

Art, Emotion, and Reflection: Engaging with Social Issues in the Classroom

By

Lauren Patricia Bagwell

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Curriculum and Instruction)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2022

Date of final oral examination: 4/27/2022

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Li-Ching Ho, Professor, Curriculum, and Instruction

Jeremy D. Stoddard, Professor, Curriculum and Instruction

Lesley Bartlett, Professor, Educational Policy Studies and (by affiliation) Anthropology

Simone Schweber, Goodman Professor of Education and Jewish Studies

This dissertation is dedicated to the family, friends, and teachers that taught me to dream big.

## Acknowledgments

There are so many people and places that helped me get through this doctoral journey. Firstly, I would like to thank Dr. Li-Ching Ho, my advisor, for reading all of my work, keeping me focused on my goals, and giving me the space to be my authentic self each part of the way. Her ability to help me articulate my thoughts in clear and concise ways was instrumental in guiding my writing process. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Jeremy Stoddard, Dr. Lesley Bartlett, and Dr. Simone Schweber, for their time, support, and feedback. Their mentorship and love of learning motivated me to be a better scholar and think more critically about the world.

I am forever indebted to Dr. Brooke Blevins, who first encouraged me to go to graduate school and has continued to be a mentor and a friend for over a decade. Her love, support, patience, and fierce determination are inspiring, and I am a better friend, teacher, and person because of her role in my life. I am grateful for the schools I have worked at and the colleagues that made it possible to be a full-time teacher and coach during this process. A special thanks to the friends and support system I met at UW-Madison, Baylor, the Midwest retreats, conferences, and the friends who had no idea what my research was about but never stopped cheering for me along the way. I love you all, and the world is better because you are in it. Lastly, I would like to thank my family. My mom, dad, and brother have always been my most significant role models, cheerleaders, and inspiration, and without them, none of this would be possible.

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Guatemala’s Genocidal History .....	4
Description of Study .....	7
Summary of Chapter .....	9
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Encountering Social Issues in the Classroom .....	10
When Social Issues are Rooted in Emotional Histories.....	13
Arts-Based Teaching and Learning .....	16
Art as Dialogue .....	19
Theoretical Framework .....	22
Multiliteracies .....	22
Critical Pedagogy.....	26
Summary of Chapter .....	29
<b>Chapter 3: Research Methods</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Research Context .....	30
Context: International School .....	30
Participants.....	32
Data Collection .....	33
Data Analysis .....	38
Positionality .....	43
Limitations of Study .....	44
Summary of Chapter .....	45
<b>Chapter 4: Findings</b> .....	<b>46</b>
Unit Lesson Overviews.....	46
Ms. Moxley’s 12th Grade Art Class .....	46
Mr. Jansen’s 11th Grade History Class.....	49
Ms. Reyes’ 4th Grade Class.....	52
Dominant Themes.....	56
Teacher Finding #1: Art as Reflection.....	56
Teacher Finding #2: Art as Representation for Conceptions of Whiteness.....	60
Teacher Finding #3: Art as Communication.....	62
Student Finding #1: Art as Reflection .....	65
Student Finding #2: Art as Representation and Symbolism .....	69

Student Finding #3: Art as Communication .....	74
Summary of Chapter .....	78
<b>Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Engaging with Controversy in a Guatemalan International School.....	79
Context Matters.....	80
Teacher-Student Dynamics.....	82
Information Avoidance .....	89
Summary of Engaging with Controversy in a Guatemalan International School.....	91
Art as Reflective Practice.....	91
Reflective Practice Doesn't Just Happen.....	92
Art to name initial assumptions .....	95
Art to Question Existing Assumptions .....	96
Art to Challenge and Act Against Assumptions.....	98
Summary of Art as Reflective Practice.....	99
The Role of Emotions in the Classroom.....	100
Classrooms as Emotional Spaces.....	100
Art to Engage Emotions.....	102
Summary of the Role of Emotions.....	103
Conclusion .....	103
<b>References.....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>APPENDIX B.....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>APPENDIX C.....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>APPENDIX D.....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>APPENDIX E.....</b>	<b>134</b>

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated three teachers and their students at International School in Guatemala as they engaged with social issues through and with art. Student and teacher experiences were examined using critical theory, concerned with ideological conflicts that shape the curriculum and how knowledge is legitimated within schools and communities (Anyon, 1978; Apple, 2004), and multiliteracies, concerned with the multimodal forms learners engage with mean-making visually, spatially, auditorily, and behaviorally (Berriz et al., 2019; Holloway & Gouthro, 2020; New London Group, 1996). Following a qualitative study approach, two secondary classrooms and one primary classroom were selected as they were already engaging with art and social issues in their classroom before the study. Over the semester, I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants, engaged with participant observations virtually, and analyzed student artwork.

The first key finding indicates that art can be used to engage students in meaningful reflective practices. For the teachers, art was used to spark conversations and engage their students in critical thinking. For students, art served as a tool to gain clarity, refine their perspectives and opinions, and consider their emotions before speaking or sharing with others. The second finding suggested that art was used as representation and symbolism to challenge existing perspectives and assumptions. For students, art as representation and symbolism came up in conversations that acknowledged art as a helpful tool to represent and convey emotions specifically through color to symbolize different feelings. The final finding offered the potential of art as a communicative tool for students to engage with the content in the classroom. Namely, art was identified as an alternative way of communicating and demonstrating learning as well as a way to bring student voices to the center of the classroom.

These findings have implications for research and future practice in the classroom. First, the results draw attention to the importance of context and teacher/student dynamics when teaching or engaging with social issues. For example, more research is needed to understand how students interpret social issues lessons when they do not share the same cultural identity as their teacher. Second, critical reflection in conversations about social issues affirms the need for classroom practices that support learners in naming, questioning, and challenging their prior knowledge. Third, providing multimodal ways to demonstrate learning and utilize both rational and emotional discourses can benefit students' well-being and understanding of the social issues they encounter.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This study examines how students and teachers engage with historical and contemporary social issues through and with art in their classrooms. Engaging with controversial topics in the school is essential because it prepares young people to participate as active citizens in an interdependent democracy (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). Many existing instructional practices focus on using discussion to bring such issues into the classroom (e.g., Hess, 2004). In the democratic classroom, the primary goals of discussion are to engage students with multiple perspectives and evidence around an issue, make critical arguments and consensus build, and emphasize student agency and voice (Hartoonian & Scotter, 2012; Hess, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Parker, 2006). However, while formal discussion activities allow students to reflect and enunciate their understandings, explain their arguments, listen to classmates, and dialogue across differences (Hess, 2004), a student's power to speak up and act within a discussion can differ depending on their race, sex, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation (Beck, 2013). Furthermore, the nature of consensus often fails to recognize the power dynamics that play into compromise and neglects to acknowledge that everyone in the body politic is not always treated equally (McAvoy & Hess, 2013; Segall et al. 2018).

Additionally, while existing discussion-based practices encourage perspectives across differences, most forms of democratic discourse tend to focus on more rational models of communication (Clark et al., 2015). In some cases, complete dependence on rationalistic conditions of communication privileges dominant social groups while also making it difficult for marginalized groups to challenge existing inequalities (Knowles & Clark, 2018), thus perpetuating dominant narratives. Therefore, this study focuses on incorporating art-based

pedagogical strategies to mitigate the existing limitations of discussion and leverage its affordances to achieve the same goals of civic education and a democratic classroom.

In this study, I define art-based pedagogical strategies as the process of teaching and learning a subject or topic through creating and engaging with different forms of art. Art-based strategies align with the same goals of discussion because they are rooted in the idea of perspective-taking, analyzing the world through a holistic point of view, and empathetic social engagement (Jeffers, 2009). Through art, students not only consider other perspectives and ideas but also contextualize the content across political, cultural, religious, and historical divides (Jeffers, 2009).

This qualitative study explores how teachers and their students at International School in Guatemala use art-based pedagogical strategies to engage with social issues. Through participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and the analysis of student work, this study investigates how teachers and students use art-based pedagogical strategies to engage with contemporary social issues rooted in the historical context of Guatemala's emotional and complex history. In particular, this study focuses on how participants identify and examine issues of power in their society, establish their point of view, and consider the perspectives and opinions of their classmates.

### **Guatemala's Genocidal History**

Contemporary social issues are often rooted in the historical contexts of a place and culture. In the context of Guatemala, issues of racism and classism are deeply rooted in the country's emotional and challenging past. From 1960-to 1996, Guatemala was marked by the *Conflicto Armado* (the Armed Conflict), or what scholars have termed "one of the most brutal civil wars in Latin America's history" (Bellino, 2017, p. 3; Montejo, 1987). Though the

*Conflicto Armado* began in 1960, the start of the civil war can be traced six years back to 1954, when the US Central Intelligence Agency intervention assisted in ousting popularly elected Guatemalan presidential candidate Jacobo Árbenz. In doing so, the U.S. ended a 10-year democratic and capitalist revolution and removed a moderately progressive and nationalistic government that threatened U.S. interests in the country (Jonas, 1996). The ousting of Jacobo Árbenz led to the reversal of crucial land reforms for the Indigenous people of Guatemala and set the stage for the beginning of the *Conflicto Armado*, Guatemala's civil war between military forces and a guerrilla movement of progressive military forces and left-wing civilians (Jonas, 1996).

At the beginning of the *Conflicto Armado*, the guerilla movement was supported by many Indigenous Maya, who saw the guerilla movement as the last hope for rectifying the economic and political marginalization of Indigenous communities (The Center for Justice and Accountability, n.d.). However, the link between the Maya and the guerillas eventually became a racialized target for the militarized government, who perceived all Maya as insurgents and enemies of the state. As a result, the state began to deliberately target Indigenous civilians, to suppress popular support for guerrilla forces (Montejo, 1987, Zur, 2019).

The conflict worsened when Efraín Ríos Montt took power in 1982 following an American-supported military coup. Montt operated under the policy that the guerrilla were fish, and the people were the sea. As such, his strategy was “catch the fish by draining the sea” (Valentino, 2004). The worst atrocities of the war soon followed. The U.S. sent hundreds of Green Berets to Guatemala to train and organize an army to shut down an insurgent guerrilla movement that they feared would turn Guatemala into a “second Cuba” (Jonas, 1996). Under General Efraín Ríos Montt's leadership, the militants shared close ties with the Reagan

administration and many Christian conservatives in the United States. During his 18-month reign, it is estimated that 70,000 Indigenous Maya were killed or disappeared (The Center for Justice and Accountability, n.d). In April 1982, Ríos Montt launched the “scorched earth” campaign against the Maya as the army and its forcibly conscripted “civilian patrols” systematically massacred over 600 villages (The Center for Justice and Accountability, n.d). Village inhabitants were raped, tortured, and murdered, over 300 villages were completely leveled, and crops and drinking water were defiled (The Center for Justice and Accountability, n.d.). Ríos Montt was finally removed during a coup in 1983.

By the early 1990s, both sides entered into peace talks, and the final Peace Accords were signed in 1996. While the Peace Accords may have ended the war, negotiations were mainly dominated by political, social, and military elites and excluded civilians, particularly Indigenous communities, women, and other marginalized populations (Holiday, 1997; Stich, 2018). As such, communities most affected by the conflict were largely excluded from the negotiations and implementation process, and efforts of the peace accords to eliminate human rights violations and strengthen Indigenous rights found mixed success (Stich, 2018).

Throughout the *Conflicto Armado*, reports estimate that more than 200,000 people were killed or disappeared, 626 villages were massacred, 1.5 million people were displaced, and roughly 150,000 people fled to refuge in Mexico (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999; Taft-Morales, 2019). Additionally, 83% of the victims were Mayan (Taft-Morales, 2019). While the 1996 Peace Accords may have ended the war, negotiations excluded civilians, particularly Indigenous communities, women, and other marginalized populations (Holiday, 1997; Stich, 2018).

When a country such as Guatemala undergoes a democratic transition, its citizens must first deal with the human rights violations committed during the authoritarian era and then move towards a restorative and healing process (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). As part of this healing process, young people living in societies undergoing democratic transition also need to learn how to engage with controversy and their country's profoundly emotional and contested histories. Schools, therefore, need to equip students with the necessary emotional and intellectual skills to engage in historical and contemporary social issues.

Art-based pedagogical practices have the potential to serve as a medium of communication and dialogue between students as they engage with social issues. While existing research focuses on topics like best practices for integrating art in social studies (Risinger, 2015) and art integration as effective culturally relevant pedagogy (Burstein & Knotts, 2010; Christensen, 2006), there is a gap in the literature on art as a method of dialogue in the social studies classroom. This is problematic because art-based pedagogies allow students to focus their attention, explore their perspectives and the perspectives of others, and engage with a wide range of emotions (Olsen, 2013 cited in Molderez & Ceulemans, 2018)—all skills that would be beneficial to students as they discuss social issues in the classroom.

### **Description of Study**

This study investigates the following research question: How do students and teachers engage with social issues through and with art? I interviewed and observed three teachers and their students at International School, an international school in southern Guatemala, to investigate this research question. Each teacher designed and implemented a social issues unit that incorporated some form of art-based approach. Participant interviews were transcribed and

analyzed using Saldaña's (2015) coding model as a cyclical act. In vivo coding was used to prioritize and give meaning to the participants' language and experiences (Manning, 2017).

The following chapter outlines the theoretical lens shaping this study: critical theory (i.e., critical pedagogy) and multiliteracies. Critical theory, namely critical pedagogy—is a theory prominent in art education and social studies education. While there are many dimensions of critical theory, this study is concerned with issues related to ideological conflicts that shape the curriculum and how knowledge is legitimated within schools and communities (Anyon, 1978; Apple, 2004). Within critical theory sits critical pedagogy. In art integration, critical pedagogy offers a lens that examines how teachers and students use art to expose, challenge, and counter sociocultural dynamics within their community. The second framework shaping this study is the multiliteracies framework. Aligning with the goals of democratic education, the framework calls for learners to analyze the world through multiple perspectives and conceptualize meaning through various methods (Berriz et al., 2019; Holloway & Gouthro, 2020; Thwaites, 1999). Multiliteracy complements the notions of critical pedagogy by framing the arts as a multimodal method for synthesizing and communicating information in the classroom that prioritizes students' diverse needs and values multiple forms of discourse.

This study recognizes the impact of one's race and socioeconomic status in a classroom on the classroom culture and how social issues are received. At International School, roughly 85% of the student body were Guatemalan, while all but two teachers on staff were non-Guatemalan. By intentionally focusing on International School as a research setting, this study looked to provide a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning of social issues in a classroom where the teacher shared a different culture than the majority of their students. Additionally, most of the students came from the same higher socio-economic status within the

community and were not religiously or culturally diverse from one another. In many instances, their higher socioeconomic status allows students to be passive in their learning and understanding of social injustices related to the *Conflicto Armado*, injustices that victims of the conflict often cannot ignore. Despite not being racially, economically, or religiously diverse, schools like International School can still serve as a potential space for young learners to engage with different perspectives than their families for the first time. As such, International School can serve as an important site for understanding how to challenge students' initial views about social issues in their community.

### **Summary of Chapter**

In this chapter, I introduced the primary research question shaping this study: How do students engage with social issues through and with art? I briefly described the importance of teaching social issues and existing methods for engaging with them in the classroom. I outlined Guatemala's history and explained the context of the *Conflicto Armado* and the importance of teaching social issues in a context like International School. After introducing critical pedagogy and multiliteracies as two frameworks shaping this study, these concepts are explored in further detail in the Chapter 2 literature review. Following the literature review, I will outline the research methods for this study in Chapter 3. Here, I describe the techniques I used to collect and analyze the data, offer a more detailed description of International School as a context, and address my positionality related to being a former White American teacher at the school. In Chapter 4, I focus on the findings of the study and explore how students and teachers were talking about and using art to engage with different social issues in the classroom. I end with a discussion of the findings and offer implications for future research and practice.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Social studies education and art education are concerned with preparing individuals to critically analyze, respond, and participate in the world around them. Therefore, questions of how to help students recognize and name injustices, engage in a dialogue of historical and contemporary events and social issues, and participate as critical and active citizens in their communities are relevant to both fields.

This section starts by defining key concepts and terms relevant to this study: issues-based curriculum, emotional histories, and art-based teaching and learning. I follow by outlining multiliteracies and critical theory frameworks, namely critical pedagogy. The theory of multiliteracies offers a good lens for understanding the potential of the arts to afford teachers and students multimodal ways of synthesizing and communicating information in the classroom. The second lens framing this study is critical pedagogy. Situated in the realm of critical theory, critical pedagogy provides a lens to consider how teachers and students use art to expose, challenge, and counter social and cultural dynamics within their community. This chapter concludes by contextualizing how art might be used as a pedagogical tool to talk about social issues in transitioning democracies in a context like Guatemala.

### **Encountering Social Issues in the Classroom**

Several curriculum scholars advocate for teaching social issues in the classroom and have outlined an issues-based social studies curriculum (e.g., Engle & Ochoa-Becker, 1988; Evans, 2001; Oliver, 1960; Shaver, 1989). An issues-based curriculum is one that welcomes social issues into the classroom and does not look to provide answers. Instead, it poses real-life problems that raise doubt, encourage reflection, expand thinking and knowledge beyond the classroom walls, and lead to social critique (Engle & Ochoa-Becker, 1988; Evans, 2001; Ochoa-

Becker, 1996). The goal is not for teachers to indoctrinate students with their ideologies and opinions but to prepare young people to interact within a diverse and interdependent democratic society and help them develop discussion, perspective-taking, and decision-making (Engle, 2003; Oliver, 1960). It is equally essential that the issue or problem introduced serves to model a real-life scenario that relates to students on a personal level (Shaver, 1992). This social issue should also be relevant to the students' lived experiences to engage learners and provide opportunities for social critique (Ochoa-Becker, 1996).

Following the scholarship of these foundational curriculum scholars, a significant amount of research focusing on issues-based curricula has emerged, offering insight for best practices (Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Barton & McCully, 2012; Ho & Seow, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Among these best practices, discussion remains an essential component of the democratic classroom as it allows students to articulate their understandings, consider the perspectives of others, and dialogue across differences (Hess, 2004; Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Hess & Posselt, 2002). The primary goals of discussion are to engage students in a variety of viewpoints, ask students to make educated arguments, as well as create opportunities for student agency and voice in the learning environment (Hartoonian & Van Scotter, 2012; Hess, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Parker, 2006). Helping students interact and converse across political, social, and ideological divides can provide students the opportunity to actively contribute to a democratic learning environment (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). Additionally, effective democratic classrooms use discussion goals to give students the space to form solidarity with others as they collectively and collaboratively create ideas and construct meaning (Mardell & Kucirkova, 2016).

Existing methods for implementing discussion in the classroom include debate and deliberation. In a debate, both sides are encouraged to present their best arguments while also

acknowledging the limitations of the opposing perspective (Avery et al., 2014). As a method, a debate is best conducted when students are knowledgeable about the opposite position while continuing to base their arguments on facts, logic, and empirical evidence (Hartoonian & Scotter, 2012). While Hartoonian and Scotter suggest that debate is an excellent tool for developing perspective-taking, scholars like Avery et al. (2014) note the adverse effects of debate having winners or losers and instead call for educators to point their attention towards more deliberation-like strategies. Deliberation, like debate, is rooted in the practice of discussion. Deliberation expands on the debate principles and uses those principles to make a consensus (Avery et al., 2014; Parker, 2006). According to Parker (2006), the primary goals of a deliberative discussion are to find and weigh alternatives to an issue and later reach a group consensus to solve that problem. As students deliberate, students learn how to evaluate a situation and then develop a shared solution to that problem.

While there are many strengths to methods like debate and deliberation that allow students to articulate their understandings, explain their arguments, listen to others, and have dialogue across those uncomfortable differences (Hess, 2004), there are also several limitations that this study looks to mitigate. First, an issue framed as a question of public policy can quickly become a moral debate (Beck, 2013), tension and situations can be left unresolved (Magendzo & Toledo, 2009), and power dynamics can lead to assertions and emotional reactions in a space dominated mainly by a rational and academic discourse (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011). This is problematic in contexts with long-standing or recent conflicts where individuals are often forced to encounter emotional and contested narratives (Ho e.t al., 2017) often rooted in unresolved tensions. Additionally, a consensus can fail to recognize the power dynamics that play into compromise and neglect to acknowledge that everyone in the body politic is not always treated

as political equal (McAvoy & Hess, 2013; Segall et al., 2018). Furthermore, scholars like Knowles & Clark (2018) argue that the dependence on rational forms of communication privileges dominant social groups, making it difficult for marginalized groups to challenge existing inequalities. For example, a study on deliberation in a Midwest secondary social studies classroom found that during consideration, 15 students were quick to reject evidence that did not coincide with their existing beliefs, assumptions, and views of the world (Segall et al., 2018). In other words, the students were quick to avoid any perspective or evidence that made them uncomfortable or challenged their moral ideologies.

Finally, dominant deliberative approaches privilege rational discourse and frequently fall short in considering the role of emotions in the classroom. Emotions intersect and traverse across reflective and reasoned discussions and should not be mutually exclusive from rational discourse (Maia & Hauber, 2020). In their study analyzing the emotional dimensions of deliberative forums surrounding criminal legislation in Brazil, Maia & Hauber found that emotions are an essential part of reasoning and are not arbitrary responses. Additionally, it is possible for people to collectively share common emotions on each side of an issue while vocalizing different reasons to support their perspectives. This idea is essential in teaching social issues because shared emotional responses allow individuals to cause across differences and reach a common ground. Therefore, this study looks to the arts for potential methods for mitigating some of the shortcomings of existing practices. It provides a space for students to engage not only with a rational discourse but also with an emotional discourse.

### **When Social Issues are Rooted in Emotional Histories**

The ways individuals express emotions and the circumstances in which they tell those emotions are connected to conceptions of agency and collective belonging (Bekerman &

Zembylas, 2011). These expressed emotions are not just internal reactions to different stimuli but are co-constructed responses produced within the individual. In both action and practice, these co-constructed responses are circulated between the individual and others. These co-constructed responses are distributed between the personal and others in both effort and practice.

Existing scholarship highlights the importance of critically reflecting on one's own emotions, sharing biographies and historical narratives, establishing a community of trust, and prioritizing a broad spectrum of perspectives that includes all voices (Barton & McCully, 2012; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011; Magendzo & Toledo, 2009; Zembylas & Kambani, 2012). This study argues that if we want to consider multiple viewpoints in our conversations about social issues, both a rational and an emotional approach to historically and socially contextualizing perspectives must be regarded as part of the teaching and learning process. Teachers should turn to methods that create space for emotions to be expressed, and students should have the opportunity to engage in multiple modes of discourse.

Studies conducted by Magendzo and Toledo (2009) and Bekerman and Zembylas (2011) highlight the need for strategies in the classroom that mitigate the cognitive and emotional complexities of teaching and learning complex histories. This is especially important in the context of my study, where sentiments and perceptions of recent Guatemalan history are essentially contested across students and families. From 1960 to 1996, Guatemala was marked by the *Conflicto Armado* (the Armed Conflict), or what scholars have termed “one of the most brutal civil wars in Latin America’s history” (Bellino, 2017, p. 3; Montejo, 1987). The *Conflicto Armado* began in 1960 as a civil war between military forces and a guerrilla movement of progressive military and left-wing civilians (Jonas, 1996; Montejo, 1987). In the beginning, the guerilla movement was supported by many Indigenous Maya, who saw the guerilla movement as

the last hope for rectifying Indigenous communities' economic and political marginalization (The Center for Justice and Accountability, n.d.). However, the link between the Maya and the guerillas eventually became a racialized target for the militarized government, who perceived all Maya as enemies of the state. As a result, the state began to deliberately target Indigenous civilians, to suppress popular support for guerrilla forces (Montejo, 1987, Zur, 2019).

Throughout the *Conflicto Armado*, reports estimate that more than 200,000 people were killed or disappeared, 626 villages were massacred, 1.5 million people were displaced, and roughly 150,000 people fled to refuge in Mexico (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999; Taft-Morales, 2019). Additionally, 83% of the victims were Mayan (Taft-Morales, 2019). While the 1996 Peace Accords may have ended the war, negotiations excluded civilians, particularly Indigenous communities, women, and other marginalized populations (Holiday, 1997; Stich, 2018).

When a country such as Guatemala undergoes a democratic transition, its citizens often must deal with the crimes committed during the authoritarian era and then move towards a restorative healing process (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). As part of this healing process, young people living in these societies must learn how to engage with controversy and their country's deeply emotional histories. This process is complicated in international schools where the teachers facilitating discussion with their students may have limited knowledge and identify as outsiders to the community's shared history. As a result, this study explores innovative methods, like art-based approaches, to better understand potential practices for engaging with social issues in emotional contexts when the teacher and student do not share a similar cultural context.

