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SPONTANEOUS STEINBECK: THE INFLUENCE OF ARTS INTEGRATION, PRIMARILY SPONTANEOUS PAINTING, ON THE READER RESPONSE OF HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS TO *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*

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SPONTANEOUS STEINBECK: THE INFLUENCE OF ARTS INTEGRATION, PRIMARILY SPONTANEOUS PAINTING ON THE READER RESPONSE OF HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS TO *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses my experience with a group of 11th grade students and their reading of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939, 2002) by John Steinbeck. I questioned how the application of visual arts integration strategies, specifically the use of spontaneously created paintings, might influence the reader responses of my high school junior-level students to *The Grapes of Wrath*? Additionally, I wondered how this experience might change me as a classroom teacher and as a reader? Specifically, using the heuristic methodology as described by Clark Moustakas, I systematically examined the responses of a select group of high school juniors to reading *The Grapes of Wrath* and to the use of arts integration, specifically spontaneous paints, as a method for responding to literature. Using a paint-write process which involves reading , free writing, and free painting, students created paints that helped express their thoughts and feelings about the novel. In addition to creating their own pieces, students responded to existing art work. Building on the works of John Dewey, Louise Rosenblatt, Richard Beach, and Eliot Eisner, the study suggests that students who use these forms of art to respond to literature learn to create their own understanding, to access their thought processes, and to experience a transaction with the text. Further research is needed to more fully understand the influence of teaching creativity skills, lengthening the instruction time allowed for the novel, and applying the Paint-Write process to other works of literature.

Chapter One

One fall, I decided to teach *The Grapes of Wrath* as part of my 11th grade American Literature class and our study of the "American Dream." Although I had struggled with the 455-page novel, twice, I was convinced that this was just the story that my class needed. Displaced persons who become migrant farmers who struggle with acceptance, self-identity, and the pursuit of the American Dream – surely my students – predominantly poor minorities in a choice-alternative school setting - could identify with this story line. Together we'd have one of those experiences -- the ones I had dreamed of when I first thought of becoming a teacher. The one where I would ask, "What does the turtle in Chapter Three represent?" and every hand would eagerly shoot into the air and answers would fly from student to student as I sipped my morning Starbucks and compared myself to John Keating, famed life lesson teacher from *Dead Poet's Society* (Schulman, 1989).

Unfortunately, life seldom imitates art and my students roundly rejected Steinbeck. "Why," they bemoaned, "must he use ten words where one will do? He gives details of his details!" And then, the teen kiss of death… "He's boring." And that was only chapters one, two, and three. We had twenty-seven chapters, four hundred plus pages to go. While I knew that the rejection of a text counted as a response to a text, I was not prepared to remove this novel from our plan of study. I reasoned that, in addition to it being a great book, I'd convinced the department head and the principal to spend $400 plus on the books and I had to use them. I braced myself for a

very long unit, gave a weekend reading assignment, and prepared the best lesson plans I could imagine. In my heart though, I feared this would not be enough. I feared that I would be force-feeding my students the great literature I loved and that doing so would destroy any chance my students had of becoming readers.

Miguel

Something had to give and it came from the one student I least expected to read a novel, to complete a homework assignment, or to contribute anything meaningful in a class discussion, other than a muttered "Jesus" which elicited laughs from his classmates and groans from me – Miguel. Don't get me wrong. Miguel had tested as gifted and talented, scoring a shockingly high 96% on the exam. He just didn't want to do the work. If it wasn't going to help him reach his goal of mastering a video game or becoming a video game designer, he was not interested. My fellow teachers and I had tried to explain to Miguel that the same skills required for writing an essay were useful when designing a video game. He wasn't buying it, and now I had committed the ultimate crime and expected him to complete a 455-page novel in three weeks. We had both left for the weekend convinced that the other was wrong. As I tried to revamp my lesson plans and regenerate my enthusiasm for the novel, I added documentaries, the John Ford movie, background information on the Great Depression, and a vocabulary list. They would read and understand and appreciate this novel, even if my inner reader died in the effort.

Monday morning Miguel strolled into class with, “Great book Klasek.”

“What?” I thought to myself, sure that he had gotten the Sparknotes version and was bluffing. “Really,” I said, trying to keep shock and sarcasm out of my voice.

“Yeah… This Steinbeck guy can really paint a picture.”

“Miguel, I love that you said that. What does it mean?” I still wasn’t sure Miguel wasn’t just pulling my leg in an attempt to get me to change my lesson plans from reading to something easier, like a free day with computers.

“It means you can’t read Steinbeck. You have to draw him, in your brain, like a movie.”

And there it was. The “eureka moment.” The change to my lesson plans. Steinbeck gave details about his details. My students could paint this book. They could create visual projects that would explain in pictures our understanding of the novel. *Ekphrasis* would work here and I now knew what to do: throw out the worksheets, the reading guides, the vocabulary lists, the literary analysis lectures and Marxist interpretations, and start again.

“Miguel, you’re brilliant.”

That day in class, we tackled Chapter Three of *The Grapes of Wrath* again - two and a half pages where a turtle crosses a road, where seeds wait to be spread by dogs and foxes, where a car swerves to avoid the dusty turtle while a delivery truck intentionally hits the turtle and he is “flipped like a tiddly-wink, spun like a coin, and rolled… off the highway” (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 15)

where he lies helpless in the hot sun until he can turn over. This had been the chapter that spelled the end of Steinbeck for my students the first time we read it. "What," they lamented, "is the turtle doing here?" "Why three pages of a turtle crossing a road?" With great suspicion they asked, "This is a symbol of something, isn't it?"

This time though, as I read, they painted. Spontaneous, abstract paintings of what they heard and of what they saw in their minds as I read the chapter to them. After they painted, they wrote. "Tell me what you painted; why you used those colors; why you used those shapes. What's there for us to see?" And they got it. They understood that the turtle was a symbol for the struggling American farmer whose lands were turning to dust and who was helped by some and intentionally kicked to the side by others. Steinbeck now had a second chance with my students and the Joads were free to continue their voyage west on the Mother Road, from farmer to migrant to survivor.

Research Question

My review of the research supported the decision to use the arts in the language arts classroom. What I wondered, what I needed to know, was how would it work for me? More explicitly: How might the application of visual arts integration strategies, specifically the use of spontaneously created paintings, influence the reader responses of my high school junior-level students to *The Grapes of Wrath*? Given that not all of my students learn in the same way, I wondered which students might be most affected or influenced by the use of visual arts integration in my language arts classroom? Perhaps the most

difficult question for me: how might this experience change me as a classroom teacher and as a reader?

Ekphrasis: One Time Event or Phenomenon?

I believed that the decision to use *ekphrasis* allowed my students to access *The Grapes of Wrath* and to create meaning that applied to their lives and gave them the confidence to read such a thick, challenging book. "In its earliest, most restrictive sense, *ekphrasis* referred to the verbal description of a visual representation" (Blackhawk, 2002, p. 1). I had been exposed to *ekphrasis* in a class with Professor Michael Angelotti in a teaching composition graduate course as we explored the teaching and writing of poetry. As described by a classmate,

> We used freewrites (stream-of-consciousness writing) and freepaints (spontaneous, intuitive painting) to unleash our imaginations. We wrote, painted, swapped paintings and wrote poetic responses to each other's paintings, and exchanged poems and painted responses to each other's poetry. This process liberated me; splashing and dripping bright colors across the canvas freed my innate but dormant creative voice. (Courtney-Smith & Angelotti, 2005)

In my experience, the paint-write process involved spontaneous paintings and free writes that usually, but not always, resulted in poetry. Using the process of reading, then painting, and then writing had made once inaccessible poetry more accessible to me and now I was confident that I had discovered the same kind of increased accessibility in my students; well, most of my students. But had I? Would this phenomenon be repeated in following years as my future students and I faced *The Grapes of Wrath* again? By using this paint-write approach, was I still meeting the PASS objectives required of my

teaching and of my students by the State? Was this an approach that could be duplicated in other classes with other texts and maybe even by other teachers? Did *ekphrasis* bring an adequate amount of access to a sufficient number of students to make it worth using again? Before any of those questions could be explored though, I needed a way to systematically examine the phenomenon and determine if something had indeed influenced the responses of my students. To find answers, research needed to be done.

Qualitative Research – Heuristics by Moustakas

According to Clark Moustakas, the core of qualitative research is introspection – a knowing of the preconceived notions, ideas, prejudices, and biases that researchers hold that will affect their research. Moustakas proposes that:

> Heuristics is a way of engaging in a scientific search through methods and process aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meaning of important human experiences. The deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one's senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments. This requires a passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated or answered. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 15)

In *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications* (1990), Moustakas outlines six stages to heuristic research: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis (p. 15-37). Initial engagement is when the researcher first comes "face-to-face" with the problem or phenomenon that s/he wishes to study. Immersion is when the researcher delves deeply into the various aspects of the phenomenon being studied. The incubation stage is almost the exact opposite of the immersion

stage. During incubation, the researcher consciously removes him/herself from the conscious evaluation of the material and allows it to "simmer," to be digested and analyzed and reorganized in the subconscious. This reorganization and analysis allows connections to emerge that might not have otherwise been discovered.

While incubation is a time of self-awareness and soul-searching, illumination offers the researcher the chance to develop conscious self-awareness about the subject without forcing the knowledge to the surface. Rather than look for preconceived notions and conclusions, this stage relies on intuitive knowledge. Explication is the stage where the researcher fully examines the levels of knowledge that have resulted from the previous steps. Using previous schema, the new information and data are correlated to frames of reference and knowledge "since meanings are unique and distinctive to an experience" (Moustakas, 1990, p.31). Creative synthesis is the final step of the heuristic research process. Creative synthesis is the creation and formation of holistic or "whole knowledge" (p.32) from the bits and pieces and parts that the researcher has been working with and thinking about since immersion.

Following these steps I developed a deeper understanding of the use and effectiveness of arts integration activities in my Language Arts classroom. Just as importantly, this method allowed "…research participants to remain visible in the examination of the data and to continue to be portrayed as whole persons" (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 38-39). I followed Moustakas' steps to

allow my students and I to maintain our voices while I worked toward an understanding of the classroom phenomenon. Using heuristics to study this situation allowed me to organize the materials, the study, following the six stages of heuristics: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis.

Initial Engagement – where the researcher documented his/her first encounters with the research subject or phenomenon. In this instance that included my history as teacher and reader. It also included an exploration of my initial exposure to the idea of spontaneous painting as a form of reader response and ideas on how the benefits of arts integration align with state and national standards and the nature of qualitative research.

Researcher as Reader and Teacher

According to Chris Crowe, former editor of the "Young Adult Literature" section of *English Journal*, most English teachers become English teachers because they love to read, "…the indefinable pleasure of being lost in stories, carried away on magic carpets of words woven by storytellers, talented or not" (2000, p.138). I am no exception to that rule. I love to read. I have always loved to read since I learned at age three. And I read constantly. My personal best record for reading was the summer between my sophomore and junior years in high school – I read the whole recommended list of "101 books for College-bound Students." I didn't realize then that it was more of a guideline than a requirement.

However, according to a study conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts, I and other adults who read for pleasure are a bit of an anomaly. T*o Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence* (2007), reported that 59% of adults ages thirty-five to forty-four report having read a book not required for school or work. That same group reported reading for twelve-minutes on a weekday and sixteen-minutes on weekends or holidays. Both of these results are a decline from the last report of this nature conducted in 1992 (National Endowment for the Arts, 2004). The numbers for teens are even lower. I have never fully understood why more people don't love to read as much as I do. This mystery is part of what I hoped to figure out when I entered the doctoral program at the University of Oklahoma in English Education and a few years later the high school English Language Arts classroom.

When I entered college in 1988, I had clear visions of myself as the English teacher whom everyone loved. My students and I would be a team. We would work on grammar skills, writing skills, and read multiple works of fiction (short story and novel) and Shakespeare with vim and gusto – discussing the relevance of each scene and every decision point faced by the characters with enthusiasm and eagerness. This vision lasted until I encountered my first education class and my first classroom observation – one semester. My first professor of education was a high school English teacher who believed in the power of the red pen, of the grammar worksheet, and of straight orderly rows of desks that were perfectly positioned to

encourage lecture and silence and to discourage discussion and noise. My first classroom observation offered more of that same teaching philosophy. The class was an 8th grade English class with desks in groups by reading level and plenty of workbooks. According to the students, reading was boring.

I left the world of Education one day later and entered the world of an English major. While my friends studied anatomy and physics, I read the complete works of Shakespeare. While they crammed for multiple-choice exams, I wrote critical responses to Samuel Johnson and Jonathan Swift. In an independent study, I received an "A" for surviving a reading of *Tristam Shandy*. At a professor's house, I shared the inside joke of a cake decorated with "I am a fish." and a giant outline of a fish. And despite not knowing where my degree would lead me, I knew the joy of sharing the power of the written word with others who loved it as much as I did; as much as I had hoped that my future students would.

After graduation, I found an appreciative audience for my love of literature – pre-schoolers. I loved "story time" and so did they. Our library had over 250 children's books and we would dedicate more than an hour each day to reading stories. After we read, students would scatter to the other activity centers and act out what we had read, "write" books of their own complete with illustrations, and "read" their books and books from the library to the bunnies, guinea pigs, resident cat and to their classmates. I still have their books, which I regard as some of my most valuable possessions. My

pre-schoolers loved to be read to. They would listen with intensity equal to or greater than that of the storyteller and then approach the written word in their own way. I knew, I hoped, in my heart of hearts that these children would stay great readers when they grew up.

After ten years of pre-school and the death of my father, I decided it was time to make my role as teacher official and moved from Indiana to Oklahoma to earn a Master's degree. I was tired of my small town and wanted to visit the world, so I earned a Masters in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. This program filled in some of the blanks in my undergraduate education, offering me classes in how to teach reading, in grammar, and in linguistics. With predominately non-native speakers as my classmates though, the program left me questioning and wanting to learn more. I worked with a federal grant that served at-risk students in the Oklahoma City area and as I researched and implemented programs to help make these students more college aware and ready, I discovered two things. One, I was not cut out for administrative paperwork; and two, I missed teaching. It was then that I started as an adjunct at a local branch of a state college and entered the doctoral program in English Education at the University of Oklahoma.

Introduction to *Ekphrasis*

I remember telling the professor who interviewed me for the doctoral program (who became my advisor) that I wanted a challenge but "don't really like poetry… at all." He gave me a look and a smile and accepted me into the

program anyway. In my first class, we analyzed *Mushrooms* by Sylvia Plath – repeatedly. I felt lost and confused and ready to quit. However my adult students were facing the same challenges in my class: they were lost and confused by the world of academic English and the unspoken rules of college. If they didn't quit, I couldn't quit. And so it went, for a semester and half, until one night a fellow student mentioned *ekphrasis*. "What is that? And how do you spell it?" I wondered.

Paint-Write

In the foreword to *Image to Word*, Christopher Edgar explores the long tradition of *ekphrastic* writing. For Edgar, the connection between writing and art involves being able to perform close observation (Walsh-Piper, p. xiii). "From the *pictura poesis* of Horace to the present, there is a long tradition of writing based on works of art, which is known as *ekphrasis* "(p.xxi). In recent years, the process has also been used in reverse (writing to image). In a graduate class at the University of Oklahoma, my professor, Dr. Michael Angelotti, introduced the process of Paint-Write. Simply put, as a class, we would read a piece, write about it, and then paint about it. Although we knew we would be painting, there was a spontaneity to the painting and writing process that forced us to give form to our initial ideas and to make creative decisions in seconds. The time allowed for each freepaint and freewrite varied from a short of one minute to a long of three minutes. (While at first, three minutes sounded like a long time, I discovered that it really wasn't when I was trying to get all the ideas from my head to my paper.) Natalie Goldberg

(1986) outlines the rules for freewrites in her book, *Writing Down the Bones*: keep your hand moving; don't cross out; don't worry about spelling, punctuation, and grammar; lose control; don't think, don't get logical; and go for the jugular (p. 8). While these are the rules, the rational is much simpler: there is power in first thoughts. "First thoughts have tremendous energy. It is the way the mind first flashes on something" (p. 9). The same rules and rational can be applied to painting. In addition, Walsh-Piper explains that the *ekphrastic* writing process "reveals something we know but had not fully realized or expressed before" (p. Xxvii). This is the goal of the Paint-Write process: to give form to first thoughts and to those thoughts not fully appreciated.

The relationship between visual text and written text is more than stages on a continuum of communication. According to Albers, "Visual texts show a distinct link between cognition and affect" (p. 133). She goes on to say that knowing how to read visual texts teaches us to make sense of marks on a canvas – even when that canvas is a piece of paper, a computer screen, or a wall. Such a connection is often visible in the works of various authors – like Keats, Goethe, and Sexton. One example of the visual text-written text connection is "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Keats' poem offers a detailed description of the urn in question and is an example of ekphrasis, while Anne Sexton's poem *The Starry Night* no doubt found its inspiration in Van Gogh's *Starry, Starry Night* series of paintings.

In *The Enlightened Eye*, Allert offers a discussion of Goethe's complicated relationship with the artists of his time. While Goethe "…disliked certain developments in the visual arts of his own time," (p. 74), those same developments are apparent in his seminal work, *Faust*. In Goethe's play, Dr. Faust sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for knowledge beyond what mere mortals know. "It is *par excellence* the Romantic masterwork precisely because it explores a wide variety of polar opposites without resolving them. Goethe has created a microcosm of life, trying to preserve its complexity, its tensions, and its dynamism" (Brians). Romanticism can be described as a movement or an attitude chiefly concerned with imagination and emotion while Classicism is more focused on the scientific and the goal of perfection. Goethe preferred his art and artists have "the correct approach to truth", his (Allert, p. 86). In his essay "On Art and the Spirit of Art," Goethe writes "You should see with your eyes exactly how the objects appear to you and represent them faithfully," (p.90). However, in his play, he is more concerned with an exploration of ideas than a search for truth.

For my study, Goethe's internal conflict actually provides support for my presumption that ideas can be objectively expressed in visual images. Simpson and Moore argue that there is "…virtually no field of endeavor untouched or unchanged by the discourse on visual change" (p. 11). As author and art critic, Goethe stood in the middle of a metaphorical circle influencing the development of various artistic fields. Years later, his understanding of the relationship between art and language would be further

demonstrated by Dr. Temple Grandin, animal scientist and autism self-advocate.

Temple Grandin was diagnosed with autism when she was three years old. She did not speak until after her fourth birthday. Through intensive therapies and education, Grandin eventually graduated from the University of Illinois with a PhD. In addition to her work with animals, Grandin has written extensively about her autism and its effect on her language development. She writes, “I think in pictures. Words are like a second language to me” (1996, p. 1). For Grandin, each interaction with the world creates a mental movie complete with sound. She strings these videos together to make sense of the world and the people around her. Consider the earlier discussion of the word “dog” and the idea of abstract versus concreate objects. For many of us, the associated image is a non-descript, four-legged creature with fur. For Grandin,

> …my concept of dogs is inextricably linked to every dog I've ever known. It's as if I have a card catalog of dogs I have seen, complete with pictures, which continually grows as I add more examples to my video library. If I think about Great Danes, the first memory that pops into my head is Dansk, the Great Dane owned by the headmaster at my high school. The next Great Dane I visualize is Helga, who was Dansk's replacement. The next is my aunt's dog in Arizona, and my final image comes from an advertisement for Fitwell seat covers that featured that kind of dog. My memories usually appear in my imagination in strict chronological order, and the images I visualize are always specific. There is no generic, generalized Great Dane. (1996, p. 4)

The idea of “visual thinker” is not a new one. In his article on the writing difficulties of visual thinkers, Grow describes visual thinkers as people who have a map of all the possibilities while verbal thinkers prefer a more linear,

"guided tour" approach. Grow (1994) believes that "verbal thinkers have difficulty organizing expository prose because their preferred mode of thought is fundamentally different from the organization of expository prose." As the class and my immersion process continued, it all began to make sense. Pictures, art, preschool drawing-inspired words and visa versa. As humans and students, first we listen, then we draw, then we read, and then we write. The language learning process was beginning to make sense and just in a nick of time too. I was entering the world of the high school Language Arts teacher.

I entered the classroom replacing a teacher whom the students didn't like. However, since she had let them have a lot of freedom, and made them do very little work, I was seen as a bit of a threat. I was supposed to teach American Literature but I had not encountered it since my survey of American Literature class during my undergraduate coursework some fifteen years before. I fell back on what I knew and we read *Macbeth* instead. Now I love Shakespeare; English majors tend to love Shakespeare; theater majors around the world adore the Bard. High school juniors who don't like the new teacher, who don't like the new rules, and who don't like to have their authority challenged, don't like Shakespeare. I was right back where I had started some seventeen years ago. I loved this and wanted them to love it too. But how was I to connect an 18th century play about betrayal and murder to the life of a teen-ager? Enter the art of media – specifically advertising.

I challenged my students to create a "product" and an "advertising campaign" for a product or service that might have been useful to the Macbeths and their cast mates. For a sample, I created "Lady Macbeth's Spot Remover – The only way to clean a guilty conscience is to out, out the damn spot!" My students loved it and quickly created several lines of weapons for effective assassinations; drugs to make sure the guards continued their sleep; and a cotton liner to help the crown rest more easily on the head. "I might be on to something here," I thought and moved on to our next assignment, leaving our artwork behind us. While this assignment was fun, I wasn't sure how to grade it and how it could possibly address the PASS objectives (Please see Appendix A for Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills [PASS] objectives for 11th grade) that were supposed to guide my every teaching moment. I used the visual to back-up or to engage but never as the primary tool in the lesson. I never allowed the visual to carry the weight of the assignment and instead relied on what I regarded as tried and true methods of teaching and learning.

Enter Steinbeck

Then came *The Big Read.* It was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts (2006) and they had selected as their first novel *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. I had never read this novel. It wasn't on my list of "101 books for College-bound Students." My exposure to Steinbeck was limited to short stories such as *The Chrysanthemums* and his short novel, *Of Mice and Men*. I took our library copy of the novel home for the

summer and struggled through the journey of the Joads. As a huge fan of Route 66, I could visualize the rickety car/truck as it climbed the Oatman Highway and approached Needles, California. I too had crossed that stretch of desert and wondered at how people survived such a journey before air conditioning and power steering. The novel was difficult for me to read, but it was even more difficult to put down. Would Rose of Sharon ever stop whining? Would Tom and Ma be able to keep the family together? Why were children dying of starvation in the richest country in the world? And why were children still starving today, so fifty years later? When I finished the novel, the whole thing strangely disquieted me. It left me with questions and no answers, and I had to read it again.

That same summer, I took a class called *Creativity in the Teaching of the Language Arts*. Through repeated use of the Paint-Write process, observation of classmates and their experiences with Paint-Write, and the lesson plans offered by fellow teachers, I was convinced that I could move the visual components of my teaching into the foreground; that I could let the visual arts carry the weight of teaching the PASS objectives. I only needed the novel, the work, the piece that would complete my emerging visual puzzle. My initial plan was to teach short stories using this more visual teaching format and to teach *The Grapes of Wrath* using my more traditional understanding.

Why *The Grapes of Wrath?*

I have often asked myself why would a teacher select *The Grapes of Wrath* to teach to an 11th grade Language Arts class? The novel is long; most student find it difficult to understand; it has that intercalary chapter organization that moves the reader from the story of general public to the specific story of the Joads and can make the story complicated; and the ending is vague, and unsatisfying. Looking back, my question is more of why I didn't think to start with a more visual approach. Why did I plan a more traditional, more rigorous-sounding approach when teaching this American classic when I had this more visual process, using art, specifically spontaneous painting, waiting to be tried? My more traditional approach was like the lesson plans provided for teachers by *The Big Read* (National Endowment for the Arts, 2006). These lesson plans include the author's history and other works, literary terminology, outside essays, and graphic organizers. Other lesson plans include SAT vocabulary words (Applied Practice, 1998) movie and book comparisons (Department of English and American Studies, 2002), and chapter-by-chapter analysis of the novel, its themes, and symbols (TheBestNotes.com Staff, 2008). In many instances, these lesson plans have several great ideas and follow a logical structure: introduce the novel, the author, and the history of the setting; review difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary; assign daily reading and writing activities; frequently check for understanding and compliance with short recall based quizzes; guide classroom discussion being sure that students understand what

symbols are being used and why and the major themes of the novel. Then to end the unit with a multiple-choice test that can provide evidence to support the idea that the students learned from the reading assignment. That was the approach I had planned to use. I, like many teachers before and since, reverted to the teaching that was done to me (Wilhelm, 2007, p. 55) even in the face of innovation. While that approach had worked for me, I was unsuccessful in using that approach with my students. They found the novel to be boring, difficult to follow, and daydreamed their way through my introduction of the Great Depression and John Steinbeck's novel.

Perhaps it's generational and my students wanted or needed a more creative approach to reading novels. Perhaps they felt a need to be entertained and my vocabulary lectures were found to be lacking. Perhaps they lacked the experience and vocabulary to express what they were thinking, what they read, saw, and thought. I don't know why the more traditional approach didn't work; I only know that it was painful for me and probably was for my students as well. I wanted them to love Steinbeck and instead he was in danger of becoming an instrument of torture. My students completely rejected Steinbeck and the Joads with "He's boring." At this point, I considered dropping the novel from the curriculum. Was it really going to be worth the teeth-pulling that was to come? I worried that forcing Steinbeck on my students was like forcing liver-and-onions on dinner guests – they'd never come back for seconds.

But I couldn't leave the novel alone. There are several compelling reasons to teach *The Grapes of Wrath*, aside from the fact that I had spent a significant chunk of our annual book money on the novel. First, I found the novel to be very challenging for me to read and felt sure that I would enjoy the challenge of teaching it to a classroom of young readers and that they could find enjoyment in tackling this novel. Second, *The Grapes of Wrath* is a literary masterpiece whose messages of social reform, treatment of others, and political and economic power and poverty are as relevant today as they were in 1939. And more than that, the reason for reading *The Grapes of Wrath* wasn't what Steinbeck and the Joads could bring to my students; it was what my students could bring to the Joads and Steinbeck. My students, many of them, come from poor families where college is not a part of their past. They are the grandchildren, the children of migrants, and are trying to find their way in a foreign world. Tom and Ma and Casy and Rose of Sharon could help my students develop a sense of self and learn the value of the struggle, but only if the students gave *The Grapes of Wrath* a chance.

Perhaps more simple than the life lesson was the reading lesson. The year before, my students had expressed a great deal of pride in tackling long, dense novels. Shorter novels, short stories and even poetry grew to be less intimidating; after all, they if they read the whole 455-page novel; if they survived Steinbeck; the poetry of Dickinson was no problem.

Next, there is a universal quality to the Joads and the other characters in the novel with which I hoped my students could identify. When *The Grapes of Wrath* was selected for NEA's "Big Read," the novel was characterized as:

> …not merely a great American novel. It is also a significant event in our national history. Capturing the plight of millions of Americans whose lives had been crushed by the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, Steinbeck awakened the nation's comprehension and compassion. Written in a style of peculiarly democratic majesty, The Grapes of Wrath evokes quintessentially American themes of hard work, self-determination, and reasoned dissent. It speaks from assumptions common to most Americans whether their ancestors came over on the Mayflower, in steerage, or in a truck…. A great book combines enlightenment with enchantment. It awakens our imagination and enlarges our humanity. (National Endowment for the Arts, 2006)

Perhaps most importantly though was my belief that reading *The Grapes of Wrath*, understanding it, transacting with it, could and would help my students develop a stronger sense of what Dewey refers to as "moral imagination" or the ability to imagine ourselves in other peoples' situations and what we might or might not do and the result of that action or inaction (Dewey, 1934; Wright, 2009). By reading this, could we imagine living in tents, travelling with little to no money, heading to a place we'd only read about, being rejected, vilified, and scorned once we reached the "promised land", and facing the very real, daily possibility of starvation? Could we imagine asking for 500 workers and finding 2,000 workers; selecting those willing to work for the least; burning or destroying crops in order to raise prices and therefore profits; fearing that these "Okies" were actually here to take what has been in their family for years, ever since they took it from the last guy? Could my students and I imagine the effort, the struggle to put into words a story so important that not

telling it would almost seem a crime? Could we, as Jeffrey Wilhelm (2008) suggests, “Be the book”?

There is one more very practical reason for reading and teaching *The Grapes of Wrath*: it satisfies several Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) objectives (http://sde.state.ok.us/Curriculum/PASS/default.html) as set forth by the state of Oklahoma. Students would expand their vocabulary, interact with words, read and respond to literature while constructing meaning. They would write for a variety of purposes in a variety of modes. They would also evaluate the visual version of the novel against the print version.

With a goal that important in mind, and more practically, the need to satisfy multiple PASS objectives with this experience, why did I turn to art for explication and expression? My students were one year away from college; they were pretty good writers; why not take a chance and write our responses? After all, Steinbeck wrote *The Grapes of Wrath*, he didn’t paint it. In a sense though, he did. The writing he used is so vivid, so detailed, that it begs for a visual version. In addition, while many of my students were good writers, most were reluctant writers. They were so indoctrinated that there was one right answer that they were very hesitant about taking a chance in writing. Even after three semesters of me and my teaching style, they still asked questions like, “What do you want me to write?” “How long does your paper need to be?” “What should I say?” In a spontaneous painting though, there was no “right” answer, so they were more open to creativity.

Eisner, PASS, and NCTE Standards

In his article "Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement?" (1998), Eliot Eisner outlined four "contributions arts education makes to both the arts and to life beyond them" (p.13). They are: an ability to transform an idea into being; an understanding of the aesthetic qualities of art and life; an understanding of the connection between content and form and culture and time; and an ability to imagine, to explore ambiguity, and recognize and accept multiple perspectives and resolutions (p. 13). These four contributions speak directly to both Oklahoma's PASS objectives (Appendix A) and the standards statement of the National Council of Teachers of English (Appendix B). These standards are what typically guide teachers as they decide what to teach and how to teach it. In my case, the standards helped justify my selection of the text (*The Grapes of Wrath*) and my method of teaching the text.

As the following chart shows (see pages 24 and 25), the academic and intellectual skills offered by arts integration align with several of the academic skills deemed desirable by both the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the National Council of Teachers of English. For me as a teacher, this alignment is important because my curriculum decisions (what to teach, how to teach it, when to teach it) are based, at least in part, on the goals set for my classroom by the Department of Education. (Please note: Some objectives and standards have been abbreviated for space purposes. The full texts are in Appendices A and B.)

