

EXPLORING PLACE: USING MAPPING AS A STRATEGY  
FOR ART MAKING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM

By

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A PROJECT IN LIEU OF THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
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ABSTRACT OF PROJECT IN LIEU OF THESIS  
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Major: Art Education

While not typically part of K-12 art education, many contemporary artists have established mapping as a method for making art. In an effort to bridge these two worlds, this project explores the research question: “How can mapping strategies be used in the art classroom to foster student exploration of place?” Support for this project was found in the work of artists such as Sara Fanelli, David Hockney, Joyce Kozloff and Denis Wood, who recognize that maps can be not only informative, but also artful and narrative. Other influences come from diverse fields, including art, education, geography, and philosophy, and examine the psychological and physical relationships between places and people.

Upon the foundations of my supporting research, I conducted a case study over the course of six 50-minute sessions in Chiefland, Florida, in which fourteen sixth grade students learned about mapping techniques to explore and explain elements of local places. This case study serves to investigate strategies for teaching artistic mapping as a means to explore place in the classroom. Analysis of the results and products of the project led to identifying successful teaching methods which spark student interest. While the participants of this particular study

were middle school students in Florida, the objectives and concepts can be modified for K-12 students of any level from any location; thus, this research contributes to the discourse on place-based art education.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Like most people, I have very particular memories tied to the places surrounding my childhood home. I grew up at the bottom of what I recall to be a very steep hill, which hosted my early cycling adventures (Figure 1). I would fly down it at such breakneck speeds that on the weekend before kindergarten, I flipped over the handlebars, broke my arm and had to wear a sling to the first day of school. Above and far beyond the hill lived my best friend, Leslie. We would ride our bikes very quickly to meet one another at the parking lot of our school and then ride leisurely together back to one of our homes. It was a long and somewhat scary trip but a day spent with my best friend was worth the risk. One summer, locusts took over the neighborhood. The little ones, mostly black with orange stripes, overran the backyard because they were very fast and difficult to catch, but the big ones were numerous and slow. That summer, I explored new aspects of the steep hill. I didn't sail down the hill for speed, but rather measured how many locusts I could crunch under my tires in one trip.

I remember seeing 'magic' in my front yard on one particular morning when I walked out of my front door and saw hundreds of crystals scattered throughout the lawn. As I went to gather the unspeakable treasures, the mirage disappeared into singular dewdrops reflecting the sun. While disappointed, I didn't immediately give up hope. Convinced I could gather diamonds if only I could reach them fast enough, the idea of finding shiny treasures recurred in my dreams. There were scary places and secret hideaways, tiny nooks, shady spots, and planes of sunshine. These places were more than just a backdrop to my formative years; they hosted my development and fostered my imagination.



Figure 1. The steep hill and front yard (Google Earth, 2011).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Situated at an interdisciplinary intersection where art, education, geography and anthropology converge, this research examines mapping techniques in the middle school classroom as a strategy for creating art and understanding and exploring local places. For many people, landscapes, both cultural and physical, simply exist and are not subjects for analysis (Lewis, 1976). However, landscape can be read as a biography of its inhabitants, reflecting their concerns and priorities and providing cultural context. Art educators would be remiss to leave local places out of the curriculum. Through addressing the research question, “*How can mapping strategies be used in the art classroom to foster student exploration of place?*” I seek to better incorporate the concept of “place” in the middle school art classroom. Through the case study conducted for this project, participants were exposed to mapping strategies for art making and exploration. At the conclusion of the case study, I reflected on successful methods of teaching mapping, addressing the sub-question: “*What are some successful pedagogical strategies in teaching mapping as a tool for art-making?*”

### **Significance of the Study**

Aligning myself with proponents of incorporating place-based pedagogy in the art classroom, this study further explores and supports the role of place-based education in the art classroom. The project continues in the art education's tradition of encouraging students to more closely examine their visual world. While the participants of this particular study were middle school students in Florida, the projects and concepts can be modified for K-12 students of any level from any location.

While the limited length of the study prevents me from making long-term claims, I conjecture that the earnest study of place heightens student knowledge of and sensitivity to their own environs and may cause them to feel more strongly rooted in and responsible for the places in which they live, work, or travel.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Places and spaces have long been sources of fascination and inspiration for authors and artists. In *The Poetics of Space* (1964), the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard analyzes the ways in which intimate places influence their inhabitants. He notes the human tendency to carve out havens in homes where “every inch of secluded space in which we like to hide, or withdraw into ourselves, is a symbol of solitude for the imagination” (p. 136). His arguments are rooted in psychology as he especially focuses on individuals’ relationships to place. The Chinese philosopher, Yi-Fu Tuan (1979), also studies human relationships to place, but his framework is sociological and therefore broader in scope than Bachelard’s. He distinguishes two perspectives from which to view landscape and describes a duality that is both literal and metaphorical. One outlook is an objective or vertical view, used by farmers, for example, to measure areas of arable land. The second, a side view, relates to personal, moral, and aesthetic perspectives (Tuan, 1979, p. 87). This distinction is particularly helpful in understanding the use of mapping in narrative art. Artful maps can be informed by vertical understanding of a place, but colored by an artist’s subjective “side view” experiences and interactions with it.

Bridging philosophy and fine arts, critic and feminist Lucy Lippard analyzes the work of artists who are tied to particular places or cultures within the United States. While Bachelard focuses on individual and psychological, Lippard (1997) prefers a broader sociological lens, arguing that culture is directly tied to place because the very concept of culture embodies a sense of origin. Lippard delineates tensions in dichotomies between preserving history and cultivating progress, between public and private, between old and new. Throughout her exploration she includes examples of the ways in which artists find inspiration in place and recognizes the

visualization of physical landscape as powerful tool for personal and artistic growth. She speaks specifically to the narrative significance of maps:

“A map can be memory or anticipation in graphic code. While there are probably some armchair map-lovers for whom connoisseurship is paramount, most are lured by the local, imagining places as they peruse the spaces delineated” (Lippard, 1997, p. 77).