### **Arts-Based Teaching and Learning**

This study investigates the experiences of three teachers and their students as they integrate arts-based teaching and learning into their social issues units. Art as a discipline refers to the theatre, music, visual arts, dance, and digital media (Halverson, 2018). In this study, when I use the term art-based approach, I am referring to the process of teaching and learning a subject or topic through creating and engaging with these different forms of art. When the focus expands beyond just the process of engaging with art to emphasize the quality and skill of the artwork itself, the teacher moves towards art integration. Scholars have defined the process of art integration as having three potential roles in the classroom: learning content through and with art, art as a way to build interdisciplinary connections, and art as a tool for student collaboration in the classroom (Bentz, 2020; Burnaford et al., 2007; Chalas & Pitblado, 2021).

The roots of arts integration go back to the early twentieth century when progressive ideals in the U.S. emphasized child-centered and holistic learning, promoting the integration between curricular subjects (Bresler, 1995). Thus, a new climate of innovation and experimentation emerged, bringing new educational goals, content, and pedagogies centered around a fusion of the arts and academic subjects (Bresler, 1995). While the initiatives like The New Deal provided public support for the arts and brought artists into schools, the primary opinion was that the skills were simply there for enrichment, only accessible to the wealthy or talented (Burnaford et al., 2007).

The idea of arts integration was revived in the 1960s and 1970s when concerns about student achievement morphed into problems about the types of experiences students had in school (Bresler, 1995). In response, the nation saw the formation of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which fronted public support for artists in schools and initiatives that

contributed to a burgeoning interest in arts integration (Burnaford et al., 2007). In 1965, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund produced a set of recommendations calling for art appreciation in early childhood. While these recommendations impacted the electives and the way policymakers approached education, the economic declines in the seventies, partnered with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, thwarted the majority of efforts to advance arts integration in schools (Burnaford et al., 2007).

Advocates of arts integration did not give up and began to shift their approach to espousing the cognitive benefits arts integration might offer. This mindset yielded scholarship that favored art education as a building block of developing brain function. Additionally, the Obama administration's effort to prepare students for careers in the 21st Century, the American education system shifted focus to the world of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education (Halverson, 2018). President Obama's push for STEM education called on the country to spark innovation, creativity, and invention in their communities. Art integration and its creative processes emerged again in conversations about multi-disciplinary education (Halverson, 2018).

Art-based strategies are rooted in perspective taking, analyzing the world through a holistic point of view, and empathetic social engagement (Jeffers, 2009). For an artist, the creative process allows the creator to engage with the material through several important functions: critical analysis, questioning of multiple perspectives, exploration of novel and unconventional views, and hands-on approaches to application and experimentation of new ideas, opinions, and viewpoints (Kagan, 2015). Through and with art, teachers can help facilitate a social space for students to analyze, synthesize, and create cultural products that express their world's complicated social and cultural dynamics (Stuhr, 2003). This openness for

artist autonomy, multi-modal thinking, and interdisciplinary exploration explains why scholars like Jeffers (2009) see art as a way for students to consider other perspectives and ideas as they contextualize content across political, cultural, religious, and historical divides. Art-based approaches and creative processes allow students to expand their worldview to new possibilities for the future and solutions for social change (Bentz, 2020).

Several scholars highlight best practices and methods for integrating and teaching social studies through and with art (Burstein & Knotts, 2020; Casey et al., 2018; Cruz et al., 2019; Risinger, 2015). First, it is essential to target learning objectives from both content areas (Burstein & Knotts, 2010; Casey et al., 2018). It is necessary to have clear objectives and goals of what you would like to accomplish in any lesson and an action plan of how you intend to get there. Integrating the arts into social studies goes beyond simply looking at an image or listening to a song and should approach both the arts and social studies with equal rigor (Casey et al., 2018). Burstein and Knotts (2010) recommend five steps teachers should follow to properly plan for the use of the arts while teaching social studies content:

1. Choose a social studies content standard that will be approached in your unit.
2. Choose a visual or performing arts content standard that complements the concepts and skills you want to teach in your social studies unit.
3. Create learning objectives for both the social studies and the arts for your unit of study.
4. Teach academic content vocabulary in both subject areas.
5. Create a performance-based assessment with clear social studies and the arts-one criteria that measure concepts with real-life tasks in both subject areas (Burstein and Knotts, 2010).

Arts integration fits nicely into the social studies curriculum because of the ways art encourages active inquiry and self-reflection—two equally important skills for democratic education (Casey et al., 2018). When integrating art into social studies, es teachers can look to add to the depth of content by having students learn about the geography and history of the place portrayed in the work of art, consider social issues surrounding the piece of art students may or may not have encountered before, engage with alternative perspectives to a selected topic, and/or research details about the era a work of art represents or was created in (Christensen, 2006).

### **Art as Dialogue**

This study situates art as a form of dialogue that teachers can engage with. Freire (1970) acknowledged two critical dimensions of dialogue: reflection and action. In the classroom, dialogue serves as an educational strategy that takes what is often an authoritative relationship between the teacher and the student and replaces it with a dialogical one that recognizes that the teacher and the student each have something to contribute and receive from the other (Darder & Baltodano, 2003). I build on Freire (1970) for this study while also drawing from Muijen & Brohm (2018). Muijen & Brohm (2018) situate dialogue as a "way of sensemaking through words, images, or any kind of symbolic interaction" (p. 3). Here, the concept of dialogue extends beyond a working definition of words between individuals to include the interaction between artist and observer, such as actor and audience, painter, and museum attendee.

Art as dialogue is essential to social studies because of its potential to serve to communicate across differences, develop active citizenship, and ability to question and challenge societal norms. When discussing social issues in the social studies classroom, students might be unaware of other perspectives or the ways others may perceive a particular case. Art can address this gap and help individuals consider an alternative perspective. When people view and engage

with art, they naturally become more mindful of its message (Roosen et al., 2018). Additionally, art can help students become more cognizant of their own opinions and perspectives. When students create art, they must make decisions and choices about what they are creating and why at each step of the process to communicate their message. In this scenario, the student is given the opportunity, and the time to question and comment on the content they are engaging with (Grushka, 2005). In doing so, art becomes a method that allows students to focus their attention, explore their uncertainty, and engage with a wide range of emotions that might arise as they consider different social issues that are often neglected in the curriculum (Olsen, 2013, cited in Molderez & Ceulemans, 2018).

Art also provides individuals with a way of visualizing the problem and facilitating their encounters with the subject matter. For example, scholars like Roosen, Klöckner, and Swim (2018) have examined visual art's role in initiating a dialogue on climate change. Using climate-related art, their study analyzed the data through a psychological lens, focusing on the part art has in helping individuals grow in their understanding of climate-related behavior and their decision-making, perception, thinking, and emotions related to the social issue. In essence, the study found that art was beneficial in helping students talk about social problems related to climate change.

Art can also develop active citizens. Through art, teachers can help facilitate a social space for students to critically investigate, inquire, and create cultural products that express the complex dynamics of society and culture (Stuhr, 2003). In a case involving students at an alternative school for North Korean refugees in South Korea, Hyungsook (2014) found that socially engaged art practice plays a vital role in students developing an understanding of the diversity of the human experience. Findings from this study concluded that art when considered

as a form of social dialogue and as a forum for participatory practice, provided an interpretation of citizenship that was not only democratic but also community-centered as it allowed for the development of members' "full participation in the process of truth-making within the community" (Hyungsook, 2014, p. 58). When students move towards becoming active citizens, art as an expression can move towards challenging hegemonic educational structures. As an interdisciplinary tool, art can allow students to tap into other forms of intelligence and skills (Casey et al., 2018) and provide multiple ways of demonstrating learning. Through art, students can explore their identity and perspective even if they had been previously marginalized from mainstream societal institutions (Halverson & Sheridan, 2014).

When thinking about issues-based curricula in emotional contexts, art-based approaches can set the stage for the artist and audience to engage separately and independently while opening the space for meaning to be constructed and contextualized as a collective process. One example of this is a Jerusalem workshop session where attendees explored how various forms of creative expression (painting, movement, vocal improvisation, performance, and ritual) could be applied to engaging with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (McNiff, 2007). In this example, an art-based approach to engaging with the complex history and emotional tension between Israel and Palestine led to conversations that included the sense of powerlessness in the face of social forces, the denial of vulnerability in the face of adversity, and the pain of being perceived as overbearing, too much, and dominant in relations with others (McNiff, 2007). These ideas were explicitly raised by an Israeli member of the group who described his distress in seeing his country treating Palestinians in ways that evoked the past repression of Jews (McNiff, 2007). In this case, participants noted how art allowed them to engage with this emotional history in a safe space, free from judgment. They were encouraged to use emotions and perspectives to drive their

art-making processes. Though just one example, this workshop exemplified the creative responses participants encountered as they expressed their historical narratives, wounds, and fear were instrumental in establishing a transformative environment within the workshop space.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was designed, shaped, and analyzed through the lens of two different frameworks: multiliteracies and critical pedagogy. The multiliteracies theory addresses multimodal ways of synthesizing and communicating information in the classroom. At the same time, critical pedagogy helps us consider how art might be used to expose, challenge, and counter social and cultural discourses. Both frameworks are explored below.

#### **Multiliteracies**

The theoretical framework of multiliteracies values diversity and calls for learners to analyze the world through many perspectives and conceptualize meaning through various methods (Berriz et al., 2019; Holloway & Gouthro, 2020; Thwaites, 1999). Scholars have used multiliteracies to address the increased local diversity and global connectedness brought on by media, technology, and the internet (New London Group, 1996). At the core, the multiliteracies framework serves as a way for the multimodal forms learners to engage with the mean-making of a text, whether visual, spatial, auditorial, or behavioral (New London Group, 1996).

First proposed by the New London Group (NLG) in 1996, the multiliteracies framework centralizes the negotiation of societal and linguistic differences among students' perspectives and lived experiences (New London Group, 1996). Initially situated in the context of English language learners, the seminal work of the NLG argues that multiculturalism is not as simple as often situated. As such, discussion across differing values, social norms, and lived experiences

requires a dynamic, creative, and inclusive way of thinking about dialogue, literacy, and meaning making (New London Group, 1996).

In traditional contexts, literacy is defined as one's ability to read and write. However, within the multiliteracies framework, this definition is expanded to include how learners might use multimodal forms of communication and representation (oral, tactile, visual, and spatial) to construct, conceptualize, and communicate meaning (Berriz et al., 2019; Cope et al., 2017; Holloway & Gouthro, 2020). The meaning-making process is a dynamic and creative process (Warner & Dupuy, 2017) in which cultural and linguistic diversity are consciously considered assets to the individual in their learning process (Berriz et al., 2019; Holloway & Gouthro, 2020). Learners are encouraged to critically interpret, analyze, and think about discourse through various contexts and forms of expression (Willis Allen & Paesani, 2010). This expansion of how we look at literacy is necessary as it considers the skills required to communicate in an increasingly technological and globalized world (Holloway & Gouthro, 2020).

As a framework, the concept of multiliteracies affords a variety of ways to look at meaning-making across cultural and social contexts (Berriz et al., 2019). When put into practice, the multiliteracies framework incorporates four key components into the curriculum: situated training, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice (Drewry et al., 2019; New London Group, 1996)

Table 1

*Four components of Multiliteracies as outlined by New London Group (1996).*

Situated Practice	Engaging in experience and utilizing available discourses including those from students' life worlds.
Overt Instruction	Systematic, analytic, conscious understanding

Critical Framing	Interpreting social and cultural context; Students step back and review their understandings critically as they consider context
Transformed Practice	Meaning making put into practice; Meaning is applied to other contexts or cultural sites.

In the last two decades, these four components have been reconceptualized by NLG members and simplified into four knowledge processes: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Cope & Kalantzis, 2016; Zhang et al., 2019). In these processes, the multiliteracies framework addresses each of the following:

- *Situated practice/experiencing*: Cognitive processes are contextual and situated in the individual's lived experiences and subjective interests (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016). As such, pedagogy should immerse students in a curriculum that works collaboratively to intersect in-classroom and out-of-school learning experiences (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016; New London Group, 2000).
- *Overt Instruction/Conceptualizing*: Here, the teacher provides explicit and direct information to the learner to guide or scaffold the learners' practice (New London Group, 2000). This differs from a "drill and kill" mentality and rote memorization because the teacher and student work together to develop the language required to "describe various processes and elements that contribute to meaning" (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013, p. 38).
- *Critical Framing/Analyzing*: Students engage in cognitive and social processes as they reflect on what they have learned, critique what they have learned, and apply it to new contexts (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013; New London Group, 1996). This includes analyzing the functions of a text/medium and critically interrogating the motivations of the participants involved (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016).

- *Transformed Practice/Applying*: Students transfer and redesign existing texts and meaning-making practices as they engage with communicative action from one context or cultural site (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013; Cope & Kalantzis, 2016; New London Group, 1996). The learner applies their knowledge and understandings to real-life contexts as they incorporate diverse discourses and perspectives to remake their understanding and conception of the world (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013; Cope & Kalantzis, 2016).

All four components listed above are imperative to the teaching and learning process (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013; Cope & Kalantzis, 2016; Ganapathy, 2014). When integrated into the classroom, each of the four knowledge processes has the potential to complement one another and strengthen the construction of meaning for the learner (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Ganapathy, 2014). Teachers implementing multiliteracies into their classroom need to critically reflect on their own culture/lived experiences, evaluate the inclusiveness of the dialogues/discourses utilized, employ noncoercive forms of power, and provide multimodal ways of learning (Mills, 2008). In the context of the international school that is the focus of this study, this multiliteracies framework offers a way of designing opportunities that welcome diversity, promote student autonomy over the meaning-making process, and provide various ways to engage with the material, all the while valuing the unique social-cultural experiences of the learner.

Early scholars of multiliteracy used the term in the context of literacy skills for English language learners (New London Group, 1996), multiple dialects or versions of a language (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), and bilingual education (Lotherington, 2003; Schwarzer, 2001; Schwarzer et al., 2003). Because these early scholars were linguists and anthropologists outside

of art education, conversations centered on multiliteracies in the arts were limited and instead focused on how the framework could be applied to technology education and digital literacy (Caughlan, 2008). Recently, however, there has been a global shift to explore the potential of multiliteracies in the arts to meet the needs of diverse learners and perspectives (Elsner et al., 2013; Fountzoulas et al., 2018; Marsh et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2019). This shift has led to the use of the multiliteracies framework in various types of art integration, including but not limited to dance (Fountzoulas et al., 2018), film and graphic novels (Elsner et al., 2013), makerspaces (Marsh et al., 2018), and street art/graffiti (Watson et al., 2019).

### **Critical Pedagogy**

Critical theory seeks social justice while providing a framework that allows the researcher to raise questions about assumptions, implications, and consequences and who benefits/suffers within a situation, system, or course of action (Cornbleth, 2017). It looks to answer whose story is told and how that dominant narrative is situated within different power structures. Critical theorists like Apple (2004) and Anyon (1978) argue that institutions are perpetuated by socialized routines and roles that often exclude the possibility of introducing new ideas or alternative perspectives. Schools themselves often serve as institutions that cultivate cultures of hegemony that redistribute the dominant narrative as “normative” perceptions of culture, and these normalized values enter into school curricula (Apple, 2004; Apple, 2018; Anyon, 1978). Traditionally, social studies serve as a primary example of how hegemonic practices have negatively impacted the curriculum (Apple, 2004; Anyon, 1978; Au, 2009). Social studies texts often provide justifications and explanations for “prevailing social arrangements” and are subjective, biased, and present a social point of view (Anyon, 1978, p. 42). As a result, certain narratives and cultural norms are legitimated, transmitted, and left unchallenged. This is

problematic because students are not given the space to engage with conflict, question societal norms, or engage with alternative perspectives (Apple, 2004).

In some cases, complex knowledge is intentionally silenced or reframed by educators and parents who wish to protect their students by avoiding particular elements of the history, framing the complex expertise as part of a larger “more comforting” story, or by confirming rather than challenging the dominant narratives being told (Segall, 2014, p. 57). In the context of Guatemala, many of the current and ongoing issues related to racism, sexism, and economic disparity are rooted in the injustices experienced historically and currently by the Indigenous Mayan population of the country. However, at International School, the historical context of the *Conflicto Armado* was rarely talked about. Additionally, while the Peace Accords were signed in 1996, the nature of the *Conflicto Armado* is very much characterized by what Magendzo & Toledo (2009) refers to as the “coexistence of history that is living at the same time that it is being written: the coexistence of the actors and witnesses of history and the historians” (p. 448).

While there are many components of critical theory, this study focuses primarily on themes within critical pedagogy. Contemporary social issues related to race, sex, and class are deeply rooted in Guatemala’s historical context of the war. Critical pedagogy as a framework provides a lens through which students can name initial assumptions prior knowledge, question those assumptions, and later challenge those assumptions. Critical theorists are concerned with the influences of academic knowledge, the cultural and societal structures that perpetuate injustice, inequality, and inequity, and methods for fostering a critical consciousness that enables citizens to rise and resist injustice (Burbules & Burk, 1999). Critical pedagogy is also attentive to the challenges of teaching intricate knowledge and histories that are “complex and often contradictory, activating both knowing and not knowing, remembering and forgetting” (Segall,

2014, p. 66) as well as with exposing, critiquing, challenging, and countering social and cultural exclusion, power, and privilege within a community (Alexander & Schlemmer, 2017). In applying critical theory to history, for example, the teacher and learner are concerned with questioning how and why records are constructed, accepted, and circulated (Segall, 2013). The effects those dominant narratives have on social issues within a community. Consequently, education is recognized not as a neutral endeavor but rather as a political act (Apple, 2018; Doyle, 1993).

In social studies, several scholars have drawn attention to the potential of critical pedagogy to restructure the social studies curriculum through a social justice lens (Au, 2009; Bermudez, 2015; Lewis, 2001; Segall, 1999). Both Lewis (2001) and Au (2009) argued that social justice involves exploring unequal structures of power and privilege and deconstructing how those structures lead to societal inequities. Similarly, Bermudez (2015) advocated for social studies instruction that encourages students to reflectively critique the ways knowledge is constructed and the ways knowledge is communicated (or silenced) within different cultural, social, and political structures. Understanding why and how knowledge is shared can help teachers and students better understand the societal structures that influence their everyday lives because “it is from a present that we construct pasts and upon which we create futures” (Segall, 1999, p. 366). In other words, our understanding of history is constructed from our present-day lens. Failing to challenge that lens in many cases only perpetuates the dominant narrative.

Notably, critical pedagogy has been relevant in art-based instruction through the incorporation of hip-hop (Akom, 2009; Stovall, 2006), spoken word (Christensen & Watson, 2015), drama (Doyle, 1993), visual arts (Darts, 2004; Duncum, 2002), and studio art (McKenna, 1999). As a form of critical pedagogy, art acts as a form of discourse that gives way to

interactions with “the other.” This challenges students’ and teachers’ preexisting assumptions of one another and the community that they live in. The goal of art, much like the goal of critical theories, is to identify ways of knowing, explore the structures that influence these social issues, and expose the underlying assumptions that those ways of knowing project onto particular forms of knowledge (Segall, 2013). A dialectical view recognizes that all knowledge is created within a socio-historical context within critical pedagogy. All analyses must first begin with the human experience and the *dynamic interactive elements* between the individual and society (Darder & Baltodano, 2003). This dialectical view examines “the changing individual in a changing social world” by analyzing short-term situational changes and long-term developmental changes within and within the society with which the individual interacts (Riegel, 1975). In some cases, socially engaged works of art require students to reflect on and question their current political, social, economic, and cultural status (Desai & Chalmers, 2007). As students reflect and challenge their current political, social, economic, and cultural situation and the institutions of power that influence those statuses, they move closer to developing a critical consciousness.

### **Summary of Chapter**

This chapter started by defining relevant terms: issues-based curriculum, emotional histories, and art-based teaching/learning. I examined how and why teachers should welcome social issues into the classroom to reflect, question, challenge, and expand one’s prior knowledge. I then explored how art-based learning, like issues-based curricula, is concerned with preparing individuals to critically analyze, respond, and participate in the world around them. I concluded by outlining the theoretical frameworks that shaped this study: multiliteracies and critical theory, namely critical pedagogy. The following chapter outlines the methodology and research design that directed this study.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methods**

This qualitative case study investigates how students engage with historical and contemporary social issues in the classroom through and with art. The participants of this study consisted of two secondary classrooms and one primary school classroom at an American international school in Guatemala. During this study, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with 19 students and three teachers before and after the study, observed teacher and student interactions within Google classrooms, and participated in three Google Hangout sessions. In this chapter, I outline my methodological approach in four sections. First, I summarize the research context, including key characteristics of Guatemala, the school, and the teacher and student participants. After, I explain and reflect on my data collection and analysis process. I then reflect on the limitations of the research design. Finally, I reflect on my positionality in this study.

#### **Research Context**

##### **Context: International School**

To understand how students use art to engage with historical and contemporary social issues, International School- an international school in a large city in Guatemala-was purposefully chosen for the context of this study. By focusing on International School as a research setting, this study looked to provide a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning of social issues in a classroom where the teacher shared a different culture than the majority of their students.

At the time of the study, approximately 85% of students at the International School came from Guatemalan families, 10% of the students were the children of missionaries from the United States, and 5% of students came from other countries, including Mexico, Nicaragua,

China, and Australia. International School's status as an English immersion school required all teachers to be fluent in English, meaning there was a predominantly non-Guatemalan staff with only one Guatemalan American and one Indigenous Guatemalan teacher teaching at International School at the time of the study. Both Guatemalan teachers initially agreed to be a part of the study. Still, the Indigenous Guatemalan teacher dropped out when International School switched to virtual learning at the onset of Covid-19. International School was also known for having a relatively high teacher turn-over rate, with the average teacher tenure averaging only 2-3 years. Consequently, most of the teaching staff appeared unfamiliar with the local community and cultural context and had limited knowledge about the *Conflicto Armado* and other social issues in the community. As a result, teachers often entered the classroom situated as outsiders to the lived experiences of their predominantly Guatemalan students.

The case of International School offers insight into how the race and socioeconomic status of participants within a classroom determine the classroom culture and how different social issues are received. While this study recognizes schools as political sites that frequently represent the most diverse settings that many students will encounter during their adolescence (Avery et al., 2014; Hess, 2009; Parker, 2008), International School, in contrast, is an example of a school with a relatively homogenous student population. The majority of students come from the same higher socio-economic status within the community and are not religious or culturally diverse. The high cost of tuition at International School (roughly 1.5 times the cost of the following private school in town) and a required English competency test for students both serve as barriers to entry for families of lower economic status, mainly families from Indigenous populations. As a result, many of the students at International School come from conservative Christian homes and share similar race and socioeconomic backgrounds. This privilege shapes

the students' engagement with social issues related to the *Conflicto Armado*. For example, their high social status allowed their family members to be perpetrators and bystanders to injustices that victims of the conflict often cannot ignore. It is important to note that even though International School may not necessarily be racially, economically, or religiously diverse, schools like International School still serve as a potential space for young learners to engage with different perspectives than their families for the first time. As such, International School can serve as an important site for challenging students' initial views about social issues in their community.

### **Participants**

To select participants, I reached out to teachers at International School that had already been engaging with social issues and art in their classrooms. Three teachers identified by their pseudonyms, Ms. Moxley, the school art teacher; Mr. Jansen, the high school history teacher; and Ms. Reyes, a fourth-grade teacher, fit the criteria and agreed to be in the study. The participating teachers were then allowed to pick which class period and grade they wanted to utilize for the study survey. Ms. Moxley, a 26-year-old White American female in her fourth year of teaching and fourth year of teaching PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade art at International School, selected her 12<sup>th</sup>-grade art class to participate in the study. Eight of her nine 12<sup>th</sup>-grade art students agreed to participate in the study. The second teacher Mr. Jansen is a 31-year-old White American male in his seventh year of teaching and fifth year at International School. The only high school history teacher at International School, Mr. Jansen, selected his 11<sup>th</sup>-grade classroom to participate in the study. Of Mr. Jansen's ten 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, six students agreed to participate in the study. Finally, fourth-grade teacher Ms. Reyes is a 26-year-old Guatemalan/American female in her first year of teaching and first year at International school.

While she grew up in the United States, her parents grew up in a neighboring town about an hour from the school. Five of Ms. Reyes' ten students agreed to participate in this study.

