THE EFFECT OF TEACHING FLORAL ICONOLOGY

IN A SERIES OF ART LESSONS

TO EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS

MASTERS PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education,
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of the Requirements for the Degree
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Many children in elementary school do not have the benefit of a visual arts instructor. Children attending these schools miss the opportunity to experience images as an important part of the history of civilization, especially the symbolic function of images in various cultures. In *Towards Civilization: A Report on Art Education*, proponents for the National Endowment for the Arts state the "basic arts education does not exist in the United States today" (pp. 13). Moreover, Efland, (1996) calls it unlikely that art education will be made universally available to future generations as long as it is guided by exclusively economic politics.

To address this dearth of art education in the elementary school, this study focuses on learning as an active process (Efland, 1996) where children plan and monitor their own learning activities. By showing students images and integrating the making of art with knowledge about the history of image making, this study proved successful in helping students attain knowledge about art in historical contexts.

The theme of floral motifs was used with eighth grade elementary students having no background in formal art instruction. The purpose of this series of lessons was to integrate a theme of high interest to help the students better understand civilization, develop their creativity, learn to communicate about art
knowledge and reflect on images they saw. This researcher taught six 45-minute classes. Each class focused on constructing new understanding of historical references to floral motifs used by artists, including still-life and symbolic references.

The researcher, in the process of teaching the lessons, was able to evaluate art knowledge the students had achieved. The potential of art to enrich the lives of children in a rural setting became evident when the students came in contact with examples of art from many of the world's cultures. The students became aware that visual images may take on various meanings for different viewers. This study included the looking at, thinking about, reading, talking, and writing, as well as experiencing processes of art making (Mims and Lankford, 1994). The study also addressed the question of whether establishing an art program would enhance or round out the school curriculum.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of six 45-minute lessons which focused on the theme of floral motifs in historical context.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that the students would willingly participate in the art activities and would perform to the best of their abilities on assignments and assessment measures.
Limitations

The limitations of this study involved the school curriculum, the classroom context, and time restraints. The school curriculum did not have a sequenced art program. Since no knowledge base in visual art was available the researcher had to determine which skills were applicable to the eighth grade students. The classroom context was problematic because the researcher had to establish rapport with new students. The amount of time students met with the researcher, six 45- minute art classes, limited the collection of sufficient visual samples of student work.

Definition of Terms

**Context** is a concept related to content and meaning in works of art. The meaning of a work of art cannot be entirely understood if the work is experienced in isolation; the work must be seen and interpreted in relation to the culture in which it was produced, the prominent ideas in the history of art when the work was made, and its mode of expression, style, or medium.

**Design Elements** are the visual building materials of an image that relate to form and include analysis of line, shape and mass, color, texture, and space.

**Design Principles** are rules of composition that bring about a coherent idea that can be communicated or expressed. They include unity, rhythm, proportion, balance, centers of interest, and variety.
Discipline-Based Art Education is an approach to teaching art that takes art to have educational value equal to other school subjects. Referred to as a "subject-centered" approach, its proponents argue that art should be taught from the varying perspectives of the four art disciplines: art history, art criticism, art production, and aesthetics.

Icon is a highly stylized rendering following strict rules of representation.

Iconography is the systematic study of subject matter in works of art versus the study of style.

Iconology is the interpretation of symbols and subject matter in works of art, based on the historical and cultural contexts in which they were created.

Illumination refers to the decorations and illustrations found primarily in medieval manuscripts, which were usually painted individually with tempera and gold leaf.

Post-test is an objective test that can be administered following a lesson or unit of study to determine the amount of information and knowledge acquired by the students.

Pre-test is a test administered prior to primary instruction for the purpose of determining if the students have the prerequisite skills to enable them to begin the unit of study and to establish whether or not the students have already mastered the unit's objectives. Because of the information the preassessment provides, it is
critical to the effectiveness of the unit of study. There is a direct relationship between student involvement in learning and prerequisite skills and knowledge.

**Still Life** is an image of inanimate objects.

**Symbols** have their origins in visual reality: the cross symbolizing Christianity or the heart symbolizing love.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The foundation of this study rested on three areas of research: policy, teaching, and content. The first area, policy, addressed national, state, and private foundation guidelines for teaching visual arts in the elementary setting. The second area, teaching, addressed the framework for constructing purposeful instructional decisions. The third area, content, addressed the rationale for using a theme to teach visual arts and the historical contexts of a theme on flowers.

Policy

The National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts, (1994) are voluntary guidelines defining what good education in the arts should provide. The Standards, part of the Goals 2000 Educate America Act, combine measures of complex performance with indicators of understanding. They are meant to advance student learning in the visual arts and support visual arts educators. Not only should students be skilled in artistic problem solving, they should also be able to reflect on and evaluate art works. The National Standards are meant to: help visual arts teachers compete on a par with other subject area specialists; provide the arts teacher with guidelines on developing a relationship between lessons, the district norm, the state models, and
the Standards themselves; and, emphasize the unique contribution of the visual arts to the overall education of the student. The visual arts provide knowledge and skills unobtainable by the study of other subjects. Specifically, students in grades 5-8... need a framework that aids them in learning the characteristics of the visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions. Study of historical and cultural contexts gives students insights into the role played by the visual arts in human achievement. As they consider examples of visual art work within historical contexts, students gain a deeper appreciation of their own values, of the values of other people, and the connection of the visual arts to universal human needs, values, and beliefs. They understand that the art of a culture is influenced by aesthetic ideas as well as by social, political, economic, and other factors. Through these efforts, students develop an understanding of the meaning and import of the visual world in which they live. (49)

Students in grades 5 through 8 will meet the following content standards:

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

(50, 51)
In 1983, the Ohio State Board of Education responded to the public's expectations for learning by requiring competency-based education. In 1993 the Board resolved its intent to extend competency-based education to the arts, thus resulting in the "Comprehensive Arts Education: Ohio's Model Competency-Based Program," (1996). This document provides a guide for city, local, exempted village, and joint vocational school districts to develop and implement competency-based education programs. The "Ohio Model" provides a guide for the development of: performance objectives for each grade level; instruction at each grade level designed to ensure the attainment of specific performance objectives; provisions for assessment of learner performance; and a program of intervention services for those failing to make satisfactory progress toward achieving performance objectives.

