A Qualitative Exploration of Discipline-Based Art Education and the Ohio Partnership

Jill Reiling Markey

Much like the factors of change in society, developments in the field of art education provide a background to address the contentions identified in the report known as the "Nation at Risk" (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). These contentions focused on who is to teach, what is to be taught, and how is education to be financed. These issues were and are concerns of all educators. Art educators currently are examining changes in society and how they can best reach the needs of their students. This paper is a summary of my dissertation research designed specifically to examine an approach to meet these needs, i.e., Discipline-Based Art Education.

Over twenty-five years of theory and curriculum study in the field of art education contribute to what is called today as Discipline-Based, or DBAE (Greer, 1984). It involves content and skills from four distinct but inter-woven disciplines: aesthetics, art criticism, art history and art production. It is characterized as being inquiry-based, integrated, systematically-developed, and evaluation-driven.

Partially funded by the J. Paul Getty Trust, The Ohio Partnership for the Visual Arts: Regional Institute for Educators is one of six such DBAE institutes across the nation. All of the institutes are designed to provide participants with DBAE knowledge and experience, to carry DBAE into the classroom and the district, to create linkages with school boards, parents, administrators and art museums. The Ohio Partnership researched and designed a five year plan involving DBAE summer inservices and year-long follow-up workshops and executed the first year, 1988-89, with four central Ohio school districts. School teams of art teachers known as specialists, classroom teachers, principals, and supervisors were trained and supported as they implemented DBAE.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of my research was to explore and analyze common factors affecting elementary art teachers' views and decisions during the implementation of DBAE. Such topics as curricular and theoretical antecedents of DBAE, approaches to program implementation, and teacher inservice were examined to provide a basis for the study. In terms of art education content, what finally reached the students by way of teacher decisions after inservice was most important to me in my research. Therefore,

teacher views and their use of the inservice information became the focus of this study.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were threefold. First, I wanted to find any evidence of the Ohio Partnership's effectiveness in delivering new concepts. Second, I was very interested in knowing about participant willingness to take on new knowledge as an adult learner. Third, I noted any evidence of change in the classroom.

Guiding Research Questions

A list of questions was kept as a guide for observation and interview in obtaining a better idea of teacher views and decisions. Such questions follow the ethnographic model discussed in "Cognitive Anthropology and Research On Effective Principals" (Donmoyer, 1985). They were developed from the "Grand Tour" category of the general to the more specific in nature, and are:

1. What was the setting like in terms of size of district, numbers of classrooms and students, types of students, daily routine, amount of teaching time, lesson planning, and classroom activities?

2. Have the art teachers noted any changes in their school environment? In their students? In the other classroom teachers of their school? Community? If so, what changes? Are they considered improvements? Why? Why not?

3. Has any adaptation of DBAE been made in order to meet the student's needs? Describe.

4. In what ways are any aspects of DBAE incorporated into the school's general curriculum?

5. What art education resources are available and how are they utilized and evaluated in the school/art room?

6. What process is involved in the planning of art lessons?

7. How do you assess the students and the lessons taught in art?

8. What are the teachers' views of DBAE, the Institute and their involvement in such a program?

9. How do the teachers see themselves as adult learners, including educational backgrounds, views of their teaching of art, and professional plans for the future?

Participants and Methodology

Participants for the study included one team from each of the four districts involved in the first year of the Ohio Partnership's project. I gained entry into the school settings and was introduced to the teachers through my role as a graduate assistant for the Ohio Partnership several months prior to the first inservice. I did not have any role with the Ohio Partnership during my research period. The issue of objectivity with this research was discussed before, during, and after to build "trustworthiness".

The qualitative method used for the study followed the guidelines set forth by Bogdan and Biklen (1982). Data were gathered and were triangulated by participant observation, the collection of documents and photographs, and teacher-directed interviews. A focus of the data collection centered on the art teacher who was viewed as the leader and decision-maker. Interview transcripts omitted identifiers to protect participant anonymity and were "member-checked" for accuracy. After a three month pilot study, the collection process lasted fourteen months, including the first and second summer inservices beginning and ending the first implementation school year.

