

**MORE THAN BOOKS: A CASE STUDY OF ART EDUCATION
PRACTICES IN THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES..... pg. 5

ABSTRACT..... pg. 6

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION pg. 8

CHAPTER 2: SUPPORTING LITERATURE..... pg. 10

CHAPTER 3: METHOD..... pg. 12

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS pg. 15

 Art Education Practice at the Jacksonville Public Library pg. 15

 Art Classes at the Main Library pg. 20

 Family Art Time at the Pablo Creek Library pg. 25

 Caregivers’ Point of View pg. 29

 Focus Group Findings pg. 31

 Public Libraries as Cultural Centers pg. 32

 Projects pg. 33

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION pg. 35

 Conclusion Pg. 37

APPENDIX A: REQUEST PERMISSION LETTER pg.38

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM / INSTRUCTOR..... pg. 39

APPENDIX C: SURVEY QUESTIONS..... pg. 40

APPENDIX D: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS pg. 41

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM / PARTICIPANTS..... pg. 42

APPENDIX F: VOICE & IMAGE RELEASE FORM pg. 43

APPENDIX G: MANUSCRIPT pg. 44

REFERENCES pg. 61

NARRATIVE BIOGRAPHY pg. 63

LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
4.1	pg. 19
4.2	pg. 22
4.3	pg. 22
4.4	pg. 22
4.5	pg. 23
4.6	pg. 24
4.7	pg. 24
4.8	pg. 25
4.9	pg. 25
4.10	pg. 27
4.11	pg. 28
4.12	pg. 30
4.13	pg. 30

Summary of Capstone Project
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Degree of Master of Arts

MORE THAN BOOKS: A CASE STUDY OF ART EDUCATION PRACTICES
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August 2012

Chair: Craig Roland
Major: Art Education

Libraries are cultural centers for the communities they serve: offering free educational programs, performances, classes, lectures, meeting place, in addition to traditional resources for their customers. Visual arts education within public libraries has been overlooked and understudied in the field of art education. With increased budget cuts in public school systems resulting in the reduction of art programs, public libraries have gained popularity within their communities in filling the gap by offering after school art programs as well as including art education within their literacy programs. As an art educator working in a public library, I have firsthand knowledge and experience with this subject. For this capstone project I have conducted research of art education in public libraries by observing my own practice as well as the practice of a colleague at the Pablo Creek branch library of the Jacksonville Public Library.

This project describes how learning and teaching art is conducted in a public library art program through observation and interviews with the facilitators and parents attending these art programs. It also brings awareness to the role of libraries in community-based art education and

gives suggestions for other libraries that may want to follow this example by showing how they can improve or implement art programs and make their institutions a cultural center for their communities. A blog has been created disseminate resources that may help library staff as well as educators who may have an interest for starting a community art program.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

More Than Books: A Case Study of Art Education Practices in the Jacksonville Public Library

Key Words: community-based art education, libraries, art programs, cultural centers, art education in alternative setting.

The world of community-based art education is vast and includes many approaches: public art, community art centers, museums and other cultural organizations outside of the school setting. Primarily focusing on my own practice, this research project intended to reveal the intricate functions of art education in public libraries. I conducted a case study of art education practices in the Jacksonville Public Library, FL, where I serve as an art teacher. I also include observations of a colleague who teaches art at the Pablo Creek Regional Branch Library of the Jacksonville Public Library. I explain how art programs take place at the Jacksonville Public library (JPL) including how such programs benefit the library, the challenges we encounter as art educators in a public library, and interviews with customers who attend these art programs.

Libraries are cultural centers of their communities; offering educational programs, performances and classes as well as more traditional literary resources to their customers. Community-based art education has been studied and its impact measured by several researchers (London, 1994; Congdon, et al, 2001). However, art programs offered in library settings have been overlooked and under-studied. Investigation in community-based art education in a library setting is needed. I'm hoping that this research is the beginning of many explorations into art

education in public libraries not just in the United States, but in other parts of the world as well. This would help art educators realize that art education can be found in many alternative sites outside the public school classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Art education in public libraries has been overlooked and understudied in the world of art education as well as in library science circles. The subject has not been intensively studied. Public librarians have been sharing ideas on library blogs and in library publications, but no in-depth study has been done on art education in a public library setting.

The goal of my case study is to fill this gap by describing my own practices as an art educator working in a public library and by reporting my findings about the impressions of parents and library staff about art education activities offered in public libraries.

Significance of the Study

This case study sheds light on a subject that is poorly studied in the professions of art education and library science, by creating a descriptive account of how learning and teaching art is conducted in a public library program. Through this study, I hope to foster awareness about art education in public libraries. Parents are looking for accessible, inexpensive opportunities to expose their children to the arts. Thus, public libraries have the potential to become more important as a site for art education.

CHAPTER 2

SUPPORTING LITERATURE

Major works have been written on community-based art education, though none focus solely on art education in libraries. Therefore, I reviewed research in the fields of community-based art education and libraries to support my case study.

Libraries are at a turning point in the role they fill in their communities. Digital media is on the rise. Computer use and online accessibility are the most commonly used resources in libraries. Libraries are not just a place to find books. They also fill a role that no other public organizations do: “Libraries remain an integral part of our society’s commitment to education, equity, and access to information” (Hendrix, 2010, p.3). As part as their educational mission, libraries offer a variety of resources, programs and classes to accommodate their customers’ needs. Despite these changes, libraries as we know them now may not survive. They need to adapt, as society’s needs change. Frey and Sloan (2010) observed, “Even though the role and function of what’s happening inside will change, the library itself will remain a powerful entity around which communities will rally” (p. 21).

Public libraries are a neutral place for the community to meet and engage in intellectual exchange; they are free, with no religious affiliations, and open to all regardless of race, socioeconomic background, age or gender (McCabe, 2001). “Libraries exemplify democratic freedom and the American belief in the right to knowledge” (Molz & Dain as cited in McCabe, 2001, p. 104). Therefore, it is a likely choice for people in the community to participate in a library program such as an art program, since it takes place in a free learning environment open to everyone.

In this study, I investigated the idea of a public library as a cultural center, looking at library programs and keeping in mind the future of libraries. Most public libraries have auditoriums for performing arts, meeting rooms for civic endeavors and galleries for visual arts exhibitions. This library and cultural center combination is increasing in new library construction. Politicians, library administrators and architects work together, creating spaces that nurture the community's cultural interests (Davies, 1974).

Libraries also offer educational programs where customers can take part in art learning experiences. Since learning can take place in non-school settings (Congdon, Blandy & Bolin, 2001; Gaudelius & Speirs 2002; London, 1994), libraries are at the center of their community's free access to education. In UNESCO's Public Library Manifesto, the importance of art and culture in public libraries is very clearly listed: "providing opportunities for personal creative development; stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people; promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations; providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts" (UNESCO, 1994). With these mission guidelines, libraries should be considered as important participants in the promotion of cultural awareness in their communities.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

For this capstone project, I used a qualitative method of research that reports and reflects on my teaching practice through a descriptive case study. I included in my description another colleague's practice as well. My case study included a reflective practice strategy, involving the examination of my own art teaching practice in the public library in which I work. Questions such as "How do I stay true to myself as an art educator while respecting my teaching philosophy through the challenge of following the library's weekly story-time theme?" and "How do I engage with participants during the art-making?" underline my inquiry about my own practice. I video recorded myself teaching and I kept a descriptive online journal (blog) to document my projects and interaction with participants. I also conducted two focus groups with parents who are customers at the library in which I work and I used surveys to get parents' opinions about art programs in libraries.

