

Lev Vygotsky and Art Education: A Theoretical Framework for a Cultural-Historical Model of Visual Art Education for Primary School-Age Children

by

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Abstract

This study constructs a theoretical framework and argument for the development-advancing functions that art education can have during childhood as based on the theories of child development, imagination and art central to the Cultural-Historical Constructivist theory of development of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Building on Vygotsky's theory of development and his definition of imagination this thesis argues that during childhood imagination is in a particularly sensitive and important stage of development. At this stage its growth and ability to influence the development of other functions hinges on the ways children's activities use and develop their imagination. Visual art education can be understood as one such activity: developing the imagination, and through it, developing the whole psychological system of the child. However, not everything called 'art education' for children has the characteristics needed to best develop the imagination. This study will also outline some guiding principles for art curriculum and teaching methods that can, following from Vygotsky's theory, make art education an activity that fosters development.

Keywords: Vygotsky; art education; imagination; creativity; child development

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Preface

The purpose of this theoretical study is to construct an argument for the development-advancing functions that art education can have during childhood as based on the theories of child development, imagination and art central to the Cultural-Historical Constructivist theory of development of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. More specifically, this thesis asks the question: within Vygotsky's explanation of development, can art education be a leading activity in the development of imagination and through it, the development of the whole psychological system? Despite the growing popularity of Vygotsky's theories, my literature review found no work published in either the literature on visual art education or on Vygotsky's theories that apply his ideas to art education. This theoretical study seeks to begin to fill that gap in the theory and literature, both with ideas about the relationship between child development and art education, and by providing some concrete principles for guiding the construction of art education methods and curriculum such that art can be an effective activity for fostering intellectual development.

The central argument that I will present is that imagination, when understood within Vygotsky's theories, is a vital mental function for mature, flexible thought. Furthermore I will argue that it is vital for the development of the whole psychological system of the individual: from preschool-age, where it first appears, through its development in childhood and adolescence to adulthood. The mental function of imagination, as Vygotsky understood it, is a mental process intimately tied to reality, not a product of the subconscious. It is learned through participation in activities that require its use. In turn, the use of the imagination leads the development of a variety of mental functions including conscious awareness and conceptual thinking during childhood. It is this age, from the beginning of elementary school to early adolescence that will be the focus of this study.

Based on Vygotsky's texts I will argue that during childhood, imagination is in a particularly sensitive and important stage of development. At this stage, its growth and ability to influence the development of other functions hinges on the ways children's activities use imagination. That is to say that during childhood imagination needs to be practiced externally in creative activities in order to be developed and internalized. Visual art education, I will argue, can be one such activity. It develops the imagination and, through it, develops the whole psychological system of the child. However, not everything called 'art education' for children has the characteristics needed to best develop the imagination. This thesis will also outline the characteristics that can, following from Vygotsky's theory, make art education a particularly important activity for facilitating development during childhood.

The thesis is broken into six chapters. The first chapter reviews the literature in art education and Vygotsky's theories looking for applications of his ideas to art education. To do so I start with a framework of the concepts at the heart of Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Constructivist theory of development comparing it to the cognitivist and social constructivist theories that can be found at the base of most art education programs. The second chapter proceeds with an expanded presentation of the main concepts of Vygotsky's theory followed by an explanation of the meaning and function of imagination within his ideas. Chapter 3 describe ways in which art education can be a leading activity¹ for the development of imagination and through imagination, a leading activity in the development of a variety of other mental functions including principally, conscious awareness, volition and conceptual thinking.

¹ The term 'leading activity' is not used here to express a hierarchy of activities that help development. Rather, it refers to Vygotsky's theory that development is situated in activity, where certain activities (for certain ages) propel a child's psychological development forward. These activities facilitate development by engaging the child's developing (rather than just the fully developed) mental functions. The child develops into a specific culture, thus particular cultural activities require and thus develop the mental faculties important for that culture: 'leading' the child into maturity (Vygotsky, 1978). This will be clarified with the more extensive discussion of Vygotsky's theories in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapter 4 will build on the theoretical possibilities presented in Chapter 3 with the construction of practical guidelines that might inform a choice of curriculum and teaching methods for art education. To make those arguments more concrete the chapter will also look at the art education literature for some existing curricula and methods that can be read to fulfill particular pieces of the argument for a Vygotskian approach to art education.

Finally, the fifth chapter will begin with an expanded discussion of what I find to be one of the most interesting concepts to arise from this study: that for art to be a leading activity in development the teaching methods need to focus on community-based instruction. This, I argue, means creating a program in which all members of a child's community, including parents and peers, are actively included in each child's learning experience. For this argument I introduce Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, a Neo-Vygotskian model that uses his theories to explain the dynamics of learning and development as situated in large, community systems. I proceed to provide an analysis of the Suzuki Method of music education through Cultural-Historical Activity Theory both as a way of illustrating the utility the ideas of the theory and to show ways in which the Suzuki Method and its applications to art education can be useful for extending this study into a teaching practice.

I end Chapter 5 with one possible outline of a Vygotskian art education program. Rather than a complete program, this theoretical outline presents a platform to make the ideas of the study more tangible. It also shows the strength and flexibility of the guiding principles for the construction of an art education program such that it becomes a leading activity in development for elementary school-age children. Following Chapter 5 is a chapter with conclusions, limitations and recommendations for future study that could continue the ideas presented in this theoretical study into the development and study of an art teaching practice.

Chapter 1. An Introduction to Lev Vygotsky and a Review of the Literature Applying Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Psychology to Art Education Theory and Practice

Introduction

This study draws primarily from an examination of two bodies of literature: contemporary North American art education, work by Lev Vygotsky and current literature about his theories. More specifically, the literature review explores evidence of explicit applications of Vygotsky's theories to art education in both bodies of work.

I found that both art education theory in North America and Vygotsky's work can be understood within the spectrum of constructivist theories of development. Using Wim Wardekker's succinct explanation of the distinctions between different constructivist theories, I will demonstrate that Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory of development does not underlay any common contemporary art education theory or practice (Wardekker, 2002). I reviewed the literature by Vygotsky and Vygotskian scholars, and also found a lack of sufficient application of his theories to visual art education. This study thus seeks to fill that gap in the literature. However, before proceeding with a review of the literature I will begin with a brief summary of Vygotsky's life.

Lev Semenovich Vygotsky: a Summary of his Life and Work

Lev Vygotsky's theory deals with the cultural and historical context of development. For that reason, among others, it is important to understand the social and historical contexts in which he lived and worked. Lev Semenovich Vygotsky was born in 1896 to a well-educated Jewish family in Orsha, a provincial town in the Russian Empire (now part of Belarus). Though Vygotsky was drawn to studying philosophy, which would

have led to a teaching career, he could not pursue this because of the heavy restrictions the Russian government placed on Jews at the time. He thus entered law school in Moscow, and simultaneously enrolled in the Historical-Philosophical department of Shanyarsky's University. He graduated with an education in law, history, literature and psychology, and proceeded to begin to develop his theories of psychology through research and writing while simultaneously running a theatre and editing a literary journal (Gajdamaschko, 1999, Vygotsky, 1987).

From 1924 to 1934, Vygotsky worked in the Moscow Institute of Psychology. There, he worked with a group of researchers, notably Alexander Romanovich Luria and Aleksei Nikolaevich Leont'ev, to develop a new 'Soviet Psychology.' This work combined Vygotsky's efforts to fuse the opposing scientific and phenomenological trends in the field of psychology with an application of Marxist dialectic materialism to individual cognitive development. The research became what we understand as Cultural-Historical Psychology, which Vygotsky expanded and developed over ten years, publishing approximately 270 articles and books. Vygotsky died of tuberculosis in 1934 at the age of 37. Under Stalin most of Vygotsky's work was destroyed. Starting in the late 1950's, his surviving work was revived through the efforts of his colleagues, friends and family, and began to be translated and published in English in the 1960's (Gajdamaschko, 1999; Cole, Daniels & Wertsch, 2007; Vygotsky, 1987; Yaroshevsky, 1989).

Constructivist Theories of Development

In order to substantiate the claim that Vygotsky's theory may hold different answers for thinking about the relationship between art and cognition from other theories, I need to identify the cognitive development theories underpinning prominent art education theory and practice and must do so in a way that allows us to compare those theories with Vygotsky's. I have chosen to organize this discussion around the theories of constructivism.

Constructivism is an umbrella term for theories of development that see the individual as an active agent in constructing her understanding. This sits in opposition to the passive acceptance associated with transmission models of learning. Constructivism proposes a child-centered view of education, where individuals are encouraged to work

independently, building their own understandings of their world. The questions that arise from this view then are 1) How does one gauge or insure that the individual's 'self-made' understanding of the world is adequate or correct? and 2) How does the individual actually construct those understandings?

The basic theory of constructivism is interpreted in drastically different ways when it comes to answering these (and other) questions, splitting constructivism into several distinct theories. To give an idea of the scope of thought that falls under the 'constructivism' umbrella, we can look at three types of constructivism: cognitive constructivism, social constructivism and cultural-historical constructivism (Wardekker, 2002).

Cognitive constructivism.

Also called 'cognitivist constructionism' and 'trivial constructivism,' this version of constructivism follows from the work of Jean Piaget (Wardekker, 2002). This view sees an internal blueprint for cognitive development, guiding the child's constructed understandings through development. The development is viewed as mostly a maturation process. The child develops 'from the inside to the outside,' following a developmental path already laid out in the brain at birth. Proponents of this view argue that an individual's errors in logic are naturally corrected as the child 'grows into' the logic they are destined to adopt by virtue of their genetic code. As the child develops, she passes naturally through different stages of cognitive development and it is the job of the teacher to teach *to* the current stage of the child, providing her opportunities for direct experience and sense-making that matches the logic of the developmental stage. This theory is summed up by the maxim 'development leads learning' where the child is free to construct her own understanding of the world because cognitive development will eventually correct any logical errors (Elkind, 1976; Piaget, 1970; Wardekker, 2002).

Social constructivism.

In contrast, social constructivism sees knowledge as socially constructed, both on the individual level and by the community, with the emphasis on the knowledge construction of the community. The world is viewed as something that cannot be empirically 'known.' Over time, a society can create any type of construct of values and

knowledge. In this model learning occurs through experience with the socially-formed knowledge rather than through the direct experience with the world advocated by cognitive constructivism. Cognitive Development is not guided by an internal genetic blueprint, but rather by the relativistic systems of logic, values and knowledge negotiated and built by the community. Learners still build their own interpretations, but those interpretations are bounded by a general track towards socialization in their community. The key mechanism in cognitive development is considered to be participation. Good representatives of this brand of constructivism include the work of Lave and Wenger, and can be found typically where such phrases as 'legitimate peripheral participation' and 'community of learning' are used (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wardekker, 2002).

Cultural-historical constructivism.

Cultural-historical constructivism rejects the relativistic stance of social constructivism. While holding that there is no singular, objective understanding of the world, it proposes that human understanding is not limitless, because the material world 'resists' some interpretations. Like social constructivism, knowledge is based in the society. There it develops over time as a result of joint activity to create and improve conceptual knowledge. Human understanding gets built into the tools and artifacts of a culture and an individual does not experience the world directly, but through the cultural tools of the community. People's experiences, perceptions and knowledge are all mediated by the tools and artifacts that develop over time in the context of a particular culture, society or community. This theory rejects Piaget's supposition that cognitive development is driven by genetic predisposition and maturation, proposing instead that cognitive development comes as a result of engaging with the tools of the culture.

Furthermore, the individual is not a separate entity from his culture. The tools and artifacts of the culture become internalized once they are mediated to the individual. Once internalized, cultural tools shape our interests, thoughts and perceptions, mediating experience from within the individual. This phenomenon can be seen most clearly with language, where learning a language not only provides the means of communication, but also provides the structures and vocabulary for thinking and perception and thus becomes not only a tool for communication but also a tool for

thinking and self-regulation. Cultural-historical constructivism is the constructivist theory which underpins Lev Vygotsky's theories (Wardekker, 2002).

An Overview of the Implications of Divergent Constructivist Theories

The differences among these three constructivist stances can be made more concrete with a brief application of their tenets to education. In cognitive constructivism, the teacher's role is to 'follow the child' or teach to each child's level of development, trusting that the natural fruition of developing mental functions will eventually fix errors in the child's logic.

The social constructivist teacher might take an emancipatory view of education, seeing the culture created in the classroom as of paramount importance to building the children's minds. The view that children have of the world, as directed by the experience in the classroom in turn directs their actions.

The cultural-historical constructivist teacher would reject both these views, seeing the cultural tools of the wider culture (outside the classroom) as being the most important instrument of development. Those tools do not give exercise to a genetic blueprint for development, but rather, they become the actual stuff of development. Language, for example, is one of those powerful tools formed by the culture over time, through experience, that, Vygotsky argues, starts as a social tool that gives the individual power just as it eventually comes to structure an individual's thoughts and perceptions. The teacher's role is to mediate those tools and artifacts to the students, with the understanding that these tools need to be practiced externally before they can be internalized, leading development. The rest of this paper will concern itself with developing a cultural-historical approach as it can be applied to concepts of teaching and learning in the visual arts.

A Search for Cultural-Historical Constructivism in North American Art Education

In providing a description of the differences among the various constructivist views of development, I hope to give the reader an appreciation of how different an education program may look depending on which theory of development a program's authors subscribe to. Furthermore, as we will see in the next chapter, cultural-historical constructivism is a rich, detailed and specific theory that comes from Vygotsky's work. While many other theories of learning and development overlap with this approach, none follow the precise logic of cultural-historical constructivism. This study is concerned with illuminating a 'pure' approach to Vygotsky's theories and thus I will look for evidence of direct application of his theories to art education theory and practice.

To that end, the literature can be bounded historically by the date when Vygotsky's theories became available in English. Despite the fact that Vygotsky lived from 1896 to 1934, the political climate in Russia was such that his work was largely unavailable outside of Russia for decades after his death. His work first became available in English with the 1962 publication of the monograph *Thought and Language*, followed by *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* in 1978. It was with this second publication that Vygotsky's ideas began to take hold in North America, expanding quickly in popularity (Cole, John-Steiner, Soubberman & Scribner, 1978).

I then identified the influential researchers working in art education and the art education practices prominent in the United States since 1962. The important intellectual figures in North American art education of this period include Arthur Efland, Elliot Eisner, Howard Gardner, Rudolph Arnheim and Jerome Bruner. The prominent schools of thought and curriculum models in art education that I will be reviewing include Discipline-Based Art Education, Visual Culture Arts Education, and Integrated Arts programs (Efland, 1990; Eisner, 2002; Smith, 1996).

While a detailed presentation of the works of each of these figures would be very interesting and useful to understanding art education research, a broad picture of current research in arts education is not within the scope of this study. The following discussion

will focus on identifying the theories of development that underpin the work of these scholars and art education models.

Contemporary art education scholars.

In his recent book *Art and Cognition (2002)* Arthur Efland suggests an approach to art education and development that, while informed by cultural historical theory, sees knowledge and its relationship to development as structured differently from the way Vygotsky understood them. Efland criticized Vygotsky's theories as explaining knowledge acquisition, but not how new tools and knowledge are created in the culture. He offers Cognitive Flexibility Theory as an alternative to cultural-historical constructivism for understanding cognition and art education. Cognitive Flexibility Theory focuses on the individual and her agency in organizing knowledge (Efland, 2002).

Howard Gardner is a cognitive constructivist whose theory of development draws largely on the work of Jean Piaget (Gardner, 1989, 1990; Gardner & Perkins, 1989). He is well known for developing Multiple Intelligence Theory and for his work at Project Zero, an arts education research project out of Harvard University. While Gardner is not a cultural-historical constructivist, much of the practical art education theory developed out of Project Zero can be interpreted to fit Vygotsky's theory of development, and thus helps inform curriculum development later in this study. This can be seen specifically in the *processfolio* concept developed by Project Zero's Arts PROPEL program (Gardner, Gitomer & Wolf, 2010; Gardner & Perkins, 1989).

Elliot Eisner is a third important voice in art education over the past few decades. His theories also broadly fall under the theory of cognitive constructivism, with a foundation in the idea that individuals experience the world directly. He is, however, a proponent of the idea that artistic ability and conceptual understanding require education, and that both critical and creative thinking are practiced and develop through an education in the arts. These concepts can be seen in Discipline-Based Art Education, a program that has become standard curriculum in art education, largely due to Eisner's research and advocacy (Eisner 2002). With some reinterpretation through a cultural-historical framework, much of Eisner, Gardner and Efland's work will still prove very useful for this study.

Notable theorists whom these scholars draw upon include Rudolph Arnheim and Jerome Bruner. Arnheim's *Art and Visual Perception* (1954) is cited often by Eisner and Efland. Arnheim's theory of perception appears to approximate Vygotsky's in some ways, in that he sees perception as (what Vygotsky would call) a higher mental function, subject to development in the context of culture. However, his theory of young children's drawings approximates Piaget's notion of an internal blue print for development, with the theory of a kind of universal grammar of images in children's drawings (Arnheim, 1954; Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002).

Jerome Bruner proposed a theory of development that drew heavily on cognitive constructivism in his early work (Bruner, 1960, 1966). Gardner was a student of Bruner and was thus deeply influenced by his theories. Bruner's later works show a turn in his theories toward cultural-historical constructivism, with a focus on the importance of culture in learning and development (Bruner, 1990, 1996). His work had a deep influence on education in the United States in the 1960's and thus, in turn, had an influence on art education, particularly in the theoretical framework for Discipline-Based Art Education.

Contemporary art education practice.

As we might imagine, movements in art education practice over the past quarter century largely follow trends in education as a whole. Education has remained for the most part in line with cognitive constructivist theories, and so too has art education. This can be seen in all contemporary art education movements including Discipline-Based Art Education (now Neo-DBAE), Visual Culture Arts Education, and Integrated Arts practices (Eisner, 2002).

A social constructivism approach to art education can be seen in the Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) program. This approach applies critical pedagogy towards the agenda of teaching students to read underlying cultural and social meanings in works of art and to use art-making for self-empowerment (Eisner, 2002; Davis et al., 2005). Integrated Arts, as its name implies, is an approach to supplementing a variety of subjects with art education as a way of enriching children's understandings of those subjects and of art (Eisner, 2002). It can be understood as largely cognitive constructivist in its theory, following the general theory of education in which it is 'integrated.'

While clearly not an exhaustive list, we can see a general encampment in cognitive constructivist views of development across most theories and practices in arts education, even as they take different manifestations in the work of different prominent scholars in art education. Vygotsky's ideas are not entirely absent from the work, as may be deduced from this presentation, though I did not find his theories to figure prominently in any of them.

In testament to the growing presence of cultural-historical theory, each of these writers at least briefly mention Vygotsky's theories, though seldom in great depth. Arthur Efland's work showed the one exception to this trend that I could find. In *Art and Cognition* (2002) Efland provides a detailed comparison between Vygotsky's and Piaget's development theories. He also notes his criticism of Vygotsky's theory, citing its lack of explanatory power over the formation of new tools and knowledge in a culture. Notable as well is a short passage on the implications of Vygotsky's theory for art education. He and Eisner both cite the popular (though often misunderstood) concept in Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development and its implication that art *can* be learned (that it is not merely a product of in-born talent) (Efland, 2002) and that children need to be challenged to work beyond what they can accomplish independently in order to advance development (Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002). I could find no other work in the published literature on art education expanding on the meaning of cultural-historical constructivism for art education.

A Search for Art Education in Cultural-Historical Constructivism Literature

The second side of this literature review is an examination of work by Vygotsky and contemporary scholars of his work for applications of his ideas to art education. The most obvious place to begin a search for Vygotsky's thoughts about art might be his text *The Psychology of Art* (1971). In this text, Vygotsky explores the social and psychological functions of art. However, as I will show later, the ideas put forth in this text do not create a complete concept of art as it functions specifically for children or specifically in a contemporary North American context, though it will still prove a useful framework for understanding the concepts of art, as will be explored later.

Vygotsky's writings applying cultural-historical psychology specifically to artistic development in visual art can be found in his text "Imagination and Creativity in Childhood" (2004). While useful for understanding Vygotsky's theory of imagination and its role in artistic creativity, he says very little about the development of art during the elementary school age period, focusing primarily on preschool and adolescence. Thus, while useful, his discussion of artistic development leaves gaps that I will try to fill by extending his theories to the elementary-school age period. Beyond this work, I found no other texts by Vygotsky that refer directly to visual art education (Vygotsky, 1971, 1978, 1986, 1987, 1993, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2004).

A variety of works by Vygotskian scholars were also examined for application of his work to visual art (Chaiklin, 2003; Cole, Daniels & Wertsch, 2007; Connery, John-Steiner & Marjanovic-Shane, 2010; Gajdamaschko, 1999, 2005; John-Steiner & Moran, 2003; Kellogg, 2010; Lima, 1995; Lindqvist, 2003; Rogoff & Wertsch, 1984; Smagorinsky, 2007, 2009, 2011; Valsiner, 1987; Wertsch, 1985). While rich in their applications of his theories to various educational contexts, I found no extensive application of his ideas specifically to art education. These works will, however, be put to use alongside Vygotsky's writings as the material for building a picture of one possible understanding of a Vygotskian view of art education.

Conclusion

The lack of published art education theory based on Vygotsky's view of development is not, perhaps, in itself reason enough to dedicate a thesis to this subject. However, considering the growing interest and prominence of Cultural-Historical theory, and the profoundly different implications this theory could have for understanding art education, artistic development and its role in cognitive development, this topic appears to me to be not only justifiable but also important to the growth of the field of art education.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Foundations for a Vygotskian Approach to Art Education

Introduction

The literature review in the previous chapter sought to establish that 1) an application of Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Constructivist theory of developmental psychology to art education has not yet been done (in a published, available form) and that 2) it is a project worth pursuing. These two claims were supported with a brief description of the differences between several constructivist arguments for child development and their divergent implications for education. Part 1 of this chapter will build on that argument first with a more detailed presentation of the concepts and logic underpinning Lev Vygotsky's theories. That material will then provide the context and vocabulary for a detailed discussion of the nature and function of imagination within this theory of psychology in part 2 of the chapter.

Part 1: Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Constructivist Theory of Developmental Psychology

As outlined in Chapter 1, Vygotsky's theory can lead to very different understandings of the nature of learning and its role in development from that of other theories. Consequently, it is important to begin this study with an explanation of some of the main ideas in Vygotsky's theory such that they provide a strong foundation on which to build the rest of the study. Other concepts in Vygotsky's theory will be introduced throughout the study as needed.

Higher and lower mental functions in Vygotsky's theory of psychology.

Lev Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development hinges on the idea that we develop into culture. That is, we develop mental formations that go far beyond what is written in our genetic code. We do so through mediated exposure, practice and internalization of concepts, tools and artifacts of our culture. Vygotsky defined the ability to grow into culture as the development of higher mental functions. The lower psychological functions are mainly biologically inherited (thus, unmediated), involuntary and isolated from each other. These include (but are not limited to) involuntary forms of emotion, memory and the basic bodily functions (Vygotsky, 1978; Gajdamaschko, 1999).