Analysis

Data analysis incorporated the constant-comparative method (Glaser, 1978) and revealed seven categories. Each teacher's use of them was assessed for DBAE implementation. Glaser's Constant Comparative Model used for this study is as follows:

1. Begin collecting data.

2. Look for key issues, recurrent events or activities in the data that become categories of focus.

3. Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories.

4. Write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while continually searching for new incidents.

5. Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.

6. Engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories.

Adopted Models

        To aid the analysis of teachers' views and decisions gathered during interviews, I adopted two established models by national researchers in the area of supervision and teacher education. Models displaying teacher efficacy toward student achievement and assessing the levels of teacher use of an innovation were studied and followed. The Supervision II Model (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1988) was selected to offer the research participant art teachers the role as leaders and decision-makers in their classrooms. The graphic representation of this model is as such:

```
SUPERVISION II:   A Professional View of Teaching and Supervision:
                  Teachers are Superordinate to the System

 _____     |
|             |
|WORK SYSTEM|->Supervision empowers
|_____|     |
|Goals      |        __                                  __
|           |   | Provide |                 __  Increased |
|Curriculum |   | concepts |  Teacher as       |          |
|           |   | to inform|  professional     | Teacher  |  Student
|Teaching   |->and expand|->decision-maker, |->satisfaction|-> achievement
|models     |   | the      |  leader          | commitment |  higher
|           |   | teachers |              __|  efficacy   |
|Tests      |   | view     |                             __|
|           |   |        __|
|_____|
    ʼ
```
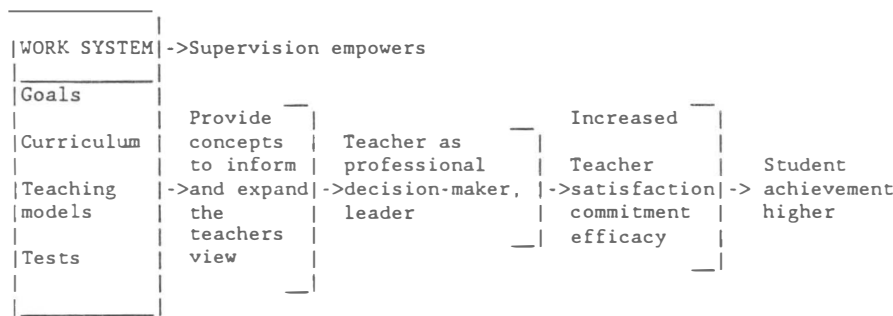
Figure 1. Sergiovanni's and Starratt's Graphic Representation of Supervision II.

        Level of use (LoU), a diagnostic tool devised by Gene Hall, et al. (1974, 1975, 1987) as part of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model was also used in my research. It was selected and used to assess the degree to which the teacher had implemented the innovation of DBAE during the first year of the project according to the areas each teacher felt important. I combined three separate charts devised by Hall and Hord for LoU identification. They include descriptions of the level, the typical behaviors, and typical expressions. The combined chart is as such:

<u>Levels of Use of the Innovation</u>

<u>Level of Use and Behavioral Indices of Level</u>

0   <u>NON-USE</u>:   State in which the user has little or no knowledge of the innovation, no involvement with the innovation, and is doing nothing toward becoming involved.

    # Non-Use   No action is being taken to learn about new ideas in the area of the innovation.

    * Unaware   I don't know anything about it (the innovation).

I   <u>ORIENTATION</u>:   State in which the user has recently acquired or is acquiring information about the innovation and/or has recently explored or is exploring its value orientation and its demands upon user and user system.

    # Orientation   The user is seeking out information about the innovation.

    * Awareness   I have heard about the innovation, but I don't know much about it.

II <u>PREPARATION</u>:   State in which the user is preparing for first use of the innovation.

    # Initial Training The user is preparing to use the innovation.
    * Exploration   How much of my time would use of the innovation take?

III <u>MECHANICAL USE</u>: State in which the user focuses most effort on the short term, day-to-day use of the innovation with little time for reflection. Changes in use are made more to meet user needs than client needs. The user is primarily engaged in a stepwise attempt to master the tasks required to use the innovation, often resulting in disjointed and superficial use.