Population

The Jacksonville Public library system and the customers who participate in the art programs were the targeted population of this case study. The majority of children who attended art classes during the case study were between age of 18 months to 6 year olds and were accompanied by their caregivers. However the Family Art Time class was open to children ages 18 months to 12 year olds. The demographic of the participants is mixed with different social-economic and cultural backgrounds. Week days, the majority were Caucasian families, but during the weekend there was an increase in African-American families attending classes as well as other ethnic groups. Each library serves a different population and depending on the neighborhood, the libraries' demographic can change drastically. The Main library is located in

downtown Jacksonville and attracts a diverse group of people. Half of the Main library's customers are African-American from a lower income or homeless. This group does not frequently take part in the library's free programs, either be story-time, art classes or other library events. Even when asked to join, they refuse to join. This may be in part due to racial tensions that Jacksonville is still struggling to mend. It may in interesting to look deeper into that issue in relation to art programs in a library setting.

This study focused on two groups of participants; those who are actively participating in an art program at the Jacksonville Public Library, as well are parents who had participated in the past. This last group was contacted via email and some past customers participated in a group discussion.

Secondly, I included in this study a colleague teaching art at the Pablo Creek Regional branch of the Jacksonville Public Library in order, to highlight how art education works in a different public library other than the one in which I work. The demographic at the Pablo Creek Regional library is much different than the Main library. Their customers were mainly Caucasian middle class, stay-at-home mothers and new Spanish speaking immigrants. Only two African-American families were present.

Data Analysis

In my analysis, I first looked at the survey results. Focusing on the quantitative evidence, I made a chart to help me compile the data collected during the survey, placing each answer was on a separate line and adding check marks for each skill or reason mentioned by parents. I followed my analysis by looking for patterns in the answers from the focus group in order to identify common interests within the group.

Limitation of Study

For this case study, I focused on two art-making programs taking place in the children's departments of the Main Library and the Pablo Creek Regional branch library of the Jacksonville Public Library. I did not include any other arts programs happening in different departments of these libraries, nor did I examine other libraries of the Jacksonville Public Library system. There are music, theatre and other cultural programs offered at the Jacksonville Public Library that reinforce the concept of the public library as a cultural center, however these programs have not been part of this descriptive case study.

I did not consult material about art for young children or the effect of art on learning early literacy skills. I realize now, that this would have been beneficial, since the audience during my case study were children under the age of five.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Three major components comprise the findings of this case study. First is the description of how art education is conducted at the Jacksonville Public Library. Second is a summary of parents' views about art programming in public libraries. Third are my insights about the emergence of public libraries as cultural centers for their communities. I will also describe three additional professional projects that accompany this case study. The first project is a manuscript I have written to submit for possible publication in the National Art Education Association's (NAEA) *Art Education* journal. The goal of this manuscript is to share my findings about art education in a public library setting with art educators. The second project is the creation of a blog about art education programming in libraries. The last project is a proposal to present my capstone project at the NAEA's annual convention to be held in Ft Worth, Texas in March 2013.

Art Education Practice at the Jacksonville Public Library

Art-making in public library settings is not a new concept; this case study aims to bring awareness to this phenomena. Many libraries offer art-making activities to their customers (Comito, 2011; Kramer, 2010; Mandel, 2007). However, for the purpose of this case study, I focused on my own practice at the Main Library of the Jacksonville Public Library as well as a colleague who teaches at the Pablo Creek Library. I kept a journal, video recorded my art classes and took photographs as a way of documenting my art practice.

When I was hired at the Jacksonville Public Library in 2005, I was not hired as an art educator, but as a Library Associate. There is no official position for art educators in public libraries. However, I had a supervisor with a vision: he was opening a new library and he wanted the arts to be hand-in-hand with the literacy programs. The new library featured an art room in

the children's department. I was asked to develop and implement art classes to fill the needs of our customers.

Every quarter, I meet with the children's librarians and we go over possible weekly themes which would apply to story-time as well as art-time. When overviewing the potential themes, I keep in mind my teaching philosophy and belief. We usually come to an agreement as a team to complement each other's programs. Sometimes, I'll ask that the focus of a theme be geared towards a certain skill I would like to develop in the art class; other times, I take a challenge of a more difficult theme and try to find a creative project that can be accomplished successfully by young children. I believe young children need to explore art materials and get familiar with them. Frequently, the young children attending my art classes have never been exposed to art materials. I also want children to create to their own abilities, without too much adult intervention. If the theme of story-time is too particular and I don't see how I would be able to engage children's creativity or art exploration, I will ask for the librarian to change the theme or in rare instances, I will diverge from the story-time theme. As an art educator, I think that it is primordial for children to have a chance to be creative in their art-making. Younger ones, 18 to 36 months old, need to be given a chance to explore the art materials and discover for themselves how to use them. I will suggest techniques and ways to use the material, but I always stress to the parent to allow their child to explore art materials in their own way. For example, if we are using paintbrushes and paint, children may want to touch the paint and feel it. Their project may become finger-painting instead, which is a normal reaction for a toddler. I believe the process of art-making is more rewarding to young children than the final project. Parents on the other hand, are the ones I need to convince.

I often align my art projects with the best practices found in the *Every Children Read to Read @ Your Library* manual, and focus on certain skills children will be developing through the art activity. Many public libraries throughout the United States are adhering to the *Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library* initiative from the Public Library Association and the Association of Library Service to Children, both divisions of the American Library Association. This initiative is meant to educate parents and caregivers on pre-literacy skills through library experience. “If the primary adults in a child's life can learn more about the importance of early literacy and how to nurture pre-reading skills at home, the effect of library efforts can be multiplied many times” (Every Child Ready to Read, 2012). These early literacy skills are directly connected with art and art-making processes. For example, we can find in the manual many instances where scribbling or drawing are encouraged to reinforce pre-writing skills. Also, mentioned, is the importance for parents to dialogue with their children about their art; for instance, to ask their children about their drawings. There’s also an emphasis on the development of eye-hand coordination through drawing. In this case, drawing and art serve to develop literacy skills.

During the time period of this case study the children’s department took a programming break from mid-May to mid-June; focusing on school outreaches and planning for the summer programs. There were only two art classes available: *Toddler Art* and *Family Art Time* both on Friday and Saturday mornings. *Toddler Art* is an art class for children ages 18 to 36 months old that starts right after *Busy Bodies*, a twenty-minute story-time gear to children of the same age. *Toddler Art* is followed by *Family Preschool Storytime*, which is a longer story-time for children ages 0 to 5 years old. Some toddlers participate in the *Busy Bodies*, some in *Family Preschool Storytime*. They may start with the art class and follow with story-time or vice-versa. The

morning programs ends with *Family Art Time*, which is meant for the whole family to work together at one art project.