Understand the connection between content/form and culture/time	Transform an idea into being	**Eisner's contribution** (Eisner, 1998)
Students should understand that the world the artist lives in influences his/her work, the expectations for the work and the problem solving that goes into the work	Students should be able to envision an idea or concept and then create a concrete representation of that idea or concept	**Explanation** (Eisner's idea as I see it)
Writing 2 - Modes and Forms of Writing - The student will write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Writing 3: Grammar/Usage and Mechanics -The student will demonstrate appropriate practices in writing by applying Standard English conventions to the revising and editing stages of writing. Visual Literacy 1- Interpret Meaning - The student will interpret and evaluate the various ways visual image-makers represent meaning. Visual Literacy 2 - Evaluate Media - The student will evaluate visual and electronic media, such as film, as compared with print messages. Visual Literacy 3 - Compose Visual Messages - The student will create a visual message that effectively communicates an idea. Reading 2 - Comprehension - The student will interact with the words and concepts on the page to understand what the writer has said. Reading 3 - Literature - The student will read, construct meaning, and respond to a wide variety of literary forms. Reading 4 - Research and Information - The student will conduct research and organize information.	Visual Literacy 2 – Evaluate Media - The student will evaluate visual and electronic media, such as film, as compared with print messages. Reading 2 - Comprehension - The student will interact with the words and concepts on the page to understand what the writer has said. Reading 3 - Literature - The student will read, construct meaning, and respond to a wide variety of literary forms.	**PASS** (Retrieved from http://sde.state.ok.us/Curriculum/PASS/default.html on July 18, 2009.)
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience. 7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience. 9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.	3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, & appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers & writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, & their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). 7. Students conduct research on issues &	**NCTE Standard** (Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/standards on July 24, 2009.)
MGRP's; art work from the period; creative writing – the artist created this piece using this material because…: creative writing about the art and/or the artist; critical analysis from a historical or cultural perspective; analysis of the underlying cultural messages of a film rendition	MultiGenre Research projects (MGRP's); presentations by students using visuals; Spontaneous painting; visual models; creative processes; creative writing	**Classroom Application** (Eisner's idea as it might be used in the classroom)

Accept multiple perspectives/ resolutions	Ability to explore ambiguity	**Eisner's contribution** (Eisner, 1998)
Students must understand that there is more than one way to interpret a situation or to solve a conflict.	Students should understand that they cannot know everything and that doubt and questioning are positives.	**Explanation** (Eisner's idea as I see it)
Oral 2 - Speaking - The student will express ideas and opinions in group or individual situations.	Visual Literacy 1- Interpret Meaning - The student will interpret and evaluate the various ways visual image-makers including graphic artists, illustrators, and news photographers represent meaning.	**PASS** (Retrieved from http://sde.state.ok.us/Curriculum/PASS/default.html on July 18, 2009.)
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience. 3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. 5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately. 9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity 11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.	3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. 7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems.	**NCTE Standard (**Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/standards on July 24, 2009.)
Rhetorical analysis or visual analysis of an ad campaign using *ethos, pathos,* and *logos*; critical analysis from a historical or cultural perspective; Creative writing from a piece of art; mock trial or debate over a social issue of the time; student presentation of a social issue of the time	Rhetorical analysis or visual analysis of an ad campaign using *ethos, pathos,* and *logos*; critical analysis from a historical or cultural perspective; Creative writing from a piece of art; mock trial or debate over a social issue of the time	**Classroom Application** (Eisner's idea as it might be used in the classroom)

In addition, this chart offers a way of visualizing how standards express the learning goals I have for my students that go beyond the purely academic. For example, Eisner suggests that the arts allow the students the ability to imagine, explore ambiguity, and accept multiple perspectives. I want my students to learn empathy, to accept that people view the world in a variety of ways, and to explore those views with an eye toward expanding their world. The chart suggests that in teaching these skills, I have potentially covered Visual Literacy standards, listening standards, and oral standards by exposing my students to a wide variety of texts.

In assigning a short story based on a photograph, I am helping my students turn a representation into an idea; to demonstrate an understanding the photographer's era and world; to imagine how things were in the past; and to realize that there is more than one perspective to consider when responding to art or literature. My personal goal in the classroom is for my students to be able to take their place in the future with the skills necessary to succeed and to thrive. At the same time, I have to be able to justify what I am teaching to my school administrators, to my students, to their parents, and to the community at large. Just as my teachers did when I was a student.

When I look back at my education, I realize that my teachers were in the same place that I am: teaching for a future that can barely be imagined. When I started school in 1975, my kindergarten classroom did not have a computer, but my father was already working with computers. Little did any of us know that by 2010, computers would be pocket-sized and cordless (think

"smart phone"). Consider the field of education. My students are headed for careers that I cannot even begin to imagine. Just as my teachers could hardly imagine teaching with YouTube, the Internet, and SmartBoards, my students who are entering the field of education will be using virtual reality, distance education, and on-line textbooks. The innovations they will create and develop are almost beyond my imagination. Holographic computing, remote control surgery, organ regeneration, space exploration – all are fields that have only begun to be explored, but that are full of potential. For these innovations to be reached, my students must be able to transform an idea into being; to connect form to function; to imagine; to understand ambiguity; and to look at challenges from multiple points of view (Eisner, 1998, p. 13) – all skills that are sharpened and developed by arts integration.

While the world of American education is moving toward a set of common standards, at this point, those standards are not yet fully approved and implemented. As they stand now, the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in Reading are divided into four broad categories: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, and Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity. "Key Ideas and Details" emphasizes close readings which allow students to make inferences from text. It also asks students to identify themes and to analyze how and why characters, events, and/or ideas develop and interact over the course of the text. "Craft and Structure" asks students to look at connotation, denotation, word choice, text structure, point of view and other technical aspects of the

text. “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas” challenges students to integrate and evaluate content presented in various formats, while considering the validity of the presented arguments and information. At the same time, students also compare two or more texts for their similarities and differences. “Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity” evaluates students’ ability to read a wide range of texts for wide variety of purposes. As they stand right now, the Common Core Standards appear to reflect the NCTE standards and PASS objectives; however, it is not until they are fully implemented that we will be able to fully understand their impact.

Chapter Two

Immersion – where the researcher consciously delves deeply into the subject in an effort to learn as much as possible about the topic. For this study, my immersion included researching the history of reader response and of the teaching of English Language Arts; reviewing the relevant literature from past and current practitioners. I also briefly outline various methods of responding to literature, examine the role of arts integration in the classroom, provide definitions of key terms, and detail the heuristic research process.

Reader Response

A friend of mine once told me that I was taking too long working on my syllabi and lesson plans for my high school classes. "After all," she said, "you pick a novel; they read it; you tell them what it means. Easy." At one time, that might have been the case, but educators have since discovered there is more to the process. To start with, I don't tell my students what a novel does or does not mean. Reader response, or how a reader replies to a text, has a long and colorful history. For me, understanding that history creates better understanding of where I am today, how I got to this place, and how I can apply reader response theory in my daily classroom activities.

According to *Professing Literature* (Graff, 2007), in the early years of English education, Greek and Latin literature were used primarily to teach grammar and syntax and they were taught in such a way, via rote memorization and isolated analysis of pieces of the text, that the beauty of the literature was often lost to the reader. In the late 19th century and early 20th

century, this methodology continued with, what Graff calls, the “Generalist” and the “Investigators”. The Generalists favored the “…old college ideal of liberal or general culture against that of narrowly specialized research” (p. 55) while the Investigators were interested in pursuing meaning and purpose via scholarly, scientific research – literature as the basis for professions, narrowly defined fields of expertise and specialization (p. 55). What was valued: appreciation or investigation? Facts or values? Once the purpose of literature was decided, professors could then teach to that angle and students could learn. However, a simple black-and-white definition of the purpose of literature escaped experts then and continues to defy explication now.

Following in the theoretical footsteps of the Investigators came the “Critics.” Martin Wright Sampson, chair of the English department at Indiana University in 1895, argued strongly in support of criticism when he said “the aim should be to place the student face to face with the work itself” (Graff, 2007, p. 123). By giving several representative pieces of an author’s work a close and careful reading, a student could decipher the literature for himself. The focus was not to be on the history of the text or of the era in which it was written but instead on the text itself and its importance. In my case, this means that the value of *The Grapes of Wrath* is in its ability to depict the story of the Joads and in Steinbeck’s style, not in its ability to influence social change, or its controversial history. The Critics argued that a piece of literature was meant to be read -- not compared to other pieces of the time; not analyzed for sentence structure and grammatical concerns; not viewed as

a treatise on morality or virtue. Eventually, the term “New Critical” would come to mean “the practice of explicating texts in a vacuum” (p. 146). However, while “New Criticism” gave primary importance to the text, the role of reader was never fully dismissed. However, New Criticism was not the approach I was using in my classroom. Its emphasis on isolated examination was too stark for my students and for my goals.

On the other end of the spectrum were the “Scholars”, whose work would eventually help to give rise to Reader Response Theory. For the Scholars, criticism was fine but only after the work had been approached in a scientific, or structured and methodological, manner. The history and structure of a piece must be considered and the influences on the author and his role in history must all be given adequate voice before one’s own opinion and interpretation could be given voice. Perhaps Andre Morize said it best in his tome *Problems and Methods of Literary History* (1922). His message to students seems to be that readers should indulge their taste for criticism but not confuse that taste with genuine knowledge or thought. Said more plainly, criticism is fine, but it is not fact and fact is where the value is. Here the value of *The Grapes of Wrath* lies in the accuracy of Steinbeck’s depiction of the Great Depression, his inventive use of intercalary chapters, and his command of rhetorical style. Again though, the reader is not fully dismissed from affecting the meaning.

It was in this light that, in 1938, Louise Rosenblatt introduced her Transactional Learning Theory. In a “transaction” there is reciprocity - both

the reader and the text are involved in the creation of meaning. According to Rosenblatt in *Literature as Exploration* (1983), "…the literary work is a social product" (p. 28). To me this means that nothing is created in isolation and to read a piece of literature (or art), the reader needs to be aware of the author and the self in order to create fuller meaning. Just as the author brings his/her knowledge and experience to a text during the writing process, the reader brings his/her knowledge and experience to a text during the reading process. In this way, the text and the reader are changed by the reading experience. "No one can read a poem for us. The reader of the poem must have the experience himself" (p. 33). Again, this idea is in contrast to the prevailing teaching philosophy of the time. According to Scholars (Graff, 2007), there is one meaning to the piece of literature, based solely on facts, and that meaning was established long ago, by people infinitely more knowledgeable than mere undergraduate students -- people who had done the systematic work necessary to truly explicate, and therefore understand, a text. Transaction was much more desirable for me in teaching *The Grapes of Wrath* than the one-right-answer approach of the Scholars.

The early 1960's found the emphasis in schools to be on the text itself rather than on the reader's response to the text or the lessons and values that could be learned from the text. Criticism reemerged as a prominent view. These "New Critics", whose view was initially seen in the late 1930's, were focused on the view of literature as art for art's sake. T.S. Eliot once declared that, "poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it

is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" (Eliot, 1928). For the New Critics, this exemplified their beliefs. It was not the author's intention that mattered most; nor was it the reader's response that mattered. Instead, the impact of the work at the point in time when it was read or explored was in its meaning. Genre, close reading, technique, and patterns of imagery and metaphor became the mode for understanding a piece of text; the text's author, place in history, and any parallels to the reader's life were secondary, if they were considered at all.

Eventually, the "Deconstructionists," a school of thought founded by Jacques Derrida, entered the field. Deconstructionists, who were strongly influenced by the work of linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure, claim that "there is nothing outside the text, other than more text" (Littau, 2006, p. 122). Derrida has "insisted that deconstruction is not a theory unified by any set of consistent rules or procedures" (Derrida, 1976, p. 20) It does however, challenge traditional interpretations of texts using ideas of the self, the world, and the use of human language. Since these are always changing, the interpretation of a text must also be fluid and changing. According to deconstructionists, "we don't simply have thought which is then expressed by language; thought takes place in, and is made possible by, language" (Habib, 2005, p. 652). In this way, the reader reads a text and is influenced by its language but does not exert any influence on the language. There is no Truth with a big "T" in Deconstructionism; there is only what is known at this point in time and can express in language. In Deconstructionism, I found a starting

point for my students and our study of literature. When they read a text, what do they see? What do they think? If they cannot express those thoughts clearly in written words, then how can they express them? Would a paint do? Could a paint serve to scaffold our experience? Again, I found myself in a position of questioning what I was certain I knew, but for which I had no evidence.

Richard Beach

Richard Beach's *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader Response Theories* (1993) offers a comprehensively researched summary of critical literary analysis theories divided into five categories: textual responses, experiential responses, psychological responses, social responses, and cultural responses. Each chapter of the book contains an overview of the theories and theorists related to that type of response, and the strengths and weaknesses of that type of response. The weaknesses described by Beach then lead to the next type of response. For example, textual response relies only on the words on the page for meaning. However, words have different meanings in different contexts. A strictly textual response offers a single interpretation. By adding experiential responses, a different meaning, a multi-faceted meaning, can be developed. Also, for each response type, Beach uses Sylvia Plath's poem *Mushrooms* to illustrate his point. (The use of a single poem to demonstrate multiple response methods also works well in the high school and college English classrooms.)

In the introduction, Beach explains that simply applying a theory "often entails no more than a reification of the traditional knowledge-transmission model, in which the teacher draws on theory to impart knowledge" (Beach, 1993, p. 4). If I used a teaching methodology only because of a theory and without a purpose for the theory, I would be engaging in the banking model of teaching – telling students what a piece of literature means and not allowing each student to create and explore meaning for himself or herself. While that may make grading tests simpler (the answer is either right or wrong), it fails to allow students to create meaning, to (as Rosenblatt named it and as I see the value of literary experiences) transact with the text, to bring a bit of themselves to the text and to take an enriched self home each night. It values text over reader. While this may be a very tempting approach at times, it fails to achieve my classroom goals.

According to research done by Newell, MacAdams, and Spears-Burton, (Newell, MacAdams, & Spears-Burton, 1987) the beliefs of a teacher concerning the purpose of literature influence his/her literary instruction. Graff goes on to add that…

> (t)he teacher whose theoretical stance emphasized imparting knowledge about literature was more likely to focus on the texts and employ written formal analysis of the text. In contrast, the two other teachers, who asserted that they believed in using literature to write about experience, were more likely to focus on the student response and to emphasize expression of personal responses. (2007, p. 3)

Teachers who believe that the role of literature is to instruct or to impart moral values are more likely to use close readings, textual analysis, and critical literary analysis to help students respond to texts. Teachers who believe that

literature is about a shared experience or creating or expanding a worldview are more likely to use other response techniques to allow students to come to their own understanding about the meaning of a text. While this "shared experience" approach may prove difficult to assess or may open a metaphoric "can of worms," it more closely aligns with my classroom goals and is my preferred methodology.

The Textual response theories that Beach identifies include the work of structuralist and transformational linguists such as Kenneth Burke; the phenomenological theorists Georges Poulet and Roman Ingarden; and Peter Rabinowitz's theory of Readers' Knowledge of Narrative Conventions. According to Beach, in all of the theories, the reader uses his/her knowledge of the text to create meaning. Readers must call on their knowledge of the conventions of literature (elements of a short story for example; the presence of catharsis in tragedies; allusion, assonance, and rhyme scheme in poetry) to make meaning of the texts. In *A Teacher's Introduction*, Beach uses Sylvia Plath's poem "Mushrooms" to make his point. In the poem, Beach demonstrates, the "s" sound is repeated several times creating a certain tension and increasing volume (Beach, 1993, p. 13). Another textual convention that stands out in reading "Mushrooms" in the three-line stanzas where the pauses create tension and give personification to the mushrooms. The overall effect is the creation of a mob-mentality for the mushrooms.

In the classroom, this type of analysis requires students to know conventions of writing and to be able to apply those same conventions. This

also places the teacher in the role of "master explicator who, as mediator between students and critics, held the keys to unlocking the text before the admiring eyes of the students, serving to center the authority for knowledge construction in the hands of the teacher" (Beach, 1993, p. 17). As a starting point, this is a wonderful way to respond to literature. In my classroom, I provide my students with a copy of the poem and a list of literary terms and have them go hunting. We review literary terms like "alliteration" and "consonance" while practicing a form of response. However, it does have its limitations. To start with, textual response limits what is and is not an acceptable response. Texts should adhere to literary conventions in order for students to apply those same conventions. In cases where conventions are not being adhered to, close textual analysis fails to provide a full picture of the text in question. Additionally, textual analysis fails to recognize that different readers bring different experiences and values to the text (p. 47). It is this very shortcoming in textual analysis that brings us to the next type of response: Experiential.

In examining Experiential Response Theories, Beach explores those theorists who look at how a reader's history affects his/her response to a piece of text. Primary among these theorists is Louise Rosenblatt. While she is not the only theorist to look at how a reader's experiences affect his/her response (Purves, Probst, and Slatoff also appear in Beach's chapter), she is probably one of the most well known and, for me, her work is most applicable in this context. As noted in Beach (1993, p. 49-50), Rosenblatt focused on

education, drew largely on the work of John Dewey and William James, and based her work not only on feelings but also on cognitive processes. In her work *Literature as Exploration* (1938, 1968, 1976, 1983, 1995), Rosenblatt challenges the notion that the text is more valuable than the reader. For Rosenblatt, the text and the reader are of equal value. Both are obliged to take an active role in the reading process. As Connell explains, "…the reader undergoes a lived-through experience with the text that serves as the basis for a personal response…" (2000, p. 27). This is much the same as Dewey's belief about art and experience as expressed in his 1934 book *Art as Experience*. Both Dewey and Rosenblatt explain that the work is meaningless until someone takes the time to transact with the marks on the paper and brings a meaning to them. Connell goes on to propose that,

> The unique potential of the arts provides students with lived-through experiences that not only point to the importance of the study of the arts in school curriculum, but also indicate a need to integrate in some fashion Rosenblatt's notion of aesthetic experiences other disciplines of study. (p. 27)

This strongly suggests that the arts can be a vehicle for learning, regardless of the subject. It also supports Rosenblatt's (and Dewey's) proposal that education move beyond rote memorization of the "Truth" and the one "right" answer in literature and other subjects, and instead value a learning process where (when truth is defined as the way honorable men live) "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." (John Keats, in Dewey, 1934.)

In more modern times, Robert Probst offers another view of the purposes of literature in his *English Journal* article *Three Relationships in the Teaching of Literature* (1986). He suggests that the purpose can either be as a domain for the development of basic skills such as decoding and using context clues; it can be used to indoctrinate moral lessons into students; or it can be the reservoir of a culture's vision for reality and the future. For the third option to be viable, students need to "encounter the text, and in the encounter make meaning" (p. 62). This means that "students must be free to deal with their own reactions to the text" (Probst b, 1986, p. 31) while the teachers needs to be equally free to deal with their own reactions to the text, in addition to asking "… students what they see, feel, think, and remember as they read, encouraging them to attend to their own experience of the text" (p. 31). Both parties should be willing to take chances, make suggestions, and to form and test hypotheses. This is often easier said than done and may even require overcoming the preconceived notions of students that teachers have "right" answers and the students' job is to guess what the teachers is thinking.

It would seem that allowing students to add their own experiences to reading would create a sense of ownership and interest in the text. For Beach, this addition of self allows students to experience the language of emotion (p. 55), develop empathy (p. 60), and experience the world from another person's shoes (p. 59). While these may not be direct statements of PASS objectives concerning literature, they are valuable skills that students should not leave the classroom without gaining. They also echo Eisner's

contributions that the arts make to life and education (1998, p. 13): the ability to transform and idea into being; an understanding of the aesthetic quality of art and life; an understanding of the connection between content and form; and the ability to recognize, accept, and explore multiple viewpoints and ambiguity.

Again, there are limitations to this form of response. One is the idea that all students have a shared experience and will therefore respond in the same manner. Another is the assumption that students will apply their own personal experiences to the text and that doing so is appropriate. In my classroom, I have found that two students can be from the same family, share the same life experiences, and report those experiences in two totally different ways. Experiential response also presumes that all students respond to experiences in the same way and that their experiences are what influence their responses without giving credence to social and cultural influences. By placing the reader in the position as someone to whom the experience has happened rather than as someone who has knowledge (Beach, 1993, p. 69) experiential theories deny experience as knowledge which is where Psychological, Social, and Cultural theories come into play.

According to Beach, Psychological Theories of Response explore the roles that readers play when they read: player, hero/heroine, thinker, interpreter, and user of text. When children begin to read (or perhaps even to be read to), reading is play. Its purpose is to provide entertainment and, for small children, close time with a parent or caregiver. When I was a pre-

school teacher, my children could and would listen to stories for hours. As they begin to mature, children often use stories as a foundation for their play. Rather than just listen to *Cinderella*, they want to be Cinderella, or the handsome prince, or even the evil stepmother.

When they reach adolescence, however, students begin to look at literature as a way of exploring the differences between the outside world and their inside world (Beach, 1993, p. 74). Literature can also be a way of exploring who they may want to become or who they were in the past. The "thinker-reader" is capable of projecting him/herself into a character's shoes and considering the world, in a somewhat limited way, from that angle. The "reader-interpreter" however, is capable of moving beyond surface definitions of meaning and considering a variety of perspectives in relation to a text. When I teach reader-response methods in my class using multiple readings of Plath's poem *Mushrooms,* the poem often becomes about more than fungi. While it has been read as a poem about an ever-expanding cluster of chanterelles, it has also been viewed as a feminist, or Freudian, or Marxist commentary on the repression of an as yet unidentified group. "Mushrooms" may well have been Plath's attempt to bring attention to a specific, yet unnamed, group.

From the Psychological standpoint, there is also the reader as "Pragmatic User of Texts" (Beach, 1993, p. 75) to be considered. As a user of text, the reader has a specific reason for reading a text – to gain information, to escape a long day at work, to stimulate creativity, among

others – and reads specifically for that purpose. When planning my classroom reading experiences, I need to consider the cognitive and linguistic skills levels of my students in order to be able to use this approach and to remember that not all students have the cognitive and linguistic skills to use this approach effectively. Additionally, the psychological theory relies on the reader as a "rational, autonomous, accessible, consistent self who is described as an entity separate from social and cultural forces" (p. 100). I find that I would seldom use words like "rational" and "consistent" to describe my students and I do not that this should be a condition of reader response. I believe that I should not wait for my students to reach autonomy before teaching them reader response styles. Beach seems to support this assertion as he moves on to the social theories of response, which focus on social and cultural contexts.

In looking at Social Theories of Response, the teacher needs to consider the roles that s/he and his/her students are playing in the classroom. In a constructivist classroom, where students voices are valued and the teacher plays the role of guide rather than dispenser of truths, students will respond quite differently to a text than they will in a classroom where texts are read, questions are answered, and the answers are judged as right or wrong, and an essay is assigned with the expectation that it should reflect what the teacher said the text meant. According to James Paul Gee, "One always and only learns to interpret texts … through having access to, and ample experience in social settings where texts are…read in those ways." (Gee,

1988, p. 209) For the teacher, that means using a variety of texts in the classroom is an absolute necessity. For me, that means deciding the purpose of each text before it is assigned and structuring the class so that the proposed purpose is either achieved or replaced. Ideally, each text is also selected with student interest in the foreground.

However, according to Ivey and Broaddus (2001), there is a huge disconnect between what students want to read and what they are assigned to read; there is a disconnect between what the local standards require in terms of types of materials students should be able to read and comprehend and what they are actually being assigned. In addition, social theories of response require that the teacher not dominate the classroom discussion. Researcher and writer James Marshall (1989) conducted an analysis of classroom discussion and found that teachers dominate classroom conversation. Typically, a question is asked by the teacher, answered by a student (with the answer being directed at the teacher), and the focus then returns to the teacher. The questions that are asked focus on where the teacher wants the discussion to go rather than on what the students may have found interesting or what the students wanted to question. These practices limit students' ability to respond appropriately and insightfully to texts. They also limit a student's willingness to engage with a text.

These are not the only limitations faced by social response theories. First, teachers are not omnipotent and are often unaware of all the social roles students play. Second, the quality of social response relies on the

quality of the social event. In my classroom, if students are reluctant to respond, the quality of response is usually diminished. Sometimes this is because the student cannot quite put his/her thoughts into a clear expression; sometimes this is because a student is worried that his/her thoughts on the subject are wrong. If one or two students dominate the conversation, the quality suffers. On more than one occasion in my classroom, my students have been willing to sit quietly while a classmate or two holds a discussion of a text with me. If students are unwilling to accept or identify their social roles, then the quality of the response is diminished. For our reading of *The Grapes of Wrath* to go like I wanted it to, several of my students needed to identify with migrant workers, with the feeling of despair and hopelessness faced by millions during the Great Depression. In short, perhaps more than in any other class of response, social response theory relies on the reader being a willing participant in the response process. That is in part why the cultural theories of response are so important.

Of all the response theories that Beach examined in his text, the Cultural Theories of Response is perhaps the trickiest. According to Beach (1993), theorists interested in how readers' attitudes and values shape their responses draw on a range of different disciplinary perspectives: post-structuralist, feminist, anthropological, historical, and Marxist (p. 125). These perspectives generally reflect the language, norms, and values of given groups and these in turn affect how members of these cultural groups respond to text. A prime example from comes not from literature, but from

writing. Early in my career, I taught an International Study Skills class – an introductory level class for non-native speakers of English. When they wrote, I found that a good percentage of my student's papers were what I would classify as plagiarism. While my students represented a variety of native cultures, I noticed that those students whose native culture or whose families stressed communalism over individualism were more likely to plagiarize a paper. It was much more difficult to adequately explain what plagiarism is and why students are required to give credit when they use others' words and ideas to some cultural groups of students than to others. It is worth noting that I have begun to see this same kind of behavior from my high school students. They tend to believe that if the information is on the Internet, it is public property and they can represent it as their work. By being aware of the cultures of my students, I can begin to anticipate what may be culturally sensitive issues; I can select texts that challenge or reinforce those cultural beliefs; I can explore what it means to be an Hispanic, a Native American, a Buddhist, an American teen, or any one of a thousand more cultural groups; and perhaps most importantly, I can help our students achieve a fuller understanding of themselves and the world around them.

However, these response theories have limitations too. First, not all members of a cultural group are the same. A second limitation is the assumption that students are willing and able to question their cultural norms. Such questioning requires students to be able to envision a changed "norm."

However, this is not always the case and teachers should be aware that questioning norms is very difficult and can be scary.

There is one caveat that over-rides all literary criticism. In 1948, Douglas Bush, then president of the MLA, professor at Harvard, and expounder of "Christian Humanism" admonished critics for "the invention of unhistorical theories, and the reading of modern attitudes and ideals into the past" (Bush, 1949, p. 20). When we read, it is important to remember that while some action or belief may seem strange or narrow-minded or wrong, it is critical that we put ourselves in the time period that the piece was written and think about the work, at least partially, from that point of view. Then we can make a quantum leap forward to now and see how we interpret the situation.

Beach In My Classroom

Before we began *The Grapes of Wrath*, as part of our "regular classroom activities", my students and I explored the idea of responding to literature using different tools. I explicitly taught textual, experiential, psychological, social, and cultural responses and as the year progressed, asked students to identify which kind of response they were using and why. For a successful reading of *The Grapes of Wrath,* one where my students would identify with the Joads and the Okies, appreciate the beauty of Steinbeck's (albeit wordy) art, understand the despair and desperation that required action and promoted fear, I felt that my students had to know that they could draw on many different pieces of their background to create

meaning. While a single-faceted response to Steinbeck could be worthy, I was after more.

John Dewey

Current theories in reader response tend to be very reader/student focused. The idea that classroom should be student centered and that the teaching going on in those classrooms should reflect student interests comes to us from the educational reformer and philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952). In addition to his works on educational pedagogy, Dewey also wrote on art and the experiences humans have with and in creating art. In his work *Art as Experience* (1934), Dewey explores the philosophy of art – what art is; why it is important to humans; what combines to make art; and the role that art can play in education. For Dewey, the idea of art as instructional media made perfect sense, even if it was not a common practice.

> …art becomes the incomparable organ of instruction, but the way is so remote from that usually associated with the idea of education, it is a way that lifts art so far above what we are accustomed to think of as instruction, that we are repelled by any suggestions of teaching and learning in connection with art. (p. 347)

My understanding here is that art makes an excellent instructional tool, if educators, parents, and students can move past the idea that art is only for fun and has no true academic value. Indeed, as Dewey explains it, the value in art is in our experiencing of it (p. 4); experiences are on-going and are combined to create new experiences while leaving the originals unchanged (p. 36-37); and, "the artist selected, simplified, clarified, abridged, and condensed according to his interest. The beholder must go through these

operations according to his point of view" (p. 54). These steps of clarification and synthesis offer educators, offer me, a chance to teach and then to emphasize higher order thinking skills and to move their teaching past the level of "fill-in-the-blanks" and to the higher order thinking skills and student centered constructivism that is so valued across the curriculum, by business leaders across the globe, and by me.

Louise Rosenblatt

Dewey's views on how people experience art, suggests early traces of Louise Rosenblatt's theory of transaction in literature. Rosenblatt argued for a more flexible analysis and learning of literature. According to her, "…the literary experience must be phrased as a *transaction* between the reader and the text" (1978, p. 35). In a transaction, both parties are involved; neither is passive. Information, input, details are exchanged. "Transaction designates … an on-going process in which the elements are each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 17). I would add that in a classroom setting, there are three parties transacting: student, text, and teacher. The literary experience is influenced not only by the transaction

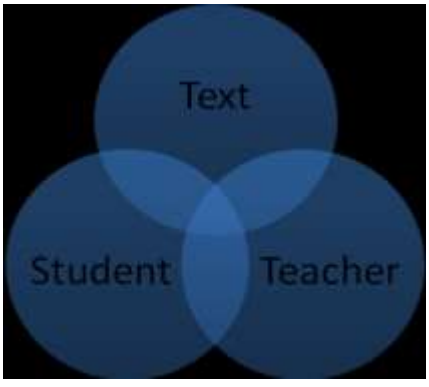

Illustration 1

between student and text, but also between student and teacher, which is influenced by the transaction between teacher and text. Also critical to a fuller understanding of Rosenblatt's ideas is an understanding of our purposes for reading, be they aesthetic or efferent. A reader's purpose for reading can lie on either end of a spectrum, aesthetic or efferent, or at some oftentimes-flexible point between the two end points of the spectrum.

