views of the social world, and stresses that such images can provide insight into how images construct accounts of the social world (p. 195). Questions that were used in guiding this analysis were: how are particular words or images given specific meanings and in what context; are there meaningful clusters of words and images; what objects do such clusters produce; what associations are established within such clusters; and what connections are there between such clusters? The goal of such an analysis was to identify key themes, words, or recurring visual images and the connections between them (Rose, 2012, p. 210). Not only did the analysis evaluate what was apparent, but it also looked at what was not apparent. As is asserted by Rose (2012) “discourse analysis also involves reading for what is not seen or said”, and that “absences can be as productive as explicit naming; invisibility can have just as powerful effects as visibility” (p. 219).

### **Data Presentation Through Emerging Themes**

Through the coding process and the visual discourse analysis, multiple categories were established, then synthesized into themes. The findings are presented through four themes that emerged from the interpretation of the interview data and the participants’ sketches and artwork.

The following four themes were interpreted from the analysis process,

1. Intelligence is perceived as a “matter of mind” and is distinct from talent which is perceived as a “skill developed through effort”
2. The value of art education is within its emotional and expressive aspects
3. Art education is perceived by others as limiting and not valued

4. Participant perceptions of their academic confidence is described primarily by their “effort”.

The following sections are elaborations on the evidence to support each theme and to illustrate this study’s findings through emerging categories from which the themes were established. Table 2 shows the organization of the four themes with their corresponding categories. For each supporting category, interview and arts-based evidentiary warrants are presented.

Each category supporting the four themes was developed from grouping multiple codes together that emerged into patterns deriving from statements and artwork recorded and collected from the participants. Below is a presentation of the evidentiary warrants that support each category and the resulting themes as established above.

Table 2. *Data Presentation Through Themes and Supporting Categories*

	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Supporting Categories</i>
<i>Theme 1</i>	<b><i>Intelligence is perceived as a “matter of mind” and is distinct from talent which is perceived as “a skill developed through effort”</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Talent comes from “effort” and “hard work”</i></li> <li>• <i>Intelligence is “of the mind” and associated with understandings of “academics”</i></li> <li>• <i>Talent and intelligence are perceived as fundamentally different</i></li> </ul>
<i>Theme 2</i>	<b><i>The value of art education is within its emotional and expressive aspects</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Art education is about expression</i></li> <li>• <i>Art education is an emotional outlet</i></li> </ul>
<i>Theme 3</i>	<b><i>Art education is perceived by others as limiting and not valued</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Art education is different from “academics”</i></li> <li>• <i>Art education is recreational</i></li> <li>• <i>Art education is not valued by “others”</i></li> </ul>
<i>Theme 4</i>	<b><i>Participant perceptions of their academic confidence is described by their “effort”</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Confident but could work harder</i></li> <li>• <i>Confident because I work hard</i></li> </ul>

## **Theme 1: Intelligence is Perceived as a “Matter of Mind” and is Distinct from Talent Which is Perceived as a “Skill Developed Through Effort”**

Theme 1 illuminates participants’ perceptions regarding talent and intelligence and the relationship between the two concepts, and provides insight into the purpose of this study.

Theme 1 states that there is a perception of intelligence and talent that are distinctly different. According to the students’ language, intelligence is perceived as a “matter of mind” which is tied to cognitive processing, or one’s ability to “think quickly”, “remember”, and “problem solve”. Talent, on the other hand, is perceived as a “skill developed through effort”, or something that is obtained over time and through “hard work”, “practice”, and “effort”. The evidentiary warrants that support this theme derived from participant interviews, sketchbooks, and artwork analysis.

Participants were given two questions relating to intelligence, questions five and ten, and two questions related to talent, questions six and eleven as listed on the interview guide as well as indicated in the sketchbook prompts. Each set of questions targeted a participant’s view of “self”, as talented or intelligent and a view of “others” as talented or intelligent. The sketchbook prompts continued with the same targeted topics of talent and intelligence in regards to “self” and “other”. Thus, evidence was able to be extrapolated regarding the values, beliefs, attitudes, and descriptions regarding talent and intelligence by juxtaposing the two perceptions from “self” and “other”. The theme represents the perceptions of the interviewees through patterns deriving from what is said and what is not said (Rose, 2012; Saldana, 2013).

In completion of the analysis process, three categories were identified and reflected on regarding their collective meanings, interactions, and interplays concerning values, attitudes, beliefs and descriptions while working on the basis that the three constructs are part of an interconnected system. From the following, three categories were established that supports theme 1:

Categories in support of theme 1:

- Talent comes from “effort” and “hard work”.
- Intelligence is “of the mind” and associated with understandings of “academics”.
- Talent and intelligence are perceived as fundamentally different.

Each category developed from grouping multiple codes deriving from statements recorded from the participants, their sketchbooks and their artwork.

**Talent comes from “effort” and “hard work”.** This first category is one that emerged throughout the analysis process. “Talent is not inherent”, “you earn it through hard work and effort”. This statement came from Leah, a Sophomore in art II, as well as eleven out of the twelve participants expressed the same belief. Some of the participants said it in a quick statement, such as Ella, a senior in AP art, when she states that “a talented person is putting in the most effort”, or Carter, who is also a senior in an AP art class, who responded “I take that as a compliment, I kind of take that as I work hard for it” when asked how he felt about being a talented art student.

Talent seems to be perceived by the participants as not necessarily an ability but is something that is acquired through “effort” and “hard work”. I choose to put the two in

quotations to emphasize the statements as well as generalize them, as there were many ways participants expressed this concept.

Another way participants expressed talent as “effort” and “hard work” was through the idea of practice. This concept emerged with the very first interviewee, Emma, who is a Senior in an AP art class, who expressed her thoughts on talent by explaining that “art to me, whenever you say talented, I think practicing, takes a lot of practice and stuff”. When asked how she felt about being identified as a talented art student Emma replied that “it feels kind of special” and that it was “because of all the hard work” that was put into it. Once we reached the second question regarding talent and how she would describe a talented person that is when she felt it important to explain how she sees talent by stating “talent to me is practice”.

The concept that a main characteristic of talent is “hard work” and “effort” was further reflected by Olivia, who is also a Senior participating in an AP art class, when she stated,

“Well I mean talent is relative and so I wouldn’t say I’m talented more that I’m hard working because you can be born with some kind of talent but you can do the same thing if you just work your way up, so I would say I’m not talented that I just worked my way up so I don’t like when people call me talented”

Olivia expresses her value of achieving “talent” through the hard work she puts into it. Although there is a hint of talent as being present without “effort” when she describes it as something someone “can be born with”, she quickly affirms her perception of talent by not identifying herself as “talented” and reiterating that she “just worked

[her] way up”. Seeming to confirm to herself that talent is not just something she was born with, rather she achieved it through effort.

In Olivia’s artwork, shown in Figure 4, she further depicted talent in the same way as she described it above in that she illustrates talent as something to be achieved through work and effort. Olivia, when exploring the concept of talent with her artwork, described her image as being “a poor man” that through hard work has reached talent, and it is the poor talented man who is helping the “rich, intelligent” man to “enlightenment” while the children or students learn from this matter (Figure 4). Olivia

explains during the analysis of her artwork that “the reason why I am doing this is because talent is not necessarily riches or intelligence I think talent really depends on the common person”. When analyzing this artwork concerning how images are given specific meanings, it is evident that she strived to illustrate a dichotomy and a hierarchy between talent and intelligence. The “poor man” can be perceived as “low” status but through effort and hard work has achieved something of worth. Or in the participants own words, “enlightenment”. “Enlightenment”

representing something of worth and of enough worth to be taught to others such as the students that are on looking while the “rich man” continues to look away seemingly not valuing the interaction.



*Figure 4.* Olivia’s Artwork.  
Illustration representing talent.

Noah, a Senior in the same AP class, also depicted talent as “effort” in one of his sketchbook drawings. Figure 5 shows a drawing of a drawing, as well as the written title “quality of art, stems from effort”. In the interview, Noah described drawing this sketch late one night after having a conversation with his little brother. The conversation was about putting in the effort to become a talented artist and how effort and hard work are the key. The participant described this by stating,

“It’s something I keep saying to my little brother because he, he is lazy and he doesn’t like to do his work in art because he doesn’t think he is a good artist so I keep telling him that the quality of his art stems from his effort and that is the quote I put on the picture”.

Noah expressed his belief in the idea that “good” art comes from effort. Even given the possibility that his little brother may just not be good at art, Noah’s belief is that “good” or talented displays of art such as the “quality of his [anyone’s] art just takes effort. Regardless whether or not his brother is “good” at art, Noah seems to believe that through effort, his brother could be talented like him or achieve “talent”.

Oliver, who is also a senior participating in an AP art class, further supports this category. When asked how he describes a talented person, he replied that talent is “somebody who dedicates their time to mastering their craft”. Talent is “something you have to work for”, “nobody gives it to you”.

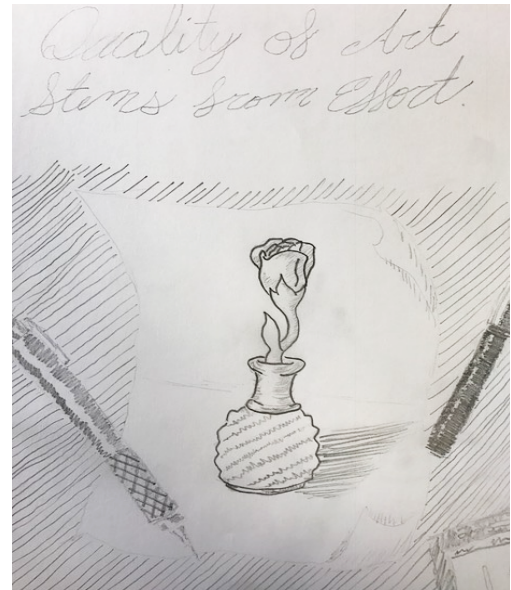


Figure 5. Noah’s sketch. Illustration representing talent and effort.

Oliver's sketchbook illustrates this concept with two sketches. The first sketch (Figure 6) shows a person at a desk working throughout the day and night as depicted by the moon on top and the sun on the bottom. Respectively, Figure 7 is a sketch of a person practicing soccer in the rain while others in the background give up and leave. The Participant described each sketch as being meant to illustrate the concept of talent, or to illustrate a talented person. It is interesting to note that each image does not necessarily show artistic talent. Rather, in these depictions of talent, each sketch illustrates the concept of "work" and "effort".

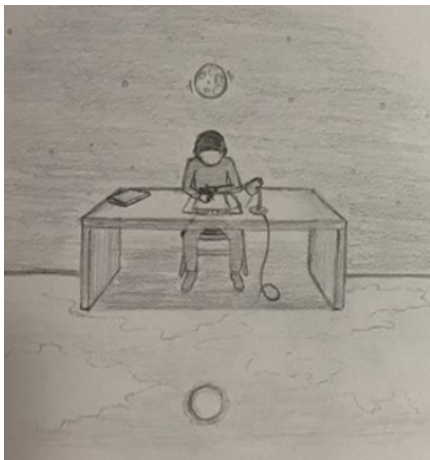


Figure 6. Oliver's sketch a. Illustration representing talent.

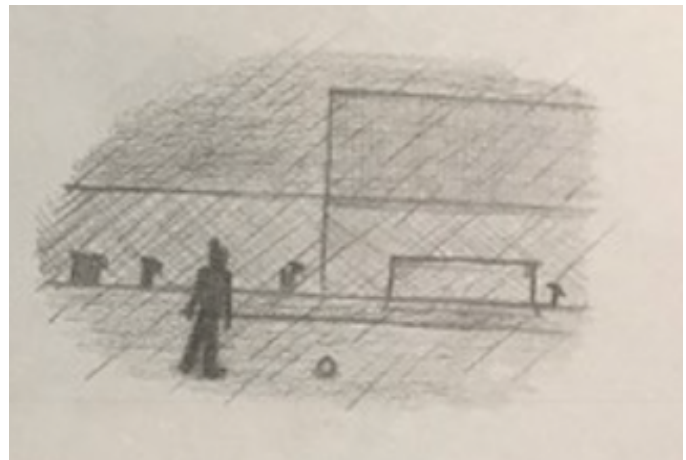


Figure 7. Oliver's sketch b. Illustration representing talent.

A final statement by Emily, also a Senior in an AP art class, expresses similar concepts of talent by stating that "a talented person is someone who takes something and then they put all of their dedication and passion towards it, and they improve, and they grow". These descriptions of talent as "hard work" and "effort" are examples of the evidentiary warrants that support this category. Even with some participants' initial claim of talent being something of natural ability, "hard work" and "effort" remain predominant in participants' perceptions of the qualities of talent.