Like Lippard and Bachelard, many scholars frame their analysis of place on the dichotomies of human interaction with landscape. In her analysis of John Dewey’s pedagogy of place, Jayanandhan’s (2009) definition of place differentiates between physical elements and peoples’ individual bonds and sociological relationships to place. Focusing in on the social aspect, she explains two branches of place in pedagogy. The intent of the more prominent branch, environmental education, is to “develop connections between students and their surrounding environment” (Jayanandhan, 2009, p. 105). An urban pedagogy of place is another trend, which involves sociology and class struggle. She notes that the two approaches are not dichotomous.

Julia Kellman also recognizes a difference between individual relationships to place and sociological group narratives in her essay “Telling Space and Making Stories: Art Narrative and Place” (1998). Unlike Jayanandhan, Kellman does not discuss class distinction but emphasizes the collective relationship between a group of people and their place. This consideration is especially relevant to the highly social period of early adolescence and therefore pertinent to working with a middle school population. Pushing for practical implementation, Kellman feels that incorporating place-based narrative in the art classroom helps construct a meaningful and authentic art experience which “celebrates and validates as it binds the student artist to her own complex world” (Kellman, 1998, p. 40). In this way, both Jayanandhan and Kellman provide

support for place-based art education and likewise for the case study I propose to conduct as a part of this research.

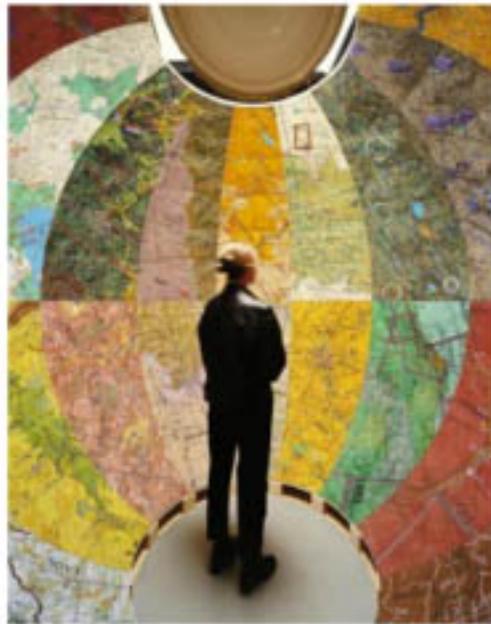
### **Artists Who Use Mapping Strategies**

One goal of art education should be to introduce and connect students to the work of professional artists. Artists observe the world and direct the attention of their audience to their findings. It follows that encouraging observation of students' immediate and surrounding world is an appropriate practice in art education. Many artists employ mapping strategies in order to convey a sense of place, especially pertinent to this research are those artists who employ mapping techniques to convey personal stories or group narratives. One such artwork is David Hockney's painting, *Mulholland Drive; Road to the studio* (Figure 2). Hockney fills the composition with color, as if the sun was reflecting a radiant landscape. The orange and white sky also conveys this warmth. Having grown up in a rainy area of England, the California sun would have certainly impressed Hockney, inspiring him to paint memories of his commute in Los Angeles (Museum Associates, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011). Depicting both a grid-like pattern in the background, which evokes a street map as well as a landscape of winding roads, fields and hills, Hockney's painting captures both Tuan's notion of vertical perspective as well as the more personal side view.



*Figure 2. David Hockney (1980) Mullholland Drive; Road to the studio. (Museum Associates, LACMA, 2011).*

Many artists use themes to make meaningful narrative maps. In *Targets* (2000), Joyce Kozloff juxtaposes many aerial paintings of war-torn places within an inverted globe (Figure 3). In making a case for the significance of Kozloff's work, the authors of the exhibition catalogue, *Co+ordinates*, structure their argument on the notion of the link between place and identity, stating "maps are mirrors in which we look for ourselves; they reveal how strong our sense of identity is associated with location and place relative to others" (Pricenthal & Earenfight, 2008, p. 7).



*Figure 3. Joyce Kozloff, 2000, Target. (Pricenthal, & Earenfight, 2008).*

Denis Wood also re-orders atlases by theme rather than by geographic proximity. He feels that this conveys a more interesting and even more accurate statement about the world. In "The pleasure in the idea: The atlas in narrative form," Wood argues that maps and atlases can be at once informative and pleasurable (Wood, 1987). He feels that all maps represent their cartographer's point of view. He does not take issue with this subjectivity, but rather with the

dull and often unconvincing veneer of objectivity with which maps are presented. In his book *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas*, Wood (2010) organizes his own narrative maps of his neighborhood, Boylan Heights, NC by theme in order to powerfully illustrate complex information. As Ira Glass (1998) noted in an episode of *This American Life*, Wood's maps "have meaning because they filter out all the chaos in the world and focus obsessively on one item;" this focus allows the viewer to understand more than if the map tried to include all available information. For example Wood found that his map, *Jack-O-Lanterns* (1982), documenting the carved Halloween displays in his neighborhood strikingly similar to a map documenting the number of times a residence was mentioned in the neighborhood newspaper. Using thematic juxtaposition, he was able to conclude that those who were more frequently named in local media were also more likely to display a jack-o-lantern (Wood, 2010).

In addition to organizing maps by theme, artists record personal and group histories of landscapes. The Italian artist, Sara Fanelli's *Map of My Day* (1995) is a simple and fitting example of different moments in time layered within one piece (Figure 4). She manages to include personal narrative and depth of detail but does not sacrifice subjective joy in her composition. Furthermore, Fanelli's (1995) other maps often depict unconventional subjects such as a "bedroom," "dog," "tummy," and "face." The lighthearted nature of her approach as well as her loose artistic style, are appropriate examples to illustrate narrative mapping strategies to adolescents.



Figure 4. Fanelli. (1995). *Map of My Day*.

In their well-designed *Stuff That Works!* curricula, Benenson and Neujahr (2002) promote mapping activities for elementary geography classes, carefully integrating national standards and benchmarks in English, science, social studies, and math. Although the authors recognize the visual appeal of maps, they intentionally avoid connecting their activities with art objectives, explaining “Art is the artist’s personal expression about the nature of things. Because art is such a personal statement, you can’t check it against reality in the same way you can test a scientific hypothesis” (p. 24). However, they devote an entire chapter to mapping stories (Chapter 4). What could produce more personal statement? In addition to inviting students to share their stories and viewpoints, making maps reinforces many of the visual-spatial lessons that have traditionally been the domain of art education (learning about shape, scale, visual symbols and metaphors). For these reasons the many activities that Beneson and Neujahr recommend are perhaps most appropriately taught in art.