On one end is efferent reading. In efferent reading, the reader is focused on the information contained in the text. His/her focus is directed to what can be taken from the text and applied to a situation. Such reading is oftentimes appropriate for cookbooks, technical manuals, scientific texts, or in my classroom, ACT test preparation books. On the other end of the spectrum is aesthetic reading where "the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 25). An example of this kind of reading would be the young lady who loses herself in a Jane Austen novel, fancies herself Jane Eyre, or sees herself in Cinderella or the young man who becomes in his mind's eye, the pirate Blackbeard or Prince Charming. In my classroom, this reading is typically reserved for DEAR time (Drop Everything and Read time).

When the reader considers the lessons learned by Cinderella or King Lear and applies them to his/her life, then the reading experience marks some point between the efferent and the aesthetic. The reading has the potential to become balanced between the efferent and the aesthetic. This is my most typically desired reading standpoint for my students. A text that my

students can enjoy, can relate to, to which they can apply one or more of Beach's response theories, and from which they can learn. Too often though, the reading experience in school, although affected by the teacher's view of the purpose of literature, is only efferent and this can cause some students to become frustrated and bored – not only with classroom reading, but with reading in general. As an avid reader, I hope to help my students avoid frustration and boredom.

Current Practitioners

Readers have been responding to texts since before the written word. Since the first caveman pressed his hand in mud to steady himself and left a ochre-red handprint on the rocks for other cavemen find and thereby know that others had been there before, humanoids have been responding to text. And since about that same time, theorists and researchers have developed ideas and standards by which those responses can be quantified, qualified, and judged. In the late 1930's Louise Rosenblatt challenged the status quo of reader response with her transaction theory. In his article, *Literary Art as Experience* (2001), Mark Faust, associate professor of English Education at the University of Georgia, applies Rosenblatt's transaction theory and John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934) to the reading experiences of 8th graders who are re-reading *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor (1976). The students that Faust interviewed and observed had first been exposed to *Roll of Thunder* in the fifth grade when a teacher had read parts of it aloud to them. Many students picked up the book on their own and read the entire

novel. As they re-visited the novel, they made meaning from their earlier exposure and enjoyed a certain amount of confidence with the increased fluency that came with the second reading (Faust, 2001, p. 43). While Faust's subjects used re-reading to intensify their own impressions of the characters and of favorite scenes, adult readers tend to use re-reading to clarify concepts of language, character, and plot development (p. 44.) These different stances set students up to be somewhere in the middle of reading for pleasure and reading for right answers. During this time, the reader tends to see school reading and aesthetic reading as two separate activities. And here, Faust, Rosenblatt, and Dewey suggest, is the problem.

School reading, Faust proposes, is a one-time action where the goal is a correct answer. Aesthetic reading is a repeatable action where the goal is understanding and appreciation. Students who are incapable of "transforming words into lived-through experiences imbued with meaning" can never regard a text as a piece of art (p.46) – an object or idea to be analyzed, revisited, contextualized, applied, and understood. According to Faust's reading of Dewey and Rosenblatt (p. 46), it is only when readers can hold onto interest in a piece long enough to analyze it, evaluate it, study it, and re-evaluate it, that they can begin to achieve the fullness of language offered by the cultural, social, psychological interpretation of literature. In short, that's when the literary transaction can happen and where the reader can construct knowledge and meaning. The question remains though, of how to move students from efferent toward aesthetic.

Jeffrey Wilhelm

In his text *You Gotta Be the Book* (1997; Second Edition 2008), Jeffrey Wilhelm observes the reading process and subsequent responses of both advanced readers and reluctant readers in his 8th grade classes. Using field notes, interviews, and emergent coding as tools for teacher inquiry, Wilhelm explores his teaching techniques, his students' response techniques, and their subsequent discovery that to respond to a text, as one student, a young man named Kevin, puts it, "You have to be the book!" (2008, p. 144) For Kevin, "be the book" means the reader shares in the lived experiences of the characters; looks at events from the point of view of the characters; and see what the author described, alluded to, and left out. (To do this effectively, readers can build on the textual, social, cultural, experiential, and psychological response techniques explored by Beach.) In his text, Wilhelm provides ethnography and phenomenology, as well as hints that classroom teachers can use Monday morning.

In particular, Wilhelm offers two tools that are of interest to me as a teacher and as a researcher. The first is a list of ten dimensions of responses subdivided into three primary categories. According to Wilhelm's thinking (p. 67-68), the three primary categories are evocative, connective and reflective. In the evocative dimension, readers enter the story world, show interest in the story, relate to the characters, and visualize the world of the story (p. 68). In the connective dimension, the reader elaborates on the story and makes connections between the story and life (p. 68). In the reflective dimension, the

reader ponders with the significance of the literature, recognizes literary conventions, and recognizes the roles of readers, authors, and the text in the story telling process and in the reading process (p. 69). Wilhelm explains that these dimensions are not exhaustive but merely provide a scaffold for categorizing, evaluating, and understanding student responses (p. 69). This same scaffold may provide a starting place for the evaluation of student responses or for teaching students how to categorize and/or expand on their own responses.

Wilhelm's study also looked at the use of drama and visual responses, which can be considered as in the same field as my students' painted responses. Wilhelm starts this process by using reader's theater to allow students to more readily enter the world of the text. Reader's theater allows students to read the text in a play-like setting without requiring the use of elaborate sets or costumes to add meaning and builds on Rosenblatt's (1978) assertion that "the benefits of literature can emerge only from creative activity on the part of the reader himself" (p. 276). While this creative activity may come easily for more advanced readers, for some readers, more assistance and scaffolding is necessary and reader's theater can provide that support. This process takes a slightly different turn in his chapter "Reading is Seeing" (p. 153-187).

Although this chapter focuses on reluctant readers (two mainstreamed students and an English as a Second Language student), the techniques described offer a chance for every student to show their metacognition by

drawing what they see, what they imagine, what they hear in the words. For students who do not realize that they should be creating "mental movies" during the reading process, this "Show me what you see" activity may hold the key to unlocking the reading process. ***Indeed, it was Miguel's ability to "show me what he saw" when he was reading that started this exploration.*** The use of non-word responses free students from the confines of their vocabulary and opens another plane of response. Other students have also been helped by the idea that reading is an active, visual activity. This more aesthetic version of classroom reading offers readers a chance to expect more and receive more from the reading process than simply boring black marks on a page that hold no appeal and offer no stimulation.

Rabinowitz and Smith

Wilhelm also weighs in on "What Makes a Valid Reading?" (p. 40). Is every reading done by a student equally legitimate or suitable? Should every student-generated response be equally accepted? Rosenblatt, while she argues for helping every individual human being "…to discover the pleasures and satisfactions of literature" (1978, p. 34), also defines a valid reading as one where, "1) the interpretation is not contradicted by any elements of the text, and 2) that nothing is projected for which there is no verbal basis" (p. 115). Wilhelm agrees with Rosenblatt and while he accepts "divergent readings" (p. 40) as a sign of growth, he maintains valid reading as an ultimate goal. "Reading can lead to self-discovery and learning – but only if we understand what the author has to say" (p. 40-41). Learning to include the

author's intent then becomes an important part of a valid reading of literature. This idea is a cornerstone of "authorial reading."

According to Rabinowitz and Smith (1998), the first responsibility of a reader in authorial reading (also called "authorial intent") is to understand the text the way the author intended it to be understood. In their 2005 article *Playing a Double Game: Authorial Reading and the Ethics of Interpretation*, Smith and Rabinowitz describe the slightly schizophrenic world inhabited by students of both English and English Education – a position in which many would-be teachers find themselves. For English majors, they suggest, literary discussions tend to be detached, informational, analytical while English Education majors literary discussion tend toward the more personal, interpretive, and emotional (p. 10). While English professors may declare Shakespeare the greatest writer ever, English Education professors warn against the dangers of relying on the canon of "dead white men" (p. 9). However, the two ideas are not necessarily exclusionary.

As Smith and Rabinowitz go on to explain, while Reader Response theory teaches that each reader comes to a text as a unique individual, authors rely on assumptions about their audiences when making decisions about their writing. One excellent example they use is the phrase "black-tie" on a wedding invitation (p. 11). Not only does this phrase mean that men should wear tuxedos and women should wear evening gowns, it also means that the event will mostly likely be a formal, evening affair; that children are probably not intended to attend; and that a $10 gift card to Wal-Mart may not

be an appropriate gift. While we can know these social conventions, we cannot know the author's psychology. We cannot know whether we are invited because the author really wants us there or if it is because his/her mother made him/her invite us. Smith and Rabinowitz regard authorial intent as a category of social convention, not as psychological principle. They also go on to explain that authors create audiences they are writing to and that to read a text requires that we agree to become members of this audience. Being members of the audience however, does not preclude us from thinking critically about the author's work, the behaviors and choices of the characters, and what we liked or didn't like. It also doesn't preclude bringing our individual experiences and backgrounds to the text. For example, when we read about the death of Grandpa in *The Grapes of Wrath* (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 138-145), we can identify with the desperation that the family feels over the need to honor Grandpa and the need to save the family. We can also question the wisdom of their decision to bury him along the road in an unmarked grave and ponder the creation of a social services agency to render assistance to families who find themselves in a situation like this one. Indeed, Smith and Rabinowitz encourage the questioning of authorial intent as a way of examining social mores and of exploring issues of social justice (p. 15). However, before students can respond to literature, they need to have the necessary tools.

Other Modern Practitioners

In her book *How Does it Mean? Engaging Reluctant Readers Through Literary Theory* (2006), teacher Lisa Schade Eckert suggests teaching literary theory as a way to provide students with the tools for responding to literature. Eckert reminds us that teachers teach literature "to encourage students … to become engaged, inquisitive readers, [and to] help them learn to find meaning for themselves…" (p. 4). The book goes on to outline a year-long course in World Literature where students were taught literary theory and how to use theory. While on the one hand, the explicit teaching of literary theory sounds obvious, Eckert (and I) didn't encounter this pedagogy and instruction until college. Additionally, without the direct instruction, "…students often don't understand what a teacher is asking for when she directs them to infer, interpret, or respond to literature" (p. 8). In his book *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (2003), Thomas C. Foster describes that moment of not understanding: "A moment occurs in this exchange between professor and student when each of us adopts a look. My look says, "What, you don't get it?" Theirs says, "We don't get it. And we think you're making it up" (p. xiii). While it may be tempting to laugh, the problem is that the students and the teacher are speaking different languages. While I may not be able to do anything about texting language (*lol, cul8r*, and such), by explicitly teaching the language of literary theory, I can help students discover a way to respond to literature that is productive and helpful. Following Beach's response-by-

response demonstration with a single text is one option for such explicit instruction.

Arts Integration

To fully understand "arts integration" and its potential to benefit students, practitioners should understand that "…the arts are cognitive activities, guided by human intelligence, that make unique forms of meaning possible" (Eisner, 1985, p. 201). People often regard the mind and the body as two distinct entities, but in truth they are sides of the same coin. Consider the act of reading. To read, we must not only have cognitive ability, but the physical ability to concentrate, to control eye movement, to build schema. While it is tempting to dismiss the arts as unimportant, non-academic topics (many colleges exclude the arts and other non-core classes from GPA calculations), the arts can be cognitively challenging. Consider the words "dog" and "justice." "Dog" is a concrete idea – we all know and can create a mental picture of a mammal, usually with four-legs and fur, that resembles Lassie, Toto, or Rin-Tin-Tin. Now, consider the word "justice." "Justice" is an abstract – there is no common mental picture created for this word. But we can create a visual representation of "justice" by building on our previous knowledge and experience – a cognitive process.

Arts Integration is a phrase that is often bandied around the field of education with little or no explanation. Arts integration has been defined by various researchers as project-based learning, thematic instruction, multiple intelligences based instruction, and the use of arts to enhance academic

instruction (Ackerman & Perkins, 1989; Fiske, 1999; Gardner, 1983; Wolk, 1994). According to Arthur Efland, "the purpose of art education is not to induct individuals into the world of the professional arts community. Rather its purpose is to enable individuals to find meaning in the world of art for life in the everyday world" (2002, p. 77). For most researchers, arts integration is defined as the use of any of the Arts (such as dance, painting, drama, film) in the classroom as a part of the learning experience. This is in direct contrast to the use of the Arts as a special event at the end of a unit or as a reward for a job well-done. In her study of arts integration and Second Language Learners, Spina (2006) offers this definition:

> Arts refers to the entire field of art, in which lines, colors, forms, and their structures, motions, and (inter)relations are used to create visually, auditorily, and/or kinesthetically perceptible works. These include painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, pottery, architecture, industrial design, photography, cinematography, textile arts, basketry, typographical arts, multimedia arts, vocal and instrumental music, dance, and indigenous forms of visual artistic expression. (p. 1)

According to a study done by the Partnership for Arts, Culture, and Education in Dallas, Texas, arts integration involves "…training teachers in using the arts in the classroom, transferring arts experiences into the core curriculum…" (Stapleton, 2005). According to Stapleton, examples of this include teaching basic geometric shapes to second-graders through dance and having fifth-graders study acoustics by simulating sound waves during a trip to symphony hall. These uses allow students to visualize and manipulate abstract concepts rather than to view them in only a two-dimensional way. The idea to include arts in everyday education is not new. Both Horace Mann in the

1800's and John Dewey in the 1930's were proponents of the inclusion of art and their ideas were further supported by the work of Vygotsky who believed "students constructed cognitive knowledge through the active process of learning, and the arts were integral to that purpose" (Gullatt, 2008, p. 3). Even Disney used art to teach math. In the cartoon *Donald In Mathmagic Land* (Disney, 1959), Donald Duck lands in an imaginary world of numbers. Through various adventures and mishaps, he discovers the mathematical history and basis of musical scales, the Golden Ratio, the Parthenon, the *Mona Lisa*, and the Magic Spiral.

However, Gene Mittler (1974) explains in his article "The Classroom Teacher: The Missing Element in Effort to Improve Elementary School Art Programs," when art instruction is isolated from regular classroom instruction children often fail to connect art with their other subjects and art remains a sideline subject, not an active participant in a rich educational experience. Additionally, this is in direct contrast to the indicators of a successful arts integration program as defined by Catterall and Waldorf in their 1999 study of the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education. According to their study, effective arts integration needs six characteristics:

1. Students should be able to see connections and create bigger ideas;
2. Students should take their work (and have their work taken) seriously;
3. The activities and assignments should address valuable parts of the academic curriculum;
4. The content and the art should be of equal importance;
5. The assessment should be planned and rigorous.
6. The planned lesson should address both content standards and art standards.

These characteristics are similar to the standards and objectives put forth by states and national Language Arts professional organizations and explicated in the chart on pages 26 and 27.

Unfortunately, in this age of high stakes testing and college prep curriculums, elective classes, including art and drama, are often the first to go to make room for more "test prep" (Leonhard, 1991). These so-called "soft classes" are easy targets because they are not reading and math; they are not the subjects on which students are tested. Recent findings from the Center on Education Policy (2007) report that 44% of districts have reduced their non-core offerings, which include classes such as art, music, drama, and physical education. According to Mishook and Kornhaber (2006), among the low socio-economic schools they polled, 36% report discontinuing their offerings in the Arts. And there is strong evidence to support the assertion that "…the stark choice between academics and the arts is a false dichotomy" (Reeves, 2007, p.80). For me this means there is no authentic reason to regard the arts as a waste of time, effort, or resources.

While there are many reasons to include the Arts in education, I do so because I feel that the students should be our first consideration. For many students, elective classes may be the only reason that they attend school; these elective classes may represent the only place where they can feel successful and comfortable and engaged (Boston, 1996; Bresler, 1997). Indeed, a recent study reports that one in ten American high schools are "drop-out factories" (Balfanz, 2004) – places that graduate less than 60% of

the students that entered the school as ninth graders. This is an epidemic that can be reasonably expected to worsen if schools continue to focus only on test-prep and further diminish their electives curriculum. These same high-risk students, however, have shown increased academic performance through participation in after-school arts programs (Heath, 1999). Therefore, it is not unreasonable to suggest that, rather than reducing or removing the arts, educators should consider augmenting the curriculum with the arts.

In Language Arts classrooms, my colleagues and I are expected to cover a set content – content that often includes novels, short stories, grammar, and writing skills. Oftentimes, students fail to transact with traditional readings and often report them as "boring" or unrelated to their personal lives. This disengagement from the materials in class reduces a student's desire to read and oftentimes their desire to be present in the classroom (Ivey, 2001). Collins and Chandler (1993) suggest students be exposed to and working with the arts in meaningful ways throughout the day. Art projects should be used as an expansion of the learning process, not merely as an "if we have time", busy work activity. Oddleifson (1994) suggests that teachers and parents should understand and support the idea that the arts can enhance and deepen understanding of the content area materials.

Eliot Eisner (1992) claims that the more intelligences that a student uses to create understanding, the more complete his/her understanding is. There are Language Arts teachers who have used arts integration to

successfully bridge the space between where students are and where they need to be. These teachers, and I, recognize the arts as a "research-based mechanism with which to provide assistance and enhancement for achieving student academic success" (Goldsmith, 2003; Finch, 2004).

In addition, the arts provide opportunities in the modalities required by the future: analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and critical judgment. The arts feed the imagination and creativity; they require collaboration, teamwork, technological competencies, flexible thinking, an appreciation for diversity, and self-discipline (Cornett, p. 24).

The Arts and the SAT

While the arts are valued in the early grades, they are less well regarded in the secondary classroom. Many educators view activities like painting and other Arts as fluff and fun; however, their effects on student learning should never be underestimated. According to statistics gathered by the College Board for 2006, students who have taken four years or more of arts and music scored on average a 531 on their SAT Verbal and a 540 on their SAT Math; the average scores on the SAT were 503 and 518, respectively. For students who studied Honors-level arts classes, the average scores were 570 and 574. For students taking Honors/AP level English courses average scores were 564 and 567, respectively; for Honors level mathematics, the respective averaged scores were 569 and 599 (College Board, 2006). There is a statistically significant ($p \leq .05$) difference in these scores. This provides evidence to support the conclusion that there are

many academic benefits beyond the Arts themselves to be found in the study of the Arts. Art rich programs are shown to increase academic performance as measured by standardized testing; an increase that is even more apparent when talking about students who are struggling academically (Rabkin and Redmond, 2004). Such achievement is apparent even when considering the scores and art involvement of students in the lowest 25% on the socioeconomic scale. According to the UCLA Imagination Project, as a group, these students are half as likely to be involved in the arts and tend to not have access to outside resources like private lessons or to attend schools with well-developed arts programs (Catterall, et al., 1999). And yet, their academic achievement mirrors that of their higher socioeconomic peers when they are involved in the arts. The arts allow students to move beyond mere recall and on to the higher order thinking skills of creativity and synthesis.

Arts in the Classroom

Regardless of the reasons why the arts are being used, many teachers are using them to positive effect. In her article *Give Me Moor Proof: Othello in Seventh Grade* (2005), Eileen Landay describes the classroom of a fellow teacher, Theresa Toomey Fox, and the journey Fox takes her students on through the world of Shakespeare, Othello, Desdemona, and the students' own learning processes. The ArtsLiteracy project that Fox uses and that Landay describes is neither traditional drama nor process drama; rather it is a combination of both and "…its major focus is to strengthen students' literacy skills" (Landay, 2005, p. 43). Using a wide range of literacy activities, Fox

engages her students in comparisons of various movie-adaptations and play versions of *Othello*, character analysis, and analysis of their own feelings toward relationships, among other things. As Landay explains, "When instruction is designed around performance activities, students' understanding becomes visible and open for discussion and review" (p. 44). Such performance-based educational processes find much support in the work of educational theorists.

According to *Busting Multiple Intelligence Myths* by Barbara Pearson (2006), dancer/choreographer and art-in-education consultant, the arts are a subject that must be regarded as cognitive in nature and should be regarded as "a gateway to the processes of thinking and learning." She goes on to explain that intelligence tests, such as the *Wechsler Child Intelligence Scale* or the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test*, offer a one-dimensional view of a child's multi-faceted potential. Intelligence, she argues (and I could not agree more), is best measured in context and standardized tests offer only a snapshot of how a given student performed on a given day. Pearson suggests that to teach students to actually use the materials they have learned, educators should approach subjects from a variety of viewpoints. Fortunately, the arts give us enriched language with which to explore knowledge – both old and new.

In her book *Educational Drama and Language Arts*, Betty Jane Wagner suggests that, "Drama is powerful because its unique balance of thought and feeling makes learning exciting, challenging, relevant to real-life

concerns, and enjoyable" (Wagner, 1998, p. 9). Years before, in his synopsis of the Dartmouth Conference of 1966, John Dixon claimed:

> …drama is central to English work at every level. Drama means doing, acting things out rather than working on them in abstract and in private. When possible it is the truest form of learning, for it puts knowledge and understanding to their test in action. (Dixon, 1975, p. 43)

In a very specific way, drama (an example of the visual arts) offers students a chance to creatively solve problems and express themselves. Such skills benefit students personally, and academically.

Arts Outside of the Classroom

These skills lead to benefits outside of the academic world too. According to Eisner (2006), the arts also allow students: to learn how to make judgments without rules; to realize that problems often have more than one solution; to understand that the goal they start with is not always the place they end up and that is perfectly acceptable; and that oftentimes, they know more than they can express in words or numbers. In short, the arts offer our students a chance to learn many of the skills that modern employers are looking for in their employees. Additionally, Eisner (1994) suggests that each genre and form of representation carries its own set of limitations and guidelines - some explicit, others implicit. Learning how to function with each set of guidelines gives students multiple opportunities to adapt to various environments and changes.

Outside Concerns About the Arts

Such opportunities are an important part of the regular classroom experience. However, there are concerns with using drama and the arts in the

classroom. In his article, *Growth Through English Revisited* (2002), Smagorinsky worries that the emphasis that drama places on individual interpretation and growth comes at the expense of other students. What, he questions, should a teacher do if the drama being presented by a student (or students) offends or insults another student in the class? How do teachers and students handle creations that express social concerns? Creations that demonstrate socially unacceptable behaviors and responses? These are very valid concerns. Art is often *avant-garde* and risks offending others. However, a well-run high school classroom should be a safe place for students to explore and learn and debate. Additionally, every teaching style has its limitations and these must be weighed against the benefits being offered. Shakespeare can be viewed as sexist, anti-Semitic, and violent and yet he is also highly likely found in most every high school level anthology. Educators should also remember that the classroom can be an excellent place to find the value in texts which others have deemed "obscene" or "offensive."

There are other issues to consider too. Beyond using the arts as enhancement, many argue that the arts should simply be taught for their own sake. Eisner (1998) and Oddleifson (1994) argue that the arts should not be reduced to mere tool status but should be an end in and of themselves. Aprill (2001) also points out that if the arts are adopted only for their ability to raise test-scores, then they will be dropped just as quickly should the promised results not become immediately apparent. We should not teach the arts

simply to raise math and verbal skills. We should teach the arts because they teach valuable modes of thinking like seeing, imagining, inventing, questioning, problem solving, and thinking (Winner & Hetland, p. 31). The National Art Education Association supports the idea that the arts must be maintained as an academic subject not reduced to the role of mere handmaiden to core content. However, Frank Hodsoll, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, explains it this way:

> I do not advocate using the arts simply as 'tools' to teach other subjects…. The arts are important and worth learning for their own sakes, and they should never be relegated to mere utilitarian status. But a curriculum that incorporates the arts… can be more stimulating and more productive than one where they are ignored. (1985, p. 249)

It is perhaps this position of compromise that offers our students the greatest chance at understanding the power of art as academic and cultural material. I find that as I plan my use of Arts Integration, I agree with Hodsell. In my school setting, my students will not have a chance to take an art class until they enter the college community. Rather than have them do without for three to five years, I can integrate the arts into our classroom activities and help my students to develop an appreciation for multiple perspectives, forms of response, and creative problem solving.

John Steinbeck and *The Grapes of Wrath*

John Steinbeck was born on February 27, 1902, and died on December 20, 1968. In the sixty-six years of his life, he produced over twenty pieces of literature, received the Nobel Peace Prize for Literature (1962), and stirred up much controversy. Perhaps his most controversial work is *The*

Grapes of Wrath, published in 1939 and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1940. The novel tells the story of the Joad family, a kind of everyman family, which moves west to escape the Dust Bowl and hardships of the Great Depression and to pursue their American Dream via hard work in the "promised land" -- California. Despite their trusting nature and goodwill, the Joads are regarded with disrespect and suspicion by those who view them with contempt and call them "Okies" while being treated with kindness and generosity from those who can see past the road dirt and poverty.

The novel is a dichotomous creation. From its intercalary chapters to its chapters about the Joads; from its battle between good and evil, between "us" and "them"; from its representation of people as good and caring to its representation of the dark side of capitalism, Steinbeck strives to bring his reader into the work and to create in them an awareness of the need to care, the need to do what is right rather than what is profitable. "In the view of many, the migration from Oklahoma and the trials of those who left their homes were presented too directly, as if to win readers' sympathy" (Davis, 1982, p. 3). In a 1952 interview concerning his reasons for writing the novel, Steinbeck explained that at the time, he was angry over the inhumane treatment the migrants received at the hands of the residents of California (Clark, 2009). By the time of the interview, thirteen years after the novel was published, his anger was gone but the message still remained, as relevant, as important, and as vivid as ever.

The duality of this work also shows in the journal Steinbeck kept while working on the novel. In *Working Days: The Journal of "The Grapes of Wrath"* (1989), Steinbeck wavers between diligent devotion to his work and a desire to leave it all behind. In attitude shifts that I can understand, he vacillates between his belief in his ability to tell the story he considers to be so important and his belief that he is a hack, unable to give to the story the power and honor it deserves. The next to the last entry in his journal for *The Grapes of Wrath* says:

> I only hope it is good. It simply has to be. Well, there it is, all of it in my mind. And I hesitate to get to it. Maybe I'm afraid I can't do it. But then I was afraid I couldn't do any of it. And just day by day I did it. So that is the way to finish it. Forget that it is the finish and just set down the day by day work. And now finally I must get to it. (Steinbeck, 1989, p. 92)

In the end, Steinbeck was pleased with the novel, even if his dream novel soon became a nightmare.

When it was published in 1939, *The Grapes of Wrath* received what can only be called mixed reviews. While it was a commercial success selling 428,900 copies at $2.75 a piece in the first year (Steinbeck, 1989, p. 97), Steinbeck, an intensely personal man, was besieged with requests for money, the use of his name, and personal appearances. In addition, he was vilified by the corporate agriculture industry, politicians from Oklahoma to California, large landowners and banks. Steinbeck was most hurt by the rumor that, "…the Okies hate me and have threatened to kill me for lying about them" (Steinbeck, 1989, p. 98). According to Martin Shockley's article "The Reception of *The Grapes of Wrath* in Oklahoma," (1963), the book was

decried as “communistic propaganda”, and “obscene sensationalism”, and then Representative Lyle H. Boren (Democrat, 1937 to 1947) declared in the Congressional Record that the book was a “dirty, lying, filthy manuscript” created by “a twisted, distorted, mind”. However, among ordinary Oklahomans, the book was regarded as a best seller, second only to *Gone with the Wind*. Professor O.B. Duncan, head of Sociology and Rural Life at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (later known as Oklahoma State University, Stillwater), related that he could not find one piece of evidence to refute the book. “It cannot be done, for all the available data prove beyond doubt that the general impression given by Steinbeck’s book is substantially reliable” (Shockley, 1963). Despite his protests over the portrayal of “Okies” in the book, then Governor Phillips admitted to having never actually read the book. Whether or not Representative Boren read the book is debatable, but in refuting Boren’s stance on the book, a Miss Katharine Maloney wrote:

> If Boren read *The Grapes of Wrath*, which I have cause to believe he did not, he would not label John Steinbeck a “damnable liar.” John Steinbeck portrayed the characters just as they actually are. … Why, if Boren wants to bring something up in congress, doesn’t he do something to bring better living conditions to the tenant farmer? ... This would be a better platform for a politician than the book… (Shockley).

Indeed many protestors of the novel frequently accompanied their remarks with, “I haven’t read a word of it, but I know it’s all a dirty lie”. While *The Grapes of Wrath* does not appear on the American Library Association’s list of the top one hundred challenged books from 1990 to 1999 (*Of Mice and Men* is number six on the list), *The Grapes of Wrath* is number three on the

"Banned and/or Challenged Books from the Radcliffe Publishing Course Top 100 Novels of the 20th Century" (Challenged or banned classics, 2009). It would seem that while the passage of time has lessened the controversy surrounding *The Grapes of Wrath*, it has not ended it altogether.

The Grapes of Wrath has meant many things to many different critics and readers, and even the author.

> John Steinbeck indicated that he wrote with several levels of meaning intended; he noted "five layers" in The Grapes of Wrath… As subsequent criticism has shown, his works can indeed be understood on many levels, from realism to allegory. Steinbeck wants to understand the human as a species… (Railsback, 1995, p. 125)

While I would love to explore the five levels of meaning with my students, it's not what the novel means to others or even to Steinbeck that concerns me. It's what it can mean to my students that is of primary importance.

The duality of the novel is reflective of the nature of the world in which my students and I currently live. As Davis writes in the introduction to his book,

> The Joads move in an environment in which climatological, economic, and cultural forces have turned against them. The land has been depleted, the banks are mismanaged, and the people suffering from these misfortunes do not recognize their need to establish a "true" community. (p.5)

I would be hard-pressed to separate Davis' description of the Joads' world from that of my students. Global climate change, international warfare, an on-going economic recession and the resistance of the dominant ideology to incoming minority cultures– all have combined to make growing up complicated and demanding for my students. Many of my students are not

middle-class white kids from the suburbs. My students struggle with change to find a place for themselves: a place between the family life and culture that they grew up in and the middle class American dream that their parents want for them, which the students themselves are pursuing. Change is all around them and change is one lesson they can learn from the Joads. As Ma explains life in Chapter 28:

> Man, he lives in jerks – baby born an' a man dies, an' that's a jerk – gets a farm an' loses his farm, an' that's a jerk. Woman, it's all one flow, like a stream, little eddies, little waterfalls, but the river, it goes right on. Woman looks like that. We ain't gonna die. People is goin' on – changin' a little, maybe, but goin' right on. (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 423)

At this point in the novel, Ma has taken over as head of the family; Tom has been sent away; the "little fellas" have had to grow up fast; the Joads are surrounded literally and figuratively by change, but in the end, the reader is left with hope for their survival. Steinbeck repeatedly suggests, "suffering is meaningful" and in time, the Joads' suffering will be rewarded with a just community (Davis, 1982, p. 5). This is one meaning of the novel with which I want my students to walk away. I want them to be able to imagine that the challenges they are facing now will eventually pay high dividends. My other goals are more academic.