When families come in to the library, they usually come to the children's desk and are asked to take a ticket for each child participating in the art activity. This is the way we keep track of participation. If we run out of tickets, families are asked to wait until room is available and they can join at a later time. Our attendance usually doubles when school is out for the summer; making it difficult to serve everyone at once. Families will go into the library theatre for story-time or spend time reading books while waiting for the art class to start. Once story-time is over and people are trickling out of the theatre, I open the art room door and make a verbal announcement asking children and parents to join us. I stand by the entrance to the art room and collect the tickets as I welcome children and their caregivers. If smocks are needed, I hand them out as children step into the art room. Upon entry, children and caregivers sit down at one of the six tables. Once everyone is in, I move to the front of the room and position myself by the counter. Prior to the art class starting, I arrange the tables with some of the supplies and usually a hint about what we will be making. As everyone is sitting down, I wait a little while for them to settle down and I say: "Good morning everyone!" I will repeat it if people do not answer back. Once I have everyone's attention, I welcome them to the art class, ask them about what they learned in story-time and from their answers I start introducing the art project. If it is *Toddler Art* or there are a lot of toddlers participating in *Family Art Time*, I stress to the caregivers not to do the art for the children, but instead to let the children explore the art materials on their own. The children may not produce something tangible, a *masterpiece* for them to take home by the end of the class, but they will have learned and been exposed to art making nonetheless.

Once I'm done giving instructions for the art project, I go table to table and give each child the last of the art supplies needed for the project, for example, a sheet of paper to make art on or a paintbrush (See Figure 4.1). I also use this time to learn each child's name, or say hello to those I know from previous classes. Children, assisted by their caregivers, create their artworks loosely following my initial guidelines. This is not a regular school setting, and children are not graded on their work. My guidelines are a way of sustaining a common theme and for children to make connections in their learning. Therefore, I will let them explore art freely as long as they are respectful of others and of the art material we are using.



Figure 4.1 Distributing Art Supplies

The caregivers present during the art class have an important role. They assist their child in the art-learning experience. This moment can be as enlightening for the caregiver as for the child. In retrospect, an entire study could be done observing the interaction of parents and their children during this period of collaborative art making. This is a special time where parents and child communicate and share ideas liberally. It's a unique bonding experience that they might

not share outside of the art room, unless they do similar activities at home. Parents discuss colors, shapes, and lines; inquire about their child's art; and make suggestions. This is also a time for parents to interact with each other. It is a socialization period for their children as well as themselves.

As the art making is occurring, I go around the room, asking questions to the children about their art, making suggestions or giving compliments. This interaction is significant to my practice; it is how I connect with the children and their parents. When a child is not following directions, I reassure the parent about the path the child decided to embark. For example, when toddlers start the art class, it is often their first interaction with art materials. They may spend two or three classes emptying the box of markers and putting them back in or taking the tops on and off. Sometimes children's imagination and creativity take over; they want to explore further and might diverge from the original theme or art process. All of these behaviors are normal for an experienced art educator, but might be puzzling for parents. Reassuring parents that their child's exploration is normal helps them understand their child's learning process. This time is also when I make book recommendations, either for the child or the caregiver's enjoyment. Once children are finishing their artworks, I place them in the drying rack, outside the art room and help the children wash their hands at the sink.

Art Classes at the Main Library

On Friday, June 1st 2012, I started this case study at the Main Library. I quickly realized that questioning parents and caregivers during the art class would be quite impossible. The art classes do not last very long due to children's attention span. During the fifteen to twenty minutes of the art activity time, I asked parents to participate in a survey for this case study. From the fifty-two parents that participated in the art classes that day, twenty-eight of them took

the survey and answered open-ended questions. There were nine new parents who had never participated in the art class. At the same time, they have to assist their child in the art-making project. The answers collected were quick and short and I didn't really get the results expected. Therefore I conducted a focus group in the evening for parents to join without their children. The goal of the focus group was to reflect on the role and benefits of art classes in libraries.

On the first day of the case study, the weekly children's library theme was "the Beach." The librarians and I created a book display featuring a beach theme, inciting customers to checkout books so that they can continue to explore the same theme at home. The story-time period that day was also about the beach, using three books and beach-related songs. In art we used white construction paper, oils pastels, glue and colored sands to make beach-inspired creations. The images created by the children could represent beach scenes or something else altogether, as long as they used the sand, their art would have a beach feel. The instructions were simple and guidelines were loose. I really wanted the children to experiment with the colored sand. Some children only used the glue and the sand, whereas others used the oil pastel to draw first and then used the sand to fill in the shapes. (See Figures 4.2-4.4) I asked caregivers to help with the sand, to avoid having the sand colors to mix.



Figure 4.2 Sand Art by Toddler.



Figure 4.3 Butterfly Sand Art.



Figure 4.4 Sand Art Project.

The following day, Saturday June 2nd 2012, a different group of parents and children participated in the art class and I decided to add a new element to the project. I setup two tables

in the back of the classroom with white play sand, paint brushes, and other tools. Children were asked to draw in the sand, to brush the sand, and to make their own creations by moving the sand and revealing the black butcher paper underneath, which I covered the tables with to create a contrast with the white sand (see Figure 4.5).

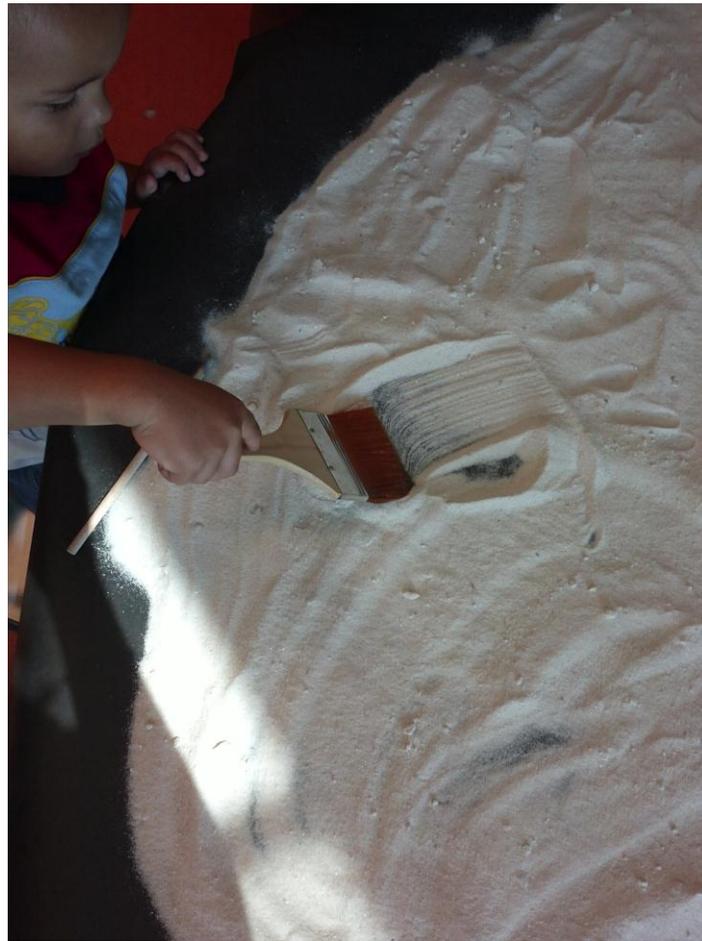


Figure 4.5 Toddler at the Sand Art Table

On June 8 and 9, 2012, the story-time theme was pirates and mermaids. Toddlers decorated pirate hats that they would subsequently wear in story-time. I cut out the hat shapes from construction paper prior to class. Children were handed a hat template and asked to use oil pastels and sequins to embellish their hats. This is a great example to show how I support the story-time theme, as well as allowing children to make their own art. In this instance, giving

them pre-cut hats, is like giving them a piece of paper to draw on. The shape will be useful in story-time, however the art-making process is still the same. For the *Family Art Time* class, children are usually a little bit older, between the ages of 3 to 5 year olds, and are asked to make pictures of a mermaid or pirate. This class is open for the whole family with no age restriction. We had oil pastels to draw with and blue tempera paint to add water to their image. The young artists also had access to scraps of construction paper and sequins if they wanted to add these to their creations. Depending on the age and aptitude of the child, parents were asked to help if they felt like their child needed the help. As the class progressed, children and parents moved around, getting scrap paper, paint, sequins, and so on. This *Family Art Time* project provided a theme, which participants could interpret in the manner that best suited them (See Figures 4.6 & 4.7).