Denis Krygier (2009) put narrative mapping into practice by teaching sensory mapping techniques to middle school students in the summer course “Mapping Weird Stuff,” at Ohio Wesleyan University. Although the course is run through the geography department, the

mapping strategies implemented are highly artistic and based on perception (Krygier, 2009); students explore geography by making maps of the university campus (Figure 5).

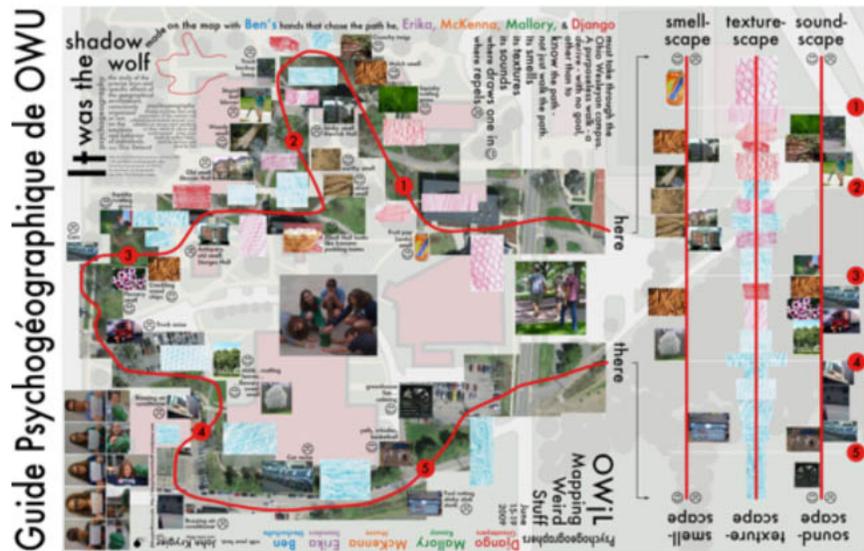


Figure 5. Krygier (2009). *Psychogeographic Map of Ohio Wesleyan University*.

At the University of Florida, Craig Roland has also implemented mapping in the art classroom (2002). Roland invited upper elementary students to participate in a Community Maps Project, teaming each group of two or three upper-elementary students with a preservice art educator. The children were first challenged to map their homes. They then drew places in their neighborhoods, considering the location of each place and its physical connections to the community via roads and sidewalks. The groups' colorful maps convey their thinking about familiar and surrounding places, elements of their communities that the children found most important are prominent while features less relevant to the children's lives do not appear in their maps (Figure 6).



*Figure 6. Roland (2002). Community Maps Project.*

In conclusion, through this review of related literature, scholarship and art, the role of mapping in exploring place has been established as a way of making meaning. Many researchers construct their understanding of place by identifying dualities in human relationships to landscape; the distinction between individual and group interaction with place is one example. Several contemporary artists use mapping strategies to explore place. While the artists I have discussed organize their work in different ways (by theme, time, or senses), they all convey personal narratives within the maps they create. While geographers frequently incorporate mapping activities in the classroom, the practice is far less common in K-12 art curricula.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Population**

Participants were recruited from the sixth-grade (ages 11-13) at Nature Coast Middle School in Chiefland, FL with an invitation to join in the project as an alternative to a school-wide study period held on Wednesday afternoons during which time teachers plan and organize their lessons. I sent letters home to the parents and guardians of the students, requesting permission for students to participate and to be photographed for documentation of the procedures (see Appendix A, IRB protocol and Appendix B, parent letter).

The “Gem of the Suwanee Valley,” Chiefland is a rural agricultural town in North-Central, Florida. According to the 2010 US Census, the greater Chiefland area is home to a population of 11,636. Natural springs that feed into the Suwanee River are a remarkable geologic feature. In conversations with residents, two notable points of pride included the high quality of the tap water and the fact that the Walmart downtown is the only Walmart in the region.

The population is predominantly white at 88%; African Americans make up the next largest racial group but represent only 8% of the population (US Census Bureau, 2010). In 2000, the median household income was \$17,331 compared to a national median of \$41,994; 33.3% of families in the Chiefland area live below the poverty line compared to the national average of 9.2% (The Greater Chiefland Area Chamber of Commerce, 2011). Reflecting the economic demographics of the city, 77% of students at Nature Coast Middle School received free or reduced lunch in the 2010-2011 school (FLDOE, 2011).

The volunteers for this project had not received extensive art instruction as part of the curriculum. At the time of this study, Nature Coast Middle School employed a part-time art specialist but since enrollment in electives is on the basis of student seniority, very few sixth grade students are able to take art. Nonetheless, students have opportunities to hone their design and craftsmanship skills through other electives such as woodshop and scrapbooking, which were offered in addition to other electives such as karate, chorus, and drama in the 2011-2012 school year.

### **Procedures**

This project was conducted over the course of six 50-minute sessions held on Wednesday afternoons. The participants learned about ways that artists have used mapping strategies, drew initial sketches as personal research, and recorded their own familiar places by creating maps of their communities. Following the structure of their classes, I separated the groups by gender. I further divided the fourteen participants into four groups with three or four students each. In this section I will review the procedures of each of our meetings.

#### **Session one.**

During our first meeting, prior to any instruction, I asked participants to draw maps of their school campus. I initiated this task by saying: "I am new to this school and I need your expert knowledge to know more about this place." Students began to draw detailed maps of the small school campus indicating the correct number of tables in the main room of the school, and even a pothole in the circular driveway. Many included labels in these first mapping experiences (Figure 7).