**Intelligence is “of the mind” and associated with understandings of “academics”.** This second category emerged from direct and indirect evidence. When participants described intelligence, they would reference attributes such as “quick learning” and “knowing stuff”. What they did not mention is art making, creativity, and expression. Noah describes intelligence as “just knowing things” and “good logic” and goes on to further describe such attributes of intelligence as,

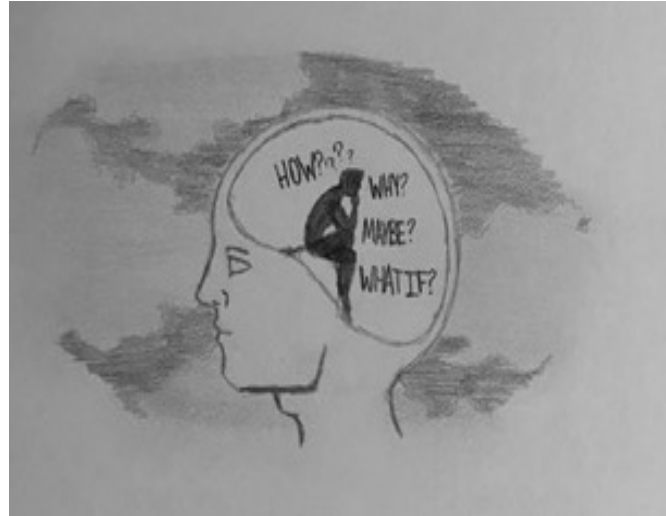
“The ability to gain knowledge you need so it is less reading through a textbook and more being able to read through a textbook because, if you can set in a class all year and somebody is putting knowledge in your head and you and your paying attention and you are doing everything right and you still only make a ‘D’ then you had all the information you just didn’t. You were not able to learn it properly but the people who are able to learn, the people who are able to read and understand things and comprehend difficult subjects, those are the ones that are really intelligent to me”.

Noah illustrates a belief about intelligence in that intelligence is cognitive or “of the mind” in nature and that it requires the ability for one to understand and the ability to learn, or retain information.

This is also reflected by Olivia who, when asked about how she feels about self-identifying as intelligent she said: “I do enjoy being able to learn things quickly”. This idea is further asserted by Emily, a Senior in an AP art class, who states that “intelligence to me is having book smarts and street smarts so a good combination of those two are what I would call intelligent”. Sophia, a Senior in an Art III class, also express that intelligence “is someone who gets really good grades and takes a lot of notes and doesn’t

think that a class is hard”. Both Emily and Sophia indicate that intelligence is tied to academics, or “book smart” and “good grades”.

To further establish this category, Figure 8 and Figure 9 are illustrations from Oliver’s sketchbook and depict intelligence and talent. Figure 8 is a drawing of the human head with a thinking figure inside the brain with the questions: how, why, maybe, and what if. In the background, there is a rough sketch of the world.



This image illustrates Oliver’s perception of intelligence being

*Figure 8.* Oliver’s sketch c. Illustration of Intelligence.

cognitive in nature or a “matter of mind”, and is in contrast to Oliver’s earlier depictions of talent (Figure 6 and Figure 7) that show talent as “effort”. This is representative of Oliver’s perceptions of intelligence in that it is not what one does or the effort one puts into something but rather, it is how one is able to think and process information.

Another intriguing sketch from participant Oliver’s sketchbook is regarding talent (Figure 9). Figure 9 is a sketch of a rapper performing. The rapper image has the characteristics of a professional rapping artist and has the words “platinum artist” to the upper right indicating a successful musical artist. What is interesting is the dominant “4.0 GPA” in the image that depicts intelligence. The participant, in analyzing his work, stressed the importance of asserting intelligence through the concept of a grade point



Figure 9. Oliver's sketch d. Illustration of talent.

average (GPA) of 4.0. The Participant described the importance of making the 4.0 boldly so it would stand out to show an intelligent person. This creates both a difference between concepts of “art” and “intelligence”, as well as a connection. However, even though Oliver is making the connection between the two the depiction of “intelligence” is predominantly symbolized through a grade point average and not the Rapper himself.

The above evidentiary warrants emerged as a pattern supporting this category in that Participants’ perceptions illustrate a belief that intelligence is a “matter of mind” which is associated with their perceptions of “academics”

**Talent and intelligence are perceived as fundamentally different.** This final category for theme 1 emerged from patterns of concepts of talent and concepts of intelligence. This was evident from most of the participants. After being asked a direct, probing question on his thoughts of artistic talent being an intelligence, Noah explains that

“it’s like it is a type of intelligence like artistic skill, creativity and imagination are, to me, a type of intelligence. They might not be the smartest like when it comes to things like math or the ability to learn or retain information, but they do have a special kind of intelligence... their brain works in a different way”.

Noah explains that it is a “type of intelligence”; however, through analyzing the components of his statement, Noah seems to believe that talent is not related by later stating that a talented person’s “brain works in a different way” and that they “might not be the smartest when it comes to things like math and the ability to learn or retain information”. There seems to be an inner conflict with this statement. Noah seems to say “yes” to the question, yet relating the concepts of intelligence and talent seems to also produce inner conflicts that are evident in the participant’s explanation of the “yes” answer. Noah previously described talent in two ways. One is skill, and the other is creativity. However, while later describing intelligence, the participant describes it as the “ability to gain the knowledge” or someone who is “able to learn” and “people who can read and understand things” as well as people who can “comprehend difficult subjects”. These descriptors of “intelligence” from Noah, add to the understanding of the conflict evident within his statement above. Noah, seemed to want to associate the two concepts of intelligence and talent, yet his beliefs and descriptions about the two are distinct.

Sophia further illustrates the perceptions of the distinctive positions of intelligence and talent by stating that people who are talented people are “happy and confident in what they are doing then they would be talented”, but intelligent people are those “good at classes and AP classes” like “AP Spanish and AP Physics”. It is important to note here that Sophia did not mention AP Art as “one” of the classes in

which an “intelligent person” would be participating in. Sophia is currently taking Art III. Even being an advanced art student and with art being in her future career choices of “animation” she still failed to mention art or correlate art study to the intelligence description.

Ella further promotes this category by illustrating in her artwork a scale measuring the weight of “academics” and “art” (Figure 10). In analyzing the piece, we can see that “art education” has more implied weight than “academics”, indicating that Ella has a greater value for art education in her life. Further illustrated are the participant’s concepts of the contrast, or opposite, to art, which is “academics”.

There were occasions when a participant would hint to concepts of ability tied to talent and intelligence. However, the concepts of talent and intelligence as fundamentally different seemed to be the predominant pattern. Mila, who is also a Senior in AP art, explains that people who are talented “are kind of naturally good at



*Figure 10.* Ella’s sketch. Illustration of art education and academics.

something but also put in the effort to kind of improve their skills” and intelligence is to “think without second guessing” or “figure [things] out on your own”.

Mila’s understanding and above description of talent and intelligence highlight the multiple aspects of the overall theme. Mila expressed the belief that even though talent may be present before “effort”, it was “effort” that completes the talent or “skills” and that intelligence is fundamentally about thinking and processing.

The above evidentiary warrants, within each of the three categories, illustrate the patterns that came together in establishing the overall theme. Participants consistently described talent as something that comes from effort and hard work, and intelligence as being related to “academics” and cognitive processing, or being a “matter of mind”, as well as the two concepts of talent and intelligence as fundamentally different.

## **Theme 2: The Value of Art Education is Within its Expressive and Emotional Aspects**

Theme 2 is reflective of the idea that the participants’ value of art education lays within its expressive and emotional aspects. Throughout the data, multiple students expressed beliefs and attitudes about the value art education within public schools. During the interview, two questions were asked that elicited responses that provided insight regarding the value of art education to participants. These were questions three and eight. Question three asked what interested the participants the most about their experience in art education while question eight asked directly about what the value of art education was to them. From the participants’ responses and the analysis process patterns were identified, and the following two categories emerged.

Categories in support of theme 2:

- Art education is about expression.
- Art education is an emotional outlet.

The following is a discussion on the evidentiary warrants that illustrate these two categories.

**Art education is about expression.** The first category supporting theme 2 developed through patterns that participants perceived the value of art education through

its self-expressive qualities. Art education is about “expression” was repeated throughout the data. Self-expression seemed to be valued by participants and was a key descriptor of art education.

Emma, in her first interview, described her belief that art education was a place where anyone can express themselves in ways that only art could provide. When asked about how she views the value of art education, Emma explains, “I feel like with other people [students] they can express themselves and their talent and everything they cannot say they say in their artwork”. Through her belief of its expressive attributes, Emma’s value of art education is evident, as well as her belief that this attribute is unique in that people can say what they otherwise could not say or express oneself. Ella also extends this value of “expression” for everyone by explaining that “even if people aren’t good artist it’s still a way that they can, like express themselves” and that “it’s just a good outlet for people, it’s important to have it in our school system for this reason”. Ella further extends this value of “expression” in art education, as well as continues the assignment of art’s uniqueness in providing such an outlet. Ella feels that it is “important” to have in schools “because of this [expressive qualities] reason”.

Emma and Ella both highlight the value of art education as something that allows individuals the opportunity to express themselves in ways that can neither be expressed by words nor does it take talent to do so. Noah also expressed this perception directly when he described how he views the value of art education in public schools by stating that “art class lets us let loose into a media to express ourselves a little bit whereas in other classes we cannot do that”.

Additionally, an analysis of Ava's artwork reveals insight into how she views art education through art creation and talent juxtaposed to the "world". Figure 11 is the

image of Ava's artwork she created and analyzed. The artwork is of a girl walking or entering into the world along a path while bringing colorful designs into a dull looking landscape. The designs themselves are vibrantly colored, and the landscape is rendered in only gray. During the interview with Ava and her artwork, she was asked to first describe the artwork. Ava described it as a "talented" or "creative" person entering the world and "influencing" it through the arts or "talents".



Figure 11. Ava's artwork. Illustration of arts' influence on the world.

Ava explained that as the girl walks down the road the "design work" follows her so as she walks and enters the world her influence goes as well affecting the world around her. I then asked about the world as depicted in her artwork as there are leafless gray trees and an empty horizon. Ava explained that the world which the girl is walking through is a "dull world and her bringing art is kind of putting life into it". In analyzing Ava's artwork, the color and abstract designs as contrasted with the dull gray "world" illustrates a belief that art's contributing element to the "world" is expressive in nature through this use of color and whimsical design as well as that art is revealing and valued by its expressive traits. Ava further illustrates a value in art education through the depiction that art, itself, can change the world and the catalyst for this change is through the art student as depicted by herself image bringing art into a



duel gray world. The value of art education and the fundamental life and world altering affects such as an art educational experience provides, is indicated through Ava's image as having a large and valued impact on the world.

Such above expressions on perceptions of the value of art education being about self-expression warranted a category reflecting this belief.

**Art education is an emotional outlet.** The second category for theme 2 is the belief that art education is an "emotional outlet". "It is basically about the emotions" as expressed by Carter as he explains what the value of art education is to him. Like Carter, multiple participants tied art education with the belief that art education was a place where one could explore their emotions and the value of art education, to them, lays within those characteristics. Carter further expresses the belief that emotional expression is a key function of art education by explaining that "the only way I can express my emotions was through art".

Ava, when asked what interests her about taking art classes, explained that "I kind of feel that art helps emotionally because I can just pour whatever I am feeling out on paper and it can be beautiful or kind of eww." Oliver's belief and value of art education was also expressed through the "emotional" tie although not stated explicitly. When asked directly what the value of art education was to him, Oliver explained that "art is an outlet like a form of counseling where you don't really need to say words it's kind of like music or anything like that you just do what you want to and nobody can tell you otherwise it's personal". This concept was further described by Emily as she explained that art education was a place for an "academic escape [to] get the feelings and stress out".

The evidentiary warrants above illuminate the value, belief, and attitude of the participants regarding art education in schools. These two categories provide insight into how participants perceive art education. Both categories were synthesized into one theme statement to illustrate this pattern of perception.

### **Theme 3: Art Education is Perceived by Others as Limiting and Not Valued**

Theme 3 also emerged from categories established in the coding and artwork analysis process. Theme 3 emerged not just from direct questioning but through participant's answers, descriptions, and perceptions, either directly or indirectly, regarding their values, attitudes, beliefs, and artistic depictions of art education.

Theme 3 is reflective of participants' perceptions of art education as limiting regarding art education's significance and function within the educational system, as well as the perceptions that "others", do not value or assign a low value to art education.

In completion of the coding and the visual discourse analysis, categories were identified and reflected on regarding their collective meanings, interactions, and interplays with regard to values, attitudes, and beliefs, while working on the basis that the three constructs are part of an interconnected system. From this, the following three categories were established that supports theme 3:

Categories in support of theme 3:

- Art education is different from "academics"
- Art education is recreational
- Art education is not valued by "others"

These three categories can be grouped together for their similarities. However, there was enough evidence in the data to maintain three separate categories.

Although not surprising, each participant suggested a value for art education by indicating its importance in their lives in different ways. What is of interest is how they described art education within their value, attitude, and belief statements and depictions through art creation. Throughout the interview and included in the sketchbook prompts were questions and statements that elicited participants' perceptions on values, beliefs, attitudes and descriptions of art education. In the interview guide, those questions are three, eight, and nine as well as sketchbook prompt number four.

**Art education is different from “academics”.** In this category, “academics” is in quotations to emphasize the broad descriptions of academics by participants such as subjects, grades, and references to “textbook classes”.