The "Ohio Model" is based on a philosophy that arts education experiences lead students to: an understanding of the role of the arts in people's lives; an ability to communicate through the arts; an ability to respond to the arts; and, an understanding of why people value the arts. An unique aspect of the "Ohio Model is its emphasis on life-centered learning. The "Ohio Model" is written on the premise that education and learning must be holistic and integrative.

Curriculum planners must find ways to help students develop understanding within their own human context in order for them to acquire a rich awareness of life's complexity. Life-centered learning is a concept and context-based approach in which instruction is built around issues and concerns that are relevant to students. (20).
Instructional objectives for the eighth grade include:

**Goal I Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts:**

**Understanding the Role of the Arts in People's Lives**

Learners will:

a. Examine or investigate an historical event or period and compare multiple perspectives of it presented through the arts.

b. Use historical resources to assess the veracity of a work of art intended to represent an historical event.

**Goal II Personal Expression and Production/Performance**

Learners will:

a. Develop strategies for collaborative work in the arts.

b. Create or recreate art works, individually or collaboratively, discuss the source(s) for ideas, and defend the artistic choices made.

c. Create or recreate an artistic piece demonstrating use of old and new technologies and compare the process or result.

**Goal III Arts Criticism: Responding to the Arts**

Learners will:

a. Write a review of an artistic event or exhibit and support their position.

b. Develop criteria for evaluating art works and apply them to a collection or their own work.

c. Use vocabulary that encompasses structural, technical, analytical, and aesthetic aspects when discussing and analyzing arts forms and/or processes.
Goal IV  Nature and Meaning of the Arts: Valuing the Arts

Learners will:

a. Explore reasons why subjects and ideas are re-interpreted through the arts in different cultures.
b. Recognize point of view as a physical, psychological, and/or cultural position.
c. Interview someone in an arts related field and research the field to discover the influence of the arts on society. (68-70)

A private foundation, the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, embraces discipline-based art education (DBAE), a subject-centered approach to curriculum development. Officials of the Getty Center encourage the development of multiple prototypes of DBAE curriculum units by sponsoring collaboration between art specialists, museum educators and representatives from the art disciplines and curriculum development field. This collaboration resulted in the writing of "Discipline-Based Art Education: A Curriculum Sampler," 1991. The sampler contains a wide variety of teacher-authored approaches that demonstrate the diversity of how DBAE can be taught to students. The sampler contains eight units meant to be shared with other teachers. These units are to be used as resources for art specialists to create curriculum-writing teams. Each unit features a sequence of lessons organized on a theme and includes learning activities, resource materials, and assessment strategies.
Teaching

The focus of Danielson's (1996) *Enhancing Professional Practice: a Framework for Teaching*, addresses two questions, "What instructional purpose is being served?" "Is this instructional purpose worthwhile?" (26) In the framework for teaching purpose is central. The teacher and students together become a learning community in which all contributions are valued. The competent teacher designs lessons that enable students to connect what they know to new information. To engage students with knowledge, it is essential to know what they understand about the material to be learned. A framework for teaching is organized to encompass: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. The framework focuses on a set of commonalities underlying the actions of teachers. The purpose of the framework serves to give teachers a repertoire of strategies from which they can select the most suitable one for a given purpose.

The framework is grounded in the constructivist approach to learning: Any concept depends on a person's mental construction of the concept. Teachers can guide the process but students must manage the process of understanding. Students will remember an experience based on their pre-existing knowledge and developmental levels of cognitive structures. The physical "hands-on" approach to learning is no guarantee that students are mentally engaged with an idea. In a constructivist classroom, teaching focuses on designing activities and assignments that can engage students in constructing important knowledge. It is the teacher's responsibility, using available resources, to accomplish this goal.
Domain I, Planning and Preparation, focuses on how the teacher organizes the content. The content must be transformed through instructional design into sequences of activities and exercises that make it accessible to students. Assessment techniques must also reflect the instructional goals and serve to document student progress during and upon completion of a teaching episode.

Domain 2, The Classroom Environment, focuses on interactions that occur in a classroom. The atmosphere is professional, with noninstructional routines and procedures handled efficiently. Student behavior is cooperative and nondisruptive, and the physical environment is supportive of instructional purposes. The teacher is a facilitator who expands the amount of information available within the group. The teacher's task is to establish and communicate high expectations for learning.

Domain 3, Instruction, focuses on the engagement of students in content. Teachers must create an atmosphere of excitement about the importance of learning and the significance of the content. They care deeply about their subject. The classroom work is real and significant, important to students and teachers. Components of instruction include: communicating clearly, using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, providing feedback to students and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.

Domain 4, Professional Responsibility, consists of self-reflection and professional growth, to contributions made to the school district, and to the profession as a whole. Interactions with the families of students, contacts with the larger community, the maintenance of records and the advocacy for students contribute to the general well-being of schools.
Content

Curriculum planning to meet policies and best teaching practice often used a theme to connect learning episodes in a meaningful manner. Fogarty (1991), in The Mindful School: How to Integrate the Curricula, states that "curricular integration is the motivational factor that results from selecting high-interest themes." (56) Using a life-centered theme, students understand how different activities and ideas are connected.

The writer being an artist as well as an avid floral designer and gardener, had a personal need to share the relationship artists have with flowers. The reason at first being a personal ambition to find references to the subject matter and to be able to relate this information to teaching about flowers and their relationship to visual art.

Floral art (Duthy, 1987), recognized in still life paintings of the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, may be symbolic or viewed for the aesthetic value to the artist, for instance, Monet's paintings. Although floral painting appeared to be most closely related to the general definition of still life, in the seventeenth century it was considered as a genre distinct in itself. Nevertheless, floral painting developed along parallel lines with other forms of still life.