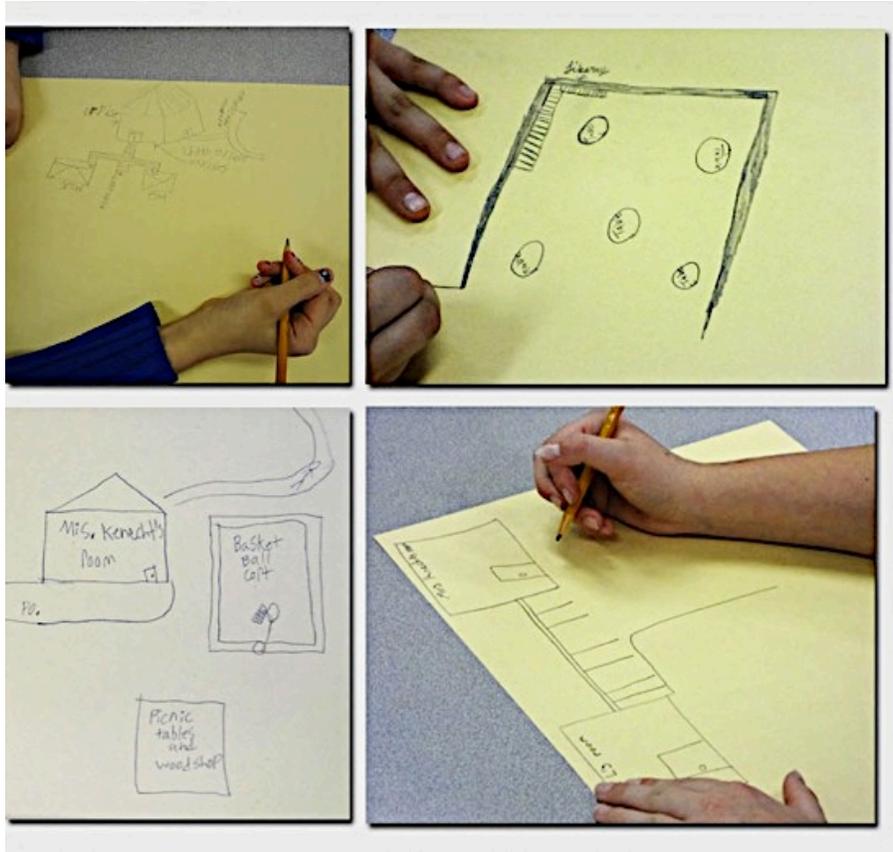


Figure 7. Labeling school maps.

Next, I asked students to record some sensory information. I asked them how they would indicate the loudest places, most colorful, and smelliest places, which led to the addition of certain symbols being included in their drawings (Figure 8).

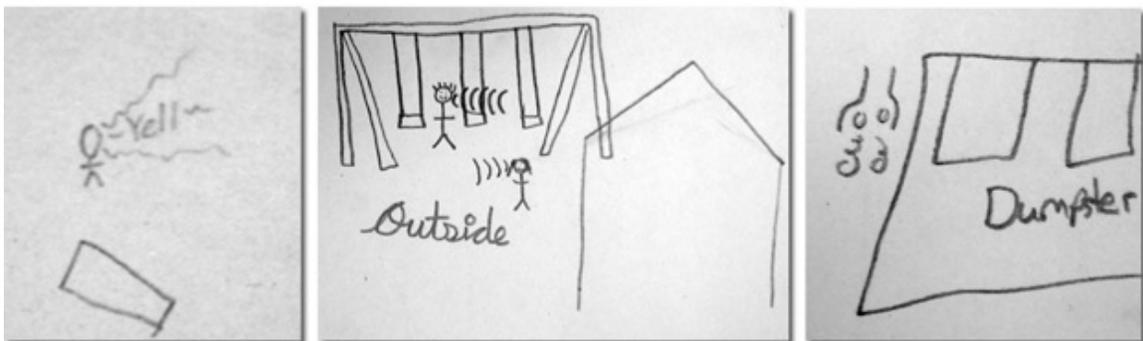


Figure 8. Adding symbols.

After this initial activity, I used UGS maps depicting the same place but from different vantage points to illustrate the characteristics of each perspective. Each group started with only one vantage point, and was instructed to list and describe elements they saw within the maps. After spending about three minutes with a one perspective, the groups exchanged the reproductions with one another until each group had a chance to see all of the images. We talked about the three different perspectives, I framed the discussion by asking what a bird's eye view or aerial perspective tells us about space and what information we could gather from a perspective closer to the ground.

Inviting students to recognize different vantage points in contemporary art practice, I handed out printed reproductions of "Mulholland Drive; Road to the studio" to each group. The children commented on the fields, tower, color and hills. They began to recognize food items in Hockney's unique brush strokes and paint application and laughed over their ideas of "Bacon Hill" and "Pickle Tree."

Next, I passed out new sheets of sketch paper and asked students to brainstorm and list at least ten places in their community. Many students listed stores or businesses; Walmart, McDonalds, and Winn Dixie were the most commonly cited places (Figure 9). With the time remaining, each participant selected one or two places to sketch. I also asked students to think about how people would get to these places.

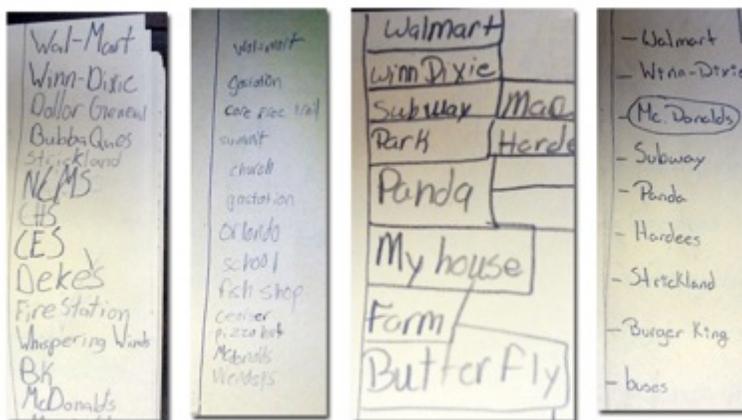


Figure 9. Participant-generated place lists with Walmart first listed

### Session two.

I began the second session with a review of perspective. Focusing on how maps tell experiences, stories, and perspectives. I showed students Sara Fanelli's "Map of My Neighborhood" and "Map of My Day." We briefly discussed the questions: "What do you see in the map?" "What makes this a map?" "What elements tell a story?"