For this study, Ms. Moxley, Mr. Jansen, and Ms. Reyes independently worked to design an art-based unit for their classroom that engaged students in social issues. Ms. Moxley's unit focused on racism and discrimination. Mr. Jansen's class looked at gender and social role issues, and Ms. Reyes created a unit on fairness for her fourth graders. These units can be found in the appendices and further explored in the findings chapter. As participating teachers were designing their units, teachers would meet with me to ask questions, run by ideas, and revise their social issues unit. In these discussions, we talked about each teacher's objectives and goals for the unit as well as the pedagogical process to achieve their objectives and goals. Through these conversations, teachers revised their units and prepared to implement them into their classrooms.

The director approved this curriculum integration process, secondary (grade 6-12) principal, elementary principal (PreK-5th), and International School's school board. Participating teachers signed consent forms. All students in their selected classrooms received the arts-integrated curriculum. However, only students with parental consent forms and student assent forms were included in the data collection process. Student assent and parental consent forms were provided both in English and Spanish.

### **Data Collection**

This study focused on how students and teachers used art to talk about social issues in the classroom. In the data collection process, this study recognized scholarship stressing the importance of utilizing multiple methods (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2012; Yin, 2014) and relied on four primary methods often used by qualitative researchers: participating in the setting,

observing directly, interviewing in-depth, and analyzing documents (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Before collecting data, I met with teacher participants individually and later visited each participating classroom to brief student participants about the study. The intent was to introduce myself as the researcher, articulate why the research was essential and necessary, and explain what participating in the survey would entail. Parent consent and student assent forms were distributed in English and Spanish, and students were given the time to ask clarifying questions. Students were told that all students in their class would receive the arts-based curriculum, but only those who submitted parent consent and student assent forms would be counted in the study. Participants were assured that their participation in the survey was confidential and that the findings from the study would not affect their grades or work-life at International School.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the first method of data collection. They were conducted before and after the study with participating teachers and students. Semi-structured interviews are compelling because they are centered around open-ended questions and flexible sequencing that allow for a dynamic dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Trainor, 2013). For each student and teacher participant, the intent was to conduct two rounds of semi-structured interviews. The first was conducted before the study, and the second was conducted after the study. However, when Covid-19 moved the research setting to the virtual classroom, not all participating students were able to be interviewed after the study. Three secondary students, two 12<sup>th</sup> graders, and one 11<sup>th</sup> grader did not provide a post-study interview. Additionally, the fourth-grade students failed to respond to interview requests following the study. The onset of Covid-19 also meant that initial interviews

were in person, while all interviews at the end of the study were conducted through Google Meet.

When a researcher conducts semi-structured interviews, interviews are guided by questions that guide the interviewee towards talking about specific data or themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Before the start of each unit, I interviewed teachers and students using a set of questions that focused on their engagement with social issues, experiences using art, classroom dynamics/environment, emotions in the classroom, and perceptions of power in the community. Following the lessons, teachers and students were asked similar questions and other questions specific to their experiences in the study and their experiences with online learning.

In post-study interviews, student artwork was used to elicit responses from the student participants. When talking about social issues, methods like elicitation can be more effective than asking straightforward questions (Barton, 2015) because the artwork acts as a stimulus or a starting point for students to direct their attention. In these post-study interviews, students were asked to describe and reflect on their final artwork and the thought processes they engaged with during the unit. In these interviews students engaged in civic dialogue with the researcher as they discussed their knowledge about the social issues they were encountering and how their understandings of different social issues were transformed (or in some cases not transformed). Similarly, teachers' unit plans and lesson outlines were used as a starting point for reflection and discussion about their experiences. Teacher post-study interviews also focused on the challenges and affordances of integrating art-based approaches in the classroom. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B. Interviews varied in length from participant to participant, depending on availability. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using narrative and discourse analysis.

The original intention for this study was to engage in daily classroom observations for each teacher. Observation methods serve as powerful tools that can provide the researcher with insight into the different situations during the study (Cohen et al., 2011). These observations occurred via Google Meet. Mr. Jansen held three Google Meetings for his 11<sup>th</sup> graders, and I was able to attend two of them. Additionally, I observed the one Google Meet session held by Ms. Moxley in the middle of her unit. Unfortunately, Ms. Reyes held a Google Meet at the end of her unit, but no participating students were present on the call.

DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) identified four different levels of researcher participation in the observation process:

*Passive participation:* The researcher acts as a bystander or spectator and does not interact with people.

*Moderate participation:* The researcher is semi-present in action, occasionally but not actively interacting with participants.

*Active participation:* The researcher is engaged in almost everything the other individuals are doing to understand culture and rules for behavior

*Complete participation:* The researcher becomes a member of the studied group, suspending all other roles to fully immerse in the experience or phenomenon (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010).

As the researcher, I took on a moderate participation role in observations to better understand the site's culture and dynamic and the rules for behavior (Creswell, 2013; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). Teachers also occasionally consulted with me about their units and spoke to me about changes to their units during the study. Interactions with students consisted of students acknowledging my presence during virtual meetings and responding to my clarifying questions about their responses

in those meetings. During these participant observations, I utilized jottings, short words, phrases, and sentences, to aid my memory later on (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). These jottings followed an observational protocol divided into two categories: descriptive notes & reflective notes. These categories helped me organize the jottings chronologically to understand better how things unfolded in the classroom environment while also taking note of the process, reflections on activities, and summary conclusions (Creswell, 2013).

The final phase of data collection involved collecting student artifacts and artwork. Physical artifacts offer insight into cultural features and technical operations (Yin, 2014). Reviewing documents like student artifacts can supplement participant observation and interview with an “unobtrusive” method that portrays participant beliefs and values (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). For this data collection phase, I had access to each teacher’s Google Classroom, which included the description of daily activities, student work, and responses to those activities, and uploaded student artwork created throughout each unit. As mentioned previously, I used student artwork as a stimulus for conversation and reflection in their post-interview questions. Additionally, student drafts and daily assignments provided insight into the cognitive processes students were engaging with throughout the unit.

This study was subjected to two agency review processes, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UW-Madison and a review process conducted by International School’s school board. Before collecting data, I obtained consent from school leaders, including the school's director, secondary principal, elementary school principal, teacher participants, and parents of student participants. Students were given student assent forms to sign stating their consent to participate in the study. Because of the nature of the study, all students engaged with the social issues units their teachers created. However, only students with parental consent and student assent forms

were included in the data collection and analysis. All parental consent and student assent documents were translated into Spanish and reviewed by International School's official translator, who made minor revisions to help with fluency and comprehension. Additionally, participants were reminded that their participation was 100% voluntary and that their identity would remain confidential. The data collected from this study was protected from unauthorized access by storing it securely electronically on the UW Box and making sure all copies, sources, and identities were only accessible by my faculty advisor and me.

### **Data Analysis**

This study adopted Saldaña's (2015) coding model as a cyclical act. Interviews were analyzed in two stages. Audio recordings of participant interviews were first analyzed during the transcription phase. As interviews were transcribed, read, and checked over, I used in vivo coding to make initial categories. In vivo coding was used in the first coding cycle because of its emphasis on participant voice and how it relies on the participant's experiences and language to help give meaning to the data (Manning, 2017).

Additionally, in vivo coding helps analyze research because the researcher is coding with participants' own words and phrases to enhance and deepen the researcher's understanding of participant cultures and worldviews (Saldana, 2015). In the first phase of data analysis, I read the participant transcripts from each interview several times to identify keywords and phrases that emerged across participants in the data. After rereading the transcripts, I began coding teacher and student interviews. Initial codes emerged through student and teacher interviews before and after the study. These initial codings later formed into more distinct categories that I could later connect directly to this study's findings. Once initial codes were made, I used NVivo software, a qualitative data analysis software, to code the rest of the data using those initial codes.

While in vivo coding is a valuable tool that gives autonomy to participant voices, it has the potential to limit the researcher's perspective of the data (Saldana, 2015). The second cycle of data analysis involved emotion and values coding to unpack the feelings participants encountered while also evaluating participants' integrated values, attitudes, and belief systems at work (Saldaña, 2015). In the second cycle of coding, I looked for emerging themes and used these themes to form categories of codes. For example, in the first coding round, I grouped conversations about machismo culture, deficit descriptions of Indigenous populations, and classism into an initial category *Perception of Social Issues: Racism, Classism, Gender Roles, Pollution, Street Dogs*. In the second round of coding, this initial category was divided into two smaller categories *Nature of power: Race, religion, social class, gender, and Impact of socialization*.

Organizing the data into smaller categories of codes allowed me to identify racism and gender discrimination as critical issues impacting the community, recognize familiar and cultural socialization as driving forces that perpetuate social problems in the community, and examine how teacher/student/class dynamics affect how these social issues are discussed and expressed in the classroom. Using a constant comparative approach, I compared and contrasted the participant perspectives of teachers and students as they engaged with social issues through and with art in their classroom. Examples of codes, categories, and their connections to the findings are outlined below in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Examples of Codes, Categories, and Connections to Findings*

Initial Categories	Categories of Codes	Connections to Findings
Perception of Social Issues: Racism, Classism, Gender Roles, Pollution, Street Dogs	Nature of power: Race, religion, social class, gender  Impact of socialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Racism and gender discrimination are key issues impacting the community.</li> <li>b) Family and cultural dynamics/expectations impact how these social issues are perpetuated.</li> <li>c) Teacher/Student/Class dynamics affect how these social issues are discussed and expressed in the classroom.</li> </ul>
The Reflection Process	Reflection through and with art  Reflection is important  Research can inform the reflection process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Reflection leads to clearer communication about perspectives and opinions.</li> <li>b) Integrating art into the class supports the reflection process.</li> <li>c) Art through methods like elicitation support students in reflecting on their emotions and their perspectives on social issues.</li> </ul>
Emotions in the Classroom	Emotions come up when individuals care about a social issue.  Art can be used to reflect on emotions.  Art can be used to convey emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Emotions come up in social issues conversations in different ways like anger and passion.</li> <li>b) Art can be used to mediate intense emotions in the classroom.</li> <li>c) Art can be used to clarify one's own emotions and/or the emotions of others.</li> <li>d) The use of color helps convey emotions through art.</li> </ul>
Communication	Student voice  Importance of having multiple ways to communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Reflecting on what you want to say and how you want to say it leads to clearer communication.</li> <li>b) Art serves as an alternative form of communication in the classroom.</li> </ul>

---

c) Art supports student voice  
in the classroom.

---

To better understand the context of International School, I examined how students and teachers discussed social issues in their community and how they expressed their understandings at school. Informed by several key components of critical theory, I focused on how prior knowledge was legitimated (Anyon, 1978; Apple, 2004), ways the curriculum could restructure the curriculum to question and challenge that knowledge (Au, 2009; Segall, 1999), as well as where racism intersects with other forms of discrimination such as sexism and classism (Lopez, 1997; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Additionally, I focused on how teachers and students conceptualized insider and outsider status within their community and their impact on their engagement with social issues in the classroom.

I paid particular attention to how and why teachers implemented art into their classroom, what students said in classwork, and what students communicated with and through their artwork. Although limited to just three Google Hangout sessions for participant observations, I made preliminary conclusions about what the student artwork was speaking and how students were using art as a form of dialogue in their classroom. Later in post-study interviews, I looked to confirm, clarify, or reject those assumptions and connect what I observed and what teachers and students experienced. As I began to make generalizations about the data, it was essential to remain self-reflective of how my closeness to the school, participating teachers, and the curriculum influenced how I interpreted, coded, and represented the data. I incorporated the use of analytic memos that included reflections on how my assumptions and positionality were shaping the analysis and coding process to uncover themes that might otherwise be overlooked (Saldaña, 2015). This process was limited in nature but aided in adapting interview questions and shaping themes and generalizations in the second round of coding.

This study also focuses on analyzing art as a form of civic dialogue. Scholars have suggested that art can influence civic dialogue by “challenging audience perceptions, raising awareness and suggesting action around social issues” (Kelaher et al., 2014, p. 146). In addition, informed by the theoretical framework of multiliteracies, this study also considers how art might be used as a method to incorporate a diversity of perspectives and help learners analyze the world and conceptualize meaning through a variety of viewpoints and processes (Berriz et al., 2019; Holloway & Gouthro, 2020; Thwaites, 1999). Drawing from this idea of art as civic dialogue, this study also considered art as a source of social language (Wertsch, 2009) and how it can be used as a dialogical tool to “assimilate, incorporate and exemplify their understandings of themselves and their thoughts” (Stickley et al. et al, 2007, p. 787). While participants were hesitant to call art dialogue, this notion came up in the ways students and teachers talked about using art in the classroom to recenter students’ voices, offer multiple avenues to demonstrate learning, and express emotions.

A discursive action model (Horton-Salway, 2001) analyzed how a teacher and student participants used art to identify, explain, and construct meanings of social issues using art-based approaches. Using a discursive action model, I utilized discourse analysis that focused on the themes within-participant conversations, text, and images like their artwork. In this process, I was less concerned with each student's final artwork and more concerned with the cognitive processes that got them there. These mental processes included the initial and intended assignment of the teacher, feedback, collaboration with peers, and processes like critical reflection and research that were or weren't evident in the final product. Through this approach, I was able to better discern how and why participants were making different decisions and gain insight into how art was being used to engage with social issues to name prior knowledge,

question prior knowledge, and challenge prior knowledge. This information was enriched by comparing teacher intention vs. student execution in various art-based tasks and offered a deeper understanding of why critical reflection occurs in some instances but not others.

### **Positionality**

My positionality in this study was unique. I was first introduced to International School when I took a middle school teaching job three years before this study. During that time, I taught middle school social studies. I left the school for two years to complete my university graduate course work and returned as a middle school teacher for the 2019-2020 school year. In this study, the participating teachers chose the class they wanted to create a unit for. As a result, Mr. Jansen's class had some of my former students participating in the study. Given the unique situation, I needed to reflect on how I engaged with participant observation and how the participants engaged with me (Greene, 2014). This was partially mitigated when the study was moved online at the start of the pandemic, and participant observations were forced online.

My prior relationship with International School as a teacher, soccer coach, and community volunteer proved beneficial when communicating with parents and navigating classroom and school dynamics. While my prior relationship with International School provided valuable insight into this study regarding school culture, student demographics, and life outside of school, it was vital for me to consistently reflect on how my status as a White American teacher impacted interviews and participants' observations, and reflections. It was also important to consider my role as a non-native Spanish speaker and a White American teacher researching classrooms of predominately Guatemalan students.

I was positioned as an outsider to the Guatemalan perspective in many situations because of my status as a White American. On the other hand, I was often situated by secondary students

as an insider to conversations specific to International because of my previous involvement with the school. The paradox of identifying as both an insider and an outsider in different aspects of the study allowed me to ask clarifying questions in the interview process and let the students voice their perceptions of their classroom environment and the social issues in the community. Students were open to answering clarifying questions about culture and racism but hesitant in some cases to name or talk about specific students because of my prior relationship with the school. In these cases, it would have been helpful to observe in the classroom to cross-reference student and teacher experiences and reflections with what I saw in class.

### **Limitations of Study**

There were several limitations in this study. This section focuses on two rules in the methods design, sample size, and participant representation. I also address how the global pandemic impacted the study's design and the participants' experiences.

The first limitation in the design was the small number of classroom observations in the data collection process. While the intention was to observe teacher instruction and student engagement/interactions in each classroom, the pandemic forced classrooms to go online and limited my ability to watch student and teacher interactions during the unit. In total, participating teachers held four Google Meets, of which I was able to attend three. Although I had access to all three Google Classrooms, including teacher assignments, student work, teacher feedback, and student comments, the inclusion of classroom observations would have provided additional valuable insights. Instead, I had to rely mostly on student work as well as teacher and student interviews to paint a picture of what was happening during virtual learning.

The second limitation was my sample size. The largest class size at International School was 14 students. This meant all three classrooms were relatively small in size. While this

allowed me to understand each participant more extensively, having a larger sample size would have provided insight into whether or not my assumptions about the findings were easily generalizable or applicable to a larger conversation on teaching social issues in other contexts. Additionally, I would have liked to have a more significant number and a more diverse group of participating teachers. Unfortunately, the one native Guatemalan teacher dropped out of the study when the school switched to a virtual setting. While the American teachers provided insight into non-Guatemalans teaching mostly Guatemalan students, having an Indigenous Guatemalan teacher in the study could have provided the perspective of being Indigenous and teaching Mestizo/Ladino students primarily. Comparing the American view, the American-Guatemalan perspective, and the Indigenous Guatemalan perspective in this study would have helped build a more well-rounded narrative on the influence on teacher identity and student engagement with social issues in the classroom.

A final limitation worth considering was the pandemic. While my theoretical framework focused on critical pedagogy (Apple, 2018; Au, 2009; Burbules & Burk, 1999; Segall, 2013), it was difficult to observe and evaluate it in a virtual setting. Power outages, sound issues, and device issues made it difficult for participants and teachers to stay engaged or attend Google Meets. Besides the Google Meet lesson plans, student work, and participant interviews, creating a detailed teacher snapshot of what a typical day using art in the classroom looked like for each teacher was challenging.

### **Summary of Chapter**

This chapter looked at the research design that shaped my study. I outlined the general context of International School and teacher and student participants, examined and reflected on the data collection and analysis processes, and the limitations of the research design. I also

addressed how my identity and positionality shaped the data collection, analysis, and findings of the study. The following sections look at these findings in-depth and offer insight into what they might mean for implications for the future.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

My study explores how students and teachers engage with historical and contemporary social issues using art in their classrooms. The scope of the study centered on one primary and two secondary classrooms at an International School in Guatemala. Data was collected through participant interviews, analysis of student artwork, and participant observations. Analysis of the data revealed three primary findings: (a) art as reflection, (b) art as representation and symbolism, and (c) art as communication. First, interviews and observational data revealed that both teachers and students saw art as a form of reflection. Teachers used art as reflection through methods like elicitation, while students used art to reflect and clarify their opinions and perspectives on complex issues. Second, both teachers and students believed art could be used as representation and symbolism for more abstract concepts like conveying their emotions. Finally, teachers and students suggested that art offered a more inclusive way of communicating because it allowed different ways to engage and express opinions on social issues. This section starts by comparing how the three participating teachers planned and executed their unit and concludes by exploring each of the key findings from both student and teacher perspectives.

### **Unit Lesson Overviews**

#### *Ms. Moxley's 12th Grade Art Class*

Ms. Moxley had been the school art teacher at International School for four years at the start of the study. She placed great emphasis on collaboration, creative expression, and obtaining

student feedback. The unit she developed for her 12<sup>th</sup> graders aligned with the justice-minded lens she worked to incorporate into her daily interactions with students.

**Ms. Moxley's unit plan.** Ms. Moxley designed a unit that focused on issues of racism and discrimination, and the goal was for students to build connections between the historical context of the *Conflicto Armado* and the contemporary ways racism continues to play out in their community. Ms. Moxley's unit consisted of several parts: (a) research on the *Conflicto Armado*; (b) research on social issues in Guatemala; (c) reflective prompts on perspectives/points of view; (d) analysis of socially engaged artwork about the *Conflicto Armado*; and (e) student creation of visual art. During the unit, students spent an extensive amount of time researching and analyzing articles about the *Conflicto Armado*. Additionally, students were introduced to different artists locally and globally that used art to talk about social issues. In one example, Ms. Moxley gave the students the option of analyzing *Gloriosa Victoria* (1954), a painting by Diego Rivera portraying events from the *Conflicto Armado*. The painting depicts Rivera's perception of the 1954 CIA coupe that led to the overthrow of Guatemala's democratically elected government later that year. In the center of the painting, you can see United States' CIA director at the time, John Foster Dulles shaking hands with Colonel Castillo Armas. This Guatemalan military overthrew and replaced then-President Jacobo Arbenz. To the left, bananas are being carried on to US-bound ships, and on the right, Guatemalans are being beaten, jailed, and killed.

Ms. Moxley taught students how to analyze the different uses of color, symbolism, and techniques artists used to communicate their messages to help them understand how they can share their messages in the next part of the lesson. Students were given sentence stems to elicit responses on racism. Students then picked one sentence stem to serve as the overarching theme of their final artwork. Initially, there was going to be a gallery walk in the front office where

students could present their last and discuss their artwork with the school community. When the unit shifted to virtual learning, students uploaded the last photo of their project to Google Classroom. Instead, a paragraph explaining their process, the message they were trying to communicate, and a critique of their artwork. Student names were removed, and the artwork painting was posted on a discussion board for students to analyze, ask clarifying questions, and offer feedback to their classmates. While Ms. Moxley agreed this was a suitable alternative for their virtual setting, the opportunity for civic dialogue at a community art show was lost.

**Ms. Moxley's reflections.** Across all three participating teachers, some obstacles impacted how each intended social issues unit was implemented into practice. The first obstacle Ms. Moxley faced in the virtual setting was student access to materials and art supplies. Typically, International School provides students with whatever supplies they need to complete an art project. When the unit moved online, students no longer had access to the school or its art supplies. Students were limited in what they could produce, and as a result, Ms. Moxley had to lower her original standards. Teacher and student feedback were other issues Ms. Moxley faced. Ms. Moxley expressed that the students missed out on the encouragement and constant feedback they get when working together in the same space. In terms of teacher feedback, Ms. Moxley added weekly check-points that helped her connect with her students. Each week students had to upload a picture of their progress, and Ms. Moxley was able to ask clarifying questions and offer suggestions.

**Ms. Moxley's key take-aways.** Ms. Moxley talked about several key takeaways from using art to engage with social issues during her final interview. First, Ms. Moxley noted that meaningful reflection and communication must first start with research on a topic. Ms. Moxley was adamant about the need for research to play an intentional and explicit part in artmaking. In

her eyes, the message behind the art can be more important than the quality of the art itself, and artwork without a clear notice loses meaning and purpose. Second, Ms. Moxley emphasized the importance for students to encounter multiple perspectives. In one example, a student questioned why their viewpoint was not better represented in their readings about the *Conflicto Armado*. This student did not ask Ms. Moxley to change the unit; instead, they communicated that they did not feel like they were given the whole picture. In response, Ms. Moxley allotted more research time for the project, and students were encouraged to find their articles representing their perspectives or that answered lingering questions. The final takeaway for Ms. Moxley was the importance of using resources already available to her online. For Ms. Moxley, YouTube was an easy and ready-made tool that served as an excellent resource for demonstrations and “how-to” segments. She explained that because students had a close-up view, they could watch multiple times. Ms. Moxley also expressed that YouTube allowed students to observe various demonstrations about different materials at once, which can be challenging to do as one teacher for every student in each class.

#### *Mr. Jansen’s 11th Grade History Class*

Mr. Jansen was in his fifth year teaching at International School and had previously taught at an international school in Israel. He led all four high school social studies grades at International School and chose to design and implement a unit on gender roles and sexism into his 11<sup>th</sup> grade US history course. His classes often focused on global issues and foreign policy, with PowerPoint slides and lectures as the typical mode of instruction. In designing his unit, Mr. Jansen was excited about the opportunity to do something interactive with his students and step out of his comfort zone as a teacher.

**Mr. Jansen's unit plan.** Mr. Jansen's unit focused on visual culture, incorporating advertisements, commercials, and storyboards. His unit consisted of several parts: (a) identifying and analyzing gender roles in the community; (b) analyzing and discussing the role of American and Latino advertisements in promoting gender roles; and (c) a reflection/discussion on the use of LatinX as a cultural term. For Mr. Jansen's summative assessment, students were asked to create a visual storyboard for a fictional advertisement that articulated their perspectives on sexism and gender roles in their community and culture. An outline of Mr. Jansen's unit can be found in Appendix A, along with the other teacher units.

On the first day of the unit, students were asked to draw a "real" man/woman on one side of a sheet of paper, and on the other side, students had to pull a "good" man/woman. Students were asked to draw and scan in their artwork from the activity. In the second part of his unit, Mr. Jansen brought in visual media. Students were put into breakout rooms on Google Meet, and they discussed Gillette's *We Believe: The Best Men Can Be* commercial and Dove's *Always #LikeAGirl* commercial. In the Gillette commercial, the company speaks out against sexual assault and sexual harassment toward women by calling men to be the best versions of themselves. In the Dove commercial, the company asks: When did "like a girl" become an insult? In this case, visual media was used as an alternative text to ask and analyze the following questions:

- How is masculinity (an idea of how men should act) being performed/acted out?
- How, if at all, is femininity performed/acted out?
- Are the male behaviors innate/natural for men, or are they learned?
- How could the male behavior in the scene be modified to be healthy/positive/good?