Research Design and Methodology

In his piece *Strengthening the Use of Qualitative Research Methods for Studying Literacy* (2005), Joseph Tobin points out that the Institute of Education Sciences has demonstrated a strong preference for quantitative research in the discipline of education and that qualitative research is often

viewed as lacking in rigor (p. 91). However, according to Clark Moustakas (1990), the core of qualitative research is introspection – a knowing of the preconceived notions, ideas, prejudices, and biases that a researcher holds that will affect his/her research.

In her book *Mixed Methods for Social Inquiry* (2007), Greene explains that quantitative methodologies are often viewed as superior because they are carefully controlled standardized assessments of phenomena. The samples are randomly drawn from an identified population and can therefore be generalized to a larger, like population. Qualitative methodologies however, tend to be "thoughtful studies of lived human experiences"; they are intensive, in-depth studies of a few people or cases (p.39). While their results cannot be generalized to the population at large, they do tend to offer understanding from the perspective of those who have lived the experience. For example, consider the way Moustakas describes heuristics, a form of qualitative study:

> Heuristics is a way of engaging in a scientific search through methods and process aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meaning of important human experiences. The deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one's senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments. This requires a passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated or answered (Moustakas, 1990, p. 15).

This introspective approach, which gave a form and a process to my goal, has helped me to build a deeper, richer, understanding of my teaching, of my students, of reader response, and of myself as teacher and reader. At the same time, this research method allowed my students "…to remain visible in

the examination of the data and to continue to be portrayed as whole persons" (p. 38-39). In my mind, the classroom is a triangular structure build between a student body, a teacher, and a shared material. Moustakas' approach to heuristic approach allowed all three legs to remain visible and a part of the process.

Research into teaching methods and their effectiveness can be done either qualitatively, quantitatively, or using a combination/mixture of approaches. The question of the use of visual arts in the classroom as a conduit for understanding a novel lends itself most readily to a multi-qualitative method study, or a study using multiple forms of qualitative research. Exploring this question quantitatively would provide evidence that a phenomenon was indeed occurring (or was not occurring) and to what degree it was affecting my classroom of students. It would not however address the "why" of the phenomenon; nor would it fully explore the phenomenon and therefore provide a level of understanding that could be generalized to other classes with other students, other teachers, and other novels. Instead, a qualitative study seeks to explore and understand exactly what it is that is going on in my classroom at this time, with these students, interacting with this text. However, that still leaves the question of what approach (or approaches) to take.

Types of Qualitative Research

According to Creswell (1994), qualitative research can be divided into five main types: biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography,

and case study. Each type has benefits and challenges that should be given careful consideration before selecting or rejecting that methodology. In the case of this study, each type could produce acceptable data that would lead to a defendable dissertation. No one type will lead to the dissertation I want to write; however, a combined approach should produce a rich data set and subsequently deeper exploration of the subject matter.

First, let's consider the role of the biography. In the classroom, not only does my history as a student and as a teacher come into play, but the histories my students bring with them also come into play. If they have been successful in past English classes, they likely expect to be successful in my English class. If they have always loved reading and have been supported in that love of reading, their attitude and approach to reading will be different from that of a student who struggles with reading. On the other hand, it is not their past experiences with reading that most concerns me and therefore biography would provide only one part of the data set.

According to the *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (Schwandt, 2001), grounded theory refers to the abstract, analytical building of a theory. In the case of my question concerning the effect of visual arts integration on reader response, the theory would reflect that if teacher A does intervention B then result C can be reasonably expected. While this is my own personal belief/bias, it is unrealistic to expect that every teacher who does what I do would get the result that I get. Grounded theory methodology, however,

employs systematic procedures of data collection, induction, deduction, and verification that should not be ignored and would bring structure to my study.

In *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Robert Yin (2001) offers case study as a way of addressing questions of "how" and "why." In the case study, the research is conducted in the place where the phenomenon occurs and where the subject is. Case study is preferable when the line between phenomenon and context is blurred and the classroom can be an excellent example of this blurring. However, in the instance of my study, since I can control (to a degree) the interventions and the settings, the case study is not the best option, nor is it the only option. And that leaves phenomenology and ethnography.

Ethnography, according to the *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, is "…the process and product of describing and interpreting cultural behavior" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 80). Ethnographic study is conducted in the field (the natural setting) and most often involves observing members of a group as they participate in life. In an ethnographic study, participants are observed while the researcher stays removed from the situation. But distance does not always assure that the research will not influence the situation. Also at play in this scenario is the "Observer's Paradox." According to William Labov, a linguist, the style of a person's speech was directly affected by the observation of a person's speech (Labov, 1997). Hence, the simple act of observing runs the risk of changing the very phenomenon that the researcher wants to observe. The solution, as proposed by Labov is catching people off

guard or in dangerous situations. It is doubtful that IRB would approve reader response in dangerous situations; however, I feel that it is reasonable to conclude after being observed and questioned about their reading multiple times, my students would lower their guards and provide genuine, honest answers. Additionally, since it is my classroom that is being observed, I am both researcher and member of the culture. Removing me from the situation to be a neutral observer is only partially possible and therefore a purely ethnographic study is not an appropriate choice.

For me, now phenomenology stood alone. According to Moustakas, phenomenology "referred to knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience (1994, p. 26). Phenomenology attends to the details of the everyday to begin to know or understand what is happening around us and to us. As a teacher this is quite an appealing idea – that it is not the long, technically motivated lectures that affect my students as much as the everyday conversations and interactions. However, according to the phenomenological approach, I can only respond to what I perceive, sense, and know. While I think that, to paraphrase Socrates, an unexamined teaching career is not worth living (www.quotedb.com/quotes/1563), it is not my responses that were of primary interest to me. It is my students that are of primary interest.

So if none of these five general types of qualitative research described my research plan, what did? The answer lay in the "generic qualitative" label.

Generic qualitative research is characterized by “description, interpretation, and understanding” (Merriam, 1998, p. 12) and may include a process. Those who conduct such studies are trying to “discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives of the people involved” and data “is collected through interview, observations, or document analysis” (p. 11). By taking a heuristic approach to the generic qualitative study, I used the necessary components of biography (the examination of my history as teacher and reader and my students’ histories), case study (the exploration of “why” in our classroom), phenomenology (the analysis of the readers’ response to the text), ethnography (the study takes place in our unaltered classroom), and grounded theory (the systematic procedures for data collection and analysis) to guide my research. Furthermore, the resulting information was sufficient to thoroughly explore my current questions and led me further into the field of research in the Language Arts, while helping me to develop a clearer image of myself as teacher.

Definitions

Arts Integration

A universal definition of Arts Integration is difficult to find. Some teachers that I talked with about Arts Integration viewed it as using the illustrations in their students’ texts. Others mentioned watching the movie version of a novel after the reading process as a reward for a job well-done. For the purposes of this research, Arts Integration is defined as the use of any

of the arts (such as dance, painting, drama, film) in the classroom as a part of the learning experience. The arts offer a chance for students to demonstrate their knowledge and their responses to literature in a more visual way. This is in direct contrast to the use of the arts as a special event at the end of a unit or as a reward for a job well-done.

Ekphrasis

Simplified, *ekphrasis* is the process of creating art from art (Moorman, 2006). "In its earliest, most restrictive sense, *ekphrasis* referred to the verbal description of a visual representation" (Blackhawk, 2002, p. 1). Examples of *ekphrastic* poetry include Homer's description of the Shield of Achilles in *The Iliad*; Keats' poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" 1820); and Anne Sexton's *The Starry Night* (1961) inspired by Van Gogh's painting *The Starry Night* (1889) which also inspired Don McLean's song *Vincent* (1972). The process of creating art from art allows students to engage in word play and to express other ways of knowing. "When we ask children to write through their engagement with the visual arts, we ask them both to make sense of what they see and to make meaning on the page" (Ehrenworth, 2003, p. 7). It is this process that I think allowed my students to have a deeper transaction with *The Grapes of Wrath* and to learn from it. What I like about *ekphrasis* is that it takes the response, "I don't know" out of the classroom. As the creator, "I don't know" is no longer an option. As the one who made the paint color choices, maneuvered the brush or other painting tool, started painting and stopped painting at a self-decided moment, students created and controlled

the process and product and their explanation of the process and product required more words than “I don’t know.”

Reader Response

Reader response is both a very simple and very complex term to define. According to Richard Beach (1993), reader response theorists are generally concerned with how readers make meaning from the text. Furthermore, readers respond to a text for a variety of reasons: to create meaning, to clarify understanding, to share reading experiences, and to express emotion (p. 6). Therefore, any reaction, any reply, any production of speech or writing as a result of a text can be termed a response. Furthermore, any lack of reaction can also be termed a response. But when studying the phenomenon, it is more than just the presence or absence of a response in which the researcher is interested. Instead, it is the nature of the response (social, cultural, emotional), the depth of the response (comprehension, recall, application, synthesis), and the form of the response (written, visual, dramatized) that is of central importance to understanding reader response. Reader response can be defined as any reaction by a reader to a text that can be analyzed with regard to its nature, depth, and form.

Spontaneous Paint

Mankind has relied on a medium applied to surface since prehistoric times. According to The Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, the earliest pieces of art are dated from 8,000 to 20,000 B.C. (Heilbrunn timeline of art history).

From the cave paintings of Lascaux (15000 B.C.) to the work of the pre-Raphaelites (1850 A.D.), art was the reproduction or an idealization of what the artist saw. However, with the advent of the Impressionists (1875) and the Abstract Expressionism (1950), artists created their vision of what they saw. They created expressions of what they saw as opposed to reproductions of what they saw. For Van Gogh, this meant night skies that are purple-blue with brushstrokes that were visible or women's faces that are blotchy green-lilac.

Natalie Goldberg explains in her book *Writing Down the Bones*, "First thoughts have tremendous power. It's the way the mind first flashes on something" (1986, p. 9). While artists plan their works and often make multiple sketches over long periods of time, in my class, spontaneous painting is done quickly (in minutes) with little or no preplanning or pre-vision, and no revision. However, despite this lack of formal pre-planning, the purpose of the painting remains the same – to express an idea using a non-verbal medium. Albers further explains, "these visual texts are raw creations worthy of significant study, both as immediate responses to literature and/or language study"; over time though, learners begin "to dislike art as a communicative form largely due to their inability to realistically represent the object they wish to represent" (p. xiii). That is where the work of the Impressionists and Abstract Expressionists come into play. These art forms allow students to create representations rather than copies.

The word “spontaneous” may be misleading. David Sousa’s model of how the brain works seems to demonstrate that it is nearly impossible for an expressed response to be completely, purely spontaneous, unstructured, and unplanned. Sousa compares the brain to an office filing system (2001, pg 38-39). New information comes in (immediate memory), is evaluated for worth and meaning (working memory), and then placed in an appropriate file in an appropriate filing cabinet. During the “working memory” stage, the brain is determining if it has heard this information before and how (or if) it relates to the information it already have; the brain is searching for a pattern, an appropriate place to fit the information. To do this requires the brain to begin “opening” other files of information, a process that clouds spontaneity.

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines spontaneous as “proceeding from natural feeling; arising from a momentary impulse; controlled and directed internally; developing or occurring without apparent external influence; not apparently contrived or manipulated; natural.” If what I wanted was pure spontaneity, I would have needed subjects whose brains had no “file” for reading, Steinbeck, paints, grapes, migrants, and a myriad of other concepts and ideas. Instead, what I was seeking can be found in the later part of the definition: occurring without apparent external influence. It is this first contemplation, first inspiration, not-quite fully formed idea that I hoped to capture and to relate to reader response. I wanted responses based on what my students thought, not on what they thought I wanted.

11th Grade Language Arts

Since there is no universal curriculum, it would be difficult to say that all 11th graders study X. However, in Oklahoma, 11th grade English class is spent in the study of American Literature. In my school, the U.S. History teacher and I share a timeline wherein, as often as possible, my Language Arts class reads novels and selections from the same time period being studied in her history class. For example, we read *Across Five Aprils* (Irene Hunt, 1964), a novel about how one young man and his family experience the Civil War while the students are studying the Civil War in history class. Since the classes tend to move at two totally different paces, our curriculums cross only at specific points. When I am ahead of her, I offer historical context. When my class is at a point that I know she has covered in history class, I ask questions to stimulate recall of the historical context.

The state has general guidelines that must be met in the 11th grade. My students will take an End of Instruction (EOI) test at the end of the school year and starting with the class of 2011, my students will need to pass the EOI in order to graduate. Generally speaking, the state expects that my students will experience a wide range of literature, expand their vocabularies, write for a variety of purposes, listen and speak effectively, and be able to make sense out of graphic representations and visual messages. (For a complete list of Priority Academic Student Skills, please see Appendix A.) In short, the expectation is that they will be able to function as literate individuals in a democratic society. While most students take 11th grade English in the

high school classroom, my 11th graders have another opportunity. They are eligible for concurrent enrollment, or to take a college class for both college and high school credit.

Harbor Middle College High School (a pseudonym)

According to the Middle College National Consortium (FAQ's, 2009), a middle college high school is like any other high school: able to confer diplomas, and offering high school curriculum. A middle college, however, is located on the campus of a college; they tend to be very small (fewer than 100 students per grade level); and offer a curriculum and support structure that feeds directly into the college environment. At the time of the study, Harbor Middle College High School was the only middle college functioning in the state, although another was in the planning stages and has since opened to students. We are the smallest alternative school in our district, which is the second largest district in the state. According to the 2007-2008 District Statistical Profile, 39.1% of the students are Hispanic, 22.5% white, 30.4% African American, 5.3% American Indian, and 2.7% Asian. At Harbor Middle College High School (hereafter HMCHS), 31% of students are Hispanic, 51% white, 13% African American, 0% American Indian, and 5% Asian. While the national ACT composite is 21.1; the state is 20.7; and the district is 18.9, the ACT composite for HMCHS is 19.7. 71.2% of our students receive free or reduced price lunch compared to 85.8% of the district. District wide, some 29% of students are identified as English Language Learners while at HMCHS the number is a much lower 3.9%. Four out of five of the teachers at

HMCHS have an advanced degree and our average class size is 19.3. Out of our 8th grade students (2008), 60% scored satisfactory or advanced in Math and 40% scored satisfactory or above in Reading as compared to 63% and 60% respectively in the district. In Algebra I, 78% of our students scored satisfactory or advanced while district-wide the number was 61%. For English II, the rates are 94% for HMCHS and 57% for the district; US History is 79% for HMCHS and 46% for the district; and in Biology our score is 64% while the district score is 30%. In the class of 2009, our thirteen seniors accumulated over 255 college credit hours at the time of their graduation.

While we are a public school, our students make the decision to apply to HMCHS, typically as 8th graders. The decision to attend is not an easy one. In coming to HMCHS, students have to give up organized athletics, social and career clubs, large groups of classmates, and must provide their own transportation. While other schools aim to have their students ready for college by the time the student graduates, our aim is to have the student ready for college classes at the end of tenth grade. As each student experiences his/her first college classes, the teachers at HMCHS are ready to offer support, advice, and encouragement as necessary. While some professors are reluctant to allow high school students into their college classes, a more typical response, especially after they've experienced our students, is, "Your students are usually excellent in the classroom. They normally motivate the other students as well" (personal communication, 2009).

We are also one of the few schools in the district that operates on a block schedule. Our school day does not start until 9:30 a.m. and lasts until 4:00 p.m. Each class period is eighty-five minutes followed by a five-minute break. Lunch is thirty minutes and comes right after first period. Since our class periods are longer, we cover a year's worth of materials in an eighteen-week semester. A typical semester for the juniors would consist of English III, Yearbook, U.S. History, and a math class (either Algebra II or Trigonometry.) To round out the year, they would take a Language Arts elective, World Religions, Anatomy and Physiology, and ACT prep. Or, if their ACT score, behavior, and grade point average allowed it, a junior could enroll in Freshman Composition or Psychology as a first college course.

Chapter Three

Incubation - when the researcher removes him/herself from the phenomenon to allow for subconscious consideration of the phenomenon. In this chapter, I explain the need for the study and the research methodology. I also investigate the sampling procedure, consent and assent procedures, and data collection and analysis.

Need for the Study

While quantitative research is generalizable to a larger population, the goal of qualitative research is the understanding of a phenomenon: what is this thing that is happening (or not happening) in my classroom? Why is it happening? Is it a behavior or response that I should encourage or is it detrimental to my classroom? Do my students benefit from it? Does it help to create greater understanding and to reach our classroom goals? My initial experience seemed to indicate that having my students paint their responses to our reading created a different level of understanding of the novel. There was no guarantee, however, that doing the same type of activity would have the same type of result from a different group of students reading the same novel; hence the need for the more systematic and rigorous study. With a systematic analysis of the activities and students in my classroom, what influence would the use of spontaneous painting have on the reader responses of this group of 11th grade students? Although the results of the study were not intended to be replicated by another researcher, such a qualitative study would have value. For example, it is the work of classroom

teachers that inspires activities for other classroom teachers. I certainly did not create the idea of painting a response to a piece of literature. I am not the only teacher in the history of education to decide to teach *The Grapes of Wrath* either. Both of these came from the work of other teachers. Both have been modified to fit into the classroom, the environment, the student body, the expectations, and the goals of the classroom in which they are being used. In this case, they have been adjusted to fit my classroom. That is what this study offers others – a framework that can possibly be adapted and applied to other classrooms.

The majority of students enrolled in America's public schools are taking an English class, and reading some form of literature. Teachers are asking the students questions, and assigning them essays, quizzes, tests, or projects to elicit the students' understanding of the assigned work. If those teachers are anything like me, they are wondering if there is a better way for them to teach - some method that will the teacher to engage the students while addressing the skills necessary to help students become life-long successful users of the English Language Arts readers and satisfy the standards, objectives, mandates, and requirements set forth by the public bodies that control American education.

In my experience, the goal in education is not a single "truth" in technique, but another idea, another approach that others can adapt and try, and eventually make their own. As a teacher, I am in constant conversation with a goal of creating an environment that fosters learning, thinking, and

developing. Often though, I leave the most important people out of the conversation. The conversation must include the people being asked to carry out the goal – the students. My students have regularly amazed and stunned me with their insight into the world they are preparing to inherit and the education they are receiving. The vast majority of my students know where they are headed, what it will take to get there, and they are looking to their teachers for help. They do not want us to do the work for them; they want to be treated like young adults and allowed to experiment and fail and suffer the consequences. They want to learn to use their stumbling blocks as building blocks while it is still relatively safe to do so.

While the goals of this study are lofty, this study will not end illiteracy in students. Some students will reject outright the idea of spontaneous creation. For that matter, so will some teachers and authors. The study will not offer a method to make reluctant readers into rapacious readers with little to no effort on the part of the reader or of the teacher. This intervention will not work for every teacher, for every piece of literature, or for every student. But it might give teachers one more option to add to their toolbox of methods and pull out when it is appropriate to do so. It might also help students to learn a different way to express themselves and to learn creative problem solving skills. It offered me, as a teacher and researcher, a place and a time to examine what I believe about teaching, what I believe about reader response, and what I believe about students.

Heuristic Methodology

The work “heuristic” comes from the Greek "*heuriskein*" meaning, "to discover" and is a six-step process through which a researcher systematically observes, studies, and analyzes a phenomenon in order to learn more about, and/or to discover the meaning of, the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990). Heuristic research is a way of discerning a phenomenon and hopefully understanding the conditions that allowed the phenomenon in the first place and that allowed it to continue. Moustakas describes heuristic inquiry as “… a process that begins with a question or problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer” (1990, p. 15). He further explains that the question or phenomenon is usually personal in nature but may have universal significance.

Initial Engagement

I elected to use Moustakas’ six-steps of heuristic research as a framework for my basic research design. While researching research methods, this approach offered a framework upon which my research question and my thoughts about classroom research fit comfortably. Even before I officially began, I could see where each step reflected a part of my research agenda and developed the idea more clearly. The six steps for Moustakas’ heuristics are: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination in creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27). In this study, the initial engagement has two parts. First was my initial engagement with *ekphrasis* and second was my student’s initial

engagement with the selected novel and their responses. My initial engagement with *ekphrasis* was fearful, hesitant, and skeptical. I did not consider myself to be a very creative person and was therefore fearful of being asked to be creative and hesitant to try this technique that made my stomach fill with bats and butterflies. My initial attempt at a "creative report" was for a doctoral-students only course on the history of the teaching of Language Arts that I took in the spring of 2004. My presentation, a piece called "Hello Dali!" where my classmates drew symbols with edible markers on sugar cookies, reflected my fears and hesitation. The research and the creativity were poorly connected and the gap widened as my presentation continued. However, each encounter with creativity pushed me further and further from my comfortable little world of right and wrong answers. Each exposure also broadened my horizons and helped me to feel like maybe I could just handle this challenge. I was skeptical because I had always been taught that art was an accessory – like dessert – nice to have but not 100% necessary. I consider a meal complete without dessert. However, my immersion into the world of art and creativity quickly convinced me that art can be either a dessert or it can be a main course.

In another graduate class at the University of Oklahoma, my professor, Dr. Michael Angelotti, introduced the process of Paint-Write. The process was simple enough to follow – read, paint quickly, write quickly. Although I knew we would be painting, there was a spontaneous quality to the painting and writing process that forced me to give form to my initial ideas and to

make creative decisions in seconds. The time allowed for each free paint and free write varied from a short of one minute to a long of three minutes. (While at first, three minutes sounded like a long time, it really was not when I was trying to get all the ideas from my head to paper.) As the class continued, my previous experiences and education began to combine in a way that made sense. Pictures, art, preschool drawing-inspired words and visa versa. As humans and students, first we listen, then we draw, then we read, and then we write. Despite a very rocky start, I found that I liked being creative; even if it challenged me and even if I did not think I was very good at it.

My students' initial engagement with Steinbeck and *The Grapes of Wrath* was also a bit rocky. The 455-page novel challenged them. They had never been asked to read anything quite so long. Their last exposure to Steinbeck was the much shorter, though equally poignant, *Of Mice and Men* (1937), which was a part of their 8th grade curriculum. At 112 pages, *Of Mice and Men* is a quarter of the length, but no less powerful. While my students did not volunteer the information that they were familiar with Steinbeck's work, a quick mention of the title, *Of Mice and Men,* brought them back to the tale of George and Lennie. They were quick to say that they did not like the ending and hoped that such endings were not "Steinbeck's thing." With all discussion of expectation and novel complete, we were ready to move forward to stage two: Immersion.

Immersion

The second stage of immersion also had two parts: my immersion in *ekphrasis*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and teaching in general; and my students' immersion into the world of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and creative reader response techniques. In the months leading up to the study, I studied *The Grapes of Wrath* and heuristics. I thought through and imagined every possible reaction to the novel and tried to create appropriate scenarios. I worried that my teaching would be deficient; I worried that the experience of reading such a dense novel would be a defeating activity for my students; I worried that they would hate the Joads and refuse to work. I dreamed that the students would take one look at Tom Joad and see themselves. Then the moment of truth arrived.

For the next two-and-a-half weeks, my students needed to spend a fair amount of their time with the Joads – eighty-five minutes in class each school day; an additional sixty minutes to two hours at home each evening reading for the next class. I did not account for the times that thoughts of the book, the Joads, the Dust Bowl, and the Depression might have slipped unbidden into their minds. There was a certain bit of irony in reading these words of a past depression while their country was facing a new economic crisis that promised to rival the Great Depression, not to mention their lifelong exposure to the debate over global warming. While my immersion period was much longer than the two-and-a-half weeks my students had with the novel, it was their immersion that was most important to me and to my research. It

was their experiences and immersion that colored my research and began to explain the phenomenon I explored.

At the same time though, I came to realize that I was more than just the teacher and the researcher. My role in this study can be likened to the third leg of a stool, or the third side of a triangle. The students were one side or leg; the novel was a second side or leg; and my teaching and I were the third. No one element was more important than the other. This idea came to me from the world of qualitative research. Altrichter *et al.* contend that triangulation "gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation" (2008, p. 147). I believe this is true for my study. A different teacher/researcher would probably have changed the entire situation. The same is most likely true of a different novel and of different students. For the study to have achieved its goals, we all had to work together.

Incubation

The third step is incubation and from this point forward, the research involves my interactions with and understanding of the artifacts that my selected students have produced. During the incubation period, time was spent allowing ideas to develop without forcing them. What I had seen and read of my students' work was allowed to simmer in the back of my head while I went about the business of summer, of vacation, and of writing the first few chapters of this dissertation. While my plan was to let their work simmer out of sight, I found myself drawn to the pictures and writings and I revisited them as often as I could.

Illumination

After the incubation period, the fourth stage - the illumination period - begins. Illumination occurs “when the researcher is in a receptive state of mind without conscious striving or concentration…” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 29) This is the hardest part of this research for me. My habit is to force myself into the knowledge, to research and explore it almost to death. To sit back and “allow” it to happen is very difficult. And to be honest, I found it nearly impossible to sit back and allow knowledge to happen. As the summer passed and I shared my research with colleagues, friends who had stepped up to help me with my dissertation, and other interested people, I found myself expressing ideas that I did not even know I had. I scribbled thoughts that danced through my head as I was drifting off to sleep. I jumped up from watching television to type a page or two before the idea “got away.”

One night as I was driving home from work, I passed a horse farm. Because of traffic, I was driving slower than usual and I found myself taking mental photographs of a young colt and the pasture. As I drove, I repositioned my mental camera, removing and inserting surrounding objects into the frame. I wondered where this sudden interest in photography came from and my mind answered me with “You’re thinking like an artist.” An artist? Me? The thought continued: “You think like an artist, eat like a chef, read like a writer, and write like a reader.” I quickly called my husband to write down this cryptic thought. Illumination had come without me even

realizing it. During the many drafts, versions, conversations, and reviews since then, illumination continues to surprise me.

Explication

The fifth step is the explication stage. It is at this point that everything starts to come together. The information gleaned from my students, my readings, my teaching records and journals all began to coagulate to form coherent themes and ideas that, while they will not apply to everyone, eventually provided some pieces to my puzzles and helped me make sense of my individual situation. I was surprised by the amount of background knowledge my students brought to this process. I was also surprised to find that the student regarded by most of her classmates as "smartest" was equally comfortable with paint-write and the more traditional final quiz. Previously, my more "academically gifted" students had resisted the call for creativity. These pieces might also fit another teacher's puzzle. This stage was most practically written as what I learned, what I would want other teachers to learn from my experiences, and what information I would want shared with my future teacher interns.

Creative Synthesis

The sixth and final step – creative synthesis - is the creation and formation of holistic or "whole knowledge" (Moustakas, 1990, p.32) from the bits and pieces and parts that the researcher has been working with and thinking about since immersion. The creation of a defendable dissertation certainly provided a concrete representation of the final stage, the creative

synthesis. However, since the focus of my study is arts integration, specifically spontaneous painting, it seemed that a spontaneous painting would also be an appropriate representation of creative synthesis. At this point, it was also necessary to consider the features and qualities that the study did not consider and to explore avenues for further study. For example, this study lacks an intensive study of the pedagogy behind *ekphrasis*. Also, in this study, my student-subjects were familiar with the paint-write process having done it before for other stories. What, if anything, would have gone differently if they had not had such an exposure? (Please see Chapter Six for further discussion of these points.)

Sampling

Before discussing how the research was conducted, I believe it is important to understand who participated in the research. This 11th grade class at Harbor Middle College High School (a pseudonym hereby indicated as HMCHS) consisted of two African-American males; three Hispanic females; three Hispanic males; two Asian females; one Asian male; one Caucasian male; and six Caucasian females. Out of the eighteen students total, five were ineligible to participate in the study because they were in concurrent enrollment classes and therefore were not taking my class. Of the remaining thirteen students, all thirteen opted to participate in the study.

As is often the case in research done by teachers, this sample is a purposeful sample. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling occurs when a researcher selects an information-rich case to explore. In this

instance, my desire to investigate a phenomenon in my classroom provided the information-rich case. It was the unique combination of the middle-college environment, classroom culture, student culture, text, and teacher experience and philosophy that provided the information-rich case.

In my case, the relationship between teacher/researcher and student is also unique. My school is a small school with five teachers and about seventy-five students. While many teachers see over 100 students a day, at the time of the study, I saw approximately sixty students a day. As one parent described it, "You've heard the expression 'It takes a village'? Well, ya'll are my village" (personal communication). The relationship between students and teacher/research in this study often goes beyond the classroom. By the time of this study, I had spent four and a half years with some of these students. I knew their families; their strengths; their weaknesses; and their goals. What I do not know is the possible effects of this relationship.

There is one other aspect of this sample that warrants consideration: they are very technically savvy. When completed, this dissertation will be available via the Internet. As I have written it, my students (both subjects and subsequent students) have asked how they can secure a copy to read. While the information for the biographies and the data were both student-generated, my analysis, conclusions, and opinions have generally not been shared with my students. While this is not a huge concern, it does warrant careful, detailed consideration on my part as I balance the roles of teacher, mentor, and researcher.

Procedure

Consent and Assent Process

The first step in this research process was to get appropriate permissions for the study to take place. The district, the university Institutional Review Board, and the building principal granted permission. The conditions that were accepted by these authorities were that students' identities would be kept confidential; data would be collected only in class; no work outside of the work normally assigned for class would be required; and no data analysis would take place before semester grades were completed and recorded on the district's grading system.

Both consent and assent forms were attained from the students and their legal guardians or parents. A fellow doctoral student who was familiar with both the study and my students conducted the consent process. The signed forms were returned to the principal in sealed envelopes. When she received the envelopes, the principal placed them in the school safe and held them until the semester grades were recorded and report cards were received. The assent and consent processes were designed as an extra layer of protection provided for the students to ensure that they and their parents did not feel pressured to participate (or to allow participation) in the study. Since I had no way of knowing who was and who was not in the study, there was no way for me to be biased for or against a student and his/her work.

Data Collection

It was originally planned that the research data collection would begin in mid-March. However, the building principal suggested that I not start the novel and thus the data collection process, until after the students had completed all of the required End of Instruction tests and taken the residual ACT exam. Thus the class started *The Grapes of Wrath* in mid-May with just two and a half weeks left in the semester. (The length of time allowed for the study can be considered a limitation. Please see Chapter Six for further discussion on this point.) I would like to say that the research process sailed along without a single hitch; that all of the students read all of their assigned pages; and that administrative needs, absences, and students leaving school early for family obligations never interrupted class. All educators know that this is never the case. In the two and a half weeks of the study, there were eight absences; fourteen tardies; and three interruptions of greater than five minutes to deal with administrative issues. Two students (Bea and Mira) left with one week remaining in the study. However, both girls reported to me that they did finish the book. While these disruptions were inconvenient, they are what teachers deal with on an on-going basis and while they were tiresome at the time, they help to lend a bit of credibility to the study: it did not take place at the perfect school with the perfect students and the perfect teacher. The study took place in a real classroom with real students and real challenges.