After this introduction, participants began to sketch maps of their days, while I had envisioned that their depictions would be grounded in their realities, A few students started drawing completely imaginary days. For example, two boys in different groups each included skydivers. I regret not asking them what had inspired these drawings. I have since learned that there is a skydiving business in a neighboring town and I wonder if the children had seen parachutists falling from the sky.

Next, in order to combine topographic and personal perspectives, I told students they could layer their drawings on top of real maps. I provided the students with large maps of areas of North Florida that I had gotten from the pile of free, discarded maps at the Map and Imagery Library of the University of Florida. They were generally very excited about getting to keep the maps and liked looking at the topographic imagery.

### **Session three.**

Concerned that we would not have sufficient time to complete both the collaborative maps and the day maps, I refocused the groups on the community map project we had begun in week one but reminded students of the previous week when they had thought of activities they would do in different spaces.

We reviewed their lists of places and I wrote the goal of connecting the individual drawings into group maps. Although one group of girls immediately started piecing together their pages and connecting the places in context, the other three groups needed more coaxing. For example in one group, a boy, who was the most confident in his art skills and affirmed by his peers had moved to Chiefland relatively recently and still identified West Palm Beach as his home. At the other end of the table was a boy who lived Old Town of Dixie County, Florida. The two remaining group members struggled with connecting their drawings of places in the Chiefland community with the drawings done by their group members. The two boys were caught in the middle geographically and were not confident in their art skills. By the end of the class, however, the group had figured out how to connect their places by stacking sheets of paper vertically.

### **Session four.**

For our fourth meeting we continued to focus on the ways the places that individuals had selected would fit together in a community map. On the board, I wrote the questions: “How do these places connect? What are these places? What are they for?” For the first time, I provided the paint, hoping the children would be able to more efficiently cover areas of paper. We also discussed using color to signify different areas and some students incorporated painted colors into their keys. Through this activity, it seemed that students for the first time were thinking

about the ways that people inhabit and use space. In their groups the children began to address the different functions of places and discussed categories such as businesses, parks, schools, homes, and so on (Figure 10).



*Figure 10. Using color to signify function*

#### **Session five.**

Before the participants came in the room, I wrote “No bare paper” on the board as our goal for the day. We discussed layering and I demonstrated adding drawn details on top of a dry wash of painted color. I wanted the students to understand how to use layering rather than filling in background areas with small brushes around their featured places. I was anticipating that the following week we could put on finishing details or even collage their other drawings and sketches on top.

This week I noticed that the groups had developed a shared vision. They had figured out the key problem of how to arrange and connect their maps and were then able to recognize and divide the remaining work they needed to do. Wanting to understand more about the places the children had decided to include, I passed out blank pieces of paper and wrote three questions on the board (Appendix C):

*What is one place you chose to include?*

*Why is this place important to you?*

*Why is it important to the community?*

### **Session six.**

For our final meeting we focused on details. On the board I wrote the question: “How will people know what they are seeing?” The children thought of adding categories to their map keys, writing in labels, or bringing out more details with the oil pastels. Knowing that I had promised the students a wrap-up party, one group of boys seemed anxious to be finished and started hurriedly filling in details; for example, scribbling green oil pasted over green paint and quickly putting yellow dashes down the road. Twice when they declared that they were done I asked them to put the pieces of their collaboration together and see if they could improve upon any parts. Last minute additions were collaging tractors they had drawn onto a large field and drawing in a “control burn” of some blackened trees.

In the group with four girls, there were with passive undercurrents of dissention. Three had started to form a clique and excluded their fourth member. Other teachers report that this fourth girl is content but reserved, and is very quiet but often daydreaming or off-task. Compounding the issue, she was far behind and had been absent for three of our six meetings. Her group members were concerned that she had not followed the theme of the group map,

which exclusively depicted places on Main Street in Chiefland. More than any of the other groups, their map was true to the actual locations and spatial relationships between places they had drawn. The fourth member of the group was more interested in featuring places that were interesting or important to her personally, she drew SeaWorld (Orlando) next to McDonald's across from the Oaks Mall (Gainesville). She also made her background bright green instead of black. With my assistance, this group came up with the solution that her map could be part of this one but be shown as a continuation, of places still connected to Main Street in Chiefland but much further away.

Before concluding this meeting, I had the participants reflect on the project by completing the sentences "I learned...", "I wish that we...", and "When it comes to making maps in art, I think..." (Appendix D). Also I took final photographs of the group maps so I would be able to reproduce the students' arrangements for documentation and exhibition of their artwork (Appendix E).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The most challenging limitation of this project was the length of the time available to conduct the case study. However, the weekly, 50-minute format does mirror the amount of time many public school students get to spend in art class. Further shortening our time was the school policy that participants who had turned in two or more late assignments in the previous week had to go to a detention/study hall rather than attending the art project.

Frequent absences were also problematic. With the exception of the final session, twelve of the fourteen was the highest attendance. As a result, some students missed instructional moments and slowed some of the momentum of their groups' project.

Our activities were limited to the boundaries of school grounds and available and

affordable technology. Ostensibly, taking field trips in which the young artists could have directly observed places would have informed their artwork. Gravity also significantly affects observation of place. Using only their feet and legs to distance themselves from the horizon, participants had to rely on their imaginations to depict aerial perspectives. However, gravity also keeps children relatively close to the horizon line, where visual detail and nuance is arguably more readily accessible than from the sky.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

Comparing the maps the children created at the very beginning of the case study with their completed community maps did not prove to be an accurate or appropriate assessment of the learning that occurred during this project. While I thought this might measure growth when I designed the project, I feel the lessons are more complex than can be captured in a simple measure. This assessment would have been more fitting if I we had focused our study to observation and mapping of only the school campus. A comparison between the initial sketches and more developed products based on the same areas would have been more telling.