Flowers (Duthy, 1987), painted in antiquity for decorative purposes, became endowed with symbolic value in medieval times. From the late fifteenth century onward, flowers fulfilled both decorative and symbolic functions in the rich borders of books of hours. In the eighteenth century, the French Academy decreed that the
sublime form of expression was historical painting. This usually meant a vast canvas depicting a mythological, religious, or historical scene. Next came portraits, followed by genre or narrative painting, and finally the humble still life.

The genre of flower painting is not limited to the depiction of bouquets in vases. Often (Duthy, 1987), floral still life were painted as pendants to fruit pieces set in elaborate landscapes, placed in baskets, or organized into garlands. In these broader contexts, their symbolic associations were expanded. Later in the seventeenth century, pendants of either fruit or flowers were popular.

According to Levison (1994), floral painting and floral decoration of books, floral inlay of symbolic nature was used in furniture. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries carved and painted sunflowers, tulips and carnations decorated drawer chests. In the last decade of the eighteenth century in America, carved and painted motifs were largely supplanted by inlaid floral designs.

Flowers (Levison, 1994), have been a common carrier of messages understood by everyone since Biblical times. Although one must be cautious in assuming that all floral motifs had iconographic undertones, an analyst of symbolism states that nothing is meaningless and everything is in some way related to something else. Overflowing cornucopias and sumptuous baskets of fruit suggest harvest and plenty. Acorns and oak leaves signify strength and longevity, and garlands of laurel celebrate victory. These long-recognized symbols are found on decorative art from carved furniture to silverware.
An important reference, *The Culture of Flowers* (1993) by Jack Goody, initiates a world-wide inquiry into the place of flowers in secular life and religious ritual from ancient Egypt to modern times. He links the use of flowers to the rise of agriculture, the growth of social stratification and spread of goods, while studying the history of aesthetic horticulture in Europe and Asia. Goody analyzes the importance of trade and communications in disseminating and transforming attitudes about flowers, the rejection on puritanical grounds of flowers and their artistic representation, and the multiplicity of meanings that flowers possess. *The Culture of Flowers* will be the text upon which the remainder of the literature review will rest.

In the beginning there was the Garden of Eden. It was an enclosed garden that was irrigated. The Garden was considered paradise, a Persian concept derived from the earlier gardens of Babylon and Assyria which were associated either with temples or with royalty. These gardens, parks or paradises, had ornamental as well as fruit trees in addition to wild animals and exotic birds. The surrounding walls acted as breeding beds, even as experimental stations. They were not only pleasure gardens and science parks but sanctuaries, offering solitude and communion with nature, a place of retreat and mediation, especially suitable for temples and later monasteries. In these gardens the lotus, a species of lily, was encouraged to grow. In the earliest time the lotus was the Egyptian flower par excellence. It was represented as early as the Vth Dynasty (2494-2345 B.C.) and was associated with Upper Egypt just as the papyrus was identified with the Lower Kingdom. The stalks of the lotus and papyrus were entwined to represent the union of the country during the 15th Dynasty (about 3100 B.C.).
Gardens, trees and flowers were widely represented in Mesopotamian art and architecture. While garlands were present at an early stage, the wearing of crowns from plants seems to have developed with the arrival of Greek influences. Apart from the lotus and a species of lily, only the palm was a representation of the time (100 B.C.). The palm tree was associated with the supreme being and with royalty. The lotus was offered as a gift in sacrificial rites throughout the Near East. Abstract flower-type designs, such as the palmette and the rosette appeared on architecture as well as in craft work, on cloth and on carpets.

At first the gardens of Egypt seemed to have been devoted to fruit and ornamental tress. In Pharaonic Egypt there were few cultivated flowers apart from the lotus and some flowering shrubs. Egyptian paintings of gardens are more formal and less realistic than later Roman ones, so that the evidence of flowers is more difficult to interpret. While the ground plans are usually given from above, plants are individually portrayed in profile like the motifs in Persian carpets. In these paintings not only the lotus but the cornflower, poppy, anemone and chrysanthemum have been identified.

The uses of flowers were secular as well as religious. Under the New Kingdom they were gathered for entertainment. There were necklaces of lotus or a lotus bud on women's headgear. Flowers in vases and jars of pottery adorned tables. Their greatest use was for making bouquets, crowns and garlands with white and blue waterlilies as well as poppies, daisies and similar wild flowers.
The lotus formed part of the offerings placed on the altar, sometimes as a single flower but often as a bouquet. Other flowers evolved but above all was the hundred-petalled rose which became an important product of Egyptian gardens. All of these flowers were used to create the bouquets, chaplets and garlands so much admired by the Romans. Garlands were offered to the army after military triumphs as well as in daily life. The lotus played a dominating role in architecture, in painting and in poetry. Uses were also made of the papyrus and palm tree, not only in graphic representation but in architecture. The columns of temples were carved as bundles of papyrus or as palms on which the lotus, often truncated, figured as a capital.

With the Greeks increasing visits to Egypt about 650 B.C., it gave them the opportunity to get to know about Egyptian stone buildings which provided a starting point for the ultimate development of monumental architecture and sculpture. The lotiform may have specifically influenced the capitals of the Ionic order which evolved in eastern Greece after the Doric, appearing on stone columns with capitals elaborately carved in floral hoops. The lotiform was found in the tombs of the New Kingdom. Three distinct design elements made their appearance in these Egyptian tombs: the lotus, the palmette (a pseudo-flower), and stems in the shape of spirals. Lotus and spirals were joined in borders and across broad expanses of wall, with the occasional addition of palmettes.

The Greeks played a major part in extending the Egyptian repertoire of flowers as well as their use as garlands. Egyptian florists and gardeners had a high reputation and developed a major industry, for flowers were needed locally for elaborate banquets, religious services and domestic use, including marriages.
Across the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt, painted flowers were found in the ancient city of Pompeii. The inhabitants decorated the walls of their peristyle gardens, which formed the center of the house, with paintings of the flowers that they purchased or grew. A favorite flower, the oleander, appeared with birds and wild animals. Paintings of flowers were not confined to the garden. For example, roses, bachelor's buttons and other flowers painted against a dark background, were found on a framed panel inserted in the ceiling of a house.