    # Mechanical   The user is using the innovation in an awkward, poorly coordinated manner.

    * Early Trial   I seem to be spending all my time in getting material ready for students.

IVA <u>ROUTINE</u>:   State in which use of the innovation is stabilized. Few if any changes are being made in ongoing use. Little preparation or thought is being given to improving innovation use or its consequences.

IVB <u>REFINEMENT</u>:   State in which the user varies the use of the innovation to increase the impact on clients within immediate sphere of influence. Variations are based on knowledge of both short and long-term consequences for clients.

    # Independent   The user is doing a good job with the innovation.
    * Limited Impact I can now see how this innovation relates to other things I am doing.

V   <u>INTEGRATION</u>:   State in which the user is combining own efforts to use the innovation with related activities of colleagues to achieve a collective impact on clients within their common sphere of influence.

    # Integrated   The user is sharing with others what he is learning about students from using the innovation.

    * Maximum Benefit I am concerned about relating the effects of this innovation with what other instructors are doing.

```
VI   RENEWAL:              State in which the user reevaluates the quality of
                           use of the innovation, seeks major modifications or
                           alternatives to the present innovation to achieve
                           increased impact on clients, examines new
                           developments in the field and explores new goals
                           for self and the system.
     # Renewing            The user is seeking out more effective alternatives
                           to his established use of the innovation.
     * Renewal             I am trying a variation in my use of the innovation
                           that looks like it is going to result in even
                           greater effects.
```

Figure 2. LoU Chart Excerpted from: Operational definitions of Levels of Use of the Innovation. Austin; Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas, 1975; # = Levels of Use and Typical Behaviors for Each Level of Use of the Innovation, Gene Hall, 1974; * = Stages of Concern and Typical Expressions of Concern About the Innovation, Gene Hall, 1974; # and * = Excerpted from Implementation of CBTE -- Viewed as a Development Process, Texas University, Austin, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, March, 1974.

Results and Emergent Categories

Similar and prominent topics emerged from my interviews with the teacher participants. As the data collection progressed, it formed seven categories which included what the teachers spoke most about and which seemed most important to them as DBAE implementors.

The seven emergent categories included: (1) DBAE, (2) Institute, (3) Resources, (4) Lesson Plans, (5) Teamwork, (6) Assessment and Evaluation, and (7) Adult Learner. The category of "DBAE" included what the teachers mentioned about any or all of the four disciplines in their implementation of DBAE. The second emergent category included any reference the teacher participants made to the Ohio Partnership and its activities, especially the summer inservice. I labelled these comments as "Institute". The category termed "Resources" encompassed all things the teachers felt were resourceful or useful to them during the summer and the school year of implementation. Such resources included: films, prints, slides, texts, journals and other written dialogue, model lesson plans, as well as other teachers, staff, and faculty involved in the Ohio Partnership. They felt the renewal activities during the year, in the form of six workshops, were resourceful as was the opportunity to call institute staff and faculty if they had any questions or problems. "Lesson Plans" referred to any in-process teaching or future plans concerning DBAE. When a participant mentioned any collaborative work with any or all members of their DBAE school team, I labelled that information as "Teamwork". If the teachers made note of how they assessed or evaluated their teaching effectiveness, student accomplishments, or the Partnership, I put them all in

one category: "Assessment/Evaluation". The seventh and final emergent category, the "Adult Learner", referred to what the teachers believed were their future plans for themselves as students (See Figure 3).

LEVELS OF USE DISTRIBUTION
CROSS-SITE

Level of Use	Emergent Categories						
		B	B D	B D	B	B	B D
		B	B D	B D	B	B	B D
Renewal VI		B	B D	B D	B	B	B D
	B	AB D	B D	AB D	B D	B	AB D
	B	AB D	B D	AB D	B D	B	AB D
Integration V	B	AB	B D	AB D	B D	B	AB D
	B D	AB D	B D	AB D	AB D	AB D	AB D
	B D	AB D	B D	AB D	AB D	AB D	AB D
Refinement IVB	B D	AB	B D	AB	AB	AB D	AB
	AB D	ABCD	ABCD	AB D	AB D	AB D	ABCD
	AB D	ABCD	ABCD	AB D	AB D	AB D	ABCD
Routine IVA	AB	ABCD	ABCD	AB	AB	AB	ABCD
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
Mechanical III	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
Preparation II	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
Orientation I	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
Non-Use 0	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD

1	DBAE
2	INSTITUTE
3	RESOURC
4	LESSON PLANS
	TEAMWORK
6	ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION
7	ADULT LEARNER

Figure 3. Cross-Site Application of LoU.

Achievement of the desired outcomes using the seven categories and Hall's LoU revealed differences and similarities among the four teachers (See Figure 3). Evidence supports findings that by the end of the first year, most of the art teachers were at the second highest of eight Levels of Use in three of the seven emergent categories.

Overall, the "Adult Learner," meaning the teacher's desire to continue the processes of gaining more knowledge of the phenomenon, and an area of one of my research objectives, was the most promising category for the

continuance of education in the field. Half of the teachers expressed views of this category on the highest level of use known as "Renewal".

Significance

The significance of the study can be seen in the seven emergent categories. The participants felt that they were the most important areas in DBAE implementation. Responses made by the teachers were categorized as such because of their repeated appearance in the data and common characteristics with one another across the sites.

The results presented as emergent categories can also be seen as answers to the beginning of the study. Answers to all but the first nine were provided in the data of the emergent categories of Chapter IV of the complete dissertation. For the first question, "What was the setting like?" the dissertation's Chapter III: "Settings and Participants" generally described each teachers' district size, classes, art room, types of students, class routing, amount of teaching time, lesson planning, and activities.

For question two, "Have the art teachers noted any changes in their school environment?" changes were noted as a form of teacher evaluation in the related categories, especially in "Teamwork". The category of "Lesson Plans" answered research question number three, "Has any adaptation of DBAE been made in order to meet the student's needs?" Answers to question number four, "In what ways are the aspects of DBAE incorporated into the school's general curriculum?", were portrayed primarily in the "Teamwork" section, as it was here that the teachers described how their teams communicated (or didn't, as was seen in several instances) their implementation tactics.

Clearly teacher descriptions of what resources were available and how they were utilized were presented in the category of "Resources", but can also be seen in other categories such as "Lesson Plans" and their use of the "Institute" and "DBAE". These descriptions answered question five, "What art education resources are available and how are they utilized and evaluated in the school/art room?".

Likewise, question number six, "What process is involved in the planning of art lessons?", was answered in the category of "Lesson Plans". Question seven, "How do you assess the students and the lessons taught in art?", was explained in terms of "Assessment and Evaluation". Since most of the emergent categories provided answers to number eight, "What are the teachers' views of DBAE, the institute and their involvement in such a program?", no **one** category in particular will be mentioned.

The last of the guiding questions, number nine, "How do the teachers see themselves as adult learners, including educational backgrounds, view of their teaching of art, and professional plans for the future", was answered in

"Adult Learner". Here, notions as to how the participants viewed their own teaching of art and future professional plans were portrayed. However, some information about the teachers' backgrounds in education was also in the "Settings and Participants" section of Chapter III.

Documentation provided by outside program evaluators supported the findings of this research and was presented in the dissertation. Theoretical and practical implications for teacher, district, and Institute use concluded the written document.

References

Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1982). **Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods**. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Donmoyer, R. (1985). Cognitive anthropology and research on effective principals. **Educational Administration Quarterly**. **21**, (2), 31-57.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). **The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative resources**. New York: Aldine Publishing Co.

Hall, G. E. (1979). Levels of use and extent of implementation of new programs in teacher education institutions: What do you do. MICROFICHE: ED189078.

Hord, S. M., Rutherford, W. L., Huling-Austin, L. & Hall, G.E. (1987). **Taking charge of change**. Alexandria, VA: ASCD

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). **A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform**: Author.

Sergiovanni, T. & Starratt, R. (1988). **Supervision: Human perspectives**. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.