Although starting with mapping a relatively small and very familiar place was an excellent starting point, it was a broad leap to then consider the entire community (and other important places beyond). Unfortunately, I knew very little about the participants' abilities prior to beginning the project. In regards to this study, the children's developmental levels spanned a wide range, as is manifested in both their drawing and writing abilities. It was necessary for me to quickly adapt my goals and instructional plans. In his research on mapmaking with children, David Sobel (1998) promotes mapping a broader scope of area as a developmentally appropriate activity for early adolescents; however he also recognizes that "eleven and twelve-year-olds just being introduced to the idea of making maps for the first time will have to go through some of the earlier stages before being able to make pure maps. Also, though the aerial view is accessible for some children at this age, many may linger with a preference for panoramic views or for mixed frontal and aerial views in their own maps" (Sobel, 1998, p 21). After our discussions on perspective, many students experimented with shifting viewpoints in their subsequent sketches. However, I ultimately encouraged students to choose with their group

mates how they would depict places. Giving students this choice is compatible with constructivist art teaching practice in which students have more autonomy in their solutions to a visual problem.

While I initially felt that the inability to access and directly observe the places they were drawing was a limitation, the methodology of this case study draws on the theory of mental mapping. From very early childhood, we piece together what we understand about our surroundings to create mental maps. As we grow so do our boundaries for exploration. We edit and expand our mental maps as we further observe the world (Roland 2006). Our mental maps are also influenced by secondhand knowledge, reports from friends about their daily commutes or summer vacations, images we see in the local news, or even photos we access online covering events across the globe. The challenge of mapping their places from memory made students draw on their mental maps and build their community maps based on the collective knowledge of their groups.

The collaborative nature of the project was a frustrating element for some of the students. Several times students approached me to ask if they were allowed to incorporate a new theme or idea into their maps. My usual solution to this was to go and visit the group to discuss the new idea. My goal was to guide the children but have them ultimately make their own decisions as a group. Some of the groups worked collaboratively from the start, whereas others worked more cooperatively, they worked on independent tasks and seemed to piece together their contributions as an afterthought (Appendix E, Girls' Group 2). Overall, while the collaboration may have slowed down production, it was a valuable learning period for the students. While many school subjects and activities offer opportunities for group work, collaborative mapping mirrors the negotiations that occur over the use of real public space (Figure 11). That said, in

order to mitigate frustrations of working in groups, the groups of three seemed to work more efficiently and cooperatively than the groups of four. Also, separating the students into gender groups seemed to be a wise move. Because the children were already separated by gender for their core academic classes, they had previously worked with their other group members in a classroom setting. Also a rumored breakup between two participants caused noticeable tension across the room during our third week together.



*Figure 11. Negotiating the use of space*

Several students exhibited emotions linked with the crisis of realism. Craig Roland (2006) describes this as a drawing stage in which children are frustrated when they aren't able to draw as accurately as they would like. For one boy, this attitude crippled his progress on the project. He would sketch a building but then throw away the drawing because it looked childish. He was also acutely aware of the differences between the spatial layout of his group's map and the real landscape. As students were beginning to put together places, those that were trying to make maps that accurately reflected their community were sometimes discouraged when, after depicting a place, they would realize that they had forgotten an adjacent place but had run out of room on the map.

Having their work shown in a final exhibition seemed to be a major motivator. I arranged for exhibitions both at the University of Florida’s WARPhaus Gallery as well as one in the main room of their school. Students were generally eager and confident to share their artwork, but even more so at “the University,” which most children held in high regard. Two of the first questions students asked when I told them that we would have an opportunity to show our work at UF were: “Will the football team be there?” and “Will we be able to sell our drawings?” I told them that neither was likely but they were still excited about the show. The students who were able to come and see their artwork in the gallery proudly documented it (Figure 12). Although the exhibitions did not directly contribute to the children’s understanding of space, it served as an appropriate way for them to reflect on and share their experience. In addition, knowing that the work would later be displayed encouraged them to finish the challenging task of completing a large-scale group project.



*Figure 12. Participants taking pictures of their artwork in the gallery*

Many of students’ questionnaires and reflection statements reflect their enjoyment of the project, although most of the learning they cited was materials-based. Although I feel the final

products convey deeper learning and observation, the participants likely associate art in school with learning about particular media.

Many of the places the children selected were commercial and the reasons they cited for the importance of these places was that they could buy food and clothing. Some of the children also reported that places were important because they provided education or recreation. One girl in particular expressed her personal ties to the place she had drawn: “[Blue Spring] is important to me because I have been going there for my whole life. It is a part of me” (See Appendix C). The participants also noted the limitation of what we were able to accomplish given the short period of time. The most frequent completion of the reflection sentence “I wish” were variations of the desire to have more time in art class.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Through this research I have explored the question, “How can mapping strategies be used in the art classroom to foster student exploration of place?” Following the example of a number of contemporary artists, mapping can be used as a way for students to share their personal stories, experiences, and opinions. Students can use maps to record their observations of their surrounding areas and to focus their attention on a particular issue or idea that is relevant to their community. Collaborative mapping activities can also be a valuable way to practice negotiating the use public space. In a case study with middle school students, I found that creating collaborative maps encouraged students to piece together their collective knowledge. In their small groups, participants shared their mental maps and memories of their communities in order to depict areas more thoroughly than they would have on their own. This activity, along with their reflections on the reasons why the places they selected may have contributed to students better understanding of their relationships with the places in which they live or travel.

#### **Further Questions**

As a result of this research and case study, I would like to further investigate mapping activities with an initial focus on children’s most immediate places before asking them to consider larger communities. Following Sobel’s advice, I would encourage students to make big maps of small places (1998). The more intimately known the place, the more richly detailed students’ depictions. Children might start by mapping their feet before making an atlas of the hiding places in and around their homes. For the next activity, they could map their routes to secret places reachable only foot or by bike. The focus on students’ everyday places would allow them to meaningfully tie in their own interests and experiences. Rather than looking at

how adults have carved out public space in the community, children could share how they have shaped their own spaces.

I would also like to investigate an amended version of my original research question. I wonder “how can mapping strategies be used in the art classroom to foster students’ *imagination*.” While I encouraged the participants in my case study to share their stories about particular places, I feel mapping strategies can also be used in response to imaginative tasks. Students could draw maps to get lost, creating portals from the known world to invented landscapes. Likewise, in mapping time, they could create maps of their ideal day or find a way to imagine the unknown in creating a map of the future. The students’ own maps might provoke even further avenues for exploration. For instance, I might have asked the participants who drew skydivers to draw what they would see if they were parachuting. Imaginative mapping would not prevent links to other disciplines, students might draw utopian or dystopian landscapes while reading fiction with these themes. They could draw maps for particular creatures they learned about in science, mapping a day in the life of a worm, for example, or making a map of necessary resources for a blood cell. Maps that allow students to incorporate fantasy in their known worlds would further provoke their critical and creative thinking.