Figure 4.6 Jade, age 5, Mermaid Adventure.



Figure 4.7 Reed, age 4, Pirate Ship.

Father's Day weekend occurred during the final week of my case study. On June 15 and June 16, 2012, children made a metal embossing project that could be offered to their fathers as a gift, instead of making cards for Father's Day. I cut four-inch by six-inch pieces of aluminum tooling foil and laid stacks of newspaper on the table prior to class. This project was conducted the same way in both art classes, *Toddler Art* and *Family Art Time*. The only difference was that

the toddlers' metal embossing arts were mainly scribbles and looked abstract, (see Figure 4.8) compared to the older children who tried to make realistic art (See Figure 4.9). Children used a pencil and drew on the metal, which was positioned on top of a stack of newspaper padding to allow the metal to be tooled. Once children were done with their drawings, they brought their piece of metal to me and I did a patina for them. Since the patina is made with India ink, I didn't want them to do that part in order to avoid messy hands and spills. The metal was then placed on a piece of construction paper that could either be turned into a card or used as a frame.



Figure 4.8. Toddler's Metal Embossing.



Figure 4.9. Caleb, age 6.

Family Art Time at the Pablo Creek Library

Art instructions in a library may or may not be part or in close connection with a literacy program. For example, the *Family Art Time* that my colleague teaches at the Pablo Creek

Regional Library is offered on its own. It is not connected to a literacy program. The art program is set up in the children's library of the Pablo Creek Regional library and always includes a recycled component to the project. This art class is offered once or twice a month, depending on staffing and supplies.

On May 30th, 2012, I went to observe the art instruction provided by a colleague at the Pablo Creek Regional library. I had asked her supervisors, in an email, the permission to conduct this research study at their library branch (Appendix A). That day, the teacher presented an art project that involved the use of recycled Styrofoam pieces salvaged from computer packaging. These pieces were twisted, cut and reassembled by the art instructor and placed on tables around the children's library (See Figure 4.10). The tables were lined with newspaper, paints and paintbrushes. Parents and children gathered at the tables and sat in front of a Styrofoam structure. When I arrived, the art instructor was still setting up the tables and welcoming participants as they were arriving. Once it was time to start, she walked around the room and rang little bells to get everyone's attention. She welcomed everyone for coming and proceeded to give the instructions for the art project. About twenty families with children mostly under the age of four participated in the art class. Caregivers and children started using the paintbrushes and paint that were already set at the tables and started to paint the structures in front of them, before the instructor was done explaining the project (See Figure 4.11). The children's library's tables were setup in two different parts of the room, with a bookshelf splitting the room in two. This created a separation in the dynamic of the class. Not all the instructions carried over to the other side of the room and some of the participants missed valuable information. The art instructor made connections between the art project and early literacy practices from the *Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library*. These early literacy practices are presented to parents and caregivers as

part of the American Library Association initiative to get children ready for school and to show how public libraries reinforce pre-literacy skills in their story-time and art time.



Figure 4.10 Twisted Styrofoam Structures.



Figure 4.11 Children Painting Recycled Styrofoam.

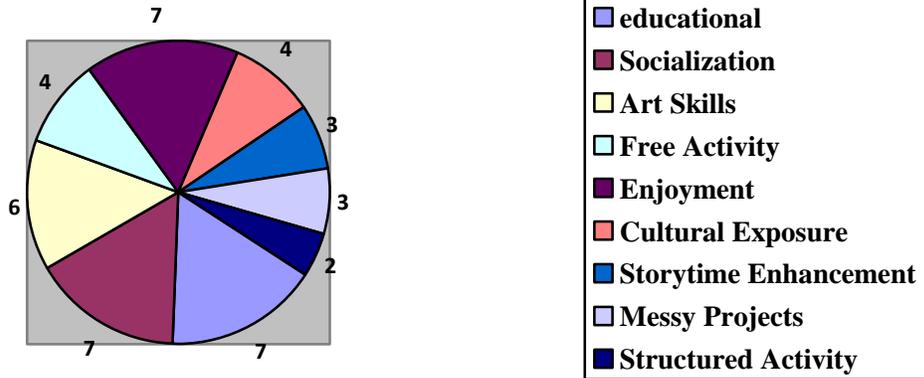
As the art class progressed, the art instructor interacted with the children and caregivers, making comments about their art and suggestions about how to apply the paint. At the same time, I asked parents some questions to help me further my understanding of their participation. These questions included: Why do they bring their child to the art programs at the library? What do they like about it? How often do they come? How else do they use the library? The caregivers were happy to answer. However, this was in the middle of an art activity, where they had to watch and assist their young children, so the answers were kept short. About five parents didn't know there was an art time at the library, they had stumbled upon it. The others knew and regularly attend the art activities at the Pablo Creek Regional branch. They had participated in the past and enjoy the art instructor's creativity and passion for art. Parents felt that their children were gaining an experience that wouldn't have been possible otherwise. When I asked them if they did art projects at home, most of them answered yes, but the projects were not as creative or involved. The art projects executed at home were basic.

Caregivers' Point of View

Listening to the caregivers helped me understand why they choose to take part in an art program in the Jacksonville Public Library, either at the Main branch or at the Pablo Creek branch. I identified a few reoccurring themes in the answers collected in my survey (Appendix C) given to caregivers at the Main Library on June 1st, 2012, and in answers to my open-ended questions asked during *Family Art Time* at Pablo Creek branch on May 30th, 2012 (Appendix D). Three main reasons given by parents for participating in the art programs offered at the library surfaced: socialization, education, and artistic enjoyment (see Table 4.12). Twenty-eight caregivers participated in the survey and question period; all of them agreed that their child was learning skills from the art program offered in the library. These skills ranged from sharing, developing fine motor skills to learning colors, shapes and patterns (See Table 4.13). Since the Main Library offers art classes after a story-time, I asked parents if they participated in both library programs or just the art program. Three parents said they come just for the art programs whereas twenty-five parents come for both story-time and the art classes.