In contrast, Vygotsky used the term 'higher psychological function' for the mental formations that develop instrumentally through the internalization of certain kinds of cultural tools that have the power to turn into psychological tools (changing how we think). Vygotsky states "[t]he following may serve as examples of psychological tools and their complex systems: language, different forms of numeration and counting, mnemotechnical techniques, algebraic symbolism, works of art, writing, schemes, diagrams, maps, blueprints, all sorts of conventional signs, etc." (1997a, p. 85). To stress the cognitive nature of tools, Vygotsky goes on to state that if something "did not have the capacity to influence behavior, it could not be a tool" (1997a, p. 87). The function of these higher psychological tools in the mind is voluntary, structured and controlled. Furthermore, higher psychological functions always act as part of a psychological system that involves a variety of other mental functions rather than acting in isolation (Vygotsky, 1978).

These characteristics can be applied into an explanation of the process of internalization of higher mental functions that says that all functions develop through two distinct stages. First, by extension of the principle of mediation we can see the higher psychological functions appear first on the social or inter-psychological stage as tools developed over time in social activity. The function is external to the individual in the form of artifacts and tools that develop over time (historically) through social activity (culturally). Through mediation, volition and the opportunity to master a cultural-historical tool, it can become fully internalized.

This process of internalization can be further understood as a historic process: one in which the cultural tools and the individuals internalizing them are in a constant state of change. Vygotsky conceived of this process of change (on the individual and cultural level) as governed by the principle of the Hegelian dialectic in which a thesis and its antithesis can meet and synthesize (Gajdamaschko, 1999).

At the heart of this theory is the search for dialectic relationships: contradictions whose very dissonance provides the will and forward momentum for the contradictory parts involved to move forward to a new point of synthesis and balance (that in turn is pregnant with further dialectical contradictions) (Houlgate, 2007). For example as a young child begins to experience desires that she cannot fulfill (such as the desire to occupy her mother's role in the family) tensions rise in her between her reality and her desires. "To resolve this tension, the preschool child enters an imaginary, illusory world in which unrealizable desires can be realized, and this is what we call play" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 93). Imagination first appears as the mechanism of play, allowing the child to build a scenario and act out the idea of being a mother, thus building her understanding of that role and relieving the tension in the desire to be in her mother's role (Vygotsky, 1978).

A contradiction motivates the search and engagement with a new tool that can solve the problem. Furthermore, as each new tool is internalized it does not simply take the place of another function or add to other functions. Instead it works in collaboration with other functions and thus, when changed sublimates the lower function and changes the relationship between all functions in a psychological system (Vygotsky, 1978). This is why we cannot think of development as a strictly linear or incremental process.

The psychological system.

In Vygotsky's theory of psychology, higher mental functions are not isolated from each other. They work together in what he called a 'psychological system' (Vygotsky, 1978, 2004). The mental functions that are fully formed as well as those in the process of development all interrelate in particular ways. As a child develops new functions the relationships change (Vygotsky, 1978).

The 'age period.'

Vygotsky noted a pattern in the way a psychological system changes. Long, relatively stable periods (called 'age periods') were separated by shorter periods in which major changes occur. A child will live with a relatively stable psychological system for several years. The logic inherent to that system starts to create more and more (dialectical) contradictions for the child between experience and understanding. Throughout this long stable period new mental functions are being developed. But it is only when the child hits a certain threshold of tolerance for the dissonance and contradiction that the new function fully flips inside the mind providing a new, more practical way to understand the world.

The change in the psychological system can be understood further as a change in the relationship between mental functions. Vygotsky theorized that at every age period one mental function is in the center of the psychological system leading mental activity and influencing the child's interests and perceptions. Extending from the leading mental function is a leading activity in each age period. The leading activity is both the most captivating activity for the child and the one that engages the developing mental functions, including the leading mental formations that Vygotsky called neo-formations (Vygotsky, 1978, Mahn, 2003).

In early childhood (preschool age) deliberate memory is the leading function, with thinking-in-complexes and imagination as secondary functions being led in development by the child's use of his memory. The dominant activity for preschool age children is socio-dramatic play. It is understood in Vygotsky's terms as a mediated activity in which children create role dramas out of roles and situations they have witnessed and are still working to understand. Memory leads the concepts being played with but the activity of play is made possible by engaging the function of creative imagination. The roles and rules that children make come from the child putting pieces of the experiences together in a new way in the imagination (volitional memory) then creating (externalizing) the product of the imagination. Through memory and creative imagination the child masters the symbolic function of language and builds the mental tools necessary to allow her to move into the next age period (Vygotsky, 1978, 1999).

The transition from preschool to elementary school marks a crisis period in which children acquire print literacy. They fully internalize the knowledge that language carries symbolic functions and printed text conveys meaning. Understanding the meaning of reading and writing allows children to begin to learn concepts. In this way the leading activity changes from play to learning concepts and the leading mental formation changes from memory to creative imagination. Adolescence marks another age period. It is characterized by the internalization of conceptual thought and imagination. Lead by the use of imagination and conceptual through this age period the teenager grows and develops in his understanding of the important tools and concepts of the culture leading him into mature adulthood (Karpov, 2003, Vygotsky, 1931/1998).

These concepts will be easier to grasp with a more detailed description of one of the most important high psychological functions: language. All the ideas presented thus far will be important for understanding the possible functions of art within cultural-historical theory. However, the development of language will play a particularly important role in building an understanding of artistic development, justifying the need to discuss it here in greater detail.

Language in Vygotsky's theory of psychology.

Language is the most important example of all aspects of Vygotsky's cultural, historical, instrumental psychology. As a cultural tool we understand that languages are culturally specific and change over time. We can also feel that we think with internalized understandings of our culture's language. In observing a child we can see that language develops from the outside in. Language first appears to the child as an element of social experience. The child learns that a word symbolizes something and through practice he learns to refine the meaning of a word slowly internalizing words as tools for thinking. This stage is called thinking-in-complexes. The symbolic function of the word gives the child freedom to think about things that he cannot perceive directly. However, for the young child language is still a crude tool, bound to their experiences and developed through the 'home-made' experiences of make-believe play (Vygotsky, 1986, 1978).

Concept development: generalization to abstraction

We can also understand that the meanings of the words children use develop over time. In Vygotsky's theory of development children begin to understand the meaning of words by making increasingly specific generalizations from their experiences with words and the objects, actions or attributes associated with them. Vygotsky called this generalized understanding a 'complex.' While generalizing meaning continues to be a way of understanding language into adulthood, another tool for language and conceptual understanding develops during childhood called abstraction. Where generalization is a process of looking for all shared traits to objects of a given name, abstraction means pulling out the key traits of the objects referred to be a particular word (i.e. the word's definition). A generalized understanding of a word Vygotsky calls a complex. The process of speaking and thinking primarily with generalized understandings he thus calls 'thinking in complexes.' As the process of abstraction is learned and grows to dominate a child's understanding of language, her thinking changes from thinking-in-complexes to thinking in concepts, or conceptual thought. Abstraction proves a more powerful tool than generalization because it gives the individual a concrete understanding of the traits of a word, allowing knowledge to build more accurately and specifically. Furthermore, through conceptual understanding of language, concepts can be learned without the need for direct experience (Vygotsky, 1986).

The difference between generalization and abstraction can be better understood through the concept of metaphor. A metaphor is a tool of language in which one word is used to directly denote another through the reader's connections from the written to the intended meaning via contrasting ideas with a shared core trait (Merriam-Webster, 2012). For example, in order to understand that the term 'golden ball' in the line "the golden ball hung low in the sky" is a metaphor for the sun the reader would need to connect the key traits of 'roundness' shared by the sun and a ball. The child who generalizes the meaning of a ball from personal experience may understand a ball to mean all shiny, small, bouncy things, seeing no connection between his play things and the sun. It is only when the child learns that 'ball' can have a systemic definition that includes being spherical, that a mental leap can be made between the spherical trait of a ball and the spherical trait of the sun.

Part 2: Vygotsky's Theory of Creative Imagination

Based on the discussion in part 1 of the fundamental logic and key concepts of Vygotsky's cultural-historical constructivist theory of development we can proceed to discuss the meaning and psychological function of creative imagination within this theory. Key to understanding Vygotsky's theory of imagination is to understand that it is a higher psychological function, meaning that it is a mental function that begins on the social sphere as a cultural-historical tool used and developed in social activity. To understand imagination and its function in development then we need to look to the activity in which it first appears. That activity, Vygotsky states, is a young child's socio-dramatic play. Vygotsky states, "like all functions of consciousness, [imagination] originally arises from action. The old adage that child's play is imagination in action must be reversed: we can say that imagination in adolescence and school children is play without action" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 93).

Socio-dramatic play (also called role play or make-believe play), is an activity in which children create imaginary situations complete with roles, rules and a narrative, then proceed to embody those roles, acting out a planned or improvised narrative. It is in this activity that children first exhibit creative imagination. Vygotsky calls this early form of imagination "a special and unique form of memory activity" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 371) which is based on the elements of past memory but not on whole, specific memories (John-Steiner & Moran, 2003).

This connection between memory and imagination is at the center of Vygotsky's larger theory about activity in which the mind is understood to have two functions: reproductive activity and creative activity. Storing and reproducing the past is the function of memory. Likewise, any activity that repeats a skill that is learned or recreates something from the environment without adding anything new is a reproductive activity. Imagination is making an image from memory, if that image comes directly from a memory it is a reproductive activity. If that memory combines aspects of memories in new ways it is called creative imagination. Anything that creates something new, physically or in the mind of an individual is a creative act: an act that results from the combined, deliberate efforts of creative imagination with memory and thought. (Vygotsky, 2004).

In the preschool-age child, the child's memory is thus the leading mental function in the psychological system with creative imagination arising from memory through play. Play is understood as the leading activity in development during this age period. Since creative imagination (as a function of deliberate memory) makes play possible, we can understand imagination (through play) as having a vital role in the formation of a variety of other higher psychological functions that arise during this age period including emotion, self-control and language and conceptual thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). With this statement we come to one of the guiding arguments of this study: *imaginative activity leads the development of imagination, which leads the development of the whole psychological system*. To substantiate that argument this chapter will look at the function and development of imagination, and the ways it can be understood to lead the development of all other major mental functions.

To that end we can recall the first argument that imagination is practiced and mastered through mediated activity before flipping into the mind where it becomes a tool for thinking. This understanding leads us to the argument that, unlike theories that see imagination as a product of the subconscious, Vygotsky saw imagination as intimately tied to reality (Gajdamaschko, 1999). He formulated this argument into four 'laws' regarding the relationship of imagination to reality in his paper "Imagination and Creativity in Childhood" (2004). A presentation of these laws will structure the following explanation of Vygotsky's theory of imagination.

Law 1: Imagination depends on experience.

[T]he creative activity of the imagination depends directly on the richness and variety of a person's previous experience because this experience provides the material from which the products of fantasy are constructed. The richer a person's experience, the richer is the material his imagination has access to. This is why a child has a less rich imagination than an adult, because his experience has not been as rich. (Vygotsky, 2004, p .15)

As discussed above in the definition of play, imagination does not make something out of nothing, but out of memories. The greater the richness and depth of understanding a person has of her experiences the more material she has to work with in the imagination.

Law 2: Experience depends on imagination.

A large part of the mandate of schools is to teach children. We can broadly understand the learning that happens in classrooms as an effort to impart to children a body of largely decontextualized concepts. That is to say that a great deal of culturally valued knowledge cannot be learned through direct experience. We cannot experience historic events, distant places or many scientific or socio-political concepts. We may be able to memorize the dates and story of the French Revolution but to understand it to an extent that we deeply internalize it requires experience. An historic event can be experienced in the imagination. We rely on our imagination in this way to extend our experience (and with it our understanding) beyond what we can experience directly (Vygotsky, 2004).

Just as the past is made available to experience and understanding through the imagination, so too is the future. Creative activity is necessary for imagining future situations and thus is necessary for future orientation and adaptation. Vygotsky begins and ends his paper “Imagination and Creativity in Childhood” (2004) greatly emphasizing this point. If we can only think about things as they have happened to us (only reproduce them directly from memory), then we will only be ready for future situations that directly mimic the past, not for anything new. Thus, creative activity is vital for children’s development, as Vygotsky states in the conclusion of this paper:

The entire future of humanity will be attained through the creative imagination; orientation to the future, behavior based on the future and derived from this future, is the most important function of the imagination. To the extent that the main educational objective of teaching is guidance of school children’s behavior so as to prepare them for the future, development and exercise of the imagination should be one of the main forces enlisted for the attainment of this goal. (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 88)

Law 3: “All forms of creative imagination include affective elements” (Ribot, as quoted in Vygotsky, 2004, p. 19).

Vygotsky drew heavily from the work of Theodule Ribot in developing his theory of imagination. To describe this law he quotes Ribot directly from his book *Essay on the Creative Imagination* (1901/2010). Vygotsky explains this quote by Ribot to mean “every

construct of the imagination has an effect on our feelings, and if this construct does not in itself correspond to reality, nonetheless the feelings it evokes are real feelings, feelings a person truly experiences” (2004, p. 19). This idea is profoundly important to our understanding of the power of the imagination and activities that elicit emotional reactions outside of ‘real’ life, including arts and sports. Vygotsky’s theory of the mature psychological mechanism of art is based on this theory: the emotions we feel when experiencing works of art are real and in experiencing art we can thus live, emotionally, beyond our own lives (Vygotsky, 1971).

Law 4: Imagination becomes reality when it manifests in material form.

The fourth way in which we see the relationship between imagination and reality is in the way imagination feeds creation. Creative activity (as defined earlier) is the creation of something new, as opposed to the reproduction of something already in existence. When creative imagination is manifested in a material form – something outside the mind of the individual – it becomes just as real as other things, affecting the community and the individual (Vygotsky, 2004).

In this way we can understand imagination and creativity as necessary mechanisms in what John Dewey called the *reflex arc* (Dewey, 1896). Vygotsky and Dewey appear to match when speaking of the logic that experience feeds knowledge that, in turn, feeds experience. Vygotsky’s theory of the relationship between imagination and reality show imagination (and the volition to engage the imagination) as the mechanism that fuels that cycle (Dewey, 1934/1980, 1986; Vygotsky, 2004).

Individual and community expansion.

It is largely by virtue of these imagination-reality cycles that we see the key both to an individual’s development and the development of a community. An individual takes in new experiences and creatively recombines elements of ideas and concepts from experience to create something new. That creation is made to meet a need: a dissonance in one’s current situation. The same way an individual is able to internalize new tools and cultural artifacts, the community as a larger body also develops. The creative products of an individual become the experience of the rest of that person’s community, and if found useful or enriching to others that product becomes accepted as

a creative innovation. In this way creative imagination can be understood as the tool that permits both the individual and community to develop by providing the means to meet contradictions or needs with new solutions, tools and knowledge in a process that Engeström called "expansive learning" (Engeström, 1987, 2011).

The development of imagination.

We can see in these 'laws' the deep connection between reality and imagination and the importance of imagination for developing a 'future orientation' (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 88). With creative imagination comes the ability to learn and adapt. Creative imagination is not, however merely a byproduct of experience. It is a higher mental function, and thus, can be understood as a historical process, meaning that it is a tool that develops in a culture and in an individual over time. That development, furthermore, is situated within the child's developing psychological system where the relationships between various functions change as she develops (Vygotsky, 1978).

As with all mental functions, imagination can be understood as first existing outside of the individual, crystalized in an activity that is mediated to the child. We can therefore begin our examination of the development of creative imagination through the first mediated cultural-historical activity that requires (and thus develops) imagination: socio-dramatic play (Vygotsky, 1978, 2004).

The relationship between language and imagination in socio-dramatic play.

"Speech frees the child from the immediate impression of an object. It gives the child the power to represent and think about an object that he has not seen" (Vygotsky, 1932/1987, p. 346). Language enters the child's world in direct association between heard words with perceived things. Slowly, through the effort of generalizing the characteristics of objects referred to by others by the same word the child begins to associate the word with groups of experiences. However the act of separating meaning from the field of perception is a difficult leap in the development of a child's understanding of language. It requires severing meaning from what the child can immediately perceive. This ability is at the heart of the power of language, allowing us to think, free from immediate perceptions or personal experience and it leads to mature abstract thought (Vygotsky, 1986).

One of the activities that develop an understanding of this symbolic function of language is play, and particularly the function of what Vygotsky called the 'pivot.' When a child attaches the meaning of a horse to a broom or the meaning of a baby to a doll in socio-dramatic play the mental function is one of severing the meaning of a horse or baby from the experienced real thing and attaching it to another form. The broom and doll thus function as a 'pivot': a material bridge for moving meaning from direct experience to the words that reference them. Vygotsky describes this phenomenon this way:

... a divergence between the field of meaning and vision first occurs at preschool age. In play thought is separated from objects and action arises from ideas rather than from things: a piece of wood begins to be a doll and a stick becomes a horse ... the child does not do it at once because is terribly difficult for a child to sever thought (the meaning of the word) from object. Play provides a transitional stage in this direction whenever an object (for example, a stick) becomes a pivot for severing the meaning of a horse from a real horse. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 97)

This object substitution makes for a transitional phase between thinking externally, through acted out scenarios, and thinking internally with the words and their meanings. The pivot is a function of the imagination and thus we can see the importance of imagination in the development of language (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986).

The relationship between emotions and imagination.

In socio-dramatic play we see the beginnings of the development of another higher mental function: emotion. Emotion is one of the mental functions that start as a lower, biologically-based function before transitioning, through mediation, to a higher mental function. As a lower mental function, emotion is a function of the body's response to physical need and physical experience. As a higher psychological emotion, it is the learned and culturally-situated emotion: associated with roles, situations, actions and concepts. It is the difference between the fears we feel when being chased compared to the fears we feel at the sight of people in Ku Klux Klan uniforms. The first fear response is an example of the lower function of emotion while the second is an example of the higher function of emotion.

The higher psychological function of emotion requires imagination and can be understood as a function of Vygotsky's second and third laws of imagination. In play the child imagines herself in another role, acting (and thus feeling) the emotion associated with the role such as being scared because she is lost or sad because she is a mother and her baby is sick. Through play the child learns to distinguish between her emotion (i.e. happiness in playing a game) and the emotion of the role (fear in being lost) (Vygotsky, 1978).

The relationship between self-control and imagination in socio-dramatic play.

Through play the preschool-age child also builds self-control, planning and the ability to follow rules. The act of imagining the rules and boundaries of a role and choosing to act in accord with the requirements of that role exercises and builds self-control and an understanding of rules. Successful participation in elementary school requires all the mental functions developed through the use of imagination in play including self-control, thinking in complexes, planning and the ability to follow rules (Vygotsky, 1978).

Imagination in childhood.

Upon entering school the child starts a new age period of development in which the leading activity in development changes from the activity of play to the activity of learning. Here the psychological system changes and imagination becomes the leading function in development. It is still only partially internalized and requires activity in order to be practiced. To say, therefore that imagination leads development during this age period, and that it requires activity in order to do so means that learning and the development of new mental formations is best achieved through activities that engage the imagination or what Gajdamaschko calls "well-developed imaginative activity" (2005). The next chapter will make a detailed argument for considering visual art education as one type of imaginative activity that can be a powerful tool in leading development in childhood. Here I will briefly outline how imagination works with the other mental functions in a child's psychological system to further develop the child's mind. In his lecture "Imagination and its Development in Childhood" Vygotsky states, "[a]ll the major new mental functions that actively participate in school instruction are associated with the important new formations of this age, that is, with conscious awareness and

volition. These are the features that distinguish all the higher mental functions that develop during this period” (Vygotsky, 1934/1987, p. 213).

Conscious awareness can be understood to be the awareness of one’s consciousness, or one’s process of thinking and perception. Activities that utilize creative imagination develop an awareness of one’s thoughts and perceptions by virtue of the fact that those thoughts and perceptions become the material fuel for the imagination. We can remember that imagination is a product of volitional memory and by elementary school is a conscious process of dissecting elements of memories, feelings and learned concepts. In this way activities that employ the imagination implicitly build awareness of the processes of thinking and feeling.

Creative activity (specifically, activity in which the products of the imagination are manifest in material form) further develops conscious awareness by engaging the child in a cycle of awareness of the perceptual experience of her own imaginative creations. The arts, as will be discussed later, exemplify the kind of creative/experiential cycle that builds conscious awareness. Furthermore a cycle of activity in which conscious awareness is practiced for both the process of thinking and the process of perceiving cannot help but build an awareness of the process of feeling. Practicing emotional awareness builds understanding of both culturally and conceptually situated emotions and the self as a unique, feeling individual living in culture (Vygotsky, 1987).

The relationship between concept development and imagination in learning activities.

I have stated that with the change in leading activity in childhood from play to learning concepts the leading mental function changes from memory to imagination. Why does this change occur? The answer lies in the abstract nature of the concept. Play is based on experience. Prior to an understanding that knowledge can exist outside experience as systemic ideas in culture the child’s understandings of the world is limited to what he can experience. The acquisition of language starts the child on a path of freeing his mind from direct experience, but it is with the acquisition of literacy that the child internalizes the idea that knowledge can be learned outside of direct experience. By being able to read words on a page and understand the meanings they convey the child learns how to learn through written language.

Imagination is key to the function of conceptual thought because without direct experience the child needs to imagine the reality of the concepts he reads or is taught. Imagination makes conceptual thinking possible, and thus it takes over as the leading mental formation in the school activity of conceptual learning (Mahn, 2003, Vygotsky, 1978).

We can understand the role of the imagination in thinking about concepts more specifically by understanding that though the child starts to learn concepts in school, systemic conceptual thought is not yet an internalized tool. Instead the child is still thinking in complexes: generalizing meaning from direct experience. Imagination, therefore, only has these generalized understandings of words, ideas and memories to draw from in constructing knowledge of learned concepts. It takes the whole course of elementary school to fully internalize the abstract, systematic understanding facilitated by conceptual thought.

Remembering the dialectical nature of Vygotsky's theories we can see in this example one of the dichotomies that propels development forward during childhood. The contradiction between the systematic concepts being learned and the everyday concepts being thought which creates the cognitive dissonance needed to propel development forward towards unification of experience and learning with the internalization of conceptual thinking (Gajdamaschko, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978, 2004).

Imagination permits this unification in two ways. First, the imagination grounds the learned concepts in lived experience with active efforts at connecting the two. This is visible in activities that employ the creative imagination such as story writing, drawing and role-play. In these activities the child constructs narratives that combine learned systemic concepts with experienced generalized concepts, thus giving sense (personal experience) to learned meanings (systemic concepts) and vice versa, as mention above in the second 'law' of imagination. Activities that allow the child to engage the dissonant space between learned and experienced concepts, through reflexive cycles, can be understood as the practice needed to internalize new cultural-historical tools (Vygotsky, 2004).

Second, it is the conscious effort of the imagination to break the generalized concept into parts that leads the development of abstraction. True concepts are arrived

at by *abstracting* the core characteristics of learned phenomena from an experience (Vygotsky, 1986). Activities that employ imagination in childhood do just that. The function of the imagination is to use elements of concepts and experiences. Thus using the imagination gives children the practice at abstracting parts of concepts and experiences from the whole. The following chapter will show how art education can employ the imagination in these two ways towards the development of conceptual thought.