Data collection was an on-going process through the last fourteen days of school. While collecting data, I walked a narrow line – a very narrow line. On the one hand, as the classroom teacher of record, I needed to make sure that students were reading the assigned materials, participating in classroom discussion, and completing assignments. At the same time, I needed to make sure that the assignments and assessments were what I would have assigned and assessed even if I were not doing a study. I had to be 100% certain that the researcher stayed clear of the teacher. It was easiest for me to maintain a sense of distance between the class and the phenomenon if I pretended that I was not doing research. To that end, the tape recorder was run by a non-participating student and my one allowance to the study was to spend five to ten minutes immediately after class each day writing in a teacher journal. For me, journal writing was always a sporadic activity reserved for problem solving, really great days, really awful days, or "Eureka!" moments. This time though, my journal became a place to record, without judgment, what I saw, what I had expected to see, what I hoped for, and what I had planned for the next day. I made a studious effort not to re-visit my journal, the class recordings, and the video so that the students knew that I was being true to my word about not evaluating the collected data before their grades were completed. This proved to be a fateful decision.

Data Analysis

After the school year ended, the grades were recorded and submitted, and I had enjoyed a few days off, I was ready to undertake data analysis.

The qualitative data underwent inductive analysis where themes were allowed to emerge instead of approaching the data with a predetermined set of themes in mind. Student-generated writings and classroom discussions were ready to be transcribed and coded with themes being allowed to emerge from the data. The art projects were to be coded and/or analyzed as artifacts. Additionally, the lesson plans and research notes were ready to be dissected with themes being allowed to emerge. Shank (1995) explains that "…themes do not really emerge from data". Instead, the researcher develops an awareness of the patterns contained in the data. This awareness is more in keeping with Moustakas' heuristic methodology.

All of the resulting data and themes were to be triangulated. While O'Donoghue and Punch (2003) explain that triangulation is a "method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data" (p. 78), Altrichter *et al*. (2008) assert that triangulation "gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation" (p. 147). According to Guba and Lincoln (1981) triangulation is a technique "which depends on exposing a proposition to possible countervailing facts or assertations or verifying such propositions with data drawn from other sources or developed using different methodologies" (p. 107). Merriam adds "methodological triangulation combines dissimilar methods such as interviews, observations and physical evidence to study the same unit" (1991, p. 69). All of these are important factors in gleaning as much reliable information from my study as possible. "Especially in terms of using multiple methods of data collection

and analysis, triangulation strengthens reliability as well as internal validity" (Merriam, 1991, p. 172). As I examined that data, I looked for instances where the data collected from my students converged with data from my lesson plans and with the information already in existence. I looked for instances where my data intersected and overlapped or where differences in the data emerged. Both were ways for me to see what was happening, how it was happening, and both could perhaps hint at the reason for why it was happening.

Subject Biographies

While a general look at the kinds of students that attend the school where this study took place is sufficient as a starting point, the nature of this study (heuristic) and of the sample (purposeful sampling) asks for a closer look at the individuals involved in the phenomenon. The junior class at Harbor has eighteen students total. Of these, five were ineligible to participate in the study because they were in concurrent enrollment classes and therefore were not taking my class. Of the remaining thirteen students, all thirteen opted to participate in the study. However, due to issues of attendance and completion of the activities involved in the study, four students composed the bulk of the study. Students who did not complete all of the activities were excluded to allow me to focus on students who participated in all of the kinds of arts integrated activities included in the lesson plan.

All of the names that follow are pseudonyms and the information contained in each biography was provided primarily by each student.

- Fiona is an Asian female with a 3.5 GPA. She is a first-generation college student (an older sister has begun college) and spends three to five hours a week doing homework. She works sporadically for pay and cares for her younger siblings. She finds that the books that teachers select for her to read are "sometimes interesting, sometimes not so interesting." For her reading is pretty easy and she likes school "most of the time." Fiona is being mentored by another teacher at HMCHS and after the study began taking concurrent enrollment classes.
- Calvin is an African-American male and first-generation college student. He likes school although he finds it easy and sometimes boring. While he describes the books his teachers assigned as "Good", he does not find time to read and goes on to say, "I'm too lazy to read." Calvin has an after-school job and spends no time on homework. His GPA is 3.9; government is his favorite subject and Environmental Science is his least favorite subject. At one point, Calvin was ready to take concurrent classes but was unable to due to behavior matters. Calvin is a very intelligent student but struggles with the demands placed on him by society, teachers, and his mother.
- Pilar is a Hispanic female. She will be a first-generation college student but has cousins who are currently in college. She views the readings assigned by her teachers as boring and generally

does not like to read. She no longer has an after-school job but spends less than three hours a week on homework. When she started at Harbor, she struggled with reading but after a little help from an older student her reading skills improved and now she only struggles if the assignment is “boring”. She likes school, has a 4.0 GPA and plans to attend college immediately after graduation. In the second semester of her senior year, Pilar will take a concurrent enrollment course. Pilar is very intelligent and creative but sometimes her lack of self-esteem hinders her intelligence.

- Sienna is a Caucasian female. She is in the first-generation of her family to graduate high school and will be the first in her family to attend college. She likes to read but describes it as both easy and hard “because it depends what book and how hard it is.” Teacher-assigned books are sometimes boring. Sienna enjoys her Creative Writing class but dislikes Environmental Science because of the teacher. She likes school “for the most part. It beats staying home.” Sienna will begin college immediately after high school. In the second semester of her senior year, Sienna will take a concurrent enrollment course. Sienna is extremely shy and, having been raised by her father, uncomfortable with being female. With the

help of her friends and lots of hard work, Sienna has overcome her shyness and begun to establish her feminine identity.

- Kat is the third child from her family to attend HMCHS. Her older sister was class valedictorian and Kat spends a considerable amount of energy not being her older sister. Kat has a young son at home (Oscar was two months old at the time of the study) and ever since she found out about her pregnancy, Kat's grades have skyrocketed. When asked, she explains that now she has a reason to get good grades. Kat is very creative and intelligent. She often knows the right answer and when called on, will generally make a comment that stimulates conversation. Kat likes to read, finds school to be "pretty much a waste of time", and prefers to draw and listen to music. Books that teachers assign are sometimes "awesome; othertimes (*sic*), not so much so." Before Oscar was born, Kat had a job. Now, Oscar is her job. Kat and Oscar spend time every evening reading. When asked about the relationship between the teachers and the students, Kat reported that she had come to see the teachers as "friends, not just authority figures."
- Thad is a Caucasian male. Both parents graduated from high school and his father from college. During the course of the study, his parents divorced and his mother returned to college.

Thad plans to attend college but has enlisted in the military. Thad "absolutly [*sic*] hates" to read and describes teacher-assigned readings as "ok." He does not have an after-school job, spends less than one hour a week doing homework and thinks that reading is easy. Although Thad likes school most of the time, he is (in his own words) lazy. In the beginning of his junior year, Thad was taking college classes, but was not allowed to continue his college classes due to academic issues. Thad is a smart young man and could go far if he dedicated as much energy to his work as he did to his efforts to avoid work.

- Mira is a Hispanic female. She will be a first-generation college student but has cousins who are currently in college and will also be among the first in her family to graduate high school. She enjoys reading "a good book" and says that the books assigned by teachers are different but interesting. She does not have an after-school job but would like one and spends around five hours a week on homework. She generally does not struggle with reading but finds boring books more difficult to read than good books. She likes school, especially the "creative" parts, has a 3.5 GPA and plans to attend college immediately after high school. In the second semester of her senior year, Mira will take a concurrent enrollment course. Mira is a quiet young lady whose demeanor oftentimes hides her true

intelligence. She describes the relationship between teachers and students as like a mother to a child. “Nice when everything’s ok, but on your tail when they want something.” She goes on to say “they never give up on us students even when we feel there’s nothing left to hope on.”

- Frank is a Hispanic male who is the first in his family to graduate high school and to attend college. He does not like to read; finds the readings assigned by his teachers to be “sometimes good,” but mostly not. He does not have an after-school job, spends about five hours a week doing homework, and struggles with reading comprehension, although he likes school. Frank had planned to study architecture when he began college, but is unsure of his ability to handle the course work. He will take a concurrent enrollment course in the second semester of his senior year. Frank had some rough times when he started at Harbor, but he has matured into a very intelligent, kind young man.
- Fernando is a Hispanic male who is the first in his family to graduate high school and to attend college. He does not like to read; finds the readings assigned by his teachers to be “sometimes interesting”. He does not have an after-school job, is a member of a band, likes school, and finds reading easy. He plans to attend the Academy of Contemporary Music at a local

college to study music, music management, and to begin a career in the music industry. Fernando is a great kid who has a lot of potential waiting for him to access it.

- Gaspar is a Hispanic male who is the first in family to graduate high school and attend college. Gaspar wants a career in law-enforcement and eventually wants to serve on the federal level as a Secret Service or FBI agent. At present, he helps his family run their newly-opened restaurant and before that worked twenty hours a week at an auto parts store. He likes school and his reading abilities are dependent on the type of book he is reading. He enjoyed *Dracula* as a summer reading project and does not like reading textbooks. His GPA is 3.0 and he plans to attend college immediately after high school. One aspect of the school that Gaspar likes best is the one-on-one attention available to him, "even when I don't want it." Gaspar is a wonderful young man who is working very hard to fulfill his dreams and his family's expectations.
- Bea is a Caucasian female, one of two daughters in a middle-class military family. Her father spent a good portion of her childhood in the military and his final duty station was in this city. Her mother has a Bachelor's degree and a Master's. Bea enjoys riding her horse, doing dressage, and hopes to manage an equestrian based business after she completes college. She

does not work for pay; loves school; spends little time completing her homework; and reads voraciously, often completing class reading assignments the day they are given. Bea has some difficulty fitting in with her classmates because she is very intelligent and can sometimes be impatient with those who are not as quick or who do not hold her same views. Bea left HMCHS after her junior year. Her plan was to complete high school in the winter semester and enroll in college in the spring. Instead, she stayed at a large, traditional high school and took several elective courses she had not been able to take at HMCHS.

- DJ is an African American male. His grandmother, who started a Master's degree, is raising him. DJ entertains dreams of becoming a star athlete or the drummer for a band. He has at times held a job for pay, but these positions never seem to last very long. DJ Is very intelligent, score well-above average when he concentrates on a testing situation, and struggles to make school-appropriate choices at times. He does not like to read now, but he used to. He spends less than an hour a week on homework and never reads for pleasure, "unless my mom makes me." DJ plans to attend college to study music and play sports. He will start his college career at the community college and transfer to a four-year college when he is ready. DJ left

HMCHS at the end of his junior year and enrolled at a nearby magnet school for his senior year. There he was able to play sports, and found that he enjoyed the more traditional schedule of shorter classes.

- Serafina is from Eastern Europe and speaks several languages in addition to English. She left her home country as a result of a civil war and came to the United States at about seven-years-old. She is a quiet student whose interests run more to the social aspects of school than to the academics. Serafina likes to read but finds school assignments boring and irrelevant. Her parents both have degrees from universities in their home country and have high hopes that Serafina, their only child, will have a successful college career too. They hope she will become a doctor or lawyer while Jana is not certain that she even wants to go to college. Serafina has achieved native-like fluency in English, while maintaining a working knowledge of several other languages including German, Russian, Italian, and several Eastern European dialects. At one point, Serafina considered a career as a translator, but did not want to commit to "that much college." She is a very intelligent student whose lack of self-confidence presents a roadblock for her to overcome. Serafina left HMCHS to spend her senior year in a home-schooling situation.

This phenomenon involves one other person – the teacher. For me, the classroom can be regarded as a triangular structure. One point is the subject matter; one point is the students; and one point is the teacher and his/her pedagogical beliefs. Once again, the idea for this model came from the world of qualitative research. Altrichter *et al.* (2008) contend that triangulation "gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation" (p. 147). In this instance that seemed logical to me that the teacher, the students, and the material come together to form a triangle – a structure where no one leg is more important that the other. Therefore, a brief biography of the teacher/researcher is as important as information about each student and about *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Researcher Biography

Cathy is a Caucasian female nearing forty. She has over twenty years of classroom experience but has held a teaching certificate for only five years. She has co-owned and taught at a pre-school with a liberal arts construction; run an after-school and summer program for an elementary school; taught developmental composition, reading, study skills, college composition I and II; was a federal grant program partnership coordinator between a large urban district and a small private college; and held countless other jobs in education and the service industry. Cathy's mother received her GED when Cathy was in middle school and her father lacked nine credit hours in completing his Bachelor's degree in Computer Science (in 1967). As a middle child, Cathy learned to read by playing school, valued books over everything, and majored

in education when she started college. She left education after several negative encounters with older educators and became a pre-law major. That never quite worked out, so she became a teacher despite her reservations. She holds a Bachelor's degree in English literature with a concentration in 18th century writers; a Master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; and is completing a doctorate in English Education.

Pedagogically speaking, Cathy believes that all students can learn and that when faced with academically rigorous, student-centered opportunities, all students will learn. When a student has difficulty in class, Cathy looks first to her teaching for signs of deficiency and then to the student and his/her efforts, needs, and personal situation. Cathy's lesson plans not only change from year-to-year, but from week-to-week. She believes that if one approach is not working, it is time to change approaches. Sometimes, that can be a negative. At her current teaching assignment, Cathy is known to be a tough teacher, one who pushes and demands and drives students crazy, but one for whom a student will be thankful once s/he has reached college.

The Grapes of Wrath

If my students and I form two legs of the triangle, then the novel is the third and a brief synopsis of the story line and the characters is as important as the biographies above.

Written in 1939, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck traces the Joad family from their home in Sallisaw, Oklahoma on their quest to discover a better life in California. The novel is arranged in dyads and its thirty

chapters can be divided into three parts. Each dyad contains a chapter about the general population (also known as “intercalary” chapters) and a chapter about the Joads. The three parts are: preparing for the trip; the trip west; and life in California. As the novel opens, the Dust Bowl is beginning to affect the farmers of Oklahoma and Tom Joad is released from Macalester prison where he has been held on a homicide conviction for the past four years. On his voyage back to his family home, he encounters the former preacher turned wandering philosopher, Casy, and the turtle from Chapter 3, who plans to present as a pet to his younger siblings. As night falls, Casy and Tom encounter Muley. Muley, like many other Okies has been driven from his farm by the banks that actually own the land that the Joads, Casy, Uncle John, and countless others had sharecropped. Muley’s family has gone west, but he has refused to leave. He tells Tom that the Joad family is at his Uncle John’s and are preparing to leave for California. The next morning the three men leave for Uncle John’s and Tom is reunited with his family just days before they were to set out for California. He also meets Rose of Sharon’s, his younger sister, new husband, learns that they are expecting, and helps the family pack for California. With a flyer advertising job for fruit pickers in hand, the Joads (Pa, Ma, Granma, Grampa, Tom, Al, Rose of Sharon, Connie, Uncle John, and the two children - Ruthie and Winfield) joined by Casy pile their few possession onto a dilapidated Hudson Super-Six and, with Grampa drugged so he’ll come, leave for California. Thus ends the first third of the book.

Within two days of their departure, Grampa dies, a symbol of what happens when man's connection to the land is severed. The Joads continue west with heavy hearts but determined to reach their destination. As they (and countless other migrants) drive Route 66 west, they encounter both helpful people willing to commit acts of kindness and charity and selfish people who are suspicious of the Okies, think them less-than-human, and assume that all of the migrants are dirty, uneducated, thieves. As they drive, the Joads encounter their first "Hooverville." According to the Suburban Emergency Management Project (SEMP, Inc., 2009), Hooverville was the name given to shantytowns that frequently popped up on the edge of towns. These settlements were made up of the homeless and of migrants. The housing was crude and the conditions were unsanitary. They were named for then-President Herbert Hoover whose term ran from March 1929 to March 1933 and is often blamed for the severity and length of the Great Depression. It is a Hooverville that the Joads have their first trouble from the police and labor organization. After leaving the Hooverville, the Joads drive all night to cross the desert. While they are driving, Granma dies and Ma tells no one. She pleads with the police the Joads encounter at the California/Arizona border to let them pass unmolested so they can find a doctor Granma. The police concede and the family crosses into California.

The final section of the novel starts with burying Granma, and the hunt for work. The Joads encounter police brutality and labor organizers. After they flee the Hooverville, they come across a government camp, the

Weedpatch Camp. Here the migrants are self-governing, treated with respect, and given a chance to achieve their goal for traveling west. Tom quickly finds a few days work, but the rest of the men are not so fortunate. Eventually, the family must leave the camp in pursuit of work so that they can buy food. On the road, they encounter a well-dressed man who offers them jobs picking peaches. The family passes a police-line to enter the farm. After an entre day of the whole family picking, they do not earn enough money to buy adequate food from the company store. That night, Al goes in search of girls and Tom goes to find out what the police presence is about. He encounter Casy who is now a labor-organizer and listens as Casy describes the advent of the strike and the plan to lower wages even further. Two policemen approach the tent and, recognizing Casy as a labor organizer, one attacks him with a pick ax handle, crushing his skull. Tom flies into a rage and kills the man who killed Casy before being struck himself. He escapes back to the family and hides in a nearby irrigation ditch while the family plans to leave the peach farm. The family's next stop is a job picking cotton where Ruthie, attempting to impress another girl, blurts that her brother has killed two men and is hiding. Tom is forced to leave the family as the spring rains come and flood the workers camp. After three days of rain, Rose of Sharon, whose husband disappeared one night at a Hooverville, goes in to labor and delivers a still-born baby. Uncle Tom is dispatched to bury the child. Instead, he puts the baby into a makeshift coffin and floats the child down the river to tell the story of the family. The family leaves the flooded cotton farm and

enters a barn only to find a starving man and his son. The story ends with Rose of Sharon saving the old man's live by nursing him with her breast milk.

The novel is replete with allegory, symbolism, social justice, and countless other themes, literary devices, and imagery. Every time I read the novel I encounter some new piece of meaning or another way of looking at a given scene. When *The Grapes of Wrath* was selected for NEA's "Big Read," the novel was characterized as:

> …not merely a great American novel. It is also a significant event in our national history. Capturing the plight of millions of Americans whose lives had been crushed by the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, Steinbeck awakened the nation's comprehension and compassion. Written in a style of peculiarly democratic majesty, The Grapes of Wrath evokes quintessentially American themes of hard work, self-determination, and reasoned dissent. It speaks from assumptions common to most Americans whether their ancestors came over on the Mayflower, in steerage, or in a truck…. A great book combines enlightenment with enchantment. It awakens our imagination and enlarges our humanity. (National Endowment for the Arts, 2006)

The preceding synopsis does not do justice to the novel but should help us to understand the role the novel fills in the classroom triangle.

Chapter Four

Illumination

Illumination is where, after data collection and analysis, the researcher allows knowledge and understanding to develop holistically, naturally, without force. To help this process, in this chapter, I explore the teaching of *The Grapes of Wrath* and the projects assigned to the students during the reading of *The Grapes of Wrath* and the artifacts that they created.

Preparation and Supplies

Due to my decision to follow my principal's advice and wait until after standardized testing and the end of the school year, my students and I had seventeen days to read all 455-pages of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Of those seventeen days, only one day was actually spent reading in class. Two days were dedicated to watching the movie version; three days to painting; four days to discussing the book; and two days to covering the background of *The Grapes of Wrath* – including the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Five days were weekends and the Memorial Day holiday. (For a copy of the reading schedule and complete lesson plan, please see Appendix C.)

While the reading of this book lasted only seventeen days, the preparation for the project began months before. My students and I began our teacher/student relationship in their 8th grade year. I was new to the classroom and they were new to the school. We've had students come and

go since that day, but half of the students had been in my 8th grade Reading for Pleasure and Information class. In their 9th and 10th grade years, these students did not have me for any of their core classes. We had studied Speech and French I and II and other elective classes together but English III was our first core class together. The next semester, we explored East Asian Literature and Culture together for the first nine weeks and Operational English (also known as grammar) for the last. It was at the end of this last class that I conducted my study. Waiting until the end of the school year and the end of their junior year was a multi-faceted decision. First, my building principal suggested that this timing would allow my students and their parents to feel more comfortable about their decision to participate or not to participate in the research. I was allowed to collect data and store that information until after grades were completed and posted, thus providing another layer of safety for my students and their parents. Additionally, it is my practice to end the semester with a novel whenever possible. Teaching novels is, to me, more flexible and such flexibility is particularly valuable at the end of a semester when other teachers are giving final exams, students are taking EOI's, and the school year may find itself extended due to snow or ice the previous winter.

Responding to literature had been an integral part of our American Literature curriculum. As we read various pieces of American literature, we wrote about what we had read; acted out scenes; created found poems; debated the morals and ethics and messages of pieces; and painted our

version of the theme, symbols, and of our understandings. As we responded to literature, we used various forms of art. We used painting, drawing, cartooning, music, dance, drama, reader's theater, story boarding, and poetry – all as ways to respond to literature which we cannot forget is an art form in and of itself. Through these activities, my students grew to be comfortable with the various forms of response they had practiced and experienced.

Unfortunately, looking at every form of arts integration that I use in my classroom is simply not possible. Nor would such an attempt be good research practice. Therefore, as researcher, I had to select what forms of arts integration would best fit the research process and the classroom. For me, that was spontaneous painting and creative writing. Spontaneous painting (Paint-Write) allowed for the creation of both written documents and painted pieces while creative writing allowed for a written document from a visual stimulus. In addition, Paint-Write allowed my students to transform an idea into being; to explain the aesthetics of life and art; to imagine, to explore ambiguity, and to explore multiple perspectives. The creative writing allowed them to transform an idea into a story; to imagine the history behind the photograph; and to explore the multiple perspectives offered by multiple students. (Please see the chart on pages for further discussion).

They also grew comfortable with the idea of playing with words and with paints. Many of my students had not played in paint since elementary school and most had not used paints since that same time. I know that my

experiences with Paint-Write were the first times that I had used paints for anything other than covering a wall in a uniform color since my childhood. And this was also true of my students. Knowing the art habits of my school at large and the interests of certain students in particular, I suspect that I had some graffiti artists in the group but that they chose not to share that information with me. For me this is worthy of note because it indicates a certain comfort level with this form of response. Creating this comfort was one of the goals I had for my class before the study started. I believed that if the students were comfortable with the medium, they would be better able to create responses; they would have the skills necessary to express their ideas in visual ways.

While response to literature was our goal, painting great works of art was not. One discussion my students and I had before we began was the difference between paints and paintings. For us, paintings were works of art created by artists with a plan, a sketch, the careful and consistent application of technique and theory. They were creating paints. Our goal was to put paint on paper with little or no planning, with as much spontaneity and first thought as possible, and with as little judgment, revision, and input from an internal censor as possible. The paints were a scaffold to an understanding of their responses to literature.

The school provided the supplies for our project. The school secretary is an art-lover and had stocked our art cabinet very thoroughly as soon as she

and the principal realized that we would use any materials that were provided for us. Before we started our *The Grapes of Wrath* project, I assembled a basket of supplies to make starting and cleaning easier. The basket contained large bottles of paint in nine different colors (red, green, yellow, blue, black, white, orange, and brown); a collection of inexpensive paintbrushes in a variety of shapes, sizes, and bristle formations; a carton of baby wipes; a roll of paper towel; four plastic cups for water; and a large package of art paper. The total cost of the basket of supplies was less than $100 and at the end, there were plenty of supplies left over for future projects. With book and paint supplies in hand, we were ready to begin.

The Lesson Plan

Before we could begin however, I had to know where we were headed. Why were we reading *The Grapes of Wrath*? What would my students be able to do at the end that they could not do/could not do as well now? While many teachers and administrators regard SWBAT's (Student will be able to…) as an important element of the lesson plan, I am not a huge fan. Perhaps it is because I teach at the upper end of the grade level spectrum, but most of my students can do all of the basics. Instead, my lesson plan goals are often written as "Students will practice or demonstrate or advance their ability to…"

In the case of *The Grapes of Wrath*, my students were to practice figuring out what words mean in context; to learn how to understand the

vernacular and its importance in portraying a character. My students would apply their previous knowledge of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression to their reading. By creating a visual reading of *The Grapes of Wrath,* my students would respond to literature, demonstrate moral imagination, make meaning from words and images, and identify the author's purpose in writing such a piece. The images would be a bridge of sorts to help move from where they were to where they needed to be to express the thought, ideas, and imaginings that the novel offered. (For a complete lesson plan, please see Appendix C.)

While we read the entire novel, I choose to emphasize four chapters: Chapter 1, Chapter 3, Chapter 25, and Chapter 36. Chapter 1 sets up the story and introduces the reader to Steinbeck's writing style, to the Dust Bowl, and to the intercalary chapters.

> To the red country and part of the country of Oklahoma, the l;ast rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth… The last rains lifted the corn quickly and scattered weed colonies and grass along the sides of the roads so that the gray country and red country began to disappear under a green cover… The sun flared down on the growing corn day after day until a line of brown spread along the edge of each green bayonet. (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 1)
>
> After a while the faces of the watching men lost their bemused perplexity and became hard and angry and resistant. Then the women knew that they were safe and that there was no break. Then they asked, What'll we do? And the men replied, I don't know. But it was all right. The women knew it was all right and the watching children knew it was all right. The women and children knew that no misfortune was too great to bear if their men were whole. (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 3-4)

Steinbeck's imagery is incredible and his portrayal of the anguish experienced by the farmers and their families as they wait for rain is hard to resist. Chapter 3, the turtle chapter, offers a symbolic synopsis of the story of the Joads. Moving slowly, the turtle crosses a road, is intentionally hit by one driver and avoided by a second, all the while unintentionally carrying a seed. "And over the grass at the roadside a land turtle crawled, turning aside for nothing, dragging his high-domed shell over the grass" (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 14). While it is tempting to focus on the turtle's trek, it is the seeds in this chapter that provide the reflection of "nature's benevolence" (Davis, 1982, p.6).

> Lying on its back, the turtle was tight in its shell for some time. But at last its legs waved in the air, reaching for something to pull it over. Its front foot caught a piece of quartz and little by little the shell pulled over and flopped upright. The wild oat head fell out and three of the spearhead seeds stuck in the ground. And as the turtle crawled on down the embankment, its shell dragged dirt over the seeds (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 15-16).

Chapter 25 was selected because, to me, it is one of the most beautifully ironic chapters ever written. The chapter also features the novel's namesake- a line from *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Over the course of the novel, the scene changes from pastoral beauty to starvation and death.

> The spring is beautiful in California. Valleys in which the fruit blossoms are fragrant pink and white waters in a shallow sea. Then the first tendrils of the grapes, swelling from the old gnarled vines, cascade down to cover the trunks. The full green hills are round and soft as breasts. And on the level vegetable lands are the mile-long rows of pale green lettuce and spindly little cauliflowers, the grey-green unearthly artichoke plants (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 346)

While the beginning is pastoral beauty, the end is desperation and death.

> The people come with nets to fish for potatoes in the river, and the guards hold them back; they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but the kerosene is sprayed. And they stand still and watch the potatoes float by, listening to the screaming pigs being killed in a ditch and covered with quicklime , watch the mountain of oranges slop down to a putrefying ooze; and in the eyes of the people there is the failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage. (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 349)

I used Chapter 36 because it was the final chapter of the novel. The final paragraph brings to mind the image of the Pieta, of the Virgin Mary holding the crucified Christ.

> For a minute Rose of Sharon sat still in the whispering barn. Then she hoisted her tired body up and drew the comfort about her. She moved slowly to the corner and stood looking down at the wasted face, into the wide frightened eyes. Then slowly she lay down beside him. He shook his head from slowly from side to side. Rose of Sharon loosened one side of the blanket and bared her breast. "You got to," she said. "There." Her hand moved behind his head and supported it. Her fingers moved gently in his hair. She looked up and across the barn, and her lips came together and smiled mysteriously. (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 355)

The death of Rose of Sharon's baby, his subsequent water burial, and her sacrifice to save the life of a stranger all work together to initiate "all familial and social change, all political organization, all human activity" (Davis, 1982, p. 10). Steinbeck's novel is so well-written that while almost any chapter could be used, these chapters are the ones that speak most loudly and clearly to me and are the ones I believed would help my students create an understanding of an appreciation of Steinbeck's novel and the Joads' plight.

Introducing the Dust Bowl

The first assignment that my students did was to listen as I read Chapter One aloud. The chapter introduces the reader to the men, women, and children of the Oklahoma Dust Bowl. It describes the green earth as it becomes the drying earth, the clouds that bring little or no rain and no relief, and the people's reaction to the situation:

> After a while the faces of the watching men lost their bemused perplexity and became hard and angry and resistant. Then the women knew that they were safe and that there was no break. Then they asked, What'll we do? And the men replied, I don't know. But it was all right. The women knew it was all right and the watching children knew it was all right. The women and children knew that no misfortune was too great to bear if their men were whole. The women went into the houses to their work, and the children began to play, but cautiously at first. As the day went forward the sun became less red. It flared down on the dust-blanketed land. The men sat in the doorways of their houses; their hands were busy with sticks and little rocks. The men sat still – thinking- figuring. (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 3-4)

As soon as I finished reading this chapter, the students were directed to write what they heard in the chapter; what did they expect to have happen in this novel? What was the relationship between the land and the people? Despite the fact that five-minute free writes were a regular part of our classroom experience, the students seemed stymied by this prompt. While they did not ask for direction (knowing that none would be forthcoming), their writing lacked depth and insight. Most students explained that the people were close to the land; that they were attached to the land, and that the people would be sad to have to leave. "The people want to stay but know they have to leave," seemed a common response. However, a more insightful explanation came

from Pilar who explained that the relationship between the people and the land was like that of "…a mother and her child." The people don't want to leave the land because they have been there for eighty-plus years and "…as Muley said 'People were born on this land, raised, people died there and its (sic.) their land." As they shared their writings, the students were asked to consider what would cause them to leave their land, their family, and their entire history. Asking this question of a classroom where half of the students are from immigrant families asks them to tap into their own personal history. While I know that many of their parents came to Oklahoma in search of a brighter future, higher wages, and a better life for their children, not one student identified a relationship between the Joads and his/her own family. The relationship that seemed so obvious to me was invisible to them. That night the assignment was to read chapters one through three – just sixteen pages.