Table 4.12

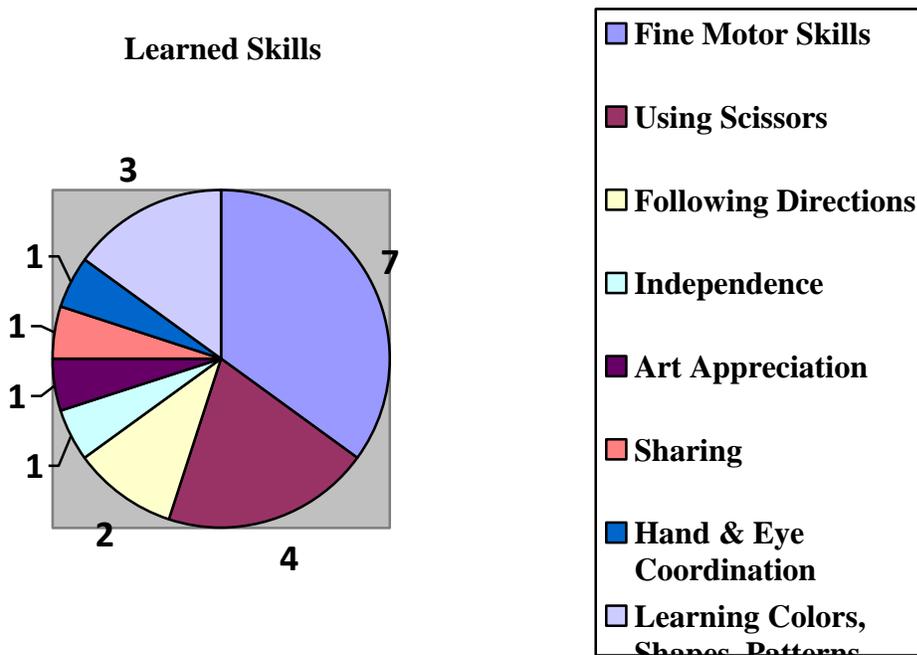
Reasons Why Parents Bring their Children to an Art Activity in a Library.



Note. Twenty-eight caregivers participated in the survey.

Table 4.13

Learned Skills



Note. Twenty-eight caregivers participated in the survey.

Some caregivers choose to participate in the art classes with their children because they believed that it is the only art exposure their children will get. Most of the parents I interviewed at the Pablo Creek branch were stay-at-home mothers. They use the library as a social outlet for their both children and themselves, whether these social outlets were an art class, story-time, or just a visit to the library for reading books and meeting other families.

Focus Group Findings

Asking questions of parents during an art activity was not easy, since the children are young and need assistance. So I decided to conduct a focus group discussion about art in public libraries outside of the normally scheduled class time. I used the same open-ended questions I had asked during the art class (Appendix D). Seven parents came to the focus group. They signed a University of Florida IRB consent form (Appendix E) and a voice/image release form as well (Appendix F). We started the conversation about the library and why they use the library. The questions also asked what resources they use, how often they go to the library, and related kinds of questions. Interesting information emerged from this hour-long discussion. For one thing, parents reported that they bring their children to the library so that the children can be exposed to people from different social-economic and cultural backgrounds. Parents at the focus group as well as parents who took the survey said they had stumbled upon the art programs at the library rather than coming to the library specifically for art programming. Through their interest in the story-time, they discovered it was followed by an art activity. When asked how they used the library and what library resource they use, most of them had attended workshops, concerts, and movies. Parents reported that they attend these because they are both free and high quality programs, either for them or for their child. We discussed the idea of a public library serving as a cultural center for their community. Participants had never thought of the library as a cultural

center *per se*, but agreed that the library had been filling that role for them. An emphasis on the arts, learning opportunities and other cultural enrichment opportunities will continue to be important for the community.

Public Libraries as Cultural Centers

The idea of a public library being a cultural center is not a new one (Davies, 1974). Mentioned earlier in this paper, UNESCO's Public Library Manifesto states that a public library's mission should include offering cultural events, performing arts, creative outlets, and educational opportunities as well as literacy programs. It is not surprising then to find public libraries embracing the arts to better serve their communities. During this case study, the imminence of a library as a cultural center emerged from the discussion in the focus group. Participants in the two focus groups listed several different cultural activities they had partaken in the past in a public library. They also compared the different public libraries they had used over the years, discussed what they had to offer, and added what they hoped libraries could offer in the future, listing programming such as theatre play, classes, concerts, movie showings, art shows, and so on. Participants drew their own conclusion about how libraries might indeed be at the center of the community in offering cultural programs for everyone to participate in. For example, one parent observed, "The library provides a free venue to take part in book discussions and lectures and music programs. It doesn't seem like there are too many other places to find these things for free."

It is clear from both the literature and from my study findings that the public library is a free-choice learning environment, where books, exhibitions and performances can arouse one's creativity. Unlike other institutions, public libraries do not focus on one art, but all of the arts as well as crafts. Some public libraries have embraced the role of cultural leaders in

their communities and include a cultural center within their walls. The Vacaville Public Library in California, Seaford Library and Cultural Center in Delaware, Free Public Library and Cultural Center of Bayonne in New Jersey, are great examples of successful public libraries and cultural centers combination. On the other hand, with the technology so rapidly changing and more electronic media being present in libraries, libraries now find that they need to reinvent themselves again and find yet another way of offering resources and programming to community members (Frey & Sloan, 2010).

Projects

The goal of this capstone project was to increase awareness of the emerging role of art education in public libraries. My case study of the art education practices in the Jacksonville Public Library offers some descriptions of how art learning takes place. To help achieve my goal, I wrote a manuscript (Appendix G) on my library art education program to submit for publication in the journals of professional association. Additionally, I submitted a proposal for presenting my research to the National Art Education Association 2013 annual conference to be held in Fort Worth, Texas. Lastly, I started a blog *Art in the Stacks* www.artinthestacks.wordpress.com where I share ideas about art projects and describe a few of the art classes I offer at the Main Library of the Jacksonville Public Library.

I will submit my manuscript to the journal *Art Education* as well as the *Library Journal*. Each journal reaches a different professional audience with their own background and interests. I feel each professional group would benefit from learning about art education practices in public libraries. My manuscript describes how art education takes place in the Jacksonville Public Library. It also explores the notion of a library as a cultural center for the local community. My

blog is an ongoing project that will help me grow in my professional development as an art educator working in a public library of a large metropolitan city.

The blog not only provides a venue for me to share art projects, ideas and opinions about art, libraries and education, but it also allows me to look back at my education practice. It serves as a visible informal chronicle, accessible to everyone online, illustrating my art teaching practice in a library setting. I'm hoping this blog will be resourceful to others who also teach art in a library setting. I wish to share ideas with them and hope to create a community of creative people working in libraries. I also hope that art educators working in other settings will find my blog inspiring and useful. So far, I have written on the blog about once a week. I'm sharing the art projects we have made, giving instructions for people to follow and be able to reuse my art education ideas in their own library or elsewhere.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Art education programming is happening in many public libraries throughout the United States and the world. It is not unique to Jacksonville, Florida. The degree in which the art programs are offered in libraries varies greatly. In some libraries the art programs are non-existent; in some libraries there are partnerships with cultural organizations in the community; in others they rely on the library staff to offer art-making programs on their own. The quality of the instruction may vary as well. In some libraries pre-made craft kits are used to compliment literacy programs, like a story-time hour. These craft kits give confidence to the library staff instructing the “craft time,” especially if the instructor does not have an art background. When describing such projects, Agostinone-Wilson (2001) says, “the projects are so simplified that literally anybody can do them” (p. 84). Craft kits can be purchased or created by the librarian using templates. Craft kits usually include a “how to assemble” the project, leaving little to no room for creativity or the development of art skills. In other libraries, such as mine, an art educator with professional experience in the discipline develops and offers the art programming.

Public libraries don't always have time to evaluate their own programs, art making or others. Setting a set of guidelines for art making in a public library that would follow the *Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library* best practices or state standards for school-aged children, would be beneficial for libraries to look back and evaluate their art programs. Since a major emphasis is placed on promoting pre-literacy skills at the library, why not make sure it is done appropriately?

Further inquiry is needed to fully comprehend the quality of art education taking place in public libraries, as well as to describe the effect art education in libraries have on their

community. Inquiries should also include the performing arts as they play an important role in the community as well. Studies are needed to further explore the strengthening of mission of libraries as cultural centers, where the community converges to find literature, performances, lectures, concerts, art exhibitions and classes. This growing role of the public library as community center should be considered for a future path for libraries to survive through the digital age transformation.