Leah provides insight into the establishment of the category by stating “art is very different than um, math and sciences, oh it is very, very different”. “Art is fun” and “not like other classes”. This response was after asking the participant what the value of art education was to her in her academic experience. With this reply, she establishes a perceived dichotomy between academics and art education by describing art as “fun” and “different” and “not like other classes”.

These descriptions of “difference” establish her belief that art education is something else, meaning something other than “academics”. Additionally, Ella, in expressing her perception of the value of art education asserts that “even if people aren't artists, it is still like a good way to just like, express yourself and that it is just a good outlet for people, and so I think that it is important that we like, have it in our school system”. Ella further expresses that art education is an “outlet” and is needed in the school system as an escape from academics and not a part of academics itself.

Emily extended this thought of art education as “different” and “recreational” by stating that “it is just somewhere I can go to just let the, like feelings and stress and stuff be just like let out in the work that I do, so I guess its kind of like an academic escape”. Mila further extends this by expressing her perceptions of art education by stating the following,

“Well for one thing it is kind of a relaxing thing in class but it is also, it is just learning on a different side a little bit you’re not just reading a textbook and learning your actually applying things and trying to be creative, so it is kind of building that side of your brain... Art can get you to ‘think differently’”.

Here Mila expresses her belief that art education is different from academics, or as previously described, “reading a textbook and learning” as opposed to art education which is “relaxing” and “different”. Mila establishes a perception if “difference” regarding academics and art education.

Mila created the artwork shown in Figure 12. The artwork shows three flowers of differing sizes. At the root of each flower, there are items representing academics, art education, and sports. The participant has used the size of the flowers and positioning to illustrate her values related to each subject. The art education flower is larger than the other two and is centered on the page indicating her higher value for it. The structure of the image establishes a clear separation in the three areas so



*Figure 12.* Mia’s sketch. Illustration of art education in relation to other academic areas.

much so that there is no overlap at all. The participant indicated a choice that she is confronted with in her school experience. A choice between focusing on academics, a choice in the arts, and a choice in sports.

The further emergence of this category was derived from patterns evolving from different statements. Ava who is a Junior in an Art II class, stated that art education is an “escape” from other subjects, it “helps emotionally”. Ava added to the emerging pattern by stating that “art is about emotions and anyone can do it!” “You know like I said they need a place to escape and kind of pour their emotions out”. As well as from Carter who stating that art education is about “emotions” and Oliver who explained that “art education is like a form of counseling”. Attitudes and beliefs regarding art education as an “escape” and being about “emotions” has a clear contrast to descriptions of academics being of “textbook classes”.

The assertion from the participants warranted a category illustrating the perception of art education being “different” than “academics”. Mason, a Senior in an AP art class, was asked if others value art education and he responded by saying, “personally I think a lot of kids just take it because they think it will be a blow off class because you just have to draw and stuff like that because I think that is why they don’t take it seriously”.

The above warrants from the participants established perceptions of art education being different than “academics”. The above descriptions indicate art education as pertaining to “emotions”, “exploration”, “creativity”, and an “escape” from “academics”. “Academics” throughout these evidentiary warrants maintained the perceptions of “other

classes”, therefore such a category asserting that art education is different than “academics” was established.

**Art education is recreational.** This category developed through participants’ perceptions of studying the arts as being not “academic”, but something else. The previous category, *art education is different than “academics”*, helps support this category, however it does have its own warrants. When Mila was asked what disinterests her about art education, she replied,

“Um I don’t really like having it [art education] for a grade in a way because it is more stressful, and you don’t really know what people are expecting because you have a set of rules you have to go by almost but I mean it hasn’t been too bad I just like doing things more and doing them because I want to instead of for a grade”.

Mila later states that art education, to her, is “relaxing”, “creative”, and “different”. Moreover, Mila has the attitude that art education should not even be for a grade. She explains that she does not “really like having it [art] for a grade”. The assertion that art education should not be for a grade, reveals that the participant does not value the academic measurement of the work she does in art class, but instead it is valued for the “relaxing” and “creative” aspects of the class and that a grade just makes it “more stressful”.

Ava extends the concepts behind the category by illustrating a value for her talent by saying that “being talented feels good, I mean I can draw more than a stick figure”. She goes on to illustrate her value for identifying as intelligent by saying “being

intelligent feels good also, I mean now I know that I can go somewhere in life that I have some potential”.

In comparing the two statements, it is evident that her perception of intelligence is that it is of enough value to allow her to “go somewhere in life” while her art education experience has helped her “draw more than a stick figure”. Further, the participant illustrates a lower belief of importance toward art education and establishes it as being fundamentally “different” than say intelligence or academics, which holds the potential of being able to allow her to “go somewhere in life”.

Oliver, at the beginning of his interview, describes his uncle as being an influence in his love of art. When asked if his Uncle works in the arts field he responded “no” and proceeded to explain that “[he has] the whole mindset too like, I got to work, I need to provide, I do not have time to do all this other stuff”. This theme of art as being “other stuff” was carried throughout the interview. This theme indicates that art is recreational as opposed to “making a living”.

Emily states it directly in that she feels that people see art education as more of a “hobby” rather than a livelihood. When asked about how she perceives other’s valuing art education she replies,

“No I don’t [see others valuing art education] because, I don’t know, I don’t think that people and by people, I mean the people who run the schools like the Superintendents and Administrators and stuff, I don’t think they see it the way that the students see it because it is like not what they are focusing on... art is not the first thing they would pick [because] people see it as more of a hobby”.

In Emily's sketchbook (Figure 13) there was a page that contained the heading "value of art education - to you/society/others". Under that heading were six bullet points with the

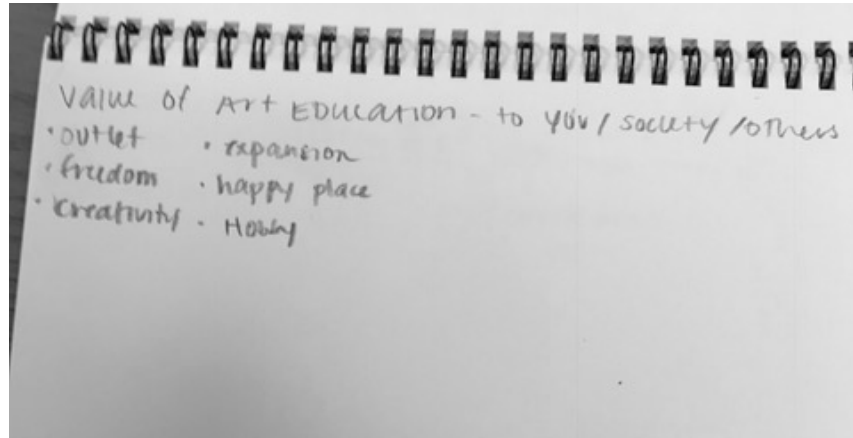


Figure 13. Mia's sketchbook list. List on the value of art education.

written words: "outlet", "freedom", "creativity", "expression", "happy place", and "hobby". When asked about the list Emily responded that in representing what art education means to her she "just wrote some notes on it", and that it is "important because it is an outlet, lets kids be free, because it lets them express themselves", "it boost creativity" and "for me it is a hobby and a happy place all at once".

**Art education is not valued by "others".** The evidentiary warrants were overwhelming in support of this category. When asked a direct question if art education was valued by others, twelve out of twelve participants indicated that they believed that art education was not valued by "others" either by doing so directly or through elaboration. "Others" is in quotations indicating that "others" is represented in different ways from the participants.

When asked if they think art education in schools are valued, Emma responded, "to some point no, I don't think people really value it some people just think of it as a



class to where you don't do anything you just sit there and do nothing like free time, some people who think that I, on the other hand, don't think so, I think it is different". Olivia expresses this same undervaluing by stating "art is an amazing thing it is very valuable but it is very underrated". Some participants would first indicate a "yes". However, in discussing it, they would later explicitly describe a "no". For example, Ava, who indicated a "yes" that others value art" but then stated, "but I feel like they [art education] are kind of on the lower scale", a "lower scale" indicating lower or undervalued.

Mila also explains that art education is not valued by saying that "a lot of times it seems like it is just a class you know, to fill up a schedule or to get the arts credit that you need" and that "it is not top priority". Not a top priority than other academic areas is reflective in Ava's statement in that art education is low on the priority list or has lower value than other "academic" classes even with the understanding that an art credit is "needed" to fulfill graduation requirements in the state of Oklahoma.

Regarding the non-valuing of art education, Ella further explains by stating that "it is not valued", "I feel like it is always on the back burner just because there is sports then there is like choir and then there is art because people don't think that it is technically like a sport or something that like people can actually like, get into and so I just feel like it is vary undervalued".

The above evidentiary warrants, within each of the categories, illustrate the patterns that came together in establishing the overall themes. Participants fundamentally and consistently described art education as something different from academics, something of "recreation", and art education being undervalued by others. Thus, the

theme of art education is being perceived by others as limiting and not valued, was established

#### **Theme 4: Participant Perceptions of Their Academic Confidence is Described by Their “Effort”**

Theme 4 reflects that participants describe their academic confidence by the amount of “effort” they put forth. During the interview process, participants were asked how they felt about their academic capabilities or their academic confidence. In the values coding process, a belief code of low, medium and high confidences was established. These codes were established through interview questions relating directly to the participants’ level of academic confidence. How the participants responded to this question allowed for this coding scheme. The frequency of each code was observed based on all twelve participants. The results show that one participant indicated a low level of confidence, six participants indicated a medium level confidence and five participants indicated a high level of confidence. The frequency of these “confidence” codes indicates a pattern relating to the majority of participants having medium to high academic confidence; however, it is interesting to note that the participants described their confidence, through effort. “Effort” emerged as a predominant descriptor across the participant interviewed regarding their academic confidence or ability.

Although “effort” emerged in different ways, it became evident that this pattern was significant enough to warrant a theme. From the analysis, the following two categories were established that supports theme 4.

##### Categories in support of theme 4

- Confident but could work harder

- Confident because of hard work

The following is a discussion on the evidentiary warrants that support these two categories.

**Confident but could work harder.** This category emerged from the interview discussions in which participants continually described their confidence using indicators of “effort”. In discussing his academic confidence, Mason indicated a high level of confidence stating that “if there is something I know I want to do and I really find it interesting, if I take it seriously, I think I can do a lot, but I just don’t apply myself a lot to different things”. Mason’s belief in his academic confidence indicates that he believes he is able, but it is through effort or the lack thereof, that provides for the achievement outcome.

Sophia similarly expressed such a concept. When asked how she felt about her academic capabilities or her confidence she claimed to be “somewhat” confident and that “maybe [she] could do better at it [grades]”. When asked to elaborate on “could do better” she stated “[to] work harder”. Likewise, Emma, when asked about her academic confidence, declared that she does not “have that much high confidence”, but continued to explain how she has “built it up over the past few years” and that she has been “working really hard” to do so.

**Confident because of hard work.** Conversely, Mila, when discussing her academic capability, described it not in the lack of effort but as effort as key to her capability. Mila explained that she was “pretty confident” and that she could do “whatever is asked” could “complete whatever is needed” and she could “work to understand”. This is because, as she explained, she has the “motivation to work through

it". Mila expresses a belief that if she has the "motivation to work through it" then she can accomplish "whatever is asked".

Mila directly ties her confidence to her motivation to work hard. Noah further expresses this belief by stating that he is confident because he can do anything if he "tries". When asked how he feels about his academic confidence, he states that "I believe I am confident in my academic abilities, can do anything if I try". Noah goes on to assert that "[his] confidence is high with preparation".

Ava describes her academic confidence using concepts of "effort" as well. When asked about how she feels about her academic confidence or ability, Ava explains if "I work hard then I will have great confidence, just need to take the time to comprehend the material, then I think that would be better and further my confidence".

Although the two categories express participant attitudes about academic confidence and its relation to "effort" in different ways, each maintains a distinct similarity regarding confidence and "effort", thusly emerging as a single category.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to present the qualitative data collected from interviews and artwork from participants. Additionally, this chapter contained the study's data analysis plan based on the study's purpose and research questions. This study utilized values coding, descriptions coding, and visual discourse analysis to elicit categories from evidentiary warrants which coalesced into the following four themes: intelligence is perceived as a "matter of mind" and is distinct from talent which is perceived as "a skill developed through effort; the value of art education is within its emotional and expressive aspects; art education is perceived by others as limiting and not

valued; and participant perceptions of their academic confidence is described by their “effort”. The next chapter presents a summary and discussion of the study’s analysis and conclusions based on the findings, including reflections on the study implications as well as recommendations for further future research.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The following chapter is designed to provide an interpretation of this study through discussions on topics discussed in the literature review from chapter two in conjunction with the emergent themes of the data analysis presented in chapter four. This chapter focuses on the purpose and research questions of the study to interpret the findings presented in chapter four. Chapter five further frames the context of the findings and interpretations within the goals of an arts-based educational research methodology. Additionally, this chapter will include a discussion on recommendations and implications on the interpretations of the findings. This chapter will also provide suggestions for further research based on the research findings and interpretations and concludes with final reflections.