The students made connections from their initial drawings and examples of masculinity and femininity in the advertisements to their own culture and day-to-day lives. Students were then asked to find an ad from television or print that first aired or was first printed in Guatemala. In addition to the initial questions, the students considered whether the ad was targeting the Latino or Indigenous community and how the ad might be adapted to address different social roles in other communities. Following the advertisement lesson, Mr. Jansen brought in several articles supporting the use of the term LatinX as a gender-neutral descriptive word and several articles against the use of the term. Students had to choose one piece from each perspective and come ready to discuss the following day on their Google Meet.

Mr. Jansen ended with a storyboard project. A storyboard is a panel of still photos or snapshots that breaks down the sequence and story of an advertisement. In this final project, students were asked to reflect on the following questions and respond through their storyboard:

- How do gender roles play out in my life/community?
- How are gender roles and sexism reflected in different products and marketing?
- How are the realities and ideals of each gender different?

There was no rubric for the assignment, and the requirements were loosely interpreted.

Examples of student storyboards can be found later in this chapter.

**Mr. Jansen's reflections.** Overall, Mr. Jansen felt that he did well in maintaining his lesson plans in a virtual context. The students met roughly every three or four days to check in and discuss their thoughts and opinions. His class, like others, was disrupted due to power outages and sound and equipment issues. In addition, Mr. Jansen described other challenges, such as engaging his students who logged in at different times and had to share electronic

devices with other family members. The online format also prevented students from asking clarifying questions about the assignments in real-time. For example, I noticed that students were confused by the first elicitation exercise in my observations and interviews. The idea of drawing a real man and a good man elicited a mix of responses from students who were not sure which prompt represented the expectation/stereotype of the gender role. Despite the reactions and confusion, Mr. Jansen said he was pleased with the comments and conversations that came out of the activity. Other assignments were open-ended, and the final project had no rubric or grading criteria for students, but this was a non-issue for Mr. Jansen, who explained he enjoyed seeing how students interpreted the assignments.

**Mr. Jansen's key takeaways.** For Mr. Jansen, the unit was different than how he usually approached his lesson plans. His classes were typically lecture-based and PowerPoint heavy. He also admitted that having a thematic unit like the one he created for this study was new. His students responded well to the interactive nature of the unit and Mr. Jansen was pleased with how several students seemed to enjoy both the social issues conversations and the process of creating art. Compared to the other online units Mr. Jansen offered, students seemed more engaged because the content and methods for demonstrating learning for that class played to the class's strengths. Mr. Jansen also explained that it was a challenge not being an artist but that he was able to borrow resources and examples online from people that were.

#### *Ms. Reyes' 4th Grade Class*

Ms. Reyes was a Guatemalan American who was in her first year of teaching at International School. Growing up in the U.S., Ms. Reyes' Guatemalan parents made the conscious decision to teach her about Guatemalan history and the *Conflicto Armado*. In one interview, Ms. Reyes explained that her dad had worked in a government office during the

*Conflicto Armado* and only later found out about the atrocities during the war. Ms. Reyes wanted to teach her students about their history and challenge their assumptions based on their prior knowledge and experiences.

**Ms. Reyes' unit plan.** Ms. Reyes intended for her unit on fairness and inequality to connect to a past unit on the *Conflicto Armado* her students had engaged within the previous semester. Her unit consisted of five lessons, and it incorporated photo analysis, student artwork in response to the photo analysis, and discussion. Students responded to an introductory prompt in the first lesson, engaged with a photo analysis in lesson two, created and reflected through their visual art in lessons three and four, and were set up to have a class discussion over Google Hangout in lesson five.

The semester before the study, Ms. Reyes' students listened to children's testimonies about the *Conflicto Amado*. They visited a weaving cooperative where students heard testimonies from women who lost their male family members during the *Conflicto Armado* and learned how weaving allowed those women to support their families after the war. In Guatemala, weaving plays a vital role in traditional Mayan culture, and each region within the country can be identified by a unique pattern woven into conventional clothing. Ms. Reyes explained that the weaving cooperative was a way to expose students to aspects of Guatemalan history they had not encountered at home. The lived records of the women weavers, the unique Indigenous regional patterns, the proximity of the cooperative to the students' school, as well as the historical accounts students had studied in the classroom all intersected to contextualize the history of the *Conflicto Armado* with the implications the war still had on the community today.

The social issues unit in the spring was intended to connect to these prior class experiences. In her social issues unit, Ms. Reyes focused on photography as a medium and

alternative text for students to analyze inequity in their community. Ms. Reyes selected photos for students to engage with a photo analysis that highlighted Indigenous women in traditional textile clothing as female laborers because she felt women as laborers were rarely highlighted. At the end of the unit, Ms. Reyes intended for students to transfer their knowledge from the unit to a work of art (drawing, painting, etc.) that demonstrated an example of a situation where they noticed inequalities around them. She hoped to give students an alternative form of communication to the class's 300-word essay that was also required. Ms. Reyes noted that her 4th-grade class was not keen on other forms of communication and expression, such as writing. The goal was to use art to provide an alternative method to demonstrate their learning. An outline of Ms. Reyes' unit can be found in Appendix A.

**Ms. Reyes' reflections.** At International School, elementary teachers posted their lessons on Google classroom on Monday morning for the week, and students had a week to complete their units and turn them back into their teachers. Most elementary teachers would host a weekly optional Google Meet to check in with students. However, attendance for the elementary level grades was sporadic and sparse. Ms. Reyes held virtual office hours for students to join the meet, but she admitted that only about half the students would show up. When students did show up, the discussions were scattered between school, video games, and questions about what everybody had been up to. With the switch to virtual learning, Ms. Reyes explained that most students were left alone to complete the assignments. As a result, the fourth-grade students were given activities like the photo analysis to complete independently without their teacher there to guide and direct information in their learning process. Ms. Reyes explained that students who were successful with virtual learning had parental support. For example, while most students

struggled with the photo analysis activity, asserting their assumptions and stereotypes about what was happening, Ms. Reyes attributed one student's success to their parental support at home.

Additionally, miscommunication appeared to be a struggle for all elementary teachers. Ms. Reyes and her colleagues used WhatsApp to communicate with parents about assignments. Because of the small class size of about ten students, Ms. Reyes felt like this was extremely helpful and necessary for their situation and learning environment. In the end, the parents of elementary students at International School agreed.

**Ms. Reyes' key takeaways.** Ms. Reyes was not an art teacher, several of her students did not turn in their final art projects, and some students who did turn in projects did not follow her prompt. Despite all of these challenges, Ms. Reyes' still noted how much she enjoyed incorporating an art component into her unit. Ms. Reyes pointed out the benefits of art as an alternative way of expression and recognized art as a method that offered multiple modes of expression within a lesson. Her 4th-grade students drew and painted, and one student even created a pop-up. It provided a way for students to take the initiative and have autonomy as they demonstrated their learning. When it came to thinking about what she would do differently, Ms. Reyes emphasized the need for parent involvement and accountability. She expressed that some aspects of virtual learning, such as her photo analysis, should have required the students to attend a formal meeting. She also explained that having a few "formal" Google Meets with parents and students might have helped the online process. Overall, Ms. Reyes explained that she would do the unit again and looked forward to the potential of a unit like this in an in-person environment.

Finally, Ms. Reyes noted that her students loved to communicate using art, but the goal of connecting fairness to historical narratives of the *Conflicto Armado* did not appear to be met in the students' final art projects. Several students did not turn an art assignment in and the

student artwork that was turned in focused on other social issues like pollution and did not focus on discrimination or racism in Guatemala. Had the lesson been conducted in person, Ms. Reyes felt that she could have guided students in the right direction. An example of student artwork on the final project is pictured below.



4<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Daniella's Final Artwork

### **Dominant Themes**

This study looks at how art was used to engage with social issues in the classroom. Three key themes that emerged from the data include (a) art as reflection, (b) art as representation and symbolism, and (c) art as communication. The section starts by examining each finding from the teacher's perspective and follows by doing the same from the student's perspective. It concludes with a summary connecting the two.

#### **Teacher Finding #1: Art as Reflection**

Teachers and students talked about reflection in different ways. Teachers were focused on art-based methods that motivated or initiated the reflection process. Ms. Moxley, Mr. Jansen, and Ms. Reyes all used artful elicitation to engage students in their reflection and understanding of social issues.

#### *Art as reflection and elicitation*

All three participating teachers prioritized reflection at the beginning of their social issues units. In each of their cases, the three teachers used elicitation methods to guide student responses toward different understandings. When talking about social issues, methods like elicitation can be more effective than asking straightforward questions because it shifts the focus to external stimuli such as a photograph, sketch, or other media (Barton, 2015). Ms. Reyes used photo-elicitation to evoke emotions, engage critical thinking, and prepare students for their unit on fairness in the community. In contrast, Mr. Jansen used art techniques such as sketching images to elicit student responses about their conceptions of gender bias and stereotypes. Finally, Ms. Moxley's classroom used sentence stems as starting points for students to complete and then respond to in a draft of their final art project.

In the first example, Ms. Reyes presented students with four photographs of Indigenous populations in and around their communities. Students were then asked to respond to the following questions:

- What do you feel when you see this picture?
- Do you think there is a problem with this picture?
- What does it represent about Guatemalan culture?

The goal of the activity was for students to analyze the photos, explain the feelings and thoughts they each evoked, and then refer to and respond to those understandings in a final artwork assignment. The images from her PowerPoint can be seen below:

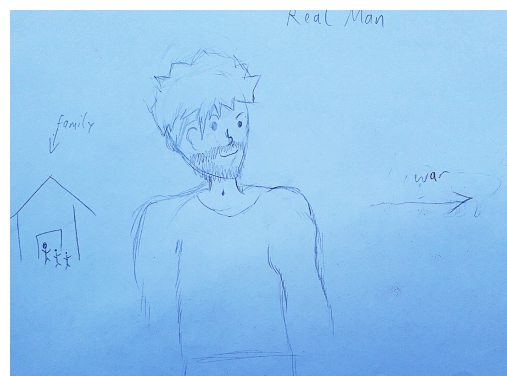


Ms. Reyes' PowerPoint Photographs

In another example, Mr. Jansen used art as elicitation in his initial sketching and drawing activity to help students reflect on their initial assumptions of what society considered to be an ideal man/woman and what they thought to be a real man/woman. Mr. Jansen had his students draw and respond to the following prompts:

- What does society say is a “real man” or a “real woman”?
- What is a good man or a good woman?

The goal was to reveal students' initial assumptions about gender roles before the start of the unit. Below is a drawing and reflection from Armando, an 11<sup>th</sup>-grade boy in Mr. Jansen's US history class.



11<sup>th</sup> Graders Armando's "Real Man" Artwork

Drawing as an elicitation method often leads to better conversations because the artist must make symbolic choices through drawing. Teachers can then ask students to reflect on those choices (Barton, 2015). For Mr. Jansen, the drawings were less about the drawing quality and more about the reflection from the picture.

Mr. Jansen also used multimedia to elicit student responses. Students were presented with advertisements and commercials that perpetuated or challenged the gender roles students had previously encountered. As students watched commercials, they were asked to write a short reflection describing how each multimedia advertisement reflected American culture and how that can be compared to Guatemalan or Guatemalan Indigenous culture and values of manhood. Mr. Jansen asked students to analyze the advertisements and discuss the following questions in small groups:

- How is masculinity (an idea of how men should act) being performed/acted out?
- How, if at all, is femininity performed/acted out?
- Are the male behaviors innate/natural for men, or are they learned?
- How could the male behavior in the scene be modified to be healthy/positive/good?

While the questions themselves were focused on analyzing and examining the different forms of art, the conversations and reflections elicited responses that allowed students to express their opinions and perspectives.

In a final example, Ms. Moxley used sentence stems as a starting point for their student artwork. With sentence completion, participants are given a sentence stem and asked to complete it with single words and phrases (Barton, 2015). Students were asked to complete the following sentences:

- I see racism in...

- I believe that all people...
- ...is where many Guatemalans get it wrong.
- Racism could improve through...

The goal of these sentences was to give students a prompt and get them to analyze discrimination and racism in their community from multiple vantage points. As an American outsider looking into their Guatemalan culture as an expatriate, Ms. Moxley utilized elicitation as a method to bring student reflections to the forefront of their discussions and their artmaking process.

Additionally, the sentence stems were used as a way for students to begin connecting their prior research and their reflections into something more concrete. Later on, in the unit, students were asked to pick one of their sentences from the sentence stems activity and use it as a starting point for their final art project. The art project at the end of the unit, in turn, was a response to the sentence stem they created at the beginning of the unit.

### **Teacher Finding #2: Art as Representation for Conceptions of Whiteness**

Teachers in all three classrooms faced similar experiences with students and their conceptions of Whiteness during their teaching at International School. As a researcher, it was interesting to see how students perceived Latino and Mestizo students (students with mixed Spanish or European heritage) as White and students with Indigenous heritage as Brown. Across grade levels, students at International School conceptualized Whiteness as having Spanish heritage and defined Brownness as those with Indigenous Mayan heritage. For example, Chloe, an American student at International School, explained an incident in her English class where her Australian teacher asked the class about their heritage following an incident of hearing a student use a racial slur towards another student:

He made us [raise our hand when he asked] who has Indigenous blood and like everybody raised their hands. You have to have at least a little bit, as the vast majority does. They have at least one great-grandparent that was completely Indigenous, there's no way around it.

Ms. Moxley explained that a similar dilemma occurred with her art students and their perception of skin color. During a conversation with Ms. Moxley between class periods, she thought it was interesting how her Guatemalan students had little conception about their skin color. During class self-portraits, Ms. Moxley explained that she had to hide the peach-colored pencils from her elementary students because students, regardless of their skin color, were grabbing the peach-colored pencils to use for their skin tones in their self-portraits. Ms. Moxley soon realized that her students had little understanding of the colors that made their skin tones unique. As a result, Ms. Moxley turned to color theory to challenge the conception and perception of Whiteness in her elementary school students.

After hiding the peach-colored pencils in her classroom, Ms. Moxley introduced a skin formula project to her fifth-grade students. In this project, Ms. Moxley explained to her elementary students that all skin tones are made up of combinations of the three primary colors, red, blue, and yellow, as well as the color white. Depending on one's pigmentation and undertones, an individual may have different amounts of red, blue, and yellow, but depending on their pigmentation, they may have more or less of those in conjunction with the color white. The lighter one's skin tone is, the more of the white color one might have in their mix of primary colors. For the project, students counted the number of drops they used for each color and determined the formula for their skin pigmentation. In her four years of doing the project, Ms. Moxley explained that students were consistently shocked by how much "brown" went into their

pigmentation. They also were shocked at how brown their classmates were. In her students' eyes, Ms. Moxley explained, Spanish and European heritage were perceived as White and Indigenous heritage was perceived as Brown. This notion overlapped with how students discussed race, skin color, and discrimination in their community during their initial interviews.

### **Teacher Finding #3: Art as Communication**

Teachers noted that art offers students many avenues to express their ideas, provides them with multiple modes of expression and allows students to utilize different ways to communicate or demonstrate their knowledge, rather than being limited to more traditional methods like an essay. Notably, Ms. Reyes suggested that art, in general, could be used by students to show what they are feeling. For her students, Ms. Reyes found that they were not as interested in communicating through essays or writing but that art was something they loved and enjoyed. Teachers also acknowledged that art afforded students autonomy to pursue different interests and skills within the same assignment. For example, in Mr. Jansen's history class, students were required to create a storyboard for their final product on their unit on gender roles. However, within that assignment, students were given the freedom to decide how they wanted to communicate their message within their storyboard. Several examples of these storyboards are pictured below:



Examples of Student Story Boards

Because the art assignment was open-ended, the students had the freedom to choose how and what they wanted to communicate in their final project. As a result, each storyboard's length, content, style, and color varied amongst Mr. Jansen's class students. In Ms. Moxley's class, students were given the same freedom to choose how they wanted to respond and communicate their perspectives and opinions on racial discrimination in their community. Unlike in Mr. Jansen's class, students were not limited to one mode of art; instead, they could choose any form of art to communicate their message. As a result, student Maria shared through crochet while her classmate Adriana used acrylic paint, and another classmate Lucia used adobe illustrator. Other students like Oscar and Ignacio chose to sketch their final products.

### ***Art to bring students' voices to the center of the classroom***

At International School, the participating teachers were interested in finding ways to bring student voices into the classroom. Mr. Jansen explained how bringing multi-media into the classroom to compare gender stereotypes across cultures allowed conversations about the community to intersect with conversations they were having in their US history class. Additionally, using art as elicitation and creating a storyboard at the end of their unit on gender

allowed the students to have autonomy over conversations in the classroom. Mr. Jansen expressed that the unit became less about him lecturing and more interactive. As a result, the unit became primarily centered on student voices. Several students in Mr. Jansen's class commented on the interactive nature of the unit in their final interviews. This was consistent across students who enjoyed the unit and those who did not necessarily care for it.

It was evident that students wanted their voices and their lived experiences in the classroom. Before the unit moved to a virtual setting, I had a few opportunities to interact with and observe Ms. Reyes' 4<sup>th</sup>-grade class. Ms. Reyes, whose parents were both born and raised in Guatemala in a nearby community, grew up in California, speaking English and Spanish in her household. From a communication standpoint, Ms. Reyes joked that her students were not used to teachers understanding their slang or side remarks in Spanish. It was easier for her to communicate and connect because she knew what the students were saying. For her, art was another way students could bring their voice into the classroom and another way for them to show her what they were feeling and experiencing.

From Ms. Moxley's point of view, art was not only a way to center student voices but also a method for pushing individual perspectives to explore their interests and speak up in the classroom. While teaching at International School, Ms. Moxley continuously stressed the importance of expression, creation, and communication through student artwork. Ms. Moxley emphasized that the goal was not necessary for them to create "good" artwork but was to enable students to think critically and reflect on a social issue, and communicate their perspectives to their classmates:

Because it doesn't it usually doesn't come as easily to the kids that excel in other classes it's really good for them to kind of struggle with things and not necessarily have a perfect

project, but they had to work at it and keep fixing it and keep improving it. Which I think in general really helps the students learn how to think deeper and more critically in other classes and also kind of helps their work ethic because it wasn't a one-step, two-step, three-step process... A lot of art is about reworking things and revisiting them and getting feedback from other people. That's a skill that can apply to a lot of different areas later on.

The quote above demonstrates Ms. Moxley's belief that art also benefitted the more academically inclined students because it required them to revisit, reflect, and refine both the student opinion and artistic portrayal of that opinion. For all three teachers, the goal of art was not to have a masterpiece as the final product but to prioritize student voice and communication through student-centered activities that engaged critical thinking skills. Student voices were brought to the forefront of the classroom through decentering the teacher's voice, prioritizing student autonomy and decision making, and creating an open forum for feedback and clarity among the students.

### **Student Finding #1: Art as Reflection**

Interview data revealed that both teachers and students saw art as a helpful tool for reflection in the classroom when engaging with social issues. However, students talked about art as a reflection differently than their teachers. While teachers spoke about art to facilitate reflection, students conceptualized art as a way to reflect and clarify opinions, shape individual perspectives and ideas, and meditate on emotions before the discussion.

#### ***Art as reflection and clarity***

The majority of the high school participants believed that incorporating art into the classroom helped them reflect, research, and clarify their opinions. The act of students creating

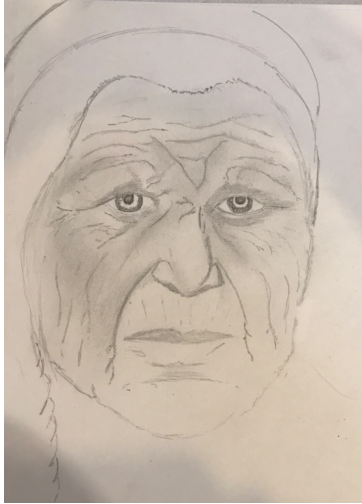
something that represented their personal opinion and perspective encouraged several students to research and educate themselves on the social issue they were engaging with. In one example, student Ignacio, a 12th grader in Ms. Moxley's art class, focused on sentence stem #3 for his final art project. After conducting research and engaging with different articles in the research portion of Ms. Moxley's unit, Ignacio completed the sentence stem in the following manner:

*Thinking Indigenous groups don't have an important voice in our society is where many Guatemalans get it wrong.*

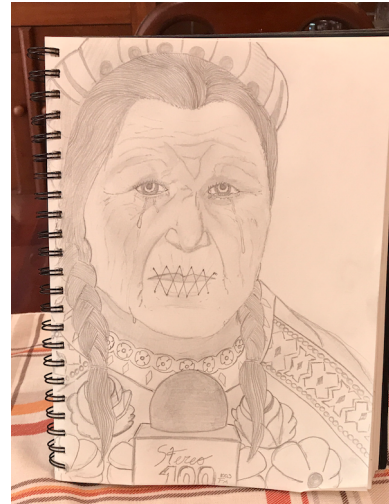
It was interesting to see how Ignacio's reflection process and response to the sentence stem above played out through his art. In his project, Ignacio wanted to focus on how the voices and opinions of Indigenous populations had been trivialized and ignored in his community. In his first draft, Ignacio portrayed an older Indigenous woman, her face worn, and her mouth shut to represent that she did not have a voice in her community. Ignacio explained in his interview that in the beginning, the woman's mouth was simply closed. Later, Ignacio considered adding tape to the woman's mouth to represent the silence of Indigenous voices. However, after further research and conversations with his classmates, Ignacio began to deconstruct the research he had engaged with. He realized that the nature of silence from Indigenous communities was not a choice but rather the result of something systemically deeper. The woman in his first draft with the closed mouth became the woman in his final draft with the sewn mouth as Ignacio came to realize that her silence was not a choice:

With the stitches, they sort of symbolize a little bit like, you know, the physical harm to some Indigenous people...I just changed the tape because I really didn't think that the tape symbolized that much, you know, brutality that is going on over here. So, I decided to change that with stitches because I thought I would be like, oh, yeah, by the way, normally

they'll hurt you to stay shut or something like that. And then the reason why I decided to remove the crowd was mostly that another student said that he didn't understand that since, you know, having a crowd on my image pretty much sort of contradicted what I was trying to say... That the idea of having a crowd was something more [than] like [it would represent] Indigenous people actually getting all the attention needed.



Ignacio's First Draft



Ignacio's Final Artwork

In Ignacio's case, art gave him the space to construct and contextualize racism in his community, both individually and collaboratively. Classmates were able to guide Ignacio through reflecting and clarifying his message, and ultimately Ignacio was proud of his final product and how it represented his opinion.

Ignacio was not the only student who felt that art helped clarify and solidify their opinions and perspectives. Students like 11th graders Clara and Isabella in Mr. Jansen's US history class expressed how creating a visual made them think outside the box and think critically about how and why they were visualizing and portraying an opinion in a certain way.

Isabella explained:

It [art] is something I enjoy, and I feel like it makes me think more about what my opinion is and like, think critically about the topic a little bit more, not just facts after facts.

For Isabella, art gave her an alternative avenue to be thoughtful in understanding a social issue and move beyond simply reading and memorizing facts.

This was a shared experience for her classmate Mateo who explained that art allowed him to think about his thinking. While art was not his strong suit, Mateo explained that having to draw something that symbolized his opinion made him reflect on how he was feeling and what he wanted to convey to his classmates. Mateo described how art as a visual helped him reflect on and clarify his own emotions and be more conscious of how others communicated their perspectives and opinions in their art. Maria, a 12<sup>th</sup> grader in Ms. Moxley's art class, shared a similar sentiment. Maria, who crocheted a quilt for her final art project, explained that the reflection process was instrumental in her ability to articulate her opinion to her classmates later:

I think because I spent so much time thinking about it [the art project] and thinking about what makes up our society in Guatemala. I can talk about it a little bit more eloquently because, you know, I thought about it a long time.

Maria explained that because the act of crocheting a quilt (pictured and analyzed in the following section) took a significant amount of time, it gave her the space to reflect on the different structures that make up society in Guatemala. Many students explained that art forced them to prepare their opinion to communicate their ideas.

***Art to reflect and mitigate emotions.***

Students highlighted art as a way to reflect, mitigate, and alleviate emotions elicited from the material, as well as to minimize the typical stressors that they received from their everyday

school environment. For some students, producing artwork served as a reflection process and creative outlet that helped manage some of the emotional tension they were experiencing in the classroom. In one interview, Juliana, a 12th grader in Ms. Moxley's art class, expressed that art was a nice escape from her other schoolwork. Although notably one of the more artistic students in her grade at International School, Juliana explained that drawing served as a creative outlet that allowed her to relieve her stress from her other assignments at school.