The well preserved remains of Pompeii, dating from A.D. 79, provide firm evidence for the extent of the culture of flowers in this fertile area. The Roman aqueduct brought abundant water to the town gardens. No longer confined to evergreen, the myrtle, oleander, and ivy, gardens were enlivened by the colors of seasonal flowers. Even today the climate and soil enable three crops, one of flowers, to be grown each year. The region produces plants for many large European seed companies. In addition, carnations, roses, gladioli and tuberroses are grown for the extensive market in cut flowers.

In antiquity flowers were grown in Pompeii for two main purposes: garlands and perfume. The making and use of garlands is illustrated in a number of drawings and paintings.

In Rome flowers were extensively used in religious contexts. Funerals demanded masses of blooms. The corpse was adorned as an expression of honor and affection. The funeral urn was similarly decorated. Flowers were scattered on the guests at the funeral banquet, and wreaths of dry or artificial flowers were placed on the tomb. A marble relief from near Rome of late Flavian, early
Trajanic origin shows a woman laid out for burial, above her standing two tall vases garlanded with fruit and flowers. Her hair is surrounded by a light wreath of blossoms and a man stands ready to place a heavy flower garland around her neck. On the left an acanthus leaf may represent the foliage that is placed in front of the door to show the presence of a corpse. The dead were not abandoned after the funeral. Fresh flowers, especially roses, lilies and violets, were widely used to deck out tombs as memorials.

The fall of Rome had a devastating effect on both the knowledge and the practice of flower culture in Europe. Not only did botanical learning fail to increase, it actually declined. The use of flowers in crowns or garlands, especially on statues of pagan gods was condemned. For some Christian believed Christ was forced to wear a crown of thorns, but in Heaven he wore a crown of gold. A Constantine Ascetic leader, Clement of Alexandria, declared it to be inconsistent to celebrate the holy suffering of the Lord to crown people with flowers.

After the fall of Rome, crowns and garlands used to adorn statues of gods disappeared. Even statues disappeared. There was little Byzantine statuary in Constantinople, Syria or Egypt. Sculpture lived on in other forms but not as statuary. As in the case of flowers, rejection of paganism combined with earlier Judaic objections, changed the face of European statuary.

Botany or the study of plants had slowly died during the Dark Ages, but china demonstrated a slow and steady growth in this science. The foundations of botany were laid in Greece and China. In medieval Europe plants were divided into culinary, aromatic and medicinal purposes from the first century A.D. to the
sixteenth century. Gradually, through the course of the Middle Ages, Europe experienced revival of the garden and the garland, as well as botany and gardening. By the twelfth century visual art was added as an instrument for teaching faith. The return of the rose, which was considered pagan and a luxury item, the development of botany, the rebirth of naturalistic painting, the acceptance of three-dimensional sculpture, were aspects of a long, slow and much debated process.

While floriculture plummeted after the Roman empire, earlier traditions were maintained and extended under Islam. Influences from the East contributed to the slow revival of the culture of flowers in medieval Europe. Turkey, India and China all continued to play a major part in later developments.

These influences were important both for flowers and for icons of flowers. The Far and Near East became major resources in the later rise of the culture of flowers in the West. The whole of Asia supplied plants and later representations of plants on paper, cloth and porcelain, as well as artificial flowers. While the Near East continued to provide a model for the enclosed garden, present in the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden, it was brought close to the West not only by the circulation of literary works and by the influence of returning Crusaders, but by the implantation of Islam in southern Spain, in southern Italy, and subsequently in eastern Europe.

From Iran the culture of gardens and flowers spread both east and west. The enclosed garden of the Near East retained much of its character until recent times. Walls protected its valuable property from other people as well as from animals. In the polygymous societies of Islam, women as well as flowers were shut off from the outside world.
In India, the royal gardens were divided into three: the King's part; the harem's part, and the public's part. The gardens that the Mughols created in India were not only for pleasure but for income. Supposedly there were seven hundred and seventy-seven gardens, which drew a substantial revenue from roses and bed musk.

Western Europe would gradually see the return of representation art even though early Christianity was predominately anti-iconic. Flowers had to take on a new meaning through symbolism. They were to be looked upon decoratively and aesthetically. This was done in several ways. For example, developments in the culture of flowers represented a reassertion of popular interests but unless brought under control, church authorities would ban their pagan associations. Just as churches were built on the sites of pagan worship, so flowers were literally christened, renamed, as Mary's root or John's weed. Wild flowers especially underwent renaming. These flowers, now often called Lady's this or that, were formerly: Alchemilla (Our Lady's Mantle), Ribbon Grass (Our Lady's Ribbons or Garters), Canterbury Bells or Foxgloves, (Our Lady's Gloves), Portulaca (Our Lady's Purse), Solomon Seal (Our Lady's Seal), Clematis (Virgin's Bower), Mint (Herbae Sanctae Mariae), Lily (The Madonna Lily).

Renaming these flowers from both the garden and the field brought about a new dispensation. The culture of flowers had its symbolic aspect in religious teaching. The image of a virgin as a flower in an enclosed garden was present in ancient Israel as well as in Rome. In the art and literature of medieval Europe the Virgin Mary was sometimes visualized as the enclosed garden, sometimes as a rose in that garden. She was often a white rose without thorns. Floral imagery was
overlapping rather than exclusive, for the Virgin was also seen as a lily and a violet. The marigold is one of many flowers linked to the Virgin Mary after the increasing popularity of her cult in the 11th century.

At the same time as the teachers of religion in the countryside called upon the flowers as illustrations for their texts, writers were bringing their symbolic usages into literature. Not only was there symbolic meaning to flowers through literature and art but also a language of flowers. Goody provides an example of Shakespeare quoting from a lyric that was printed in Clement Robinson's "A Handefull of Pleasant Delites," 1584.

Lavander is for lovers true . . ;
Rosemarie is for remembrance . .
Sage is for sustenance . .
Fenel is for flaterers . .
Violet is for faithfulness . .
Thyme is to trie me . .
Roses is to rule me . .
Leliflowers is for gentlenesse . .
Carnations is for graciousnesse . .
Marigolds is for marriage . .
Penniriall is to print your love . .
Cowsloppes is for counsel . .