## **A Summary of the Study**

This qualitative arts-based educational research study had the purpose of investigating identified artistically talented student's perceptions of intelligence in relation to their talents and their willingness or unwillingness to self-identify as "smart". This study further examined the notion of intelligence in relation to art creation and art education as it pertains to students' beliefs in their abilities. Additionally, this study examined such systems of schooling that foster a bias paradigm in which a students' claim to intelligence is restrictive through current educational practices and constructed norms.

The methodology of arts-based educational research (ABER) as developed by Elliot Eisner and Tom Barone (2012) was the underlying strategy of this investigation and fundamentally guides this study's interpretation. Within the ABER methodology, there are three criteria. These three criteria are identified as this study's illumination or its ability to provide insight into a social phenomenon, this studies generativity or its ability to disrupt perceived understanding and to raise more questions than it answers; as well as its incisiveness, which is this study's ability to focus on a salient issue or address its intended issues (Eisner & Barone, 2012).

The two research questions that guided this study were: what are artistically talented student's perceptions regarding intelligence and its relation to art talent and art education and how do these perceptions relate to academic achievement within the public school system, and how do artistically talented students describe themselves regarding talent and intelligence? These two research questions developed from the purpose of this

study and were established to explore artistically talented students' perceptions of talent, intelligence and art education.

An investigation of such perceptions aimed to establish discourse in illuminating perceived understandings of talent and intelligence from an artistically talented student's point of view. Such insight aimed to guide further discourse regarding norms, practices, and understandings of the current systems of education. Such a system that creates value structures or hierarchy in the type of classes students take and their performance within those classes is understood to construct an individual's values, beliefs, and attitudes regarding their capabilities and identities (Brown & Weiner, 1984; Covington, 1989). As expressed by Eisner (2008), "make no mistake, the curriculum we prescribe for schools and the time we allocate to different subjects [and the emphasis we put on them] show children what adults believe is important for them to learn" (p. 112). This study was completed to provide conversation from the perspective of the student in investigating such systems of bias through narrowed emphasis and importance, where artistically talented students' values, beliefs, and attitudes toward their talents, along with their field of study and intelligence dispositions, places them in a locus of misconceptions and misunderstanding. For "when a talent is defined and assessed too narrowly, many students will be missed, many more discouraged, and the conception of artistic talent will remain isolated from other abilities and intelligences" (Oreck, Owen & Baum, 2003, p. 67).

The findings of this study, as elaborated in chapter four, produced four emergent themes that revealed perceptions from artistically talented students regarding intelligence, talent, and art education as well as insight into such student's academic self-efficacy.



These four emergent themes are: 1) intelligence is perceived as a “matter of mind” and is distinct from talent which is perceived as “a skill developed through effort”, 2) art education’s value is within its emotional and expressive aspects, 3) art education is perceived by others as limiting and not valued, and 4) participant perceptions of their academic confidence is described by their “effort”. The following section discusses the themes as they connect with the literature reviewed in this study.

### **Addressing the Research Questions**

The first research question that guided this investigation asked what are artistically talented students’ perceptions regarding intelligence and its relation to art talent and art education and how do these perceptions relate to a student’s academic achievement within the public school system. Theme 1 addresses the first part of research question one in that artistically talented students’ perceptions regarding intelligence and its relation to art talent, and art education are seemingly separate things. This is reflective of a singular understanding of intelligence endorsing the idea from Gardner (1993) explaining that a singular understanding of intelligence has carried over into schools as well as to the perceptions of the students. Thus, artistically talented students perceive intelligence as distinct from their talents and of art education.

The second part of research question one extended the artistically talented students’ perceptions to how they relate to academic achievement within public schools. Participants perceived intelligence as an ability of the “mind”, and expressed a belief that intelligence was a path to success. Theme 3 provided insight into this assertion as it illustrates a “limiting” perception to art education’s perceived ability to provide students

with the “ability” to grow intellectually. This concept was described by participants when attributing outcomes to talent and intelligence. This was exhibited by Ava who explained that success in art education means being able to “draw more than a stick figure” which was something her talent afforded her, yet being intelligent, provided her with “some potential” in life.

This contrast between Ava’s perceptions of what her talents mean, is less in value than what it means for her to identify with being intelligent. Drawing a stick figure is often used to illustrate one’s inability to draw or create art, which is generally used in a statement as “I can’t even draw a stick figure”. Ava’s statement then, attributes her talent as something just over that level, a low level and it further does not point to greater successes outside of this low-level drawing ability. Her intelligence, on the other hand, provides her with “potential in life” or success in life. This was reflected by several participants in chapter four and warranted theme 1 and theme 2 as participants attributed neither intelligence to talent nor intellectual study with art education. Issaieva’s (2016), explains that perceptions of intelligence, or identifying oneself as being intellectual, has “causal power” on “student goals, perceptions of self-regulation and self-efficacy” (pp. 114 - 118). Therefore, such a dichotomous and limiting perception of art education and talent does support a problematic paradigm for students regarding their academic achievement and further reveals a system that supports such a problematic paradigm.

Research question two, of this investigation, asked how artistically talented students describe themselves regarding talent and intelligence. Theme 1 and theme 4 indicates that the participants described themselves as having talent because of the effort they put into their art studies as well as being intellectually capable, through a perception

of high academic confidence that was also connected with their concepts of effort. This “effort” connection between perceptions of their talent and perceptions of confidence in their academic abilities is revealing and warrants further study. Yet with this connection also comes disconnection, as participants described their talents and intelligence as distinctive. Therefore, participants described themselves as talented and intelligent, connecting both to effort, yet maintained that both talent and their intellect were fundamentally different which is fundamentally problematic.

### **Understandings and Implications from Multiple Intelligence Theory**

This study’s findings provide insight in further understandings regarding the theory of Multiple Intelligence (MI) and how such a theory aids in illuminating issues discussed in this investigation both in an excluding and an including way. The excluding aspect is that MI theory reveals perceptions and values about intelligence in public schools that are excluding students from fully understanding themselves due to a narrowed view of intelligence and a narrowed view of curricular importance. As this study illustrates through participant perceptions, the value placed on “academics” as described by the participants being subjects like English language arts and math, regarding intellectual worth, are greater than the value placed on art education and the value of the intellectual aspects associated with art study. Which, as described by participants, is different than “academics”. Therefore, those with intelligence demonstrated outside the narrowed curricula of importance and the narrowed view of intelligence are excluded. Conversely, the including aspect of MI theory allows for a view of intelligence that includes artistic endeavors and art education as an intellectual endeavor and a mode of intellectual study. This aspect of MI theory is inclusive to the

students that exist outside the narrowed views and values of intelligence and intellectual studies and affords such students connections to an understanding of their intelligences.

Reflecting on the data analysis and the literature review on multiple intelligence theory, a glaring association was apparent. The definition of intelligence described by Gardner (1999) is “the potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” (pp. 33 – 34). With this understanding of intelligence, a major disconnect emerged from the data analysis. Gardner (1999) links the understanding of intelligence to something of “cultural value”. As evident in theme 3, perceptions exist that participants view art education as not valued by others. “Others” meaning other students, school administrators, and from a larger standpoint, general school culture. This was evident when participants expressed that art education was not valued by “people” in general, or specifically described it as a “blow off class” or “free time” as Mason and Emma each expressed.

This was further evident as art education was framed as “not [being] a top priority” in school, indicating art education as being culturally perceived by “people” as low “priority” or not of high value. Perceptions from the participants illustrate that art education, and conversely art creation, is not a valued part of academics in regards to an intellectual mode of study. Therefore, defining intelligence through “cultural value” proves to be problematic when associated with art education which carries, as positioned within the system of schools, perceptions of low cultural value. This is also asserted by Campbell and Campbell (1999), who explain that the “narrowly defined limits of intelligent behavior make students who do not excel in linguistic or mathematical disciplines perceive their talents to be of little use” (p. 7).

This association between intelligence as having “cultural value” and art education or art creation as having low value is revealing in that claims of intelligence, even within multiple intelligence theory, has components that restrict those claims to intelligence to socially-created value systems which are constructed around misunderstandings, or non-understandings. The understanding that intelligence and intelligent activities are tied to cultural values is problematic, as cultural values can be exclusionary, as illustrated by the participants’ descriptions of their limited value and beliefs of art education and their art creation abilities.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Oliver’s drawing of a Rapper distinctly separated the idea of an artistically talented person, the “platinum artist” Rapper, from the idea of an intelligent person depicted by the “4.0 GPA” illustrated to the side of the Rapper image (Figure 9). This image is revealing of the misunderstandings or non-understandings perceived with intelligence and art. The 4.0 GPA, as explained by Oliver, needed to be bold so that the Rapper can be viewed as intelligent. Otherwise, as Oliver suggests, if the depiction of the “4.0 GPA” was not there, then the “artist” would not be seen as intelligent.

The current undervaluing of art and art education is extraordinarily limiting when viewed through the idea of education as discovery of self (Greene, 2001). Without the connection of art study and art creation to intelligence, students ultimately form a limiting understanding of “self” that can affect life outcomes (Issaieva, 2016). The data analysis in Theme 3 illuminates a negative connotation, which reveals that participants have a limited view of what art education provides academically. As stated by Presseisen, (2008), intelligent pursuits, such as artistic intelligence, have “long been associated with

learning the disciplines of knowledge”, and such intelligent pursuits, such as art education, should be valued as an intelligent pursuit.

Moreover, it is this connection between intellectual pursuits and fields of knowledge that defines certain practices in an intellectual field which lead people to think and act in ways consistent with the education connected to the field. These ways of thinking and acting then become part of the social and historical structure that forms the medium for professional practice (Bourdieu, 1993) and the individuals that participate within it. With a disconnect between intellectual pursuit and art study the professional practice of schools is then constructed with a perpetual undervaluing of art education and consequently harms the artistically talented students within them.

This study highlights the need for the concept of multiple intelligence theory’s presence in public schools. As the data displays, artistically intelligent students perceive their intelligence as limiting because of the restrictive system of schooling that focuses intellectual value on limited areas of curricula. Traditionally this limited focus is on non-artistic classes such as English language arts (ELA), math and science (Campbell & Campbell, 1999; Eisner, 1988; Gardner, 1999). On the contrary, the approach of multiple intelligence theory allows for a view of intelligence that is not exclusionary in terms of intellectual dispositions, opposed to a traditional understanding of intelligence is. Yet, it is a singular understanding of intelligence that is especially prevalent in public schooling (Campbell & Campbell 1999; Gardner, 1999; Presseisen, 2008).

This narrowing in the understanding of art education, and thus the artistically intelligent students that participate within it is structured through perceptions as

restrictive. This is apparent in the perceptions of value the participants ascribed to art education as well as the talents they demonstrated within it. As asserted by Eisner (1988), it is “the curriculum of the school [that] defines for students the opportunities they will have to develop their thinking skills as individuals and gives them access to the intellectual wealth of their ever expanding culture” (p. 3); however, if students are afforded such opportunities to study in the domain of their intellect, such as the participants in this study who had access to art programs yet are denied the valuing of such an intellect or the value of such a curricula, the question remains if they still have access to the “intellectual wealth” of their ever expanding culture?

Therefore, it is within the description of intelligence that Gardner (1999) provides, which highlights “cultural value” in regards to intelligence and along with this study’s findings, that art education and art creation are not perceived as intellectual, provides insight into details why such a disconnect between intelligence and talent exists in public schools. If intelligence is defined as a “matter of the mind”, as theme 1 revealed and with perceptions existing in school systems with low values for art education and art creation regarding academic study, then the misunderstanding between the two provides for a disconnect and is problematic. However, such discourse, as postulated in this study, provides for insight into possibilities to re-think how we, as a society as well as within the system of schooling, know the place of talent and intelligence in public schools.

## **Implications for Diversity**

In reflecting on the demographics of the school sites A, B, and C in this study, and as discussed in chapter three, a discussion can be had on how such findings may affect a diverse population. As illustrated above, sites A and B are shown to be similar in their diversity while site C has the lowest. Site C also has the lowest percentage of reported poverty at 41.9%. Site B reports the highest percentage of poverty at 77.2% with a 35.3% poverty rate higher than site C. Site A reports a slightly lower poverty percentile than site B at 65.7% which is 23.8% higher than site C.

It has been shown that valuing intellectual study from the understandings of multiple intelligence theory can reduce the achievement gap between white and minority students (Campbell & Campbell, 1999, pp. 96 - 97). As each site in this study is forty percent or greater in diversity an approach that is inclusive for students to identify with their type of intelligence can have a positive effect in such a diverse setting. Students are intrinsically motivated by personally relevant intellectual study and the valuing of that study, which supports their understandings of their abilities, aptitudes, and intelligences.

The findings of this study highlight a possible way forward in approaching schools with diverse populations. When the curriculum is narrowed, and the intellectual value of differing curriculum domains or courses are undervalued, then the exclusionary paradigm can compound the issues that maintain and perpetuate achievement gaps between minorities and white students. Changing such discourse to be inclusive in curricular domains regarding intellectual study allows for all students to explore greater understandings of “self” and what that may all mean within society. This study



illuminates a disparity in the valuing of intellectual diversity in public schools and thusly maintains a limiting and restrictive system of schooling.