Juliana was not the only student that saw art as a stress reliever. Her classmate Maria expressed a similar notion in her final interview. However, while Juliana saw art as a way to alleviate stressful emotions, Maria saw art as a form of meditation that allowed her to reflect, process, and communicate her message in a more tranquil way:

I think [art] it's a way to express yourself and kind of show others your perspective. And for me, it's a way to calm myself and be less aggressive...I used to be really confrontational and it's kind of a way to let it all out in a peaceful way. And it's sort of like meditation for me at least.

Art served as a tension reliever for Maria, allowing her to recenter her emotions and reflect on what she wanted to convey to her classmates. Maria explained that while she was typically a very vocal student in heated discussions, producing her crocheted quilt allowed her to calm down and communicate her message and opinion. While other students also talked about art as a way to reflect and find clarity it was interesting that Maria in particular talked about art as a tool to process her frustration before engaging in discussion with her classmates.

### **Student Finding #2: Art as Representation and Symbolism**

Students across grade levels recognized the potential for art to represent and symbolize complex and often abstract ideas. More specifically, students talked about art's role in conveying

and communicating their emotions in conversations about social issues. In these conversations, two distinct categories emerged. The first look at art as a way to represent and convey emotions, and the second explores the role-specific colors have in symbolizing and representing emotions.

### *Art to represent and convey emotions*

In general, student participants spoke about how art acted as an outlet for expressing their emotions in discussions of social issues, especially in contexts that were less welcoming of alternative modes of expression. Student interview responses from this study indicated that a significant proportion of participants believed that using art to engage with social issues allowed for emotions to be expressed within the classroom. For example, Lucia, a student in Ms. Moxley's art class, believed that art gave her a means of emotional expression that had not previously been provided in her English or history class. In conversations with Lucia, as well as in her interviews, Lucia explained that when students use art, they can express how they feel about a topic rather than just talk about it dispassionately. Similarly, Lucia's classmate Oscar believed that art allowed students to be more authentic because art allowed them to share their "true feelings" on what was going on in their Guatemalan community:

I feel that if we would have just had this discussion [about racism] where we just like talked about it and that's it. We probably would have expressed our words, but not our true feelings about how things were going. But doing this artwork, not only submitted our words but our internal feelings on this problem.

For some students like Oscar, art was a way to articulate how they felt about the social issues they were engaging in within the class. For others, like his 12th-grade classmate, Ignacio, the act of creating art was more than just expressing emotions; art was the tool that granted permission for emotions to enter the classroom in the first place:

When we were creating something, a visual, those emotions like rise up. Normally on...you know, pretty normal conversations... we really don't like, you know, get as passionate about or try to describe the horrors ... However, using art, I feel like we do a better job, you know, implementing these feelings through, you know, colors or just our drawings overall.

Notably, student experiences using art to convey emotion were not limited to the art classroom. In Mr. Jansen's history class, Mateo described how creating art allowed him to reflect and find emotional clarity concerning classroom conversations about sexism and gender discrimination:

I think it made my emotions more clear, or at least for me. Like when I usually talked about something and just talk about it, it was like, you know, my emotions weren't as clear. But like when they got the chance to draw them like it did, like put my emotions more clear to myself. It made me see how I thought about what you were talking about.

Not only did art provide an outlet for Mateo to reflect on his own emotions, but Mateo explained that art allowed him to reflect on the emotions of his classmates as well. In one instance, the use of black and white shading allowed Mateo to see one classmate's "negative emotions" towards the gender disparity gap in their community. For some students, this was the first time they used art in this way, while for other students, like 4th-grader Daniella, they had used art to express emotions before engaging with art in their social issues conversations.

### ***Colors as symbolism for emotions***

Mateo's acknowledgment of color and shading to represent emotion was not unique to his individual experience. Notably, over half of all student participants across all three participating grades at International School associated the use of different colors with different

emotions in their artwork. In fourth grade, 3 of the 5 participants brought up emotions and color in their pre-interviews. Fourth-grade students Daniella, Eduardo, and Nora, associated warm colors, like yellow and pink, with happiness and cool colors, like blue and purple, with sadness and “being upset.”

With the secondary students, not only was the use of color linked with emotion, but color also became symbolic of the deeper themes students were communicating in their art. For example, 12th grader Maria crocheted a quilt (seen below) that articulated her interpretation of Guatemala’s complicated history. In her final interview, Maria revealed that she intended different colors to have multiple meanings in her artwork. On the one hand, she explained that deep purple represented the dark and mysterious, or prosperity and creativity. The greens in her quilt described flora and fauna. The yellow, like for 4th graders Daniella, Eduardo, and Nora, represented happiness but also symbolized gold and things of monetary value. However, unlike the fourth graders, the lighter blues, the colors of Guatemala’s national flag, did not represent sadness to Maria. Instead, she saw it as representative of what Guatemala strived to be: peaceful, kind, and loving.

Maria also observed that colors had multiple meanings. For example, while green represented nature, it also represented greed and apathy. Maria associated the color green with the desire that led to the rapid consumption of natural resources. Additionally, Maria felt it was important to communicate the ways Indigenous voices are often excluded in conversations about Guatemala’s history. For her, the darker navy blues represented the darker sides of Guatemala’s history. Maria expressed in her post-study interview that she was explicit in having little bits of navy blue in some squares and lots of dark navy in other squares. For her, it represented the exclusion and the void of the Indigenous perspective in their conversations about Guatemala and

how the exclusion of Indigenous voices is more significant in different areas of Guatemala's history than others.



Maria's Crocheted Quilt

In another example, Mr. Jansen's student Isabella used blue to represent something that was altogether quite different. In the context of gender discrimination, Isabella created a storyboard for her 11<sup>th</sup>-grade project to fight back against the gender stereotypes that she previously observed in her analysis of the different commercials:

I chose to do a clothing company for women...I didn't want to do like the typical gender roles where women are supposed to stay at home, take care of children, cooking, not working. I chose to do it by representing, like many different women of different races, doing sports, working like in a strike, really kind of like an activist woman. I made it the Blue Clothes Company...They're all wearing blue.



Isabella's Final Artwork for 11<sup>th</sup> Grade US History

For Isabella, the color blue was a statement of how color has been gendered in other advertisements she had seen. Her final storyboard was a testament to women reclaiming their roles the stereotypes said they did not fit. As Isabella pointed out in the first square of her storyboard, “any woman can wear blue.”

While connections to color and emotion were present across all three grades, it was not surprising that the more detailed responses regarding symbolism and color came from Ms. Moxley's art students. However, as part of the school curriculum, all of the participants across all three grades at International School had experienced at least one year of art class with Ms. Moxley before or concurrently with their social issues unit in class. Ms. Moxley noted that her art classes at all grade levels focused on getting students comfortable with the elements and principles of art and design, precisely balance, color, shape, and repetition.

### **Student Finding #3: Art as Communication**

#### ***Art to bring students' voices to the center of the classroom***

Students in Mr. Jansen's history class consistently noted that art made the classroom setting more student-centered and interactive than the other activities in their virtual classroom during the

pandemic. Students Clara, Isabella, and Armando expressed that the conversations felt more alive. As a result, they were more engaged in the unit compared to the previous units in Mr. Jansen's class. Isabella expressed in her post-interview that the online setting made her more inclined to welcome art as a method because it was an alternative to the online lectures and videos their teachers were utilizing in their virtual classrooms:

I could interact more with my teacher and like my classmates. Because like in the other online courses we took, it was basically getting an article or video or something to read from the book and then answering questions about it. I don't think that was bad [that] I didn't learn [anything new], but I feel like I enjoyed learning more like in the interactive way. Also, the artwork was cool and like it was more about me giving my opinion and not me giving facts if that makes sense.

Interestingly, Isabella recommended that teachers incorporate art in future classrooms because it let her express her opinion and move beyond just “giving and receiving the facts,” even though she admitted to not learning any *new* material in the unit. However, Isabella explained that she believed that that was not necessarily bad because the unit allowed her to express her opinion and interact with her classmates' opinions.

### ***Art as an alternative way to communicate and demonstrate learning***

Like the participating teachers, the students described how art was an alternative way to communicate and demonstrate learning in the classroom. For the 11th grader, Chloe, the only American student in Mr. Jansen's class, art was a helpful alternative to communicating her ideas and feelings even though she was a self-described verbose and outspoken student. Chloe noted that she enjoyed having her artwork as a starting point for verbal conversations to take place:

I think it [art] actually kind of helped us a little bit...Because then all the stuff that we couldn't put in the assignment we've got to talk about in the conversation. So that was nice because then we talked a little bit more than you might have had we not done the art assignment...So, like, I didn't get to add a few things into one of my art assignments because I just I couldn't figure out how to draw it. Okay, then we'll start a conversation.

Chloe did not identify as an artist. She explained in her interview that she felt that the art-based approaches were weird and different than what she was used to in class. However, Chloe thought art was helpful because she could use her drawings and traditional discussion to communicate her opinion in class. The act of not being able to draw a concept or idea was not a hindrance for Chloe; instead, it served as a springboard for conversations with her classmates. Chloe noted that while she did not feel like she could communicate all of her opinions through art, she felt like her class talked more about social issues related to gender than they would have without art.

For Chloe's classmate Clara, art offered her a way to express ideas that she could not communicate with words, and it required "more work" than writing an essay:

Having art in the class and having art as most of our assignments made it easier to understand and make it at least for me and made me want to do a good job at that. Like, for example, if I was like writing an essay, I would be like ah OK, this is good enough. When I was drawing my stuff, I like to try hard because I feel like art is...like you can express a lot more in art sometimes than you can with words and I find that cool...I feel like it made you think outside of the box and really made you analyze how you visualize and portray things.

Clara's final reflection touched on a few key points that were consistent with her classmates: (a) art gave expression to things words could not; (b) art encouraged critical thinking skills, and (c)

art provided a welcomed alternative form of communication to traditional assessments like essays. While Clara's idea of art as "more work" was unique, this notion of thinking more critically about an assignment was not. For example, in her post-study interview, 12th grader Adriana explained that school was boring and that traditional assignments and assessments had it all wrong. When asked what advice she would give her teachers for improving their curriculum, Adriana expressed the following:

I think maybe giving assignments that are creative, not so much just to fill in the gaps of time because it needs to be like 30 minutes. But letting us use our creativity...I would do more projects than assessments because like assessments don't make sense. I think it's so easy to cheat. Yeah...It's pointless.

Adriana explained in her interview that art and art-like projects in her eyes are more beneficial ways of communicating because the work was more individualized and limited the ways students could copy, cheat, or defer to their classmates' ideas.

Similarly, another student, 11th grader Isabella, joked in her interview that art was not a worksheet you could copy off of a friend during lunch. She laughed saying, "Ya you can't copy that anywhere or memorize that." Although Clara did not mention cheating in her interviews like Adriana or Isabella, she pointed out that creating art was a multi-faceted process that had the potential to be more unique to the individual student compared to other assessments.

In Clara's opinion, art allowed her class to come together and talk about things relevant to her community, a mindset that was consistent across secondary students. In several instances, student artwork was used as a stimulus for social issues conversations in both classroom conversations and in the students' post-study interviews. Although not all students were engaging with civic dialogue through their art, nearly all secondary students were observed

engaging in civic dialogue because of their art. The act of students explaining their artwork, particularly in their post-study interviews led to conversations about their initial perceptions of an issue, their awareness of the issue they were discussing, and the action they felt needed to be taken. This was something observed in both secondary classrooms but not in the fourth-grade classroom.

### **Summary of Chapter**

Art as reflection was a significant finding from this study, reflected in both teacher and student responses. However, students and teachers conceptualized art as reflection in different ways. For teachers, art was used as a form of elicitation to spark conversations, engage critical thinking skills, and prepare students for the unit ahead. For students, art as reflection meant art was used as a tool to gain clarity, refine their perspectives and opinions, and contemplate their emotions before engaging with their classmates. Although teachers and students thought about reflection differently, both perspectives recognized reflection as a notable benefit of using art to engage with social issues in the classroom.

Data for the second finding of this study revealed that art was used as representation and symbolism in student conversations about social issues. Like the first finding, teachers and students expressed different perspectives about art as representation and symbolism. From a teacher's perspective, art was used directly and purposefully to disrupt how students represented their conceptions of Whiteness in their art projects. Art was used explicitly to challenge existing perspectives and expand students' understanding of their skin tones. For students, art as representation and symbolism came up in conversations that acknowledged art as a helpful tool to represent and convey emotions specifically through color to symbolize different emotions. Unlike the teacher perspective, art was not identified by students as a way to disrupt or challenge

conceptions of Whiteness. However, the use of *othering* Indigenous perspectives in their artwork and their conversations about Whiteness offered valuable insight into how art can represent perspectives not just in what is communicated but also in what is not. This notion is explored further in the discussion section.

Finally, data provided information on student conceptions of how art could be used to communicate opinions on social issues emerged in both the pre-and post-study interviews. Art as communication was a significant theme that included two sub-themes from the teacher and student perspectives: (a) art as an alternative way of communicating and demonstrating learning, and (b) art to bring student voices to the center of the classroom. The following chapter discusses these findings and expands on their significance.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

This study investigated how teachers and students at International School in Guatemala used art to engage with social issues in the classroom. In this chapter, I examine how students and teachers engage with controversy at International School in their classrooms and then analyze how student and teacher participants see art as a way to reflect, represent, and convey emotions when discussing both historical and contemporary issues.

### **Engaging with Controversy in a Guatemalan International School**

The data from this study showed that the socio-cultural context of the learning environment greatly affected how students and teachers at International School engaged with issues of gender and race (Hess, 2009). Second, the study also illustrated how one's identity influences student and teacher dynamics and characteristics of one's identity might situate an individual as an insider or outsider in the learning environment. Finally, the data also demonstrated that the participants' desire to rectify issues of injustice was potentially

overshadowed by hegemonic groupthink that sometimes led to information avoidance (Bekerman, 2009; Hong et al., 2020).

### **Context Matters**

For many students, schools are the most diverse setting they will encounter during adolescence (Avery et al., 2014; Parker, 2008). While small schools like International School may not necessarily be racially, economically, or religiously diverse, the point is that a school like International School still serves as one of the few spaces where young learners engage with new and potentially challenging perspectives. As such, schools of all sizes and contexts should be recognized as political sites where students can work through one of the most critical questions in democracy: *How should we live together?* (Hess, 2009, p. 4). Though International School may lack racial, economic, or religious diversity compared to other schools, it still serves as one of the few spaces where its young learners engage with novel and diverse perspectives.

While the majority of the world recognizes the *Conflicto Armado* as an act of genocide against the Mayan people, the other side, namely communities of moderate and conservative government officials and political organizations, are adamant that the guerillas were equally at fault for committing horrific violations of human rights (Smith, 2001). Unfortunately, the power and influence of the moderate and conservative government officials have resulted in schools not teaching students about the atrocities committed during the war. To further complicate things, the majority of International School's faculty and staff were non-Guatemalan with many teachers on staff having a limited understanding of the *Conflicto Armado*.

This study showed how the political context can influence whether a narrative is perpetuated or silenced and demonstrates how the race and socioeconomic status of students in a classroom can determine the classroom culture. The political context of the local community

dramatically affects how difficult histories and controversial topics are taught in the classroom (Camicia, 2008). For the most part, International School has a homogenous student body, with the majority of students coming from a relatively high socioeconomic status within the community. The high tuition costs (the most expensive in the area) served as a barrier to entry for families of lower economic status who were primarily Indigenous. As a result, all three participating classrooms were limited in their representation of Indigenous voices. Except for a few students of expatriate and missionary families, the homogenous student population created an environment where students were affirmed in their existing perspectives. This was exemplified in the students' use of the racial slur "Indio" and their dismissal of the impact of the use of this slur. The idea of "groupthink" potentially explains this behavior. Groupthink is a mode of operation standard in homogenous populations that can affect the individual's decision-making capacity. When a group strives to maintain a high level of cohesion, each individual's decisions tend to support any position that will help maintain a high-level cohesion within the group (Johnson & Weaver II, 1992).

At International School, this groupthink behavior resulted in a culture of perpetrators and bystanders. To Bekerman (2009), these perpetrators and bystanders represent the tension between wanting a democratic society for all groups but still wanting to retain one's hegemonic group identity. At International School, students across grade levels were quick to name examples of injustice in their community, such as racism towards Indigenous populations, machismo culture towards female populations, education gaps, trash/pollution, and the influx of street dogs in their community. However, the only time students were observed passionately speaking out against injustice was in machismo and sexism conversations, not in other social issues like racism.

Students at International School refrained from identifying as Indigenous (even if they had an Indigenous heritage) to fit in with the perceived homogenous population of the school. If a student used a racial slur, students might call out another by saying, “Hey, that’s so racist,” but comments were quickly followed by laughter. Students rarely engaged in any serious conversation with the perpetrator because of the fear that this may result in heightened tensions within the dominant group. However, this was not the case with discussions about sexism and machismo. Female students like Clara and Isabella were proud to identify as feminists and call out social injustices when they saw students being sexist in the classroom. However, in their 11<sup>th</sup>-grade classroom, 60% of the student population was female. This allowed both Clara and Isabella to be upstanders against sexism and speak out against machismo culture while at the same time remaining a part of the majority group in their classroom.

Social issues are not controversial in nature; instead, they are socially constructed in ways that make a case more or less controversial (Hess, 2009). For example, at International School, the concept of racism was not a contentious issue. Every student interviewed acknowledged that racism was a terrible thing. However, what *counted* as racism was controversial, and it caused tension both in and out of the classroom between teachers and students. This is explored further below in the following subsection on teacher and student dynamics.

### **Teacher-Student Dynamics**

Classrooms are political spaces, and power issues are enacted in those spaces (Delpit, 1988; Hess & McAvoy, 2014). When thinking about teacher-student dynamics, it is essential to reflect on how the teacher’s authoritative power, whether implied or expressed, influences their students' perspectives, participation, resistance, and agency (Skattebol, 2005). Teacher positionality, demographics, and social-cultural status within a community drive how students

interact with the curriculum and interact with their teacher. Additionally, when teachers and students enter the classroom environment, they bring with them their understanding of hierarchies and dynamics that organize their world (Engebretson, 2018; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998). One of the main challenges for educators at schools like International School is that they often do not share the same historical or cultural status as the students they are teaching. Suppose a teacher is not from or familiar with the community they are teaching in. In that case, it can make it difficult for the teacher to foresee student responses to social issues and deliberately plan how to respond to student reactions (Washington & Humphries, 2011). This leads to questions about insider-outsider status and the impact of teacher disclosure.

### *Insider vs. Outsider Status*

The positionality of an insider vs. outsider status within a learning environment is worth noting, especially when looking at teacher-student dynamics. At International School, new teachers were almost exclusively labeled as outsiders to the community based on their race (the majority of new teachers are non-Guatemalan) and the length of time they have been a part of the community. However, as Crow et al. (2001) pointed out, individuals might be considered outsiders in some instances but not in others, depending on their ancestry, involvement in the community, and length of residence in a place. At International School, Ms. Reyes, despite living the majority of her life in the United States, was quickly perceived as an insider by her students because of her status as a Guatemalan American and a native Spanish speaker. Notably, she was also actively involved in the same traditions and celebrations as her students and shared similar social and cultural experiences.

While Ms. Reyes was an insider by her 4th-grade students, there was evidence of teachers being situated as outsiders at the secondary level because of their nationality and ethnic

backgrounds. The positionality of an outsider's status influenced student perception of teacher expertise. While students trusted their teachers as individuals, teachers identified as outsiders were not authorized to have informed perspectives of contemporary social issues in International School's Guatemalan community. In one example, 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students discussed an incident where their Australian English teacher had heard students use the racial slur "*Indio*" in several joking contexts. In response, the teacher facilitated a two-day class discussion around the word's context and challenged students to think about why they were using it. For a few 11<sup>th</sup> graders, the lesson felt excessive because none of the students felt that it was racist. The students were annoyed rather than transformed by the class simply because the teacher did not share their lived experiences and did not understand they were merely "joking."

The idea of distrust or hesitation to trust their White teachers in conversations about race is not surprising. Sleeter (2008), for example, studied how White preservice teachers in the U.S. entered diverse school settings with little understanding of discrimination or the structures of racism at large. Additionally, Sleeter noted that White preservice teachers typically spent less time in unfamiliar cultural communities, and of those who had tended to overestimate their understanding of the cultural communities. At International School, the majority of teachers were White and the average teacher tenure was 2-3 years, thus resulting in a relatively high turnover rate of teachers each year.

While ancestry is an essential factor in identifying insiders, the decision to label somebody an insider or outsider can also depend on how a person participates in the local social life and builds community ties (Crow et al., 2001). This was also evident at International School, where the teacher's status as an insider/outsider was also contingent on the number of years of experience at the school. As a 4th-year teacher at International School, a status few teachers had

reached, it appeared that Ms. Moxley could have more meaningful conversations about social issues with her students than other teachers in their first semester at the school. Similarly, Mr. Jansen had built trust within the International School community after five years of teaching at the school. It is possible that the lesson with the Australian English teacher would have been perceived differently had the teacher not been a first-semester teacher at the school.

Scholarship by Luangphinit (2005) suggests that schools like International School should not be discouraged by the insider/outsider dynamics at the school. Focusing on insider/outsider status in Hawaii, Luangphinit found that the classroom was a place that could help non-locals to understand the community they were living in and its relationship to the places they have come from. When done well, the classroom provides space for individuals to contact different cultures and ideologies that influenced their multicultural and multiracial identities, creating a shared responsibility for building the learning community and strengthening the potential for multicultural education. Although talking primarily about student interactions, teachers situated as outsiders at schools like International School can allow students to share their own cultures and perspectives in class. Later sections explore how art specifically can be used to achieve these goals.

### ***Teacher Disclosure***

The way a teacher discloses their point of view can positively or negatively affect classroom learning depending on the student hearing it and how it happens (Hess & McAvoy, 2009). Barton & McCully (2007) argued that teachers should find balance in challenging their students to articulate their point of view without hiding or disavowing their own. They should be honest about their doubts, questions, and uncertainty. Even if a teacher does disclose their point of view, students can most likely infer what their teachers believe based on body language and

other nonverbal cues. This was the case in Ms. Moxley's classroom, where she was not completely neutral in her presentation of the *Conflicto Armado*. Understanding her classroom culture, Ms. Moxley recognized that most of her students had a single-story narrative and a limited understanding of the war. As a result, the sources and articles she chose were contrary to the perspectives held by her students as she hoped to challenge students to think beyond the government perspective of the *Conflicto Armado*.

However, after a few lessons, Ms. Moxley was approached by a student who was frustrated that they were not given a well-rounded narrative because their pro-Guatemalan government perspective was not represented in the articles they were reading. In teaching social issues, teachers are expected to present the information from multiple perspectives and interpretations of the same historical facts while refraining from choosing a side (Magendzo & Toledo, 2009). However, demanding complete and open neutrality can be difficult, if not impossible, in contexts related to emotional histories. Teachers, just like their students, are emotional beings with their reactions and ideologies intertwined with the curriculum (Magendzo & Toledo, 2009). Ms. Moxley's decision to not include the government perspective was not an emotional choice but rather a rational choice. She explained that she had pushed the alternative narrative to challenge what they had previously encountered. Following the student comments, Ms. Moxley met with me about how to adapt the unit moving forward. As she simply put it, the student comments were correct. In pushing the alternative narrative, she had almost entirely eliminated the government's perspective of the *Conflicto Armado*.

The student who approached Ms. Moxley did not come to her angry or resentful of the articles she presented; instead, they questioned why the majority of the articles were in English and why the government perspective was not represented in the ways they had been taught at

home. The students' reactions to the lesson highlighted three key characteristics Hess and McAvoy (2009) observed in their research on teaching controversial issues in U.S. classrooms. First, students want to be given the space to investigate the issue for themselves. When a teacher takes up too much of the conversation or teaches to one point of view, they are cheating the student of the opportunity to solve a problem or answer a question on their own. Students need and want autonomy in their learning process. Hess and McAvoy suggest that educators can teach toward autonomy by providing opportunities for students to examine different sources of evidence, consider their own beliefs, and understand their political views. In short, presenting students with conflicting opinions is a part of helping guide students towards their political autonomy. They are presented with a choice; they weigh their options and then get to decide about their own political beliefs.