This case study brought my questions to life and further studies will both extend these questions and raise new ones: Why do public libraries offer art-making activities? How important is the art-making in a library in support of the pre-literacy skills? How can libraries become cultural centers? What are the needs of the community in relation to the arts? These are a just a few questions that can guide future, more in-depth studies of art education in public libraries.

CONCLUSION

The goals of my case study were to foster awareness of art education programming in a public library setting and to give a descriptive account of how art instruction is conducted in one public library. This study focused specifically on what the Jacksonville Public Library offers as art education programs. Part of this capstone project was to share my experience as an art educator in a public library setting through a blog, writing a manuscript for publication for the journal *Art Education*, and submitting a proposal to present at the 2013 National Art Education Association annual conference.

Most importantly, this case study has helped me reflect on my own teaching practice; by getting feedback from the parents and colleagues, and by observing more closely my own actions

in the classroom through my review of a video recording of me teaching. I was able to reflect and think on how I stay true to myself as an art educator while respecting my teaching philosophy through the challenge of following the library's weekly story-time theme. Looking back at the video, I observed my action while interacting with participants. I was able to amend my future engagement, to make sure I spend equal time with everyone, giving positive feedback to all, not just the few who requested my attention.

I hope that this study will both help expose the efforts public libraries put into art classes for children, teens and adults, and that it will inspire other libraries to see the possibilities in growing toward a cultural center for their community.

APPENDIX A

Request for Permission Letter

Dear Carol Bailey & Peggy Crawford,

I'm a student at University of Florida and I am working on my MA thesis in Art Education, which focuses on art programs in Florida libraries. I'm interested in observing an art programs your library offers: Family Art Time, on Wednesday May 30th at 11:00am. It will require me to observe, document (using photographs, notes, audio or video taping) and share information about your library's art programing with my professors as well as with my colleagues in and fellow art educators.

My photographs and video taping are for my research purpose only. I will keep patrons identity confidential and will not film or photograph their faces. All information collected will be used only for educational purposes only and will result in publication.

Thank you for considering my request.

Marie Andree Myers
354 west 7th street
Jacksonville, FL 32206
(904) 755-4822
marieandree@ufl.edu

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent / Art Instructors

Protocol Title: Libraries Are not Just for Books; A Descriptive Study of Art Education Practices in the Jacksonville Public Library

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this case study is to provide a description of the art programs offered at the Jacksonville Public Library.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Answer a few questions about the art program you offer at the Jacksonville Public Library.

Time required: about 15 minutes

Risks and Benefits: No risks are foreseen in this study. The benefit is to bring awareness to art education in library setting.

Compensation: no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential. The researcher will not refer to you by your real name and if needed a fictitious name will be assigned to you. This information will only be used by the researcher for the purpose of this case study and nothing else. Researcher may use still photo and video recording of the group art session. The purpose is to capture children and parents making art.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Marie Myers, UF graduate student, Masters in Art Education, 354 west 7th Street, Jacksonville, FL 32206. Cell Phone: 904-755-4822. Email: marieandree@ufl.edu

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study: IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

Agreement: I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Survey Questions

Please answer these questions:

1) How often do you attend art programs at the Main Library, Jacksonville Public Library?

4 or more times a month 2-3 times a month Once a month

Every other month

Or specify: _____

2) Do you come just for art or to participate in both story-time and art?

Art program only

Art program and story-time

3) How many children do you have? _____

How old are your children

0 – 2 2 – 3 3 – 5 6 – 12

4) Do you feel your children learning skills in the art program?

Yes No

5) Any comments on the art programs you have attended at the Main Library?

APPENDIX D

Open-ended Questions

Questions for art instructor:

- What is your art background?
- How much creative freedom do you allow in your art program?
- What pre-literacy skills do you feel you are teaching in your art program?
- What are children and parents taking away from the art program?

Questions for parents:

- Why do you bring your child to the art program at the library?
- Do you bring your child to other cultural venues? Which ones?
- What skills have your child acquire since coming to the art program?
- Do you do art activities at home with your child?

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent for Participants (Parents)

Protocol Title: Libraries Are not Just for Books; A Descriptive Study of Art Education Practices in the Jacksonville Public Library

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this case study is to provide a description of the art programs you are attending at the Jacksonville Public Library.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Answer a few questions about the art program you are attending at the Jacksonville Public Library.

Time required: about 15 minutes

Risks and Benefits: No risks are foreseen in this study. The benefit is to bring awareness to art education in library setting.

Compensation: no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential. The researcher will not refer to you by your real name and if needed a fictitious name will be assigned to you. This information will only be used by the researcher for the purpose of this case study and nothing else. Researcher may use still photo and video recording of the group art session. The purpose is to capture children and parents making art.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Marie Myers, UF graduate student, Masters in Art Education, 354 west 7th Street, Jacksonville, FL 32206. Cell Phone: 904-755-4822. Email: marieandree@ufl.edu

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study: IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

Agreement: I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F



**City of Jacksonville, Florida
Voice and Image Release Form**

I hereby grant to the City of Jacksonville, its respective licensees, successors and assigns (herein collectively called the "Licensed Parties"), the right to perpetually use, publish and copyright my name, voice, picture, portrait, likeness, occupation and testimonial in all media for the City of Jacksonville.

I understand there will be no monetary compensation for my participation in any advertising or promotion.

I understand that nothing herein obligates the Licensed Parties to use my name, voice, picture, portrait, likeness, occupation and testimonial in any advertising or promotion.

I release the Licensed Parties from any liability or damages resulting from the use of my name, voice, picture, portrait, likeness, occupation and testimonial in the manner described herein.

Printed Name of Subject: _____

Signature: _____
(signature of parent or guardian if subject is under 18 years of age.)

Date: _____

Daytime Telephone Number : _____

Questions – contact: Marie A. Myers, Main Library / Children’s Department, 904-630-2417
mmyers@coj.net or marieandree@ufl.edu

APPENDIX G

Manuscript

More Than Books:

Public Libraries as an Alternative Setting for Art Education

When people think of a public library, they usually picture an old dusty building with rows and rows of books and a stern librarian with her finger to her lips, motioning for silence. However, public libraries have transformed themselves since those archaic days, adapting to an ever-evolving society. Many public libraries today are at the center of their communities, offering educational classes, concerts, theatre plays, children's programs and other entertainment resources. According to UNESCO, "information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of public library services" (UNESCO, 1994). Therefore, it is not surprising to find more and more cultural events and classes in public libraries. To accomplish this mission, some libraries partner with local cultural centers, museums, artists, musicians, and so on; while others carefully select their employees to create a diverse staff that are able to offer cultural programs within their own organization. One such cultural offering that has been overlooked and under-studied in the field of art education, is art classes offered in libraries. Using my own experience as an art educator with the Jacksonville Public Library system in Florida, I will shed some light on art education in public libraries and the role it plays in the community.

The Changing Role of Public Libraries

Public libraries are at a turning point in the role they fill in their communities. Digital media is on the rise; computer use and online accessibility are the most commonly used resources in public libraries. They are no longer just a place to find books; they also fill a role

that no other public organization can by remaining “an integral part of our society’s commitment to education, equity, and access to information” (Hendrix, 2010, p.3). As part of their educational purpose, public libraries offer a variety of resources, programs and classes to accommodate their customers’ needs. Public libraries as we know them now are not going to survive if they do not adapt as our society’s needs change. Frey and Sloan (2010) wrote, “Even though the role and function of what’s happening inside will change, the library itself will remain a powerful entity around which communities will rally” (p. 21). Public libraries are a neutral place for the community to meet and engage in intellectual exchange; they are free, with no religious affiliations, and open to all regardless of race, socioeconomic background, age or gender (McCabe, 2001). “Libraries exemplify democratic freedom and the American belief in the right to knowledge” (Molz & Dain, as cited in McCabe, 2001, p. 104). Therefore, it is a likely choice for people in the community to participate in a library’s art class, since it is a free-choice learning environment open to everyone.

Local Partnerships

Public libraries often partner with galleries, art centers and more commonly museums to offer free art program outreaches to children (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2004). They also create ongoing partnerships designed around common goals for the library and museum. For example, the Enoch Pratt Free Library and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore worked together to design “...an early childhood area for children from birth to age five and their families as a critical element of two major family events using shared expertise of the collaborative entities” (Riordan & Blumenthal, 2010). When public libraries have artists and art educators on staff to ensure that ongoing and high quality art programs are available to their customers, the library is best able to support its mission and goal. The Jacksonville Public Library [JPL] in Jacksonville, Florida, is

one such library system.

An Art Educator in a Public Library

When I was hired with the Jacksonville Public Library seven years ago, I was not hired as an art educator, but as a Library Associate. There is no official position for art educators in public libraries. However, I had a supervisor with a vision. He was opening a new library and he wanted the arts to occur hand-in-hand with the literacy programs. The new library featured an art room in the children's department. I was asked to develop and implement art classes to fill the needs of our customers.

As an art educator working in a public library, I experience many of the same challenges that plague art educators in schools: budget decreases, precariousness of employment, and having to wear many hats. However, there are differences in my job, as compared to art education programming in K-12 schools. I do not have to worry about adhering state or national standards or advocating for the importance of arts in public schools to justify my job as a an art teacher.. But I do have to support my own library's mission, align my art lessons with the library's weekly story-time theme, and adapt my art projects to the various age ranges and abilities of participants in attendance in my classes. I also have to accomplish duties aligned to me that are outside of my art education expertise. I recommend books for children, help with their research or projects, checkout books, create book displays, make reading lists, present outreach programs to schools and child care centers, and design and present during my library's story-time events and the many other programs that might draw in new customers.

Like museums, public libraries are an informal learning environment where visitors can choose their own path and follow their learning interest (Mayer, 2012). Therefore, working in a public library can be similar to working in a museum in that you need to sustain your visitors'

interest and make their visit enjoyable to ensure their return and their support your organization. In my job at the library, it also feels like a retail environment at times. Public libraries have made a shift in referring to their visitors or patrons as customers. Patrons are people who donate to the library, whereas customers are who we serve. We cater to our customers, constantly promoting our services and merchandising our materials in hopes of increasing our circulation statistics. As a city-funded public organization, we are also accountable to the residents of Jacksonville. We are entrusted with the City's finances and must find increasingly inventive ways to stretch ever decreasing budget dollars as far as they can go, even as we see continually increasing usage of library resources, from computers to children's programs. We have to do much more with much less, but isn't that what art educators do best?

The Art Classes

I teach children ages 18 months to 14 years old and their caregivers. The JPL policy prohibits parents from leaving younger children unattended. Since parents must accompany their children, I am allowed direct interaction with the parents and can teach them about art and creativity skills right alongside their children. I teach six different art classes a week, each geared for four different age groups, for a total of about nine classes per week. On average, about two hundred children and parents attend the JPL art programs weekly during the school year. During the summertime, art program attendance doubles. There is no fee associated with any of the programs the library offers. For art supplies, we rely on recycled materials donated by parents, along with some basic art supplies purchased with library budget funds or funds from the Friends of the Library, a volunteer organization that supports the Jacksonville Public Library initiatives.

When I teach art to toddlers (18 to 36 months old), I focus on exploration and experimentation with art supplies. Most of children who come to the library have never been

exposed to any art-making process. It seems to me that parents are afraid of messy activities or simply do not know what to do with their toddlers when it comes to art. I want these toddlers to experience art on their own terms, with their parents' assistance. Parents are asked not to do the project for their children, but to encourage, assist their children's exploration. I ask parents to assume the role of co-pilot (e.g, see Figure 1). Some toddlers jump right into the art-making process without hesitation; while others might look and touch, but not make a "mark" for a few classes, until they become comfortable in this strange, new environment.

I was reluctant at first to start an art class for toddlers, not really knowing what I was getting myself into. In my training as an art educator, the focus had been placed on art education for grades K-12 schools. But I was surprisingly delighted with the interaction I had with toddlers and their parents at the JPL. This *Toddler Art* program at JPL has been very successful and we now offer this class three times a week paired with a story-time for toddlers. We believe that teaching art to toddlers builds a foundation needed for reading and writing. Children acquire several pre-literacy skills, such as recognizing written symbols and learning to differentiate between shapes, numbers and letters; as well as developing fine motor skills by using art supplies. For me, I am laying a foundation for creative self-expression and art making skills as well.

Preschoolers (3-5 years olds) come to two different art programs at JPL. One is geared to their age group, the other is for the whole family to participate in and may require some help from adults. The preschool story-time reading is always a precursor to the art making, setting the scene for weekly theme derived from the literature being highlighted by the library. In the art room, we review what the children have learned in story-time and finish by explaining the art project I envisioned for them. Children are always welcome to explore the boundaries of art

within the highlighted theme and I ask parents to encourage inquisitiveness in their children's art, even if they seem to wander outside of the day's theme or art project's scope (e.g, see Figure 2 & 3).

Additionally, I offer an art class for school-aged children. This program occurs after school and is set-up as a more traditional art class. In this class, children learn art appreciation and art history followed by an art-making project. We also have a partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Jacksonville, which is located next door to the library. Once a quarter, I take the children to visit the museum's galleries as part of the art curriculum. This art class gives an opportunity to children who do not have any or enough art education in their school to learn about, appreciate, and make art.

Adult Art Programming at the Library: *Books as Art*

In the Fall of 2011, I offered a series of art appreciation and art-making classes for teens and adults surrounding the theme of books in art (e.g, see Figure 4). We focused on four major aspects of art making in which artists used books as a source of inspiration or a raw material for their artworks. Their art works could be installation art, sculpture, photography and altered books. We met once a week for two hours each, for four consecutive weeks. The Lessons included an introduction to contemporary artists, book artists and their art. I used discarded books from the library's collection as art materials for the participants to use. We also had open discussions about books, libraries and art; sharing ideas about the future of libraries in the digital age. The idea of a library as a cultural center emerged from those discussions. Many of the participants had been benefiting from the library's free programs throughout their lives; enjoying music concerts, lectures, art classes, theatre plays, etc. Not only did they see the library as an

enjoyable place to learn and be entertained, they also wished the library would have a bigger impact within the cultural community.