Through this discourse a move to human freedom within human communities in education becomes a clear need. Even within the disparity of the demographics between poverty and diversity from site A, B and C, the four themes, as postulated by this study, were evident from each site indicating the undervaluing and misunderstanding of art education and art creation being valued as an intellect transcends such demographics in public education.

### **“Thinking” Art Education**

Art education, as illustrated in this study and from my experiences in the art education field is viewed as “outside” of the valued educational curriculum or academics when it comes to perceptions of intellectual study. From my experiences as an art student, art teacher, and fine arts administrator, this is evident as communicated from the community, administrators, teachers as well as the students. The experience for students in art education, can and should be an enjoyable experience, yet it should also be valued for the many experiences it offers as well as its intellectual or “thinking” benefits to learning and grow cognitively. From the recreational craft aspects to the complex cognitive developmental and intellectual domains, as well as from its expressive and emotional aesthetic faculties, art education provides a multi-dimensional learning experience (Bourdieu, 1994; Clawson & Coolbaugh, 2001; Dorn, 1994; Eisner, 1998; Greene, 2001; Perkins, 1994; Slattery, 2013; Stevens, 2000). Therefore, value systems in domains of learning within the holistic educational experience, needs to be addressed, as

has been revealed from the participants' perceptions of the value of art education within the school system.

### **Where is the Intellect in Art?**

It is well understood that art education does provide a means of expression and emotional connections within the public school curricula (Dorn, 1994; Eaton, 1989; Eisner, 1988, 1998; Greene, 2001). Art education taps into the aesthetic, expressive and emotional aspects in unique ways, yet the participants did not extend their descriptions of art education or their valuing of art education past these aspects. Art education has validity in cognitive, abilities, and intellectual growth consistent with "other academic" areas. Often participants contrasted art education with "other" academic areas without being specific other than establishing a distinct dichotomy of art education and academics. Yet, the artistically talented students participating in this study limited art education's description to just a few aspects of expression and emotion and did not perceive art education as contributing to a purposeful part of the overall school curriculum in terms of academics.

As discussed in the literature, the benefits of art education extend past its expressive aspects and are truly in the realm of learning described as "habits of mind" (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles (1999). This assertion states that the educational benefit of art education is providing growth in "cognitive competencies, including 'elaborative and creative thinking, fluency, originality, focused perceptions and imagination'" (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles, 1999, p. 43). Such aspects tie art learning to an enhancement of all aspects of learning throughout the school curriculum (OKAPLUS Schools, n.d.). Yet, as expressed by participants and illustrated in theme 1, artistically talented students

attributed such “habits of mind” to perceptions of intelligence only, or as expressed “matters of mind”. Talent, on the other hand, was not expressed in this way. Rather it was perceived as having been attained through effort.

Additionally, in the data analysis of this study, a pattern emerged that revealed art education and art creation as being solely valued for its expressive and emotional aspects, as the theme illustrated, which is limiting to the overall benefits art education has regarding intelligence as well as the aesthetics. Theme 2 emerged because time and time again, participants explaining their beliefs and values of art in education and the value of art education to them described a value in its expressive and emotional aspects and how they perceive it as an “escape” from regular academics; specifically, how art education provided a place for one to escape from the school day to “express themselves” and to “just let the emotions out”.

As expressed above, art education can be an escape; it can be about expressing one’s emotions in new and creative ways. However, it should not be defined as simply that. Art education is multi-faceted in that it ties to cognitive (how we think), aesthetic (how we know ourselves and others) and social (how we communicate and interact) views. A holistic view of art education, as described above, is absent from student perceptions, as shown from the data analysis, in their fundamental beliefs and values of art education. Because of this absence and as expressed in the literature; there is a causal effect on total student outcomes regarding academic achievement and the understanding of self. (Covington, 1989; Brown & Weiner, 1984; Issaieva, 2016).

The literature review establishes an assertion for artistic intelligence and the study of art education as an intellectual mode of study in which artistically intelligent students

can participate in and identify with their intellectual dispositions and coming to know “self” and “self within society”. However, with current understandings or misunderstandings in the value and purpose of art education as part of the overall education system, provides for a problematic paradigm of such identified students.

Theme 1, as discussed above, emerged from twelve artistically intelligent high school student participants’ reveals that intelligence is perceived as fundamentally different than talent and therefore their talent, explicitly, does not specifically afford them the identification as an intelligent person nor does the study of art education. Furthermore, artistically intelligent students often excel in art education classes; however, twelve out of twelve artistically intelligent participants perceived art education as not valued by others and limiting as a course of study, as expressed in Theme 3.

### **An Undervaluing of Aesthetics in Education**

This research study has shown that art education is perceived by the participants as limiting and not valued as revealed in theme 3. Theme 2 has also revealed that participants’ value of art education lays in its expressive and emotional aspect. There is a connection that participants make with aspects of aesthetic education, such as expressive and emotional faculties (Greene, 2001), as shown in theme 2; however, even with these understandings in the valuing of such faculties, theme 3 frames such faculties of learning, or specifically aesthetic learning, as not valued.

It is problematic for aesthetic learning when the study of art education, even with the perceived benefits of expression and emotional connections in the curriculum, is still seen as limiting and not academically valued. Benefits of aesthetic education as expressed by Greene (2001), lay within its perception, sensation, imagination and how

such concepts relate to knowing, understanding and feeling. Greene (2001), as in other publications, specifically sees aesthetics as being achieved through the arts and art education as being key to such aesthetical learning.

Greene (1977) describes an aesthetic experience as having “wide-awakeness” which is achieved through full consciousness. Full attention to life and its requirements is how Greene explains we reach this “wide-awakeness”. Greene (1977) states that “heightened consciousness and reflectiveness are meaningful only with respect to human projects, human undertakings, not in a withdrawal from the intersubjective world” (p. 121). She further states that “human beings define themselves by means of their projects, and that ‘wide-awakeness’ contributes to the creation of self” (Greene, 1977, p. 121). Within these statements, Greene ties the “wide-awakeness” experience with social outcomes, or “human projects”, which in turn is tied to the “creation of self”. Greene’s focus on human experiences and aesthetics as being invaluable to learning is well asserted in her writings. As Greene explains, “the experience is valuable – the experience is needed to stimulate the kinds of learning all hope to see” (Greene 1994, p. 495).

Aesthetics is an important part of a student’s overall educational experience and as illustrated by Greene (2001, 1994, 1977), is an important part of one’s life. The art class is where students interact, learn and grow with respect to aesthetic education. Yet a key space for aesthetic learning, as illustrated in the data, carries social perceptions and understandings or misunderstandings that ultimately undermine its academic value and acceptance within the educational system. Although aesthetic knowledge has been represented at times as being frivolous or trivial, it is actually a critically important type of practical knowledge (Bourdieu, 1993).

**The value of expression and emotions in art education.** The value of expression and emotion as provided through an aesthetic, educational experience is evident. Art education is the primary place where students interact with such an educational experience as aesthetics through self-expression and emotional interactions. However, art in education is shown to be misunderstood as it involves two often conflicting forms of practice. Education, which seeks predicted learning outcomes; and art, which seeks the unpredictable have various domain faculties (Freedman, 2003). As will be discussed below, the current context of “schooling” does not lend itself to such undefined outcomes. Such outcomes as emotional intelligence and self-expressive communication are fundamental to providing a basis for students to develop thinking skills and a capacity for intellectual reasoning (Stevens, 2000). The undervaluing and misunderstandings of art education as discussed in this study provides for concern as such a modality of learning in expression and emotion are fundamental to overall human development (Eisner, 2002; Gardner 1990).

In art education, students learn that some kinds of meaning may require the expressive forms that the arts make possible and that are absent from other domain of learning. In this sense, “the arts expressively represent; they provide the forms through which insight and feeling can emerge in the public world” (Eisner, 2008, p. 121). Expressive and emotional understanding and communication skills and knowledge are shown to be a critical part of human development. The arts provide opportunities for creative thinking, foster imagination, and are a rigorous and substantive study of human culture and history that lead to aesthetic literacy. The arts build descriptive language and

personal expression in many forms and provide emotional outlets and validate students' ideas and work (as cited by Robinson, Shore, & Enersen, 2007).

As discussed above the expressive and emotional aspects of aesthetical learning experiences are needed and are imperative in today's public education systems, and for which is primarily provided through art education, so too is needed the discourse on the approach and understanding of such forms of education on intelligence and within art education. Expression and emotion are needed to be viewed as cognitive function as well as viewed as both a valued part of the academic system in the form of intellectual study and as distinct as an academic domain fostering its own unique qualities of expressive and emotional faculties.

### **Talent, Intelligence and the “Art Kid”**

It is problematic for an artistically talented student or the “art kid” to construct understandings of “self” in a system of schooling where their perceptions of an academic study, for which they demonstrate high abilities, is undervalued as an intellectual mode of study. This is an issue into which Theme 1 provides insight. Theme 1 states that participants have perceptions of intelligence and talent that are unrelated or distinct from each other. Intelligence is perceived by the participants as being a “matter of mind” which participants tie to cognitive processing or one’s ability to “think quickly”, to “remember”, and have “problem-solving” skills. Talent, on the other hand, is perceived by the participants as something that is obtained through “hard work” and “effort”.

Implications from this theme regarding artistically talented students’ perceptions of their intellect is significant. Presseisen (2008) explains that the content or subjects of

schooling, such as art education, are also entwined with a student's "intelligent pursuit" (p. 5). An intelligent pursuit is associated with "how one thinks" and the experience in education that provides a student with "value inquiry, [such as] critical thinking, problem posing and problem solving" experiences (p. 1). With this understanding, the very students who should value such a pursuit do not, and are denied an understanding of the significance of their individual intelligent pursuit, or their "way of thinking". Rather, their intellectual pursuit of art study, currently taking place in the school system, is perceived by the participants as just a place to "feel" good and "escape" from the real "academics", as expressed by the participants, and not something of "valued inquiry".

This undervaluing of art education provides for a confusing position for the artistically talented student in that not only is their "way of thinking" not valued as an intellectual ability, consequently affecting one's perception self-understanding, but the class for which they excel is also not valued as an intellectual domain of study.

When a student with high levels of artistic intelligence perceives their intellectual ability as undervalued as well as the domain or class for which they excelled and are positioned in such a locus of non-importance, then their self-efficacy is affected and thus affects such a student's understanding of self-capabilities. With this understanding, as participants perceived their talent not as an intellectual ability, but rather something achieved through effort, their achievement within their holistic academic experiences will also be affected (Issaieva, 2016; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

This study does not claim that perceptions of talent being derived from hard work and effort are, in themselves, restrictive; however, this study does postulate that the



perceptual limitations participants placed on understandings of their talent in relation to perceptual understandings of intelligence is restrictive and harmful to a student's overall experience in the academic system.

Understandings of intelligence in public schools, as expressed in Chapter Two, is rooted in a singular understanding of intelligence, which therefore, excludes certain students, outside of this view, from their own intellectual understandings (Eisner, 1988; Gardner, 1999; Horn, 1989; Perkins, 1994). With certain domains or courses of study outside of the singular view of intelligence and therefore intelligent study, such as art education, then, would deny a student that possesses an intellectual disposition that is complementary to that domain or course and identifying with intelligence associated with that domain or course, is restrictive, limiting and overall problematic for such as student.

Multiple intelligence theory, which is a pluralized view of intelligence as discussed above, is inclusive for such students that exist intellectually “outside” of the valued academic domains. Gardner (1999), with his understandings of intelligence, asserts that intelligence and talent should be viewed as the same and any “hierarchy among the capacities must be avoided” (p. 83). If the discourse within the school systems change to accommodate such a view would possibly provide artistically talented students a way to identify their talents, not just with effort and hard work but also as an intellectual ability thus affording them the social benefits such understandings provide.

Furthermore, establishing this concept; Feldhusen (1986) describes talent as a representation of abilities in relation to a specific area of human activity and can be evaluated based on proved performances on authentic tasks, such as those in the art

classroom. From the literature, both Gardner (1999) and Feldhusen (1986) express the “talent” to “intelligence” connection; yet this is contrary to perceptions of the artistically talented students’ perceptions of “talent” and “intelligence” as shown in this study. This understanding or misunderstanding of talent and intelligence as separate is not only unwarranted but also misleading to students through limited and undervalued perceptions. It is clear, however, that there is a long way to go in expanding the understanding and valuing of talent and intelligence. The participants consistently demonstrated a sense of pride in their effort regarding their talent rather than wanting to identify their talent with intellectual ability. Olivia even displayed a negative reaction to such a concept when she said that she does not like people to call her talented because she felt it undermined the “work” she did to be talented.

From this study’s findings and the literature review, it is well-defined that artistically talented students perceive their talent as distinct from their intellect and that such a distinction is limiting and restrictive to students. The data analysis and interpretations of this study identify this as an issue within the public school system from which students construct understandings of themselves and their place in the world. Such a disconnect places students displaying artistic intelligence in a locus of misunderstanding which ultimately affects such a student’s academic and life outcomes.