In conclusion, while this research experience has been rich, it only begins to address the possibilities of using mapping in the art classroom and I look forward to exploring where these future questions lead.

Appendix A: IRB Protocol Submission Form

<b>UFIRB 02 – Social &amp; Behavioral Research</b>			
<b>Protocol Submission Form</b>			
<i>This form must be typed. Send this form and the supporting documents to IRB02, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611. Should you have questions about completing this form, call 352-392-0433.</i>			
<b>Title of Protocol:</b>	Using Mapping Strategies to Make Art in the Middle School Classroom		
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	Carl Zylstra	UFID #: 4981-5821	
<b>Degree / Title:</b>	Art Education, Masters of Art in Teaching	<b>Mailing Address:</b> (If on campus include PO Box address): 532 NE 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601	<b>Email:</b> czylstraluciano@ufl.edu
<b>Department:</b>	School of Art and Art History; Art Education,		<b>Telephone #:</b> (561) 758-4331
<b>Co-Investigator(s):</b>	N/A	UFID#:	Email:
<b>Supervisor (if PI is student):</b>	Craig Roland	UFID#: 3989-8300	
<b>Degree / Title:</b>	Ph.D.	<b>Mailing Address:</b> (If on campus include PO Box address): PO Box 115801	<b>Email :</b> rolandc@ufl.edu
<b>Department:</b>	School of Art and Art History; Art Education		<b>Telephone #:</b> (352) 392-9165
<b>Date of Proposed Research:</b>	(any five of the following dates:) January 18, 25, February 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 March 7, 14, 21		
<b>Source of Funding</b> (A copy of the grant proposal must be submitted with this protocol if funding is involved):	Not applicable		
<b>Scientific Purpose of the Study:</b>			
This study serves to inform the pedagogy of place-based art education. The rationale for using mapping in art is to teach the importance of both perceptual awareness and connectedness to one's surroundings. From the products of this case study, the researcher will determine successful mapping strategies to use in making art.			
<b>Describe the Research Methodology in Non-Technical Language:</b> (Explain what will be done with or to the research participant.)			
<i>Participants in this project will use mapping techniques both to observe the world around them and to make a work of art. They will create sensory maps based on their subjective experience of their school campus. Over the course of five 80-minute meetings, students will create artistic narrative maps. A culminating art exhibition at the school will provide closure and allow them to share their work with their families, peers, and teachers.</i>			

**Describe Potential Benefits:**

Students may benefit from experience completing an art project. They will learn new techniques, which they might find enjoyable and applicable in other subjects of study (history, geography, science). The satisfaction of making an art project is often intangible but significant.

The research informs the field of place-based art education.

**Describe Potential Risks:** (If risk of physical, psychological or economic harm may be involved, describe the steps taken to protect participant.)

There are no foreseeable major risks to participants. Because some of the art project will take place outside, possible physical risks include anything that may result from outside play: sunburn, insect bites, whims of energetic, adolescent peers.

Steps taken to protect participants will be to closely monitor them and carefully structured activities. We will avoid spending prolonged periods outside during peak hours of sunshine. The researcher will carefully examine school grounds for potential safety hazards.

**Describe How Participant(s) Will Be Recruited:**

Students in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class at Nature Coast Middle School will be invited to participate in an art project using mapping strategies to explore their school campus. Students have the option to participate in this project as an alternative to a school-wide non-instructional period on Wednesday afternoons during which they usually watch educational films while teachers have their only planning period of the week.

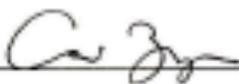
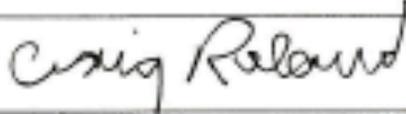
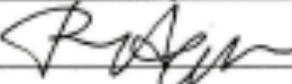
A letter of consent will be sent home to parent/guardian to sign to give consent. See attached.

Maximum Number of Participants (to be approached with consent)	30	Age Range of Participants:	11-13	Amount of Compensation/course credit:	No compensation or credit will be given.
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**Describe the Informed Consent Process.** (Attach a Copy of the Informed Consent Document. See <http://irb.ufl.edu/irb02/samples.html> for examples of consent.)

The researcher will send a letter home to parents/ guardians describing the project and informing them of the research goal.

**(SIGNATURE SECTION)**

Principal Investigator(s) Signature:		Date:	11/30/11
Co-Investigator(s) Signature(s):		Date:	
Supervisor's Signature (if PI is a student):		Date:	11-30-11
Department Chair Signature:		Date:	11-30-11

**Appendix B: IRB, Parental Consent Form**

Cari Zylstra Luciano  
532 NE 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Gainesville, FL, 32601

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a graduate student in Art Education at the University of Florida and I would like to invite your child to join me in doing an art project Nature Coast Middle School. The purpose of this project is to see how children can use mapping strategies to make art and to better understand the world around them.

The project will take five 80-minute sessions on Wednesday afternoons during the months of January and February. Your child may be photographed during the instructional period. The photos will be used to document the art project. Students will not be named in my research paper. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Participation will not affect your student's grades. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at anytime without penalty. Benefits to participation include learning about and making art. There are no risks or compensation to you for participating in the study.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at (561) 758-4331 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Craig Roland, at (352) 392-9165. Questions or concerns about your child's rights as research participant may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611, (352) 392-0433.

Thank you,

Cari Zylstra Luciano

---

I voluntarily give my consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in this project.

---

Parent / Guardian

---

Date

## Appendix C: Participant Questionnaires

The children's answers are recorded with their original spelling and grammar.

1

*What is one place you chose to include?* My House, school

*Why is this place important to you?* I like it

*Why is it important to the community?* it help you learn

---

2

*What is one place you chose to include?* walmart

*Why is this place important to you?* it's a store!!