Imagination in adolescence.

While not the focus of this study, a short description of the full trajectory of the development of imagination will help further establish the importance of imagination, as well as its roll in childhood and its use in visual art in childhood. First, as mentioned, imagination has become fully internalized and now functions in collaboration with conceptual thinking rather than the thinking in complexes that characterized the elementary school age child's understanding of language and the nature of the concepts that words represent. Vygotsky calls the fully internalized form of imagination that appears during adolescence *fantasy* (Smolucha, 1992; Vygotsky, 1931/1998).

Fantasy can be best understood through an explanation of the two forms it takes during this age: objective fantasy and subjective fantasy. Objective fantasy is the externalized form of the function of imagination working in collaboration with conceptual thought. It serves external purposes such as problem solving and artistic expressions that meet the social, intellectual and educational needs of the adolescent.

Subjective fantasy does not serve external social needs but rather, it serves the internal emotional needs of the child. Once fully internalized, the child no longer needs the kind of external manifestation of the products of his imagination the younger children need in order to maintain and organize their thoughts. The adolescent can create an elaborate narrative fantasy in his mind and inhabit that fantasy, creating and living through the emotionally charged scenarios that practice and satisfy the emotional needs of his real life. For example, the adolescent who suffers shyness in school may create and live through a fantasy of being a powerful superhero to exercise the emotional need for strength and social confidence (Vygotsky, 1931/1998).

Imagination in adulthood.

Here the cathartic function of subjective fantasy turns into the mature function of art. That is, adults, Vygotsky argues, seek out experience with works of art to exercise emotions that parallel emotional needs in their own lives. Art functions to raise an emotional response and simultaneously annihilate that response by virtue of the emotional contradiction present in the art form and its narrative or conceptual content.

The objective function of fantasy that began to form in adolescence matures in the adult as fully formed artistic and scientific creativity. The creativity that drives innovations in everything in society from business and politics to science and art is the product of mature development of the psychological system in which there exists a powerful will, deep conscious awareness, and rich conceptual knowledge, all built from, and working with, creative imagination (Vygotsky, 1971, 1931/1998).

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an argument for the vital importance of creative imagination in the development of mind as understood within Lev Vygotsky's cultural, historical instrumental theory of psychology. To do this I started with an overview of the structure and key concepts of his theory of psychology. Vygotsky's work builds an argument for child development that places the mechanism for development in culture, rather than in the genetic makeup of the individual, as cognitive constructivist theories of development presume (Wardekker, 2002).

Development occurs as the internalization of mediated, culturally and historically-specific tools for thinking and acting. Among the most important of those tools is creative imagination. Understanding imagination as a higher psychological function means that it is practiced and internalized through engagement in particular activities that use the imagination.

The process of the development of imagination can be understood in three stages. First it appears as socio-dramatic play during the preschool years. Second imagination becomes the leading mental function in childhood where it leads the child in understanding his experiences and the concepts learned in school and continues to

develop through activities that actively engage the imagination. Third, imagination becomes fully internalized becoming a tool the adolescent can use for thinking, without the need of a material activity.

This study will focus on the second stage: the development of imagination in childhood through activity. The concept of the role of imagination in childhood presented here hinges on the idea that before becoming fully internalized, imagination exists partially in activity and partially in the child. Therefore its development requires that it be engaged, practiced and challenged in activity. The following chapter will argue that an activity needs to have certain characteristics to best use and develop the imagination. I will further claim that visual art education can be one such activity.

Chapter 3. Visual Art Education and the Development of Creative Imagination

Introduction

With the previous chapter I built on Lev Vygotsky's arguments for the importance of the development of imagination and the need to develop it in activity during childhood. Its importance stems from the role of imagination as a leading mental function for understanding experiences, learning concepts and developing other mental tools. However not every activity in childhood develops the imagination as much as it can be and should be developed. In order to do so it needs to be what the Vygotskian scholar Natalia Gajdamaschko calls a "well-developed imaginative activity." Gajdamaschko explains that a

... well-developed imaginative activity is not only leading the child to more successful ways of dealing with intellectual and educational tasks, but also leads to changes in the structure of psychological functions, making them conscious and volitional, and gradually the child becomes a master of his own imagination... Mastering imagination has the following effects: (a) mastering emotions; (b) mastering mechanisms; (c) changing cognitive tools; (d) more control over the imagination; (e) more complex relationships with other psychological functions, not only with perception but with thinking—as thinking develops, imagination develops; and (f) more implications for the education. (Gajdamaschko, 2005, p. 21).

This chapter will make the argument that visual art education can be a "well-developed imaginative activity" leading development in childhood. To do this I will first summarize Vygotsky's views of artistic development followed by an expansion of those arguments for a cultural-historical view of artistic development in childhood with contemporary, North American thought and research on the subject. Looking at the relationships between mental development and artistic development I will proceed to argue that the visual arts use and develop creative imagination and (through it) develop a variety of other mental functions as well.

A Summary of Vygotsky's Writings on Artistic Development in Childhood

An obvious place to start in building a Vygotskian understanding of art in childhood is to summarize what Vygotsky himself says about the issue. In his monograph "Imagination and Creativity in Childhood" (2004) Vygotsky writes about the stages of development in drawing as gleaned from the research on children's art conducted by a variety of Russian and European scholars. While his own research on the subject appears to be minimal he seemed to find in the work of a variety of other scholars ideas that supported his theory of psychology and findings that could be interpreted within his theory of creativity and imagination.

Vygotsky summarizes (and interprets) this research as exhibiting children's artistic ability passing through four stages. He defines children's first stage of drawing as the first appearance of symbolic drawing. He states that the graphic marks and 'scribbles' of younger children do not qualify as drawing. With this logic he seems to indicate (though not directly) that by definition, drawing is the product of a volitional effort at mark-making towards the expression of specific imagery. This first stage of 'real' drawing he labels the 'early schematic stage'. It appears around the transition between preschool and the elementary school age period and is characterized by children's drawing from memory with a concern for the essential important details of an object and not its realistic appearance. In this stage the child "draws what he knows about things and not what he sees" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 76).

Drawings in this stage amount to something like a graphic list of the detail a child might mention in describing that object. Early drawings in this stage include images of a person with legs, head and arms but no torso. Later images include far more details but are still depicted in a manner that expresses their meaning rather than their visual appearance. These include so-called 'x-ray' pictures that show a person the baby in a mother's belly or the coins in the wallet in a man's pant pocket.

The second stage is a transitional stage between schematic and realistic (formal) drawing that appears in the later years of childhood. In this stage the child begins to show more awareness of the real appearance of objects but still includes elements of schematic (symbolic) drawing. Examples include pictures of a man riding a horse where

the two forms are fully depicted and in accurate proportion though with both of the man's legs visible where only one leg should be visible. Children in this stage, Vygotsky notes, develop sensitivity to line and form and gain awareness of the relationship between forms and their location in space.

In the third stage, found usually in early adolescence, drawings stop being schematic and reflect the actual appearance of forms, though often in only two dimensions as the adolescent has not yet developed the ability to visually render three dimensions. With instruction (and practice) adolescents/teenagers may reach the fourth stage of drawing in which they can accurately depict three dimensions. To explain this transition from schematic to formal/realistic rendering Vygotsky quotes the Soviet scholar A.V. Bakushinskii as stating:

The adolescent becomes more and more visual, contemplating the world from the sidelines, experiencing it mentally as a complex phenomenon and perceiving in this complexity not so much the variety and presence of things, as was the case during the previous period, as the relationships among them. (Bakushinskii, as quoted in Vygotsky, 2004, p. 82)

Vygotsky accounts for this change, from schematic to formal drawing, as evidence of the changing interests and needs of children. The child, he says, is more focused on himself, his direct experiences and the processes of his own actions whereas the adolescent is more interested in the processes of the external world. Where the child is led by experience and memory, the adolescent is more interested in understanding the world beyond his experience. This is reflective of the previous discussion of the transition from thinking-in-complexes to conceptual thought in adolescence (Vygotsky, 1931/1998). The adolescent has internalized the *concept* of art as (among other things) a set of techniques for creating visual representations of emotional, narrative and perceptual realities that exist in his experience as well as beyond his own experience, in the systemic concepts of the culture. Furthermore, art in adolescence “becomes creativity associated with ability, with certain creative skills, [and] with mastery of the material” (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 83).

Children in the first two stages (schematic and transitional) relate to art as a “spontaneous, self-initiated creative activity” (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 82). While the adolescent needs to feel he has the skill necessary to draw, the child is less inhibited,

seeming to find in the symbolic function of art a vital tool for constructing and expressing narratives.

This is, more or less, as much as Vygotsky says about development in the visual arts. Within this short discussion, Vygotsky's description of art during the years of the elementary school age period is particularly brief. He focuses on describing the development of art for children in early childhood then jumps to adolescence, noting the function of art in childhood only as a transitional stage between the two. I think more can be said about the function of visual art in the elementary school years, especially considering the importance, in Vygotsky's theory, of transitional phases in development. With childhood we see important transitions for imagination, from a partly external to a fully internalized mental function, accompanied by the transition from thinking-in-complexes to conceptual thought (Vygotsky, 2004, 1978).

To inform an understanding of artistic development more relevant to the time and place of this study I will proceed to expand Vygotsky's arguments with contemporary, North American research. For this I turned to Nancy Smith's 1993 text *Experience and Art: Teaching Children to Paint*. It is a small but dense volume that combines American thought and research on children's artistic development with the work of the author and her colleagues. While based on a cognitivist perspective the author emphasizes the mediated nature of art, thus making this book a closer match to Vygotsky's theories than many other North American texts on artistic development. Thus, though not specifically Vygotskian, many of the concepts in the text lend themselves to a cultural-historical interpretation, informing this study with a more detailed understanding of the function and nature of art in childhood in North America (Smith, 1993).

An Expanded View of Artistic Development from Preschool through Early Childhood

Tracing the development of art back to the graphic motoric experiments in very early childhood, Smith defines the beginning of children's comprehension that a drawing can hold meaning to their efforts, to name the objects in their graphic drawings. This is a key point in both Vygotsky's and Smith's discussions. Smith further states that the activity of naming the form in a drawing starts as a reaction to the drawing, rather than a

consequence of a plan to draw something specific. Soon after this stage the child begins to name what she is drawing while still working on the form and can proceed to alter the drawing to better reflect the decided object. In the next stage of early symbolism the child can say what she will draw before drawing it and maintain the intention throughout, controlling and directing the appearance of the work (Smith, 1992).

A Cultural-Historical Interpretation of Artistic Development

I will now relate artistic development and mental development to see whether or not art can be understood as a leading function in development. For it to be a leading activity I will need to show that art actively engages the leading mental functions of each age period. This will start with an examination of the mental functions at play in the initial appearance of what Vygotsky and Smith identify as the first schematic of symbolic stage of art.

The appearance of artistic activity.

Vygotsky explains children's drawings only so far as to say that they are schematic: expressing essential details of something as held in the child's memory. In describing the drawings, however, those essential characteristics still appear to reflect the child's visual perception, suggesting that the young child has internalized the formalistic concept of drawing. Smith's (1993) discussion of this phase of artistic development provides a counter explanation that appears to fit cultural-historical theory more than Vygotsky's. She observed that children's early schematic drawings come not from children's perception but from the vocabulary of graphic forms developed in the child's early explorations of line, shape and space with artistic materials. She states, "...the capacity for representation depends on the construction of concepts of visual-graphic elements and designs" (Smith, 1993, p. 7). This answer provides a better fit for a cultural-historical view of development than Vygotsky's explanation because it gets closer to describing art as an activity that develops out of previous activity, rather than something that appears spontaneously. Understanding the nature of the appearance of schematic drawing is important because it raises a key question for this study: is art a mediated or spontaneous activity?

The mediated nature of artistic activity.

The principal question in this study is: within a cultural-historical constructivist explanation of development, can art education be a leading activity in the development of imagination and through it, the development of the whole psychological system? Understanding imagination (and all other higher psychological functions) as mediated means that, in order to say that art leads the development of imagination, I need to show that artistic activity and artistic development is mediated, not spontaneous (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's explanation unfortunately falls far short of showing that schematic art appears as a result of mediated activity. He even goes so far as to say the opposite, stating that art begins as a "spontaneous, self-initiated creative activity" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 82). This is the only time in this study that I will take the liberty of saying that I think this statement runs contrary to Vygotsky's own theory of psychology.

While Vygotsky explains schematic art as relating to visual understanding and the child's memory of characteristics, Smith's explanation of art as arising out of graphic activity gets closer to seeing art as mediated by looking to the child's physical activity (graphic drawing) rather than to mental activity (perception) for an explanation of its origin. I will go further and suggest that art arises out of socio-dramatic play, and if we understand socio-dramatic play as a mediated activity then schematic art is also a mediated activity.

Art and play.

As discussed in the previous chapter, preschool children's leading mental function is memory and the leading activity is socio-dramatic play. Through play children work to understand their experiences, the concepts of roles, rules and social dynamics, and (most importantly) imagination and the symbolic function of language. Socio-dramatic play is a mediated activity. Even as it may appear to arise spontaneously from children, Vygotsky's theory of play shows that it is mediated by adults as well as older children, and develops through practice (Vygotsky, 1978).

Due to the dominance of play in young children's lives it would seem to be a good point of entry for a cultural-historical investigation of the meaning and function of

children's artistic development into schematic drawing at this age. On the surface both socio-dramatic play and schematic drawing seem related in several ways. First, both activities are often mistaken for being spontaneous and self-initiated, suggesting that they are both of personal interest to children of this age, fulfilling some need in the child. Second, both activities employ deliberate memory, imaginatively reworked and creatively manifest for the purpose of understanding and expressing narratives.

I propose that the similarities between the two activities are not a coincidence but rather the result of an intimate connection between the two. Symbolic drawing, I will argue, emerges from socio-dramatic play. Specifically, the leap from art as graphic exploration and mark-making to the labeling and planning of a drawing to express specific forms arises from the function of the pivot in play.

Art as arising from the pivot in play.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in play the pivot exists as an object onto which the child projects the meaning of another object that serves as a tool for play, and through play, as a tool for thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). Schematic drawing also starts as the labeling of a drawing after it is already finished. The child working to separate meaning from perception may project meaning onto a drawn symbol for the same reason she projects meaning onto an object.

Both activities provide an external, material 'holder' for the meaning, allowing the meaning to be more easily thought about, manipulated, talked about and played with. We can thus understand labeling (and the consequent development of schematic drawing) to be a transfer of the logic and utility of socio-dramatic play to drawing. The function that the pivot holds may thus be interpreted as partially mediating the rise of symbolic drawing and painting during the late preschool and early elementary school years. Schematic art then develops beyond the pivot in play as the child, through practice, learns to include the same kind of planning employed in making a role play to his drawing: planning what he will draw before he draws it.

Thinking about the schematic stage in artistic development as an extension of the function of play explains first, how it may begin without any apparent mediation and second, why children of this age seem largely self-motivated and self-directed in their

engagement with art. In seeing art as derived *from* play we can also understand it as an activity that develops *beyond* play. Art extends the functions that play held for development in early childhood to the developmental needs of the elementary school child. That is to say that the help that play provided for understanding concepts and the symbolic function of language (through the use and development of imagination) extends from play through art. Art fulfills the same functions, allowing for external manifestation and manipulation of ideas, while also expanding up and away from play in its purpose.

The developing function of art

Through play the symbolic function of language and the mental functions of planning and imagination develop externally, in activity. By mid childhood these functions have become partly internalized, needing far less external structure and activity to help the child use them. Where preschool-age children need to act through a narrative in order to more deeply understand it, the elementary school-age child may only need to tell the story in order to deepen understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). I therefore conclude that the pivot that aided in role play turns into the drawing that aids in story-making.

Embedded in this argument is the idea that the mental functions employed in the creation and uses of the pivot in play are the same as those used in the schematic function of art. If this is true then as mental functions change from preschool through childhood into adolescence we should also see a change in the function and nature of art. Furthermore, if art is to continue to have a leading function for children then we need to see art engage the developing mental functions, not only the fully formed mental functions. Based on the combined evidence of Smith and Vygotsky regarding artistic development I will proceed with a cultural-historical explanation of observed changes in children's artistic activity during the elementary school age period and into adolescence to support the idea that art aids the advancement of intellectual development.

Correlating and explaining observed artistic developments with children's intellectual developments.

To review from the last chapter, the elementary school age period is distinguished from the preschool age period in that the leading activity shifts from play to learning, and the leading mental function changes from memory to imagination. The more-or-less fully developed functions include volitional memory, thinking-in-complexes and planning, among others. Developing functions of this age period include primarily conscious awareness, volition and conceptual thinking and imagination. Adolescence is marked by the complete internalization of imagination, volition, conscious awareness, the higher function of emotion and conceptual thinking (including the internalization of the concepts of written language) (Vygotsky, 1986, 1931/1998).

We can therefore look for correlations between each of the mental functions developing during childhood and artistic activity in this age to see if art plays a role in their development. This will start with language development followed by conscious awareness and volition, then emotion and lastly, imagination, returning to the principal argument of the study that art education can develop a child's imagination.

Art and language in early elementary school.

I will start by outlining some of the correlations between developments in language and developments in art. First, as previously mentioned, labeling a drawing can be understood as an activity that reflects the application of a child's effort to understand the symbolic function of language (as first practiced in play) to drawing/painting. Next, Smith notes, children begin to want to learn how to draw things correctly. Before the interest in realism emerges later in elementary school this interest in learning the 'correct' way to draw usually relates to a child's desire for a 'correct' schematic image. This, I would argue reflects of the child's generalized understanding of language extending to visual art. With the understanding that there is a correct word for an object the child may develop the idea that there is a correct picture representing each object as well. An important conclusion can be drawn from children's effort to increase their vocabulary of 'correct' images in this way. If my analysis that children's desire to learn the right way to draw reflects their understanding of language then they may understand art as similar to verbal language: as a systemic social tool that helps in

communication and in building understanding. By extension then the same reasons that motivate children to engage in the difficult task of language mastery also motivates the desire to engage in activities that improve their mastery over art.

The relationship between language and art can also be seen in children's understanding of the concept of written language. That is, the child first learns that spoken words have particular meaning and as he learns that written words convey specific meanings he may extend that concept to drawings. The drawing, as a symbolic system with greater simplicity and logic (conceptually) than the abstract logic of written language provides the child a preliminary tool for what would later become the purpose of writing.

Writing is a very abstract concept, particularly in a culture, like ours, where the written symbols of our language hold no connection to experience. Our letters and words in English do not look like the sounds or things they stand for. The logic of our written language (and spoken language) cannot be arrived at through personal experience (Abram, 1996). Furthermore, we understand the logic of writing to be communication to a non-present audience, which requires the full description of the relevant situation. It requires the child to understand the idea that another person has another point of view, and may not know the details of the situation being explained.

While verbal language benefits from the context of the situation of a conversation, written language must be much more detailed because it has to explain the important aspects that would be obvious in direct conversation. Because children are functioning with an understanding of language based on speech not on the concept of writing, their art, as it relates to language, can be understood to relate to speech more than writing. This is to say that, while writing needs to be able to stand alone, outside of context, speech does not, and likewise children (early in elementary school) may not intend their drawings to stand alone, outside of context. They may be quite happy explaining the meanings of the forms in their drawings and their role in the stories that the drawings illustrate. Realism (i.e. the ability for a drawing to be expressive of specific forms without the need for explanation) may only become a necessary or relevant concept as the child learns that written language stands alone, outside of the context of conversation.

Art and language in late elementary/early adolescence.

This argument, that artistic activity works with (and reflects) children's developing understandings can be further supported by relating artistic activity and language development. First, in late childhood/early adolescence the desire to know how to draw things correctly may change from an interest in a schematic representation to a realistic representation. This may reflect a growing understanding of the nature of systemic concepts and that one systemic concept of visual art is that it can serve to rendering images realistically. The internalization of this concept and application to their drawing activity reflects the beginnings of the shift from thinking-in-complexes to conceptual thought. It also may reflect a shift in children's interests from the self to the outside world.

The shift to an interest in realistic rendering may also reflect the internalization of the abstract concept of written language. Younger children, even though they are starting to understand how to read and write may be still relating to language primarily as a system for speech rather than a system for writing, as that is the more developed concept for them (Vygotsky, 1986, 1978). By late childhood the abstract concepts of written language, (including its function as a way to convey meaning outside of context) have been more fully internalized. This shift may in turn change the way children relate to other forms of communication such as art, explaining (in part) a shift from seeing art as relating to speech (i.e. needing context) to seeing art as relating to written language (i.e. standing alone).

Art and the development of abstraction.

To address the question of how art shifts from relating to speech to relating to writing I will turn to the concept of abstraction. We understand Vygotsky's concept of abstraction as the ability to understand that a systemic (as opposed to generalized) concept has specific essential characteristics. The process of developing the ability to abstract goes in two directions: it can come from the practice of identifying or isolating essential details from experienced concepts and it can come from applying learned essential characteristics of a concept to build a more systemic understanding of concepts previously generalized from personal experience.

Drawing and painting can be understood as particularly good activities for mastering awareness of essential details. Symbolic drawing is essentially an exercise in expressing key elements. In the elementary school age period the child “draws what he knows about things and not what he sees” (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 76). In order to translate a remembered image to a visual symbol he has to identify to himself the essential characteristics. Furthermore, we understand this activity as a process of the imagination. As discussed in the previous chapter, to create a schematic rendering the child has to identify the essential characteristics of an experienced object or idea, sever them from the object, and create a new object (the drawing) onto which he then projects those characteristics. Through elementary school the child gains more control of both his imagination and the drawn image. He grows to identify more important characteristics, including those related to the real appearance of the form and its relationship to other forms in space. He eventually begins to work not just with remembered experiences but with learned concepts, applying metaphoric thinking to the symbolic work. In this way symbolic/schematic drawing can be understood as an exercise that combines and develops imagination, memory, abstraction, thinking-in-complexes, emotion, and (eventually) conceptual thinking (Vygotsky, 1978, 2004).

Art and the development of conscious awareness and volition.

From the way art activity changes with language we can proceed to look at the way art relates to (and engages) the development of other mental functions, specifically conscious awareness and volition, which Vygotsky states are functions that aid in the development of conceptual thinking (Vygotsky, 1997a). The development of mind requires volitional engagement in one’s life: a passion for experience, learning and feeling. These mental functions develop through activities that employ creative imagination. Thus, understanding how art activities develop conceptual thinking requires looking at how they develop conscious awareness and volition.

When mediated properly art activities naturally engage the child in reflexive activity cycles. This is to say that art activities can actively engage children’s conscious awareness of their feelings and thoughts when 1) the child’s awareness is drawn to the process of planning and making a work of art and 2) when the child’s awareness is drawn to the product of his plan and he is invited to ‘read’ his work, experiencing it, and

gauging its effectiveness in conveying the intended meaning and subsequently improving it. The first step is a kind of conscious awareness that can build in early childhood through art. In other words the young child, happy with his own symbolic system, creates art as part of a reflexive cycle that focuses on the creation and telling of a story. The second kind of awareness requires both more mediation, the development of more deliberate attention and, I would argue, development of the concept of written language.