The Reading Schedule

The next day, I asked my students about the turtle. "What does the turtle in chapter three symbolize?" Here, I hoped but did not expect, was the *Dead Poet's Society* moment of my earlier teacher dreams. To clarify a bit, *Dead Poet's Society* (1989) is the story of an unorthodox English teacher, Mr. Keating, at a private boy's academy during the 1950's. Using poetry and unconventional teaching methods, Mr. Keating encourages his students to become free thinkers and to "*Carpe Diem*!" (seize the day). After a student

lies to his father and to the school's headmaster and then commits suicide, Keating is fired. As he packs to go, his former students jump onto their desks and declare him "O Captain, my captain," a reference to Walt Whitman's poem about President Lincoln and concrete proof that Keating has touched the lives of these young men and none of them will ever be the same. Keating's love of students and of teaching are part of what inspired me to become a teacher and I keep the goal of knowing that I have touched, and therefore changed, my students' lives foremost in mind.

Having read *The Grapes of Wrath* with students before, I thought I was prepared for less than stellar responses, but I was not prepared for the responses that I received. Perhaps a more accurate description would be to say that I was not prepared for the responses I did not receive, for the students to not respond. I had long understood that not responding is in itself a response; just not one that I was ready to handle. Only one student out of the entire class had read the chapter and the symbolism of the turtle had completely escaped her. To say the least, I was frustrated and a little glad that the video camera was not recording what came next. I scrapped that day's lesson plan and went with plan B: "Here's the book. You tell me what you're going to read and when it will be completed." I tossed a marker to Fiona and asked her to record what chapters we would be reading and by when each chapter would be completed. Then, I left the room, feeling less than confident in my abilities as a teacher and a researcher.

In ten minutes, I was back and they were ready. They would read approximately thirty pages a night and come to class prepared to discuss those pages. (For a copy of the reading schedule, please see Appendix C.) For the rest of that day, the students read. Some read aloud in small groups while others read alone. Some needed to escape the noise of the classroom and found quiet places in the hallway or in individual study carrels to read. I moved from person to person and from group to group, answering questions, setting up background, and helping students with the arrangement of the novel, the role of the intercalary chapters, and Steinbeck's use of dialect. In the last five minutes of class, my students were invited to write about what they had read, why they had not read the night before, and to ask any questions they had of me. They had not read because other obligations had gotten in the way and "the novel was too hard to understand." I was amazed that their responses to the part of the novel they had covered that day boiled down to "This novel is not as bad as I first thought it would be." Not exactly rousing praise for a literary classic, but a vast improvement over the silence that had started class.

The next two days were taken up with background information and a documentary on the Dust Bowl. Each day's class began and ended with a status report: how was the reading going? Any questions? What did you learn from the video? From the reading? Questions were asked and answered and we moved forward to the first weekend. One hundred pages on their own. I was worried. I was not at all certain that they could handle

what I was sending them forth to do. It was spring, school was almost over, reading the novel would require effort, and I was not their only assignment that weekend. I was concerned and more than a bit apprehensive.

It turns out that my concerns were fairly unfounded. Most of the students read their assigned materials and were prepared to discuss the novel. My students and I discussed the role of Route 66 in history and how it opened the west to the "Okies." I have traveled Route 66 before and shared some of my pictures of the narrow concrete and asphalt road as it passed under bridges and made hairpin turns. We pondered the Oatman highway's twists, turns, blind corners, and beautiful vistas. (The Oatman Highway is a fifty-mile stretch of Old Route 66 that goes from Kingman, Arizona to Needles, California. The road is generously described as a "highway" since it is only two narrow lanes, with few shoulders, many hairpin turns, a fairly steep climb [at the Sitgreaves Pass, the road climbs to an elevation of 3556 feet] and some of the most beautiful Southwest scenery imaginable {Hualapai}.) We discussed the sobriquet "Okies" and debated whether it was a pejorative term or simply a state nickname. We mourned the death of the dog, questioned Rose of Sharon's superstition and seemingly selfish attitude toward the family and Ma, and left Oklahoma on an "ancient overloaded Hudson" that "creaked and grunted to get to the highway" (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 123). Our literary journey has begun and while I had read the novel and traveled the route, I was still unsure of just where and how this journey would end.

Character Paints

The next assignment was a chance for my students to return to spontaneous painting. We had painted with previous assignments and stories and so this technique was nothing new to the class. They did this assignment before they watched the movie so that the casting director's version of the characters did not influence the student's vision of the characters. The assignment was to paint the character that they felt most strongly about – positively or negatively. Not surprisingly, most students choose to paint Tom Joad. However, one student painted Rose of Sharon and another painted the homeless man from the diner/gas station. After the painting was finished (five minutes) and the students had written about what they had painted (three minutes to answer questions like: What do the colors represent? Why did you select those colors?), they traded paintings and guessed at whom each student was looking. Was their received painting of Tom, or Casy, or of the homeless man who warns the Joads that California is not the Promised Land (Figure 2)? At one point in the trade, Pilar's painting of Rose of Sharon ended up in Bea's hands. In Pilar's painting of Rose of Sharon (Figure A), she used black to represent the "negative cloud around her; the blue and purple are kinda like she's cold, but cause of the baby in her stomach maybe she can change and I think she will but maybe she won't." Further exposition of Pilar's explanation reveals that for her, blue is a cold color and red is a life color. Their combined purple stands for potential.

Bea guessed that Pilar's picture was of Connie, Rose of Sharon's young, dreamer of a husband. In her description and explanation, Bea said "Connie is a kid who is not ready to be a father and only thinks of himself. The small heart represents that. I think the black border represents the ignorance of Connie and the blue and purple represents his desires in life." Both students represent selfishness with a small heart (just like in "Dr. Seuss's *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*," was a comment made by more than one student). Both use black as a negative representation but their use of blue is seen as both positive and negative.



Figure A. Pilar's Painting of Rosasharn. 8 1/2" X 11" (Acrylic)



Figure B. Thad's Painting of the Homeless Man 8 1/2"X 11" (Acrylic)

The painting of the homeless man (see Figure B) was perhaps the most intriguing result of this exercise. When Thad identified his painted character, my response was, “What homeless man are you talking about? Do you mean Muley or Casy?”

“Neither. The homeless man in the camp who wanted to buy his kids some bread and candy.” Certain that such a man did not exist in the novel, I asked Thad to show us where in the book. He referred us to Chapter 15, page 159 and Chapter 16, page 188. Chapter 15 is an intercalary chapter where an “Okie” buys a fifteen-cent loaf of bread from a diner for ten cents. As he fishes the dime from his money pouch, a penny comes with it. Seeing his children eyeing the candy, he asks if the candy sticks are penny candy. The waitress lies and says the nickel candies are “two-for-a cent” candies. In Chapter 16, the Joads are at a campground and a circle of men have gathered to talk. As the group discusses their westward migration, a ragged man approaches them. “Near the edge of the porch a ragged man stood. His black coat dripped torn streamers. The knees were gone from his dungarees. His face was black with dust, and lined where sweat had washed through” (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 188). The man warns the Joads that California is not what they are expecting. His vivid description of danger makes a deep impression on the Joad men and on the reader as well.

> Somepin it took me a year to find out. Took two kids dead, took my wife dead to show me. But I can’t tell you. I should have knew that. Nobody couldn’t tell me, neither. I can’t tell ya about them little fellas layin’ in the tent with their bellies puffed out an’ jus’ skin on their bones,

> an' shiverin' an' whinin' like pups, an' me runnin' aroun' tryin' to get work – not for money, not for wages!" he shouted. "Jesus Christ, jus' for a cup of flour an' a spoon of lard. An' then the coroner come. 'Them children died a heart failure,' he said. Put it on his paper. Shiverin', they was, an' their bellies stuck out like a pig bladder. (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 190-191)

Steinbeck's description made a deep impression on Thad and he considered these two men to be one character – a before and after picture almost.

The painting of the characters gave us a chance to discuss archetypes and how Steinbeck uses words and details to create mental pictures of each character and to give his readers clues as to the character's role in the story and place in the family. It is at this point that we discussed Steinbeck's use of a dialogue. When we began reading the novel, some students had difficulty following the dialogue. However, when we read portions aloud, they could understand what the character was saying. We had a short but lively discussion of what dialogues carry what connotations. For example, according to them, a thick Southern drawl is often used to depict a simple character, lacking in sophistication. In the case of this novel, we noted how the Joads and the other poor characters were depicted with thickly dialectic speech, while the policemen, land owners, and Jim Rawley (camp manager) – persons of power in the novel- spoke using a more "proper" English. Our discussion of dialect also helped us to be able to evaluate how text affects visual messages and how text creates visual messages. The discussions led us to our next activity, viewing the movie.

The Movie with Henry Fonda

We started watching parts of the movie corresponding to our reading. In 1940, John Ford directed an impressive cast, including a young Henry Fonda as Tom Joad, Jane Darwell as Ma Joad and John Carradine as Casy, the preacher turned philosopher, in the movie version of *The Grapes of Wrath*. The movie is remarkably faithful to the book, and Steinbeck believed that,

> [Producer Darryl] Zanuck has a hard, straight picture in which the actors are submerged so completely that it looks and feels like a documentary film and certainly has a hard, truthful ring.... It is a harsher thing than the book, by far. It seems unbelievable but it is true. (National Endowment for the Arts, 2005)

Filmed in the style of a documentary, the movie provides excellent reinforcement of the stark reality about which Steinbeck was dedicated to writing. Part of my rationale for using the movie is that, "viewing a film- moving into a dark room where other stimuli do not intervene and becoming engrossed in an expertly photographed, carefully orchestrated, and auditorially enhanced multimedia experience- to have a profound effect upon how I view the world" (Baines & Kunkel, p. 68). Although the classroom is seldom dark enough or quiet enough to be free from other stimuli, the effect is the same. The viewing of the movie created a visual reference for my students' reading experiences.

In our daily discussion, the students referred to instances where the movie deviated from the book and instances where both texts matched fairly

well. They were particularly interested in the movie's ending (Ma's speech) and the book's ending (Rose of Sharon's breast feeding of the starving man). I had asked them not to read the last ten pages of the novel as I had a special project planned for those pages. As they watched the movie end, the students seemed to sense that something would be different – that the speech was unlikely to be Steinbeck's final word. Their prediction skills were improving. As we continued to read, the Joads arrived in California without Grandpa and Grandma and our discussion moved from the Joads to the intercalary chapters and the people they represented.

Writing from a Picture

Earlier in that school year, HMCHS had received a Picturing America grant with over thirty two-foot by three-foot high-quality reproductions of American-inspired artwork (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2009). Using the photograph, *The Migrant Mother (Destitute pea pickers in California, Mother of seven children. Age thirty-two. Nipomo, California)*, 1936 by Dorthea Lange, I challenged the students to write her story. "This iconic photograph of a 32-year-old impoverished mother and her three children does not show a single detail of the destitute pea pickers' camp where they lived. Still it evokes the uncertainty and despair resulting from continual poverty" (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2009). This activity was designed to reverse the *ekphrastic* process (to create writing from art); to exercise their "moral imagination," or ability to put themselves in someone else's shoes, while at the same time using their background

knowledge of the Great Depression, and the elements of a narrative. It also helped the students to understand the role and function of the intercalary chapters.

I chose this picture for many reasons. One, I saw this picture for the first time years ago and I have never forgotten the look in the mother's eyes. Her despair and the power of the photo have stuck with me and I simply love this picture. Second, the composition of the photograph is quite simple – a woman, holding a baby, while two other children hide at her sides. In the background is a structure of some sort. There are several clues as to the story, but not all the details necessary to tell her whole story. Third, from my research of the picture, I knew that the story of the migrant mother, Florence, shared several points with the story of the Joads. Indeed, this photograph could easily have been taken at any one of the Hoovervilles the Joads occupied. The last reason is fairly simple – we had the photo in a two-foot by three-foot poster. The size of the poster offered my students the details necessary to create a story, without the need to go online where the true story is easily accessible.

According to a story written by her grandson, the son of the little girl to the right of the picture, the woman's name was Florence Sprague (Sprague, 2006). She was a full-blooded Cherokee who had married her husband, Cleo, when she was just seventeen. At one time, the Spragues had achieved the American dream – they had a house, children, and steady employment.

Cleo was employed at a local mill and the older children were in school. The family (Florence, Cleo and five children) did not have much but they had enough. Until the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression. By the end of 1931, Cleo had lost his job, the family had lost their home, and had no choice but to join the stream of migrant workers who followed the seasons from crop to crop hoping to make a living. After picking peaches in Northern California, Cleo fell ill and was dead within forty-eight hours. Florence had five children and was pregnant with her sixth. She spent the next two years as a migrant traveling with her in-laws from place to place, raising her children. She briefly returned home to Oklahoma to deliver her seventh child (and never revealed the father's name) and then returned to California with her six older children. In 1936, the family was chasing a chance to pick peas when a freak frost wiped out the entire crop. With no money, a broken-down car, and five of her seven children with her and her new common-law husband, Dorthea Lange, employed by the Farm Security Administration to document the plight of the migrant worker, shot her now immortal photos. *The Migrant Mother* is actually only one of a six shot series. The next day, the picture was published in the front page of major newspapers across America and within forty-eight hours, aid was pouring into the camps. But by then, her family had come to Florence's rescue and she never knew of her role in the rescue of so many other migrant mothers and their families.

All the students knew was the name of the picture – *The Migrant Mother*. They were given no information before they started writing and no

limitations were imposed as to length. "Tell me her story," was their only direction. "What has happened to bring her to this place? In her life? In her world? Use what you see and what you know to tell me her story." In their stories, the mother is named Mary, Julie, Roxanna, or she is nameless, anonymous. She is the mother of two (those students missed the baby in her arms), three, or five – the older children are in the fields, picking. She is often seen as a single mother whose husband is either off to war or has died from heat, disease, or starvation. She is in California suffering like the Joads or living in a Hooverville or she is traveling from Oklahoma to California with the hope of attaining a better life for her and her children. She is in her mid-thirties or younger but looks much older because of all that she has experienced, suffered, and endured.

In discussion, they noted that the use of black and white photography was extremely effective in showing the desperation of the scene. They commented on the lack of a background. The only visible background is what they correctly surmised to be tent material. As they looked at the picture, they were drawn to the eyes of the mother, her well-worn skin, tattered clothes, and the children who both clung to and hugged her. In one version of her story, Bea describes a stash of books that the mother has with her. She teaches her children to read after they return from the fields because she knows "that it will be valuable to them in the future." In Kat's version, the mother is worn out because she goes without food to allow her children to have more, all the while knowing that it's not enough. For Kat, the

father/husband is the victim of “dust pneumonia.” Fiona sees calm in the mother’s face rather than the anxiety, trouble, and struggle that the rest of class sees. For Fiona, the migrant mother is waiting for the better times that she knows are coming. According to Rabinowitz and Smith’s idea of an authoritative reading, these are all valid interpretations of *The Migrant Mother* because they refer to concrete details and historical facts. The same is true when working with “paints.” The students use concrete details and historical knowledge to inform their paints. Then, the variety of interpretations the students offer gives them a chance to demonstrate the different interpretations that can occur when a heterogeneous group looks at a piece of art or of literature.

Chapter 25 Paints

Our next major project was to read and paint Chapter 25. Chapter 25 is an intercalary chapter – a chapter whose purpose is to tie the Joads to the larger population. Steinbeck’s wife Carol had named the book *The Grapes of Wrath* just a few weeks before he wrote this chapter (Steinbeck, 1989, p. 65). And it is in this chapter where readers find a reference to the title: “In the souls of the people, the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage” (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 349). This verbal image is an almost exact opposite of how the chapter begins: “Spring is beautiful in California” (p. 346).

As I read, my students are led through a fragrant valley, blooming with life and prosperity and bounty; teeming with fear and anger and resentment.

The men of science have done their jobs well and the fields and trees are heavy with fruit. Too heavy it seems for the farmers to make a profit. Supply exceeds demand and so, rather than risk lower profits, the supply is destroyed. The local farmers lose their crops to the large landowners who also own the canneries and therefore control the prices. And the men of science "…can find no way to let the hungry people eat their produce" (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 348). Truckloads of oranges are sprayed with kerosene, while hogs are slaughtered and buried, and potatoes are dumped in the river – all while the migrants slowly starve to death.

> There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation… And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificates – died of malnutrition – because the food must rot, must be forced to rot." (p. 349)

Once again, Steinbeck offers a picture of the duality of human nature. In a land of plenty, the very socially, politically weakest are left to die so that others, more socially and politically strong, can make a profit.

The vivid imagery and bleak ending of this chapter are an excellent example of Steinbeck's writing style. His words create visual images in the reader's head and this chapter's images offer an excellent opportunity for students to paint their understanding of the chapter and the relevance of the title. The day they were scheduled to have read the chapter, we started class with a painting session. The students prepared the palettes and gathered materials and when everyone was ready, they sat and I read. The directions were to paint the chapter as I read it. The students were told, "Don't wait until the end, because when I finish reading, you only have thirty seconds to finish

up your painting." As I read, I watched. Most of the students listened intently for about the first minute and then began painting the beautiful California spring that unfolded before them. As the fruits grew and the trees bloomed, the dark colors on their palettes were ignored in favor of the bright yellows, pinks, and greens that typify a sunny day. But as the chapter starts to turn and mood begins to darken, brown, black, and white began to meld into their representations and strokes became harder, bolder, and sometimes, slower and more deliberate. While students seemed reluctant to destroy the pretty in their work, they expressed the ugly side of Steinbeck's and the Joads' world with accuracy and clarity.

In her picture (Figure C), Bea first painted a bright spring day and began a row of trees. As the tone of the chapter changed, the appearance of her trees changed. On the left of the picture the trees are healthy and vigorous. As the viewer moves to the right, the trees begin to whither and bend. The last tree is bent with a reddish-brown trunk, grayish leaves, and black "cherries". In her writing about the piece, Bea identified the trees as "the only concrete things about my painting." She explained that the red spots in the trees are not cherries, "…but the blood of the workers who busted their butts but get no reward." In the final minute of painting time, Bea streaked her formerly blue sky with brown, red, and orange – the colors of the fruits and vegetables that went to waste. "The orange represents all the children that died because of malnutrition. The sky represents the ugly reality

of California rather than the beautiful hope that California would bring prosperity to all the families."



Figure C. Bea's Painting of Chapter 25 11"X17" (Acrylic)

While Bea painted from the first word, Kat didn't start painting until we were about half way through the passage. She had not previously read the passage, but as she sat and listened with closed eyes, her tense posture suggested that she anticipated the twist, what was to come. When she did start to paint, Kat loaded her brush heavy with black and painted a black tree with yellow and red leaves. She then added an amorphous blackness on the left and bottom of her picture. With another brush she added streaks of red that represent a mouth, and eyes. Her lone tree on the right of the painting has a "black and bloody" trunk. "The leaves on the trunk are yellow because it used to be bright and full of life and it was slowly taken over by the black and the red." Kat's experience with this text was particularly difficult for her because she had recently had a baby. Talk of starving children and superstitions about babies seemed particularly difficult for her to discuss and absorb. When I asked Kat if her recent entrance into motherhood played a role in her interpretation, she seemed reluctant to answer. Slowly she admitted that the day-to-day parenting of her son was affecting her but she was unclear on how.



Figure D. Kat's Painting of Chapter 25. 11"X17" (Acrylic)

Pilar's picture (Figures E and E-1) is at first similar to her classmates' pictures: a dark colored tree, a yellow sun, green grass, and red and purple people. But Pilar's writing offers an insight that her classmates may have thought of but did not identify. "While she (Mrs. Klasek) was reading I got a picture in my mind with a blue sea and seaweed in the blue water a bunch of trees of apples grapes and oranges on the floor rotting and potatos (*sic*) and pigs as well." Pilar identifies where her painting comes from – her mental image of the scene. She is also careful to include what seem like minor details but really are major details when she paints a "20" and a "5" in the picture. They are not noticeable until the viewer looks at each individual brush stroke. (Please see Figure E-1. This figure has been edited with the numbers highlighted in gray so that they are more easily visible.) The numbers indicate the starting and ending price paid to pickers. Pilar explained that the "20" is in the tree because it's higher, "it's what they should be picking." The "5" is on the ground because that is where the "rotten stuff" is. In the novel, twenty cents is a living wage; five cents is not. The inclusion of the numbers though indicates an understanding of the importance of the prices and their role in the demise of the life of the pickers.

Figure E. Pilar's Painting of Chapter 25. 11"X17" (Acrylic)

Figure E-1. Pilar's Painting of Chapter 25. 11"X17" (Acrylic)

So far, much of the work Calvin has created is half-hearted. He's told other students that creativity can't be graded so I will be forced to give them all A's no matter what they produce. This time, however, Calvin produced a painting that is fluid, colorful, and full of emotion. With bold streaks of red, orange, and brown, Calvin's picture has a green base with dashes of red. The painting also has the word "wrath" painted across it, with the "a" and the "t" crossing to form the "h".

> It represents the blinded clouds of judgement (*sic*) during that time, you know how you feel when your (*sic*) angry. The colors represent the string emotional feelings. The orange is for the California day. Wrath is written in the middle of the picture just to point out the obvious emotions. The red is for the blood of the slaughtered pigs.

When asked why he painted what he did, Calvin responded with, "I jus (*sic*) had a vision and went with it."



Figure F. Calvin's Painting of Chapter 25. 11"X17" (Acrylic)

The Grapes of Wrath Paint

On the next to the last day, we spent the entire class period on the last chapter. In this chapter, Rose of Sharon's baby is stillborn, the boxcar the Joads call home is flooded, and when they take refuge in a barn, Rose of Sharon saves the life of an unidentified father by breastfeeding him with the milk that should have nourished her baby. I had expected that some of my students would be shocked or repulsed (the academic word for "oooged out") by this final moment of the book. Instead, they accepted Rose of Sharon's act as one of redemption and almost as if they expected nothing less of her; she whom days earlier they had described as "selfish and immature." When it was time for class to end that day, my students didn't rush from the room like a herd of puppies freed from their crate as they usually did. They lingered, talking, asking questions, trying to make sense of this moment where Rose of Sharon gives life to the unknown man. Finally, as the next class pressed into the room, our conversation concluded.

"It's an allegory, right?" asked Frank.

"An allegory?" I queried.

"You know, when the writer tells a story but he really wants you to think of something else – an allegory. Or something like that," Frank patiently explained to me.

"Yah; it's something like that," I replied. And there it was. Not the whole dream but a moment of my *Dead Poet's Society* dream – lived out in my classroom.

The next day, which was the next to the last day of school, the students had two assignments to complete. One was to take the multiple-choice test over the novel; the other was to paint the novel. The multiple-choice test was taken from the website Sparknotes.com. The site offers information on many different pieces of literature and each piece has a quiz, summary, chapter-by-chapter analysis and summary, discussion of important quotes, themes, and characters. I refer my students to this site when they ask for a recommendation because I have often found it to be more thorough than other similar publications and sites. When I handed out the multiple-choice test, my students weren't very happy. They had presumed that because we were painting and writing our way through the book, there would be no multiple-choice test. Normally, that would be true. However, this time, I wanted to see how they would do on a test of simple recall and to compare that to the more abstract final project: paint the novel.

The twenty-five-question quiz features questions of recall and most of my students did fairly well. (Please see appendix C for the complete quiz.) Scores ranged from forty-two out of fifty to fifty out of fifty. In previous instances, when I have used quizzes from this same site, the results have been less promising. It was not unusual for my students' scores to range from eighteen out fifty to forty-two out of fifty. Often the average score is about a thirty-five out of fifty. I was pleased to see that the scores on this quiz were higher than I had seen in the past. I attributed that increase to a deeper

understanding of the novel, but that may not be the case. (Please see Chapter Six for a more complete discussion of this idea.)

The whole novel paintings from my students are nothing less than beautiful; at least they are to me. In them I see created meaning, understanding of the text and sub-text, and identification of the themes that Steinbeck worked so hard to create and portray. Pilar's novel painting and writing are full of color and explanations of what each color represents. (See figure G.) In her final writing, Pilar explains that the tree isn't a tree. It's a representation of the family journey. The black in her picture represents Route 66 with its red for sorrow and brown for the earth and the dust bowl.

Figure G. Pilar's Final Painting. 11"X17" (Acrylic)

Kat's novel painting left me wondering. (See figure H.) It consists of a series of black, brown, red, gold, teal, and purple swirls that in some ways resemble clusters of grapes. In her writings, she explains that the browns and blacks represent the misery of the Joads while the reds and purples represent the strength and beauty of the woman who struggles to keep her family together. The white, the absence of color, represents the future that the family faces. "They don't know how it's going to be. It might be good, it might be bad." Abby was also the first student to identify a reason for Rose of Sharon's selfless act at the end of the book. "I guess maybe it's because she felt bad since her baby died and felt that she has to save him for some reason. I don't know how to explain it. But it makes sense to me."

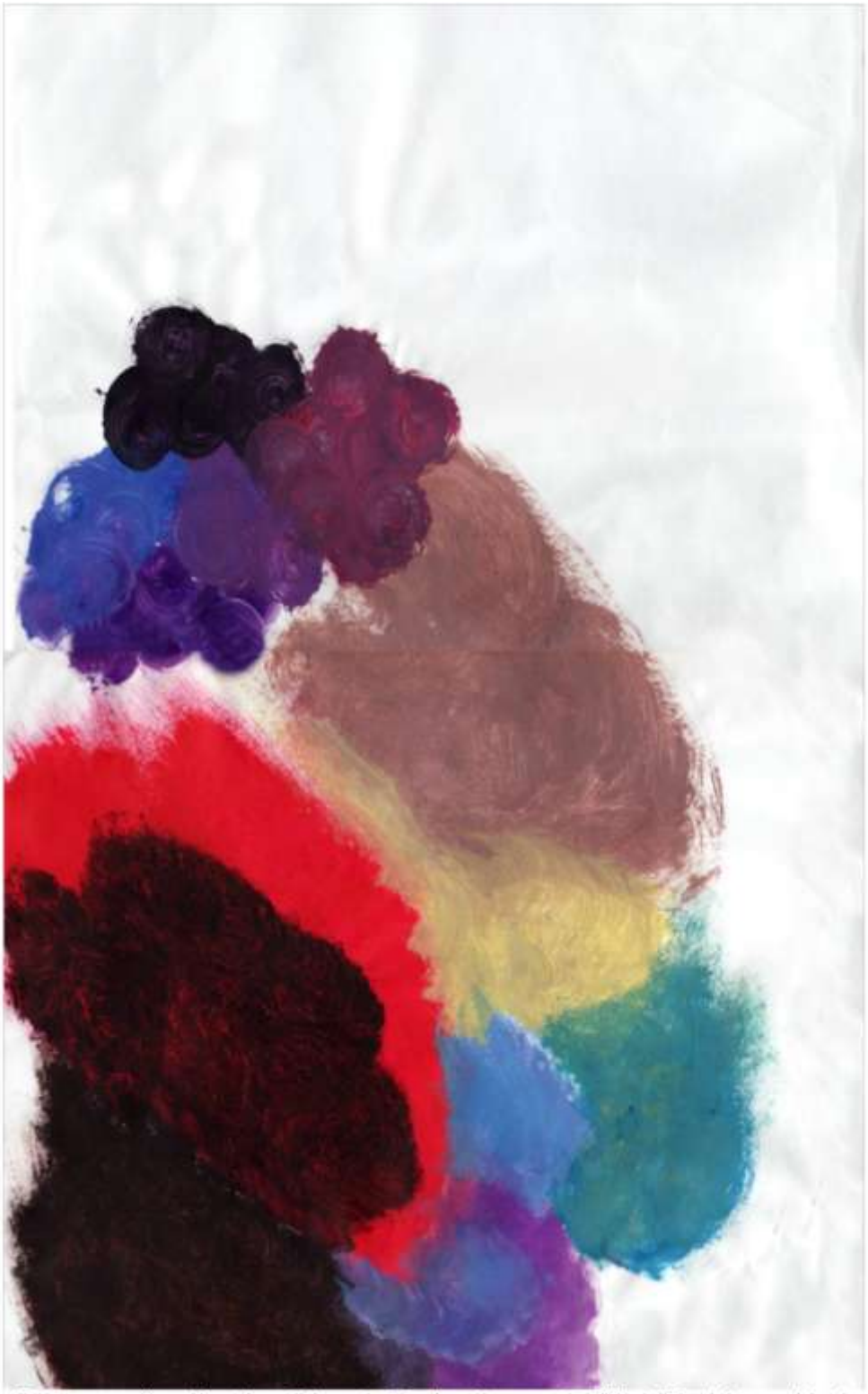

Figure H. Kat's Final Painting. 11"X17" (Acrylic)

In Fiona's painting, she identifies a theme of "All Death can lead to life. Another way it can be described is good things can happen no matter how bad it seems." (See figure I.) She explains that her picture is dark on the bottom to represent all the bad things that happened that were related to the ground: the death of Grandpa and Grandma, the failure of the crops, the Dust Bowl, the loss of the Joads home. The rest of her picture is done in bright lively colors and represents the good that the Joads still have in their life. "They still had each other… They were grateful for what they could get, even if it wasn't a lot. The sky, the grass, the grape they all represent life and all the good things." Fiona sums the book up with the simple statement, "Good can grow from bad. Life can come from death."



Figure I. Fiona's Final Painting. 11"X17" (Acrylic)

Of all the paintings though, it is the one done by Calvin that I find most compelling. His picture is done in grey with streaks of purple, red, and blue. (See Figure J.) At first glance, I felt that Calvin had simply decided to not participate in the final assignment and was disappointed in his monochromatic rendering. But when I looked again and read his explanation, I was surprised and impressed by the work he had produced. Calvin's picture is all grey because "while reading the book I visualized it all in black and white." The people in California can't see the world in shades of color. They only see black and white and that leads to the discrimination against the migrants. For Calvin, the "purple is for the grapes. The read (*sic*) is for the pain and blood shed throughout the book – Also the deaths. The blue is for hope and freedom – the rain. And the specks of white are for light." The grey is depicted in a swirling motion and the swirls are stopped by the streaks of red, blue, and purple. While our class had discussed what colors could mean while reading *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899) by Charlotte Perkins Gillman, the class had not explored the topic with any real depth or rigor. I find Calvin's use of color as symbols to be intriguing and it is Calvin's final picture that I return to time and time again.