### **A Context of Narrowed Emphasis**

It is well discussed that the current school system paradigm is heavily reliant on standardized “high stakes” testing which creates a context of imbalance in educational importance (Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009). With the emphasis put on high-stakes tested areas, such as English language arts, math, and science, social and individual perceptions

are constructed to value such areas specifically because of this targeted high-stakes emphasis (Arnheim, 1989; Eisner, 2008, 1988; Perkins, 1994). Such a high-stakes emphasis fosters a bias in the valuing and ultimately the understandings of “intelligence” and high academic achievement specifically in academic areas that are not targeted by high-stakes testing.

Such a high-stakes testing emphasis puts an uneven value on a limited number of subjects effectively narrowing the “valued” curriculum. As it is discussed that importance is given to such domains and courses we, so too, ascribe importance to the faculties of intelligence or “smartness” to such areas. Such an emphasis is limiting the notion of one identifying as “intelligent” and likewise as “smart” from valuing high achievement or ability in “other” non-targeted academic areas such as the visual arts (Eisner, 2008; Ravitch, 2010; Taubman, 2009). Notions of “intelligence” as defined within such a context of the public school system and within the context of current scholarly understandings regarding intelligence is presented to be restrictive to students demonstrating intelligence in domains and courses outside of the emphasized domains and courses. As society ties social value to domains and courses within public schools (Fieldhouse, 1986) so to do the students that grow with such a context (Campbell & Campbell, 1999).

The themes that have emerged from this study are revealing of a restrictive school context that does not value the multitude of student intellectual dispositions, specifically the artistically intelligent ones. Such a context that fosters perceptions, as documented in this study, of disconnections between talent and intelligence and that views art education as limiting and not valued even with its expressive and aesthetical qualities is evident of a

hierarchy of importance with the curriculum in schools. To emphasize this Maxine Greene (1995) speaks against such hierarchy when she states that she favors “plurality and multiplicity” over hierarchies (p. 179). In schools, Greene (1995) would “seek out multiple excellences, to think of academic rigor in connection with the cultivating of qualities of mind in diverse domains” (p. 179). As evident from the findings of this study, the pursuit of plurality and multiplicity in understanding and valuing of human intelligence and human intellectual activity within the public school system is still underway and still very much needed.

### **Implications for Understanding of Giftedness in Education**

The implications of this study for gifted and talented education are significant. As discussed in the literature review, academic giftedness is established as “possessing untrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities in at least one ability domain that places a child among the top 10% of his or her age peers” (Gagne, 1985, p. 104). In this context, talent is synonymous with giftedness and is directly relatable to “domains”, and is further relatable to subjects in school systems, such as art classes (Feldhusen, 1986). Furthermore, Oklahoma legally established artistic talent as being a trait of giftedness (OSDE: School Law Book, 2015). With these understandings, as to what giftedness is understood to be, it is telling in the results of this study that artistically talented, intelligent and gifted students do not connect such an ability as their “natural ability”, but rather they connect it with effort and with the perception that anyone could attain such a “talent” if they also put forth the effort.

This concept can be highlighted from Noah’s sketch in which he illustrated that

the quality or achievement of talent can be accomplished if one puts forth effort. Covington (1989) explains that “perceptions of ability profoundly influence virtually all aspects of the achievement process as it unfolds in the classroom” (p. 87). With this understanding, as participants perceived their talent as something achieved through effort instead of an ability, their achievement within their academic experiences as well as throughout their life is also affected. It provides for gifted, talented students a misunderstanding of their abilities and their intellectual dispositions. The understandings of gifted and talented education, as well as Oklahoma state education laws, make this connection of talent as academic giftedness; however, the very students that should identify as such are being educated in a system that restricts and hinders such perceptions of self-understandings, which can untimely affect their efficacy throughout their lives.

Art education, fundamentally, develops creative leaders by encouraging creative approaches to problem solving (Krause, 1987) which is essential to the gifted educational experience for students. Eisner (1998) also expresses that the importance of the arts in schools enriches flexible thinking by transferring ideas, images, and feelings into an art form. “Arts contribute to intellectual capacities that may complement, but are different from traditional subjects” (Rasmussen, 1998, p. 1). Each domain is unique as is the gifted and talented students that grow within theme and provides for specific and specialized skills, strengths and faculties needed in systems of education.

### **Academic Self-Efficacy and Effort**

Academic self-efficacy, as discussed in Chapter Two refers to a person’s judgment of his capability to perform a specific academic task or behavior in a given

context (Bandura, 1993). The participants' perceived abilities, as described in the data, is by their level of academic confidence which correlates to their perceived academic capabilities, reveals that their confidence in their academic capabilities are also tied to perceptions of effort. Theme 4 emerged from the data and reflected this concept.

Students expressed a belief that their academic ability contributed to their effort. Eleven out of twelve participants expressed having medium to high academic confidence levels. When connecting their confidence to achievement, they consistently expressed it through the amount of effort they put toward the task. Either by explaining they "could" if, they work at it or they "didn't" because they did not work at it. Thus, artistically talented students appear to be attributing their academic confidence to their effort as well as their demonstrations of talent to their effort. Therefore, a connection can then be made between "confidence through effort" and "talent through effort".

It is possible then, that artistically talented students, because of their perceptions that their talents are present due to their "hard work" and "effort" rather than their intelligence, also attribute their academic confidence level to the same perceptions of "hard work" and "effort". Baird, Scott, Dearing, and Hamill (2009) explained that a student with a higher sense of academic self-efficacy or high level of academic confidence tends to perform better on academic tasks than a student with a lower sense of academic self-efficacy even when the actual academic ability is similar. So the performance of talent from a talented art student, which is perceived by the students as achieved through effort, affects their overall academic self-efficacy in a positive way, seemingly circumventing the negative effects, of the student's self-efficacy from the limiting and misunderstandings of artistic intelligence.

Consequently, participants' talent abilities may be contributing to their academic confidence. This may be due to the participants contributing their artistic talent with effort and likewise, their academic confidence also with effort. As the participants see themselves as successful in art because of their talent and their talent because of their effort, their effort then is perceived as a path to academic success. Yet, as illustrated in this research, "out of all the traditional dimensions of self-concept, the one that bears the highest relationship to achievement is perceptions of one's [academic] ability" (Covington, 1989, p. 86). Therefore, even with the seemingly beneficial ties of "talent to effort" and "effort to confidence", students with artistic intelligence are not afforded self-conceptions of the "highest relationship" to achievement because they are not contributing their academic confidence to their intellectual ability, rather to their perceptions of effort. Conversely, students believe that their ability, more so than their effort, contributes to social status (Brown & Weiner, 1984). Additionally, this adds to the limiting and restrictive paradigm for artistically talented students as concepts of their intellectual abilities are again tied to effort rather than intelligence therefore affecting their self-perceptions, identities and social status.

Furthermore, the perceptions of effort being contributed to talent and confidence continues the non-understanding and misunderstanding of art education as an intellectual mode of study, thus perpetuating issues of art education's perceptions as limiting, recreational and undervalued

As discussed, the findings of this study indicate that effort and hard work are attributed to the participants' talents rather than artistic intelligence. This is presented through theme 1 of this study. Although this study postulates that this is a misconception

within the understandings of intelligence and talent, it is understood that effort and hard work also have social values of their own. As simply stated, we learn to love what we work to achieve. The effort or hard work that is put into a task often raises the value regarding the outcome of that task (Klein, Bhatt, & Zentall, 2005). Such effort and hard work have its own social value and worth. The participants in this study projected pride in the effort they had put into developing their talents. Such as Olivia who indicated offense if her talent was attributed to her ability only and not recognizing the hard work and effort she had put into becoming talented. Almost all other participants illustrated the acquiring of their talent through their effort.

Within a democratic and capitalist society effort holds social value and worth. It is the age old understanding that if one works hard enough and puts forth the effort than one can achieve anything. This study asserts that attributing effort to talent does not devalue the notion of talent itself, as effort and talent are both seemingly valued; rather it is the misalignment or misappropriation of talent and intelligence that is problematic and ultimately providing devalue to talent in the context of public schools and intellectual study within the public schools. Theme 1 reveals this problematic paradigm and adds to the discourse in rethinking such a construct.

### **The Unexpected**

In chapter one there is a discussion of the assumptions that were present at the beginning of this research study. The first assumption was that the participants would not make the connection between intelligence and talent. The second assumption was that students would not make a connection between art academics and intellectual study. The



third assumption was that this disconnect impacts a student's self-perceptions of abilities and achievements through an unwillingness to identify with being a "smart" person. Each assumption was assumed to emerge from the analysis of the participant's perceptions. Through the themes that were developed from the data corpus, some facets of the stated assumptions were confirmed, and some were not, and some were unexpected.

The first assumption of this study seemingly was confirmed yet also yielded unexpected evidence that became a major part of the study analysis. The connection of talent with "effort" was unexpected in this research. Although through Theme 1 the assumption of a disconnect between intelligence and talent was present there was a suppressing connection. Theme 1 states that participants have the perception of intelligence and talent that are unrelated or distinct from each other. Intelligence is perceived by the participants as being a "matter of mind" which participants tie to cognitive processing or ones' ability to "think quickly", to "remember", and have "problem-solving" skills. Talent, on the other hand, is perceived by the participants as something that is obtained through "hard work" and "effort". This was a surprising concept as it was assumed that common knowledge would be that talent is something that someone is just naturally good at or an innate skill and would have been expressed through the participants' perceptions. During the first interview; Emma first expressed talent as someone who "works hard". I did not think much of this; however, when it came to the second question regarding talent and how she would describe a talented person, she paused. Emma then looked at me in an affirming way and explained that "art to [her], whenever you say talented, I think practicing, takes a lot of practice and stuff". This was a clarification from Emma to me as to what she thought talented was and a key point in

the data although unexpected. This concept was expressed by multiple other participants in similar terms of hard work, effort and practice as well as evident in the participants' sketch journals and artwork.

Although assumption two was confirmed through theme 2 and theme 3, assumption three was an unexpected theme. Theme 4, regarding participants' academic confidence being correlated to their "effort", was surprising and unexpected. As stated in the assumptions of this research, it was assumed that participants would have a low perception of academic abilities due to the undervaluing and misunderstandings of their intellectual dispositions. Yet the data consistently displayed participants have a high level of academic confidence which warranted theme 4.

When participants explained their answer regarding their confidence level, some stated that they have high confidence because of the effort they put into it, and others described their high confidence but contributed their lack of achievement to not putting in the effort. This concept was evident in Mason's interview who indicated a high level of confidence stating that "if there is something I know I want to do and I really find it interesting, if I take it seriously, I think I can do a lot, but I just don't apply myself a lot to different things". Here Mason has the confidence to achieve, but contributes, "not applying themselves" or "not putting in the effort" to achieve, being the reason for non-achievement.

### **Illumination & Generativity**

This study's methodology is arts-based educational research as described by Barone and Eisner, (2012). In the application of ABER, there are three criteria from

which to judge the research. These three criteria are its illumination, its generativity, and its incisiveness. Below is a discussion on this study's illumination and its generativity. Incisiveness, as explained by Barone and Eisner (2012) is a study's ability to focus on salient issues and questions within a field of study. The field of study this research is focused on is art education, and the issues and questions are directed to an investigation of intelligence, talent, art education and academic self-efficacy. As this study's incisiveness is well presented throughout these chapters, this section will focus on the illumination and generativity of the study.

Through the perceptions of artistically talented high school students' insights, misunderstandings and non-understandings of artistic talent, intelligence and art education are plentiful. In this study's illuminative qualities, this arts-based educational research study reveals issues within the public education system that maintain an exclusionary paradigm for artistically talented students' understandings of their own intelligence as well as for the multi-dimensional benefits of art education.

The above discourse throughout these chapters, can be utilized for future investigations. As generativity is the ability for an arts-based study to promote new questions and expand understanding by disrupting perceived understandings. This study provides discourse for further examination as well as disrupts systems of schooling by providing a revealing discourse of misunderstandings and non-understandings. Questions for which this study illuminated are; what policies, practices and norms may be in place within public schools that maintain a system of values and hierarchies with subjects of study; to what extent do systems of schooling celebrate student achievement and in what areas; and is there a common discourse within schools that promote bias to certain types

of thinkers?

The four themes that emerged in chapter four are phrases or sentences describing subtle and tacit developments (Saldana, 2012) that have provided insight into issues relating to talent, intelligence, and art education. Such subtle and tacit developments were derived from participant data that illuminated their perceptions revealing misconnections between scholarly understandings of art education and art creation within public school systems. The themes are not in and of themselves “answers”, per se; however, they are developments that can and should highlight and lead to further discussion as they provide insight into such systems of schooling that affect students’ values, beliefs and attitudes about their identities and self-understandings within the world.

### **Recommendations**

The findings from this study are derived from a single research conducted at three high schools in Oklahoma. These findings have provided a glimpse into perceptions of artistically talented high school students that participate in public school art programs. Educational stakeholders may wish to consider and implement programs that focus on artistically talented students’ intelligences which would be a first step to the need of focusing value on art education programs and the artistically intelligent students in them.