As explained above, the internalization of the concept of written language correlates to a change in artistic interests from symbolic to representational art. Once children develop an interest in having their art stand alone, independent of explanation then the artwork can become the focus of the process rather than the story it was previously made to illustrate. The act of critically looking at a work-in-progress, then imagining changes and acting to change the picture amounts to change from participation in a reflexive cycle. With each re-examination, the work is re-experienced, feeding the imagination with new perceptual input that then feeds ideas, decisions and more actions. This kind of work builds conscious awareness of one's experiences because the act of critically analyzing art is a practice of being consciously aware of experience. In other words, the child who wants his picture to be accurately expressive of something (without his having to explain it) tries to look at his work the way a stranger would. He tries to be aware of his experience of his own work (Dewey, 1896; 1934/1980).

Art and the Development of Emotional Awareness

This kind of conscious awareness reflects the way we learn to edit a paper: we try to put ourselves in the shoes of another person reading the work and gauge whether the writing is clear and expressive of the intended ideas. The difference between this kind of conscious awareness while editing prose writing and the conscious awareness cultivated in viewing art may be the addition of emotional awareness. Arts of all kinds speak, in part, through their effect on our emotions. This could be the sense of weight and balance of lines and forms, as sympathetically felt in the body when seen in a painting. It could also be the emotional connotations brought to light by the metaphors and images of a drawing or poem. This is a cultivated emotional awareness (i.e. the

higher psychological form of emotion) that feeds self-understanding and cultural understanding.

Vygotsky stressed the importance of the emotional aspect of experience when he identified the unit of analysis for understanding psychology is *perezhivanie*. This Russian term roughly translates as ‘emotional lived experience:’ a view that experience is simultaneously emotional and intellectual, containing both personal sense and cultural meaning (Connery, John-Steiner & Marjanovic-Shane, 2010; Gajdamaschko, 2005; Vygotsky, 1986). Activities that practice awareness of the emotional half of experience develop our understanding of ourselves while they simultaneously feed development. Conscious, developed, sensitive awareness of our emotions means we can be aware of the feeling of the contradiction between internalized tools for understanding the world and the experiences we confront. This includes the feeling of the contradiction between thinking-in-complexes and conceptual learning that is a driving force for development in childhood. With awareness those dissonant emotions drive the will to use our imaginations to create solutions to problems. We cyclically experience those efforts until new tools for understanding the world are internalized that provide a point of balance—emotionally and intellectually—between thought and experience, the personal and the social.

Furthermore, the arts not only provide a means of sensitizing the child to her emotions but it provides the means of engaging the source of those emotions. Visual art, when well mediated, is fun. We can see how good art-making is as a tool for child development simply in children’s desire and drive to engage in art. Visual arts provide them a tool to engage learned concepts in a way that grounds them in personal sense, feeling and experience. Enjoyment in drawing means the child engages in it often: practicing and mastering the tools and concepts of art as well as the mental tools of conscious awareness, imagination, emotional awareness, volition and conceptual thought.

Art and the Development of Imagination

In lieu of a conclusion I will briefly summarize and review the ways the visual arts engage the imagination (as this will be the subject of the next chapter). Building on the in-depth discussion of the meaning and function of imagination in the previous chapter

and the summary of artistic development made in this chapter we can quickly see how the arts engage the imagination. I began the chapter with the argument that visual arts arises out of the function of the pivot in play, which is made through the use of the imagination. Imagination thus makes the birth of artistic activity possible and continues to function through the symbolic stage of art in early and middle elementary school: providing the necessary mental function for the construction of images and stories out of the pieces of the child's learned, felt and lived understandings. It is the use of the imagination that allows art, furthermore, to be a tool through which children build personal sense into learned meanings, as seen in the creation of art that shows learned concepts and use of metaphor.

We generally take for granted that children's inventive, symbolic art uses and develops the creative imagination. However if we understand imagination in the way Vygotsky proposes, we need to see the use of creative imagination as an act intimately tied to children's mediated (and mastered) understandings of the concepts of art which include its tools, techniques and communicative, social and personal functions. In order to use and develop the imagination effectively the arts need to be taught. Young children's volition in asking how to draw images symbolically needs to be met with teaching and the opportunity to master those images. Older children's volition in asking how to draw images realistically needs to be met with instruction and the opportunity to master the concepts and visual sensitivity needed to draw/paint realistically.

In other words, in order for art to be an activity children want to engage in it needs to be made useful and vital. It needs to be taught and practiced. It needs to be what Gajdamaschko calls a "well-developed imaginative activity." The following two chapters will ground the hypothetical relationship between art and development presented in this chapter in concrete recommendations for ways art can fulfill the mandate of being the kind of well-developed imaginative activity that can make art a leading activity in psychological development in childhood.

Chapter 4. Branching from Vygotsky's Theory to Guiding Principles and Practical Ideas for the Construction of a Visual Arts Education Program for Primary School-Aged Children

Introduction

I have thus far worked to establish and support the argument that an education in the visual arts can be a powerful tool for development, particularly at the elementary school level. This is due to the fact that the ways the arts engage children's imagination helps develop the imagination and (through it) the other important mental functions of this age. Though its formation began in the pre-school activity of socio-dramatic play, imagination does not, Vygotsky's says, become fully internalized until adolescence. Childhood, therefore, marks an important time for engaging and developing the imagination through mediated learning activities including art, such that it can be the most powerful tool possible for aiding development. The previous chapter showed how art can be understood as a tool for the development of imagination based on the ways it engages children's interests and their developing mental functions. Part of the argument in Chapter 3 for the developmentally-advancing nature of art was that artistic activity is mediated, not something that arises spontaneously.

Understanding art as a set of mediated activities means that it does not come out of the child but is a tool in the child's culture which is mediated to her, practiced and internalized. This means that a child's teachers and parents have the responsibility to mediate art and mediate it in a way that both most accurately reflects the culturally and historically-specific concepts of the discipline and provides the most productive learning situation for practicing and internalizing those concepts. We therefore need to understand art as a mediated activity, and that it needs to be mediated in particular ways to achieve the developmental potentials discussed in the previous chapter. That is to say

that it needs to be what Gajdamaschko calls ‘well-developed imaginative activity’ (Gajdamaschko 2005, p. 21).

A ‘well-developed imaginative activity’ is an activity that exercises and develops the imagination. Gajdamaschko expands on this idea by saying that, according to Vygotsky,

To become a cognitive tool for the development of imagination, our educational materials: (a) have to be crystallized in culture; (b) have to be that of unity of imagination and thinking; imagination and emotions; (c) have to influence the child’s behavior (otherwise it won’t be considered a cognitive tool); and (d) have to be actively accepted by the child (adolescent) as being part of her cultural development. (Gajdamaschko 2005, p. 21)

The principles outlined in this statement will guide the construction of the arguments in this chapter regarding the ways art education needs to be understood and structured to maximize its potential as a cognitive tool for development during childhood.

Gajdamaschko’s statement can be broken up into two guiding pillars: 1) the development of the child and 2) the conceptual content and methods of the discipline. The two can be understood as entirely linked in regards to the idea that development includes the internalization of the systemic concepts of a discipline. However, they can also be separated in the sense that the psychological tools needed for complete, mature participation in culture and self-actualization only exist partly in a given discipline. They are the product of activity across learned disciplines and social experience combined with the individual’s developing psychological system. We can therefore understand these two areas—content knowledge and development—everywhere that the individual meets community (Vygotsky, 1978).

Within a cultural-historical perspective this theory can be extended to viewing teachers as holding particular responsibilities. These responsibilities are to 1) understand child development and their students’ particular stage of development, 2) understand the cultural concepts of the particular discipline being taught and 3) construct the curriculum and methods around a cultural-historical understanding of development and conceptual knowledge such that learning that activity contributes to their students’ development.

Part 1 of this chapter will begin with the first of these responsibilities—to understand child development—by introducing a conceptual tool that Vygotsky developed for understanding what to expect of an elementary school child in terms of internalized mental functions and those in the process of developing. Furthermore, this conceptual tool, the Zone of Proximal Development, provides a framework for assessing a child’s particular stage of development and can guide the construction of a curriculum such that it engages children’s developing mental functions at that stage. Part 2 will look at the concepts that can guide a Vygotskian approach to the content of a curriculum and the teaching methods for art education.

Part 1: The Age Period and ZPD of the North American Elementary School-Age Child

In the previous chapters of this thesis I worked to build an explanation of Vygotsky’s cultural, historical and instrumental theory of psychology. Using that material, this part of the study will focus on building a more detailed understanding of the elements of the psychological systems of the elementary school-aged child, as structured through Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which Vygotsky defines as “*the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86, emphasis in the original).

The Zone of Proximal Development is a model for thinking about the dynamics of mental development in each age period on an objective, cultural level as well as on the subjective, individual level. The objective ZPD is the historically and culturally relevant norm for mental capacities and abilities at each age period. In western culture, for example, it is expected that school-age children have the capacity to engage in learning activities which requires that a variety of mental functions be fully internalized. While learning develops a variety of functions, successful engagement in learning activities requires that a variety of mental tools be (more-or-less) fully internalized. A culture where children do not attend a western style school would have different

requirements of children and therefore a different objective ZPD for that age period. The subjective ZPD is a description of the fully and partially developed functions in the individual as they relate to the objective ZPD of that culture (Chaiklin, 2003, Vygotsky, 1978).

To review, Vygotsky identified the mental functions that the child in western culture needs to have fully internalized by the time he enters elementary school (generally speaking) as including 1) a stable sense of self (understanding the self as separate from the environment, physically and emotionally), 2) an understanding the concept of rules, social roles and the emotions associated with roles and situations, 3) a basic understanding the symbolic function of language, 4) deliberate memory, and 5) self-control. The developing mental functions of the elementary age period include conceptual thought, conscious awareness, volition and imagination (Vygotsky, 1978, 1998b).

The objective ZPD not only provides the framework for understanding the individual's experience but can also be understood as part of the child. That is to say that the ZPD is never solely in the child, it is an evaluation of the child's capabilities in relation to the theoretical model of the child's age period as witnessed in what a child can do alone compared to what he can do with help. Traditional independent testing therefore only demonstrates the mental functions that a child has fully developed. Key to Vygotsky's theory that learning leads development then is understanding what is fully and partially developed and not working with the child's fully developed functions so much as with a child's partially developed functions.

Assessing the subject ZPD of a child first involves observing the independent capabilities of a child, then identifying the degree to which various functions are in the process of developing by the amount of assistance the child needs to accomplish a given task. This is the heart of the teaching activity, in that identifying the activities that lie in the subjective ZPD identifies the particular ways that art can function as a leading activity for that child (Chaiklin, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978).

A wealth of material has been developed for assessing children's ZPD under the general term of Dynamic Assessment. The core principle of Dynamic Assessment is that it is "interactive, open ended and generate[s] information about the responsiveness of

the learner to intervention” (Lidz & Elliot, 2000, p. 7 as quoted in Lidz & Gindis, 2003, p. 103; Lidz & Gindis, 2003; Chaiklin, 2003; Vygotsky, 1987).

Vygotsky states that it is the capacity of the child to imitate that lies at the heart of the activity (or intervention) and illuminates developing mental functions. The function of imitation is deeply misunderstood, particularly in the visual arts, where it is viewed as the opposite of creative activity. It is often assumed that imitation shows ability without understanding. However, the ability to imitate an activity requires an understanding of the basic logic of the activity. Vygotsky states, “imitation is possible only to the extent and in those forms in which it accompanied by understanding” (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 96). A child who does not understand the concept of a board game will not be able to pretend to play chess. That which you can do with leading questions, modeling and guidance exhibits the mental functions that are in the process of forming and provides the activity through which mental functions develop. Seth Chaiklin summarizes the concept of imitation well with the following statement:

The crucial assumption is that imitation is possible because (a) maturing psychological functions are still insufficient to support independent performance, but (b) have developed sufficiently so that (c) a person can understand how to use collaborative actions (e.g., leading questions, demonstrations) from another. The presence of these maturing functions is why the Zone of Proximal Development exists. Alternatively, one can say that the Zone of Proximal Development is defined as referring to those intellectual actions and mental functions that a child is able to use in interaction, where independent performance is inadequate. (Chaiklin, 2003, p. 52)

The concept of imitation is at the heart of the cultural-historical constructivist theory that mental tools start on the material plane, in activity, before they move into the mind. This understanding of imitation should therefore deeply inform a cultural-historical approach to art education in childhood. While conventional understandings of imitation place it in contradiction with creative imagination, Vygotsky’s specific cultural-historical concept of both processes makes them complementary and vital concepts for guiding the construction of an art education method and curriculum that can aid in the child’s development.

For the moment, however, we can finish constructing an understanding of the Zone of Proximal Development with the third area that needs to be recognized: the

mental functions still entirely undeveloped. These can be seen in activities that the child cannot do regardless of the degree of help provided by a teacher or parent (Chaiklin, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978).

Viewing art as a leading activity in development, as this study proposes, means that an educator is responsible for starting her efforts with a group of children by understanding the objective ZPD and gauging each student's subjective ZPD. The degree to which art education can be a powerful tool for development depends on how well art is understood and how well development is understood. The functions inside the child's ZPD are what all education, not only art education, needs to both assess and work to develop. The degree to which a learning activity can be successful at leading development depends further on how well the learning activity is understood in terms of both the craft of the activity and the conceptual content of the activity. In the following sections I will build an argument for a particular view of the concepts of art and the activities that best mediate those concepts.

Part 2: Guiding Concepts for a Cultural-Historical Approach to the Curriculum and Methods of Art Education Curriculum and Methods

I can now finally begin to build concrete guidelines for the creation of art education curriculum and methods such that visual art becomes instrumental in leading development during childhood. Building on the conceptual material presented in the previous chapter and the first half of this chapter you will recall that to be a tool for development art needs to develop the child in ways that is relevant to culture (i.e. it needs to contribute to the development *into* culture). To draw from Gajdamaschko's statement quoted earlier: "[t]o become a cognitive tool for the development of imagination, our educational materials... have to be that of unity of imagination and thinking; imagination and emotions; [and] have to influence the child's behavior (otherwise it won't be considered a cognitive tool)" (2005, p. 21). The general possibilities that art has to be instrumental in development were explored in the previous chapter.

Now I can take those arguments and combine them with Gajdamaschko's mandate for 'well-developed imaginative activity' towards the creation of guiding principles for art education curricula and methods. Guiding principles for building an understanding of the content at the heart of art education will be presented under the umbrella of the 'historical' aspect of Vygotsky's theory of psychology. Guidelines for art education methods that can make art education instrumental in development will then be presented as they relate generally to the 'cultural' tenet of Vygotsky's theory. Each section will also include some connections to existing, North American art curricula and methods.

These examples, while coming from programs that were not built with cultural-historical theory in mind, can nevertheless inform a Vygotskian approach to art education when engaged with critically. Furthermore, please note that the examples are not meant to be comprehensive but to begin to create tangible connections to art education practice and build a pallet of ideas with which to construct possibilities for a cultural-historical art education method in the following chapter.

The Historical experience of previous generations (curriculum "crystalized in culture").

From the discussion of Vygotsky's theory in Chapter 2 you may remember that the term "historical" refers both to the idea of people and concepts having a history in their development. That is to say that concepts and people do not appear fully formed but rather they can be understood as the product of a long process of development. Furthermore we can understand Vygotsky's concept of the historical nature of development as referring to the idea that development, learning, culture, and perhaps every dynamic phenomenon is in a constant state of change.

The concepts of art are likewise historical both for the culture and the individual, changing as the individual develops. While all the tenets of Vygotsky's theory overlap, the historical principle here will be used to discuss guidelines for thinking about the concepts of art, both in terms of the mature cultural-historical concepts of the discipline and in regard to the concepts specific to the elementary school age period. The importance of identifying and deeply understanding the concepts of a discipline by the teacher is integral to Vygotsky's theory of development. Understanding development as

culturally-historically situated, where the tools for thinking exist in the concepts and activities of the culture, means that the quality of the conceptual knowledge mediated to students will impact the quality of their internalized tools (Vygotsky, 1978). This is what Gajdamaschko means with the statement that for education in a discipline to amount to a cognitive tool the curriculum must be “crystalized in culture.” The more a teacher understands the concepts of a field in her culture the more informed and powerful the curriculum in that discipline can be as a tool for development (Gajdamaschko, 2005).

The concept of art in North America.

To move the argument beyond simply saying that a teacher needs to be an expert in meanings, uses, techniques, histories, vocabularies and practices of art in his culture I will pose one possible understanding of an overarching concept of art. Acknowledging that there are hundreds of texts written in an effort to articulate a contemporary, North American definition of art and that any effort of mine would therefore be particularly crude I will nevertheless attempt to outline some basic conceptual principles, as it will serve several purposes here.

First, the exercise of constructing a concept of art will provide me (an art teacher interested in implementing a Vygotskian approach to art) the reflexive practice of identifying my own knowledge of art. Doing so will help me as a teacher see the gaps and strengths in my understandings and build a conscious awareness of the assumptions that underlie my teaching such that I can critically engage with them. Secondly, the exercise will illustrate one possible cultural-historical understanding of the general concept of art, showing how it can be understood very generally and how that understanding can help guide curriculum construction.

As mentioned, I am learning and working in the United States and the concepts of art that I will look at to guide this study will be situated in the context of contemporary American culture. This is not intended to promote a particularly narrow view of art but it is an acknowledgment that as an activity that holds the tools for thinking, art education needs to be relevant to the culture that students are growing into. However, as you will see, the concepts are particularly broad and focused on the development of tools for thinking. By being culturally specific, art becomes relevant, functioning in a complementary way with the child’s experience. If an activity can provide the child tools

for her cognitive development (as art education can do when 'crystalized in culture') then she is more likely to develop the mental functions (including imagination and conceptual thinking) necessary for deep and meaningful understanding of the concepts and tools of art in other cultures and at other times in history.

In accord with the theme of this study I will use Vygotsky's theory of art as a starting point. Vygotsky's text *The Psychology of Art* (1971), while not defining art outright, draws the contours of an understanding of the meaning of art through a study of the psychological processes at the heart of artistic experience and embedded in the works of art. Informed by the text and several commentaries I concluded that Vygotsky's definition of art is roughly: *concept and feeling expressed through a form* (Vygotsky, 1971, Kellogg, 2010, Lima, 1995). In his dialectical rendering of the psychological process of experiencing works of art, Vygotsky defines the artistic experience as the cathartic annihilation of feeling resulting from the simultaneous experience of contradictory sets of emotions. One set is present and felt in experiencing the conceptual content of the work, the contrary set of emotions is felt from the form of the work (i.e. enjoying watching a play while also feeling sad because the story is tragic). A good work of art, in Vygotsky's opinion needs to be constructed in such a way as to create catharsis (as he defines it). Furthermore, the work should be a form of crystalized culture: holding meaning relevant beyond the individual to the collective experience of the community (Vygotsky, 1971, 1978).

In order to build a concept of art relevant to this study of Vygotsky's theories, however, the cultural and historical context in which Vygotsky formulated his theories of the psychology of art need to be noted. His was not the contemporary North American context but early twentieth century Soviet Russia. A more-or-less straight forward expansion of that idea to something relevant to contemporary North American culture may mean defining art as *thought and feeling, experienced and expressed through a form*. This would reflect the idea that art does not only exist in canonic works but also in a process that begins when we experience our environment emotionally and aesthetically. Those emotions then inform as well as contradict our thoughts. In the imagination, thought and emotion synthesize as new ideas and knowledge move out of the mind in a creative act of speech or action. This act affects something in the individual's environment, which is in turn re-experienced, feeding a cycle of feeling,

thought and action. This cycle exists in art making, art viewing, and the art object where it lies dormant as an invited potential. It can be thought of as a mental tool: a way of engaging presently, emotionally and imaginatively, and acting from a synthesis of thought and feeling towards expressive engagement.

My expanded rendering of Vygotsky's definition seeks to maintain the core features of Vygotsky's dialectical theory while expanding his notion of what qualifies as art to include the wide variety of cultural activities called 'art' in North America through which people engage in the emotional-imaginative-creative process described above. The formation of this definition of art as a creative process more than a particular type of artifact draws on my readings of the works of a variety of important art pedagogues, philosophers and researchers including Robert Henri, Kerry Freedman, John Dewey, Arthur Efland, Elliot Eisner, David Gardner and Maxine Greene (Dewey, 1896, 1934/1980; Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Freedman, 2003; Freedman & Hernandez, 1998; Gardner, 1989, 1990; Greene, 1995; Henri, 1939).²

² Postmodern approaches to arts and aesthetics, for example, suggest that aspects of culture are not only transmitted in 'high art' or even in concrete artifacts but are available in the myriad forms of visual and aesthetic media and culture that surrounds us (Freedman, 2003). Moreover, postmodern aesthetic thought puts more of the emphasis on the personal response of the audience to a work of art or popular culture. Meaning, the theory proposes, is less stable and located more in the individual interpretation rather than in the work of art. While this theory speaks to a different theory of learning (radical constructivism or cognitive constructivism) rather than the one on which this paper is based (cultural-historical constructivism) the two views need not be in complete contradiction (Wardekker, 2002). The personal experience of a work can still take precedence over the historical-cultural meaning of a work while at the same time acknowledging that our 'personal experience' is socially situated: we think with meanings and language and therefore our personal experience is infused with our cultural.

Another productive way to reinterpret Vygotsky's theory of art for contemporary culture relates to Maxine Greene's idea of opening texts (Greene, 1995). She suggests re-imagining, or re-opening canonic texts to their meanings for those whom the work originally sided against. That is to say that canonic works are defined as valuable (and their particular meanings are defined) by the dominant group. The dominant group defining the canon in western culture is most often that of middle and/or upper class white men. To open our culture's works of art to new interpretations means valuing and promoting a reinterpretation of their meaning for the minority group inside and outside the work (Greene 1995). In this way works of art stay alive and relevant: holding and transmitting cultural-historical truths that can continue to enrich and fuel life.

While admittedly very brief and incomplete this definition is useful for this discussion because it places the meaning of art in the psychological tool exemplified by artistic processes. While that process can be extended to defining a wide variety of cultural activities I find it particularly relevant to visual arts education. Its utility can also be seen in how well it describes the meaning of art both in the mature cultural form and for the child. As discussed in the previous chapter the differences between the two lie primarily in the different tools for thinking internalized by adults versus children. Children's symbolic understanding of language and generalized, experience-based understanding of concepts mean that works of art cannot yet express the culturally-expansive ideas that they can for adults. Having internalized conceptual thinking adults can employ and experience the cultural concepts expressed through art by virtue of its use of metaphor and other techniques for extending aesthetic experience to culture meanings. To a young child art is symbol. By middle childhood art is emotion and symbol, and by late childhood art transitions to emotion, symbol and concept, beginning to employ metaphor and a more experientially-based (rather than symbolic) expression of emotion (Smith, 1993; Vygotsky, 2004). That is to say that the emotion expressed in young children's artwork is often rendered symbolically while the realistic rendering and

This 'opening' of the concept of art then shows the possibility for art (when understood as experience) to exist in 1) an artistic creative process (i.e. the 'work' of art), 2) held as a potential experience in the culturally defined art object, or 3) in a viewers' experience whether or not it be with a canonically defined art object. An example of the latter can be seen in the 1999 Dreamworks film *American Beauty* where the character of Ricky Fetts (played by Wes Bentley) has a deeply moving experience watching a plastic bag float in the wind. While some may argue that Vygotsky specifically defined the artistic experience as being the result of the relationship between form and content in a specifically made 'art object,' I would propose the idea that much of the purpose of the arts is to exercise and develop our ability to feel, empathize and become conscious of our emotions, senses and environment during experiences. The aesthetic experience Ricky Fetts had with that floating plastic bag made the bag a work of art. Kerry Freedman speaks of the same expansion of the concept of art in her discussion of the richness and aesthetic diversity of current media and popular culture (Freedman, 2003). This expansion of the attributes of art from the object, to the experience and making of art allow us to see more of our activities and experiences as possible sites for artistic thinking and experience.

sensitivity to the emotive qualities of line, form, color and movement develop as the child develops artistically, emotionally, socially and intellectually (Vygotsky, 1931/1998; 2004).

The concepts of art are held in the container of aesthetic practices which include, in the case of visual art, the western traditions of drawing, painting and sculpture, and contemporary traditions of digital media, design, and socio-political arts including cartoons, graphic novels and graffiti (to name just a few). The concepts can be understood as extending outward to the histories, techniques, practices, social influence and aesthetics associated with these mediums. The concepts of art also extend downward, into the individual in terms of the changing meaning of art for the child as it functions within the developing psychological system.

While the mature, cultural concepts are important for building a curriculum that can lead children to the most empowering concepts of art, understanding the particular meanings of art for children is perhaps of greater importance. An activity, such as art, that relies on the use of creative imagination cannot be coercive. That is to say that you cannot force children to be creative. They need to see the relevance of the activity for their own lives and feel drawn to engaging in it for the ways they find it personally useful and interesting. Therefore the concepts central to the activity, as it is taught, need to fit the psychological system of the child (Gajdamaschko, 2005, Vygotsky, 2004).

Remembering that thinking-in-complexes rather than conceptual thought dominates the school-age child's psychological system, the age-specific meaning of art can perhaps be stated as *thought and feeling experienced and expressed through symbolic forms*. The power of art for adults may rest in the viewer's aesthetic sensitivities, cultural understanding and ability to read a painting metaphorically, conceptually and emotionally or in the artist's technical ability and conceptual knowledge. By contrast art becomes a powerful tool for the child when he feels confident in his visual rendering of a large vocabulary of symbolic forms.

I would argue that when a child begins to ask for direction, wanting to know how to draw something correctly, he is expressing both an interest in drawing (perhaps seeing in it a useful tool for expression or exploration of thoughts and ideas) and he is expressing the knowledge that as a set of symbols, like language, there is a 'right' way to draw something if the work is to be understood by someone else. The teacher's

response to this desire to know how to draw should be to mediate both the basic forms the child wants to know, and the elements of line and form that will build his abilities to construct his own vocabulary of symbolic forms.

The conceptual elements of the basic definition of art that hold true for adults and for children provide the key for curriculum development that can be both relevant to the mature concepts of art and be a means of building the child's understanding towards the mature meanings (and mental tools of art). These include the concepts that art making and viewing engages reflexive cycles of emotion and thought, expressing ideas and narratives in symbolic/conceptual ways and emotional ways. Teaching art in a way that focuses on its emotionally and conceptually expressive potentials bridges the childhood concepts of art with the adulthood concepts. In this manner the child's personal interests are engaged in forms that lead to the internalization of the mature (and most powerful) concepts of art by adulthood.

Applications of the 'Historical' aspect of a Vygotskian approach to art education.

Combining an understanding of development and art in this way can be better understood if illuminated with concrete examples from existing art education programs. While no program exists (to my knowledge) explicitly based on cultural-historical theory, many art education theories and programs can be interpreted in ways that make them meaningful and useful in light of the logic presented in this study.

Drawing upon "Discipline-Based Art Education."

Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) is one such approach that can be gleaned for concepts relevant to this study. As the dominant theory in art education in the United States it seems important to examine it for relevance to this theory. As described in Chapter 1, DBAE has its roots in a cognitivist approach to development. However, it presents criticism, aesthetics, history and art production (the four defined disciplines of art) as all learnable from an early age (in a simplified form) and of equal importance. In this way the program works to advance the cognitive/intellectual nature of art. In teaching the mature cultural concepts of art from an early age DBAE presents art as a powerful tool for thinking that can be both relevant for children and build them towards a mature understanding of art, in all its intellectual complexity (Davis et al, 2005; Eisner, 2002; Smith, 1989).

DBAE can thus be a useful tool for the creation of a cultural-historical art education program. It requires some reconceptualization, however, as it is not based on a Vygotskian understanding of development. It seems to me particularly divergent from a Vygotskian approach to education and development in its concept of imagination. From a Vygotskian perspective the centrality of imagination for development and the concept of imagination as intimately associated with reality mean that the activity of producing art (where creative imagination is manifest and mastered) would be the most important part of art education, particularly during childhood.

In contrast to DBAE's approach are a variety of art education programs that focus more specifically on production. Two interesting examples can be found in Frederic Franck's contemplative approach to drawing and Betty Edward's 'right brain' approach to learning to draw realistically (Franck, 1973; Edwards, 1989). In his 1973 book *The Zen of Seeing: Seeing/Drawing as Meditation*, Franck presents the act of drawing as the kind of activity that can open up a meditative conscious awareness of seeing and feeling, sensitizing both (Franck, 1973).

Betty Edward's famous drawing curriculum *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (1989) provides a concrete curriculum based on the idea that the hemispheres of our brain are responsible for separate activities and orientations. The left hemisphere is thought to be analytical, logical, time-sensitive, language based, precise and detail-oriented. The right hemisphere is not logic-oriented, not time-oriented, more emotion-oriented, and holistic rather than detail-oriented in the way it processes ideas, experiences and images. The left hemisphere is thought to dominate our conscious lives. Realistic drawing requires an awakening of the right hemisphere, she argues. The left hemisphere gets in the way in its need to organize and label what we see. Drawing accurately from life requires silencing the logical, language-based half of the brain. Edwards proposes a drawing curriculum that does just that, sensitizing the eyes to form, line and relationships while providing the guiding principles of perspective and the proportions of the face that can help surmount the lens of schematic and symbolic understanding with which we see the world.

If we proceed to read Edward's arguments in light of a cultural-historical approach we can perhaps conclude that the centrality of the schematic, language-based

orientation to art need not be the result of a split in character between the hemispheres but expressive of the thinking-in-complexes and schematic drawing of children (Edwards, 1989). A curriculum like Edwards can be ideal then for mediating the shift from symbolic/schematic to formal/representation artistic ability that begins to rise in interest for children as they internalize conceptual thinking. The reason many adults still approach drawing from the schematic stage is not because they are still using that cognitive tool but because the skills needed to transition to a formalistic understanding of art and skill in art were never mediated or mastered by those individuals (Vygotsky, 2004).

These curricula provide an idea of the resources available in existing approaches to art education that see art as a cognitive tool and ways that the programs can complement each other. Where DBAE may put too little emphasis on the developmental power of the art-making process, Edwards or Franck's approaches may not provide enough of the cultural context and resources for the development of imagination. However, when examined through a clear theory of development and imagination such as that provided by cultural-historical theory, elements of various programs can be read as fulfilling aspects the developmental potential of art, thus informing the creation of curriculum and methods for art education for this study.

The Cultural Nature of Art Education Methods

...on the one hand, we need to cultivate creative imagination; on the other hand, a special culture is needed for the process of embodying the images created by imagination. Only when both aspects are adequately developed, can children's creativity develop properly and provide the child with what we have a right to expect from him. (Vygotsky, 2004, p.84)

The element largely missing from the discussion is the real *how* of an art education: how does learning art become a developmental activity? By what method do the cultural concepts of art become tools for thinking? Remembering that the roots of Vygotsky's work lie in dialectical materialism we can further understand the social situation as a set of dialectic relationships between the individual and community, the material and mental, the personal and social (Gajdamaschko, 1999). Development happens in the meeting of these dichotomies and can thus be examined around a concept of the individual, the community and the space between.

The *individual* in cultural experience.

I will begin building arguments for cultural-historical methods for art education by conceiving of art education as the reproduction of culture through the acceptance of innovations by the individual and the creation of culture through the community acceptance of the individual's creative products. For education to provide tools for cognitive development, the activities and the concepts they are based on "have to be actively accepted by the child (adolescent) as being part of her cultural development" (Gajdamaschko 2005, p. 21).

This idea of acceptance is a very delicate and important concept particularly in an activity that is based on the exercise of creative imagination, because, again, creativity cannot be coerced. Vygotsky states,

When we attempt to foster children's creativity, including in the visual arts, we need to observe the principle of freedom, which is generally an essential condition for all kinds of creativity. This means that the creative activities of children cannot be compulsory or forced and must arise only out of their own interests. For this reason instruction in drawing cannot be a mass and general phenomenon. (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 84)

This statement can be applied to the practice of education with the idea that freedom comes as a result of gaining mastery. That is to say that the deeper our understanding of a given field the more tools we have at our disposal for thinking and creating within that activity. The greater a child's depth of skill and understanding of the elements of design, their emotive and symbolic power, the more freedom he can have to form and express ideas artistically. The more practice he gets exercising his imagination the more adept he will be at applying his imagination toward creative activity, in and outside of art (Vygotsky, 2004).

Freedom and Mastery

We can therefore understand one source of freedom as the opportunity to develop mastery in the techniques and skills of art. Opportunities for mastery of artistic materials need to include work that we can consider to be on the lower end of a child's ZPD: work that challenges the child less, but is easier and in some ways more enjoyable. Working at the edge of our capabilities all the time would be exhausting and frustrating. Challenge needs to be balanced with ease. Mastery activities thus include

reproductive efforts: practice that builds habits and does the work of internalizing the skills and concepts of a discipline.

One concrete recommendation for a cultural-historical approach to art teaching methods would thus be to provide a lot of space and structure in the program for practice. Because the skills needed to draw seem less difficult to grasp we often do not realize that for a child to enjoy drawing and painting (and gain the possible cognitive benefits from it) he needs to practice it. You cannot expect to see advances in artistic ability or in the development of cognitive functions through art if the child only engages in art half an hour or an hour per week, as can be seen in many elementary school-based art programs. We would never expect a child to master a foreign language with one hour per week of practice. Why then would we think art can be learned with so little attention?

Activities that more clearly require a depth of physical and technical ability such as sports and music are more obviously mastery-oriented practices than the symbolic art of children. Seeing creativity as contrary to mastery arises from the Piagetian notion of creative imagination as a practice based in the subconscious (Gajdamaschko, 2005). When building from Vygotsky's theory technical ability in art and a wide range of experiences are both needed for imaginative expression in art. The argument can legitimately be made that the threshold of mastery may be much lower for drawing than for playing the violin, for example, and thus the child can spend less time in mastery activity and more time in creative activity in art education. This can be seen in the idea that, as an extension of the function of the pivot in play, symbolic drawing is no more a mastery-based activity than symbolic-play. Its utility lies in the lack of need for mastery. This argument may work for early childhood when children are still happy with their completely schematic representations and have not yet hit the barrier of feeling limited by a lack of skill (Smith, 1993; Vygotsky, 2004). When a child begins to ask how to draw something, art begins to become a mastery-based activity.

Perhaps art does not have a lower threshold of mastery for children but that mastery is almost never achieved and thus we seldom get to see what a depth of knowledge and skill in art can look like in children. Examining this question would require the creation and study of an art education program that provides the structure and guidance for the quantity of mastery effort associated with activities like learning to play

a musical instrument. Later in the chapter I will introduce just such a proposal: an early childhood art education program based on Shinichi Suzuki's theory of music education.

We therefore need to understand the relationship between mastery and freedom in art education not in terms of the conceptual and technical mastery associated with other subjects but in terms of its creative function as it stems from its birth in socio-dramatic play. The primary function of art for the child is as an imagination-driven tool for building emotive, experiential and conceptual understandings. This means providing children the opportunities to engage in visual art as a very personal way of building and expressing understandings and ideas.

Freedom and mastery are thus intertwined in a tricky, dialectic relationship. Mastery relies on freedom where freedom means the ability to engage with art in a personal way and use it to fulfill personal needs. Freedom relies on mastery in the sense that without mediated exposure (i.e. imitation) and practice with the materials, techniques and concepts of art the child may not be aware of the possibilities it holds as a powerful and useful tool for the formation and expression of ideas and understandings.

Applications of the individual aspect of the cultural nature of art education in teaching methods.

The Suzuki Method.

One way I will propose here for balancing mastery and freedom is to construct art teaching methods and curriculum such that mastery activity is embedded in learning activities that arise out of the child's own interests (to paraphrase Vygotsky, 2004 p. 84). The Suzuki Method of Music Education is particularly successful at this. The curriculum is one almost entirely made up of musical pieces as opposed to studies and exercises traditionally used to develop technique. New techniques are built into the repertoire with careful attention paid to presenting them only in small increments, separated by pieces that do not introduce any new skills. In this way children periodically learn songs that are easier to play, building the child's mastery of the techniques learned through previous pieces while at the same time providing the enjoyment of learning how to play new songs (Suzuki, 1981, 1983).

An art curriculum could follow the same model: introducing new techniques and concepts within projects that are interesting to the child (making mastery activity

personally relevant) and only introducing new concepts after the child has had the opportunity to develop ease and understanding of the preliminary concepts. This is clearly not a novel idea, but it is worth explaining here in terms of how it relates to a cultural-historical approach to learning and development and because of its particular relevance to a creativity-based discipline where development depends on making and maintaining personal interest. In learning the violin, the child is motivated by the desire to play songs he has heard or seen peers play. In art, as discussed, the child is generally motivated by the desire to create images and stories relevant to his thoughts and experiences (and related to what he sees). Because art is primarily a creative activity in this way, Vygotsky states, “drawing cannot be a mass and general phenomenon” (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 84).

In practice this means that teaching a child the meaning and function of various design elements or the ways to control those elements to express particular forms will not, in itself, make that learning interesting and relevant to the child. However, what if the child is first introduced to new design element as imbedded in a presentation of the narrative and expressive possibility of drawing with that design element? The teacher could then invite the child to create his own image with that design element and in so doing embed new learning in the guiding symbolic concept of art for children. With this structure the child may, in planning his image, want to use that design element and will thus engage in mastery of the design element through imitation and application of it in their work. In this way mediated art concepts and techniques are presented in ways that make them relevant to the child, matching and expanding his interests in art.

While productive (i.e. creative) activity has already been partly discussed as it relates to mastery, we can now turn more fully to it. Following from Vygotsky it can be defined here as work that employs creative imagination towards making something new (to the individual) with the learned (mastered) body of techniques in the artistic field combined with the experienced and learned body of concepts, memories and ideas (Smolucha, 1992; Vygotsky, 2004). Productive activity can further be understood as engagement in reflexive activity cycles as they have been previously discussed. It is in the productive (creative) activity of art where we see the mature meaning of art embodied.

In practical application this can mean an art education program that focuses on the individual's expressive interests through a process-based approach. Which, in turn, implies 1) providing activities that focus on the work process, 2) showing through formative assessment and curriculum structure that the process is valued above final products, and 3) engaging students in dialogue (written and verbal) to describe, organize and record the mental process and the work process. A teaching approach that advances this kind of approach can be found in the concept of the 'processfolio.'

The 'Processfolio.'

The 'processfolio' is an approach to teaching and assessment in the visual arts classroom that supports mediation of the concept of art within a cultural-historical constructivist theory of learning. The word was coined by Harvard's Project Zero researchers in their research into instruction and assessment in the arts. The term refers to a portfolio approach to teaching and assessment that expands theories of assessment and instruction from the tradition of summative assessment of final projects based on set rubrics, to a method that values and supports the art making process by teaching to the process and assessing the process (Gardener, Gitomer & Wolf, 2010; Gitomer, Grosh & Price, 1992).

The 'processfolio' teaching method was promoted specifically by the Project Zero program Arts PROPEL. The art assessment research program promoted art as a discipline that combines perception, production and reflection. It sought to promote these three areas by 1) open-ended long-term projects and 2) the 'processfolio' (or formative portfolio) approach to lesson organization and assessment (Gardner, Gitomer & Wolf, 2010; Gardner & Perkins, 1989; Gitomer, 1992). The work included in a student's portfolio expands here to include work generating in the art-making process as well as the final products. The 'processfolio' may include written dialogues with the teacher, journal entries/plans, sketches, reference material, records of the art-making process and final pieces. Formative assessment occurs during the learning process in the form of 'rolling' interviews, intended to engage the student in dialogue about their thinking/feeling/working process and help them work through challenges. The whole 'processfolio' is then assessed in a final interview based on descriptive and (often) negotiated criteria with the assessment taking on a formative, descriptive function, primarily, and a summative simplified grade only secondarily when necessary. By

changing the focus of the practice and assessment to the processes rather than the product a 'processfolio'-based project promotes the concept of art as primarily a mental-emotional-imaginative-creative, individualized process (Gitomer, 1992, Haynes, 1996, Gardner & Perkins, 1989; Gardner, Gitomer & Wolf, 2010).

While not designed with cultural-historical theory in mind, the concepts of art and teaching promoted by the Arts PROPEL 'processfolio' approach can be interpreted to fit the process-based concept of art and the Vygotskian theory of learning promoted in this paper. One problem with applying it directly to elementary school-age children, however, is that it appears designed for older students as it assumes a level of agency, conscious awareness and long-term planning abilities that (from a Vygotskian perspective) are not usually well-developed in young students (Gardner, Gitomer & Wolf, 2010).

However if the program is understood more as a conceptual approach than a specific recipe it can still be very useful to this study. It could be scaled back for younger children with a focus on the concepts that guide their engagement with art, including the symbolic function of art and an understanding of language as it relates to verbal language rather than the concept of written language. The focus on planning, making, reflecting and communicating in the 'processfolio' approach however can naturally mediate imagination, conscious awareness and volition while providing a container in which the child can act freely on work relevant to him or her.

What the 'processfolio', and this whole discussion of the individual half of learning has yet to address is the overarching fact that learning and development happen in community. While providing an important piece of the picture of art education, the 'processfolio' approach puts the individual's personal relationship with art tools and concepts in the fore with mediation of those tools and concepts occurring primarily within the context of the teacher-student relationship. In order to gain a more complete picture of learning we therefore need to turn now to the larger community that shapes and holds the individual student's artistic experience.

The community in cultural experience.

We have thus far looked at a few aspects of the individual or personal side of the dialectical relationships in which learning and development are situated. We now need to

look at the larger context: the community in which the child develops. This discussion will begin with a brief look at the community-based nature of children's artistic interests and motivations, the various important players in that community, and ways the relationships between the individual and the community can be applied into the methods for a cultural-historical approach to art education.

First we need to remember how much learning and development are socially situated. Starting from the earliest stages of life with the baby's attachment to his mother, interpersonal connections motivate the child to engage in the social activity that shapes his development. Language is the clearest example of a socially-situated tool with its social purpose and social manifestation. Similarly, understanding art as a mode of communication places it primarily in the social sphere as well. We can further remember that art, in terms of a cultural-historical approach is a set of practices and concepts situated in cultural-historical tools, *outside* of the child. Through the connections children make with their peers, family and teachers and the contradictions met between internalized tools and lived experience, the child is motivated to engage with new tools, including art, to meet the need to understand his social and material world and express those understandings (Vygotsky, 1978).

As previously discussed, activities that employ creative imagination have to be constructed around the principle of freedom, through which productive (i.e. creative) and reproductive (i.e. mastery) activities can be organized. For art education to be something children want to engage in freely it needs to be modeled as an important part of the cultural fabric of their community and a useful tool for self-understanding and communicating with that community. As the child's community includes family, peers, friends and teachers, all these groups need to be included in the structure of an art education program for it to be successful.

We can therefore think about teaching methods as they expand out from the individual and his relationship with a teacher to the child's relationships with family and peers as well. What this can mean from the outset is viewing the meanings and uses of art as particular to a child's community. While the culture at large defines the general parameters of the cultural-historical concepts of art, the real, tangible meanings and practices are formed in the child's immediate community.

Upon entering school children have already had several years of mediated exposure to art in the form of illustrations in books, pictures they see at home and in public, and in public media (television, advertising, etc.), to name just a few sources. They are also growing in their use of art as it extends from the function of socio-dramatic play, which we understand, is not a single static concept but an activity with which children have varying degrees of experience and varying depths of understanding. Children therefore enter school with a variety of different concepts of art and interests in how to use art. The variations continue through school as they gain more experiences with their communities outside of the classroom (e.g., family and friends), all contributing to variations in what the child is interested in drawing and how the child is interested in using art. The classroom then, provides only one of many mediational situations in which the concepts of art can be constructed.

Furthermore, the child's relationship with peers and parents may be motivating her interests more than her relationship with her teacher suggesting that the construction of children's concepts of art is a process of co-construction between the students which includes the ideas about art that the students bring from home and the experiences with art they share in the class. Thus we can understand that the child-teacher relationship is only one of several important relationships in the child's community affecting his art education and development. Constructing art education methods that acknowledge the important role of the home and class communities in generating motivation means including parents and classmates in each student's learning process.

While the 'processfolio' presented a method for learning that focused on the individual student's process and the student-teacher relationship, the relationships between the students are perhaps more important. Due to the age difference between teachers and younger students there is less of a sense of common experience and common understanding. As a result the mediation that children provide each other in learning art may often be more important than what the teacher mediates, both in terms of comprehension and in terms of inspiration.

Co-construction of the artistic vocabulary.

I will move from this idea to the understanding that while the concepts of art as a communicative and self-reflective cultural tool may hold as a general rule, the

vocabulary of images and ideas that the children are interested in arises is partly co-constructed in the classroom community and is specific to that community. The same can be understood of verbal language: while the general concepts of language hold across the small communities that make up a culture, the vocabulary that each community uses is built through joint collaboration. The quantity of words in a dictionary is of little importance to a child who wants to communicate with other children in his community. To him only the vocabulary they have in common is useful. Art may be understood to function in the same way. In order for art making activities to be relevant to children they need to be relevant to their experience and to their community of peers.

While the verbal vocabulary that a group of children use may be particular to them, meanings of the words they choose to use are largely systemic. In art both the symbol and the meaning can be co-constructed in the community. In order to nurture the co-construction of a class's artistic vocabulary the teacher needs to construct classroom dynamics that promote the mediated learning between students as well as between the teacher and students.

I would expand the argument for a co-constructed artistic vocabulary to the conceptual material of art in terms of the shift from symbolic to representative artistic interests. The influence of peers in facilitating this shift is important in two ways. A sense of connection to a community results in a desire to communicate with that community which motivates engagement with art as both the principal activity of the community, and an expressive means of communicating with that community. By engaging in art the imagination is exercised, through which conceptual thinking is eventually developed. Secondly, the growth of representational art by members of the community may inspire others to want to build the same artistic skills, propelling artistic development. These ideas are prevalent in the work of a variety of scholars including Maxine Green, Elliot Eisner, Kerry Freedman, John Dewey, Jerome Bruner and Martin Buber, to name a few. While a lengthy digression into the contributions of these writers would not fit here, their work will be invaluable for continuing to research and apply the ideas presented in this thesis when carefully considered for the ways their theories do and do not fit a Vygotskian approach to learning and development (Bruner, 1996, 1990; Eisner, 2002; Freedman, 1998, 2003; Green, 1995; Dewey, 1934/1980; Buber, 1970).

Furthermore, the community-based nature of learning, as it fits in Vygotsky's theories, can be understood as an area where scholarship and education practices based on cultural-historical constructivism and social constructivism partially overlap. Thus further research would also be served by the careful examination of social constructivist theories of learning and education programs that build on those theories for ways they can contribute to a Vygotskian approach to art education (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1993; Clouder & Rawson, 2003; Montessori Suzuki, 1983).

Classroom applications of the idea of a co-constructed curriculum.

The consequences of viewing the cultivation of community in a classroom as deeply important to artistic education are numerous. First, understanding the student community as vital means cultivating trust and care between the students in the community through the activity of learning art. Having a group of students in the same room does not qualify as community. The member of the group need to care about each other, trust each other, want to share their ideas and want to learn from each other for the community to aid in learning and development in and through art. This can manifest as promoting joint activity on projects as well as cultivating particular attitudes and habits for communicating about the products and processes of making art in the classroom. A focus on the importance of generating community in the classroom can be seen in a variety childhood-centered education programs including the Suzuki Method of Music Education, the Waldorf Method and the Reggio Emilia approach, among many others (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1993; Clouder & Rawson, 2003; Suzuki, 1983).

Shared Activity

Promoting joint activity can be an important way to build children's interest and concentration, as well as the skills of communication and teamwork. When collaborating children share ideas and images, mediating each other's learning. We can remember here that the traditional opposition to copying in art does not match Vygotsky's understanding of the role of imitation in development. Imitation (which can manifest as copying in art) is the way the Zone of Proximal Development is engaged. In copying the drawings of their peers children expand their own vocabulary. The act of drawing develops the understanding and practice needed to work creatively. Imitation should not,

therefore, be discouraged. A child's desire to copy the work of a peer shows interest. Through interest comes the will to engage in imitation, which builds mastery, allowing for freedom and creativity in artistic activity.

We can further remember that the ability to imitate requires the partial development of the tools and concepts employed by the activity. Without an understanding of how to see the shape and relationships between lines and forms a child will not be able to successfully copy. The desire to copy provides the motivation to engage with the teacher or peer through the mediated process of understanding how to copy a work. The practice of copying thus develops artistic concepts. When children are told not to copy, and to work independently, they are not working in their ZPD but only with fully developed functions and skills.

The process of working together thus develops children's ability to communicate their ideas as well as their thought process both verbally and through images. Through this kind of work children engage each other's ZPD's, inspiring and challenging each other.

Group Critiques

Teaching methods that promote the practice of group critiques also contributes to the development of trust and care in the community, while also developing the concepts and skills of art. Though it often comes with negative connotations, the group critique can be understood as a positive sharing process in which students are invited to present and talk about their work to the group and the class is invited to respond with comments and questions. When carefully mediated, the critique can function as a system for learning how to engage with art and talk about art. For example, the critique can be an ideal tool for developing an engagement that begins emotionally: with what Blithe Clinchy calls a mode of 'connected knowing' (Clinchy, 2001). This is the skill of starting an engagement by believing that a work has value and engaging with it as an emotional experience before stepping back and critically analyzing the work. This way of engaging with a work of art is at the heart of the concept of art proposed in this paper. By mediating the need to first accept a work and experience it without judgement before stepping back to think about it critically, the art teacher can facilitate conscious awareness and emotional awareness.

The process of “connected knowing” can be mediated by asking students to take time to look at a work and listen to their classmate’s explanation of the work. Following this the teaching can ask the students questions such as, how did the work make you feel? What do you like about the painting? Then it can be followed by critical questions such as, based on what Jane said about the picture does anyone see how she could make her picture better? I have found in my own teaching that students can engage in this kind of dialogue very respectfully. Furthermore, the act of critically engaging in a work through discussion of the concepts covered by the lesson deepens the student’s understanding. Instead of merely receiving explanations of the names of shapes or the emotion that a particular work can express, students gain practice with the vocabulary of artistic concepts and learn to understand and engage in art more deeply through them. It should be noted that this process needs to be slowly and carefully mediated to build trusting relationships among the students and a conceptual understanding of the vocabulary and processes of a critically engaging with works of art.

Parental Involvement

Schooling is often overemphasized as a location for mediated learning and development. We need to remember the importance of the child’s family relationships as the primary sight for motivation to engage in language and the development-advancing activities that arise from an effort to understanding the symbolic nature of language. If we expand our concept of art education from what can be done in a school setting to a private setting where parents can be invited (or required) to be involved then we can expand the conversation about art education methods to include the parents.

The Suzuki Method of Music Education provides one example of an arts discipline that sees the parents as a vital part of a child’s learning community. In this program the parents attend private lessons, group classes and music summer camps with their child where they learn how to be the teacher at home, guiding daily private practice. The parent’s involvement changes as the child grows, with the child usually taking on full responsibility for their practicing by the time they reach adolescence. The parents’ involvement may remain high though it can shift from direct involvement in practice to a less direct support for the child’s music learning. The prominent role parents are prompted to take in children’s music education is based on the idea that the relationship between children and parents is vital for the development of the mental

function needed for learning, including self-regulation and creative imagination (Colier-Slone, 1991, Starr, 1976).

In his doctoral dissertation, Tokuroh Arimitsu applied the principles of the Suzuki Method of Music Education to a community-based (after school) art education program for preschool-aged children. While not based on Vygotsky's theory of development and working with a younger age group than this study focuses on, some interesting possibilities can still be drawn from Arimitsu's study that apply to the theory of art education and development proposed here (Arimitsu, 1982).

With that said, a discussion of Arimitsu's work will be saved for the next chapter where it will be included in a more detailed discussion of the Suzuki method. The discussion will provide the conceptual structure for thinking about the community relationships present in a learning situation and the possible applications and implications of Arimitsu's work for a cultural-historical approach to art education.

Summary

The previous chapter made the argument that art can function as a leading activity in childhood for the development of creative imagination, through which the other mental functions develop. This chapter sought to apply those arguments to concrete recommendations for the principles that can guide the formation of art education curricula and teaching methods.

Those recommendations were then applied to concrete examples of existing approaches to art education that can be read as informative of a cultural-historical approach to art education. These included the Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) curriculum for its utility in highlighting many of the concepts of art including aesthetic awareness, critical engagement and an understanding of art as an historic process. In light of the concepts of art presented here, DBAE can be understood to lack the focus on art production as a reflective, emotive, cognitive process that builds conscious awareness and creative imagination. This gap may be filled in with curricula that focus on the process of making art and the concepts and mental tools developed through that practice including Frederic Franck's contemplative approach to drawing and Betty

Edward's 'right brain' approach to learning to draw realistically (Eisner, 2002; Franck, 1973; Edwards 2004).

I then presented the socially-situated nature of development in separate discussions of the individual and community side of the dialectic relationship inherent to activity. The 'processfolio' approach was presented as an example of a method that promoted the imagination and conscious awareness through mediated, teacher-student relationship that focused on the art-making process. An argument for the co-constructed nature of the particular visual vocabulary and motivation to engage in art lead to a discussion of the utility of group critiques, group projects and the importance of including the parents in the art learning community. This final argument for parental involvement is the one that can be interpreted to lead a Vygotskian approach to art education away from the school classroom to an after-school program where parents can be included. The Suzuki Method of music education provides an example of a program that builds parent involvement into its conceptual and methodological framework, which I will continue to explore in the next chapter (Suzuki, 1983).

Chapter 5. Cultural Historical Activity Theory and How it Can Inform the Creation of a Vygotskian Art Education Program

Introduction

This chapter will narrow the wide palette of ideas presented in the previous chapter back down to a framework that can guide a teacher's understanding of the dynamics of education as situated in community. While a variety of methods and curricula in art education can be read as fulfilling various elements of a Vygotskian approach to art education none that I have found incorporate the familial element of children's community for the elementary school age period. I find the role of the family in education and development to be particularly interesting and under-explored in terms of its application to art education, and particularly important in regards to a cultural-historical understanding of development. This chapter will thus seek to develop a Vygotskian approach to art education that, while following the guidelines and concepts outlined in the previous chapter, focuses on the importance of the construction of a learning community that include parents.

I found a resource for this part of the study in Tokuroh Arimitsu's application of the Suzuki Method of music education to a preschool visual art education program (Arimitsu, 1982). In order to understand what can and cannot be drawn from this method for a Vygotskian approach to art education Arimitsu's program will first be described in detail with a focus on the theories for learning, cognitive development and artistic development that underpin the program.

From there I will begin a look at the differences between the underlying theories and ways that Arimitsu's program may or may not function within a Vygotskian understanding of learning and development. While the particular theory of artistic development and its application into curriculum will be relatively easy to compare to

Vygotsky's theory, the family-centered approach that sits at the heart of the Suzuki Method and Arimitsu's application of that method will be the more difficult and important area to understand.

To more deeply understand Arimitsu's program and its possible applications to this thesis I will need to go back to a discussion of how the Suzuki Method creates a system in which music education can function as a leading activity in development. To do this I will model the ways Vygotsky's theory of development functions in a community and use that to explain the Suzuki Method: Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and the theory of Expansive Learning. Both models are ideal for understanding the Suzuki Method in the language of a Vygotskian approach to development as it applies to a whole community system.

Unfortunately Arimitsu's study was only a pilot project conducted in 1982 and the program of study he developed was never implemented (Arimitsu, *personal correspondence*, 7/9/2011). Thus, I chose to use data from Suzuki Method as used for music education programs for the CHAT analysis presented here. The detour made in this chapter to explain the Suzuki Method through CHAT will be rather lengthy. However, I think it needs to be included because it will illustrate the utility of the Suzuki Method as an approach that supports a cultural-historical view of learning for understanding CHAT and because it will provide an explanation of CHAT which will become an important tool for analyzing the community dynamics of an art education program.

The second part of this chapter will look at how an understanding of CHAT and the Suzuki Method can inform a Vygotskian approach to art education. I will sketch one possibility for a community-based, cultural-historical art education method using the principles, curricula and methods outlined in the previous chapter combined with the material presented in this chapter.

Part 1: The Suzuki Method of Instruction Applied to Art Education for Young Children in America

This is the title of Tokuroh Arimitsu's 1982 doctoral dissertation project in which he adapted a Japanese application of the Suzuki Method to art education for school-age

children by Yoshio Tamano to an English language art curriculum for preschool-age children. I will start to look at that program in a manner parallel to the construction of this study: starting with the theoretical foundations and building up to practical applications. Understanding Arimitsu's approach begins then with an understanding of the Suzuki Method and the Japanese educational values and concepts that it is based on.

The Suzuki Method.

In the late 1940's Shinichi Suzuki began efforts to develop a system for early childhood music education in Japan based on the belief that every child has an immense capacity to learn. He believed that "talent will sprout according to how children are raised" (Suzuki, 1981, p. 94). The better the teaching methods, learning environment and quality of teaching, he believed, the greater the possibility for ability development (Suzuki, 1981, 1983).

Based on children's success at learning their first language Suzuki saw in native language learning the perfect model for a teaching method. Suzuki believed that language acquisition follows these six steps: 1) *exposure*: a child is surrounded by adults talking, 2) *imitation*: the child tries to copy the sounds he hears, 3) *repetition*: the child continues to copy and repeat the words he has spoken in response to praise and encouragement of the parents, 4) *addition*: after initial success additional words come more and more easily, 5) *improvement*, and 6) *refinement* (as cited in Arimitsu, 1982).

In following these aspects of language acquisition Suzuki developed a method of music education that can be started in very early childhood. The tenets of his method include: 1) active, nurturing instruction by the parent, 2) repeated listening to recordings of the established repertoire, 3) delayed reading of music notation, 4) repetition of the repertoire, and 5) weekly participation in ensembles as well as private or semi-private lessons from the beginning of instruction. In this way learning is not individual, but rather a community endeavor extending beyond the relationship between teacher and child to a triadic relationship between parent, teacher and child, and outward to the larger community of parents, teachers and students in a Suzuki program (Suzuki Association of the Americas, 2011; Suzuki, 1983).

The philosophy of character development centers around the idea that “ability breeds ability” (Suzuki 1981, p.6). Gaining musical ability comes as a result of a process that develops a variety of mental functions including children’s self-regulation, deliberate memory, micro-motor ability, self-confidence, and emotional development. It builds the skills to learn other subjects and confidence in the idea that talent grows out of disciplined, joyful effort. In regards to emotional development, Suzuki hoped children would develop humility, nobility, sensitivity, and a generosity of heart through a nurturing, loving, family and community-based method. His writings speak extensively to the kind of character attributes parents ought to model and the ways parents should interact with their children to promote the development of their child’s character (Starr & Starr, 1983, Suzuki 1981, 1983).

Japanese educational theory.

Suzuki’s method flourished in Japan probably, in part, because it fit a lot of commonly held Japanese assumptions about learning and development, or what we can call a Japanese ‘ethno-pedagogy.’ Arimitsu identifies the principles of education important in Japan as including perceptual awareness, creative thinking and doing, critical analysis and judgment, decision making and valuing personal choices. Arimitsu cites the cross-cultural studies of Dr. Paul Torrance as showing the Japanese as having much higher capacity for creative and intuitive thinking than their American counterparts and specifically much higher levels of creative and technical abilities in the fine and performing arts at a very young age, compared to American students. The development of these mental functions can be traced to the educational methods that stress the importance of imitation and mastery as necessary precursors to creative and critical thinking. While Japanese culture is not the focus of this study (and though his studies are relatively dated) Torrance’s findings suggest that American teachers might benefit from understanding Japanese pedagogical practices (Arimitsu, 1982; Torrance, 1980; Torrance & Sato, 1979).

The Tamano method.

Yoshio Tamano published a series of books in Japan on a Suzuki-based approach to teaching art. The method specifically incorporates Suzuki’s principle that parents are a young child’s most important influence. The program thus teaches the

parents how to be their child's teacher at home. Two core principles of the program are 1) the child must be helped to develop an eye for art (i.e. artistic ability is not inborn) and 2) every step of the art making process needs to be mastered.

The most interesting aspect of Tamano's program, as it relates to this study, is the way the performative arts are incorporated into the visual art learning process. Children listen and sing along to recordings of lyrical songs that are themselves recipes for drawing while engaging in the drawing activity. The program starts with songs about different basic design elements then includes songs that teach children how to draw people and animals in particular, symbolic ways. These songs have a variety of functions. First, the songs reinforce and repeat the in-class lesson. Listening to the songs and drawing along with the songs at home helps the child and parent remember the lesson. The inclusion of movement, music and rhythm in this way helps make the art concept being practiced fun, memorable and meaningful. Second, listening and working along with songs of previous exercises organizes the child's mastery activity. Third, students are encouraged to listen to the songs of upcoming lessons to build anticipation and understanding (Arimitsu, 1982).

The Suzuki/Tamano method.

Adaptations of the Tamano method.

Arimitsu adapted Tamano's curriculum to an American audience with few changes other than to translate the material, re-record the songs, and adjust the curriculum to a younger audience (age 3-6) and to the short duration of the study (four weeks). Arimitsu focused on very young students to emulate Suzuki's emphasis on the idea that teaching should begin as early as possible (Arimitsu, 1982).

The method.

Arimitsu's adaptation of Tamano's program follows the principles of the Suzuki method as previously described: exposure, followed by imitation and repetition, then addition of new concepts, improvement and refinement. The program focused on teaching the involved parent how to be the teacher during the home practice.

The program started with *exposure*: describing and modeling to the parent and child a way to solve a particular problem (i.e. how to draw a line, or the steps to drawing

a giraffe). Second, *imitation*: the parent and child are invited to try executing the exercise as many times as needed to exhibit mastery. Third, *repetition*: home practice is assigned in which the parent is taught how to mediate the child's learning (using the recordings). Fourth, *improvement and refinement*: the parent also mediates the repetition and of previous assignment, developing the child's mastery of the skills and concepts. The teaching cycle ends with *addition*: new material is presented as the child exhibits mastery over previous concepts (Arimitsu, 1982).

In the pilot program the children and parents were taught in separate rooms for part of the lesson, then taught together for the other half. The private work with the parents allowed the instructor (Arimitsu) to field the parents' questions and concerns, prepare them to be the teacher at home, and review and discuss practice logs that the parents were asked to keep of the home art practice. The children meanwhile worked with an instructor in an adjacent room, sitting in a semicircle with drawing tablets, facing a projector and the teacher. The program began with lessons on the care of and use of material. Then with each new technique the teacher modeled the physical motion for drawing of painting in the air with the students imitating the motion. The instructor then worked through the activity with a song and the students imitated. In the second half of the class the parents joined the students, practicing the activities with their children while the instructor gave individual help (Arimitsu, 1982).

The Curriculum.

Arimitsu used a reduced curriculum set to match the short time frame of the study, choosing the lessons based on Tamano's advice. The program began with the basic elements of design (i.e. dot, line, shape, color, etc.). This was followed by images of animals, each built up systematically and drawn from several angles. In other words each animal was drawn in eight steps and from four different angles – front, angled, in profile and from behind. Arimitsu saw the expansion from a single image to several angles of the image as an important skill that would transfer to the children's ability to make up their own schematic images and draw them from different angles. Learning these detailed schematic representations also was intended to lead into representational abilities by introducing the concept that things look different from different angles (Arimitsu, 1982).

The underlying theory of artistic development.

While Tamano's curriculum is largely based on Japanese cultural education values and traditionally held concepts of learning and development, Arimitsu applied the program to a community in Texas. Thus for his study Arimitsu applied theories of American research in art education and found in the work of Rhoda Kellogg theories that supported the ideas of artistic development implicit in Japanese pedagogy. Kellogg's extensive research on children's drawings found that children gain an awareness of basic design elements at a very early age and that that awareness slowly builds in complexity until it reaches mature adult artistic activity (Kellogg, 1970).

A preliminary Vygotskian analysis of the Suzuki/Tamano Art Education Method.

From the outset there are clearly a variety of similarities between the Japanese approach to learning and development and the ideas of the cultural-historical view. The understanding that imitation and mastery activity lead creative capacity matches in both, as does the focus on the social situation of development. The Japanese understanding that the home is the first and most important location for learning and development is incorporated as a key part of the Suzuki Method of music education and maintained in the adaptation to visual art instruction.

One large difference that we can see in the theory of development that underlies the two approaches is the idea of age periods. Suzuki felt that even children as young as two years old could learn to play the violin and could benefit from that instruction. A Vygotskian analysis would see this as introducing a learning activity into the age where play needs to be the leading activity of development. Very young children can indeed gain a high level of ability at a learned discipline but, the argument goes, what are they missing in the time they are spending in that mastery activity and what does that activity actually mean to them? The argument is illustrated with ability in reading and writing. The preschool-age child can learn to read but they do not yet understand the nature of learning activity or of conceptual thinking, thus reading does not have as much meaning for them and is not as powerful, developmentally speaking, as it is when introduced later (Vygotsky, 1998b).

Kellogg's conclusions about design elements leading directly to mature artistic ability is also at odds with Vygotsky's view of conceptual development. Building on the argument made previously that art changes in function as the child changes from thinking symbolically to thinking conceptually, we need to also understand the elements of design as shifting from symbolic to conceptual in their meaning. That is to say that design elements that originally facilitate schematic/symbolic rendering later aid in the visual perception and rendering of realistic forms and realistic space. While the underlying logic is thus slightly different, both schools of thought can be interpreted to value the development in childhood of mastery of a large vocabulary of design elements. Through such activity schematic rendering is facilitated as are the perceptual and micro-motor abilities that will help the child bridge the gap in artistic ability when his interests move from symbolic for representational art.

All these pros and cons though do not clarify the question central to this study: does the Suzuki/Tamano approach make art learning a 'well-developed imaginative activity' such that it becomes a leading activity in children's psychological development? To answer that question we would ideally need to look at the manifestation of the activity during the elementary school years as that is the focus of this study. Arimitsu's focus on the preschool age period, while interesting, means that the children learning art are participating with a different set of mental functions than the school-age child.

Though it exists, I unfortunately do not have access to the Tamano texts on art education as it applies to childhood (Arimitsu, 1982). It is clear thus far in this study that those texts will be very useful in informing future art education curriculum and thus I hope to get access to those texts (and translations) for future work applying the theories presented in this study to a teaching practice. For now I will look at how the Suzuki Method may function to make art education a 'well-developed imaginative activity' in childhood by analyzing how it works for children in music education.

As discussed, the disciplines of music and art are different in the way they employ imaginative thinking, so, you may ask, how can it be a good place to look for correlations to music education? The answer lies in the similarities not in the discipline but in the activity. It is the activity of engaging in community-based learning of a cultural-historical instrument that includes a balance of mastery and freedom that creates much

of the motivation and opportunity for development (and, specifically, development into culture). A deep examination of the way participation in Suzuki Method Music Education program may lead development will further illuminate a variety of non-discipline-specific ways in which the educational methods of the program make it a tool for development. I will then take the results of that analysis and see how they apply more specifically to a Vygotskian approach to art education.

Another reason for studying the Suzuki method as it applies to music is that I have access to a reasonably large body of data on students', parents' and teachers' experiences of long-term participation in Suzuki music programs in the United States. I have only touched the differences between American and Japanese cultures surrounding family relationships and education. As Vygotsky's theory of development stressed the culturally and historically specific nature of development, a Japanese education program can be seen as having little relevance to this study. The Suzuki Method builds on Japanese parenting practices and cultural values that differ markedly from those prevalent in North America (Hsueh et al., 2009; Peak, 1986). Despite these differences, Suzuki programs are still remarkably successful outside of Japan, though often slow to grow in popularity (Mehl, 2009). This shows that the cultural differences that do exist are not large enough to change the application or understanding of the Suzuki Method in North America (Collier-Slone, 1991).

I have thus far suggested that one of the key interesting features of the Suzuki Method (and the primary reason it was introduced here) is its focus on incorporating the family in the learning activity. A good tool for expanding the previous chapters' explanations of the mechanism of development to more clearly reflect the socially situated nature of development is the Neo-Vygotskian model of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). For as useful a theory as it is, it is also complex and difficult to grasp without concrete examples. In order to clarify the theory and use it to better understand the Suzuki Method I will proceed to both model the Suzuki Method and analyze it through CHAT. This will further clarify the concepts of CHAT showing the utility of the model for illuminating the social and instrumental nature of development and answer the question I posed regarding how the community-based nature of the Suzuki Method makes it a leading activity for development through music education in ways that can be applied to art education.