*Why is it important to the community?* it's a place were pepole can get their resources

---

3

*What is one place you chose to include?* Central Park

*Why is this place important to you?* I can play and people can make new freinds.

*Why is it important to the community?* [answered in question #2]

---

4

*What is one place you chose to include?* walmart

*Why is this place important to you?* it is a store

*Why is it important to the community?* it gives poeple their resources

---

5

*What is one place you chose to include?* One place I included is blue spring.

*Why is this place important to you?* It is important to me because I have been going there for my whole life. It is a part of me.

*Why is it important to the community?* It is important to the community because it is a acuifer and it is part are fun time in are life.

---

6

*What is one place you chose to include?* airport

*Why is this place important to you?* It looks cool at night

*Why is it important to the community?* It let's people travel from place to place

---

7

*What is one place you chose to include?* The place I included is where you get education.

*Why is this place important to you?* [not answered]

*Why is it important to the community?* it is inpotant to the community because you need to learn.

---

8

*What is one place you chose to include?* Wild aDVers

*Why is this place important to you?* Beacaus you can ride rids and go to waterpark.

*Why is it important to the community?* [not answered]

---

9

*What is one place you chose to include?* A ga\$ Station

*Why is this place important to you?* It is because there is a lot of food there.

*Why is it important to the community?* It is important buy the drinks and food

---

10

*What is one place you chose to include?* The Library.

*Why is this place important to you?* You can get info from it.

*Why is it important to the community?* [not answered]

---

11

*What is one place you chose to include?* Wal-Mart

*Why is this place important to you?* I get food there

*Why is it important to the community?* people get groceries there

---

12

*What is one place you chose to include?* Dollar General

*Why is this place important to you?* Its important to me because it gives me clothes. And we get good food there.

*Why is it important to the community?* It helps the community because they get stuff they need like soap clothes cereal etc...

---

13

*What is one place you chose to include?* Huddle House.

*Why is this place important to you?* It feeds people.

*Why is it important to the community?* It helps with world hunger.

**Appendix D: Participant Conclusion Surveys** (eleven of fourteen participants responding).

Participants were asked to complete the italicized phrases below. Their answers are recorded with their original spelling and grammar.

**Anonymous Survey**

**Reflect on the past 6 weeks of this project. Answer with 1-2 sentences.**

**Participant 1**

*I learned* how to be a better artist.

*I wish that we could be a better a little bit funner.*

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* It is a lot of fun.

**Participant 2**

*I learned* How to use oil pastels

*I wish that we could make it bigger*

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* we need to work together.

**Participant 3**

*I learned* that you can paint on mapps and you don't have to use a lot of paint.

*I wish that we could draw freely and sit wear we want, that is aolne [alone].*

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* it is fun

**Participant 4**

*I learned* to be more creaded [creative].

*I wish that we could have more time in art.*

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* that it is fun.

**Participant 5**

*I learned* createtivity.

*I wish that we could of had more time.*

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think It is amazingly awesome.*

### **Participant 6**

*I learned* how to use oil pastels and what they are.

*I wish that* we could have more meeting.

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* about all the stuff we have to right.

### **Participant 7**

*I learned* That art can be difficult.

*I wish that* we had longer.

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* We need to be accurate.

### **Participant 8**

*I learned* that art doesn't have to be perfect as long as its special to you.

*I wish that* we could have an art class for 7,8, and 6.

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* about the United States and fun stuff.

### **Participant 9**

*I learned* I can draw good

*I wish that* we had more fun with our group

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* It's ok and hard.

### **Participant 10**

*I learned* How to better do art

*I wish that* we had more time

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think* it's fun

### **Participant 11**

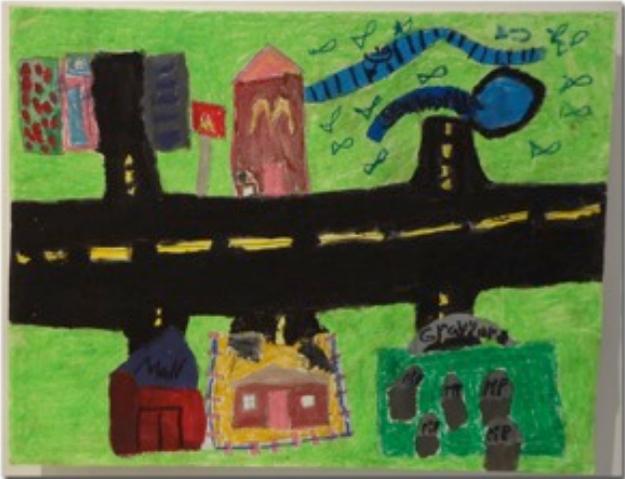
*I learned* Art is Amazing.

*I wish that we did art the rest of the year.*

*When it comes to making maps in art, I think it is cool*

Appendix E. Finished group maps

Girls Group 1





Boys Group 2



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I was raised in South Florida and attended the same small school for grades K through 12, which was the same place where my parents had met after being set up by their colleagues. I grew up with many friends, including my brother and sister as well as twenty first cousins who lived within a two-mile radius of my home.

Only a four-hour drive from my home, Stetson University was far enough North that I saw autumn leaves for the first time during my freshman year in college. While there I worked towards degrees in fine arts and psychology. When outside of class, I free-dived in nearby freshwater springs. I studied for a semester in Hong Kong and spent the following summer backpacking in Southeast Asia.

With my wanderlust stoked, I set out to see more of my home country. After graduation I volunteered with Bike and Build. Cycling an average of 80 miles per day and working at various Habitat for Humanity sites along our cross-country route, I had plenty of time to get to know my fellow cyclist and future husband, Mike. When we crossed the Golden Gate Bridge we knew we would be in one another's lives long beyond that summer..

Before settling in Charleston, I taught Parbatipur, Bangladesh and Buenos Aires, Argentina. In South Carolina I worked as a Family Services Advocate with Head Start.. Though I enjoyed this work, as the children came through my office only briefly in the mornings and afternoons, I realized how greatly I missed teaching and applied for the master's program in art education at UF. My studies have reinforced the importance of art, exploration, and experience in learning. I am enthusiastic to uncover future opportunities in this most adventurous and rewarding career.