The poem concludes,
I pray you keep this Nosegaie well,
and set by it some store. (in Goody, 1994, p. 181)
The significances attached to each flower are ruled by the desire for assonance, for the initial letters of flower and meaning to conform; hence 'Lavander is for lover, Rosemarie is for remembrance,' etc. In actual practice the bride and groom gave rosemary to friends at weddings, perhaps for rememberance.

Manuscript art or illumination mainly in the West was intended for educational purposes and took as its topic Biblical scenes, concentrating mainly on human figures. The manuscripts were sometimes decorated with vine scrolls, acanthus leaves, or a saint holding a lily. The style changed to greater naturalism during the early Gothic in the later thirteenth century when the production of books was carried out not only in monasteries and at court but at workshops in the new university towns.

The "Book of Hours," illuminated in 1485, has borders which include a range of fruit, flower and foliage forms together with putti, cornucopias and candelabra as well as a range of classical and Renaissance themes. The further development of the border in the fifteenth century seems to have arisen out of the resolution of the problem of representing three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface by the use of single-vanishing-point perspective. The illuminated book combined script, which had to be read two-dimensionally, with pictures, which had to be interpreted three-dimensionally. To avoid confusion it was soon surrounded by a hairspray type two-dimensional border which created a window effect. On many borders the hair-spray type border was combined with delicate flowers, leaves and fruits.
Now there is a further use of flowers in the pictures themselves. In Europe there was a shift in border decoration from the stereotype foliage chains and more realistic animals of the early Middle Ages to naturalistic flowers of the Gothic period. The ability to paint flowers in a life-like manner was a feature of Flemish art from the beginning of the fifteenth century. The border becomes larger and larger. In the works of painter, Jan (Velvet) Breugal (c. 1568 - 1642), the flowers step right out of the border and form a garland surrounding the Virgin, the subject of his painting, "Garland of Flowers with the Virgin." Peter Paul Rubens collaborated with Breugal in the work, forming a tradition of flower painting that flourished in the Low Countries in the early part of the seventeenth century, becoming one of the main genres of still life.

Still life painting represented another important contribution to the development of flower painting. The great creators of illusionist borders were the late Flemish manuscript painters of the Renaissance. The illuminators had been influenced by the panel painters, for Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling had worked in Bruges and Hugo van der Goes and Joas van Ghent in Ghent. These painters paid detailed attention to natural objects, which included garlands of flowers.

Flower painting flourished in the Catholic environment of Flemish Antwerp toward the end of the sixteenth century. Flower paintings came to form part of the still life tradition, following the earlier Italian practice of including flowers in vases in religious paintings. In the seventeenth century, still life flourished in the Low Countries, partly as a decorative art in which flower paintings played a major role.
In Antwerp, sixteenth century artists Gerard Seghers and Frans Yvens adorned altar pieces and devotional pictures with garlands of flowers. One of their paintings, "The Virgin and Child in a Garland" has been analyzed in these terms:

The roses evoke the love of the Virgin, the lily, her purity, her triple virginity, and her majesty, the carnation, her perfume as well as redemption. The orange blossom symbolizes the mystical engagement of Mary... The Chestnut again means purity (the fruit it preserved by its spikes from original sin) as well as chastity (chestnut and chastity have the same etymological root, casta). The fig, like the hazel-nut, is a symbol of salvation, of resurrection and of charity. Attribute of luxury in antiquity, the fig became the fruit of the Virgin, known as the new Eve. (p. 175)

During the seventeenth century there was a gradual loss of symbolic elements in floral painting. Flowers were painted for their form, color and beauty. The great vogue for flower painting began when rich Protestant merchants of the Low Countries were no longer commissioning votive paintings with garlands. They shifted their interest to flowers, real and pictorial, for the home. While floral painting was carried out in Amsterdam and Antwerp, the main center was the seaport of Middleburg where Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder (1573 - 1645) moved from Antwerp to escape Catholic persecution. Together with his sons and brother-in-law, he devoted himself to flower pieces, starting about 1610. Being strongly influenced by botanical studies, his "Basket of Flowers" (1614), has blooms spilling out on the table, with a butterfly and a dragonfly which follow closely the line of illusionist border painters.
Although still life held a lower status than historical painting, it was much in demand. A flower painting would sell for more than many large religious paintings by Rubens. At this time there was a rising interest in botany. Stimulated by the advent of printing, especially in Germany and the Low Countries, and the capacity to reproduce drawings, books on plants with illustrations became popular reading. This activity resulted in an enormous increase in plants both in art and literature.

The vase itself was a product of a shift from garlands to bouquets. The vase emerged as a vessel specifically designed to hold cut flowers. In earlier paintings the vase was often a water jug rather than a special container for holding flowers, although such containers had long been available in China.

Baskets and bowls appeared earlier than vases. Flower vases first appear in illuminations at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The word itself is from the French vase, one important sense of which is a flower vase, otherwise know as bouqueter or porte-bouquet.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

This study includes a description of the subjects and the setting, evaluation procedures, unit description, and a glossary of terms used in teaching. Underlying the teaching of this unit is the philosophy that the researcher can guide the process but the students must manage the process of understanding. The art activities were designed to engage students in constructing knowledge about visual art.

The subjects of this study were 17 eighth grade students, 12 female and 5 male, attending a small parochial elementary school in rural northwest Ohio. Special arrangements were made with the classroom teacher to allow the researcher to conduct six 45-minute art lessons. Two of these lessons were used for pre-and post-tests. Previous to this study, the subjects received art instruction from the classroom teacher, not a certified art specialist. Two female students, however, claimed to have received outside art instruction. The accumulated grades for the class were high, mostly As and Bs. A few male subjects, however, claimed to be C students. The subjects were a homogeneous group with similar ethnic backgrounds. One male student form Ireland had recently become an United States citizen.
Evaluation Procedures

A test (Figure I) was designed to evaluate learning the students had achieved from the art experience. The test was used as both pre- and post-measures of knowledge about visual art. Demographic information initiating the test construction, served to facilitate the compilation of statistical data.