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory and the Suzuki Method of Music Education

Also referred to simply as Activity Theory, CHAT is a type of meta-theory or descriptive framework for understanding the relationships between factors in large activity systems. It was first developed in Russia in the 1920s, primarily by A.R. Luria, A.N. Leont'ev and Lev Vygotsky. It is the result of efforts to combine Karl Marx's theory of dialectic materialism with Vygotsky's theory of mediation. Luria and Leont'ev sought to expand the theory of mediation from its ability to explain individual action and development to a framework for understanding the higher degree of complexity present in large activity systems (Engeström, 1987, 2009). The ideas were later developed and formulated into the model seen in Figure 1 by Yrjö Engeström (1987).

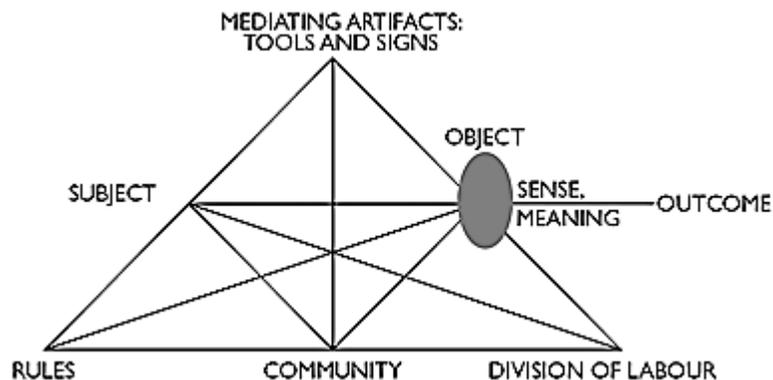


Figure 1. An adaptation of the Engeström Activity Theory Model (Engeström, 2009)

The uppermost triangle shows Vygotsky's model of mediated activity. It describes Vygotsky's thesis that an individual does not act directly on the environment (i.e. Subject—Object) as was proposed by behaviorist psychology, but acts through the use of culturally mediated tools (i.e. Subject—Tools—Object) (Vygotsky 1978, 1986). In activity theory the triangular relationship among subject, tools and object is extended down to include rules, community and division of labor. The theory argues that an individual's actions are mediated by tools as well as by the structures, norms and values of a community. The unit of analysis expands from the subject-tools-object system to a system that includes the community and its rules and norms. The community is thought of as the learner, more so than the individual (Engeström, 1987, 2009).

Activity theory provides a framework for thinking about a community as 1) utilizing mediated artifacts, 2) object-oriented, and 3) constantly evolving through contradictions and resolutions as well as through processes of internalization and externalization. Mediated artifacts are understood as tools or instruments that are first used externally, then internalized (regulating and informing imagination, thinking and planning) (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). These internalized artifacts are then used to act externally, thus leading to re-evaluation and re-internalization. The object of an activity system is “both resistant raw material and the future-oriented purpose of an activity” (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). It comes out of (and affects) all the other elements in the system. Motivation for action lies not in the individuals alone but is primarily located in the objects of the activity. All transformations in the system come from (and in turn, cause) transformation of the object.

The object of activity and the mechanism by which it develops are more clearly explained by the theories that separate Engeström and Sannino’s definition into two different ideas: object and goal. Objects refer only to the future-oriented purpose while the “resistant raw material,” more immediate in nature, is called the goal. The distinction between goals and objects originates in the concept of *double stimulation* developed by L. Vygotsky and L. Sakharov. In the “method of double stimulation two sets of stimuli are presented to the subject, one set as objects of his activity, the other as signs that can serve to organize that activity” (Vygotsky 1986, p.103). In other words, the first stimulus is the more tangible, immediate, often physical artifact that the subject can manipulate or understand easily. The second stimulus is the conceptual, often more distant, intangible artifact that the subject engages with and makes meaningful through use of the first artifact. The first stimulus in the model of activity theory refers to ‘goals,’ the second stimulus, to ‘objects.’ It can also be understood by thinking of the goal as an action like such as playing the violin or making a painting while the object may be to understand the concepts of music and art.

The concept of art or music (object) is understood and internalized through making art or music (goal). The object is understood to transform and expand as it changes places with the goal. Playing the violin or painting first allow for internalization of certain concepts of music or art, then these concepts become the internal guide or goal leading the art making or music making activity (which becomes the object). For

example, the concept of a clear, clean tone (object) is first internalized through playing the violin (goal). This concept of tone becomes the mental blueprint (goal) that the violinist seeks to actualize, informing and transforming the way the violinist plays (object).

Development of the system can also occur in such a way that new goals and objects are added without the loss of old ones as with the acceptance by the community of new tools or innovations. This occurs in instances of 'expansive learning' (Engeström, 1987; Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

Expansive Learning

Expansive learning is a type of Activity System first developed in 1987 by Yrjö Engeström as part of CHAT. Beyond the basic tenets of Activity Theory, Expansive Learning involves an expansion of the activity into practices and objects undefined at the onset. It also emphasizes the formation of concepts over acquisition of empirical knowledge. The community changes as a result of participation in the activity system, expanding outward as it interacts with other activities and is confronted with new challenges. The expansion also occurs downward and inward into the individuals, affecting personal experience, emotion, and identity (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). I will argue that the Suzuki Method functions as an instance of expansive learning in ways that can be applied to art education.

Interdependent Activity Systems

Understanding the expansive nature of learning within the Suzuki method is best achieved by looking at the method as a combination of interacting Activities Systems (see *Fig. 2*). When any given element of an activity system is changed the result is understood as a new activity, thus fruitful inquiries can be made in comparing related activity systems. Just as expansion of a system originates in the transformation of the objects of an activity, the contradictions between the objects of interdependent Activity Systems provides sources for development (Engeström, 1987, 2009; Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

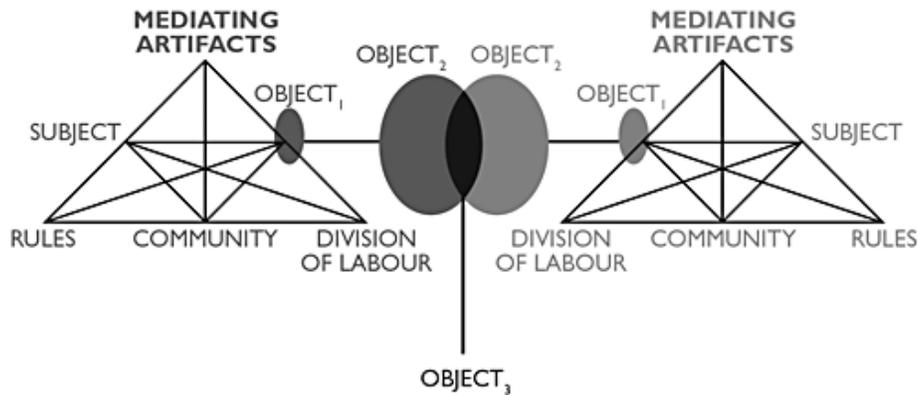


Figure 2. An adaptation of the Interdependent Activity Systems Model (Engeström, 2009)

I will proceed to show how the identification of common and contradictory objects of activity for the three subjects of the Suzuki system – parent, teacher and student – can help identify the ways the system facilitates resolution of contradictions and with it, transformation of the object and expansion of the activity of music learning.

Suzuki and Activity Theory

In Appendix one I illustrate the different elements of Activity as applied to one generalized collection of experiences with the Suzuki Method. Twelve “Suzuki Activity Systems” are shown, one per column in each page of the tables. Each Suzuki Activity System shows one of the three individual players in the Suzuki Method (parent, teaching or child) through what I identify as four general periods of growth that may occur during participation in a Suzuki program. The tables are intended to collectively reflect an experience of the Suzuki Method as generalized from my experiences as a Suzuki violin teacher and former Suzuki student in the 1990’s combined with the data from Kay Colier-Slone’s 1991 dissertation on the experiences of participants in Suzuki Method music education programs in North America during the 1980’s (Colier-Slone, 1991).

While reflective of a common experience of such a program, the data presented is not intended to reflect all or even most North American experiences with the Suzuki Method. However, I believe it provides a legitimate data set to build an understanding of both CHAT and Suzuki that can be applied to art education.

A Brief Analysis of the Suzuki Activity Systems

The first and most important conclusion I would like to discuss from these tables of Suzuki Activities is that Activity Theory draws a relatively complete and informative picture of participation in the method between the individuals and tools in the system and across time. It also reveals the interdependence between the teacher, parent and child and the ways in which the activity of learning changes for each participant (and collectively) over time, beyond the expectations of the participants. This quality of interdependence and change qualify the Suzuki method as both an instance of an Activity System in which the whole community interacts and grows.

I start the analysis at the beginning of a family's involvement in Suzuki Activity. Thus the table indicates the preliminary goals and objects motivating the parent and child's decision to begin Suzuki lessons, and the way the teacher accommodates her goals to meet then transform the parents' and child's goals and objects (see Suzuki Activity 1a, 1b, and 1c in the Table 1). As stated previously, the Suzuki philosophy holds that music education is not the ultimate goal but only the vehicle for the development of emotional and intellectual character. It challenges parents to model the kind character they want their child to develop. In the process the parents often find that they grow and learn far more than they imagined.

The beginnings of a transformation for the parent can be seen in comparing the objects and goals in Suzuki Activity 1b and 2b. The parent may begin with the assumption that Suzuki education will be like a traditional music education system where engagement happens on a private basis between teacher and child with little parental involvement, and with no purpose beyond musical ability development. He soon finds that he is required (and invited) to participate to a much larger extent in a program that emphasizes relationship building and community learning over private, child-centered activity.

The child who first may have been interested in playing an instrument because she saw a classmate play, for example, (see Suzuki Activity 1a) soon discovers that playing the violin requires a lot of practice. The child also may be surprised by the unexpected rewards of getting to play her instrument with a group of students once a week where she begins to make new friends. Here we can see how the original object

(engagement with a musical instrument) is facilitated by the more immediate goal (engagement with parent and teacher). As being part of the Suzuki community becomes more important (see Suzuki Activity 2a) the object and goal may switch. Practicing her instrument becomes motivated by the desire to participate more fully (play more pieces) with her new friends in the weekly group class.

Productive contradictions in the objects of activity can be seen in Suzuki Activity 3a and 3b. The child's objects—engagement with her musical instrument and engagement with peers—contradicts her parents' object of engagement with their child. However the desire to practice alone may not coincide with fully developed abilities to self-regulate her private practice, leading to ineffective or sporadic practice sessions. This may lead to delayed improvement, frustration and eventual quitting. The parent, having invested many years in developing a very involved role in his child's music education may be reluctant to give up his involvement in private practicing. The contradiction can be met with efforts on the part of the teacher, parent and student to change the parent's role. Meeting and working past the contradiction can be achieved if the parent's role changes from that of home music teacher to one of support for helping the student develop the self-regulation and practice strategies needed to continue to develop their playing ability.

A basic tenet of Expansive Learning is that growth comes as a result of meeting, illumination and working through contradictions. It follows that the greater the contradictions, the greater the possibility for growth. This may hold the key for understanding the mechanism of development for individuals who participate in Suzuki Method education programs and with it, the key for applying CHAT and Suzuki principles to art education. The intensive involvement that a Suzuki program asks of parents and the degree of effort and perseverance required of the students provide the opportunity for levels of growth in character, skills and relationships that few other childhood activities can provide. It transforms family relationships as much as it transforms individual students, expanding beyond a system of music education and truly becoming "education for life." (Suzuki as cited in Colier-Slone, 1991).

Applications to a Vygotskian approach to visual art education.

Now, what can we learn from this analysis that can apply to an art education program? Can a visual art education that exemplifies the principle of freedom be structured such that it creates the quantity and frequency of contradictions that the CHAT model shows is needed for development? Or does the mechanism of creative imagination function differently from the mental tools engaged and developed in a program of music education?

We can begin with the argument that visual art education may be even more relevant to cognitive development than music education by virtue of its use and development of creative imagination. Classical music education is primarily mastery-oriented and while it can also function as a leading activity in development (as illustrated above) it does so in ways other than through the direct engagement of imagination. While there is clearly truth in different views of the sequence and relationship of the development of mental functions this study is interested in the argument that imagination development leads cognitive development and will thus proceed from that argument.

As presented in chapter two, however, imagination is deeply connected to reality and (as discussed in chapter three) in order for a child's imagination to be engaged in artistic activity she needs to have a wealth of personal experience, school experience (concept learning) *and* experience in making and viewing art. Furthermore we can remember that in order for the experiences that a child has in art to be meaningful tools for the use and development of the creative imagination they need to be experiences of exposure, imitation and mastery of the culturally-specific concepts, techniques and tools of art. We can therefore say that the principles of exposure, imitation and mastery of art concepts, as Arimitsu claims would fit a Vygotskian approach to art education. Developing mastery means providing the structure in which art concepts are practiced daily, not dabbled with once a week. Art education thus, like music, should extend to a program of home practice (Arimitsu, 1982). Moving from the classroom community to the home community means that the important figures in the social situation of development shift partly from peers and the teacher (in the classroom) to parents (and possibly siblings) in the home. Thus we can say that a program that develops mastery (a key element in free, creative activity) needs to include an activity structure that involves both communities.

Part 2: Building a Vygotskian, Community-Centered Art Education Method

I can now move to constructing a curricular and methodological framework for a cultural-historical art education program for elementary school-age children. This will be a largely theoretical model. I will begin by reviewing the guiding principles for an art education program amassed thus far. Extending Vygotsky's theories and the observed mechanisms for learning and developing in the Suzuki method Music education and artistic development to their plausible meanings for art education I will proceed to present five more specific guidelines.

These guidelines will be made concrete in a theoretical framework for an approach to elementary art education. Drawing on a variety of existing methods and curricula discussed in this study I hope to provide one plausible art education method that, in bridging Vygotsky's theory and art education practice, provides a new vision for art education.

Guiding principles

Building on a framework of the cultural-historical constructivist theory of development I proceeded in chapters two and three to argue that the art teacher needs to 1) understand the cultural-historical constructivist theory of child development, including a specific understanding of the importance of constructing a leading activity that uses and develops creative imagination in childhood, 2) understand the culturally and historically-specific concepts of art, including its social functions, personal function, history and techniques, and 3) the art teacher is responsible for constructing the curriculum and methods around a cultural-historical understanding of development and conceptual knowledge such that participating in that activity contributes to the students' development. With this chapter's discussion of the ideas of CHAT and with more specific applications of Vygotsky's theories to art education these guidelines can be expanded into five principles, namely, that the teaching methods and curriculum should be 1) community-based, 2) balance the large (i.e. cultural) and small (i.e. community-specific) parts of the curriculum, 3) balance freedom and mastery activity, 4) exercise the creative imagination, and 5) facilitate the shift from thinking in complexes to conceptual thinking through the engagement of conscious awareness and volition.

Community-based methods.

To expand this statement I will begin with the idea that the decisions guiding the choice of curriculum and methods should be based on an understanding of the community-based nature of learning and development where parents as well as peers and teachers play an important role in development. As seen in the CHAT analysis of the Suzuki Method of music education, learning and development are socially situated and object-driven when understood through Vygotsky's theories. Relationships motivate and organize engagement in the activity that binds the community. Furthermore, a program that demands cooperative activity with parents and peers with consistent opportunities for parent-child, child-child, and teacher-child interactions makes a lot of opportunities for the kind of fruitful contradictions that expand the system and develop the individual.

The large and small concepts of curriculum.

The argument for community-based methods expands to curriculum in the idea that art curriculum includes overarching cultural concepts as well as concepts specific to the child's immediate community and experience. The large, relatively stable concepts of art are the ones functioning in the larger culture. These include the social functions of art and aesthetics for balancing meaning and feeling in culturally important artifacts and practices. It also includes the idea that making art and experiencing works of art are both fundamentally processes: reflexive cycles of experience-understanding-imagination-creative production-(re)experience that employ the imagination towards the creation of new ideas, artifacts, experiences and solutions (Dewey, 1896, 1934/1980; Vygotsky, 1971).

By contrast, the smaller, more malleable concepts of art can be understood as those at play in a given community, such as the ideas and images developed in a particular group of students or professional artists. While the elements of design might be understood as one of the stable, large concepts of art, the vocabulary of images that a group of students is drawn to making with those design elements may be as particular as the experiences and personalities of the people in that community. It is in mastering the large concepts of design, sensitivity to aesthetics, conscious awareness of thoughts and emotions, etc., that art activity becomes developmentally-advancing, leading to the

internalization of conscious awareness, imagination and conceptual thinking and art-specific tools and artifacts.

However, it is in the smaller concepts that art becomes relevant to children: the ways it can express their personal lives and build a vocabulary for communication and expression in their particular community. From this we can say an art education curriculum needs to nurture community based activity in which children's expressive efforts can be experienced by the group, inspiring each other and expanding a co-constructed vocabulary of imagery and practices.

Balancing freedom and mastery activity.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the ability to engage in art freely (i.e. express what you want to) requires the development of mastery over the tools of art, just as expression in a verbal language requires an ever expanding mastery of the vocabulary and grammatical structures of that language. We can build on the last two arguments in saying that a community-based approach makes art learned a relationship-centered activity in which the peer, parent and teacher relationships motivate the desire to engage in art. Children soon learn that interest is not enough and that mastery of the tools is needed to express oneself freely, thus motivating engagement in mastery activity in class and at home. The contradictions in the individual between the desire to express and the lack of ability feed the search for new abilities and skill development (Vygotsky, 1998b).

The cycle continues to expand: as the child learns new techniques (and gains new sensitivities to art) his understanding and vision of the possibilities of what art can express expand. With deeper knowledge comes deeper relevance and with deeper relevance comes more motivation to express oneself through art and working through challenges towards greater understanding and ability.

Exercising the imagination.

The community-based approach that results in confronting and engaging contradictions can also be understood as an activity that exercises the imagination. The importance of making art education a 'well-developed imaginative activity' has been a key concept in this study. The desire and capacity to gain more ability and make better

symbolic or representational pictures shows that the child is imagining something more: something beyond his current ability. Only with a vision of the future can you move towards it: planning, practicing and building solutions that get you there.

In concrete terms striking a balance between freedom and mastery activity also exercises the imagination. In mastery activity the child builds the ability and the mass of experiences with the material that then provides food for the imagination to create new ideas. In imagining something new the child finds the limits of his ability, imagines where he want to go and is thus motivated to find and engage in the mastery activity he needs to create the work he wants.

The shift from thinking-in-complexes to conceptual thought.

Embedded in the CHAT analysis of the Suzuki Method was Vygotsky's theory of the power of social connections to motivate participation in the activity of the community and communication with the common language of the community (Vygotsky, 1978). When taught in a way that stresses the social connections across the peers, parents and teachers of the learning community I argue that art can become a co-constructed and socially relevant form of communication. Through participation and mastery of art children develop their imagination and through doing so develop conscious awareness, volition, and the ability to abstract: all vital tools for the development of conceptual thought.

A recipe for a Vygotskian Art Education

I will culminate this study with a sketch of the contours of one possible manifestation of an elementary school art curriculum that fulfills the goals stated above. I would like to stress that this is only one of many possibilities. The focus of this study is on developing the framework and guidelines for the creation of methods and curriculum that fit a Vygotskian approach to art, imagination and development. The point is not to attempt to create a full, working art education program. However, applying the theories developed here to one example of a practice that may fulfill those goals will help to clarify and solidify the theory and suggest how it might be implemented in practice.

This description of a Vygotskian art education program will be organized into three sections: beginning, intermediate and advanced. The separation into sections

indicates two factors: cognitive development and experience in the program. By separating the program into three stages I will show how it can match and advance children's psychological system and their ability in art. Each section will further be divided into parts on teaching methods and curriculum.

The beginning of the art program: Students age 6-8: early elementary school.

Methods.

The framework for a community-based method that extends the community to the parents and home environment can be found in Arimitsu's explanation of the Suzuki/Tamano method for art education. The results of his study not only show that the parents and students enjoyed the program, but tests of student progress found the program effective in improving children's creative thinking and artistic abilities. The preceding CHAT analysis of the Suzuki Method for music education found the program successful in creating a fruitful situation for development by virtue of the curricular demands, the structure and the close family and community relationships built in the program. The Suzuki/Tamano program provides the structure and support for the parents to take a leading role in their child's artistic education. In this way art learning becomes a learning activity throughout the week as well as during the lesson (Arimitsu, 1982).

Following the Suzuki/Tamano approach children and parents would receive separate group classes and joint classes allowing their separate needs and joint working needs to be met. The separate classes would allow the parents to build a community – sharing experiences and support –and allowing the teacher to help them develop their understanding of the theory of development and imagination underlying the program as well as help them develop their artistic understanding and ability. To be a teacher at home the parents need to be able to understand and correctly model the activity.

A group class exclusively for the students would help them build trust and community among their peers. This could be balanced with a portion of the class in which parents and students work together. The joint class would help support the importance of the joint learning activity, practicing in class the activity as it would be done between the parent and child at home (Arimitsu, 1982). While the students may gain more independence from their parents later in the program, starting the program

with strong parent involvement allows parents and children to understand and internalize the theory of the program from the beginning as well as the joint practice activity that creates a situation of development, as discussed in the CHAT analysis of the Suzuki Method.

Both the parent and child would maintain a drawing log. The child's would include her mastery activities as well as her free drawings. With increased writing ability children would also be invited to write about their work and their process in the journal. The parents' journal could include their own drawings, their practices of the child's mastery activities and their reflections and record of the time spent practicing with their child.

Curriculum.

From the beginning there needs to be a balance in the curriculum between freedom and mastery as well as small and large concepts. The large, cultural concepts of art are modeled and practiced through curriculum that build the elements of design and teach history, aesthetics and criticism, as can be seen in the Suzuki/Tamano curriculum and DBAE among many others. The beauty of the Suzuki/Tamano method is that the curriculum is presented in fun exercises learned and practiced through singing along with recordings. This approach emphasizes the process of art making, and the cross-disciplinary nature of art (making it musical, emotional and expressive). The mastery developed through drawing along to the audio recordings would be balanced with creative efforts to apply the learned design concepts and practiced symbolic images to personal, expressive work (Arimitsu, 1982).

In this way the activity remains relevant to children and the mastery of the design elements and imagery informs an imagination-based creative process through which children ground learned meanings in personal sense and experience, while the personal experiences get organized into meaningful expressive forms. Like verbal language, art can become a tool for developing the mind: building the imagination and conceptual thought (Vygotsky, 2004).

Cognitive development.

The ideal presented here is one in which children start the program about the time they start elementary school. The program can thus be guided by an understanding

of the objective ZPD of this age with each child's subjective zone assessed in terms of her performance when asked to do tasks that requires the full internalization of expected mental functions. These include the ability to follow rules and instructions, the ability to plan and the ability to draw schematic images. Students who could not do these basic tasks may be provided some individual help or asked to wait a year as they may not be intellectually ready to engage in learning activities. In addition, a preschool art program that focuses on the leading activity of the age period – play – and bridges the function of the pivot into drawing would also be worth developing.

Cognitive variations.

For those children whose subject ZPD matches the expected objective ZPD for this age period their developing functions of imagination, volition, conscious awareness and abstraction can be developed through this kind of curriculum, particularly when the mastery activities develop conscious awareness and engage the imagination. Conceptual thinking and preliminary practice in abstraction may be developed through imagination-based activities that challenge students to identify key characteristics of objects in their effort to draw them.