A recommendation would be to implement a fine arts high school diploma program that provides for a purposeful and meaningful program track in the public school system, for which artistically talented students could participate and be highlighted as achieving fine arts excellence. A further recommendation is for school administrators to

include all areas of study when reporting or presenting total school progress. Including art achievements in the reporting of school progress, along with the reporting of testing scores from other subjects, maintains a holistic and inclusive school environment in which art education as well as art students are a part of the academic culture.

It is through discourse, within schools and with school leaders, that can value systems include all students within the school setting can be communicated and perpetuated. This ultimately can help assign importance and understandings of art education, providing art students with an academic space in which understanding and valuing of abilities can align with social constructs.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

This qualitative research was born out of the necessity to find answers on how artistically talented students perceive intelligence, talent and art education. During the literature review section, it was established that art education should be viewed and valued as an intellectual mode of study, through both the understandings of talent as a manifestation of intelligence and of art education as having intellectual, educational benefits. Based on the results of this study, a recommendation for further scholarship would be to address the limitations experienced with the population of this study; specifically, the population which had available to them art education resources that many public schools cannot or choose not to provide to students. Further study could focus on talented students that are not provided with such opportunities as art education programs or advanced art study such as underprivileged populations. This would be in contrast to the participants in this study. Such a study would provide a valuable perspective to add to the current discourse.

A further recommendation would pertain to gifted and talented enrichment programs for the artistically gifted. As this study reveals a disconnect between the perceptions of artistic intelligence and talent with the understandings of giftedness and systems of schooling, for which gifted services are provided, further study is needed to investigate such programs that are meant to service such students. A final recommendation would be to extend this study's discourse to art teachers, administrators, and stakeholders. Such perceptions from their point of view would provide a dialog for comparative analysis from different perspectives. This additional dialog would extend the findings of this study to other key participants within the public school system.

### **Research Conclusion**

This qualitative, arts-based educational research study was carried out at three high schools, and results from these sites have provided illumination into student perceptions and questions regarding constructed values in current systems of schooling. Although qualitative results are only limited to the three high schools studied and not subject to generalizations (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Creswell, 2007), the results will likely generate ideas for any audience.

The purpose of this study was to investigate artistically talented art students' perceptions of intelligence in relation to their talents and their willingness or unwillingness to self-identify as "smart". This study also had the purpose of examining notions of intelligence in relation to art creation and art education as it pertains to student beliefs in their abilities. This study further examined systems of schooling that foster a

bias paradigm in which a student's claim to intelligence is restrictive through current educational practices and constructed norms.

This research has fulfilled its purpose in providing discourse about twelve artistically talented students' perceptions of beliefs, values, and attitudes. In regards to the participants' willingness or unwillingness to self-identify as "smart", this research indicated that the participants were willing to identify with being "smart", yet did not attribute their "smartness" to their talent. Furthermore, art creation or art education, was described by the participants as recreational in nature. Participants attributed their talent or achievement in their advanced art classes to the effort and hard work they put into them. This idea of effort and hard work was also attributed to their understandings of academic success. Additionally, insight from the participants indicates that the system of public schooling is curricular and intellectually exclusionary in its cultural norms and practices. The undervaluing, misunderstanding and non-understanding of art education provides casualties in academic systems. These casualties are art as an intellectual study, the understandings of aesthetic education and with allowing artistically talented students a full understanding of their abilities.

## REFERENCES

- Alderson, P., Morrow, V., & Alderson, P. (2011). *The ethics of research with children and young people: A practical handbook*. London: SAGE.
- AP Studio Art: 2 Dimensional Design, 3 Dimensional design and Drawing [PDF]. (2014). The College Board.  
<http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-course-overviews/ap-studio-art-course-overview.pdf>
- Anghel, I. O. (2016). *Valorizations of theoretical models of giftedness and talent in defining of artistic talent*. *Review of Artistic Education*, (11), 231-239.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/argo.library.okstate.edu/10.1515/rae-2016-0028>
- Arnheim, R. (1989). *Thoughts on art education*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Center for Education in The Arts.



- Baird, G. L., Scott, W. D., Dearing, E., & Hamill, S. (2009). Cognitive self-regulation in youth with and without learning disabilities: Academic self-efficacy, theories of intelligence, learning vs. performance goal preferences, and effort attributions. *Journal of social and clinical Psychology, 28* (7), 881-908.  
Doi:10.1521/jscp.2009.28.7.881
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist, 28*(2), 117.
- Barone, T., Eisner, E. (2012), *Arts based research*. Sage Publications Inc. CA
- Barnett, S., & Williams, W. (2006). *Is the ability to make a bacon sandwich a mark of intelligence?* In S. Ceci (Ed.), *Howard Gardner Under Fire* (pp. 95-114). Chicago, IL: Open Court.
- Bloor, M. (1983). Notes on member validation, in *Contemporary field research, R. M. Emerson, ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1983*.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production*. London: Polity Press.
- Brown, J., & Weiner, B. (1984). *Affective consequences of ability versus effort ascriptions: Controversies, resolutions, and quandaries*. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 76*, 146-158.
- Burton, J., Horowitz, R., & Abeles, H. (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* (E. B. Fiske, Ed.). Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.
- Chance, P. L., & Chance, E. W. (2002). *Introduction to educational leadership & Organizational behavior: Theory into practice*. Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education.
- Campbell, L., & Campbell, B. (1999). *Multiple intelligences and student achievement:*

- Success stories from six schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Clawson, H. J., & Coolbough, K. (2001, May). *The youth arts development project*. Retrieved March 10, 2016, from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/186668.pdf>
- Covington, M. V. (1989). *Self-esteem and failure in school: Analysis and policy implications*. In A. M. Mecca, Smelser, N. J., and Vasconcellos, J. (Ed.), *The social importance of self-esteem* (pp. 72-124). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dell, C. (2010). History and Foundation Literacy. *Oklahoma A+ Schools: What the Research Tells Us*, Vol. 2.
- deMarrais, K. (2004). Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K. deMarrais & S. Japan (Authors), *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences* (pp. 51-68). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience & education*. New York, NY: Touchstone.
- Dewey, J. (1980). *Art as experience*. New York, NY: Perigee Books. (Original work published 1934)

- Doll, W. E. (1993). *A post-modern perspective on curriculum*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Donald, B., (2014). *Stanford Professor Elliot Eisner, champion of arts education, dead at 80*. Retrieved September 11, 2016, from <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2014/january/elliott-eisner-obit-011714.html>
- Dorn, C. M. (1994). *Thinking in art: A philosophical approach to art education*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Eaton, M. M. (1989). *Aesthetics and the good life*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Eisner, E. W. (1988). *The role of discipline-based art education in America's schools*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Center for Education in the Arts.
- Eisner, E. (1998), *Does experience in the arts boost academic achievement?* Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Eisner, Elliot W. (2002), What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education?, *The encyclopedia of informal education*, [http://www.infed.org/biblio/eisner\\_arts\\_and\\_the\\_practice\\_of\\_education.htm](http://www.infed.org/biblio/eisner_arts_and_the_practice_of_education.htm)
- Eisner, E. W. (2008). The misunderstood role of the arts in human development. In *Best practices in gifted education*. Prufrock Press Inc. Waco, TX.
- Erickson, F., & Wittrock, M. C. (1988). *Qualitative methods in research on teaching*.
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). (2015). Title VIII, Sec. 8001 U.S.C., Retrieved June 28, 2016, from <http://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>
- Feldhusen., J. (1986). *A Conception of Giftedness*, Sternberg, R., Davidson J. (Eds.), Cambridge University Press.

- Freedman, K., and Popkewitz, T.S. (1988). *Art Education and Social Interests in the Development of American Schooling: Ideological Origins of Curriculum Theory*. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 20(5): 387-405.
- Freedman, K., (2011). *Leadership in art education; taking action in schools and communities*. Art Education: National Art Education Association
- Freedman, K. J. (2003). *Teaching visual culture: Curriculum, aesthetics, and the social life of art*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gagne, F. (1985). *Giftedness and talent: Reexamining a reexamination of the definitions*. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 29, 103-112.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *The theory of multiple intelligences*. London: Heinemann.
- Gardner, H. (1990). *Art education and human development*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Center for Education in the Arts.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (2008). *Five Minds for the Future*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Greene, M. (1977). *Toward Wide-Awakeness: An argument for the arts and humanities in education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, M. (1994). *Carpe Diem: The arts and school restructuring*. New York, NY: Teachers College Record Volume 95, Number 4, Columbia University

- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Greene, M. (2001). *Variations on a blue guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute lectures on aesthetic education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Grohol, J. (2016). IQ Test. Psych Central. Retrieved on December 4, 2016, from <https://psychcentral.com/encyclopedia/what-is-an-iq-test/>
- Heller K., Perleth, C. (2005). The Munich Model of Giftedness Designed to Identify and Promote Gifted Students, Sternberg, R., S., Davidson, J., E. (Eds.) *Conception of Giftedness*, Second Edition, 146- 186, Cambridge
- Horn, J. (1989), *Models of intelligence*. In R. Linn *Intelligence: measurement, theory, and public policy*. (29 – 73). Chicago: University of Illinois Press
- Issaieva, E. (2016). *Conceptions of intelligence and learning and perceptions of self-efficacy among students at the end of primary school*. Educational Studies, 42(1), 114-118.doi:10.1080/03055698.2016.1152172
- Jensen, E. (2001). *Arts with the brain in mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Jones, S. D., & Workman, E. (2016, June). *ESSA's Well-Rounded Education*. Retrieved June 28, 2016, from <http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/ESSAs-well-rounded-education-1.pdf>
- Kao, J. (1996). *Jamming – the art and discipline of business creativity* New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Kaufman, J. C., & Plucker, J. A. (2013). *Contemporary Theories of Intelligence*. In S. B.

- Kaufman (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of cognitive psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Kimball, G. (2006, May 15). *Achievement analyses: A schools vs. randomly matched OKCPS students*. Retrieved March 10, 2015, from [http://www.okaplus.org/storage/Achievement Analyses OKCPS A Schools 2006 whole group.pdf](http://www.okaplus.org/storage/Achievement%20Analyses%20OKCPS%20A%20Schools%202006%20whole%20group.pdf)
- Klein, E. D., Bhatt, R. S., & Zentall, T. R. (2005). Contrast and the justification of effort. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, *12*(2), 335-339.
- Knowles, J.G., & Cole, A. L. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Krause, C. (1887). A creative arts model for gifted and talented students using community resources and people. *Roeper Review*, *9*, 149 – 151.
- Locke, L.F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2000). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing: context and narrative*. Cambridge, Hampton.
- Nadrljanski, M., Buzasi, M., & Zokic, M. (2009). *Development of Spatial-visual Intelligence*. Retrieved June 21, 2017, from <http://infoz.ffzg.hr/INFuture/2009/papers/808%20Nadrljanski,%20Buzasi,%20Zokic,%20Development%20of%20Spacial-visual%20Intelligence.pdf>
- Naglieri, J., Brulles, D., & Lansdowne, K. (2008). Equitable assessment of gifted children. In *Helping all gifted children learn* (pp. 3-17). Pearson Education.

- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. Title IX § 7801, 9101 (2016).
- OKAPLUS Schools. (n.d.). Retrieved March 30, 2015, from <http://www.okaplus.org/>  
*Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE): 2015 School Law Book* [PDF].  
(2015). Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Department of Education. Retrieved  
from:[http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/2014\\_OSDE\\_Law\\_Book.pdf](http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/2014_OSDE_Law_Book.pdf)
- Oreck, b., Owen, S. V., & Baum, S. (2003). Validity, reliability, and equity issues in an observational talent assessment process in the performing arts. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 27, 62 – 94.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.).  
Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Perkins, D. N. (1994). *The intelligent eye: Learning to think by looking at art*. Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for Education in the Arts.
- Presseisen, B. Z. (2008). *Teaching for intelligence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Public-schools.startclass.com*. (n.d.a). Retrieved June 20, 2017, from <http://public-schools.startclass.com/l/73891/Putnam-City-High-School>
- Public-schools.startclass.com*. (n.d.b). Retrieved June 20, 2017, from <http://public-schools.startclass.com/l/73892/Putnam-City-West-High-School>
- Public-schools.startclass.com*. (n.d.c). Retrieved June 20, 2017, from <http://public-schools.startclass.com/l/73898/Putnam-City-North-High-School>
- Rasmussen, K. (1998). Arts education: A cornerstone of basic education. *Curriculum Update*, 1 -3,6.