Using the National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts, (1994), pages 50-51, the researcher analyzed the content of the test questions. The first seven questions address Content Standard #2, using knowledge of structures and functions. Questions 8-10, and question 12 address Content Standard #3, choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas. Question 11 addresses Content Standard #4, understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures. Questions 13 and 14 address content Standard #5, reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others. After the tests were scored an analysis of the results was conducted.

Unit Description

The unit focused on the theme of flowers and how artists have used floral motifs in art works through the ages. Students gained experience in: understanding personal expression and production; responding to the arts; and valuing the arts ("Comprehensive Arts Education: Ohio's Model Competency-Based Program," 1996).
What type of background do you have in art?
Is your class taught by a certified art teacher?
Do you consider yourself an A, B or C student?

Answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge and ability.

1. What are the 6 major elements or components of artistic design?
2. What are the 6 major principles of design?
3. What is Symmetrical balance?
4. a. Name the 3 basic warm colors? b. Name the 3 basic cool colors?
5. What are the three primary colors?
6. What is a direct complement color?
7. When your eye is drawn to a certain area in a work of art it is called __________ __________.
8. What flower was used in paintings to symbolically represent Christ?
9. Besides the dove what botanical symbol was used in early paintings to describe the Holy Ghost?
10. What color is used to define purity?
11. Beside Christian art what two cultures used symbolism in much of their artistic work?
12. The blue Iris was used as a symbol of what figure?
13. Describe in your own words your favorite art work? a. Do you feel there was any symbolic meaning in the work of art? b. Did color play a part in your choice or what other element?
Lesson I

Goal II Personal Expression

b. Create or recreate art works

Two individual floral arrangements in vases were set up on two sides of the room. Students were to take a 18"X24" white paper and draw the still life. They were given pastels to finish the drawing; however, students had the choice of using only pencil for the work. Instructions included using the whole paper and making the arrangement fill the paper. Students were told that they could use the background provided that they fill it in. Some students constructed windows and draperies for backgrounds, while others chose to keep the ground plain. This lesson allowed the researcher to establish rapport with the the students, introduce the unit theme, and assess the students visual development in image making.

Lesson II

Goal III Arts Criticism: Responding to the Arts

a. Write a review of an artistic event or exhibit and support one's position

The students were given the pre-test (Figure I).

Lessons III and IV

Goal I Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts: Understanding the Role of the Arts in People's Lives

a. Examine or investigate an historical event or period and compare multiple perspectives of it presented through the arts.

b. Use historical resources to assess the veracity of a work of art intended to represent an historical event
Goal III Arts Criticism: Responding to the Arts

c. Use vocabulary that encompasses structural, technical, analytical, and aesthetic aspects when discussing and analyzing arts forms and/or processes

Students were exposed to reproductions of still life with flowers as the subject. Still life, floral painting, and religious images were shown: Jan Brueghel, Auguste Renoir, Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, Jan van Eyck; Marc Chagall, Georgia O'Keeffe, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Hugo van der Goes, Ethelyn Stewart, Suzanne Valadon. Several examples of botanical artists' works and manuscript illumination were also shown.

While the images were studied, students took notes on individual artists. Elements and principles of design were explained by using the reproductions as examples of lines, shapes, colors, textures, value, balance, proportion, unity, contrast, pattern, movement, and rhythm. Special attention was given to color and a discussion of primary colors and the use of warm and cool colors was held. Students looked for focal points in the reproductions. They discussed possible symbolic meanings in the images as well as debated their classifications as botanical drawings or still lifes.

Lesson IV focused on symbolic meanings some of the artists used in their works. Emphasis was given to certain flowers used extensively in paintings, frescoes, and architecture. For example the lily was a symbol of Christ, but also of the Virgin Mary. The iris (mainly blue) also represented Mary. Colors also represented certain meanings, i.e. white for purity. Numbers of objects also had meanings. Most items were shown in one unit or three units.
Lesson V

Goal IV Nature and Meaning of the Arts: Valuing the Arts

b. Recognize point of view as a physical, psychological, and/or cultural position

The students were to critique the symbolic content of Jan van Eyck's "Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride." They were to see what they could do on their own, then as a group they were to discuss the picture's symbolic content. The following is an analysis of the students' findings:

The man is holding the woman's hand. They are being betrothed or married. The year is 1434. There is a mirror behind the couple reflecting two people outside the painting. Could this be the artist or the priest or two witnesses? The candle, lit in full daylight, was a prop in the oath-taking as well as a "marriage-candle," a flame of the ardor of newly-weds. The dog was a symbol of marital faith. The fruit on the window - sill and the crystal beads beside the mirror are symbols of the Virgin Mary. The little figure carved above the back of the chair is St. Margaret, patron saint of child birth. The mirror frame displays scenes from Christ's passion. The discarded shoes show the holiness of the event.

The students thoroughly enjoyed finding the symbols and were now ready to draw their own. They drew a symbol of their choice on a 7"X7" square of white paper. They were allowed to use the idea of existing symbols such as the lily, the rose, the butterfly, or the iris, or they may make up a new symbol. They were to explain orally what the symbol meant.
Lesson VI

Students were given five minutes to review their notes and then they took the post-test.

Glossary

Student List

**Allegorical** - abstract ideas are personified; a description to convey a meaning different from that which is expressed; a continued metaphor.

**Genre** - a kind of style.

**Icon** - a highly stylized rendering following strict rules of representation; often it is a venerated representation of Christ, an angel, or a saint found in Greek and Orthodox Eastern Churches.

**Still life** - inanimate objects as subject of painting.

**Symbol** - having its origin in visual reality, it represents concrete moral or intellectual qualities.

**Symbolism** - representation by symbols; a system of symbols in art and literature; a tendency to represent emotions by means of symbols and to invest ordinary objects with imaginative meanings.