The intermediate stage in the art program: Student age 7-9, middle elementary school

This period refers specifically to students who have participated in this program for two to three years and are now in the middle years of elementary school. Variations to this will be addressed briefly at the end.

Cognitive development.

Having now developed the family commitment and art-learning community cultivated by this program the dynamics of the community may begin to change. As discussed in the Suzuki Activity Theory analysis, the goals of the parents in the program may change from originally seeing the program as being about their children's artistic development (or development of an inborn talent) to being about their engagement with their child and the development of talent, as Suzuki argues (Suzuki, 1983). The child also may change from seeing art a schematic activity that can only exhibit basic characteristics of the objects in stories to a rich language for emotional and narrative expression. His growing facility with the emotional and symbolically expressive uses of

the elements of design and composition may lead him to see art as a more relevant and powerful tool for building understandings and for making and expressing ideas.

The child has also now grown into the practice of art, finding identity in it as music students often build a sense of identity with their engagement in music learning (Colier-Slone, 1991). This is to say that they are now not only studying art but they *are* artists. The ownership of an activity and sense of pride in that activity result from having worked hard at something: building a habit of practice and feeling a sense of mastery over a body of knowledge. The development of this kind of work ethic and pride in achievement is immeasurably valuable in building character in everything from self-esteem to work ethic. The learning habits transfer to school learning while the effort at overcoming difficulties with parents, peers and teachers builds creative problem solving, empathy, a closer relationship with parents and peers, and the skills to overcome other obstacles (Colier-Slone, 1991).

Methods.

The teaching methods can further build on these shifts by challenging the students with more complex tasks including group projects and long-term *processfolio* projects. Through both of these activities children are challenged to become conscious of their thoughts, feelings and planning processes through an effort to communicate those processes. Verbal facility with the concepts of art, aesthetics and criticism can start being built with group critiques for works-in-progress and final pieces (Gardner & Perkins, 1989).

Curriculum.

Here the preliminary curriculum of basic design elements and schematic rendering leads into more advanced concepts of composition and increasingly realistic-looking schematic images. Exercises that extend from the practice at drawing images from different angles, as presented in the early parts of the curriculum may now include practices in which the students are invited to use that practice to change the orientation of their own drawn figures (Arimitsu, 1981). An incorporation of DBAE curriculum elements will help build the large concepts of art including understandings of art history, aesthetics and art criticism. Here too the assignments may shift from predetermined,

recording-based work to exercises designed to meet individual student's needs as they arise in their projects (Eisner, 2002; Efland 1990; Smith, 1989).

Variations.

What of students who enter the program mid-way through elementary school? While students that join the program later may be more advanced in their artistic ability than beginning students, their experience with the particular process of the program with its homework, parental involvement and community orientation may be unfamiliar, demanding extra effort to bring the child up to the level of the class in terms of an understanding of the learning process. This is to say that the process of engaging contradictions (in community) is perhaps the most important element of a Suzuki and Vygotskian approach: developing character, imagination, conscious awareness and relationships as it builds artistic ability.

The advanced stage in the art program: Age 9-12, late elementary school

Cognitive development.

By the end of childhood and into early adolescence children have begun the dramatic shift from thinking-in-complexes to conceptual thinking. With it, imagination becomes internalized turning into fantasy. Art changes in meaning. Lengthy participation in this art program also means that the community has expanded in its collective personality and in the vocabulary of the arts activities that bind the group.

Methods.

Facilitating the growing shift to an interest in representation that comes with the internalization of conceptual thinking means meeting children's needs with mastery activities focused on building realistic rendering skills. Through early efforts at *processfolio* assignments the projects can get more complex, demanding more planning, communication and the incorporation of more conceptual ideas, as supported by Smith's observation of the increased interest in using metaphor and other concepts late in childhood (Smith, 1993).

Reflecting children's growing independence, the parents' role may change, taking on a supportive rather than central role. As with the music learning experience in the Suzuki method, this shift opens up new tensions and new chances for growth. Instead of

guiding the practice parents may be aided in shifting to a less involved role by helping students find the resources needed for their long-term projects. Engagement may shift from involvement in home mastery activity to conversations about the concepts their children are working with in their art.

Curriculum.

As mentioned, growing interest in realism needs to be met with mastery activity that can bridge the child's transition to conceptual thinking and the changing functions of art. As discussed, interest in art often declines in adolescence (Smith, 1993; Vygotsky, 2004). While a variety of reasons for this exist, we can follow the ideas that art changes from relating to speech to relating to writing, and a growing interest in realism may reflect a child's growing interest in the world outside him rather than his own experience. This means that the art course is responsible for mediating tools and concepts that meet children's growing needs *and* to preempt their changing interests.

This can mean incorporating concepts of three-dimensional rendering, including perspective, shading, rules for proportions, into the mastery activities while children are still predominantly interested in symbolic rendering. It can be noted that, if successful, the quantity of practice that students would have in art by late childhood through this art program would lead to a successful (and possibly, early) mastery of realistic rendering skills, thus facilitating continued freedom and relevance of art for children as they transition into adolescence.

Conclusions

In bringing all the arguments and ideas of this study together it is my hope that this chapter succeeded in showing the unique and important possibilities for art education that result from extending Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory to guiding principles for art education. The following chapter will discuss the general conclusions of the study, its limitations as well as the questions and future projects that could extend from the ideas presented here.

Chapter 6. Summary, Limitations and Recommendations

Summary

This theoretical study sought to extend Lev Vygotsky's cultural-historical constructivist psychology to art education. My literature review showed no existing art education curriculum specifically based on Vygotsky's theories. I proceeded to build a foundation of the key concepts in Vygotsky's theory of development in general and imagination in particular. Of central interest to this study is Vygotsky's theory that imagination, as a leading mental function in childhood, promotes the development of the other mental functions of the age when it is actively engaged in social, learning activities. Based on this argument I proposed that visual art education can be an ideal tool for developing the mind specifically during childhood because of the ways it engages children's imagination and, through it, engages other developing mental functions including, notably, conscious awareness, volition and conceptual thinking.

In the first chapters of this thesis I built the necessary theoretical foundation for the subsequent arguments by first establishing the basic tenets of cultural-historical constructivism (as it compares to other constructivist theories) followed by the details of Vygotsky's theory of development and learning. This lengthy discussion was necessary because Vygotsky's theories, and often his use of terminology, contrasts with dominant cognitivist theories. Thus in order for this thesis to be able to convincingly extend his theories to art education I needed the reader to be fully familiar with Vygotsky's vocabulary and concepts.

The vital parts of that theoretical foundation include the theories that psychological development is culturally-historically specific and socially situated. We develop *into* culture internalizing tools for thinking as a result of external practice with the tools and artifacts of our culture, such as language. These tools are mediated to the

individual they do not experience them directly. As they become internalized cultural tools work together in a psychological system, forming how we think and engage with the world. As new tools are internalized the psychological system can undergo a radical shift, significantly changing the way the child thinks about, and understands, his experience. This occurs in the shift from thinking about words primarily as concepts generalized from personal experience (i.e. the mode of 'thinking in complexes') to the inclusion of the understanding that words have specific definitions, indicated by the core traits of a concept (i.e. 'conceptual thinking').

I proceeded in chapter two from a general discussion of Vygotsky's theories to a description of his concept of imagination. He views imagination as a concrete, learnable mental function, vital for the ability to solve problems, plan for the future and develop the ability to abstract essential details of concepts (which is needed for developing conceptual thinking). Furthermore, understanding imagination as a 'higher mental function' means that it first exists in social activity. It needs to be mediated and practiced before it can become internalized.

Chapter three explored the ways visual art education can be understood as an activity that develops the imagination. In chapter four I extended the arguments for the ways art *can* develop the child's mind to ways art *should* be taught in order to do so. I proposed that, for educators to be able to develop art education programs that capitalize on the ability of art to lead development, those educators first need to understand the cultural-historical theory of development. Furthermore, viewing art as a development-advancing activity requires understanding the general development of children during the elementary school age period and ways of gauging individual children's particular stage of development. The second requirement is that the educator be deeply knowledgeable in the culturally-specific concepts, materials and practices of art. These two tenets – deep understanding of cultural-historical theory and of the concepts of art— can then meet in the creation of art education curriculum and methods such that art education becomes a development-advancing activity.

I proceeded to show that Vygotsky's theories can be mined further for a variety of far more specific requirements for an art education program. These include that the teaching methods and curriculum should be 1) community-based, 2) balance the large

(i.e. cultural) and small (i.e. community-specific) parts of the curriculum, 3) balance freedom and mastery activity, 4) exercise and develop the creative imagination, and 5) facilitate the shift from thinking-in-complexes to conceptual thinking through the engagement of conscious awareness, imagination and volition.

Vygotsky's theory has been interpreted in various ways, and I could have taken this study in a variety of equally valid directions in expanding his theories. In chapter five, I specifically chose to focus the community-based nature of learning and development and its implications for art education as I find this to be one of the most interesting implications of the theory. Through the neo-Vygotskian model of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory I demonstrated how the parent involvement and opportunities for fruitful contradictions make the Suzuki Method of music education a leading activity for development during childhood. Furthermore, I proposed that the ways the Suzuki Method advances development are characteristic of its community-based and tool-based approach and can thus be applied beyond music education to art education. Due to the striking parallels between Vygotsky's theories and the Japanese theory of development at the heart of the Suzuki Method, many of the goals for art education that extend from Vygotsky's theories can be met with an art education program that follows the structure of the Suzuki method as demonstrated by Tokuroh Arimitsu (1982).

I ended chapter 5 with a summary of the guiding principles and detailed elements of one possibility for the framework of an art education program that applies Vygotsky's theories in a way that makes art education into a leading activity for the development of the creative imagination during childhood. I organized this Vygotskian art education program into three sections: beginning, intermediate and advanced. I based the organization of the program on two main factors: cognitive development and experience in the program. By separating the program into three stages I showed how it can match and advance children's developing psychological system and their ability in art.

Limitations and Recommendations

As a theoretical study the limits of this paper are rather clear. While the lack of art education material based on Vygotsky's theory makes this study important, it also means there is no evidence of the success or failure of such a program to make art

learning a development-advancing activity for elementary school-age children. My hope is that by extending Vygotsky's theory to art education I succeeded in convincing the reader of both the importance of developing the imagination (as Vygotsky defines it) and of the ways art education can do so, particularly during the sensitive period for cognitive development during childhood. In lieu of evidence of a Vygotskian approach to art education I provided evidence (in the form of a CHAT analysis) of the ways the Suzuki Method creates the process of learning music into a leading activity for development. That evidence showed that it is the community-based nature of learning and the centrality of the joint activity of music learning that makes a music education in the Suzuki method simultaneously successful at developing musical skill and at advancing cognitive development. I proceeded to show how, in light of Tamano and Arimitsu's efforts at applying the Suzuki Method to visual art education, their teaching methods could be a valuable resource for the development of a Vygotskian approach to art education.

As the purpose of this study was to develop a core theory for future study and application, the recommendations for work that expands from this study are numerous. Foremost is the need to connect the ideas presented here with the theories of art, education, creativity and imagination of important contemporary scholars. I made an effort to limit the thesis to Vygotsky's theories in order to gain a depth of understanding of his work and its implications, such that future efforts to expand from Vygotsky's ideas to contemporary scholarship could be done well. This meant that one obvious limitation of the thesis is its lack of relevance to current scholarship, particularly in regards to contemporary theory on the meanings, manifestations and functions of visual art in North American culture and the applications of those ideas to art education. However, without first establishing a complete picture of the conceptual structure and logic of Vygotsky's work, expanding his ideas to the work of other writers risks sloppy scholarship. It would be far too easy to bring in the ideas and vocabularies of other scholars without a careful examination of the core assumptions of those theories for fundamental contradictions or compatibilities. The terms imagination and creativity, for example, are used by numerous writers and researchers though the meanings of those terms (and assumptions about their cognitive function) vary widely. Thus efforts to expand from Vygotsky's theories require a sound understanding of his work followed by the same care and attention to the details of the work of other scholars. Such work is thus necessarily outside of the

scope of this thesis, though the efforts here seek to set the stage for fruitful expansions from Vygotsky's work into contemporary art education theory and practice in the future.

Other limitations of this thesis lie in the difficulties that might be faced in the efforts to implement a Vygotskian art education program. This stems from the contradictions between the dominant theories of learning and development in North America (which are largely cognitive constructivist in nature) and Vygotsky's cultural-historical constructivist theories. For example, in my experience art education is still largely mired in the belief that imagination and creativity are inherited abilities largely unrelated to experience and practice. Thus making Vygotsky's theories of imagination and development easily understandable and convincing will be a challenge.

The parallels between Vygotsky's and Suzuki's theories as well as the application of Tamano's work will help in this regard. The art education program could capitalize on the relative familiarity and popularity of the Suzuki Method in North America. It could use that familiarity to acquaint parents with the ideas and practices of an art education program that more closely approximates the home practice, parental involvement and ideas about talent and learning that underlie the Suzuki Method. To this end, the relationships between the Japanese ethno-pedagogy (as evident in the Suzuki Method) and Vygotsky's theories of learning and development put forth in this thesis deserve to be more deeply studied. Further research into the commonalities and contradictions between the two would be particularly useful for understanding what can and cannot be drawn from the Suzuki Method to inform a Vygotskian approach to art education in North America.

While art teaching methods explored in the thesis provide interesting possibilities for expanding the theory to practical applications they are still of secondary importance to the ideas at the heart of the study. That is to say that applications of the ideas could legitimately go in a variety of directions but, in order to do so, the claims made in this study as theoretical extensions of Vygotsky's theories warrant practical research. The fundamental (and most interesting) ideas to arise from this thesis stem from the concrete and vital nature of imagination in Vygotsky's theory. Understanding the nature of the imagination and its importance to the development of the whole psychological system is, in itself, an important contribution to contemporary conversations about the meaning and

function of the imagination. Furthermore, the argument presented here that a visual art education, specifically during the elementary school years, can significantly advance the development of the imagination could have important implications for our understanding of art education and its relevance to children.

Furthermore, a variety of the specific claims that made up the arguments for art education and the development of imagination in this thesis merit practical research. These include the claims that

1. art arises as a function of the pivot in play (a central argument of this study),
2. children are drawn to art for its function as a communicative tool,
3. art relates to speech for children while it relates to the concept of writing for adolescents,
4. the development of an interest in realistic rendering is a function of the formation of conceptual thought, and
5. art teaching methods can make learning art a leading activity in development by providing a wealth of fruitful contradictions in a learning community and a system by which the meaning and utility of art can expand with the growth and development of the learning community.

I believe that the strength of this study lies primarily in the possibilities of a cultural-historical perspective for the development of imagination in general and for art education during childhood in particular. Extending Vygotsky's theories to art education raises many important questions about the nature of artistic and creative development as well as the possible importance of art education for advancing cognitive development. With the theoretical foundations established by this thesis these questions can start to be examined carefully and thoroughly through research into 1) the relationship between artistic development and language development, 2) contemporary art education theory and practice and 3) the relationship between the learning theories that underlie the Suzuki Method and Vygotsky's theories. This research could then be followed by the implementation and study of a Vygotskian art education program.

Efforts to continue this research into a teaching practice where it could be developed and studied could prove immensely useful (if successful) at advancing our understanding of imagination and the power of art to lead cognitive development during

childhood. It is my hope that this thesis raised pertinent and interesting questions, and laid the foundation for further research into the implications of Vygotsky's theories for art education.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Suzuki Activity Tables

Table 1: First Age Period of Suzuki Activity

| Elements of an Activity | Suzuki Activity 1a | Suzuki Activity 1b | Suzuki Activity 1c |
|---|---|---|--|
| Subject | Beginning North American Child (age 4-6) | Parent | Teacher |
| Tools/Instruments | musical instrument, recordings, modeling by parent, teacher and peers | musical instrument, recordings, instruction and modeling by teacher repertoire books | instrument, recordings, instruction and modeling by trainer and other teachers, repertoire books and text about the method |
| Object | object: engagement with musical instrument, object: enjoyment goal: social engagement primarily with parents if child is younger, or goal: social engagement primarily with peers if child is older | object: for his/her child (parents seldom start with a concept that they are learners in the program along with their child): learn to play an instrument, object: enjoyment <i>for</i> their child possible object: develop in-born musical talent, goal: social engagement with teacher, | object: "education for life through music" goal: introduce family to the Suzuki Method and its philosophy goal: help family adopt the practice habits and engagement habits necessary for ability and character growth of parents and children |
| Rules | follow directions, participate, respect teacher and parents | respect teacher and child, support and teach child, follow teacher's directions | support and respect parent, respect, nurture and teach child, continually work to improve teaching skill by self-reflect and study of the method, develop own playing ability as much as possible, |
| Community | primary: parents secondary: peers and teachers | primary: family secondary: community of Suzuki parents | primary: community of teachers and community of participating families |
| Division of Labor: The equilateral Suzuki Triangle: suggests equal importance to role of parent, teacher and child, with equal respect and different but equally important responsibilities | responsible for practicing, attending lessons and group classes, following directions, | responsible for following directions given by the teacher, teaching the child at home, nurturing and respecting their child, providing a positive environment in the home for learning, providing the child with the musical instrument and recordings | responsible for providing the best possible instruction, commitment and respect, responsible for providing all the elements of a Suzuki Method music education, including curriculum, group class, and private lessons |

Table 1: Second Age Period of Suzuki Activity

| Elements of Activity | Suzuki Activity 2a | Suzuki Activity 2b | Suzuki Activity 2c |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Subject | Child: 2-4 years of participation (age 5-10) | Parent: 2-4 years of participation | Teacher: 2-4 years into one family's participation |
| Tools | musical instrument, recordings, modeling by parent, teacher and peers, repertoire books (for those who have started to read musical notation) | musical instrument, recordings, instruction and modeling by teacher, repertoire books | instrument, recordings, repertoire books and texts about the method, instruction and modeling by trainer and other teachers |
| Object | object: social engagement with peers and parents, object: enjoyment goal: engagement with musical instrument | object: relationship building with child object: social engagement in community of the music studio object: enjoyment <i>with</i> thier child goal: help the development of child's musical ability and self-regulation | object: "education for life through music" goal: development of child and parent's positive habits of group and private lesson engagement and in private practice. Goal: improvement in child's musical abilities |
| Rules | follow directions, participate, respect teacher and parents | respect teacher and child, support and teach child, follow teacher's directions | support and respect parent, respect, nurture and teach child, continually work to improve teaching skill by self-reflect and study of the method, develop own playing ability as much as possible, |
| Community | primary: peers and parents secondary: teacher | primary: community of Suzuki parents, students and teachers | primary: community of teachers and community of participating families |
| Division of Labor | Starts to take on more ownership and responsibility for private practice and participation | responsible for being supportive and not competitive, following directions, providing the learning space, materials, instruction and encouragement responsible for working to instill in their child self-regulations strategies and habits to prepare for a transition to practicing alone | responsible for providing the best possible instruction, commitment and respect, responsible for providing all the elements of a Suzuki Method music education, including curriculum, group class, and private lessons |

Table 2: Third Age Period of Suzuki Activity

| Elements of Activity | Suzuki Activity 3a | Suzuki Activity 3b | Suzuki Activity 3c |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Subject | Child: early adolescence (age 11-14) | Parent: 5-9 years of participation | Teacher: 5-9 years into one family's participation |
| Tools | musical instrument, recordings, modeling by teacher and peers, live performances, school orchestra musical scores | musical instrument, recordings, instruction and modeling by teacher, repertoire books, community, school and Suzuki music ensemble opportunities | instrument, recordings, instruction and modeling by trainer and other teachers, repertoire books and texts about the method |
| Object | object: engagement with musical instrument object: engagement with peers, goal: engagement with parents and teacher | object: relationship building with child object: social engagement in community of the music studio object: enjoyment <i>with</i> their child goal: help child develop musical abilities goal: transition to the child learning practicing independently while still supporting participation in group classes and lessons | object: "education for life through music" goal: development of child's self-regulation abilities, practice habits and skills goal: continued development and support of relationship with child and families goal: support of children's engagement with peers through challenging ensemble work that matches the student's motivations to improve their playing, gain independence from parents and strengthen friendships with peers |
| Rules | follow directions, participate, respect teacher and parents | respect teacher and child, support and teach child, follow teacher's directions | support and respect parent, respect, nurture and teach child, continually work to improve teaching skill by self-reflect and study of the method, develop own playing ability as much as possible, |
| Community | primary: peers secondary: parents and teacher | primary: community of Suzuki parents, secondary: community of students and teachers | primary: community of teachers and community of participating families |
| Division of Labor | Takes ownership/responsibility for their own practice continues to attend lessons and group classes attends a community or school orchestra (where possible) | responsible for being supportive and not competitive, following directions from the teacher, providing the learning space, materials, instruction and encouragement, responsible for continuing to support and guide child's private practice even as child works to gain independence from the parent | responsible for providing the best possible instruction, commitment and respect, responsible for providing all the elements of a Suzuki Method music education, including curriculum, group class, and private lessons, responsible for supporting child's participation in ensembles in, and out of the Suzuki program |

Table 3: Fourth Age Period of Suzuki Activity

| Elements of Activity | Suzuki Activity 4a | Suzuki Activity 4b | Suzuki Activity 4c |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|
| Subject | Child: teenage years (age 13-18) | Parent: 9-13 years of participation | Teacher: 9-13 years into one family's participation |
| Tools | musical instrument, recordings, modeling by teacher and peers, live performances by self and others, school and community orchestras musical scores, competitions | music recordings, professional and student performances, competitions (if competition is a positive motivator for their child) | instrument, recordings, instruction and modeling by trainer and other teachers, advanced repertoire beyond the Suzuki books |
| Object | object: engagement with musical instrument goal: engagement with peers, goal: engagement with parents | object: relationship building with child object: social engagement in community of the music studio object: enjoyment <i>with</i> their child goal: help child develop musical abilities goal: transition to their child learning practicing independently while still supporting participation in group classes and lessons, music camps and competition | object: "education for life through music" goal: development of child's self-regulation abilities, practice habits music repertoire and musical skills goal: continued development and support of relationship with child and families goal: support of child's engagement with peers through challenging ensemble work that matches the student's motivations to improve their playing, gain independence from parents and strengthen friendships with peers |
| Rules | act with care, respect and support towards peers parents and teachers, take personal ownership of music education | encourage, support and facilitate child's self-regulated engagement in music education, | continually work to challenge student, continually work to improve teaching skill by self-reflect and study of the method, develop own playing ability as much as possible, |
| Community | primary: peers secondary: parents and teacher | primary: community of Suzuki parents, secondary: community of students and teachers | primary: community of teachers and community of participating families |
| Division of Labor | Take ownership/responsibility for their own practice continue to attend lessons and group classes attend a community or school orchestra (where possible) | responsible for being supportive and encouraging, follow directions from the teacher, provide the learning space, materials, instruction and encouragement, | responsible for providing the best possible instruction and modeling responsible for supporting child's participation in ensembles in, and out of the Suzuki program responsible for teaching repertoire that goes beyond the Suzuki books |