Figure J. Calvin's Final Painting. 11"X17" (Acrylic)

Explication – where the researcher seeks to explain the phenomenon under consideration. In this case, I endeavor to further create an explanation of the how and why of the phenomenon from my point of view.

Data Analysis

An heuristic study does not seek to find a single answer to a research question or problem. Instead, the goal of heuristics is understanding, thoughtful analysis, and deep exploration of a phenomenon, of a lived experience, of a belief set. Clark Moustakas (1990) tells us that the center of qualitative research is introspection – a knowing of the preconceived notions, ideas, prejudices, and biases that each person holds that will affect his/her research. Qualitative methodologies tend to be "thoughtful studies of lived human experiences" (Greene, p. 39). They are intensive, in-depth studies of a few people or cases. While the results of qualitative studies and of this study are not generalizable to the larger population, ideally these kinds of studies allow the researcher to live an examined experience, to build an understanding of his/her subjects, and in my case, of how my selection of instruction methods and my students' interaction with those same selected methods influences their ability and desire to interact with text. In another way, this study presented me with a chance to examine my own teaching and my experience with this unit, this novel, this methodology, and these students.

Since there was nothing to be proved or disproved in this study, no hypothesis to back up or negate, no theory to support or deconstruct, the data

analysis was done with an emergent design. According to Schwandt's *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (2001), emergent analysis is not a "…laissez-faire attitude of seeing 'what happens'" (p. 64). Rather emergent analysis is a circular process "… of elaborating a version of or perspective on the phenomenon in question, revising that version… as additional data are generated and new questions are asked" (p.65) and repeating as necessary. As I examined what my students wrote and discussed, I was not looking for a specific piece of information to prove or disprove my theory. Instead, I am looking to see what information is there and what it could mean for me as a teacher, for my students, and if it can be shared in such a way as to benefit other teachers and their students. How had this entire process worked for me? How had the application of visual arts integration strategies, specifically the use of spontaneously created paintings, influence the reader responses of my high school junior-level students to *The Grapes of Wrath*? Or had there been no influence? Which students, if any, had been most affected or influenced by the use of visual arts integration in my language arts classroom? How had this experience changed me as a classroom teacher and as a reader?

To do this, I copied my classroom observation notes and my student writings. I had intended to include transcripts of the recordings made during our classes. However, when I went to transcribe the tapes, I discovered that they were inaudible. In an effort to maintain my distance from the data until after grades were submitted, I had asked a non-participating student to

handle the entire recording process. Unfortunately, he had not hooked up the microphone and so little to no conversation was recorded. Thankfully, between my class notes and my students' writings, there was still sufficient data for my purpose.

I made multiple copies of the remaining data and used a highlighter to note phrases that seemed to me to address the PASS objectives (as discussed in Chapter One) and phrases that stuck out, that made me think, that indicated that the student was transacting with the text. After highlighting these pages, I set them aside and returned to the writing process. A few days later, I repeated the process on a clean copy of the data and set those aside while I did more reading and writing. My next step was to pull out both highlighted sets of notes and compare them. Where had I marked both copies? Where was only one copy marked? And what did my markings say about my students and their learning? About their reading processes and interactions? I revisited my data several times in an attempt to ensure that I didn't miss anything or assign more importance to an item that it warranted. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) reading over data several times is a good practice for developing a coding scheme.

In my research notes, three themes seemed to reoccur to me. First, my students had accessed their previous academic knowledge and they had practiced metacognition – thinking about their thinking. Second, my students transacted with the text. They found a way to use experiential response and cultural response in their interpretation of the social mores and the events

surrounding the Joads' and their journey. As the students explore the social issues in *The Grapes of Wrath*, they saw bits of their own world and were able to explore possible solutions and treatments. Third, my students did not rely on me to create meaning from their readings. They created their own individual and group interpretations and explications of the text through their paints and through their writings about the paints.

Emergent Theme 1 – Metacognition and Accessing Previous Knowledge

As Eisner mentions in his article "Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement?" (1998), creating art with my students allowed them a chance to transform an idea into being and to explore and build an understanding of the connection between culture and time, between content and form. In the pre-reading conversations, Calvin stated that he believed the book was "…for all the WPA & other workers that helped build & discover artifacts." While the novel was not written for the WPA workers, Calvin's explanation does have a degree of sense to it. This mention of the WPA was a reflection of his previous knowledge, gained from previous classes.

When Calvin later explained that *The Migrant Mother* is a widow because her husband died of severe flu, he was referencing to both the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and (what was) a current H1N1 flu scare. Several students volunteered "dust disease" or "black lung" as reasons for *The Migrants Mother*'s widow status. They also mentioned the Depression as a reason for her migratory lifestyle. With the creation of the mother's story, the students are demonstrating their ability to imagine – to

imagine what was, what could be, in addition to the way things are now. Eisner identifies this as a valuable skill for both the arts and to life beyond them" (1998, p.13). The Oklahoma State Department of Education's PASS objectives and the NCTE Standards agree (Visual Literacy 1 [interpret and evaluate the ways visual image-makers make meaning], 2 [evaluate media as compared to text], and 3 [create visual messages]; Reading 2 [interact with words and concepts to understand the author's message], 3 [read, construct meaning, respond to literature], and 4 [conduct research and organize information]; Standards 7 [conduct research; gather, evaluate, and synthesize data to communicate their discoveries] and 9 [develop a respect for diversity]).

Additionally, the mere act of creating a representation of the novel requires that the students move an idea from the novel to their heads and then to their canvases. Calvin describes one painting with "It represents the blind clouds of judgment during that time, you know how you feel when your (sic) angry." This description and the picture both show a depth of intrapersonal understanding that Calvin had not shared with the class earlier in the semester. He seems to be identifying and representing his feelings and the feelings of the novel's characters. Such identification is not done in isolation. In both Bea's character painting and in Pilar's character painting, black is used to represent Connie and Rose of Sharon's ignorance while blue and purple represent their desires and potential. These unplanned agreements indicate a common understanding of representation via color; a

kind of shared understanding that is not explicitly stated but universally known (at least in our classroom). The creation of a representation of an idea demonstrates Oklahoma State Department of Education's PASS objectives and NCTE Standards (Visual Literacy 1 [interpret and evaluate the ways visual image-makers make meaning], 2 [evaluate media as compared to text], and 3 [create visual messages]; Reading 2 [interact with words and concepts to understand the author's message], 3 [read, construct meaning, respond to literature], and 4 [conduct research and organize information]; Standards 7 [conduct research; gather, evaluate, and synthesize data to communicate their discoveries] and 9 [develop a respect for diversity]).

Writing about why they painted what they painted and why they used the colors they used required the students to "understand the aesthetic qualities of life and art" (Eisner, 1998, p. 13). Not only do the students develop an opinion, they explain the reasoning behind that opinion. "I don't know" is taken out of the classroom and decision about what to create and how are put into the hands of the students. This exercise also addressed PASS objectives Oral 2; Reading 2 and 3; and Writing 2, while addressing NCTE Standards 1 and 7. (Oral 2 [express ideas and opinions]; Reading 2 [interact with words and concepts to understand the author's message], 3 [read, construct meaning, respond to literature]; and Writing 2 [write for a variety of purposes and audiences]; Standards 1 [read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of others] and 7 [conduct

research; gather, evaluate, and synthesize data to communicate their discoveries].)

Add to that Iser's explanation of the relationship between creativity and interpretation. Iser says:

> …as two basic human activities creation and interpretation are not just opposed to each other but are in constant interplay. Creation is never pure creation but always dependent on given contexts with which it occurs and by which it is conditioned." (1984, p. 392).

My students should know why in one painting blue is a sorrowful color and in another it represents hope. They have to determine context and form before they can change an idea into a concrete representation and develop an opinion about the same. As Gullatt postulates, the arts encouraged my students to apply their arts-related intelligences to perceive and organize new information into concepts that are used to construct meaning (p. 24). Albers further explains that exposure to visual images creates a schematic code for representation. Repeated exposure helps develop "memory images" which "visually teaches viewers how to look at particular aspects of culture, life, and experience" (Albers, p. 158). This is a skill that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Emergent Theme 2 - Transaction

In her work, Louise Rosenblatt argued, "…the literary experience must be phrased as a *transaction* between the reader and the text." (1978, p. 35) In a transaction, both parties are involved; neither is passive. Information,

input, details are exchanged. "Transaction designates … an on-going process in which the elements are each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (p. 17). The transformation of an idea into a representation is one example of transaction. The students take from the novel, input their details and information, and an understanding emerges. However, that is not the only transaction that exists.

When we started reading *The Grapes of Wrath*, I was not completely convinced that my students would see the connections between them and the Joads that I saw. After all, as one of my students so eloquently phrased it, "They can't be migrant farmers. Everybody knows only Mexicans are migrants." After the laughter, we explored that idea. The majority of my Hispanic students had migrant farmer grandparents or even parents and for most of my students migrants were represented by icons like Cesar Chavez. However, as we talked students offered that other peoples had been migrant workers too – African Americans, Caucasians, Okies. Talk quickly turned to share croppers and the anti-immigrant mood of local politics. My students were making connections to the issues that will make up their political futures. They were evaluating policies (like the destruction of food crops in Chapter 25 in order to control prices and minimum wages,) and testing their fit. Eisner (1998) might say they were building an understanding of multiple perspectives on, and multiple resolutions of, a conflict.

As we moved on, the students identified and created other connections. Some were very small like when Calvin compares the land to a

“family heirloom that has been passed down from generation to generation.” The class quickly seized on the idea and shared family stories and descriptions of pieces that they treasure simply because they are family pieces. Others were larger such as a discussion over environmental concerns, the Dust Bowl, and global warming/climate change. Kat, who had recently become a mother at sixteen, connected with Rose of Sharon. Throughout the book, Kat referred to Rose of Sharon as a “whiner” and kept waiting for her to grow up. Having just had a son, Kat had little or no patience for Rose of Sharon’s attitude. Until the final scene in the barn. “I would have never expected Rose of Sharon to do something like that. I guess maybe its (sic) because she felt bad since her baby died and felt that she had to save him for some reason. I don’t know how to explain it. But it makes sense to me.”

The transaction that took place was built on more personal information rather than on the more academic information that metacognition relies on. Transaction is a personal process. As Rosenblatt explained, “No one can read a poem for us. The reader of the poem must have the experience himself” (Rosenblatt, 1983, p. 33). Where the academics of metacognition can be shared, the transactions of personal reading experiences are often more personal. Researchers report that “literature comes to life in more exciting ways through the arts. When students use the visual arts, dramatic reenactments, and groups discussion, the text becomes more meaningful to them” (Gullatt, p. 21).

The transaction and construction of connections mean that my students can see a world that is bigger than one piece of text; bigger than one city; bigger than one culture. They possess the ability to read a text, connect it to personal experience, world events, or to place it in historical context. And then to respond accordingly. Perhaps, when faced with incidents of prejudice or attitudes of "us and them" my students will be a little better prepared to understand the danger of such attitudes, and public policy, and can be a voice of reason. As Tom says at the end of the novel:

> Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. If Casy knowed, why, I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad an'—I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry n' they know supper's ready. An' when our folks eat the stuff they raise an' live in the houses they build—why, I'll be there. See? God, I'm talkin' like Casy. Comes of thinkin' about him so much. Seems like I can see him sometimes. (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 419)

Whether they become teachers, lawyers, or gardeners, my students will have the skills necessary to be socially active members of their society.

Emergent Theme 3 – Group and Independent Meaning

While transaction and understanding the aesthetic qualities of life and all the other skills demonstrated by my students are important to me as a teacher, the behavior I am most excited by is my students creating meaning from the text without relying on me for input. As we read and covered the background material and watched the movie, I never answered the question "What does it mean?" My students never asked. I asked questions of them daily: "How is the reading going? Any questions? What did you learn from

the video? From the reading?" These questions generated some discussion and gave us a starting point each morning.

Often though, it was the random comments that lead us to the best discussions. One day, as we were discussing the characters they liked best or least, Thad offered this, "The homeless man in the gas station is a very touching character." Thad went on to explain that the man cared about his kids and everything he did he did for his kids and the Joad kids, even warning them not to go to California. I was at a loss. I was certain that no homeless man existed as a character in the story. And I was wrong. Chapter 16, page 188, a ragged man emerges from the shadows and warns the Joads and Wilsons that California is not what they are expecting. He's lost his wife and children to starvation and is now returning to whatever home remains. His warning goes unheeded and when last we see him he is shuffling away and swallowed by the darkness. Just before this, in Chapter 15 (an intercalary chapter), page 159, a man enters a diner in search of a ten-cent loaf of bread. After much wrangling, the cook tells the waitress to sell the man the bread. She complies and then, after seeing the want in the eyes of the man's children, adds in some nickel-a-piece candy at "two for a penny." For Thad, these two men become one. Chapter 15's hopeful father becomes Chapter 16's ragged, homeless man. And that creation, that understanding is indicative of an expectation that the Joads and the other "Okies" will find that California is not what they are expecting; that as a family, they will have to decide what cost they are willing to pay for a chance, for hope. That is not an

explanation I gave to the students; rather it is an explanation they created out of Thad's understanding of the men and their own knowledge of how novels work.

In another discussion, we explored why each of them made the choices they did when writing about the *Migrant Mother* photograph. Each student had his/her own story line and yet they shared a common theme. Each offered a story about a mother who sacrificed for her children in search of a better life. Their creations were born solely of their own experiences, knowledge, and opinions.

The same was true when it came to colors used in their paintings. The three most common colors used and commented on by my students were blue, red, and purple. Blue and purple were described as "cold colors" by some students and red was a "color of life." For other students blue was a warm, positive color – in direct contradiction of the "cold blue" description offered by other students. Black was put forth as a negative color, commonly associated with death and decay. These color choices are not a topic we had extensively discussed in class before and the mutual agreement reached by my students is a topic that deserves further exploration.

The benefit here is that the use of arts integration helped me move from the role of dispenser of knowledge to the role of facilitator of learning. My students, as Gullatt said, were no longer "receivers of the given information…The arts provide students with the tools for this construction of knowledge" (p. 24). Gioia probably expresses this idea best with the idea

that, “the real purpose of arts education is to awaken us to the full potential of our humanity both as individuals and citizens in society” (p. 12). That is probably the best statement of my classroom goals.

Direct response to the question: Why art?

After I had analyzed the data and allowed for incubation time, I realized that the themes that had emerged did not tell the whole story. While I had originally planned to interview my students, in the end, I had relied solely on their writings and their writings were about their reading and their painting, not their processes and thoughts. So I returned to my students and asked one final question: “How do you feel about using art to respond to literature? Did it influence you? Challenge you? Was it easy?” Their answers were as varied as their paintings. Sienna said that, “Art influenced my reading by letting my imagination soar. I wanted to keep reading so I could express myself with art.”

Frank explained that, “It helped me to get a better picture of the story. I feel challenged but by me because I didn’t know if I would do a good job or not (with the painting).” Mira agreed adding, “I did feel challenged but to do my best because I was actually interested in what I was doing and because what I was doing made sense and brought a good sensation to me forcing me to do my best.”

Kat’s answer encouraged me to try this approach again. “Using art influenced my reading by not making it so boring. As I read, I would paint

pictures in my head of what was going on in the story and I would later put it on paper. This project challenged my creativity. I liked it."

It is the responses of Calvin and Pilar that explain my goal in using spontaneous painting as a form of reader response. Calvin wrote, "I finally understand exactly what's going on in this novel…. I have a mental picture of 'the Grapes of Wrath.' " Pilar, who had struggled with reading all year, said, "Using art to respond to my reading influenced me because I expressed more of my thoughts on art then I did on paper. The reason being that I have trouble writing what I'm feeling, or thinking, basically I have trouble expressing my ideas on paper. I have more fun expressing my thoughts on art." The idea that Pilar uses "art" and "paper" interchangeably intrigues me. For her, there is no difference between expressing an idea on paper with words and expressing an idea on paper with spontaneous paint. For me, Pilar has found a way to express herself and without even realizing it, to improve he communication skills. She has tapped into an inner intelligence that I doubt she knew she had and is learning to use it.

Chapter 6

Creative Synthesis – where the researcher forms an holistic knowledge of the research and its findings. In this case, where I lament not having created my own spontaneous paintings during the data gathering stage. Also, where I examine what changes have happened in the students, in me, in the school since the study. I also address what could have been done differently and ideas for further research.

So what?

Step six in heuristics is creative synthesis. And since the first, I have known that a spontaneous abstract painting would not substitute for a dissertation; however, this creative synthesis called a "dissertation", would not be complete without one. Creative synthesis is the creation and formation of holistic or "whole knowledge" (Moustakas, 1990, p.32) from the bits and pieces and parts that the researcher has been working with and thinking about since immersion. In this case, that means sharing what I have learned and how my students and I have changed since we started working with *The Grapes of Wrath* and spontaneous painting as a form of reader response.

Creation of Understanding

The Grapes of Wrath is not an easy book. As I tell my students though, if it were easy, everybody could do it. Human creativity is not an easy skills set or set of behaviors and I believe that this approach to teaching literature would not work for every teacher, every time, with every novel. Each group of students is different and each journey through a novel is

different. Some students, not surprisingly, are very resistant to the idea that there is no “right” answer. With the prevalence of standardized testing, this mindset that every question has a “right” answer should not come as a shock to any of us. And yet every time I see a student who expects or wants me to give him/her the “right” answer instead of letting him/her grapple with the ideas, I am shocked and a bit saddened. This is where the creativity of paint-write can come into play. When students are asked to take an idea (the description of a character in a novel) and give it a concrete form, they are creating a solution (Eisner, 1998). When they write about the process that created that paint, they are explaining the “why” behind their creation, their opinion, their feeling (Eisner, 1998). When they create a creative writing piece in response to a visual image, they are applying their knowledge of other times, places, cultures, artists to solve a problem, to imagine, to accept ambiguity and multiple perspectives and they are experiencing multiple resolutions to conflict (Eisner, 1998). Because of that, I find that I would rather accept an okay answer that is student-created, than a “perfect” answer that is a recitation of facts from a book or a repeat of what I said in a lecture. This grappling forces my students to figure out ways of transforming an idea into being; to explain the “why” behind an opinion, judgment, or belief; to create connections between divergent times and cultures; to imagine those things which are not and how they could become; and to explore and accept ambiguity. While accepting ambiguity isn’t the only step in creation, it is one factor that set da Vinci, one of the most creative persons in history, apart from

his contemporaries (Gelb, 2004, p. 143-150). Furthermore, Sir Ken Robinson, an international expert in the field of creativity and innovation in education, who said, "Creativity is as important as literacy and should be given equal status" (p. 35). It is these skills that will allow my students to achieve in the digital age.

When I was in school, we had rotary telephones, information came from books, and movies in the classroom were played on an 8mm projector that “ding”-ed every time we needed to advance the film. Now my students have cellular telephones, Internet, and access to countless movies without the “ding”. According to the *Beloit College Mindset List*, for them,

> Libraries have always been the best centers for computer technology and access to good software. They have always been challenged to distinguish between news and entertainment on cable TV. They are wireless, yet always connected. "Google" has always been a verb. They have no idea why we needed to ask "...can we all get along?" Being techno-savvy has always been inversely proportional to age. (Nief & McBride, 2009)

In short, massive amounts of information have always been available to them and the ability to make connections, to embrace ambiguity, to accept differences in opinions, and to create understanding is crucial for their intellectual survival.

When they started painting our responses to literature, some of my students rebelled against the idea that there was no “one right” answer. This, they claimed, was a teacher trick and as soon as they formed an opinion, I would declare it wrong. After several paint/write activities, the class came to accept that it was safe to take chances with their ideas, to create independent

meanings. At the same time that I was encouraging these chances though, my students and I had to remember that there was a text in use – *The Grapes of Wrath* was more than just a passing fancy and the meaning that my students created needed to find a basis, needed to find support, in the work of Steinbeck. Thus an attempt to portray Tom Joad as a dignified, educated gentleman farmer was not considered valid while the recognition that Jim Rawley, manager of the Weedpatch Camp, is a formally educated man, who probably ran a business at one point in time, is a valid reading. In differentiating between these readings, my students and I had to engage in a process of metacognition. "Why do you think that?" I posed time and time again. When this project started, "I just do," and "I don't know," were the two most common answers. Then, through paints and creativity and discussion, my students developed answers. After a while, they would challenge back, "How do you know it isn't?" When I answered them, I modeled my metacognitive process. When they challenged me, they reflected that process back to me. At the end however, my students and I became practiced in the art of recognizing when we were accessing previous knowledge, when we were accessing the text, and when we were uniting the two. "Jim Rawley is educated because he works for the government and at this point in history, they had their pick of men. Besides, on page 304, when he meets Ma Joad, his language isn't the same as hers. His is formal and hers isn't." By answering with reasons and details, they are displaying their metacognitive processes and creating meaning from the novel for their minds.

While being challenged about my knowledge was and is very disconcerting, it also allows me to grow as a teacher. In our encounters with the Joads, I have learned to be prepared to back-up what I say with evidence, either from the book or from other sources.

When faced with what can be a very daunting novel for even mature readers, my students would prefer to opt out. This behemoth, they believe, has no relation to them and their lives and therefore should be left to English majors and others who (as my students say) "have nothing better to do than read." Using a paint-write, spontaneous paints, arts integrated approach allowed my students to express themselves when they felt they did not quite have the words to describe and discuss their thoughts and feelings - both toward the book and toward the themes (social injustice, family dynamics, coping with poverty) of the book.

One of the benefits I see of heuristics and emergent design is that, for me, the learning doesn't end. At a point in time, my committee and I will say, "Enough." The writing of my dissertation will be done and the defense will begin. However, the illumination and explication phases of my research will continue. As I write this, my "reading copy" is almost finished. I thought I was completely finished and required only a close, careful reading for last minute corrections. However, as I was driving home today, I saw a horse and foal in a field. I noted that the black and white face of the mare stood out against the flowing green grasses that weren't any one shade of green but were instead an amalgamation of colors and textures. The foal was a skinny-legged brown

baby. But the foal's coat was more than just brown; it was more of a rich chestnut sorrel color with matching mane and tail. I made a mental note to drive by occasionally to watch the little one grow.

As I continued my drive, I was struck by how beautiful a painting or photograph that scene would have made. "Hhmmm…. What colors would I blend to match his coat? Take a red, add a little brown or is it the other way around?" I wondered. As I drove, I mentally planned how to capture the memory in full-color without returning to the scene with my digital camera. It was then that I was struck with the realization that I was "seeing like a painter." In his book *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*, Michael Gelb explains it like this:

> We think we know how to see, but as Leonardo said, "People look without seeing…" Seeing for drawing means looking at things as if you've never seen them before. Rather than relying on recognition and objectification – e.g., "That's an apple"- for drawing purposes an artist suspends the concept "apple" and sees the qualities of a subject in a more elemental way: as shapes, hues, and textures. (p. 273)

In the years that I have lived and worked where I do, I have driven that same road thousands of times. I have passed the meadow and seen the horses and they've passed like a blip on radar. Now however, I find myself looking past the object to the substance. Rather than driving past a field and seeing a horse with a foal, I see the parts that make a whole: the black and white, against the green; the shades of brown and red to create the shade and tone of the foal's coat. Every time I revisit this dissertation, with my advisor, my current students, my friends and classmates, I find another idea I want to

explore, a concept I want to research, a process I wish I had thought to include or had changed. My learning has changed and feels continuous.

It occurs to me that, in this same way, when my students paint, they can now "read like a writer." They can read past the words, the nouns, verbs, and adjectives to the metaphor, the symbol, the substance of the piece. While I doubt any of my students will ever win a Pulitzer or a Nobel (I'm still hoping though), they can critically enjoy a piece of text – be it literature, artwork, or a scene encountered on a drive home. They can watch a commercial and read behind the words to a deeper message. Let the Illumination continue.

Multiple Intelligences and the Teaching of Creativity in the Classroom

Assessing spontaneous paint/write is not easy. But it is worth the effort. In the case of my students, the increased willingness on the part of the students to try and to work harder, made the discomfort worth the struggle. The use of art helps to engage some students who would otherwise have "checked out" long ago. As Kat explained, art is the only interest for some kids. Teachers should recognize that being able to show his/her intelligence in the arts allows a student to identify him/herself as contributing member of the class. So often classrooms are set-up to favor linear thinkers and those with strong verbal/linguistic and logical/ mathematical skills. The use of spontaneous paint and other forms of arts integration allows other kinds of intelligence to be expressed and appreciated.

Consider the paintings in Chapter 5. In each painting, a student made a series of choices that expressed an idea. Should the bottom of the painting be blue, green, or brown? What shade or shades of green? What does the mixture of greens express to the viewer? What do the brushstrokes, the texture, the splatters and blotches say? Do I as creator provide enough evidence for my viewer to see what I am thinking? There are myriad decisions that accompany every text – be it painting, drawing, music, or written word. The ability to make these decisions in such a way that others are able to derive meaning is an expression of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and spatial intelligence. It is intrapersonal because the student is able to transform his/her idea into being. It is interpersonal because the transformation is done is such a way that others are able to bring meaning to it – even if that meaning is totally different from what the creator intended. It is spatial because the work relies on positive and negative spaces, colors, shapes, and shades of color arranged and selected by the creator to create meaning.

The use of spontaneous paint also forces both student and teacher out of their comfort zone. Students have to be willing to try something new, to create meaning in a medium most of them have not touched since their early childhood. Most students are willing to do so and some will even burst forth with great gusto. Others however, have to be convinced that this activity has worth. I have encountered at least one student since the study that declared that, “A minute isn’t long enough to create anything of value.” Despite

multiple examples of things that could be accomplished in a minute, he remains unmoved and his attitude is clearly reflected in his painting and writing.

In addition to the students having to be willing to try, the teachers have to be willing to try something new, to create meaning in a medium most of them have not touched since their early childhood. Teachers have to be willing to not have the answer and to grapple with the idea right alongside their students. As a teacher, I am often very uncomfortable with not knowing the answers. However, there is also something very liberating in helping students to discover answers I either didn't know or wasn't sure of. Teachers also have to be willing to jump right into the plaint, alongside their students. In this instance, I didn't paint with my students. I was too busy with my own creation (the study) to pick up a brush and paint alongside my students. That is a decision that I now regret and a mistake I will not make again. I believe that, had I taken a seat at the table and created alongside my students, my view of the process would have been totally different. If I had created alongside them, I could have heard the murmurings, had a work of my own to evaluate alongside theirs, and (possibly) learned something different.

After teaching the novel twice and reading it repeatedly and researching its writing, inspiration, reception, and levels of meaning, the novel has lost a degree of spontaneity for me. I know how it ends. I cry at the opening of Chapter 10 knowing that the baby Rose of Sharon is carrying will never see California; I mourn the loss of Casy in Chapter 12 when he agrees

to journey with the family. To overcome this exposure practically requires seeing the novel in a new light, a different light, and painting with my students would have afforded me that opportunity. Despite the fact that I didn't paint with them, I was able to see some scenes differently. I had never considered Rose of Sharon as a "whiny crybaby" before; I saw her as a scared young mother. I never questioned Ma's decision to lie to the border guards, but my students did. "Why did she put reaching California ahead of her dying mother? Did she kill her with her inaction?" These are excellent questions that I had never considered - questions that demonstrate an ability to reflect on the internal workings of a person's mind; questions that reflect intrapersonal intelligence.

At the same time, I cannot help but wonder what would have been different if I had explicitly taught creativity to my students. I am not positive that creativity can be explicitly taught. However, if I taught creativity, I would encourage my students to generate a number of ideas before selecting one to pursue; I would pose situations and encourage outrageous, even impractical solutions; I would ask my students to alter others inventions and creations to improve them; to substitute materials and colors, mediums, and to find unique purposes for traditional items. If I directly taught creativity to my students (presuming that creativity is a set of skills which can be taught), would this project have progressed differently? Would my students' processes and products have been different? Would their understanding of the novel have been deeper? My plan is to research the teaching of creativity and to begin to

add it to my regular curriculum. I can see myself doing “action research” in my classroom in the future so that I can continue to improve as a teacher and a student.

Context of the Study

There is at least one other aspect of the study that has to be given consideration. That is the context of the study – both physical and social. As I explained earlier, Harbor is a small middle college. Over the past ten years, our average enrollment has been between seventy-five and eighty-five students. We have five teaching positions that have been filled by fewer than ten teachers in ten years. The students know the teachers; the teachers know the students. As teachers, we provide an education, lunch money, rides home, relationship advice, college visits, and community service opportunities. We know our student both in and out of the classroom.

It would be naïve of me to think that this relationship had no influence on the responses of my students. At the same time, I have no evidence to suggest that my students behaved any differently during the study than they would normally. Consider for example, the first reading assignment: one student completed the assignment. Had the fact that they were participating in my student influenced their behavior and response, I would have expected to see all of the students having completed the reading assignment. That was not the case. However, after the first day, it did seem that more of the students had done the assigned reading. Is this because they set the new

schedule or because they were reminded about my study? I have no way of knowing, but I feel that the answer lies somewhere between these two ideas.

In evaluating the context of this study, I must also look at the school itself. Although categorized as an alternative school, Harbor is an academically solid school that meets or exceeds Annual Yearly Progress. We have consistently maintained a graduation rate of higher than 95%. The majority of our students have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of over 3.0 and it is not unusual for the top fifty percent of each graduating class to have a GPA of 3.5 or higher. Students whose grades are "C" or below are required to attend tutoring and teachers are required to offer out-of-school tutoring, usually afterschool. The administration is very supportive of best teaching practices and encourages innovation in the classroom. The principal in this school was very supportive of the use of arts in the classroom and of this study.

In addition to the social context of my study, there is the physical context to be considered. In our school, teachers do not have assigned classrooms. Rather rooms are assigned to classes based on size and need. My room for the class in the study was a large corner room, close to the art supply closet, the bathrooms, and the office. The room has about sixteen six-foot by two-and-a-half foot tables rather than individual desks like in some of our other classrooms. This room has a white board, a SmartBoard, an LCD project and computer, and a dedicated VCR/DVD player that is equipped with close captioning technology. In short, the room is a teacher's dream come

true. The tables can be arranged to suit the day's purpose; the room can be divided to allow students to work on different projects or classes. It is set far enough away from other classrooms that noise is seldom an issue. With fourteen students participating in the study, this room is ideal. Add to this our block schedule of eighty-five minute classes, and the context of this study is almost ideal.

What influence did these factors have on the study? This study took place in a small school with a supportive administration and a student body that often regards the teachers as mothers, older siblings, and trusted friends. When we add to this the fact that this study took place at the end of the school year, after standardized tests were completed, the context of this study takes on an even bigger influence and it is easy to imagine that almost anything would be possible in this setting. Indeed, the timing of the study (at the end of the school year), helped to create a more relaxed environment than had the study been conducted earlier in the semester. At the same time, the shortened time frame resulted in a slightly more rushed environment than what we usually faced.

There is no way for me to know what influences, if any, the context of this study had on the students. I can speculate that in a well-stocked classroom, with a supportive administration, with close student-teacher relationships, with a low teacher-to-student ratio, with block-scheduling, and academically, anything is possible. At the same time, I must also remember that this study is not about what could happen in another classroom at

another time. Rather, this is about what happened in my classroom during this reading of *The Grapes of Wrath*. I can hypothesize that in a larger classroom, a teacher would have less time to spend with each student. In a larger classroom, I would be reluctant to try Paint-Write activities, but I would be willing to use creative writing strategies and various forms of poetry.

Author, Teacher, Painter

After writing about 95% of the dissertation, pondering transcripts, writings, paintings, and research on the brain, Steinbeck, and the history of art, I still felt like this work was not complete. It was missing a piece of me that had to come via my painting. One clear sunny day, I sat down to recapture the spontaneous painting process. On the advice of my advisor, I did the painting activities that I had assigned to my students. I painted a character, a chapter, and the whole novel. Since I wrote the assignments, to inject some spontaneity, I closed my eyes, fluttered the pages of the book, stabbed a page with my highlighter, and took it from there. My first painting was of a character, Granma, and came from Chapter 16 (p. 175). My second painting captured the history of landownership in California as described in Chapter 19 (p. 231). My final painting was a three-minute free paint to "paint the novel" followed by a three-minute free write about my painting.

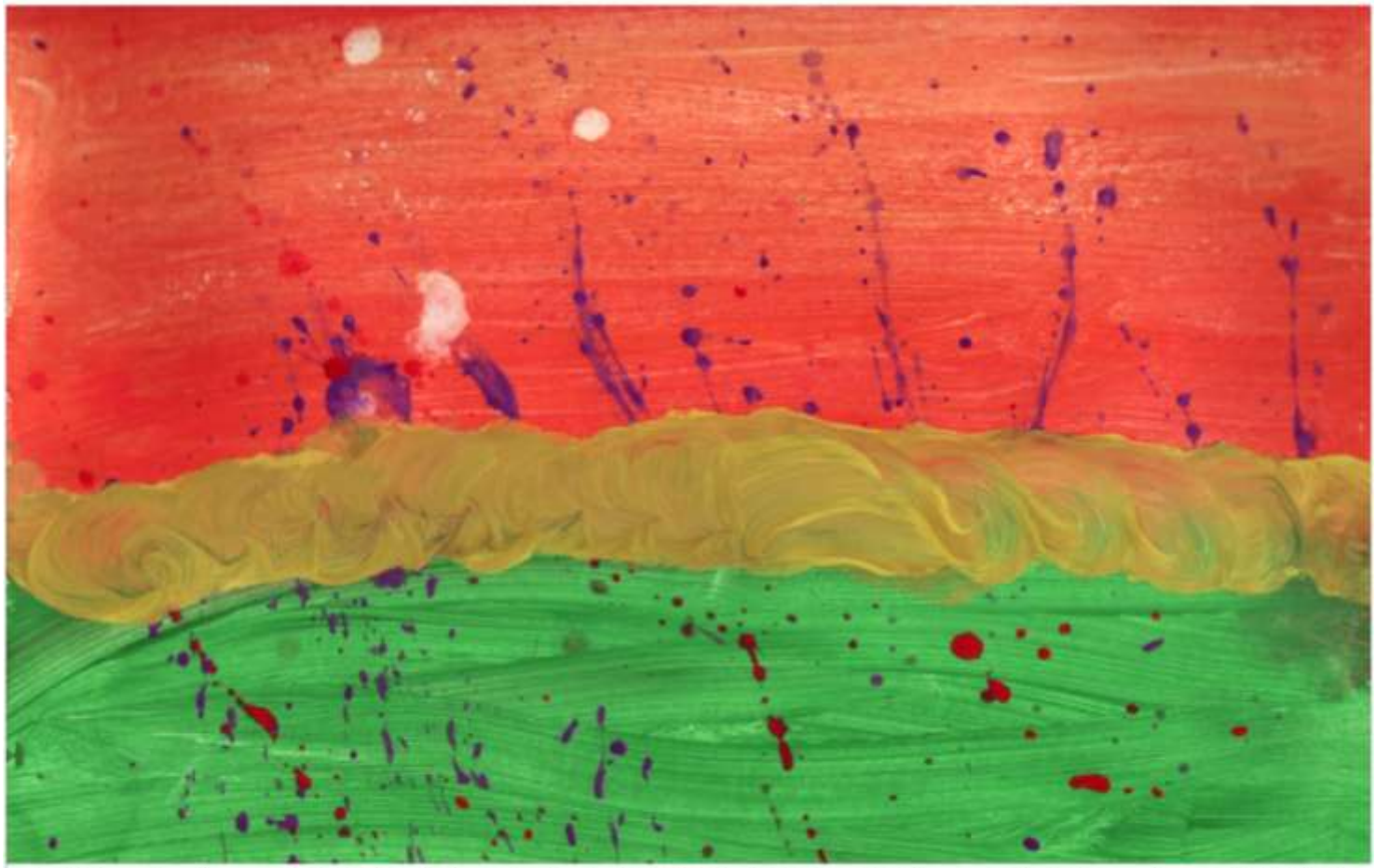

Figure K. Cathy Klasek's Final Painting. 9"X12" (Acrylic)

When I finished the painting, I understood why my students grab the bottles of paint and dump it straight onto their papers. My painting, image K, has a reddish-orange sky that fades to a paler, more yellowish orange and then darkens back to reddish-orange. As I was painting this part, the old saying "Red sky at night, Sailor's delight; Red sky in morning, Sailors take warning," kept playing in my head. The sunsets in Oklahoma can be so beautiful but day after day of no rain and 100+ degree heat can make them appear to be made of fire. While my painting doesn't show fire, the reddish-orange is meant to reflect the possibility of storms and fires, to represent the beauty and the danger that Steinbeck provides us in the novel. The bottom of the painting is green to reflect growth and family; land and hope. Over and over in the novel, Ma asks for a little house, a little plot of land to grow her family. There are splatters of purple to represent the grapes, plums, opportunities, and food. These splatters are skinny and sparse. And the land is dotted with splatters of red – spots of blood in a long history of us and them; of fear and prejudice. But the red is not the focus. I don't believe that the focus of the novel is the death of people, of innocence, of Casy and of Rose of Sharon's baby. Instead, for me, the focus is the yellow sunshine on the horizon, the yellow humanity. This is to represent Steinbeck's belief that people must treat each other with respect and dignity and that by doing so create a future worth having. When writing about this experience, I realized that, for me, pure spontaneity is simply not possible. In writing my free write, past experiences came rushing into my mind and I heard old adages, felt the

sun shining on me, and realized that my color choices were not random – they were the result of forty years of experience with visual images, texts, and my life.

When we practice *ekphrasis* in our classroom, I tell my students not to judge their work or the work of others. Indeed after each person shares, we all say "Thank you" and clap enthusiastically. The last line of my free write is "It's not what I wanted." In my head, there is a picture of the novel that could probably only have been created by Georgia O'Keefe, Ansell Adams, and Jackson Pollock working in perfect synchronicity. However, there is a picture and in experimenting with paint-write, I can create a simplified version of that painting and write about both paintings – the one that is, and the one that could be. And in doing so, I embrace ambiguity, create connections, grapple with ideas becoming forms, and remember what it's like to not be able to express myself the way I want to, what it's like to be a student once more.

Future Versions

I will return to *The Grapes of Wrath* with my high school juniors. Not only because Harbor has a class set, but because I believe the novel to be well-written and a valuable piece of literary history which offers messages and lessons for today as well as about the past. This is not to say that there won't be changes to my teaching and their understanding of *The Grapes of Wrath.* For example, the next time I teach the novel, I need to allow more than seventeen days. The novel can be read in that time span; however, rushing through it feels like playing Beethoven on fast-forward – interesting

but without the subtleties and nuances that are so often an integral part of the work. Additionally, this slower pacing will allow more time for my students to connect the background information in the story to the lessons learned in their American History class concerning the Great Depression, the role of migrant farmers, and the Dust Bowl. So often I feel like I am racing the clock to cover 400 years of literature in eighteen weeks. I've decided though that my students will be better served by in-depth study of fewer pieces than quick review of more pieces. Additionally, this slower pace will allow my student and I to do more arts integration activities and to spend more time on the culture and arts of the periods the class is studying. I will however, keep my practice of allowing my students to set the schedule for the readings. When my students were responsible for the schedule, there was less conflict, fewer unfinished assignments, and more ownership on the part of the students. Given that there were only had seventeen days, I am satisfied with the work done by my students but I am eager to see what can happen with the integration of art takes place with more time for contemplation and study.

There is one issue that my students and I seem to grapple with each year – the role of migrants, specifically minorities, in the novel and in society. As part of developing moral imagination, my students and I have in the past looked at the relationship between attitudes toward migrants and minorities during *The Grapes of Wrath* and current attitudes toward those groups. Now however, my students are just a year or so away from being of voting age and immigration is an issue that they will have to examine and act on in the very

near future. Recent legislation in our state includes a law that makes it illegal to knowingly harbor or transport an illegal immigrant. For at least one of my students, that means driving a parent to the grocery store is now illegal. It is my sincerest hope that even if my students never pick up another book, they will have learned how to examine an issue from multiple perspectives and to put themselves in another's shoes.

There are more changes that need to be made and those future changes include more than just a change in how this novel is taught. Ideally, I will team up with the other teachers in my school to integrate the arts more fully across our curriculum. In the few short years that I have been at my school, the arts have started to make their way into the other classrooms. A more complete understanding of how and why to use the arts would help my fellow teachers to more successfully and willingly integrate the arts.

There is also much more research to be done. Arts integration with *The Grapes of Wrath* makes sense to me. Steinbeck, as one of my students said, "gives us details about his details," making it fairly easy to visualize his work. What I don't know is if the same approach can be as successfully used with other authors and other genres. For example, could students do a spontaneous paint of "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner (1930) and create the same level of understanding? I have used spontaneous painting with poetry and had some degree of success. A colleague of mine used spontaneous painting with *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse (1922) amid great success. (Please see: "To search for enlightenment: Responding to

Siddhartha through paint and poetry" in *English Journal*, July 2005, 94 (6): 56-62. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English by Kelly Courtney-Smith and Dr. Michael Angelotti for more information.) My class and I have used paint-write with select short stories and have enjoyed the reading and the process. For the future, I need to expand my use with my students and to continue to monitor their progress and achievement.

More research will hopefully have one more positive affect and that is increased buy-in from the professional community, school officials, and parents. As noted earlier, not everyone believes that the arts are a valuable part of the high school education process. Standardized testing requirements place value on a student's ability to isolate and apply reading and writing skills and to perform math computations. The ACT, the SAT, and End-of-Instruction tests never ask students to read a passage and write a creative response. Students select a correct response; they don't create a correct response. And so, until we as a community place value on the education process, on the creative problem solving and thinking process, arts integration will never be given a prominent place in the classroom.

I can't help but wonder

The first time I used paint-write to teach *The Grapes of Wrath*, my students were introduced to free paints as we experienced the novel. This time, my students had practiced both free paints and free write as a part of our normal classroom activities. It was a conscious decision on my part designed to help them be more comfortable with the process when the

research began, but I find myself questioning that decision now. If their exposure had been new all around (new novel, new technique), would their responses have been different? If so, how? What would change if we had spent more time with the novel? Or if we had spent time writing about the process they went through as they created each creative piece? In addition, Kathleen Walsh-Piper's book *Image to Word* (2002) explores ways of practicing *ekphrasis* in a museum setting and in the classroom. Had my students and I completed these exercises, learned basic painting skills, and practiced "seeing" art, would our process and products have changed?

I am also curious as to the reporting done by my students. According to Surrealist painter Salvador Dali, "The difference between false memories and true ones is the same as for jewels. It is always the false ones that look the most real, the most brilliant." Were the changes that I saw and that my students expressed simply a result of the Hawthorne effect? (The Hawthorne effect is the idea that individual behavior is changed because the individual is being observed [Franke & Kaul, 1978].) How much of what my students told me, wrote for me, painted for me, was authentically their thoughts on a matter and how much was from a desire to please me? My school is small; we tend to form close bonds. Did those bonds affect my students' work? If so, how? My students knew that they were participating in a study and that the study was very important to me. Despite that, they didn't initially do their reading, which reflected typical teen-age behavior. On the other hand, they worked hard when they were in class. The design of the study (part ethnographic,

part biographical) addresses some of this issue, but certainly not all. Further research is necessary and controlling for these issues needs to be part of the design of that research.

In addition to these ideas, there are several areas where further research and deeper understanding would have changed this project yielding different results. Consider for example, brain research. While I know a little about how the brain works, I am intrigued by the idea that the arts can strengthen neurological connections and would love to learn more about how I can apply this principle in the classroom. Clinical researchers, art therapists, psychologists are doing work that could improve the practice of teaching, but only if these professions find a way to share information across our fields.

Jerks and Flows

According to Ma Joad, men and women live and change in jerks and flows. We either fight against the change or we consent to the change. The writing of this dissertation has been a bit of both for me as teacher and as researcher. When I first approached teaching, I wanted every student to adore the same pieces of literature that I did and I don't know that I ever gave writing instruction a thought. If you could talk, surely you could write.

Twenty-plus years later, I've learned a few things, picked up a few tricks, and shed a few ideas. But the jerks and flows are still there, along with the illumination and a love of reading. I know that not every text will resonate with every reader and I have learned that rejecting a text is a valid response. However, I have also learned that if I am willing to take the chances and

expose my ideas and creative expressions of those ideas, I can help my students to do the same. An arts integrated approach, using spontaneous paints and creative writings, allows my students to grow and learn and explore.

Where are they now?

That is just what they've been up to. Eight of the thirteen students are currently enrolled at the community college that hosts our program. Pilar is studying education; Sienna, computer science. Kat is studying art at the community college while she waits for an opening at the hair design program she wants to attend. Calvin is studying business and plans for a career as an officer in the military once he has earned his degree. Mira's major is theater and communications while Frank is studying graphic design. DJ is enrolled in the college's video game programming and design program. Gaspar still wants to be a Secret Service or FBI agent and will enter military service within the next six months. At present, he is taking courses at the community college.

Fiona now attends a local private United Methodist university where she earned a full-ride scholarship. She is studying psychology. Fernando attends the Academy of Contemporary Music at a local college and is studying music and music management. Bea is enrolled at a near-by state college studying psychology and early childhood education. She plans to become a psychologist for learning disabled children. Thad has joined the military to "learn something about myself" and plans to attend college while in

the service. Serafina has returned to her home country and is attending college there.

While I doubt that many of them will pick up Steinbeck's *East of Eden* (601 pages!) as a vacation reading choice, I know that they can read non-fiction and fiction. I know they have been exposed to and can contend with ambiguity, cultural differences, moral issues, and the processes necessary to convert an idea into a being. I know I can change along with my students.

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Appendix A
Oklahoma Priority Student Skills

Reading/Literature: The student will apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, and respond to a wide variety of texts.

Standard 1: Vocabulary - The student will expand vocabulary through word study, literature, and class discussion.

Standard 2: Comprehension - The student will interact with the words and concepts on the page to understand what the writer has said.

Standard 3: Literature - The student will read, construct meaning, and respond to a wide variety of literary forms.

Standard 4: Research and Information - The student will conduct research and organize information.

Writing/Grammar/Mechanics and Usage: The student will express ideas effectively in written modes for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 1: Writing Process - The student will use the writing process to write coherently.

Standard 2: Modes and Forms of Writing - The student will write for a variety of purposes and audiences using narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive, and reflective modes.

Standard 3: Grammar/Usage and Mechanics -The student will demonstrate appropriate practices in writing by applying Standard

English conventions to the revising and editing stages of writing. Work independently and in self-directed work teams to edit and revise.

Oral Language/Listening and Speaking - The student will demonstrate thinking skills in listening and speaking.

Standard 1: Listening - The student will listen for information and for pleasure.

Standard 2: Speaking - The student will express ideas and opinions in group or individual situations.

Visual Literacy: The student will interpret, evaluate, and compose visual messages.

Standard 1: Interpret Meaning - The student will interpret and evaluate the various ways visual image-makers including graphic artists, illustrators, and news photographers represent meaning.

Standard 2: Evaluate Media - The student will evaluate visual and electronic media, such as film, as compared with print messages.

Standard 3: Compose Visual Messages - The student will create a visual message that effectively communicates an idea.

Retrieved from http://sde.state.ok.us/Curriculum/PASS/default.html on July 18, 2009.

Appendix B

National Council of Teachers of English

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/standards on July 24, 2009.

Appendix C
Unit Plan for *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
11th grade American Literature
Mrs. Cathy Klasek
HMCHS, Spring 20**

Date: This unit will last from May 11 to May 27, 20**

Objectives and Goals:

- Students will complete *The Grapes of Wrath* and supplemental reading
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of
    - the Great Depression,
    - the role of migrants in this time period,
    - the significance of Route 66,
    - attitudes toward migrants,
    - culturally relevant terms like "Hooverville," "Okie," and "Red".
- Students will review and then demonstrate an understanding of literary terms while reading *TGOW*
- Students will practice creating visual messages by completing multiple short in-class paint/write assignments and create one larger painting at the completion of the novel

Anticipatory Set:

- Review the Great Depression
- Review *Of Mice and Men*
- Review free writes/reading journals/grading practices

Materials Needed for Class:

- Classroom set of *The Grapes of Wrath* (2002) and sign-out sheet
- *When Weather Changed History: The Dust Bowl* (personal DVD) – show lasts about 45 minutes – covers causes and effects of the Dust Bowl; contains dramatic images – some are disturbing
- *Surviving the Dust Bowl* (personal DVD) available @ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/dustbowl/player/
- Picturing America poster: *The Migrant Mother*
- Pictures of Route 66 *(personal electronic scrapbook)*

Supplies Needed (put these in a basket!):

Paints in basic colors (red, green, yellow, brown, blue, black, white, orange)
Paint brushes
Paint cups
Paper towels

Baby wipes/sanitizing wipes
Paper (11x14 and 8 ½ x 11)
Timer
Dry erase markers and eraser

Copies needed (17 of each):
Map of Route 66
Map of California
Dust Bowl poems
Timeline from WWI to WWII (the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl)

Helpful links to remember:
http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/ok/es_ok_dustbowl_1.html
http://dougdawg.blogspot.com/2007/03/dust-bowl.html
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/great-depression/
http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/01/grapes/index.html
http://infusion.allconet.org/webquest/TheDustBowl5.html

The Grapes of Wrath Reading Guide

DATE	Pages (Chapters)	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
5/11	1-4 (1)	Read Chapter 1 aloud; what do we expect the novel to be about? What do we remember about Steinbeck? Review the history (HT will supplement in American History class) of the Crash, the Dust Bowl, the Depression
5/12	1-30 (1-4)	Symbolism – The turtle, the drivers. Allow time to read in class
5/13	31-66 (5-7)	*When Weather Changed History: The Dust Bowl* What have you heard? Look at the pictures – what do you see?
5/14	67-117 (8-11)	*Surviving the Dust Bowl* - Discussion over as much of section 1 (Chapters 1-10) – characters, conflict, symbols (the cat, the intercalary chapters), Casy's idea of "sin and virtue"
5/15	118-149 (12-13)	Review and finish section 1 discussion – then Character painting activity (Details below)
5/16 & 17	150-200 (14-17)	
5/18	201-239 (18-19)	Discussion Section 2 – introduce the idea of a religious parallel (Conflict, exodus, redemption?) – look at Route 66 pictures – development of highways, cars, technology

		Writing Activity w/ *The Migrant Mother*
5/19	240-324 (20-22)	Watch movie for hour then discuss the differences and similarities. Do the character look like you expected? – review yesterday's conversation – check for questions, make predictions – Don't read Chapter 25 tonight!!
5/20	325-349 (23-25)	Paint Chapter 25
5/21	350-405 (26-27)	Watch movie (the ending? Same as book?) Discussion topic – Okie (meaning? Pejorative or nickname – then and now) Rose of Sharon's superstition
5/22	406-435 (28-29)	Finish up with what we've read; Reading assignment this weekend 436-450 (paragraph 1) Remind those who are behind to catch up
5/23, 24 & 25	436-450 (30)	
5/26		Read final few pages in class-Free write the ending- what do you think? Why? Why did it end like this? Could any other ending work? What happens to the Joads?
5/27		Paint the novel; take the test
5/28		Last day of school; collect books

Major grade projects:

Character painting activity

Distribute palettes, brushes, 8 ½ by 11 copies with faint outline of a human, and notebook paper;

Make sure everyone has a writing utensil

Directions: Select a character about whom you feel strongly. You have five minutes to free paint your character. Remember no words, letters, concrete objects. Use abstract techniques and ideas.

Now you have three minutes to do a free write. Address ideas like: Why these colors? What do they represent? Who is your character? How do you feel about him/her?

Collect paintings but not writings. Re-distribute paintings. Three minute free write – same prompt.

Compare what you wrote to what the author/painter wrote and intended.

Closing discussion: How do we feel about these characters? Who are their modern equivalents?

Writing Activity with The Migrant Mother

Directions: Make sure everyone has his or her reading journal out and something with which to write. Explain that they have the rest of the class period to "Tell me her story. What has happened to bring her to this place? In

her life? In her world? Use what you see and what you know to tell me her story."
Remind students to: title the story;
answer the five "W" questions (who, what, where, when, why, how);
convince me that you've been reading and paying attention.
Be prepared to share.
Two page minimum.
When you're done, please see me. And we'll see about time to type.

Paint Chapter 25
Distribute palettes, brushes, 11x17 art paper, and notebook paper;
Make sure everyone has a writing utensil.
Directions: I'm going to read Chapter 25 to you. As I read, you're going to paint. Don't wait until the end to start painting because when I finish reading, you'll have thirty-seconds to finish. Remember no words, letters, concrete objects. Use abstract techniques and ideas.
After the reading: You have thirty seconds to finish (Be prepared for a minute if needed.)
Now you have three minutes to do a free write. Address ideas like: Why these colors? What do they represent? Where did you start? How did it end up? How do you want your viewer to respond? What do you want him/her to notice?
Closing discussion: Aren't you glad such things don't happen now? Guide discussion to make modern comparisons? Is making money a sin? Wrong? Where's the line?

Paint the novel & Objective test
Have palettes, brushes, 11x17 paper, and notebook set up on tables in half the room. Make sure everyone has a writing utensil!
Directions: You have the entire hour to complete the multiple-choice test and then to paint the novel. Remember no words, letters, concrete objects. Use abstract techniques and ideas. No painting is complete without a reflection. Do at least a three-minute free write, preferably a five. Everything is due by 10:40; that gives you seventy minutes.
No talking while tests are out!

Objective test was taken from:
http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/grapesofwrath/quiz.html and a copy is attached.

Oklahoma Priority Student Skills met or practiced by this unit:

Reading/Literature: The student will apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, and respond to a wide variety of texts.

Standard 1: Vocabulary - The student will expand vocabulary through word study, literature, and class discussion.

Standard 2: Comprehension - The student will interact with the words and concepts on the page to understand what the writer has said.

Standard 3: Literature - The student will read, construct meaning, and respond to a wide variety of literary forms.

Writing/Grammar/Mechanics and Usage: The student will express ideas effectively in written modes for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 2: Modes and Forms of Writing - The student will write for a variety of purposes and audiences using narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive, and reflective modes.

Oral Language/Listening and Speaking - The student will demonstrate thinking skills in listening and speaking.

Standard 1: Listening - The student will listen for information and for pleasure.

Standard 2: Speaking - The student will express ideas and opinions in group or individual situations.

Visual Literacy: The student will interpret, evaluate, and compose visual messages.

Standard 1: Interpret Meaning - The student will interpret and evaluate the various ways visual image-makers including graphic artists, illustrators, and news photographers represent meaning.

Standard 2: Evaluate Media - The student will evaluate visual and electronic media, such as film, as compared with print messages.

Standard 3: Compose Visual Messages - The student will create a visual message that effectively communicates an idea.

Copy of the Objective Test

(Taken from http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/grapesofwrath/quiz.html)

Name: _____

The Grapes of Wrath **Objective Test**

(Yes, I got it from Sparknotes.)

1. How does Grampa die?
(A) He has a stroke. (B) He has a heart attack.
(C) He dies of old age. (D) Noah kills him.

2. Why is Noah slightly deformed?
(A) Ma drank heavily during her pregnancy.
(B) A local corporation dumped pollutants into the water supply.
(C) Pa tried to deliver Noah by pulling him out with his bare hands.
(D) As a child, Noah was run over by a combine.

3. What is a "big cat"?
(A) A machine used by the banks to evict farmers
(B) The migrants' nickname for a policeman
(C) The policemen's nickname for a male Okie
(D) A terrible dust storm

4. During what decade did the Dust Bowl tragedy take place?
(A) The 1910s (B) The 1920s
(C) The 1930s (D) The 1940s

5. How many years was Tom in prison?
(A) 11 (B) 14
(C) 2 (D) 4

6. What does Uncle John give to children?
(A) Pennies (B) Cracker Jack candy
(C) Gum (D) Wooden soldiers

7. According to Chapter 19, who were the first Americans to settle in California?
(A) Squatters (B) Middle-class businesspeople
(C) Gold diggers (D) Cowboys

8. Who is given the task of burying Rose of Sharon's stillborn child?
(A) Uncle John (B) Tom
(C) Pa Joad (D) Agnes Wainwright

9. What are Al's main interests?
(A) Cars and clothes (B) Music and girls

(C) Girls and cars (D) Music and clothes

10. Where do the Joads leave Granma's corpse?
(A) A coroner's office (B) A hospital morgue
(C) Under a sycamore tree (D) By the banks of a stream

11. Which Joad child believes him- or herself to be the least loved by Ma and Pa?
(A) Rose of Sharon (B) Tom
(C) Al (D) Noah

12. What was Jim Casy's former occupation?
(A) Truck driver (B) Preacher
(C) Ditch digger (D) Mayor

13. How does Jim Casy die?
(A) He dies of heat exhaustion in the fields.
(B) He kills himself out of sheer despair.
(C) He dies of starvation.
(D) He dies in a fight during a workers' strike.

14. What do the citizens of California angrily call the migrants?
(A) Hobos (B) Okies
(C) Riffraff (D) Bonzos

15. At the end of the novel, who is the leader of the Joad family?
(A) Pa Joad (B) Tom Joad
(C) Grampa Joad (D) Ma Joad

16. Whom does Agnes Wainwright decide to marry?
(A) Tom (B) Al
(C) Jim Casy (D) Floyd Knowles

17. Who in the novel first proposes the idea of organizing the workers?
(A) Tom (B) Al
(C) Jim Casy (D) Floyd Knowles

18. Why does Pa's dam fail?
(A) Pa uses sand when he should have used mortar.
(B) A tree falls into it.
(C) The water simply rises too fast.
(D) Pa builds a good dam, but he builds it in a bad place.

19. Why does Ruthie reveal Tom's secret?
(A) She is jealous of her older brother.
(B) She talks in her sleep.

(C) She wants to frighten a policeman.
(D) She wants to impress a girl who is picking on her.

20. Who tells Tom his parents' whereabouts when he arrives at their deserted farm?
(A) Jim (B) Muley Graves
(C) Winifred (D) Mr. Huston

21. In what year did *The Grapes of Wrath* win a Pulitzer Prize?
(A) 1940 (B) 1936
(C) 1939 (D) 1962

22. Why does Ma fear that Winfield will grow up to be wild and uncontrollable?
(A) Since Noah left, he has been without a proper influence.
(B) Work camps are not a decent place to raise children.
(C) Without a proper home, he will become rootless and lose his sense of the importance of family.
(D) Manual labor is not good for such a young child.

23. Why do the other children ostracize Ruthie when she first arrives at the government camp?
(A) She is from Oklahoma.
(B) She bullies a girl on the croquet court.
(C) She is caught stealing at the general store.
(D) She is from a large family.

24. At the cotton farm, where do the Joads live?
(A) In a boxcar (B) In a shack
(C) In a tent (D) In a culvert

25. At the end of the novel, Ma explains to Pa that some people live "in jerks," while others live in "all one flow." This is her way of describing an essential difference between which two groups?
(A) Rich and poor (B) Oklahomans and Californians
(C) Men and women (D) Tenant farmers and landowners

ANSWER KEY

1. A
2. C
3. A
4. C
5. D
6. C
7. A
8. A
9. C
10. A
11. D
12. B
13. D
14. B
15. D
16. B
17. D
18. B
19. D
20. B
21. A
22. C
23. B
24. A
25. C

Appendix D – IRB Approval Letter

The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 12582
Meeting Date: April 21, 2009
Approval Date: June 17, 2009

June 16, 2009

Catherine Kissek
ILAC
1528 Windsor Way
Norman, OK 73069

RE: The Influence of Visual Arts Integration of the Reader Response of High School Students

Dear Ms. Kissek:

The University of Oklahoma Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the above-referenced research protocol at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 21, 2009. It is the IRB's judgement that the rights and welfare of the individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46, as amended; and that the potential benefits to participants and to others warrant the risks participants may choose to incur.

On behalf of the IRB, I have verified that the specific changes requested by the convened IRB have been made. Therefore, on behalf of the Board, I have granted final approval for this study.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described:

Survey Instrument Dated: March 05, 2009 Interview Questions
Other Dated: March 30, 2009 Support Letter - OKC Public Schools
Protocol Dated: April 15, 2009 Revised
Other Dated: April 15, 2009 Recruitment Letter - Revised
Assent Form Dated: April 15, 2009 Revised
IRB Application Dated: May 11, 2009 Revised
Consent form - Parental Dated: May 11, 2009 Revised
Other Dated: May 11, 2009 Verbal Recruitment Script - Revised
Other Dated: May 27, 2009 Support Letter from OKC Public Schools

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved by the IRB. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form.

The approval granted expires on April 20, 2010. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request a progress report from you approximately two months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Ltr_Prot_Appr_B

[illegible] Parrington Oval, Suite [illegible], Norman, Oklahoma [illegible] PHONE: [illegible] FAX: [illegible]