Teacher List

**Butterfly** - A symbolic creature in many cultures, standing in some contexts for beauty and metamorphosis, and in others for the transitory nature of happiness. The miracle of its successive life stages, of metamorphosis from the larvae existence of the plodding caterpillar to the delicate beauty of the butterfly, has moved us deeply,
becoming a metaphor for the transformation undergone by our own souls. The life-cycle of the caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly symbolizes life, death and resurrection (Biedermann, 1992).

**Columbine** - literally 'like a dove;' the flower of the genus Aquilegia, so named because the shape of the flower was thought to resemble doves in flight. Hence, it is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. The columbine was not used as a Christian symbol after the sixteenth century (Hall, 1979).

**Corn** - In religious art corn and vine together symbolize the eucharistic elements, as in pictures of the Virgin and Child.

**Dove** - The Christian symbol of the Holy Ghost, from the words of John the Baptist; 'I saw the spirit coming down from heaven like a dove resting upon him.' (John 1:32) Seven doves arranged about the devotional image of Christ or the Virgin and Child, seen more often in Gothic stained glass, symbolize the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Webber, 1938). 'Seven gifts-wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.' (Isaiah 11:1-2)

**Flowers** - Flowers in general are the attribute of spring personified. They symbolize the evanescence of human life in allegorical still life. The flower and the blossom are universal symbols of young life. Symbols of vitality, the flower represents the end of winter, the victory over death. In Christian symbology the calyx, open at the top, suggests the receiving of God's gifts. Flowers also stand for the transitory nature of all earthy beauty. Especially in the early nineteenth century, it was not unusual to express difficult messages by means of flower
arrangement. Playful flower-symbology first emerged toward the end of the eighteenth century, and was revived a century later. Examples are: Iris; "You'll fill my heart with joyful hope, only then to plunge it into doubt." Rose (red): "This is the pledge of love and fidelity." (Biedermann, 1992)

Garden - The idea of an enclosure, walled or fenced, within which is fruitfulness, was used as a symbol of the Immaculate Conception and made the setting for the Annunciation (Hall, 1979).

Grape - in Christian art the symbol of the eucharistic wine and hence of the blood of Christ, especially with ears of corn (Hall, 1979).

Iris - hope; light; purity; power; royalty; eloquence; attribute of the Virgin Mary; the Passion; the Immaculate Conception (especially in Spanish art). The common iris was thought by some to be the flower of the French fleur-de-lys (Hall, 1979).

Ivy - As an evergreen symbolizing immortality, ivy may crown a skull in still life (Hall, 1977).

Lily - symbol of purity, associated particularly with the Virgin Mary and the virgin saints. It features in the Annunciation in a vase or in the hand of the archangel Gabriel, and hence became his attribute. Christ sitting in judgment may have a lily and a sword on either side of his face. In other works of art the lily may be held by the Virgin Mary's husband Joseph and her parents. The lily may also describe the purified sour; heavenly bliss; majesty; queenly beauty, grace (Hall, 1979, Biedermann, 1992) Lily of the Valley - daintiness; sweetness; humility; return of spring; return of happiness (Olderr, 1986).
Lotus - The sun; spiritual evolution; life. The supremely sacred flower. The soul transcending the flesh. In Egypt is represents royalty. In China is represents summer, fruitfulness. Buddha is always shown seated in a pedestal formed by the lotus blossom (McDowell & Mikami, 1961)

Peacock - a symbol of renewal and resurrection (Biedermann, 1992)

Pomegranate - The red juice became a symbol of the blood of martyrs. The seeds enclosed in the fruit represented the church community. In baroque symbolism the image of a pomegranate, split open to reveal its wealth of seeds stood for generosity (Biedermann, 1992).

Rose - symbol of love. The red rose stood for the blood shed by Jesus on the cross, and thus for God's love. The white rose means I am worthy of you. A yellow rose signifies a decrease of love. White and red roses together symbolize the Virgin Mary. A five leaf rose came to symbolize discretion and was often used as part of carved ornaments of confessionals. The rose window used in early churches was symbolic of eternity (Olderr, 1986).

Tree - In Christian iconography the tree symbolizes life lived in accordance with god's plan. Its annual cycle refers to life, death, and resurrection. The Virgin Mary was seen as the tree of life, giving the world its fruit. The Cedar was an evergreen of the Mediterranean region prized for its durability. The palm tree branches represent Christ's entry into Jerusalem (Webber, 1938).
**Violet** - represents modesty and sweetness.

**Wreath or garland** - a ring of flowers and leaves related to the crown, but less permanent and usually indicating temporary honors. In Christian symbology the wreath often symbolizes the defeat of darkness and sin. Sanctuaries are often decorated for church holidays with wreaths, twigs, and flowers, symbolizing joy, eternal life, and resurrection (Cuadrado, 1983).
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Presentation of the Results

All seventeen eighth grade students of a parochial elementary school in a small mid-western town took both pre- and post-tests (Table 1, page 39). With the exception to question 10 on the post-test, all students responded to each test question on both pre- and post-tests. After computing the pre- and post-test results, the data, expressed as percentages, were arranged in two tables. In Table One, page 39, each test question is indicated on the left margin, and percentages of correct answers are indicated by the horizontal bars; the pre-test is designated by the hatched bar; the post-test is designated by the gray-tone bar. Table One is designed as an aid in comparing learning gained from the series of art lessons. Each student taking the pre-and post-tests is listed on the left margin in Table Two, page 40. The percentage of gain between pre-and post-tests is indicated by the black bar. Student gain in correct answers between pre- and post-test ranged from 28% to 71%.
Discussion of Results

A review of Table 1, page 39, indicated that there was an average of 39% increase in correct answers on questions 1 through 7 on pre- and post-test answers. These questions, the spine of teaching visual art, had as a grounding, the "National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts," 1994, Content Standard 2, "using knowledge of structures and functions." (70) A deviation in the average percent of increase in correct answers on questions 1 through 7 was question 3, "What is symmetrical balance?" (Table 1, p). This question received 95% correct answers on both pre- and post-tests. A suggested explanation for the consistency of correct answers could be that the students were familiar with the principle of symmetry from their study of mathematics.

Questions 13 and 14 (Table 1, page 39) were open-ended, requiring the students to bring discrete information together and write analysis of art works. These two questions, requiring critical thinking skills, had a 41.5% increase in correct answers between pre- and post-tests. Questions 13 and 14 specifically related to the "National standards for Arts Education," Content Standard 3, "choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas." (70)

Questions 8 through 12 (Table 1, page 39) also related to the "National Standards for Arts Education," Content Standard 3. Students were asked to identify specific symbolic information used in visual imagery. There was a 26.2% increase in correct answers between pre- and post-tests. This increase reflected learning about the thematic content in the series of art lessons. Question 10, "What
color is used to define purity?" (Table 1, page 39), represented a deviation from the percent of increase in correct answers. The answer "white" was given by all students on the pre-test, but in the post-test one student did not answer. This question could have been previously learned in a religion class. To question 11, "Beside Christian art what two cultures used symbolism in much of their artistic work?" (Table 1, page 39), students answered, Indian, African and Egyptian, an obvious transfer of knowledge from social studies classes. Even on the post-test students listed countries such as Egypt and Japan. The researcher did not include information about these countries in the series of art lessons.

A review of Table 2, page 40, indicated that there was an average of 50.47% overall improvement of correct answers from pre-to post-test for each student. A moderating effect, however, appeared in percentage of improvement between pre-and-post tests for male students. The male students, the first five students listed in Table 2, page 40, averaged 42.4% improvement from pre- to post-test; however, female students showed 53.83% improvement from pre- to post-test. The female students showed 11.43% greater improvement in scores from pre- to post-test than male students.

The researcher gave the students an optional question at the conclusion of the post-test, "Do you feel you have learned anything from the lessons given?" Five students chose not to answer the question but twelve students gave the following:

*Yes, I learned a lot about different paintings.
*Yes, I learned about different artists and different symbols and colors.
*Yes, I learned about many different symbols.
*Yes, I never knew how many artists there were.
*Yes, I learned how to draw art a lot better.
*Yes, I learned about many different symbols and artists.
*Yes, I liked learning about symbols.
*Yes, these lessons taught me there's more to art than drawing stick people.
*Yes, I learned different symbols and their meaning.
*Yes, I learned of botanical symbols of Mary, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
*Yes, I learned there's a lot of symbols in pictures.
*Yes, I learned more about art.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

To address the dearth in teaching the visual arts to intermediate children attending parochial schools, this study focused on 17 eighth grade students, 12 female and 5 male, attending a parochial elementary school in rural northwest Ohio. Six 45-minute art lessons were taught to the subjects by the researcher. None of the students had experienced learning about visual art from a certificated art instructor.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of six 45-minute lessons which focused on the theme of floral motifs. The researcher emphasized learning as an active process where children planned and monitored their own learning activities. By showing students iconographic floral motifs from various cultures, they were able to integrate the making of art with knowledge about the history of image making.
Background research involved: developing lessons under national, state and private foundation guidelines; developing a framework for teaching which included planning, the classroom environment, instruction, professional responsibility; and, knowledge about the history of floral motifs which related to teaching art.

A test was designed to evaluate learning students had achieved from the thematic unit. The test was used as both pre-and post-measures of knowledge about the visual arts. The unit taught to the students focused on the theme of flowers and how artists have used floral motifs in art work through the ages. First, students focused on personal expression in drawing a floral arrangement, then they looked at the iconographic examples of floral motifs in historical, cultural, and social contexts. They used art criticism to respond to reproductions of still lifes with flowers. The elements and principles of design were explained by using the reproduction as examples of lines, shapes, colors, textures, values, balance, proportion, unity, contrast, pattern, movement and rhythm. Concluding lessons in the unit focused on symbolic meanings artists used in their works. Emphasis was given to certain flowers used extensively in paintings, frescoes, and architecture.

After computing the pre- and post-test results, the data, expressed as percentages, were arranged in two tables. The first table was designed as an aid in comparing learning gained from the series of art lessons. The second table showed the percentage of gain in correct answers from each student.

Findings from the pre- and post-tests show that the eighth grade students gained 39% in correct answers focusing on a knowledge of structures and functions of visual art. Students experienced a 41.5% increase in correct answers between
pre- and post-tests on the identification of specific symbolic information used in visual imagery. This increase reflected thematic content in the series of art lessons. Questions, requiring critical thinking skills, had a 41.5% increase in correct answers between pre- and post-tests.

Conclusions

The series of visual art lessons represent an average of 50.47% overall improvement of correct answers from pre- to post-test for each student. Most students felt that they had learned about various artists, art forms, symbols, and making art. The lessons were meant to expose students to artists, media, and approaches to viewing art through symbolism rather than teaching only the structures and functions of visual art.

Students responded in a positive manner to drawing still life. They also appeared to derive great satisfaction from their critique of the symbolic content of Jan van Eyck's "Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride." The short duration of the series of lessons proved to be problematic for a depth approach to curriculum development. For example, students needed to have a better grasp of the structure and functions of the visual arts. Although the researcher was unfamiliar with the students, they were most cooperative during the series of art lessons.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that the results of this study be made available to guide policy priorities and choices as American education is restructured to help our children meet the challenges of the 21st century.
Examining the results of the pre- and post-tests, it is obvious that students can develop higher order thinking skills, including critical thinking, by means of a thematic approach to the visual arts. The results of this study can be used to argue for adopting a visual arts program in parochial elementary schools.

There are two questions that this study leaves unanswered: the reason for the gender difference in percent of correct answers on the pre- and post-test; and, the exclusion of visual examples of student works from the study. Both of these issues would be excellent topics for further research.

The gender issue would be an interesting problem for study because the question of interest in the floral theme would emerge. The issue of student work being included in the study focuses on the limited amount of time given to the study and the limited amount of time allowed for practice in making art. Since the art making of the students was extremely limited in technical skill development, the researcher decided to focus on the cognitive development of the students.

With the positive results that are indicated from the pre-post-tests analysis, art educators can consider the theme of floral iconology to enable students to better understand the interrelationships among ecology, economy and the usages of symbolism in the arts.
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