The second characteristic students exhibited was the need to be liked. Students need to know that regardless of if their opinion conflicts or aligns with their teacher that their teacher respects and cares for them as an individual (Hess & McAvoy, 2009). Had Ms. Moxley's response dismissed the student's concerns, she may have lost the student's engagement in the discussion and the unit. By shutting down honest perspectives students develop from their lived experiences, teachers may unintentionally shut down a discussion if it feels like a student's perspective is unwelcomed in the classroom (Barton & McCully, 2007). Ms. Moxley responded to the student's comments by adding an extra week to the research component and allowing students to find their articles. The articles could be in Spanish or English, and students were encouraged to find an article that supported their point of view or addressed an unanswered question they still had about the *Conflicto Armado*. At this moment, Ms. Moxley took a step

towards creating a community of trust where students could feel their opinions were both validated and respected.

The final characteristic students expressed was fair play. Students want to know what their teachers think, but they also do not want the teacher's opinions to dominate the classroom discussion (Hess & McAvoy, 2009). In this example, the student was not angry about the articles or activities they had already engaged in; rather they wanted the playing field to be balanced where all points of view were given equal consideration (Hess & McAvoy, 2009). Ms. Moxley was honest and open about her views in all of her classes when students asked. Her thoughts could also be interpreted by the pedagogical choices and instructional materials she brought into her classroom. Her decision to expand the classroom views to include perspectives from both the victim and perpetrator aligned with research conducted by Barton & McCully (2007) in Northern Ireland. In the context of Northern Ireland, Barton & McCully explained that teachers have to operate in a community of trust with their students, hold their nerve when students respond emotionally, provide opportunities to meditate on those emotions, and sometimes allow extreme perspectives to be voiced. Barton & McCully also noted that in Northern Ireland, extreme perspectives are often expressed with authenticity and integrity because they are usually built from students' lived experiences and social realities. Excluding these perspectives from the table conveys that not all views and opinions are welcomed. Students need to know their teachers value them if teachers ever want to guide them toward objecting to violence and rejecting prejudice (Barton & McCully, 2007; Hess & McAvoy, 2009). Of course, like in Northern Ireland, teachers in Guatemala will need to set limits to what is and is not allowed in the classroom. However, in contexts like International School and Northern Ireland, those limits may need to be broader.

## Information Avoidance

The third idea brought forth by this study is the concept of information avoidance. Information avoidance occurs when an individual acknowledges that information is relevant but intentionally distances themselves from it out of fear that it will challenge and contradict their existing values, self-identity, or world views (Hong et al., 2020). Frequently, social issues cause controversy because they prompt conflicting points of view when multiple perspectives are introduced, potentially creating stressful and painful experiences when those perspectives challenge previous knowledge. This is one reason teachers might avoid teaching social issues altogether. In a context like International School, very few teachers taught about the *Conflicto Armado* or the roots of racism in their Guatemalan community before the study. Zembylas & Loukaidis (2021) suggested that sometimes teachers avoid engaging with certain aspects of complex histories because it challenges their existing emotions and beliefs. Hong et al. (2020) supports this argument, also adding that people tend to avoid information that brings unpleasant feelings.

Teachers at International School were not apathetic about Guatemalan history. The entire faculty seemed interested in learning more about Guatemalan history because it was relevant to their students' cultural identity. However, learning about Guatemala's history only occurred at a superficial level, and conversations about the *Conflicto Armado* were often neglected or omitted from most classrooms entirely. Nevertheless, as Hong et al. (2020) pointed out, information avoidance should not be interpreted as a lack of awareness, effort in learning, or indifferent to critical social issues. Likely, teachers were not engaging with Guatemala's history in the classroom because they were unsure or unclear about where or how to begin. In many cases, fear of being exposed to a lack of expertise and emotional discomfort and a lack of appropriate

instructional materials are reasons teachers may hesitate to welcome controversial issues or difficult histories into their classroom (Zembylas & Kambani, 2012; Pace, 2019).

The three participating teachers in this study were unique to the context of their school in that they designed their units with the hope of bringing their students' history and lived experiences into the classroom. Importantly, information avoidance from a student and parent standpoint seemed to play out much differently than it did for International School's non-Guatemalan teachers. For example, in Ms. Reyes' class, it appeared that information avoidance occurred not from Ms. Reyes but her students' families when parents wanted to avoid painful images and experiences as well as unpleasant emotions. In her interview, Ms. Reyes explained that her 4<sup>th</sup>-grade parents seemed to be okay with engaging with the women's stories about poverty and inequity on a superficial level. The information did not challenge existing world views and did not question any family dynamics or lived experiences. However, when Ms. Reyes was approached by one of the female volunteers about showing the organization's documentary on the *Conflicto Armado*, she explained she faced some parent pushback. Ms. Reyes discussed how a few parents were afraid that the documentary material was too graphic and too emotional for their children to encounter. This is a fair concern because teachers refrain from teaching controversial issues in their classrooms when they question their students' emotional and intellectual maturity to handle such issues (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012).

In the end, Ms. Reyes decided that her 4<sup>th</sup> graders were emotionally and intellectually capable of processing the information in the documentary. A few parents showed some discomfort and pushed back; one even asked for a parent conference with Ms. Reyes. However, the parent never followed up with the meeting, and the parenting pushback ended up being a non-issue. Ms. Reyes explained that her unit and field trip in the fall was necessary because

many of her 4<sup>th</sup> graders had never had conversations about the war or its impact at home. Those who did have conversations at home had a limited understanding.

### **Summary of Engaging with Controversy in a Guatemalan International School**

This section identified three critical themes about engaging with controversy: context, teacher-student dynamics, and information avoidance. In any setting, the context of a school will affect how any issue is socially constructed. Additionally, both teachers' and students' race and socioeconomic status are important factors to consider. When looking at teacher-student dynamics, it was clear that some aspects of identity were more salient than others and that parts of our identity can situate us as insiders or outsiders in social issues conversations. The way a teacher discloses their point of view can have a positive or negative effect on student learning, meaning students need to have the space to investigate the issue for themselves, to feel liked and valued by their teacher, and to have their perspective represented equally with others in the classroom (Hess & McAvoy, 2009). Finally, when a teacher, student, or parent fears a perspective might challenge and contradict their existing values, self-identity, or worldview, it can lead to information avoidance (Hong et al., 2020), where alternative perspectives might be neglected or omitted entirely. These factors are important to consider when designing and planning for meaningful reflection in the classroom. The following section considers context, teacher-student dynamics, and information avoidance and discusses how art might be used as a reflective practice in conversations about social issues.

### **Art as Reflective Practice**

This study looks at how students and teachers use art to engage with social issues in their classrooms. While the first section of this chapter discussed engaging with controversy at International School, this section looks at art as a reflective practice. At a surface level, reflection

is a naturally occurring cognitive process that happens simultaneously (Rolfe & Freshwater, 2020). Unprompted, students and teachers will think about their social interactions, their to-do lists, what they had to eat, or what they did the day before. However, reflection as a cognitive process and critical process are significantly different. Reflection as a process needs to be explicitly taught, and when done critically, it prompts action that challenges original ways of knowing (Brookfield, 2009; Liu, 2015; McPherson & Mazza, 2014). This process and practice are not something that automatically happens in the classroom. Instead, students must be taught how to critically reflect and then encouraged to engage in reflective practices (McPherson & Mazza, 2014).

In thinking about reflection as a critical practice, this study adopts the definition as outlined by Liu (2015):

Critical reflection is a process of constantly analyzing, questioning, and critiquing established assumptions of oneself, schools, and society about teaching and learning, the social and political implications of schooling, and implementing changes to previous actions that those established assumptions have supported. (p. 144-5)

Mezirow (1994) aligns with this definition and acknowledges that most reflection occurs in problem-solving, where students are asked to think about the context of a problem, how to solve that problem, and the assumptions the situation presents. The following section uses these ideas to examine participant experiences using art as reflective practice and discuss potential implications for classroom instruction.

### **Reflective Practice Doesn't Just Happen.**

Students need to be guided towards practices for intentional reflection. Reflection as a deliberate action starts with the individual overcoming situational, knowledge, and emotional

constraints that otherwise would lead to a passive acceptance of the social institutions and social realities defined by others (Mezirow, 1994). This action guide comes with the understanding that all students can engage with rational discourse. I would argue an emotional speech that allows them to negotiate to mean and become more critical and curious about new information and experiences they encounter. This is important because students come to class with their structure of assumptions that serve as a lens through which all new experiences are processed and interpreted (Alongi et al., 2016; Mezirow, 1990).

Students at International School came to class with their assumptions about social issues in their community. Mezirow (1990) refers to these structures of assumptions as *meaning perspectives* that are both intentionally and unintentionally learned. At International School, participating teachers dealt with meaningful views related to race and gender. For example, a machismo cultural lens would impact how students think about gender roles. A family's experience in the *Conflicto Armado* might impact their meaning perspectives about race, wealth, and power. By engaging with meaning perspectives learned through cultural assimilation and stereotypes, students can apply structures of assumptions to their ways of processing and dealing with emotions about identity (Mezirow, 1990). This means that it is essential for reflection to be an intentional process and be an explicitly taught action so that these structures of assumptions can be challenged and understandings of social realities can be transformed (Brookfield, 2009; Liu, 2015; Mezirow, 1994; McPherson & Mazza, 2014).

Art can be used to foster this type of intentional practice. In one case, Suescun-Giraldo (2022) studied pre-service EFL teachers' reflections on using art integration in the classroom. Although they were working within the scope of teacher education, a few important and relevant conclusions from their study offer insight into how and why art can be used for meaningful

reflection. First, implementing art emphasizes the value of providing multiple associations through which a student can encounter the material. This was true at International School. Ms. Reyes favored art-based approaches because they gave students an alternative way to make associations with the material apart from just reading and writing. Second, art allowed pre-service teachers to explore both the emotional and intellectual dimensions of their experiences. Several secondary students at International School had a similar experience stating that by creating art, they could welcome emotions into conversations that might not otherwise be voiced in; art brought an emotional component into their intellectual discussions. Most importantly, Suescun-Giraldo's scholarship stressed the importance of providing innovative and creative methods that offer new experiences for learners. Art can be used as a meaningful reflective tool because of its potential to facilitate an interactive and autonomous learning environment.

Every activity must have an obvious purpose for art to foster meaningful reflection because reflective practice does not just happen. Suppose a teacher simply gives students a pencil or a paintbrush and sends them on their way. In that case, it is more than likely that the teacher will incorporate an assortment of different levels of critical thinking skills that may or may not meet her intended goals. Practical reflective activities allow students to build connections between what they learn and what they have previously experienced (Douillard & Labbo, 2002). According to Liu (2015), these activities should engage students in examining, questioning, and critiquing what they had previously experienced or had been taught at home, school, and in their community. My study outlined three specific ways art can be intentionally used for reflection in the classroom: (a) art to name initial assumptions about social issues; (b) art to question existing assumptions about social issues; and (c) art to challenge existing assumptions about social issues. Each of these is discussed further below.

### **Art to name initial assumptions**

Students and teachers alike enter the classroom with their assumptions about the world, and these assumptions impact how all new information is processed and interpreted (Alongi et al., 2016; Mezirow, 1990). Before students can question or challenge their previous understandings of the world, they must first be able to identify what those understandings are. In Mr. Jansen's history class, art was used as elicitation to help students name their initial assumptions about gender roles. Methods like elicitation can be more effective than asking straightforward questions because it shifts the focus onto external stimuli like the photograph, sketch, or other media being examined (Barton, 2015). At the beginning of Mr. Jansen's unit, students were asked to sketch their perceptions of what society thought of as an honest man/woman and what they thought of as a real man/woman. The following day students were asked to bring their sketches to the first Google Meet of the unit, and the sketches were used as a talking piece to springboard classroom conversations about gender. Students were able to use their drawings to reference their reflections and explain the decisions made, while Mr. Jansen was able to gauge student understanding and ask clarifying questions regarding students' initial accounts.

Through the sketches, Mr. Jansen evaluated what assumptions about gender and gender roles students brought into the unit. Scholars like Barton (2015) support drawing as a method of elicitation, stating that it can lead to better conversations as the artist makes symbolic choices in their drawing process. Regardless of the artist's talent, they are asked to make decisions and choices about what they are creating and why at each step of the process. The performative action of creating art places the artist (or the student) as a creator and inquisitor who is given the space and power to question and comment on cultural discourses (Grushka, 2005). In one study,

Muijen et al. (2019) looked at the theater to facilitate community learning and perspective for career counseling within a professional work environment. Similar to International School, the arts invited participants into a reflective space for them to explore their values and voice their uncertainties. Muijen et al. found that through theater, individuals could name their mutual struggles within the political context of their organization. In both the examples, participants were given the space to identify their existing perspectives about various topics and utilize art to inform their understanding of themselves and society (Grushka, 2005). Once these initial understandings are named, the goal then is for students to move towards questioning how and why these understandings formed in the first place.

### **Art to Question Existing Assumptions**

The first step in meaningful reflection is recognizing and identifying the preconceived notions a person brings into the space. Students at International School had their own lived experiences and interactions with social issues in their community. They came to the classroom environment with perceived expertise about the discussed social issues. Once identified, these notions needed to be examined and questioned, especially in homogenous contexts like International School. This is because, in homogenous populations, it can prove challenging to encounter multiple perspectives and find fault in dominant ways of thinking. If students assume their existing understandings are faultless, classrooms run the risk of producing passivity and removing critical interpretation from conversations about social issues (Ross & Hannay, 1986). Therefore, educators in this situation should encourage students to welcome their lived experiences, draw theories from those experiences, and then also examine how those experiences impact action (Segall & Gaudelli, 2007).

Ross & Hannay (1986) cautioned against engaging with lived experiences and prior knowledge without examination, inquiry, and feedback from others. But examination and inquiry can prove difficult as real-world problems and relevant social issues emerge from a multitude of variables and factors that are not easily isolated or categorized. Interestingly, art-based approaches can be used as a way for teachers to help facilitate a social space for students to critically investigate, inquire, and create cultural products that express the complex dynamics of society and culture (Stuhr, 2003). This was exemplified by the experiences of Ignacio, a 12<sup>th</sup>-grade art student. Through conversations and feedback from his peers, Ignacio began to make choices in his artwork that looked to question the nature of silencing Indigenous voices in his community. The understanding of the Indigenous woman in his artwork evolved throughout his reading, reflections, and conversations with classmates.

In thinking about critical reflection and reflective practice, students must also analyze, question, and critique their established ways of knowing and implement changes to their previous actions (Liu, 2015; McPherson & Mazza, 2014). Ms. Moxley had created an environment where students could get feedback from their classmates on their artwork and the clarity of the message they were communicating. By creating this environment, Ignacio had to question whether an audience should be included in his drawing. Were people listening? Was silence a choice? If silence was not a choice, how does that change his picture and representation of Indigenous voices?

Finally, suppose students are going to become reflective thinkers and engage in inquiry that questions their existing assumptions. In that case, they must learn to present their thoughts and ideas to others in a way that opens up criticism from their classmates and their teacher (Ross & Hannay, 1986). As Ignacio became more reflective in his process, the drafts of his artwork

changed; the Indigenous woman's mouth that was initially closed was sewn shut in later drafts as Ignacio looked to communicate the idea that her silence was not a choice but was forced upon her by the dominant narratives in his community. The choices Ignacio made as an artist reflect the questions his class was asking.

Students acknowledged that art helped shape their perspectives and opinions before discussing those perspectives with their classmates. In another example, Ignacio's classmate Maria crocheted a quilt that told the story of Guatemala through her eyes. She explained in her post-interview that making her crocheted quilt forced her to slow down and think about her decisions and why. Maria was given the space and time to ask questions and think about the message she wanted to communicate. By making choices as an artist, students can move past just questioning existing knowledge and move toward challenging their existing knowledge. The following subsection explores how art can be used to challenge assumptions in the classroom.

### **Art to Challenge and Act Against Assumptions**

Critical reflection must include intentional action that challenges preexisting understandings of these social issues and structures (Brookfield, 2009; Liu, 2015; Mezirow, 1994; McPherson & Mazza, 2014). This art-focused strategy allowed Ignacio and his classmate Maria to engage with the material through several important processes highlighted by Kagan (2015): (a) critical analysis; (b) questioning of multiple perspectives; and (c) hands-on approaches to the application and experimentation of new ideas, opinions, and viewpoints.

In Maria's case, her critical commentary about Guatemala came out in her use of the color blue and the multiple meanings that the color expressed. On the one hand, the lighter blue illustrated the peaceful, kind, and loving Guatemala Maria loved. In contrast, the darker blue, the navy, represented the darkness associated with the exclusion and the void of the Indigenous

perspective. By questioning cultural discourses, students are invited to reflect and challenge who they are and what they know and invite their audience to engage with the range of positions they present in their work (Grushka, 2005). The crocheted quilt represented the two very different Guatemalas Maria had come to know through her research and lived experiences. The lighter blue represented the peace and love Maria felt and experienced in her home country. At the same time, the darker navy challenged and questioned the hegemonic discourses of the history she had been taught. This aligns with Halverson & Sheridan's (2014) claim that the arts are a valuable method of expression to challenge hegemonic educational structures. It provides a way of exploring one's identity and perspective, especially when those perspectives or identities have been marginalized from mainstream societal institutions.

This study also showed that critical reflection through art focuses on the audience rather than the artist in some cases. In her 11<sup>th</sup>-grade history classroom, Isabella used art to challenge existing narratives and reclaim the roles and identities where women are often told they did not fit. Isabella explained she wanted to avoid traditional roles that said women were supposed to stay at home, take care of children, and cook. Her goal at this moment was not to show that she was challenging her original assumptions because Isabella had already rejected the traditional stereotypes mentioned before entering the unit. Instead, her artwork was a message to other women encouraging them to do the same.

### **Summary of Art as Reflective Practice**

Critical reflection does not just happen, but it needs to be explicitly taught in a way that prompts action (Brookfield, 2009; Liu, 2015; McPherson & Mazza, 2014). Integrating art into the classroom revealed several important ways that art can be used to promote critical reflection in the school. This study demonstrates how art can examine prior knowledge through elicitation,

questioning prior knowledge through peer and teacher feedback, and challenging prior knowledge through decisions made in the art-making process. The following section expands on these conversations by examining the role of emotions in social issues conversations and how art can be used as a tool to welcome emotions into the classroom.

### **The Role of Emotions in the Classroom**

This section analyzes and discusses two main findings that focus on the intersection of art, emotion, and social issues. Throughout the study, students and teachers talked about art and emotions in two different ways: (a) art to convey and express emotion, and (b) color representing different emotions. While existing scholarship recognizes the critical role of emotion in democratic classrooms (Garrett & Alvey, 2021; Sheppard & Levy, 2019), especially in conversations rooted in difficult histories (Zembylas & Loukaidis, 2020), limited research has been done on best practices for facilitating and mitigating emotional discourses in the classroom. Although no method is without its limitations and obstacles, participants from International School addressed how art provided a vehicle for reflecting, conveying, and clarifying emotions in the classroom.

### **Classrooms as Emotional Spaces**

Notably, the virtual or in-person classroom is an emotional space where students are actively processing their in-school and out-of-school lived experiences. We know that students and teachers are not blank slates. Instead, both parties come to each class with their ideas, assumptions, personalities, and lived experiences that influence how they interact with the curriculum and others (Alongi et al., 2016). Scholars like Sheppard & Levy (2019) recognize adolescents as emotional beings who bring in their thoughts, opinions, and emotions that may be relevant and irrelevant to the social studies environment. Students need to be entitled to their

feelings because it allows them to see the curriculum as relevant to their everyday concerns (Barton & McCully, 2007). As student participants at International School interacted with their social issues units, they encountered emotions related to the pandemic in conjunction with their emotions, feelings, and reactions to the content of their classes.

The student participants believed that the act of creating art permitted emotions to be expressed in contexts that may not have been receptive to such expressions previously. In Ms. Moxley's art class, 12<sup>th</sup> grader Lucia explained that with social issues conversations in other classes, they talked about issues but never about how they felt about them. During discussions about racism, her classmate Oscar explained that the discussion is structured in a typical manner; they would not have been given the space to explain why or how they felt about something. The students in Ms. Moxley's class noted that reflection was present and that they were given the freedom to process and name what they were feeling before articulating their responses. The ways individuals express their emotions and under what circumstances they express those emotions are interwoven with the idea of agency and collective belonging (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011). These expressed emotions are not merely internal reactions to different stimuli but are co-constructed responses produced within the individual. The co-constructed answers act as exchanges between individuals and others through practice and action. Ms. Moxley's classroom offered students numerous opportunities to co-construct responses. Ms. Moxley's 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students practiced research and reflection through the articles, guided questions, and drafts they brought to Google Meets for feedback. The action came from students questioning, accepting, and applying feedback from both their teacher and their classmates and, in most cases, was best illustrated in their final art projects.

## **Art to Engage Emotions**

Students and teachers identified art as an alternative way of communicating and demonstrating their learning. This was to be expected because an arts-integrated curriculum offers students visual, kinesthetic, and auditory opportunities for students to develop their ability to interact with and comprehend the world and draw multiple meanings out of it (Bresler, 1995). However, while students talked about communicating and engaging with their emotions through and with art, it was hard to tell to what extent this was happening during the unit. With limited observations and the shift to virtual learning, much of the understanding of how art can engage emotions came from student and teacher interviews. In other words, it was self-reported and not observed directly. For some students, they acknowledged that through art, they were able to interact with the content in both an emotional and rational way. In several instances, the secondary students expressed that the act of creating art allowed them to mitigate and clarify the emotions they were feeling. These student reflections aligned with research on early childhood development. McWilliams et al. (2014) found that the exploration of art materials and creating art led to emotional literacy in young learners as they grew in their ability to name, understand, and healthily respond to their emotions. Their study also observed how art could encourage storytelling especially when those stories are difficult to share with others. In a context like International School, where the population appears to be relatively homogenous, sharing stories might be difficult for those who do not fit their classmates' normative identity, whether religiously, culturally, or politically.

The use of color appeared to be a tangible way students felt they could communicate their emotions in their artwork. Fourth-graders Daniella, Eduardo, and Nora associated warm colors, like yellow and pink, with happiness and cool colors, like blue and purple, with sadness and

“being upset.” These associations were not surprising. Specific colors develop paired associations with different emotions from early childhood through adolescence, and those associations remain throughout life, eliciting different emotional responses (Pope et al., 2012). As students mature, so do their associations with color. 12<sup>th</sup> grader Maria’s use of a lighter blue to represent peace and love and darker navy to represent darkness and void aligned with notions that the hue, brightness, and saturation of color impact the associations made between color and emotions. Even students who did not identify as artists could also make these associations, and art appeared to be still a way for those students to communicate how they were feeling about a topic.

### **Summary of the Role of Emotions**

Engaging with emotions is an essential component of the democratic classroom (Garrett & Alvey, 2021; Sheppard & Levy, 2019). Although findings related to emotions in this study were limited to the responses in student and teacher interviews, it was noted that the multimodal aspects of art-based approaches, along with the use of color, helped students to name and convey emotions they had related to the social issues they encountered. Future research should focus on participant observations to cross-examine student/teacher perceptions with what is observed in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated how students and teachers engage with social issues through and with art-based approaches. The findings strongly suggest that incorporating art-based instructional strategies allows for multiple modes of communicating and demonstrating learning, reflecting, and clarifying one’s point of view, and acknowledging the role of emotions in engaging with social issues in the classroom. Both the teacher and student participants

recognized that using art provided students with an alternative way to demonstrate strengths and passions that were previously not necessarily represented in the classroom. Although not consistently successful, teachers used art to help students name existing assumptions about social issues, question how those assumptions were made, and then challenge those assumptions in their artwork. Students consistently associated emotions with different colors, and these connections were evident in their artwork. Through these associations, students articulated that they could reflect on other emotions, name those emotions, and portray those emotions through the use of color in shading in their artwork.

Affording students authentic opportunities to dialogue and listen to others is an essential part of civic education (Andolina & Conklin, 2018). Engaging with social issues in a democratic setting can be challenging, and teachers must provide opportunities to engage in a culture of argument in conjunction with a culture of listening (Parker, 2006). Dialogue as an educational strategy takes what is often an authoritative relationship between the teacher and the student and replaces it with a dialogical one recognizing that the teacher and the student each have something to contribute and receive from the other and that each student has something to contribute and receive from the other (Darder & Baltodano, 2003). Despite acknowledging art used as dialogue in my observations, students and teachers were hesitant to name it as such. However, when art was integrated into the classroom, student voices were prioritized, and when feedback was encouraged, these exchanges happened naturally.