- Ravitch, Diane. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Renzulli, J., S. (1986). *The three-ring conception of giftedness: A developmental model for creative productivity*, Sternberg, R., Davidson J. (Eds.) *Conceptions of Giftedness*, 53 – 91, Cambridge University Press
- Robinson, A., Shore, B. M., & Enersen, D. L. (2007). *Best practices in gifted education: An evidence-based guide*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Rose, G. (2012). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching the Visual Materials* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom: Teacher expectations and pupils' intellectual development*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles [i.e. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications
- Schwandt, T. (2007). *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Slattery, P. (2013). *Curriculum development in the postmodern era: Teaching and learning in an age of accountability* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1985). *Beyond I. Q.: A triarchic theory of human intelligence* (New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stevens, V. (2000). *The Importance of Creative Thinking, Emotional Intelligence and the Arts*. Retrieved June 20, 2017, from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242663298\\_IMAGINATION\\_CREATIV](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242663298_IMAGINATION_CREATIV)



*ITY\_EMPATHY\_AND\_METACOGNITION\_Aesthetic\_Literacy\_and\_21\_st\_Century\_Skills*

- Sullivan, G. (2002). Painting as Research. In *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research, Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples and Issues* (pp. 339-355). Sage Publications.
- Sullivan, G. (2005). *Art practice as research: Inquiry in the visual arts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sullivan, G. (2006). Research Acts in Art Practice. *Studies in Art Education, A Journal of Issues and Research*, (48), 1st ser., 19-35.
- Taubman, Peter M. (2009). *Teaching by numbers: Deconstructing the discourse of standards and accountability in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tannenbaum, A., J. (1986). Giftedness: A psychosocial approach, in Sternberg, R., Davidson J. (Eds.). *Conceptions of Giftedness*, 21 – 52, Cambridge University Press
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. New York: Falmer.
- Wygant, F. (1983). *Art in American Schools in the Nineteenth Century*. Cincinnati: Interwood Press.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### **API Score Comparisons for Oklahoma A+Schools**

*API Score Comparisons for Oklahoma A+ Schools*

Academic Year	OKA+ Schools <sup>®</sup> Average <sup>1</sup>	District Average <sup>2</sup>	OK State Average <sup>3</sup>
2002-03	<b>1109</b>	975	1046
2003-04	<b>1135</b>	1049	1086
2004-05	<b>1261</b>	1137	1159
2005-06	<b>1308</b>	1170	1180
2006-07	<b>1332</b>	1196	1252
2007-08	<b>1346</b>	1210	1279
2008-09	<b>1341</b>	1262	1289
2009-10	<b>1132</b>	1063	1092
2010-11	<b>1151</b>	1113	1138

<sup>1</sup> API data are not available for some OKA+ schools (e.g., private schools, early childhood centers)  
<sup>2</sup> OKA+ schools were included in the State Department of Education's District Average calculations  
<sup>3</sup> In 2009 the State Department of Education changed the baseline formula affecting averages

*Note.* API Score Comparison for Oklahoma A+ Schools. Annual performance index (API) Score Comparison for Oklahoma A+ Schools (Regular Students) vs. Districts and state Averages. OKA+ Schools comparison chart for academic yearly progress from 2002 – 2011 (AYP) illustrating growth in arts focused schools over non-arts focused schools (Kimball, 2006).

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Guide

#### Interview #1 Guide

##### Background Questions:

- *Tell me about yourself.*
- *Tell me about your school experience.*
  - *Academically*
  - *Socially*
- *Describe your experience taking art classes.*
  - *What most interests/disinterest you?*
- *Describe your experience taking other classes.*
  - *What most interests/disinterest you?*

##### Feeling Questions:

- *How do you feel about being identified as a talented art student?*
- *How do you feel about identifying as an intelligent (smart) student?*
- *How do you feel about your academic capabilities?*

##### Opinion and Values Questions:

- *What is the value of art education in your academic experience?*
- *Do you think art education in schools are valued?*
- *What does it mean for one to be talented?*
- *What does it mean for one to be intelligent (smart)?*

#### Sketchbook Prompt Prior to Interview #2

Represent your thoughts, opinions and perceptions in your sketchbook through words, images and/or collaging regarding the following concepts:

- Talent or a talented person
- Intelligence or an Intelligent person (smart)
- How you view yourself regarding talent and intelligence
- The value of art education – to you, to others, to society

#### Painting Prompt Prior to Interview #3

Arts-based participant presentation of completed artwork based off the initial interview questions and sketchbook work.

*Interview Guide.* The interview guide is the script used during the initial interview process and the prompts provided to the participants prior to interview two and three.

## APPENDIX C

### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board IRB Approval Letter

#### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Wednesday, December 21, 2016  
IRB Application No ED16183  
Proposal Title: Artistically Talented Students' Perceptions of What it Means to be "Smart":  
An Analysis of Intelligence and Talent in Secondary Art Education  
Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited  
Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 12/20/2017  
Principal Investigator(s):  
Jason Memoli Jennifer Job  
621 Tudor Ln 254 Willard  
Edmond, OK 73003 Stillwater, OK 74078

---

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

- 1Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
- 2Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
- 3Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
- 4Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Scott Hall (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Hugh Crethar, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

## APPENDIX D

### Recruitment Information Letter for Teachers

#### Recruitment Information Letter for Teachers

Study: *Artistically Talented Students' Perceptions of What It Means to be "Smart": An Analysis of Intelligence and Talent in Secondary Art Education*

Greetings Art Teachers,

My name is Jason Memoli, a doctoral candidate from the College of Education, School of Teaching, Curriculum and Leadership at Oklahoma State University. I would like to ask for your help to recruit student participants in the research study titled *Artistically Talented Students' Perceptions of What It Means to be "Smart": An Analysis of Intelligence and Talent in Secondary Art Education*.

The purpose of this study is to explore artistically talented art students' opinions of what it means to be intelligent and to see how that relates to their artistic talent. This study also examines the notion of intelligence in relation to art creation and art education as it pertains to students' beliefs in their own educational abilities. This study will also be using art as research and will examine the student's experience and thoughts in using art as research.

As this study has a central concern to originate insight from perceptions of participants regarding intelligence, art talent, art education and academic self-efficacy, it is important to study participants that could provide an "interior" perspective. Therefore, the participants I am asking you to help identify are advanced placement studio art high school students that you feel are artistically talented.

Participants in this study, will be asked to participate in three 30-minute individual or group interviews to discuss their opinions on what it means to be an intelligent person and how that relates to talent and art education. They may also participate in creating artwork to communicate personal responses with a sketchbook and an art painting project (all materials for this study will be provided to each participant). A final check of the information, with the participants will last approximately 10-20 minutes. Any artwork created for the purpose of this study will be kept by the participant and photographs will be taken to document the work for research purposes. Participation is voluntary and any work associated with this study will not be tied to class grade/evaluations.

In regards to confidentiality; names will not be given or used in any way. The information they submit can only be accessed by myself (primary investigator) and will remain private. All data collected in this study will remain strictly confidential and no identifying information will be attached to data or reports. The risks associated with this study are low and at any time participants have the right to cease participation with out penalty.

For information regarding this study, contact:

Jason Memoli, Primary Investigator (PI): [jmemoli@okstate.edu](mailto:jmemoli@okstate.edu); 405-990-6331

For Further information regarding this study you may also contact:

Dr. Jennifer Job, Faculty Advisor to the PI: [Jennifer.job@okstate.edu](mailto:Jennifer.job@okstate.edu); 405-744-3373

Dawnett Watkins, CIP, OSU IRB Office: [dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu](mailto:dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu); 405-744-5700

## APPENDIX E

### Parent or Guardian Consent Letter Page 1

#### PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

**INVESTIGATOR:**

Jason Memoli Doctoral Candidate  
Oklahoma State University (OSU)  
College of Education

**Dear Parents/Guardian,**

Your student is being asked to participate in a research study because they have been recommended by their art teacher as being artistically talented with high academic achievement in art education and a participant in the advanced placement (AP) studio arts class. Details of the study, confidentiality and researcher contact information are all provided below. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

**PROJECT TITLE:**

*Artistically Talented Students' Perceptions of What It Means to be "Smart": An Analysis of Intelligence and Talent in Secondary Art Education*

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this study is to explore artistically talented art students' perceptions of what it means to be intelligent and to see how that relates to their artistic talent. This study also examines the notion of intelligence in relation to art creation and art education as it pertains to students' beliefs in their own educational abilities. This study will also be using art as research and will examine the student's experience and thoughts in using art as research.

**PROCEDURES:**

As a participant in this study, your student will be asked to participate in three 30-minute individual or group interviews to discuss their opinions on what it means to be identified as an intelligent person and how that relates to artistic talent and art education. Your student will also participate in creating artwork to communicate personal responses with a sketchbook and an art painting project (all materials will be provided to each participant). Interviews and activities will take place during the regular scheduled school day and during their regular scheduled art class. To end the study your student will be asked to review the information called a "member check" to make sure the research accurately communicates perceptions and opinions. This members check will last approximately ten to twenty minutes.

**RISKS OF PARTICIPATION:**

The risks associated with this study are low and at any time participants have the right to cease participation with out penalty. Participation is voluntary and any work associated with this study will not be tied to class grade or class evaluations.

**BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:**

The results of this study have the potential to broaden the understandings regarding perceptions of intelligence in public education settings and how students identify, view and value art creation and art education within a larger social view. This study will further provide understandings into human intellect as a multi-dimensional concept from a students' point of view. Additionally, the data may

APPENDIX E

Parent or Guardian Consent Letter Page 2

provide insight into systems of education that separates, and categorizes disciplines or domains of study creating a narrowed claim of intelligence in public schools that may effect a students overall academic self confidence. The benefit to the participants will be to gain a better understanding of his/her artistic talent and the experience and new understanding of investigating their world through art creation.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you or your child. Data, including interview notes, transcriptions, and images of artwork, will be destroyed three years after the study has been completed. Images created by the participant will be used in the written report of the study unless there is identifying information within the image.

**STUDY RESULTS:**

The results of this study will be reported in a dissertation (written research report) presented to Oklahoma State University as well as possible future research journal articles.

**CONTACTS:**

You may contact the researcher or the researcher’s advisor at the following phone numbers or email addresses should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study: Primary Investigator (PI) Jason Memoli (Doctoral Student)., 405-990-6331, [Jason.memoli@okstate.edu](mailto:Jason.memoli@okstate.edu) or Dr. Jennifer Job Ph.D., 405-744-3373, [Jennifer.job@okstate.edu](mailto:Jennifer.job@okstate.edu). If you have questions about your students rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the OSU IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu)

**PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:**

I understand that my student’s participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my permission at any time. Even if I give permission for my child to participate I understand that he/she has the right to decline.

**CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:**

I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what my child and I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements: I have read and fully understand this permission form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX F

### Student Assent Letter

#### ASSENT FORM OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Research Title: *Artistically Talented Students' Perceptions of What It Means to be "Smart": An Analysis of Intelligence and Talented in Secondary Art Education*

Dear Student,

You have been identified as a possible participant in the above titled research study. You have been selected because your teacher identified you as artistically talented and are currently participating in an advanced placement studio art class. In this research I am interested in learning about what art students think about what it means to be "smart" and if someone can be "smart" in art. In order to understand this, I am asking you to participate in three, thirty minute interviews that include sketching in a sketch journal and painting a picture. I am also interested in what you think about creating art for research purposes. Your parent/guardian is aware of this project and has given permission for you to participate if you choose to.

Please understand that you do not have to do this. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to or you do not have to participate in the art creation of this project either. You may stop participating in this research project at any time.

Again, participation in this study is voluntary. Art materials for this study will be provided. Participants will be able to keep all art work created and any work associated with this study will not be a part of your grade or class evaluation. Pictures of art work will be taken and shown in research results. Results will be presented in a dissertation research study published through Oklahoma State University.

Benefits of this study include a better understanding of your artistic talent and the experience, and new understandings of investigating your world through art creation.

Your name will not be on the information gathered, and you will be given a number or a pseudonym that will be put on your answer sheet so no one will know whose answers they are. This study will be a published research report (dissertation) with no names or identifying places in the report. If you have any questions about the form, please ask us.

#### CONTACTS:

You may contact the researcher, the researcher's advisor or the OSU Institutional review board (IRB) at the following phone numbers or email addresses should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study:

Primary Investigator (PI) Jason Memoli: [jmemoli@okstate.edu](mailto:jmemoli@okstate.edu); 405-990-6331  
Faculty Advisor to the PI Dr. Jennifer Job: [Jennifer.job@okstate.edu](mailto:Jennifer.job@okstate.edu); 405-744-3373  
OSU IRB Office: Dawnett Watkins, CIP: [dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu](mailto:dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu); 405-744-5700

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Jason Memoli - Graduate Student Oklahoma State University

I have read this form and agree to help with your project.

---

(your name)

---

(your signature)

---

(date)



## VITA

Jason James Memoli

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: ARTISTICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "SMART": AN ANALYSIS OF INTELLIGENCE AND TALENT IN SECONDARY ART EDUCATION

Major Field: EDUCATION

### Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2017.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Education at University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma in 2005.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Fine Arts at University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma in 2002.

### Experience:

- Curriculum Coordinator for Fine Arts and Gifted & Talented Education, Putnam City Public Schools, Oklahoma City, OK. 2012 – Current
- Art Teacher, Putnam City West High School, Oklahoma City, OK. 2006 - 2012
- Art Teacher, High School & Middle School, Geary Public Schools, Geary, OK. 2004 – 2006
- Mural Artist, Oklahoma City, OK. 1999 – Current

### Professional Memberships:

- National Art Education Association (NAEA)
- Oklahoma Art Education Association (OAEA)
- Oklahoma Association for Gifted, Creative and Talented (OAGCT)
- National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
- Oklahomans for the Arts
- Oklahoma Alliance for Arts Education (OAAE)