Case Study of Art Education at the Jacksonville Public Library

I conducted a short case study on my teaching practice at JPL as part of a capstone project for my Master of Arts in Art Education at the University of Florida. In this case study, I interviewed parents and asked their opinions about the art classes offered at the library. I wanted to know why they were participating in these art classes with their children instead of at another cultural institution, like a museum or community art center. I was also curious to know if they took part of the art program because of a literacy program that was scheduled before or after the art classes. I identified a few reoccurring themes in the answers collected in my survey given to caregivers on June 1st, 2012, and in answers to my open-ended questions during the art classes. Three main reasons given by parents for participating in the art programs offered at the library surfaced: socialization, education, and artistic enjoyment (see Table 1). Twenty-eight caregivers participated in the survey; all of them agreed that their children were learning skills from the art program offered in the library. These skills ranged from sharing, developing fine motor skills to learning colors, shapes and patterns (See Table 2). Since the Main Library offers art classes after a story-time, I asked parents if they participated in both library programs or just the art program. Three parents said they come just for the art programs whereas twenty-five parents come for both story-time and the art classes.

Some Concluding Thoughts: Why Teach Art in a Public Library?

Many public libraries throughout the United States are adhering to the *Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library* initiative from the Public Library Association & the Association of Library Service to Children, both divisions of the American Library Association. This initiative

is meant to educate parents and caregivers on pre-literacy skills. “If the primary adults in a child's life can learn more about the importance of early literacy and how to nurture pre-reading skills at home, the effect of library efforts can be multiplied many times” (Every Child Ready to Read, 2012). These early literacy skills are directly connected with art and art-making process. Looking at images in a story book, pointing out different illustrations while reading a book to children, and letting children draw after story-time are all art activities promoting early literacy. Art is just the perfect match in early childhood literacy.

Libraries are a hub for after-school activities for children. Many spend their entire afternoons and sometimes evenings there. Library staff plan activities for the children and expose them to cultural programs like book clubs, animé clubs, art classes, drama classes, music club, even culinary arts classes (Comito, 2011; Kramer, 2010; Mandel, 2007). As the arts are pushed further and further aside in schools to allow more time for standardized tests, parents will seek alternatives to fill the cultural education gap in schools (e.g, see Figure 5). In their article “Art All Day: Distinction and Interrelation of School-Based and Out-of-School Arts Learning”, Green and Kindseth stress the importance of out-of-school arts learning opportunities for students. The authors argue that after school programs help students develop creative skills, self-efficacy, and passion for learning (Green & Kindseth, 2011). Since public libraries are open to everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, gender or cultural background, they offer the perfect setting to provide out-of-school arts learning. It is a democratic learning environment where anyone is welcome to partake.

Of course, not all public libraries offer art programs to their customers. The library’s Director and Board of Trustees have to be supportive of these endeavors, similar to what art educators might find in a school setting. If the administration is not supportive of the arts, they

tend to disappear. However, the emerging trend in public library administrations is to support and develop pre-literacy skills in young children and grow life-long readers.

Conclusion

Public libraries are more than books. This essay has shed some light on art programs offered in public libraries by giving a descriptive account of the art programs I offer at the Jacksonville Public Library. Many public libraries throughout the United States and elsewhere offer similar art programs. What is the importance of art education in a public library setting? Why do people attend art classes in a public library instead of other organizations? These are questions that can be answered through an extensive study of this phenomenon. Further investigation is needed to fully comprehend the role public libraries play in the world of art education and the impact on the communities they serve. I also see many opportunities for more collaboration between school art, history, English, social studies and science programs and libraries. Of course, I would argue that all of these subjects may be engaged in an arts-based interdisciplinary manner in a library program. The next time you go in to your public library, ask about the art programs they offer. You may be in for a surprise.

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Figures



Figure 1. Rosemary, age 2, practicing her cutting skills. Her mother is watching her.



Figure 2. Jade, age 5, creating a mermaid underwater scene with oil pastel, colored sand and sequins, inspired by the story-time theme of *Pirates and Mermaids*.



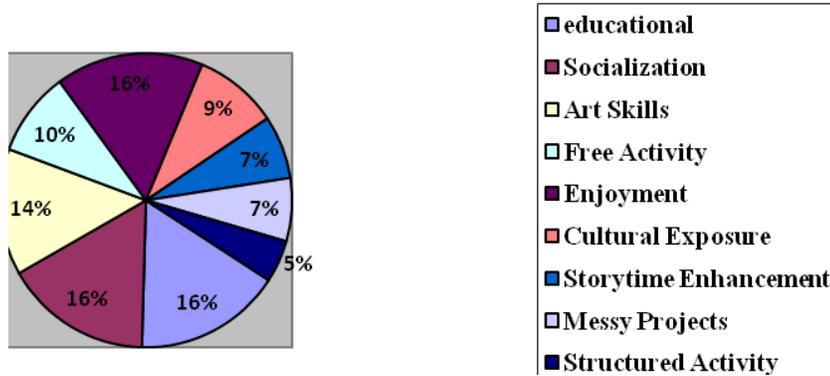
Figure 3. Gabrielle, age 3, making a monoprint with black tempera paint which I rolled on the table. Story-time theme was nighttime.



Figure 5. Building towers during *Creative Lab*, gives the opportunity to children to explore art and creativity very differently than in a school setting.

Table 1

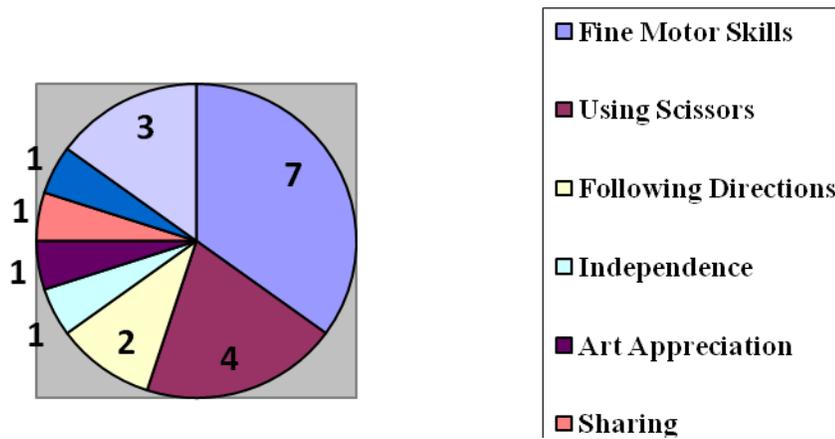
Reasons Why Parents Bring their Children to an Art Activity in a Library.



Note. Survey conducted at the Main Library of the Jacksonville Public Library on June 1st, 2012. Twenty-eight caregivers participated in the survey.

Table2

Learned Skills



Note. Survey conducted at the Main Library of the Jacksonville Public Library on June 1st, 2012. Twenty-eight caregivers participated in the survey.

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NARRATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

After graduating from Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) with a BA in Visual Arts Education, I moved to Jacksonville Florida and worked in diverse educational settings; private schools (children with learning disabilities and regular), museum and library. Coming from a different cultural background, schooling system and educational learning environment gives me a different point of view on art education.

Community-based art education has always been of importance to me. I remember my first art class, or *bricolage* as it was called, which was in a community center. My elementary school didn't have an art educator, therefore art fell on our classroom teachers. The community center gave me an opportunity to explore art with other children who had a similar interest. Unlike a school setting, the majority of children attending the art class were there by choice. The learning experience is much different when everyone in the class is a willing participant.

Working in a museum setting reminded me of those days, when I used to go to the community center. That's when I realized I enjoyed reaching out to the community via museums to teach art. I was recruited to work at the new Main Library in Jacksonville as it was being built. The new layout of the library was including an art room.

Exploring the world of art education in libraries became evident. Working myself in a one, I understand the needs of the organization as well as the needs to the population it serves. For art programs in libraries to be successful, you need a population to support it.