In some cases, students let their artwork speak for itself, while in other instances, students used their artwork as a starting point or a talking piece to clarify their point of view. In contexts where teachers share a different culture than their students, prioritizing and legitimizing students as experts in their learning become even more important. Therefore, teachers should

always consider incorporating multiple ways for students to reflect and communicate their opinions in the classroom. While not all of the student artwork called out injustice or reflected action to change, there were elements in each unit where teachers used art to elicit reflection, question why certain injustices existed, and analyze the role each individual played in perpetuating those injustices. Future research should expand on these notions and explore how art might be used to push students towards developing a critical consciousness of social issues in their community.

### References

- Akom, A. A. (2009). Critical hip hop pedagogy as a form of liberatory praxis. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 42*(1), 52-66.
- Alexander, A., & Schlemmer, R. H. (2017). The Convergence of Critical Pedagogy with Arts-Based Service-Learning. In *Convergence of Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Global Civic Engagement* (pp. 1-23). IGI Global.
- Alongi, M. D., Heddy, B. C., & Sinatra, G. M. (2016). Real-world engagement with controversial issues in history and social studies: Teaching for transformative experiences and conceptual change. *JSSE-Journal of Social Science Education, 26*-41.
- Angay-Crowder, T., Choi, J., & Yi, Y. (2013). Putting multiliteracies into practice: Digital storytelling for multilingual adolescents in a summer program. *TESL Canada Journal, 36*-36.
- Anyon, J. (1978). Elementary social studies textbooks and legitimating knowledge. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 6*(3), 40-55.
- Apple, M. W. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum*. Routledge.
- Apple, M. W. (2018). On analyzing hegemony. *Journal of curriculum theorizing, 1*(1).
- Au, W. (2009). The "Building Tasks" of Critical History: Structuring Social Studies for Social Justice. *Social Studies Research & Practice (Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama), 4*(2).
- Au, W. (2009). Social studies, social justice: W(h)ither the social studies in high-stakes testing?. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 36*(1), 43-58.
- Avery, P. G., Levy, S. A., & Simmons, A. M. (2014). Secondary students and the deliberation of public issues. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 47*(4), 849-854.
- Barton, K. C. (2015). Elicitation techniques: Getting people to talk about ideas they don't usually 198 talk about. *Theory and Research in Social Education, 43*(2), 179–205.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2015.1034392>
- Barton, K., & McCully, A. (2007). Teaching controversial issues... where controversial issues really matter. *Teaching history, (127)*, 13.
- Barton, K. C., & McCully, A. W. (2012). Trying to "see things differently": Northern Ireland students' struggle to understand alternative historical perspectives. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 40*(4), 371-408.
- Beck, T. A. (2013). Identity, discourse, and safety in a high school discussion of same-sex marriage. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 41*(1), 1-32  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2013.757759>.

- Bekerman, Z. (2009). Identity versus peace: Identity wins. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(1), 74-83.
- Bekerman, Z., & Zembylas, M. (2011). The Emotional Complexities of Teaching Conflictual Historical Narratives: The Case of Integrated Palestinian-Jewish Schools in Israel. *Teachers College Record*, 113(5), 1004-1030.
- Bellino, M. J. (2017). *Youth in postwar Guatemala: Education and civic identity in transition*. Rutgers University Press.
- Bentz, J. (2020). Learning about climate change in, with and through art. *Climatic Change*, 162(3), 1595-1612.
- Bermudez, A. (2015). Four tools for critical inquiry in history, social studies, and civic education. *Revista de estudios sociales*, (52), 102-118.
- Berriz, B. R., Wager, A. C., & Poey, V. M. (2019). *Art as a Way of Talking for Emergent Bilingual Youth*. Routledge.
- Bresler, L. (1995). The subservient, co-equal, affective, and social integration styles and their implications for the arts. *Arts education policy review*, 96(5), 31-37.
- Brookfield, S. (2009). The concept of critical reflection: Promises and contradictions. *European Journal of Social Work*, 12(3), 293-304.
- Burbules, N. C., & Berk, R. (1999). Critical thinking and critical pedagogy: Relations, differences, and limits. *Critical theories in education: Changing terrains of knowledge and politics*, 45-65.
- Burnafor, G., Brown, S., Doherty, J., & McLaughlin, H. J. (2007). Arts Integration Frameworks, Research Practice». *Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership*.
- Burstein, J., & Knotts, G. (2010). Creating connections: Integrating the visual arts with social studies. *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, 23(1), 20-23.
- Camicia, S. P. (2008). Deciding what is a controversial issue: A case study of social studies curriculum controversy. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 36(4), 298-316.
- Casey, E. M., Tobin, K. J., & Cruz, M. (2018). Chanting about Citizenship: Using Arts Integration and the C3 Framework. *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, 30(3), 14-19.
- Caughlan, S. (2008). Advocating for the arts in an age of multiliteracies. *Language Arts*, 86(2), 120.
- Center for Justice and Accountability (n.d.) The Guatemala Genocide Case. (n.d.). Retrieved

- January 12, 2020, from <https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/the-guatemala-genocidecase>.
- Chalas, A., & Pitblado, M. (2021). The suitcase project: Historical inquiry, arts integration and the Holocaust. *International Journal of education through art*, 17(2), 281-301.
- Christensen, L. M. (2006). Using art to teach history to young learners. *Social Education*, 70(5), 312.
- Christensen, L., & Watson, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Rhythm and resistance: Teaching poetry for social justice*. Rethinking Schools, Limited.
- Clark, C. H., Bordwell, D. T., & Avery, P. G. (2015). Gender and public issues deliberations in named and anonymous online environments. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 11(2).
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico [Commission for Historical Clarification] (1999). Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification. Guatemala: Memory of silence Tz'inil Na'tab'al. Guatemala: Guatemala. Retrieved from: [http://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/migrate/uploads/mos\\_en.pdf](http://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/migrate/uploads/mos_en.pdf)
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2000). Introduction multiliteracies: The beginnings of an ideas. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.). *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures* (pp. 3-8). South Yarra, Australia: MacMillan Publishers.
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). "Multiliteracies": New literacies, new learning. *Pedagogy: An International Journal*, 4, 164–195.
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2016). The Things You Do to Know: An Introduction to the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies. In Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (Eds.). *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Learning by design*. Springer.
- Cope, B., Kalantzis, M., & Abrams, S. S. (2017). Meaning-making and learning in the era of digital text. *Remixing multiliteracies: Theory and practice from New London to new times*, 35-49.
- Cornbleth, C. (2017). Critical theory (s). *The Wiley handbook of social studies research*, 191-208.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Crow, G. P., Allan, G. A., & Summers, M. (2001). Changing perspectives on the insider/outsider distinction in community sociology. *Community, Work & Family*, 4(1), 29-48.

- Cruz, B. C., Ellerbrock, C. R., & Denney, S. M. (2019). Exploring Families through Contemporary Visual Art. *Social Education*, 83(3), 128-133.
- Darder, A., & Baltodano, M. (2003). *The critical pedagogy reader*. Psychology Press.
- Darts, D. (2004). Visual culture jam: Art, pedagogy, and creative resistance. *Studies in Art Education*, 45(4), 313-327.
- Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard educational review*, 58(3), 280-299.
- Desai, D., & Chalmers, G. (2007). Notes for a dialogue on art education in critical times. *Art Education*, 60(5), 6-12.
- DeWalt, K. M., & DeWalt, B. R. (2010). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Rowman Altamira.
- Douillard, K., & Labbo, L. D. (2002). Going past done: Creating time for reflection in the classroom. *Language Arts*, 80(2), 92.
- Doyle, C. (1993). *Raising curtains on education: Drama as a site for critical pedagogy*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Drewry, R. J., Cumming-Potvin, W. M., & Maor, D. (2019). New Approaches to Literacy Problems: Multiliteracies and Inclusive Pedagogies. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(11). Retrieved from <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol44/iss11/4>.
- Duncum, P. (2004). Visual culture isn't just visual: Multiliteracy, multimodality and meaning. *Studies in art education*, 45(3), 252-264.
- Elsner, D., Helff, S., & Viebrock, B. (Eds.). (2013). *Films, graphic novels & visuals: Developing multiliteracies in foreign language education: An interdisciplinary approach* (Vol. 2). LIT Verlag Münster.
- Engebretson, K. E. (2018). One novice teacher and her decisions to address or avoid controversial issues. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 42(1), 39-47.
- Engle, S. H. (2003). Decision making: The heart of social studies instruction. *The Social Studies*, 94(1), 7-10.
- Engle, S. H., & Ochoa, A. (1988). *Education for democratic citizenship: Decision making in the social studies*. Teachers College Press.
- Evans, R. W. (2001). Teaching Social Issues: Implementing an. *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities*, 291.

- Fountzoulas, G. K., Koutsouba, M. I., & Nikolaki, E. (2018). Critical literacy and the multiliteracies of dance: A first approach. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 8(3), 69-69.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (MB Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum, 2007.
- Ganapathy, M. (2014). Using multiliteracies to engage learners to produce learning. *International Journal of e-Education, e-Business, e-Management and e-Learning*, 4(6), 410.
- Garrett, H. J., & Alvey, E. (2021). Exploring the emotional dynamics of a political discussion. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 49(1), 1-26.
- Greene, M. J. (2014). On the inside looking in: Methodological insights and challenges in conducting qualitative insider research. *The qualitative report*, 19(29), 1-13.
- Grushka, K. (2005). Artists as reflective self-learners and cultural communicators: an exploration of the qualitative aesthetic dimension of knowing self through reflective practice in art-making. *Reflective practice*, 6(3), 353-366.
- Halverson, E. R. (2018). How the arts will transform education. 2018 NCECA Journal, pp. 34-36. Boulder, CO: National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts.
- Halverson, E. R., & Sheridan, K. (2014). Arts education and the learning sciences. In *The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences* (pp. 626-648).
- Hamber, B., & Wilson, R. A. (2002). Symbolic closure through memory, reparation and revenge in post-conflict societies. *Journal of Human Rights*, 1(1), 35-53.
- Hartoonian, H. M., & Van Scotter, R. (2012). Fault lines in American culture: The case for civic debate. *Social Education*, 76(4), 202-204.
- Hess, D. E. (2004). Discussion in social studies: Is it worth the trouble? *Social education*, 68(2), 151-157.
- Hess, D. E. (2009). *Controversy in the classroom: The democratic power of discussion*. Routledge.
- Hess, D. E., & McAvoy, P. (2009). To disclose or not to disclose: A controversial choice for teachers. *DE Hess, Controversy in the classroom: The democratic power of discussion*, 97-110.
- Hess, D., McAvoy, P. (2014). *The Political Classroom*. New York: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315738871>

- Hess, D., & Posselt, J. (2002). How High School Students Experience and Learn from the Discussion of Controversial Public Issues. *Journal of curriculum and supervision, 17*(4), 283-314.
- Ho, L. C., & Seow, T. (2015). Teaching controversial issues in geography: Climate change education in Singaporean schools. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 43*(3), 314-344.
- Ho, L., McAvoy, P., Hess, D., & Gibbs, B. (2017). Teaching and learning about controversial issues and topics in the social studies. *The Wiley handbook of social studies research, 319-335*.
- Holiday, D. (1997). Guatemala's long road to peace. *Current History, 96*(607), 68.
- Holloway, S. M., & Gouthro, P. A. (2020). Using a multiliteracies approach to foster critical and creative pedagogies for adult learners. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 26*(2), 203-220.
- Hong, C., Tao, W., Tsai, W. H. S., & Yook, B. R. (2020). An Examination of Information Behaviors Surrounding Controversial Sociopolitical Issues: Roles of Moral Emotions and Gender. *International Journal of Communication, 14, 23*.
- Horton-Salway, M. (2001). Narrative identities and the management of personal accountability in talk about ME: A discursive psychology approach to illness narrative. *Journal of health psychology, 6*(2), 247-259.
- Hyungsook, K. (2014). Socially engaged art practice and character education: Understanding others through visual art. *International journal of education through art, 10*(1), 55-69.
- Jeffers, C. S. (2009). On Empathy: The Mirror Neuron System and Art Education. *International Journal of Education & the Arts, 10*(15), n15.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2009). Energizing learning: The instructional power of conflict. *Educational Researcher, 38*(1), 37-51. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08330540>
- Johnson, S. D., & Weaver II, R. L. (1992). Groupthink and the classroom: Changing familiar patterns to encourage critical thought. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 19*(2), 99.
- Johnson-Bailey, J., & Cervero, R. M. (1998). Positionality: Whiteness as a social construct that drives classroom dynamics. In *Proceedings of the 39th Annual Adult Education Research Conference* (pp. 203-208). San Antonio, Texas: University of the Incarnate Word College.
- Jonas, S. (1996). Dangerous liaisons: the US in Guatemala. *Foreign Policy, (103)*, 144.

- Kagan, C. (2015). Community psychological perspectives and counselling psychology. *Counselling Psychology Review*.
- Kalantzis, M., & Cope, B. (2000). A multiliteracies pedagogy: A pedagogical supplement. In *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures* (pp. 237-246). Routledge.
- Kelaher, M., Berman, N., Dunt, D., Johnson, V., Curry, S., & Joubert, L. (2014). Evaluating community outcomes of participation in community arts: A case for civic dialogue. *Journal of Sociology*, 50(2), 132-149.
- Knowles, R. T., & Clark, C. H. (2018). How common is the common good? Moving beyond idealistic notions of deliberative democracy in education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 71, 12-23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.12.002>
- Lewis, J. B. (2001). Social justice, social studies, and social foundations. *The Social Studies*, 92(5), 189-192.
- Liu, K. (2015). Critical reflection as a framework for transformative learning in teacher education. *Educational Review*, 67(2), 135-157.
- Lopez, I. F. H. (1997). Race, ethnicity, erasure: The salience of race to LatCrit theory. *Calif. L. Rev.*, 85, 1143.
- Lotherington, H. (2003). Multiliteracies in Springvale: Negotiating language, culture and identity in suburban Melbourne. In *Language socialization in bilingual and multilingual societies* (pp. 200-217). Multilingual Matters.
- Luangphinit, S. I. (2005). Your place or mine? The insider/outsider in the classroom in Hawai'i. *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, 16(1), 67-82.
- Magendzo, A., & Toledo, M. I. (2009). Moral dilemmas in teaching recent history related to the violation of human rights in Chile. *Journal of Moral Education*, 38(4), 445-465.
- Maia, R. C., & Hauber, G. (2020). The emotional dimensions of reason-giving in deliberative forums. *Policy Sciences*, 53(1), 33-59.
- Manning, J. (2017). In vivo coding. *The international encyclopedia of communication research methods*, 1-2.
- Mardell, B., & Kucirkova, N. (2016). Promoting democratic classroom communities through storytelling and story acting. In *Storytelling in Early Childhood* (pp. 183-199). Routledge.
- Marsh, J., Arnseth, H. C., & Kumpulainen, K. (2018). Maker literacies and maker citizenship in

- the MakeY (Makerspaces in the Early Years) project. *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction*, 2(3), 50.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage Publications.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- McAvoy, P., & Hess, D. (2013). Classroom deliberation in an era of political polarization. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43(1), 14-47.
- McKenna, S. E. (1999). Theory and practice: Revisiting critical pedagogy in studio art education. *Art Journal*, 58(1), 74-79.
- McNiff, S. (2007). Empathy with the shadow: Engaging and transforming difficulties through art. *Journal of humanistic psychology*, 47(3), 392-399.
- McPherson, J., & Mazza, N. (2014). Using arts activism and poetry to catalyze human rights engagement and reflection. *Social Work Education*, 33(7), 944-958.
- McWilliams, M. S., Vaughns, A. B., O'Hara, A., Novotny, L. S., & Kyle, T. J. (2014). Art play: Stories of engaging families, inspiring learning, and exploring emotions. *YC Young Children*, 69(2), 32.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Mezirow, J. (1990). How critical reflection triggers transformative learning. *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood*, 1(20), 1-6.
- Mills, K. A. (2008). Transformed practice in a pedagogy of multiliteracies. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 3(2), 109-128.
- Molderez, I., & Ceulemans, K. (2018). The power of art to foster systems thinking, one of the key competencies of education for sustainable development. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 186, 758-770.
- Montejo, V. (1987). *Testimony: Death of a Guatemalan Village* (Translated by Perera V.). Inter-Collegiate Press, CT.
- Muijen, H. S., & Brohm, R. (2018). Art dialogue methods: phronèsis and its potential for restoring an embodied moral authority in local communities. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 46(3), 349-364.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66, 60-92.

- Ochoa-Becker, A. S. (1996). Building a rationale for issues-centered education. *Handbook on teaching social issues*, 6-13.
- Oliver, D. W. (1960). Categories of social science instruction. *The High School Journal*, 43(7), 387-397.
- Olsen, A. (2013). Sustainability and art making. *Sustainability: The Journal of Record*, 6(3), 142-146.
- Pace, J. L. (2019). Contained risk-taking: Preparing preservice teachers to teach controversial issues in three countries. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 47(2), 228-260.
- Parker, W. C. (2006). Public discourses in schools: Purposes, problems, possibilities. *Educational Researcher*, 35(8), 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X035008011>
- Parker, W. C. (2008). Knowing and doing in democratic citizenship education. *Handbook of research in social studies education*, 65-80.
- Pope, D. J., Butler, H., & Qualter, P. (2012). Emotional understanding and color-emotion associations in children aged 7-8 years. *Child Development Research*, 2012.
- Riegel, K. F. (1975). Toward a dialectical theory of development. *Human development*, 18(1-2), 50-64.
- Risinger, C. F. (2015). Effective Integration of the Arts into the Social Studies. *Social Education*, 79(3), 155-156.
- Rolfe, G., & Freshwater, D. (2020). *Critical reflection in practice: generating knowledge for care*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Roosen, L. J., Klöckner, C. A., & Swim, J. K. (2018). Visual art as a way to communicate climate change: a psychological perspective on climate change-related art. *World Art*, 8(1), 85-110.
- Ross, E. W., & Hannay, L. M. (1986). Towards a critical theory of reflective inquiry: Theme. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(4), 9-15.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage Publications.
- Schwarzer, D. (2001). *Noah's Ark: One child's voyage into multiliteracy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Schwarzer, D., Haywood, A., & Lorenzen, C. (2003). Fostering multiliteracy in a linguistically diverse classroom. *Language Arts*, 80(6), 453-460.

- Segall, A. (1999). Critical history: Implications for history/social studies education. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 27(3), 358-374.
- Segall, A. (2013). Revitalizing critical discourses in social education: Opportunities for a more complexified (un) knowing. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 41(4), 476-493.
- Segall, A. (2014). Making difficult history public: The pedagogy of remembering and forgetting in two Washington DC museums. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 36(1), 55-70.
- Segall, A., & Gaudelli, W. (2007). Reflecting socially on social issues in a social studies methods course. *Teaching Education*, 18(1), 77-92.
- Segall, A., Crocco, M. S., Halvorsen, A. L., & Jacobsen, R. (2018). Lessons learned about the challenges of classroom deliberations. *Social Education*, 82(6), 336-342.
- Shaver, J. P. (1989). Lessons from the past: The future of an issues-centered social studies curriculum. *The Social Studies*, 80(5), 192-196.
- Shaver, J. P. (1992). Rationales for issues-centered social studies education. *The Social Studies*, 83(3), 95-99.
- Sheppard, M., & Levy, S. A. (2019). Emotions and teacher decision-making: An analysis of social studies teachers' perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 77(1), 193-203.
- Skattebol, J. (2005). Insider/Outsider Belongings: traversing the borders of whiteness in early childhood. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 6(2), 189-203.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2008). 32 Preparing White teachers for diverse students. *Handbook of research on teacher education*, 559.
- Smith, P. (2001). Memory without history: Who owns Guatemala's past?. *The Washington Quarterly*, 24(2), 59-72.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 14(4), 471-495.
- Stich, S. (2018). Social Development Strategies in Peace Processes: Colombia and Guatemala. *Social Development Issues*, 40(3), 41-57.
- Stickley, T., Hui, A., Morgan, J., & Bertram, G. (2007). Experiences and constructions of art: A narrative-discourse analysis. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 14(8), 783-790.
- Stovall, D. (2006). We can relate: Hip-hop culture, critical pedagogy, and the secondary classroom. *Urban Education*, 41(6), 585-602.
- Stuhr, P. (2003). A tale of why social and cultural content is often excluded from art

- education— and why it should not be. *Studies in Art Education*, 44(4), 301–314.
- Suescun-Giraldo, C. M. (2022). Art Integration in EFL: Making Pre-Service Teachers More Reflective. In *Handbook of Research on Effective Online Language Teaching in a Disruptive Environment* (pp. 168-178). IGI Global.
- Taft-Morales, M. (2019). Guatemala: Political, Security, and Socio-Economic Conditions and US Relations. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service.
- Thwaites, T. (1999). Multiliteracies: A new direction for arts education. Paper presented at the AARE Annual Conference, Melbourne, Australia.
- Trainor, A. (2013). Interview research. In *Reviewing qualitative research in the social sciences* (pp. 137-150). Routledge.
- Warner, C., & Dupuy, B. (2018). Moving toward multiliteracies in foreign language teaching: Past and present perspectives... and beyond. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(1), 116-128.
- Washington, E. Y., & Humphries, E. K. (2011). A social studies teacher's sense making of controversial issues discussions of race in a predominantly white, rural high school classroom. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 39(1), 92-114.
- Watson, V. W., Deroo, M. R., & Skogsberg, E. (2019). Multiliteracies toward Justice in Literacy Teaching and Research. *Race, Justice, and Activism in Literacy Instruction*, 163-79.
- Wertsch, J. V. (2009). Collective remembering. *Semiotica*, 173(1). doi:10.1515/SEMI.2009.009.
- Willis Allen, H., & Paesani, K. (2010). Exploring the feasibility of a pedagogy of multiliteracies in introductory foreign language courses. *L2 Journal*, 2(1).
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Zembylas, M., & Kambani, F. (2012). The teaching of controversial issues during elementary-level history instruction: Greek-Cypriot teachers' perceptions and emotions. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 40(2), 107-133.
- Zembylas, M., & Loukaidis, L. (2021). Affective practices, difficult histories and peace education: An analysis of teachers' affective dilemmas in ethnically divided Cyprus. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 97, 103225.
- Zhang, Z., Nagle, J., McKishnie, B., Lin, Z., & Li, W. (2019). Scientific strengths and reported effectiveness: a systematic review of multiliteracies studies. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 14(1), 33-61.
- Zur, J. N. (2019). *Violent memories: Mayan war widows in Guatemala*. Routledge.

**APPENDIX A  
TEACHER UNITS**

<b>Ms. Moxley's Unit</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity/Prompt</b>
3/23/20	<p><u>Writing Prompt: Check-In</u> After your interviews with Miss Bagwell and what you know about this upcoming unit on racism in Guatemala, how are you feeling going into it? What are you hoping to learn/gain from this? Write at least three sentences.</p>
3/25/20	<p><u>Social Issues in Guatemala</u> Students were given a variety of sources as a starting point on racism in Guatemala. Students were asked to write a paragraph including anything they learned, that surprised them, moved them, or that they might have disagreed with. Students were also asked to provide two new sources of their own.</p>
3/27/20	<p><u>Writing Prompt: Where do you get your information?</u> Where have you heard most of your information about the Guatemalan Civil War? School? Family? Culture? Guatemalan History Students were given a variety of resources about the Conflictio Armado to research and read over.</p>
3/30/20	<p><u>Writing Prompt: Perspectives</u> How do you think an article written by the perspective of a Guatemalan would be different than an article written by someone from the United States on the topic of the civil war? Write a paragraph explaining your reasoning. Include an outside source that you found on your own.</p>
4/1/20	<p><u>Perpetrators, Bystanders, and Victims</u> Students are given a variety of resources to read regarding perpetrators, bystanders, and victims. <u>Writing Prompt: Check-In</u> How are you doing? I miss you and haven't been able to hear about your lives as much as I am used to!</p>
4/3/20	<p><u>Writing Prompt: What role do you play?</u> You have read through the materials on being a perpetrator, victim, bystander, or an upstander. Now it is time to reflect- which are you? Racism in Guatemala has many layers, and from time to time we can play many different roles in our culture. Write a paragraph explaining what role you play in racism. Remember, people can play more than one role on any given day. Be honest and dig deep!</p>
4/13/20	<p><u>Writing Prompt: Complete These Statements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see racism in...</li> <li>• I believe that all people...</li> <li>• ...is where many Guatemalans get it wrong.</li> <li>• Racism could improve through...</li> </ul> <p>Each statement should be at least two sentences long. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You will use these statements to create your artwork later.</p>
4/15/20	<p><u>Analyze the Artwork</u></p>

	<p>Students are given a series of different works of art to analyze.</p> <p><u>Writing Prompt: Art as Response</u></p> <p>Using ONE of art pieces provided, write a paragraph or record a video of you talking about the art. You need to talk about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What point are they trying to get across?</li> <li>• What is the "mood" of the artwork?</li> <li>• What techniques do they use?</li> <li>• What don't you like about it?</li> <li>• How do the colors in the artwork help get their point across?</li> <li>• Why did you choose this one?</li> </ul>
4/17/20 & 4/20/20	<p><u>Start Working!</u></p> <p>Students are encouraged to start planning and working on their artwork at home.</p> <p><u>Writing Prompt: Planning Sheet</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do these two artists have in common?</li> <li>• Which artwork did you prefer? Why?</li> <li>• What art techniques do you feel you have mastered the most? (think about all your options: drawing, painting, fiber arts, graphic design, photography, sculpture, etc)</li> <li>• Pick one of your statements from the assignment "Make a Statement". You will use this as your theme for your project. Pick the statement that is the most thought out, would be the most intriguing to an audience, and that you can visualize the best. Write it here:</li> <li>• Describe how you will make that statement come to life in your artwork (at least three sentences):</li> <li>• Draw a sketch of your plan and upload it on this assignment along with your answers.</li> </ul>
4/20/20- 4/24/20	<p>Students work to create artwork with a message about racism in Guatemala based on their informed opinions from their research. Students use art skills they have learned and mastered over their high school careers to create their artwork.</p>

	<b>Mr. Jansen's Unit</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Activity/Prompt:</b>
4/28/20	<p><u>Intro to Unit</u></p> <p>Part 1: In a short paragraph, define sexism and give 1-2 examples of how it appears in your community.</p> <p>Part 2: On one side of a piece of paper, draw an image of a real man/real woman (according to your own gender) On the other side, draw an image of a good man/good woman. Use whatever meaning you think the terms real and good have. On a separate sheet of paper, write a ~1/2 page reflection on the elements you included in each image-what makes someone a "real man/woman" or "good man/woman." Additionally, explain where did you get the idea that those things make someone a "good ___" or "real ___?" What culture/country did those ideas come from?</p>

4/29/20	<p><u>Google Hangout Session</u> Students meet online from 11:00-11:45 to discuss their drawings.</p>
4/30/20	<p><u>Gender Roles in Advertisements: Gillette Commercial</u> Watch the ad below. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0&amp;feature=emb_logo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0&amp;feature=emb_logo</a> In assigned groups, analyze one of the instances of male behavior and discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is masculinity (an idea of how men should act) being performed/acted out?</li> <li>• How, if at all, is femininity performed/acted out?</li> <li>• Are the male behaviors innate/natural for men, or are they learned?</li> <li>• How could the male behavior in the scene be modified to be healthy/positive/good?</li> </ul> <p>Groups: Student A and Student M: boy being chased down a street (1.02-1.07, 1.17-1.19, 1.22-1.25) Student K, Student E, and Student A: girls at pool party: (.54-.56) Student MC: woman walking in city (.58-1.01) Discuss by whatever means is convenient to you, and be prepared to briefly summarize your groups thoughts on Monday. Additionally, write a short reflection (~1-2 paragraphs) describing how the ad reflected American culture, and compare/contrast to Guatemalan and Guatemalan indigenous culture and values.</p>
5/4/20	<p><u>Gender Roles in Advertisements: Like a Girl Commercial</u> Watch the commercial below. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs&amp;feature=emb_logo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs&amp;feature=emb_logo</a> In the same groups as the Gillette commercial, discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What might be done "like a girl" and what that would mean.</li> <li>• What might be done "like a boy/man" and what that would mean.</li> </ul> <p>Be on google hangouts at 2:30 to discuss your opinions of the two ads. Students meet on Google Hangouts at 2:30 pm.</p>
5/5/20	<p><u>Gender Roles in advertisements: Guatemala</u> Find a tv ad that aired in Guatemala, for a company not based in the US. Submit a link to your ad, along with a ~1/2 reflection on differences in gender roles displayed by the Guatemalan ad vs. the two US ads. Also discuss whether the ad was targeting the Ladino or indigenous community, and how it would need to be different if it were targeting the other group.</p>
5/6/20	<p><u>Google Hangouts Discussion</u> Students meet via Google Hangouts to discuss their ads.</p>
5/8/20	<p><u>Analyze Articles</u> Read one article arguing for the US of Latinx and one against. Write a ~1/2 response regarding which side you agree with more and why, and be prepared to discuss it in a meet session on Monday. -with</p>

	regard to the article from the Mary Sue, apologies for some of the language.
5/11/20	<u>Google Hangouts</u> Students meet on Google Hangouts to discuss the articles they read the week before.
5/12/20	<u>Story Board Project Ideas</u> Send a private comment explaining the main idea/topic for your storyboard. If you would like to talk ideas over, let me know and I am happy to find time to do so. Your storyboard needs to be for a company trying to sell a product, but think about how it might do so while reflecting gendered ideals and realities (good or bad). The Gillette commercial for instance was very clearly calling for a different model of male behavior and trying to get business from people with similar views. The Always ad was also very clearly ideological. On the other hand, the first storyboard example was less pointed, but still subverted gender roles by having the girl follow what she wanted instead of the tv, and having a father play the nurturing/supportive role. The hair dye storyboard on the other hand was more stereotypical, with the woman defined by the color of her hair and deriving confidence from that. Questions to possibly address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do gender roles play out in my life/community?</li> <li>• How are gender roles and sexism reflected in different products and marketing?</li> <li>• How are the realities and ideals of gender different?</li> </ul>
5/13/20	<u>Story Board Project Progress</u> Submit a photo of the first 3-4 slides of your storyboard. If you change them tomorrow, that's fine.
5/14/20	<u>Final Story Board</u> Students turn in their final story board.

	<b>Ms. Reyes' Unit</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Activity/Prompt:</b>
4/27/20	<u>Introduction Questions</u> For today, the assignment will be to answer the following questions in a google doc or in a sheet of notebook paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where have you seen unfairness in Guatemala?</li> <li>• Can you name a few examples of inequalities you have seen?</li> <li>• Why do you think certain people are treated unfairly?</li> <li>• Why do you think those things are happening?</li> </ul>

	Please answer the questions in a minimum of 300 words and turn it in today.”
5/12/20	<p><u>Photo Analysis:</u> For today, I want you guys to write on a piece of paper three sentences for each picture. [Students are given a series of photos to analyze]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you feel when you see this picture?</li> <li>• Do you think there is a problem in this picture?</li> <li>• What does it represent about Guatemalan culture?”</li> </ul>
5/15/20	<p><u>Creating an Art Piece</u> Today's assignment is more artistic. Based on the slides that you analyzed earlier this week, and on the writing you've done earlier, I want you to create an art piece (drawing, painting, etc.) showing an example of a situation where you've noticed inequalities happening around you. This art piece will be due until next Tuesday, but I will explain more in our meeting at 10:30 today.</p>
5/18/20	<p><u>Creating and Reflecting on Art Piece</u> Today we are continuing our art project on inequality or unfairness. Try to be the most creative you can be. I will extend the due date of your art piece until Wednesday, but now I also want you to write an explanation of your art piece that will be due on Thursday.</p> <p>Please write a minimum of 300 words telling me why you drew what you drew. What inspired you? Do you think we can make an impact on our society by acting differently? For tomorrow's social study, I will post a video explaining this writing assignment. This will be due on Thursday.</p>
5/22/20	<p><u>Google Hangout Discussion</u> Students meet to talk about the unit.</p>

## APPENDIX B SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

*The interviews will be semi-structured, and an audio recording will be taken. There will be no identifiable information on the audio tape. Students selected for the interview will have the option of opting out of the interview with no penalty or consequence. I will be conducting pre and post study interviews. Additionally, the parent consent and student assent forms note the potential of a third interview in the middle of the study that will be dependent on data collection from the classroom observations. Additional questions in the post-study interview will be driven by observation data. Each interview will last about 15 minutes.*

Project:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

### Student Questions Pre-Study Interview

#### Defining Key Terms

- What comes to mind when you hear the term social issue?
- What comes to mind when you hear the word controversial issue?
- When you hear the term difficult histories, what do you think of?

#### Social and historical Issues in Your Community

- What social issues are currently affecting Guatemala?
  - What is your opinion about these issues?
  - What are the different perspectives that people have about these issues?
  - Why do you think some people disagree or have different points of view about this issue?
  - What do you think are the roots or causes behind these issues?
  - What are the different factors that you think influence people's opinions about these social issues?
- What historical issues have affected Guatemala?
  - What is your opinion about these issues?
  - What are the different perspectives that people have about these issues?
  - Why do you think some people disagree or have different points of view about this issue?
  - What are the different factors that you think influence people's opinions about these social issues?
  - What do you think are the roots or causes historically behind these issues?

- How frequently do you talk about these issues outside of class? Who do you discuss these issues with? Why/Why not?

### Classroom Room Environment

- In class, how frequently does your teacher discuss global or world issues?
  - What global issues have you discussed? How were these discussed?
  - Do you ever talk about the causes of these issues? If so, how?
- In your class, how frequently do you have opportunities to discuss issues that are related to your own country?
  - What national issues have you discussed? How were these discussed?
  - Do you ever talk about the causes of these issues? If so, how?
- In class, how frequently do you have opportunities to learn about issues that are relevant to your local community?
  - What local issues have you discussed? How were these discussed?
  - Do you ever talk about the causes of these issues? If so how?
- Have you ever used art in your class before? If so, how?

### Emotional Dialogue with Controversial Issues in the Classroom

- What do you do when you hear a view that you disagree with? Why?
  - Do you feel like it's difficult to consider other opinions different than your own? Why or why not?
- What are other types of emotions that you have seen during discussions?
  - Do people get emotional during such discussions? For example, do people react angrily? Do people react in excitement when they talk?
  - How do these reactions and emotions (whatever examples students/teachers may use) affect the learning environment?

### Structures of Power

- What is power?
  - What does it mean to have power?
  - Who or what has power/influence in your community?
- How do you think power influences politics in your community?
  - Do some groups have more power than others?
  - Do you feel like there are people or organizations in your community that abuse their power? Why or why not?
- How does this power/ influence impact different issues in your community, both in the past and the present?

## **Teacher Questions Pre-Study Interview**

### Defining Key Terms

- What comes to mind when you hear the term social issue?
- What comes to mind when you hear the word controversial issue?

- Do you feel like you are able to bring controversial issues into your classroom? Why or why not?
- When you hear the term difficult histories, what do you think of?
  - Do you feel like you are equipped to teach about difficult histories in your classroom? Why or why not?

### Social Issues in Your Community

- What are current issues affecting your community and/or Guatemala as a whole?
  - What is your opinion about these issues?
  - What are the different perspectives that people have about these issues?
  - Why do you think some people disagree or have different points of view about this issue?
  - What are different factors that you think influence people's opinions about these social issues?
- What historical issues have affected your community and/or Guatemala as a whole?
  - What is your opinion about these issues?
  - What are the different perspectives that people have about these issues?
  - Why do you think some people disagree or have different points of view about this issue?
  - What are different factors that you think influence people's opinions about these social issues?
  - Do you talk about these issues outside of class? At home or with friends?
- How do you think your cultural or religious background impacts how you teach or talk about these social issues?

### Classroom Room Environment

- As a teacher, what are the different factors that influence the way you plan and implement lessons in your classroom?
- Do you ever discuss global or world issues with your students?
  - What global issues have you discussed? How were these discussed?
  - Do you ever talk about the causes of these issues? If so, how?
- In your class, do you provide opportunities to discuss Guatemalan social issues?
  - What national issues have you discussed? How were these discussed?
  - Do you ever talk about the causes of these issues with your students? If so, how?
- In class, do you provide opportunities to learn about issues in the local community?
  - What local issues have you discussed? How were these discussed?
  - Do you ever talk about the causes of these issues with your students? If so, how?
- Have you ever used art in your class before? If so how?

### Emotions in the Classroom

- How does your class respond when the issue is emotional?
- How would you respond to someone who voices an opinion that you fundamentally disagree with?

### Structures of Power

- What is power?
  - What does it mean to have power?
  - Who or what has power/influence in your community?
- How do you think power influences politics in your community?
  - Do some groups have more power than others?
  - Do you feel like there are people or organizations in your community that abuse their power? Why or why not?
- How does this power/ influence impact different issues in your community, both in the past and the present?

### **Student Questions Post-Study Interview**

#### Defining Key Terms

- What comes to mind when you hear the term social issue?
- What comes to mind when you hear the word controversial issue?
- When you hear the term difficult and emotional histories, what do you think of?

#### Social Issues in Your Community

- What are current issues affecting your community and/or Guatemala as a whole?
  - What is your opinion about these issues?
  - What are the different perspectives that people have about these issues?
  - Why do you think some people disagree or have different points of view about this issue?
  - What are different factors that you think influence people's opinions about these social issues?
  - What are the different roots or causes behind these issues? Why are they issues in your community?
- What historical issues have affected your community and/or Guatemala as a whole?
  - What is your opinion about these issues?
  - What are the different perspectives that people have about these issues?
  - Why do you think some people disagree or have different points of view about this issue?
  - What are different factors that you think influence people's opinions about these social issues?
  - What are the different causes of these issues? Why are have they historically been issues in your community?
- Since the beginning of this study do you talk about these issues more or less outside of class than you did before with friends and/or family?

#### Classroom Room Experience with Art

- Describe your experience this past few weeks using different types of art in the classroom.
  - How was this kind of experience similar or different to your normal classroom setting?

- What challenges did you face when art was integrated into your classroom?
- How did integrating art into your classroom compare to other methods your teacher has used to teach different content?
- Would this experience be something you would like to see happen again in your classroom? Why or why not?

### Structures of Power

- What is power?
  - What does it mean to have power?
  - Who or what has power/influence in your community?
- How do you think power influences politics in your community?
  - Do some groups have more power than others?
  - Do you feel like there are people or organizations in your community that abuse their power? Why or why not?
- How does this power/ influence impact different issues in your community, both in the past and the present?
- What conversations about power came up in this past unit?
- How did you use art during this unit to talk about power?
  - What conversations came up as a result?
  - Do you feel like it was successful? Why or why not?

### Dialogue with Controversial Issues

- How did you use art to communicate your ideas and opinions with your classmates? Can you provide examples?
- In your opinion, do you feel like art was an effective way communicate with your classmates? Why or why not?

### Emotions in the Classroom

- What emotions came up in class as a result of learning about historical and contemporary social issues in Guatemala?
- How did it feel when and if someone in your classroom had a different opinion of a social issue than you?
- What did it feel like to learn about the different systems and cultural factors that impact the way we see different social issues?
- You've spent the past unit exploring social issues through art. How, if at all did using art as a tool impact the different emotions that came up as a result of this unit?

## **Teacher Questions Post-Study Interview**

### Defining Key Terms

- What comes to mind when you hear the term social issue?
- What comes to mind when you hear the word controversial issue?
  - Do you feel like you are able to bring controversial issues into your classroom? Why or why not?

- When you hear the term difficult and emotional histories, what do you think of?
  - Do you feel like you are equipped to teach about difficult and emotional histories in your classroom? Why or why not?

#### Classroom Room Experience with Art

Describe your experience this past few weeks using different types of art in the classroom.

- How was this kind of experience similar or different to your normal classroom setting?
- What challenges did you face when art was integrated into your classroom?
- How did integrating art into your classroom compare to other methods you have used as teacher has used to teach different content?
- Would this experience be something you would like to see happen again in your classroom? Why or why not?

#### Classroom Experience with Social Issues

- What was your experience these past few weeks engaging with social issues in the classroom?
  - Were there any moments where you felt challenged? Were there any moments that stood out to you as being successful?
  - What was your strategy for implementing these lessons? If you were to do these lessons again what would you do the same, what would you change?
  - What was student engagement like these past few weeks compared to the rest of the year?

#### Structures of Power

- What is power?
  - What does it mean to have power?
  - Who or what has power/influence in your community?
- How do you think power influences politics in your community?
  - Do some groups have more power than others?
  - Do you feel like there are people or organizations in your community that abuse their power? Why or why not?
- How does this power/ influence impact different issues in your community, both in the past and the present?
- How did you see your students discuss issues of power during their unit?
- How did you see students use art specifically as a tool for discussing issues of power in you classroom?

#### Dialogue with Controversial Issues

- How did you see students use art to communicate their ideas and opinions with their classmates?
- In your opinion, do you feel like art was an effective way for students to communicate with others? Why or why not?
- In your opinion can art be used a form of dialogue? Why or why not?

#### Emotions in the Classroom

- What types of conversations came up in your classroom as a result of this unit?

- Do you feel like these conversations engaged with a more rational or emotional discourse or both?
- What emotions came up in class as a result of engaging with historical and contemporary social issues in Guatemala?

## APPENDIX C

University of Wisconsin  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Student Assent Form

**Principal Investigators:** Lauren Bagwell

### What is a Research Study?

I want to tell you about a research study we are doing. Research studies help us to learn new things and test new ideas. People who work on research studies are called researchers. During research studies, the researchers collect a lot of information so that they can learn more about something. I am doing this study because I would like to learn more about how students and teachers engage with teaching and learning about social issues through art.

There are a few things you should know about this study:

- You get to decide if you want to be in the study
- You can say ‘No’ or ‘Yes’
- Whatever you decide is OK
- If you say ‘Yes’ now, you can change your mind and say ‘No’ later
- No one will be upset if you say ‘No’
- You can ask us questions at any time
- We will also get permission from your parent/guardian for you to take part in this study

The person in charge of this study is Ms. Lauren Bagwell. I will refer to them as the “researcher” throughout this form.

### What will I do if I am in this research study?

If you decide to be in this study, I will ask you to:

- Participate in interviews lasting no more than 45 minutes during the school day.
- Allow the researcher to collect and analyze your journey with your work with engaging with art and social issues in the classroom.
- Allow the researcher to come observe you while you are participating in class activities and discussion
- Possibly participate in a small group interview lasting no more than 30 minutes during regular class time.

I would like to make **an audio recording** of interviews and classroom participation during this study. These recordings will be used only for the purpose of collecting and analyzing data. I will store these recordings in a locked cabinet and only the researchers will be able to see them. Audio recording is **optional** for this study. If you do not want to be recorded, you can still be in the study.

### Can anything bad happen to me while I am in this study?

I do not think that taking part in this study will hurt you.

**What else should I know?**

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to, you will still be required to engage in the curriculum unit and art project as part of your regular classroom activity. Your work will only be analyzed in describing the impact and results of using art in the classroom. It is also ok to say “yes” and change your mind later. You can stop being in the research at any time. If you want to stop, tell the researcher. No one will be mad at you.

**What if I have any questions about this research study?**

You can email me with any concerns or questions about the research.

Ms. Lauren Bagwell, [LBagwell@ias-xela.org](mailto:LBagwell@ias-xela.org)

If you have other questions about the study and want to talk to someone who is not a part of the study, you can call the University of Wisconsin IRB through the School of Education IRB director Casey Pellien at [casey.pellien@wisc.edu](mailto:casey.pellien@wisc.edu).

**Statement of Assent**

If you want to be in the study, write your name below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have explained the research to the subject and answered all his/her questions. I will give a copy of the signed assent form to the subject and his/her parent/guardian.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX D

University of Wisconsin  
 Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
 Parent/Guardian Permission  
 Principal Investigator: Lauren Bagwell

Please read this form carefully. The purpose of this form is to provide you with important information about the research study and what to expect if you allow your child to participate. If any of the statements or words in this form is unclear, please let me know. I would be happy to answer any questions. You have the right to discuss this study with another person who is not part of the research team before making your decision whether or not your child can be in the study. Your child's participation is voluntary. If you decide to let your child take part in this research study, I will ask you to sign this form. Additionally, I will ask your child to read and sign an assent form. Your child can refuse to take part even if you provide permission. We will give you a copy of the signed forms.

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The central focus of this study involves looking at the value of arts-based pedagogical strategies as tools for the teaching and learning of historical and contemporary social issues. In this study teachers and students will use art as a method of identifying and examining issues of power in their society, establishing their own point of view, and considering alternative perspectives. This study will take place during Quarter 3 and consist of individual semi-structured interviews with the three participating teachers, individual semi-structured interviews with students, classroom observations, and student artifacts. **The school's, the students' and teachers' identity will all remain anonymous throughout the entirety of the study.** All identifiers will be numerically coded and correlated to protect the identity of the students, teachers, and school.

### **How long will my child be involved in the study?**

Your son/daughter will be asked to participate in the study as *part of regular class instruction* for one instructional unit during Quarter 3. This unit will integrate art and social studies as a way to discuss social issues in the classroom. All of the study will take place during the regular school day and will require no extra time on the part of your student outside of school. All students will receive the curriculum, however students who do not have parental consent or assent forms will not be included in the data collection process.

### **What will happen if my child takes part in this research study?**

I am asking permission to use the student work (artifacts) generated by your child during the study for analysis purposes. Artifacts may include written reflections, artwork, and classroom activities. Students will take part in interviews throughout the course of the study. All interviews will be audio taped only for the purpose of data analysis. Audio recordings will be transcribed without any identifying information and then destroyed. During the course of study, I as a researcher will conduct classroom observations to explore students' interactions with the curriculum and record their dialogue with teachers and fellow students. Since the instruction is part of regular instruction all students will receive the instruction, but the researcher will only

have access (as given by the child's teacher) to the student data from students whose parents authorize permission by signing this letter.

**Are there any risks to my child?**

There are no known physical, psychological, and/or sociological risks involved.

**Data Storage and Confidentiality:**

All data collected will be completely confidential and coded to insure privacy of the teachers, students and their schools. All identifiers will be disposed of upon completion of the study. Names of participants and schools will remain confidential and will not be cited in the study. All data will be held in the strictest of confidences. Upon receipt of the data the researcher (Ms. Bagwell) will code the names of the students so that research assistants never have access to specific student names. This will ensure confidentiality and privacy. Every effort will be made to make the observational aspects of the study as unobtrusive as possible so that students are comfortable in their learning environment.

**Study Participation and Early Withdrawal**

Allowing your child to take part in this study is your choice. You are free not to allow your child to take part or to withdraw your child at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you or your child are entitled. If you decide to withdraw your child from this study, the information that your child has already provided will be kept confidential. You cannot withdraw information collected prior to your child's withdrawal. Your child may choose not to be in the study or to stop being in the study before it is over at any time. This will not affect your child's grades. Your child will not be offered or receive any special consideration if he/she takes part in this research study.

**What if I have any questions or concerns about this research study?**

You can call or email me with any concerns or questions about the research.

Ms. Lauren Bagwell

LBagwell@ias-xela.org

Whats App: +1 214-862-8987

If you want to speak with someone **not** directly involved in this research study, you may contact the University of Wisconsin Education Research IRB through the IRB director Casey Pellien at [casey.pellien@wisc.edu](mailto:casey.pellien@wisc.edu). You can talk to them about:

Your child's rights as a research subject

Your or your child's concerns about the research

A complaint about the research

I give my permission for my child to take part in this research study and agree to allow his/her information to be used and shared as described above.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have explained the research to the parent(s)/guardian and answered all their questions. I will give a copy of the signed permission form to the parent(s)/guardian.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Obtaining Permission

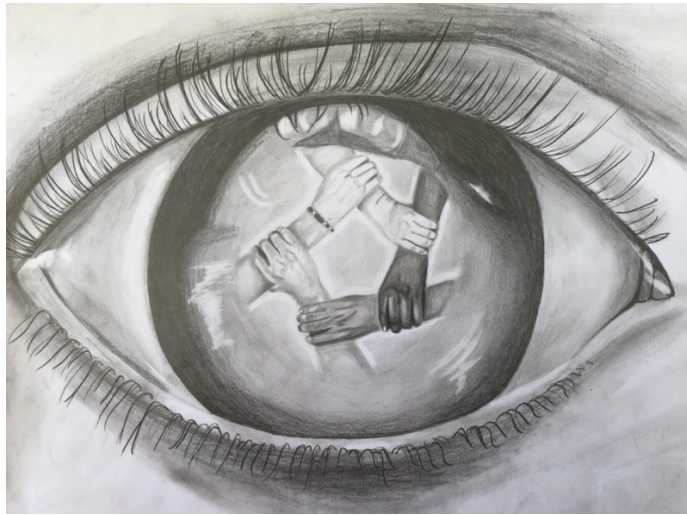
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# APPENDIX E STUDENT ARTWORK

12<sup>th</sup> Grade Art:



12<sup>th</sup> Grade Art Continued:



11<sup>th</sup> Grade Storyboards:



4<sup>th</sup> Grade Artwork:

