

CRITICAL THEORY AND PRESERVICE ART EDUCATION: ONE ART
TEACHER EDUCATOR'S JOURNEY OF EQUIPPING
ART TEACHERS FOR INCLUSION

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This qualitative action research study examines how critical theory defined and guided my practice as an art teacher educator while I provided inclusion training for seven preservice art teachers during their student teaching. Sources of data included a personal journal, the inclusion curriculum I created for the preservice teachers and questionnaires and interviews. Primary findings indicated that critical theory had a substantive impact on the evolving development of my teaching philosophy, in particular my attention to issues of power redistribution in the classroom and my developing notion of teaching as form of artistry. The findings of this study also indicate that the primary impact of critical theory upon the preservice teachers was the articulation of their personal narratives and its relation to the development of their teaching identities. Further, mentoring these preservice art teachers in critical theory increased their competence in solving educational dilemmas. A primary finding of this study was how significant of a role the supervising or mentor teacher plays in developing preservice teachers' identity. As this is acknowledged, valued and utilized, more collaborative relationships among these stakeholders in the education of the preservice art teacher can be forged. The study provides implications for art teacher educators as they provide inclusion training to preservice teachers. These include honoring narratives, articulating a broader notion of inclusion, and using context-specific instructional tools while preservice teachers are completing fieldwork with students with disabilities. One suggestion for future research is to conduct longitudinal studies which explore and validate the impact of critical theory upon art teacher educators and preservice art teachers during the student teaching semester and several years beyond.

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This work is dedicated to my loving family. I honor the life and legacy of my mother, Rebecca Yeager, who taught me what it means to long for and endeavor that all people be treated justly. I also dedicate this work to the two most important men in my life, my father, Robert Yeager and my husband, Justin Allison.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Inclusion is fact in the art classrooms of today (Loesl, 1999). The fullest participation of students with disabilities in all aspects of school life is not an ideal; it is a federal requirement (see Public Law 94-142). However, many art teachers lack resources, knowledge, and support as they strive to create inclusive learning environments. Preservice training in inclusion occurs intermittently and without any one well-researched approach. This is an issue that needs to be addressed insofar as it impacts the emotional, cognitive, and social learning of students with disabilities in art. Some art teachers disagree with the practice of inclusion, revealing a hostile, discriminatory attitude toward students with disabilities (Loesl, 1999). Consider this high school art teacher's response to inclusion: "the best thing you can do for me is to get them (students with disabilities) out of my building and we won't have to deal with this at all!" (Loesl, 1999, p. 56). These attitudes affect the child with a disability and his or her peers. Some art teachers do not believe that a comprehensive art curriculum that includes art history, art production, aesthetics, and criticism activities is relevant or accessible to students with disabilities. In many instances, art teachers end up providing a different, often less substantive curriculum for the student with a disability. Consider Pappalardo's (1999) finding:

Many art teachers have stated that they entered art education to teach art, aesthetics, criticism, color theory, and a host of other "art appreciation" issues; not sit and color all day with students who are oral with their materials or whose behaviors are completely inappropriate for an art class. Some say that 'those students' will never be able to do more than scribble and be disruptive. (p. 56)

While not all art teachers have similar beliefs, many honestly struggle with how to ensure that students with disabilities are making gains in art commensurate with their abilities. Witten (1991) states: “Many art teachers are currently challenged to teach aesthetics to children experiencing mental retardation, studio to children experiencing physical disabilities, art history to children who cannot see the images, and criticism to children who have difficulty reading and writing” (p. 32).

Art teachers are in need of support and resources as they seek to provide successful learning experiences for students with disabilities in the art class. Teacher preparation programs often provide coursework in disability awareness because of state and federal requirements, but such training often entails one survey course on various disabilities that is offered to all education majors by the special education department in a university. The nature of these courses often prohibits deep understanding of specific disabilities (Gaetano, 2006). The curricula for these courses aim to provide students with an introduction to disability and do not typically address how to adapt or modify learning experiences in the art classroom. To address this need, some art teacher educators have designed courses that address disability in the art classroom (Andrus, 2001; Carrigan, 1994; Federenko, 1996; Keifer-Boyd and Kraft, 2003; Nelms, 1990). If such a course was required, some faculty have surmised that they and other higher educators might feel unprepared to teach a course in an area in which they do not have expertise (M. Mayer, personal communication, August 2004). And though such courses are becoming increasingly popular, there still exists a tenor of unpreparedness among art teachers with regard to inclusion.

A Personal Narrative

I have spent the past six years investigating how to prepare art teachers to instruct students with disabilities. The catalyst for my research interest was my experience as an art teacher in Shreveport, Louisiana, from 1996-2001. I entered into my first teaching job with a lack of personal experience and knowledge of disability. The undergraduate art education program I completed did not address how to modify instruction for students with disabilities. I was shocked to learn that over ten percent of the students enrolled in my classes experienced disabilities such as mental retardation, emotional and behavioral disorders, autism, traumatic brain injury, and cerebral palsy. These students had emotional, physical, and cognitive needs that I did not know how to meet—needs which made it difficult for me to provide appropriate art instruction for each student. Many of these middle school students were in the scribble stages of drawing development, causing much of my curriculum to be completely inaccessible to them. I remember feeling that I was an ineffective teacher each time I began a new art project such as linoleum printing, still life drawing, or papier-mâché sculpture, but handed the students with severe disabilities crayons and paper. I knew this was not an appropriate modification; however, I did not know what else to do. It was rare that an aide accompanied these students, although in instances where they did, I did not know how to direct the aide to assist the student. Many of my students experienced multiple disabilities and often could not grasp a drawing instrument or speak. The aides seemed more like the students in my class because they frequently created the art projects themselves, and the students were minimally involved in the process. Ashamedly, I never corrected this practice because I reasoned that at least the student was receiving individual attention, something that I could not provide.

I regularly consulted the administration and special education staff at my school for advice on how to successfully instruct students with disabilities. There were several instances where my classroom management plan was not effective for students experiencing emotional and behavioral disorders. They would often disrupt other students, yell at me, and even instigate fights. When I consulted the administration and the special education staff about these problems, they told me that I would have to make and adhere to a separate discipline plan for each student experiencing emotional and behavioral disorders.

In addition to this, I found myself in a quandary when it came to assessment, not knowing how to grade students who did not meet the objectives I established for each project. As a result, many of the students with disabilities were making a “C” or below in my class. After the first grading period, the assistant principal and counselor requested a meeting to discuss my grading procedures. They both told me that no student with a disability should ever receive below a “C” in art. Moreover, the special education teachers told me that art is the one class in which many students with disabilities excelled, and I would seldom need to make accommodations. I was being told that by all accounts, students experiencing disabilities have success in art—a reality that seemed to elude me.

Through my own research, I became aware of special education legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA (PL 94-142) and more recently, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (PL 107-110). These legislative acts maintain the necessity of schools and teachers providing equal educational opportunity for every child. The landmark IDEA legislation guarantees each student with a disability a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. This meant that students with disabilities should be given the opportunity to be in the same classes as their non-disabled peers and achieve academic gains

commensurate with their abilities. This approach was first termed mainstreaming and later, inclusion¹ (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, Smith, & Leal, 2002). At first glance, it seemed that my school was implementing inclusion. As I looked closer at my school's practices, however, it became apparent that disability was viewed as a deficit and inclusion, in the truest sense of the word, was not being practiced. Many of my colleagues told me that they believed that students with disabilities should be kept in their own classroom, taught by the special education teacher.

I understood that inclusion was the law, but I began to think seriously about the claims that many of my colleagues were making. It seemed as if the presence of students with disabilities in my class often compromised the education of other students. I voiced these concerns to special education staff, and I was told that inclusion was the law and students with disabilities would be enrolled in my classes. I was also told that if I were a good teacher, I would not have any problems instructing students with disabilities because they all loved and excelled in art. In effect, I was silenced from honest dialogue about these dilemmas because my difficulties in instructing students with disabilities indicted me as being an ineffective teacher.

The lack of preservice training in disability and in-service support and resources for me as a teacher led me to decide early on that my art class was not the most appropriate placement for many students with disabilities. These beliefs influenced my actions towards students with disabilities. I often had less patience with them and felt resentful when they needed extra help. Looking back, I realize that my behaviors influenced the way that students without disabilities viewed and treated their peers with disabilities. Though I could not articulate it as such, what I was really doing was providing a separate, unequal art education for students with disabilities. The ethical and legal implications of the segregation that existed in my classroom are sobering.

¹For a more complete discussion of these terms, see Chapter 2.

I continually asked myself why I had these negative thoughts and beliefs about students with disabilities. I had always thought of myself as a caring person and good teacher, but now I was not so sure who I was. My thoughts and actions were inequitable towards students with disabilities. What possibly could have changed me from a teacher who wanted to reach all to a teacher who wanted to reach students who were all the same?

Background of the Problem

During the past six years, I have observed that not much has changed regarding the degree of preparedness that new or experienced art educators feel in instructing students with disabilities (Yeager, 2002; 2003), despite efforts on the part of art teacher educators to create books, courses, and curricula that address children with disabilities in the art class.

Paralleling changes in the general education classroom, the demographic of the art room began to change in the mid-1970s. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142, later renamed The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA), was the catalyst for bringing students with disabilities into the regular education classroom. One principle of this law was deinstitutionalization, whereby students who were educated in separate schools were brought into the public school environment. The art classroom was one of the first regular education settings where students with disabilities were educated alongside students without disabilities (Andrus, 1994; Henley, 1992). Teachers were unprepared for this addition of students with disabilities, initially termed *mainstreaming*, and often received little support in successfully instructing these students at the preservice or inservice level. As a result, many art educators began to resist the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms (Loesl, 1999).

The term *mainstreaming* was eventually replaced by *inclusion*, a term which places more responsibility upon the educator to adjust the general curriculum so that all students have access to it (Turnbull et al., 2002). The art education community set out to equip both preservice and inservice art teachers for this change. In the 1980s, courses, inservices, books and articles in professional journals emerged which addressed inclusion in the art room (Anderson, 1981). Much of this literature (Anderson, Colchado & McAnally, 1979; Clements & Clements, 1984; Rodriquez, 1984; Uhlin & DeChiara, 1984) misses the mark of inclusion and instead adheres to a medical model of disability, where a student's disability is viewed as a deficit rather than a part of their experience that must be considered when designing instruction. The medical model is apparent in curricula and literature which focus on the disability in such a way that accommodations are viewed as manifold and cumbersome. Lists of disabilities along with suggested art projects for each preclude the establishment of common practices or competencies that focus on best practices for *all* children. Teachers are often left feeling that they do not have enough time to teach a different lesson for each child with a disability in their classroom. The medical model, because it focuses on classifications of disability, subversively supports classrooms where all learners are alike. The ramifications of this model are that the student's disability is often viewed as the *only* obstacle to successful classroom learning (Gwynn, 2004; Villa & Thousand, 2000). The medical model fails to take into account the ways in which the school culture (consisting of administrative policies, classroom space, curriculum, teaching practices, and attitudes) might be oppressive to students with disabilities. Hastings & Oakford (2003) declare that "more research is needed that addresses a broad range of child, teacher, and school variables and the interactions between these in terms of their impact upon inclusion for children with special needs" (p.93).

The current school system, with its efficiency models and accountability measures in many ways opposes inclusion (Giroux, 1988; Nieto, 2000). These efforts aim for standardization of student achievement without altering teaching practices, thus acculturating teachers to a theory of mass education, where the largest numbers of students are served with the greatest amount of efficiency. Students with disabilities, who often require instructional supports, are viewed by many teachers as requiring too much individualized instruction, thus taking away time from “regular” students who are moving at a quicker, (and presumably, “more efficient”) pace (T. Armstrong, personal communication, November 8, 2002). Classroom management techniques which emphasize standardization of student behavior and present an “ideal” teaching environment as being quiet, with all students doing the same exact thing at the same pace and without disruption, perpetuates this belief about disability among teachers. Students with disabilities are socially and educationally segregated and often viewed by those in general education as not being their instructional responsibility. Such beliefs about students with disabilities exist and should be exposed for the discrimination that they engender. This dialogue has found a space in general and special education (Comer, Haynes, Joyner & Ben-Avie, 1996; Mallory & New, 1994) as well as the field of disability studies (Ware, 2002). This dialogue needs to be brought to the fore in art education.

The past twenty years of art education practice has been responsive to many social and political issues that directly influence the students we instruct. Art education continues to explore and negotiate understanding in the areas of feminist, multicultural, and queer theory (Fehr, D.E., Fehr, K. & Keifer-Boyd, K., 2000). Why not disability?

Statement of the Problem

An alternative approach to preparing art teachers for inclusion needs to be sought.

Critical theory is a philosophy that examines social systems and interactions for the ways in which they empower or disempower individuals (Giroux, 1983, 1988, 2003). One major goal of critical theory is the transformation of inequity in social spaces. As such, it has the potential to provide teachers with a theoretical framework and means to understand and successfully manage issues of inclusion in their own classrooms. As teachers are led through a process of reflection and action, they gain a sense of personal agency, or the confidence that their actions can affect change in the world. This sense of agency can equip teachers to solve any educational dilemma they encounter, especially those related to inclusion. When this process is mediated by a mentor, the likelihood of personal and collective change is increased (Freire, 1993).

Therefore, the work and role of the art teacher educator becomes paramount, negotiating how critical theory impacts self, mentoring and inclusion. This proposition resonates with research in special education. Studies (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Horne, 1985; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) have shown that the presence of a mentor who provides context-specific knowledge about disability fosters positive attitudes about inclusion among teachers. These resources have the potential to promote successful experiences with students with disabilities. Simply stated, as teachers are given the tools they need to solve the inclusion dilemmas they face, their confidence in being able to practice successful inclusion increases. Thus, their sense of personal competence increases. This process of incorporating critical theory into preservice art teacher education, if modeled and described, can benefit art teacher educators as they seek to prepare art teachers for the inclusive classroom. The principles and tools of critical theory hold promise for closing the gap in the degree of preparedness that art teachers feel exists in their ability to successfully instruct students with disabilities. This potential cannot be ignored, especially when the needs of art teaches in this area are still so great. Schiller (1999) concludes:

“Are we, as art teachers, supposed to know all there is to know about children with disabilities, and should we be ready, willing, and able to take on new students with special needs, without any assistance?” (p. 10)

Research Question

The question this study seeks to answer is “How does an art teacher educator use critical theory to mentor student teachers and prepare them for the inclusive art classroom?”

Purpose of the Study

This study provides a detailed account of my work as an art teacher educator and the impact of this work upon the six student teachers I supervised in spring 2006 at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. It explores the ways in which I negotiated the connections among critical theory and my narrative, mentoring process and the inclusion curriculum I utilized for the student teaching seminars. My evolving understanding and negotiation of the role(s) I play as an art teacher educator are explored in depth.

The primary goal of this study is to provide a thick description (Stake, 1995) of the ways in which critical theory impacted my role as an art teacher educator. A secondary goal of this study is to describe the impact of critical theory upon the inclusion training I provided for six preservice teachers during their student teaching semester. Consumers of this research will be able to ascertain its degree of relevance to their specific contexts. The thick description and narrative retelling of events, the proposing and testing of new theory and the creation of new instruments for data collection all contribute to the external validity of an action research study (Herr & Anderson, 2005). That being said, this study should provide a means for art teacher educators to equip preservice teachers to successfully manage the dilemmas of inclusion in their future classrooms. This research does not yield pre-packaged answers to managing inclusion in

the art classroom. Rather, it provides the first account of an art teacher educators' practice as she incorporates the philosophy of critical theory into her identity and the work of inclusion training.

Limitations of the Study

There were several challenges in designing and implementing this qualitative study. The first challenge is inherent in the nature of qualitative action research. Since I am both the researcher and the subject under study, I had to pay careful attention to the "truths" I was telling. To enhance the validity of this study, I provided thick description of events, included multiple forms of data in the analysis and reporting of the findings and regularly consulted with a critical friend (Herr & Anderson, 2005) who was steeped in critical theory. Further, since the study had as its primary aim the description of my practice, I was constantly refining the issues of inquiry. While I ultimately want to see change in inclusion in the K-12 art classroom, this study was not about producing that change or a model to illicit such change. It was about exploring my practice as an art teacher educator for its implications to inclusion training for preservice art teachers.

Another challenge I faced was the setting of the dissertation study. I chose to provide the inclusion training in the context of a bi-weekly student teaching seminar. While the choice to address inclusion during student teaching provided several different interpretations of inclusion to for inquiry, the setting of a student teaching seminar was often time prohibitive in addressing both inclusion and general student teaching concerns. Participants noted that they often felt I was rushing through seminars and providing too much information. They also could have perceived that the content was not relevant to their particular situation. Time management was always an issue, when at times, seminar sessions were disproportionately spent on addressing student teaching concerns and allowing participants to "vent." This led me to rush through the inclusion content during those seminars.

A final limitation of this study centered on issues of power relations. While I did much to ensure that participants felt that power was equitably distributed, I was still the one who was “giving the grade” (Adler, 2003, p. 80). As such, it was difficult for me to ascertain the extent to which the preservice teachers were giving me “critical theory answers” (cf. personal journal entry, April 24, 2006) and embracing inclusion because of moral beliefs, political correctness, wanting to please the instructor, or other reasons. I had a corollary response to this issue of power redistribution. Because I was intent on sharing power by having participants read the findings, I feel that I was careful to try to look at things through their eyes. I censored some of my initial responses because I wanted to make sure I was reporting in as objective of a manner as possible.

Significance of the Study to the Field

This research study articulates the connections among critical theory, preservice art teacher education, and inclusion training. This study should aid consumers of research in understanding some of the current practices in preservice art education as they relate to preparing teachers for inclusion. Numerous art teacher educators (Davis, 1992; Galbraith, 1997; Zimmerman, 1997) have written about the complexities of accurately describing the content and substance of art education programs in general. Hutchens (1997) asks how one can begin to reform a field in which “there is no consensus—no single, widely accepted overriding philosophy of art education or of art teacher preparation? How can over five hundred programs involving thousands of faculty members and administrators have a unified philosophy?” (p. 149)

If this is true for art education programs at large, the potential of discovering trends with regard to how inclusion and disability are addressed seems bleak. Many preservice art teacher educators who teach courses on inclusion in the art class believe that this work needs to be done

(B. Gerber, B. Suplee, M. Kelly, personal communication, April 20, 2004). All art classrooms include students with disabilities. Accordingly, preparation of art teachers needs to address inclusion.

Preservice teachers will leave the university and enter into a school which may not have sufficient resources to support their professional development with regard to inclusion. The federal government has acknowledged that *in-service teachers*, or those who currently teach in the classroom, are in need of resources which enable them to successfully implement inclusion. No Child Left Behind (P.L. 107-110) is the federal government's current effort to improve school accountability and support the success of students with disabilities and minority students. It specifically calls for the development of model in-service professional development programs for arts educators that will help assure that students with disabilities receive a substantive art education (Subpart 15, section 5551). If preservice teachers are given tools today to help them meet the demands of inclusion when they enter the profession, they will be in a much more beneficial position to experience success.

This study has the potential of articulating a multilayered perspective on preservice art teacher education as it relates to inclusion. To date, no one in art education has sought to make explicit the connections among critical theory, preservice art teacher education, and inclusion training. This study provides a thick description of my work as an art teacher educator and the impact of this work upon the student teachers I supervised. As such, it can provide art teacher educators with insight as they design inclusion training for preservice art teachers.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Review of Related Literature

A theoretical framework in a qualitative research study informs the design of the study. One of the critiques of qualitative research is that results are not always generalizable to a larger population. However, action researchers Herr and Anderson (2005) have noted that one way to increase a study's external validity, or the degree to which the results can be applied to a larger population, is to test out a theory in the course of one's research. Case study researcher Yin (1994) concurs by saying that when a researcher begins a study with a theory as a framework, this theory guides the data collection, analysis and the reporting of the findings. Thus, a consumer of the research can replicate the study using the established theory. The essential areas of knowledge that informed the design and execution of this study were critical theory, special education, and preservice art teacher education. The purpose of this chapter is to make explicit the connections among these three fields and the ways in which they informed the theory development for this study.

Critical Theory

Critical Theory—History

Critical theory, in the broadest sense, is a set of ideas about society that has the ability to transform society. The philosophy of critical theory originated in 1923 in Germany with the establishment of the Frankfurt School's Institute for Social Research. Founders of the school included Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Leo Lowenthal, Eric Fromm, Herbert Marcuse (McLaren, 1989). The main purpose of the school was to formulate a theory of society that reflected the philosophies of Marxism. As such, it examined the way that capitalism

led to the exploitation of certain members of society. It advocated for reformation to the way that class and labor divisions are determined in society. Domination, oppression and transformation were the big ideas that the school explored. Jurgen Habermas, a member of the original Frankfurt School, conceptualized critical theory as enabling human agency (McLaren, 1989). To his sense, human beings could effect change on oppressive situations in their lives by reflecting and acting. This shift in critical theory from Marxism enabled people to consider the manifold ways that people are oppressed, not just as a result of capitalism. Thus, the ideas of domination, oppression and transformation are at the core of contemporary critical theory. And, because contemporary critical theory addresses such universal ideas and themes, it has informed ideologies as diverse as feminism, multiculturalism, ecotheory, queer theory and disability rights (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). At the core of each of these ideologies is a recognition that oppression exists and is perpetuated by the hegemony of the dominant culture's values, language, and knowledge.

Critical Theory and Education

Critical theory has influenced educational research in a number of ways (Giroux, 1983, 1988, 2003). Critical theory has a dual purpose: it acts as a lens to view situations and it is a means to change situations (Giroux, 2003; McLaren, 1989). Central to the practice of critical theory is this notion of praxis, or the authentic integration of theory and practice guided by a moral purpose (McLaren, 1989). Critical theorists examine how knowledge is constructed in public spaces and the extent to which inequality exists in these spaces. An understanding of praxis necessitates that critical theorists seek for ways to transform these situations. Using the lens of critical theory, teachers are enabled to look closer at schools for the ways in which they may reproduce dominant power relationships and perpetuate discrimination based on distinctions such as class, race, gender, and ability. In this manner, critical theory can invoke a kind of

“pedagogical surrealism,” (McLaren, 1989, p. 164) whereby those familiar aspects of a school (such as administrative policies, class management procedures, teacher actions) are examined for the types of outcomes they engender. This act of inquiry allows teachers to distance themselves from the familiar, thus gaining new insight on some of the nuances of intent that are embedded in all actions and policies.

Critical theory is also a means to change oppressive situations. This transformative aspect of critical theory enables teachers to make schools sites of possibility (Giroux, 1983), where oppressive or problematic practices can be recognized, named, and changed. This transformation occurs in the context of a mentoring relationship (Giroux, 1988, McLaren, 1989; Noddings, 1992). In this study, I conceptualized myself as the primary mentor for the preservice teachers. Beginning with the writings of John Dewey, critical pedagogy emphasizes a democratic relationship between student and teacher (McLaren, 1989). This implies a balance of power in the context of a mentoring relationship. Both Freire (1993) and Noddings (1992) assert that critical pedagogy hinges upon a mentorship and exchange between student and teacher. To Freire, this exchange involves establishing a balance of power, whereby the student and the teacher each have contributions to make to one another. The teacher is not the sole truth teller or the expert. Such a view is aligned with constructivist views of education, whereby the teacher respects and enables the students search for truth, and comes alongside the student in order to learn more about his or her individual ways of knowing (Thunder-McGuire, 1999). The teacher and student align themselves with the common goal of identifying and transforming unjust situations, a task that can only be accomplished in collaboration. Noddings (1992), in her definition of what it means to care, posits that true caring involves an exchange between people. In a classroom, caring is manifest in teacher and student valuing one another’s’ life experiences.

Critical theory comes to bear in mentoring relationships by enabling teachers to understand that they can become agents of change (Fullan, 1993). As teachers are helped to see their strengths, led through a process of critically questioning the daily situations of teaching and then acting, they see that they possess human agency, or the capacity to exert power and create change.

This mentoring process encourages an exchange of personal narratives. Critical theory underscores the importance of multiple narratives, insofar as they foster democratic relationships among people (Freire, 1993; McLaren, 1989, Noddings, 1992). Critical theorist Freire (1993) states that this exchange involves a balance of power, whereby the student and the teacher each have contributions to make to one another. Mentoring takes into account and values the life experiences of others. Freire (1993) considers these life experiences (consisting of ideas, thoughts, values and activities) to be the “cultural capital” of the student. In education, this respect for a student’s cultural capital is sometimes manifest by teachers creating curriculum that provides students with context-specific tools that will help them solve actual dilemmas they experience (Applefield, Huber, & Moallem, 2000; Fogarty, 1999).

The mentoring process also creates a sense of community among learners. When teachers respect students’ life histories, group norms are created which value the contributions that each member makes. When such a group of students come together to identify and transform unjust situations, a community emerges which has a purpose larger than themselves (Freire, 1993). This process of collective transformation involves dialogue and discussion. The notion of dialogue involves “free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues, a deep ‘listening’ to one another and suspending of one’s own views” (Senge, 1990, p. 237). People engaged in dialogue are participating in a process of group meaning making, an activity that social constructivist

theorists see as essential to producing empowerment in persons.² Many people long to be part of something lasting and transformative and critical theory holds promise for such belonging.

Giroux (1983) believes that critical theory gives teachers the opportunity to make schools and learning spaces sites of possibility, where oppression can be recognized, named, and transformed. In this regard, the aims of critical theory coalesce with the experience of students with disabilities because oftentimes, they experience discrimination. When teachers recognize this oppression, the principles of critical theory can enable them to become agents of change (Fullan, 1993), transforming unjust situations through careful self-reflection (Giroux, 1988).

A by-product of critical theory is the development of dialectical thinking. This skill or habit of mind embraces the notion that problems are multi-faceted and solutions require careful examination and collaboration among all learners if change is to occur. The notion of dialectical thinking is central to critical theory because schools are places where both oppression and empowerment can exist at the same time (Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 1989). If problems should be examined in light of the larger system and solutions should be sought collaboratively, that means that pre-packaged answers do not exist and techniques and strategies alone do not provide lasting solutions. Critical theory, therefore, often develops thinkers who are comfortable with contradictions, complexities, and ambiguities. The emphasis no longer rests on finding the right answers, but upon asking questions that originate from self and interactions in society. It follows, then, that critical theory engenders careful, dialectical thinkers who value the process of making meaning of complexities. This habit of mind is crucial to enabling preservice teachers to examine the dilemmas of inclusion they experience, insofar as every child, classroom, and school they experience will be different.

² For a more complete discussions of the work of Lev Vygotsky see Gindis, 1999 and Vygotskaya, 1999.

Special Education

The History of Inclusion

The fundamental philosophies of special education can best be understood in light of the many civil rights movements that occurred in our country beginning in the 1960s. Equal opportunity became a moral issue, and it was unacceptable to deny people access to education or employment based upon race, gender or ability (Patton & Mondale, 2001). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was the first piece of U.S. government legislation to address the educational injustices experienced by students who were experiencing poverty. It set a precedent for later special education legislation.

Subsequent amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 provided funding to state schools which educated students with disabilities. As many of these students were moved into the public school setting, it provided funding and created programs for public schools to utilize as they educated students with disabilities. This mainstreaming of students with disabilities into the public schools found many art teachers unprepared (Andrus, 1994).

Mainstreaming often meant adding students with disabilities only to extracurricular classes such as art, music and physical education (Turnbull et al., 2002). Frequently, the emphasis in mainstreaming was providing the child with a disability an opportunity to interact socially with his or her non-disabled peers.

The Education of the Handicapped Act of 1970 became an amendment to the legislation. This created a number of programs for students with disabilities and was the first piece of legislation to underscore the importance of providing children with disabilities an education commensurate with that of their peers.

The seminal Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142, renamed in 1990 The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA), is a capstone piece of special education legislation which

- Mandates a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all children with disabilities
- Ensures due process rights for children receiving special education services
- Ensures nondiscriminatory evaluation for students who may qualify for special education services
- Mandates the development of an individualized education plan (IEP) and education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Subsequent amendments to IDEA infused special education with a different, more equitable, tone. The term *mainstreaming*, or simply adding students with disabilities to the public school classroom, was replaced with *inclusion* (Turnbull et al., 2002). The focus shifted to helping students with disabilities become “authentic members of general education curriculum” (Turnbull et al., 2002, p. 80). Subsequent amendments to this legislation ensured all students access to the general curriculum and participation in reform efforts and standardized assessment. Most notably for the art educator, this law identified the arts as a core subject area. This means that teachers of the arts are among those who have responsibility to educate all students. As such, IDEA requires that a general education teacher be part of each child’s IEP team and that schools and states provide training to teachers that helps them to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

The most recent legislation that has relevance for special education is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. This reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 focuses on helping all students achieve, especially those who have commonly been at a

disadvantage due to poverty or minority status. NCLB focuses on holding schools accountable for this change, giving parents options if their child's school is not helping the student to succeed, as well as improving the quality of teachers through training.³ Many federal and state training programs have focused their efforts on providing tools for teachers who instruct students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

When students with disabilities were mainstreamed in the art room in 1970s, many teachers were unprepared to instruct these students due to lack of any prior training in disability (St. John, 1986). Increased attention to creating equal educational opportunity for students with disabilities and effectively preparing all teachers for this inclusion has underscored the fact that the educational success of students with disabilities is the responsibility of every teacher. The field of special education has outlined several components of helping all teachers in this endeavor. These will be discussed at length in the next section.

Special Education: Components of Preparing Preservice Teachers for Inclusion

Having the foundation of critical theory, preservice teachers can begin to take a closer look at the way that inclusion is currently practiced in schools. They can also change situations that appear problematic or oppressive. The aims of critical theory coalesce with research in special education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Horne, 1985; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) with regard to effectively preparing teachers to practice inclusion. This research has outlined a number of components that have been effective in preparing teachers to create inclusive classrooms. To my sense, each of these components align with critical theory's purpose of providing a lens for inquiry and transforming teacher practice (see Table 1).

³ Many in education have criticized No Child Left Behind for its overemphasis on assessment and the way this emphasis deskills teachers. See chapter 3 and the work of Herr and Anderson (2005) for a more complete discussion of this issue.

Table 1

The Alignment of Critical Theory and Inclusive Competencies⁴

CRITICAL THEORY AS A LENS
The ability to problematize disability, inclusion, and school culture
Self-awareness about feelings of disability
CRITICAL THEORY AS TRANSFORMATIONAL TO TEACHER PRACTICE
Knowledge and Experience in Disability
Intensive Mentoring
Shared Decision Making/Privileging Teachers' Autonomy and Agency
Collaborative Problem Solving
Increased Teacher Competence
Positive Beliefs about Persons with Disabilities

Critical Theory as a Lens

This section will address the ways in which the principles of critical theory and research in special education coalesce to help preservice teachers critically examine inclusion.

Ability to Problematize Disability, Inclusion, and School Culture

Hutchinson and Martin (1999) found that preservice teachers with the skill of “contemplating the problematic in cases about their own teaching” (p. 247) generally held positive beliefs about inclusion. Developing such a skill can be a challenge for many preservice art teacher educators due to demands from students for techniques that will work in their classrooms (Hutchinson & Martin, 1999). Successful inclusion requires looking at each specific situation and using problem solving skills to investigate each child and class on a case-by-case basis. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found that teachers with more positive views of inclusion viewed disability not as a deficit in the student, but as a situation that was mediated by the child’s interactions with peers, teachers, school, and society. Thus, the onus rests upon the

⁴ These competencies can transform teacher attitudes and practices in inclusion. They are aligned with two primary goals of critical theory: taking a closer look at dilemmas and injustices and transforming them (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Fine & Weis, 2003; Freire, 1993; Giroux, 1983, 1988, 2003; Horne, 1985; McLaren, 1989, Noddings, 1992; Sapon-Shevin & Zollers, 1999; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

teacher to understand how to make learning accessible to the student. Teachers make accommodations for every student, and doing this for students with disabilities is not an added duty. This realization resonates with the aim of critical theory in enabling teachers to carefully examine the power relations in schools and the degree to which they oppress students with disabilities (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). As preservice teachers are enabled to see that critical theory can become a lens to help them explore power relationships in their schools and classrooms, they will also be enabled to begin looking more contextually at inclusion as it exists in their schools and classrooms (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Self-awareness of Feelings about Disability

Preparing preservice teachers for inclusion should include opportunities for them to explore their feelings about disability (Horne, 1985). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found that many teachers who participated in studies of inclusion do not have empathetic conceptions of persons with disabilities. Many times, teachers feel bound by convention or “political correctness” to the extent that they cannot express what they are really feeling. When our classrooms further reproduce these societal norms, we run the risk of silencing teachers (Fine & Weiss, 2003) and thus leaving the dilemmas unspoken and, subsequently, unsolved. Teachers’ own sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994) may be compromised in this instance, so that they are less likely to begin exploring these issues in their own classrooms. Critical theory asks teachers to explore their beliefs through reflection with self and others because their beliefs ultimately affect their actions (Fine & Weiss, 2003; McLaren, 1989). Literature on inclusive education has also found that teacher education programs that have had the most effect upon changing attitudes were those that led teachers to question their beliefs (Hutchinson & Martin, 1999).

Critical Theory as Transformational to Teacher Practice

The following section addresses how the principles of critical theory and research in special education combine to transform the ways that teachers implement inclusion.

Knowledge and Experience in Disability

Training that can transform attitudes about inclusion should be comprised of both knowledge and experience in disability (Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Horne, 1985). This knowledge includes familiarity with different disabilities, special education law, and systems of support⁵ that exist in the schools. Critical theory posits that transformation occurs when teachers ask questions relevant to their experience and are given context-specific resources that enable them to find their own answers (Noddings, 1992). Hastings and Oakford (2003) found that teachers' awareness of the presence of supports in schools was one of the most critical factors in their positive attitudes towards inclusion. Shoho and Van Reusen (2000) found in their study of high school general educators that "the most negative attitudes were found among teachers with the least amount of special education knowledge, training, or experiences in teaching students with disabilities" (p.8).

Intensive Mentoring

Because many negative attitudes arise from frustration and a lack of success in implementing inclusion, preservice training in inclusion should provide teachers with a support system of colleagues and a mentor (Hobbs & Westling, 2002). The presence of these supports increases the likelihood that teachers will experience success in instructing students with disabilities (Horne, 1985; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999). Hutchinson and Martin (1999) found that the existence of collaborative learning alone was not as effective in transforming attitudes among

⁵ Systems of support that exist for teachers at the school and district level include special education teachers, counselors, special education coordinators and in-services and training.

preservice teachers as when this learning was mediated by a mentor. A mentor is someone who has expertise in a particular area, displays sensitivity when providing feedback and resources, and shows judgment that is both objective and intuitive (Lazarus, 2003). According to Edwards and Collison (1996, as cited in Lazarus, 2003), a mentor is involved in a range of activities such as “listening to students, negotiating with students their own learning styles and encouraging focused observations of classroom events” (p. 107-108). In this study, both the qualifications and activities of a mentor described above informed me as I worked with the preservice teachers. In this study, I also conceptualized myself as the primary mentor for the preservice teachers (an issue that is discussed at length in chapters 4 and 5).

Shared Decision Making/Privileging Teachers’ Autonomy and Agency

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) in their review of literature on inclusion found that positive attitudes towards inclusion are influenced by the degree of participation that teachers have in decisions regarding the inclusion process. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) reached a similar conclusion in their review of the literature on inclusion. They determined that most teachers were resistant to inclusion because “Integration had often been effected in an ad hoc manner, without systematic modifications to a school’s organization, *due regard to teacher’s instructional expertise* [italics added], or any guarantee of continuing resource provision” (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002, p. 133). This idea parallels Giroux’s description of the teacher as a transformative intellectual (1988). If teachers view themselves as transformative intellectuals, this means that they feel competent to design instruction that best meets the needs of their students. Supervisors of teachers can further empower them by trusting the teachers’ ability to help students meet educational goals. If teachers perceive that they have no voice in matters of inclusion and are prevented from asking questions and raising objections, they are likely to

experience frustration and express resistance (McLaren, 1989). Critical theory honors the voice of each person and allows room for disagreement. Freire (1993) sees this process as essential to creating a community of learners who are able to transform oppressive situations. The main task of the mentor in this situation is to consciously create norms which allow for individuals to disagree and work on establishing outcomes that are democratically determined.

Collaborative Problem Solving

Successful preparation of teachers for the inclusive classroom necessitates that they be adept in collaborative, active problem solving (Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999). When teachers are engaged in problem solving with their colleagues, this models the process that is central to successful inclusion in the schools, insofar as the education of students with disabilities requires collaboration among all faculty and staff. Further, Hutchinson and Martin (1999) found that a primary determinant in changes in attitudes regarding inclusion was the social interaction that they had with one another during problem solving sessions. When teachers are engaged in “planning, enacting, and reflecting together” they form an identity as an intellectual group and their capacity for generating change is increased (Hutchinson & Martin, 1999, p. 236).

Increased Teacher Competence

Increased teacher competence (Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Larrivee 1982; Larrivee & Cook, 1982; Stephens & Braun, 1980, as cited in Horne, 1985; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999) refers to the beliefs of teachers in their abilities to successfully instruct students with disabilities. This competency is fostered through supported experiences in implementing inclusion where the teacher has experienced success. As mentioned earlier, this capacity is valued in critical theory as

well, insofar as teachers are encouraged to become transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) who are able to design learning situations that produce change.

Positive Beliefs about Persons with Disabilities

Teachers who experience success implementing inclusion believe that persons with disabilities can make valuable contributions to society. As such, they also believe that schools should support/model such participation (Stephens & Braun, 1980, as cited in Horne, 1985), and that students with disabilities have the right to be educated in public schools. In particular, special education's emphasis upon the communitarian perspective (Kraft, 2003) highlights the ideal that students with disabilities should be members of interdependent groups and contribute to group goals in an individual and reciprocal way. Teachers who have positive attitudes about inclusion are able to evaluate their beliefs about disability (Malette, Readence, & McKinney, 2000). Freire (1993) contends that one way we help transform the experience of oppressed groups is to stand in solidarity with them. In this study, I conceptualized that both teachers and students with disabilities are oppressed groups. As discussed earlier in this chapter, teachers are often deskilled by the overemphasis on standards based assessment and students who do not perform well on these traditional assessments are often marginalized. Thus, developing this last competency in teachers is of utmost importance, because the schools in which they will be teaching might be perpetuating this type of oppression. Being able to recognize and transform these situations will lead to empowerment for both students and teachers alike.

Each of the six components discussed above (knowledge and experience in disability, intensive mentoring, shared decision making/privileging teachers' autonomy, collaborative problem solving, increased teacher competence, and positive beliefs about persons with

disabilities) informed the inclusion training curriculum I implemented in the student teaching seminars. The seminar curriculum is discussed at length in chapter 3.

Preservice Art Teacher Education: Competencies and Complexities

While special education is a field that has seen great changes in the past few years due to a concentrated research agenda (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2002), art education lacks a cohesive approach to preparing art teachers for inclusion. Though appreciating and responding to student diversity is emphasized in both the *Standards for Art Teacher Preparation* (National Art Education Association, 2002) and the publication, *Preparing Teachers of Art* (Day, 1997), moving this competency from theory to practice is a difficult task for a number of reasons. The first dilemma is the issue of how disability is conceptualized. Many writers in multicultural education include disability as one of the many facets of diversity (Banks & Banks, 2001; Sapon-Shevin & Zollers, 1999; Sapon-Shevin, 2000/2001). Such a conception doesn't appear to be articulated in art education publications addressing disability (see Gerber & Guay, 2006; Nyman & Jenkins, 1999). Secondly, a research agenda with regard to art teacher preparation and inclusion has not been established. This is due in part to the fact that there has been a lack of publication about programs and courses that address inclusion training in art education. The literature in art education and inclusion training includes three notable programs (Andrus, 2001; Carrigan, 1994; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2003). While certainly more programs than this exist, it is difficult to make substantial progress in addressing this issue until more is known about current practice in inclusion training in art education. Hutchens (1997) underscores this sentiment by asking, how can one begin to reform a field in which "there is no consensus—no single, widely accepted overriding philosophy of art education or of art teacher preparation? How can over five hundred

programs involving thousands of faculty members and administrators have a unified philosophy?" (p. 149).

Lastly, special education is a field in which most university art educators do not typically have expertise. This can make it difficult for departments of art education to offer specialized courses in art and inclusion.

The art education publications *Preparing Teachers of Art* (Day, 1997) and *Standards for Art Teacher Preparation* (NAEA, 2002) list standards pertinent to preparing art teachers for inclusion. The components of inclusion training discussed in the previous section (knowledge and experience in disability, intensive mentoring, shared decision making/privileging teachers' autonomy, collaborative problem solving, increased teacher competence, and positive beliefs about persons with disabilities) are a critical link in moving the standards for appreciating diversity from theory to practice.

Day (1997) suggests that preservice art teachers should have the opportunity to work with diverse student populations and receive specific training on how to instruct students with an array of disabilities. This is aligned with research in special education which shows that positive attitudes about inclusion are fostered through knowledge and experience in disability and the support of a mentor (Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Horne, 1985).

The National Art Education Association (2002) lists a number of standards that are also aligned with research in special education. These standards detail the many competencies that the art teacher educator can reinforce with preservice art education students during discussions of inclusion and difference. These standards are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Standards for Art Teacher Preparation (NAEA, 2002) Relevant to Inclusion Training.*⁶

Standard II: Art Teacher Preparation Programs Provide Teacher Candidates with a Thorough Knowledge of the Theory and Practice of Art Education. Teacher candidates:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand and are able to express their beliefs regarding the efficacy of art in the general education of <i>all</i> students [italics added] ▪ Understand specific characteristics and needs of special populations, as well as appropriate teaching strategies
Standard IV: Art Teacher Candidates are Sensitive Observers in the Classroom as seen in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insightful observation of students resulting in information about the individual differences of students ▪ Partnerships with school personnel who can give the teacher candidate additional information about students, such as school psychologists, counselors, and administrators ▪ Respect for the individual pace at which students learn ▪ Respect for the individual artistic and aesthetic responses of students
Standard V: Art Teacher Candidates are Able to Use a Knowledge of Students to Plan Appropriate Instruction as seen in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The awareness of the appropriateness of the activity to the students' physical, cognitive, and emotional maturity (especially as they relate to safety) ▪ High expectations of all students
Standard VI: Art Teacher Candidates Develop Curriculum Reflective of the Goals and Purposes of Art Education as seen in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development of curricular goals that allow students to have individualized learning experiences ▪ The development of ambitious and high expectations for all students
Standard VII: Art Teacher Candidates Develop Curriculum Reflective of an Understanding of the Breadth, the Depth, and the Purposes of Art as seen in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development of a curriculum that provides students with breadth and depth of understanding in art history, artists, and diverse cultures
Standard VIII: Art Teacher Candidates Develop Curriculum Inclusive of Goals, Values, and Purposes of Education, the Community and Society as seen in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ability to adapt, change, and modify curriculum based on student needs
Standard X: Art Teacher Candidates Are Able to Create Effective Instructional Environments Conducive to Student Learning as seen in Environments that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe

⁶ Copyright 2002 by The National Art Education Association (NAEA). Used by permission

(table continues)

Table 2 (<i>continued</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embrace a respect for diversity ▪ Promote principles of fairness and equity ▪ Integrate a variety of instructional resources
Standard XI: Art Teacher Candidates are Well-Versed in Pedagogy as seen in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sensitivity to a range of student abilities, interests and skills
Standard XII: Art Teacher Candidates Inquire into their Own Practices and the Nature of Art Teaching as demonstrated by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continual inquiry of teaching practices of themselves and others ▪ Seeking help, advice, and mentoring from other teachers and supervisors ▪ Accepting responsibility for being up-to-date with new developments in teaching and schooling at all levels ▪ Recognizing that a teacher as researcher can improve the quality of art instruction in their classroom and in the field at large
Standard XIV: Prospective Art Teachers Conduct Meaningful and Appropriate Assessments of Student Learning as seen in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring that all students have equal opportunity to display what they know and can do in art
Standard XV: Prospective Art Teachers Systematically Reflect Upon their Own Teaching Practice. As Students of Teaching, They Recognize that They Will Gain Expertise with Experience and Will Continuously Improve Their Efforts to Teach Effectively as seen by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring that students have real opportunities for success through careful instructional planning based on appropriate and achievable educational goals ▪ Analyzing strengths and weaknesses and using this knowledge in fostering professional development ▪ Observing and analyzing teaching practices of mentors ▪ Developing the capacity for ongoing, objective self-examination that enables them to continually change in an effort to strengthen teaching
Standard XVII: Art Teacher Candidates Continually Reflect Upon their Own Practice as seen by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continual examination of their thinking and beliefs about themselves, their students, and the field of art education

The presence of these standards underscores the need for inclusion training which will give preservice teachers the skills and efficacy to practice inclusion in the classroom. Inclusion training informed by critical theory can address and build the aforementioned competencies in preservice art teachers. These standards (Day, 1997; NAEA, 2002) repeatedly emphasize the

necessity of maintaining high expectations for all students. Thus, inclusion training that fosters positive beliefs about persons with disabilities becomes an essential component in such a task. Other standards emphasize collaboration among all of the systems of support in a school. Making preservice teachers aware of these systems and of strategies to access them also becomes an essential task in preparing art teachers for inclusion. Many standards also underscore the importance of preservice art teachers' continual reflection. This competency is developed when teachers are enabled to see themselves as professionals and their autonomy is privileged.

The U.S. Government has identified inclusion training as a need for today's teachers. They have issued mandates, such as House Bill 1350 (2003), which support "high quality, intensive professional development for personnel who work with children with disabilities." Further, the United States Department of Education (2002) declares:

Too many general education teachers lack the skills to teach children with disabilities effectively and too many view serving those children as the responsibility of special education teachers. They lack those skills because too many teacher colleges and other professional development programs have failed to provide them that knowledge. Those teacher preparation programs fail to provide such background because many faculty lack the valid, scientific knowledge necessary to teach children with disabilities today. (p. 52)

One solution to the dilemma of adequately preparing preservice art teachers for inclusion may be inclusion training that is informed by critical theory. As preservice teachers use critical theory as a lens, they will be able to closely examine issues of inclusion in their schools. As they have hands on experience working with students with disabilities and receive relevant support from a mentor, they will be able to see themselves as change agents (Fullan, 1993) who can transform some of the educational dilemmas that inclusion presents.

Preservice Art Teacher Education and Inclusion Training

Art education studies have emerged in recent years which echo the U.S. Government's call for more rigorous inclusion training for preservice teachers. Witten (1991) found that the most critical factor in the success of students with disabilities was the adequate training of art educators. Universities have responded to this need by designing preservice programs that incorporate authentic experiences with persons with disabilities into the curriculum. The pivotal work of Carrigan (1994) has influenced many art education faculty to implement pilot programs involving interactions with persons with disabilities (Federenko, 1996; Keifer-Boyd, 2001). The premise underlying these programs is that inequitable beliefs about persons with disabilities can only be changed through experiences with this population.

In a pilot study I conducted, a sample of art teachers in Denton, Texas recommended that preservice students have authentic experiences with students experiencing disabilities (Yeager, 2001). Correspondingly, a study by Adams (1990) found that university faculty agreed that preservice students in art needed training in how to accommodate special populations. However, the respondents felt that there was simply no room in the current curriculum for another required course. If effective strategies for inclusion training in preservice art teacher education were outlined, perhaps this training could be embedded into current curriculum, eliminating the need for a specialized course.

The three most well known preservice art education disability curricula (Andrus, 2001; Carrigan, 1994; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2003) each contain some of the components of special education inclusion training discussed earlier in this chapter.

Carrigan's (1994) program focused upon helping preservice art teachers feel more confident in instructing students with disabilities. Upon analyzing the data from her study,

Carrigan suggested components that should be included in an art and disability course. These include “information about disabilities, significant contact and interaction with disabled populations, periods set aside for discussion/observation and instruction in human values” (p. 17). The impact of Carrigan’s study cannot be underestimated especially when every subsequent program discussed in the literature (Andrus, 2001; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2003) includes each of the components in some way.

Kraft and Keifer-Boyd’s (2003) model addresses the ways in which the classroom environment can be inaccessible to students with disabilities. Their preservice art education and disability program, Human Empowerment through the Arts (HEARTS), was developed following a dissertation study by Kraft (2001). She found that art classrooms only instruct students with disabilities in a superficial manner. While students with disabilities may be enrolled in the art class, they are not always given access to the same educational opportunities as students without disabilities. HEARTS was piloted in 2001 and provided 16 preservice teachers the opportunity to design and implement instruction for 20 students experiencing disabilities during a three-week course. Preservice teachers developed the mission statement, goals, lesson plans and teaching strategies for this pilot course. Such activities assist teachers in becoming agents of change (Fullan, 1993), whereby they recognize dilemmas in public education and construct a plan for change. The HEARTS model is sociopolitical insofar as it identifies ways in which students with disabilities are denied equal educational opportunities in the art class through inappropriate instructional strategies, insufficient teacher knowledge about disability, and lack of physical space. The model proposed ways of developing inclusive teaching strategies and examining ways in which the physical space of the classroom might be

modified to benefit all students. Those in special education (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2001) who embrace the sociopolitical model of disability advocate this approach.

Andrus' (2001, 2006) model focuses upon developing preservice teachers who are reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983). Andrus, a professor at Buffalo State College, teaches a required course for art education majors titled Art and Special Needs. Through a combination of course and field work, preservice teachers investigate the school environment, discuss and explore their understanding and beliefs about inclusion and develop strategies for successfully instructing students with disabilities. Andrus' model emphasizes students documenting their changing attitudes and beliefs about disability through journal assignments, visual art works, and class discussion.

Art Teacher Educators

The standards for preparing art teachers for inclusion (Day, 1997; National Art Education Association, 2002), the U.S. Department of Education's (2002) call for such preparation and research in special education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Horne, 1985; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) all meet at the nexus of the art teacher educator. It is he or she who must negotiate all of this information and use it to prepare preservice art teachers for inclusion. If curricular outcomes in preservice art education are primarily determined by the art teacher educator's life, history, beliefs and experiences (Beudert, 2006; Galbraith, 2004), then research into this area is of utmost importance. At the heart of educational action research is the exploration of self as it relates to teaching practices. The narratives of art teacher educators provide insight into the "intellectual, emotional and moral elements of preparing art teachers" (p. 125). As such, thick description of these narratives can provide a vital link to understanding the content and context of inclusion training in preservice art teacher education. The inquiry into my

practice as an art teacher educator providing inclusion training informed by critical theory aims to increase the knowledge base in this area.

In this chapter, I have reviewed the necessary areas of knowledge that informed the design and execution of this dissertation study. I detailed the ways in which critical theory coalesced with research in special education and thus informed the design and execution of this dissertation study. I also examined current practices and standards in art teacher education as they relate to preparing preservice art teachers for inclusion. Lastly, I underscored the need for more research into the life, history, beliefs and practices of the art teacher educator. This final area of inquiry is the core of this dissertation study and the nexus at which all other areas of this theoretical framework converge.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the design and execution of this study. I will address the research method, my role as researcher, the participants, the data collection instruments, the seminar curriculum, data analysis procedures and the means I used to establish reliability and validity.

The Shift in Educational Research

Many scholars in education, art education, and art therapy have previously favored empirically based research methodologies for the “hard data” that they yield for policy makers (Anderson, 1983). Currently, the trend in educational research is toward a more pluralistic approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative strategies (Eisner, 1998) and focusing more on the act of interpretation by the researcher and the research community. To Herr & Anderson (2005), the responsibility of generalizing findings of a study lies with the researcher providing a thick description of events and with the audience, who discerns the degree to which the context of a study fits the particulars of their situation. Such a trend finds its impetus in postmodern notions, which challenge the traditional canons of quantifiable, statistics-driven educational research and the very nature of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Understanding what occurs in a classroom is a multifaceted and complex endeavor; as such, quantitative research alone cannot capture its essence. The wide variety of methodologies in qualitative research (from ethnography to autobiography to case study) are more widely accepted as means to convey the contexts of schools, classrooms, groups of students and teachers.

This shift in research paradigms asks consumers of research to determine the extent to which the findings apply to their situation. The fact that a plurality of research methodologies is emerging and increasingly being accepted as valid by the research community holds promise for

those who seek to understand and document the layered nature of learning in the classroom (Eisner, 1998).

Research Method—Action Research

The chosen methodology for this study is action research. Action research fits squarely within this changing tide of educational research, insofar as it has

...prompted changes in the ways that increasing numbers of scholars who study education conduct their work. Rather than generating theory at a distance from practice settings, more researchers are now working in classrooms...and regarding teachers as partners in their research. (Lagemann and Shulman, 1999, p.4)

Eisner (1998) advocates that the efficacy of any research strategy lies in its ability to address the research question. Action research seeks to document and make sense of the complexity inherent in contexts of teaching. Since my research question addresses my practice as an art teacher educator and the impact of this practice upon preservice teachers, action research was the most fitting methodology. For this study, I explored the issue of how critical theory defined and impacted my practice and role as an art teacher educator. Through a review of literature, I found that there were multiple interconnections among action research, critical theory and inclusion training (See Table 3). It was necessary for me to continuously define, explore and apply these layers of knowledge during the execution of the study. This cyclical process of inquiry is a key component of action research (Hubbard & Power, 1999). This lent further support to action research as the most appropriate methodology for this study.

Table 3

Theoretical Framework: Critical Theory, Inclusion, Action Research

	What are core competencies /best practices of this theory?	What are the roles of teachers (art teacher educators)?	What are the outcomes for preservice art teachers?
Critical Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problem solving skills ▪ Investigation of personal biases ▪ Redistribution of power ▪ Dialectical thinking ▪ Praxis ▪ Emphasis on autobiographical narratives ▪ Personal and social transformation (Giroux, 1988) 	An agent of change (Fullan, 1993) A transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1988) One who has a reciprocal relationship with students, who critically examines practice and who is comfortable with ambiguities and willing to problematize	Personal validation as they see themselves represented, empowerment as they are allowed to critique school and societal hegemonies, as well as transform inequities (Fine & Weis, 2003; Freire, 1993; Giroux, 1988, McLaren, 1989; Noddings, 1992).
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problem solving skills (Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999a) ▪ Investigation of personal biases ▪ Inclusion necessitates that teachers perform ongoing research to test the effectiveness of their adaptations (Udvari-Solner, 1995, as cited in Keating, Diaz-Greenberg, Baldwin & Thousand, 1998). 	Investigating individual beliefs, adapting instruction, providing a communitarian environment (Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2003)	Participation in a classroom environment that mirrors society in its diverse representations (Sapon-Shevin, 2003)
Action Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problem solving, keen skills of observation develop as teachers engage in action research (Keating, Diaz-Greenberg, Baldwin & Thousand, 1998) ▪ Deep knowledge of self and ones practice (Gall et al., 2003). ▪ The ability to transform classroom spaces (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000) 	An agent of change (Carson, 1990; Fullan, 1993), and self reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983).	Empowerment as they realize that their voice is being taken into consideration in the research endeavor (Gall et al., 2003).

Action research is applied research in that it seeks to address and change a real life dilemma. Therefore, the research site is typically the classroom of the educator (May, 1997). Action research can employ qualitative or quantitative methods. Because it is based in teacher practice, typical data collection instruments include journals, interviews, and documents of student work. There are three primary benefits of action research. It supports student learning, supports educator learning, and contributes knowledge to the profession (Schwalbach, 2003). Researchers often report results in the form of a case or vignettes in an attempt to provide consumers of research with an understanding of the extent to which the study applies to their own situation.

I designed this study based upon one premise: critical theory can have a transformative impact upon preservice art teacher training. It can act as a lens for teachers, helping them to see their practice more clearly, especially any inequities that might exist. With regard to an issue as complex and multidimensional as inclusion, it is essential that preservice teachers be given the skills to thoroughly investigate each inclusion situation they encounter. Critical theory is a tool that helps them to see their situations more clearly and gives them the impetus to produce change. There were two distinct phenomena this study explored: how critical theory defined and guided my practice as an art teacher educator and how critical theory prepares preservice art teachers for the inclusive art classroom.

Before creating any instruments or collecting any data, I developed a framework for each of the phenomena under investigation: (1) How critical theory defined and guided my practice and role as an art teacher educator and (2) How critical theory impacted the preservice teachers' understandings and beliefs about inclusion. Based on my review of art education and special education literature, I delineated several components of critical theory that would inform my

practice and components of critical theory that would influence the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers (see Table 1).

This qualitative study sought to paint a picture of my practice as I prepared preservice teachers for inclusion using the principles of critical theory during the course of their student teaching experience. Action research was a fitting methodology for this study because it both makes explicit and documents the process of educational change. Stringer (1996) explains:

To the extent that people can participate in the process of exploring the nature and context of the problems that concern them, they have the opportunity to develop immediate and deeply relevant understanding of their situation and to be involved actively in the process of dealing with those problems. The task in these circumstances is to provide a climate that gives people the sense that they are in control of their own lives and that supports them as they take systematic action to improve their circumstances. (p. 32)

A primary goal of action research is to familiarize teachers with a habit of mind whereby reflection and action are natural processes (Keating, Diaz-Greenberg, Baldwin & Thousand, 1998). Action research occurs in cycles where teachers plan, act, observe and reflect (Kosnik & Beck, 2000). I participated in this cycle as I mentored the preservice teachers. Even though I created the curriculum before the semester began, I made changes in the curriculum during the semester in order to make it relevant to each preservice teacher's experiences, needs, and questions. This curriculum is discussed at length later in this chapter.

Action research informed by critical theory positions the educator's narrative at the center of the educational change process. This means that one's agency, biography, and history are linked in the process of changing one's practice and environment. This resonates with the work

of preservice art educator Galbraith (1995a, 1995b, 2004) who contends art teacher educators can understand their practice and effect the greatest change when they inquire into their own history and values. Several action researchers (Adler, 2003; Garriott, 2003; Hubbard & Power, 1999) recognize that this process often empowers teachers. Carr & Kemmis (cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) believe that the action research process has farther-reaching effects: not only can the educator's practice be transformed, but society can be as well.

In action research, theory and practice are authentically, fully integrated (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Kosnik & Beck, 2000; May, 1997). Greenwood and Levin (2000) contend that action research engenders this type of integration because it values the contributions of all participants, views the diversity of the group as a means to enhance the research process, and is always context-specific, seeking to change real life situations in real time. May (1997) and Galbraith (1995a) assert that in art education, theories-in-practice (Schön, 1983) are developed as preservice educators interact with teachers and allow the curriculum to be responsive to their needs and prior knowledge. Preservice art teacher educators and action researchers Bresler (1993, 1994), Galbraith (1995a, 1995b, and 2004), and May (1997) contend that we must understand preservice teachers' perceptions and life histories if we are to understand the curricula they construct. Each of these researcher's notions about the relationship among preservice teachers' life histories, experiences, and their learning greatly informed my practice during this study.

Action research documents a professional's practice. While a criticism of action research is that it does not always result in generalizable knowledge, Galbraith (2004) contends that research into the lives of art teacher educators is sorely lacking and that such research is the only way to elucidate successful practices in our field. Action research that addresses "intellectual,

emotional and moral elements of preparing art teachers, as well as offer[s] contexts for self-reflexive discourse” (Galbraith, 2004, p. 125). In short, action research can provide all preservice art educators with insight into their own work. On a personal note, action research became a means for me to come full circle with my dilemma as a public school teacher regarding how to implement inclusion. Indeed, autobiographical narrative is the heart of action research (Gall et. al, 2003). Hobson (2001) explains:

Our narratives include our insights, searches for meaning, and the connectedness we find in the world...Looking at our own autobiographies, reliving our own experiences with inequity, power, and authority in schools, offers us the opportunity to inform ourselves further and move forward to change situations in which today’s students experience injustice. (p. 8)

Such a goal is aligned with the rationale for emancipatory praxis described by Freire (1993). To Freire, research is a process of finding answers to relevant questions. These answers not only impact self, but the larger society as well. Thurber (2004) concurs with this notion, saying that the transformation researchers experience in the action research process becomes a model of action for others. As I explored the dilemmas of inclusion during this study, I provided myself with answers that would have helped me during my career as a public school art teacher. As I shared my history and experiences with the preservice teachers in this study, my goal was to empower them to make change in any educational dilemma in which they may find themselves.

Self as Researcher

In this study, I chose to explore two phenomena: how critical theory defined and guided my role and my practice as an art teacher educator and how critical theory impacted the preservice teachers with whom I worked.

Because of the nature of action research, it is not uncommon for researchers to study both themselves and the outcomes of their actions (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). One of the criticisms of this dual inquiry is that the ones performing the research are “often true believers in their particular practices...[and] are often tempted to put a positive spin on their data” (Herr and Anderson, 2005, p. 35). Herr and Anderson (2005) continue to warn: “To downplay or fail to acknowledge one’s insider status is deceptive and allows to researcher to avoid the kind of intense self-reflection that is the hallmark of good practitioner research” (p. 47). Action researchers have developed ways to counter this bias, however. Herr & Anderson (2005) recommend that one first acknowledge to the audience their position in the research endeavor. They identify a continuum of positions, from an insider researching their own practice to an outsider researching the practice of others.

Zeni (2001) contends that action researchers in education are all insiders. Since I am studying my own practice, my position is that of insider. I am looking closely into the setting, context and methods of my teaching. I am also looking at those whom I teach. They are also insiders, insofar as they are familiar with the context, setting and methods of the semester long student teaching assignment and seminars. Moreover, they are insiders by virtue of the design of this study. According to Herr and Anderson’s (2005) continuum, my position in this study can be identified as an insider working in collaboration with other insiders. Positionality coincides with a term familiar to ethnographic research, *participant observation* (Gall et al., 2003). Mertler defines a participant observer as one who “observes as a researcher but also particip[ates] in the group or setting as an equal, active member...” (2006, p. 69). Like Herr and Anderson (2005), Mertler (2006) also identifies a continuum of participant observation that reaches from observer to full participant.

For the majority of this study, I functioned as a full participant: I was continually engaged in dialogue with the preservice teachers, soliciting their feedback and talking with them about their goals and needs. I functioned as an observer as participant when I made school visits to the preservice teachers for the purpose of evaluation. I talked with the preservice teachers before, during and after class about what they saw happening in the classroom, helping them to use critical theory as a lens. I also talked with the students in the classroom about their work. I don't feel that I was ever strictly an observer, save when I read over my journal or the seminar transcriptions. Even so, the issues raised in data analysis informed my subsequent dialogue and changes to the curriculum and my pedagogy during the study.

From the very beginning of the study, I made explicit to the preservice teachers that my goal was to foster their personal and professional development. The cycle of thinking, planning and acting in action research came to bear on my research methodology and fostered their role as insiders, collaborators in the research endeavor. With every data instrument I administered, the results were examined immediately and they informed my future actions with the preservice teachers. For instance, if a teacher told me in a questionnaire or in a meeting after I observed their teaching that they were struggling with the way that their mentor teacher treated students with disabilities, this was an issue about which we talked and proposed solutions. We continued to revisit this issue throughout the semester until a resolution was reached.

An insider does have a stake in the research endeavor. Another means of reducing bias in such a position is to clearly state their beliefs, values and past experiences in the reporting of the study. In this next section, I acknowledge my presence in this study by recounting for the reader my reasons for choosing this research topic and choosing the methodology of action research.

As a beginning art teacher, I found myself frustrated with the lack of preparation I received to instruct students with disabilities. What was more frustrating was that I found myself acting in ways that I believed to be inequitable towards students with disabilities. I was part of a system that I did not really understand and I felt powerless to change things. The beginning of my graduate research aimed to fully explore these dilemmas I encountered and to propose a means for widespread change in the field of art education. While the term *widespread change* may seem overly ambitious, I believe it to be appropriate because the human dignity and empowerment of students in PreK-12 art classrooms is at stake. When I examine the things that I want others to understand about persons with disabilities, they are couched in issues like democracy, equity, communication, and human connection. I align myself with the philosophy of art educator Viktor Lowenfeld, who said:

It is one of my deepest innermost convictions that whenever there is a spark of human spirit—no matter how dim it may be—it is our sacred responsibility as humans, teachers, and educators to fan it into whatever flame it conceivably may develop. I venture to say that the ethical standard of a society can be measured by its relationships to the handicapped. We as human beings have no right whatsoever to determine where to stop in our endeavors to use all of our power to develop the uppermost potential abilities in each individual. We are all by nature more or less endowed with intrinsic qualities and no one has the right to draw a demarcation line which divides human beings into those who should receive all possible attention and those who are not worth our efforts. One of these intrinsic qualities is that every human being is endowed with a creative spirit.

(1957, p. 430)

How can these basic beliefs about humanity take root and grow deep in a teacher education program? Lowenfeld's words don't just speak to the experiences of persons with disabilities; they speak to all kinds of difference. Lowenfeld's identity as an Austrian Jew allowed him to relate to the experiences of diverse oppressed groups—from students with disabilities that he worked with in Vienna to African-American students he mentored at Hampton University in Virginia. How can an art education program transmit accurate knowledge about disability and provide preservice teachers with an equitable lens for exploring and understanding all forms of difference?

I believe the answer lay in developing mentoring relationships with preservice teachers whereby they are able to explore and articulate their identities as teachers. This position further reinforces my role as insider, working alongside the preservice teachers as they developed their ideas about inclusion and their beliefs about themselves as teachers. To me, this is ultimately a moral endeavor. Teachers, if they know themselves, can be equipped with the moral and professional capacity to equitably instruct all students, viewing the distinctions among students as natural, and indeed, desirable, in a democratic education. I align myself with the philosophy of Hansen (2001) who states:

...Many pioneering thinkers in education associate intellectual growth with moral growth. They conceive learning as extending well beyond adding fact upon fact and skill upon skill, important as that process may be....Learning encompasses the intellectual and the moral; it describes the emergence and formation of human being. To be a learned person, in the best sense of that term, means more than having a lot of information at one's fingertips. It means being thoughtful about what one has learned, aware of how what one has learned is significant and fits into human life, and sensitive to the

limitations and gaps in what one has learned. It means understanding that knowledge emerges from human interaction. (p. 833)

I used to think that inclusion training was the primary work that I did as an art teacher educator. My six years of supervising preservice teachers during their student teaching experience has taught me otherwise. What I realize now is that mentoring preservice teachers so that they are able to understand and assimilate their identity as teachers is a large part of my work. I am currently employed as a faculty member and Coordinator of Art Education at a private university in Texas. I am the only art education faculty member. As such, I advise and instruct all 23 art education majors. As I get to know each one, it is amazing to me to see their transformation from student to teacher. It is invigorating to me to be able to design experiences in each class I teach that will help students begin to explore, articulate and ultimately own their identity as teachers.

At the time of this study, I experienced many life changing events as a 33-year-old Caucasian female. I was married two weeks before the study began. I was also a doctoral candidate at the University of North Texas in Denton. During the study, my mother passed away. In the middle of the study, I interviewed and was hired as the Art Education Coordinator at a private university in the southern United States.

Participants/Location of Research

The participants in the study were seven preservice art education teachers completing student teaching during spring 2005 at the University of North Texas. I was employed as a university supervisor of student teaching. I chose to conduct the study with preservice art teachers who were completing student teaching for several reasons. First, my experience as a doctoral student and teaching fellow in the art education program at the university allowed me to

see that inclusion in the art room was not an issue that was addressed comprehensively in the curriculum. In the first disability questionnaire I administered (see Appendix F), I found that all professors addressed the issue of inclusion. My own relationships and conversations with these professors confirmed this fact. However, my experiences instructing preservice teachers in the program, coupled with my extensive review of literature on preservice inclusion training (Adams, 1990; Andrus, 2001; Carrigan, 1994; Federenko, 1996; Gerber & Guay, 2006; Keifer-Boyd, 2001; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2003; Nyman & Jenkins, 1999) convinced me that this is an issue that needed to be addressed more systematically if preservice teachers' competence and skills in this area were to be improved. To date, there had been no formal course in inclusion offered in the university's art education program. I reasoned that using the university as the setting for my study would benefit the teachers and the university program. If the seminar proved to be effective, the university might consider offering a course that addressed inclusion in the art room. Further, I chose the context of student teaching to conduct my study because each preservice teacher would experience two different interpretations of inclusion. Collectively, the preservice teachers had the potential of discussing fourteen different interpretations of inclusion during group discussion, and identifying trends regarding how inclusion is interpreted in public schools. Simply, the context of a student teaching seminar in a university where there was a stated need for a more consistent approach to addressing inclusion in the art room seemed to be fertile ground for this study.

Student teaching is a fifteen week experience; each preservice art teacher spends eight weeks at an elementary setting and seven weeks at a secondary setting. The participants in the study were five females and two males. There were six Caucasian and one Asian-American participant. The participants were assigned to me by the Coordinator of Student Teaching and

Field Experiences based upon geographical location. They all were seniors completing their student teaching within the same region of North Texas. There were three other University Supervisors who also had participants assigned to them based upon location. The participants for an action research study are usually not randomly selected or a representational sample; rather, they are the participants with whom someone would normally work (Issac and Michael, 1997).

Each preservice teacher had the option of not participating in the study. If they chose not to participate, that meant that none of their written or spoken comments in seminar meetings, interviews and observations would be recorded and used as data. They also had the option of being assigned to another supervisor. All seven of the preservice teachers signed a letter of informed consent and agreed to participate in the study. They were aware that the study would focus on their developing understandings about inclusion, and that information about them would be reported in this dissertation. With this understanding, each of them chose to use their real names for the reporting of the study. Although many forms of qualitative research do not use the real names of participants in final reports in order to protect their anonymity, in contrast, some action research in higher education does incorporate participant's real names, as this is a form of collective participation and empowerment.

When action researchers have informed consent for and use participants' real names in a study, this is viewed as one means of empowering participants to be actively involved in the inquiry and responsible for their own growth and development (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Zeni, 2001). Kemmis & McTaggart(2000) and Zeni (2001) see this practice as a means of establishing democratic validity in a study, which will be discussed at length later in this chapter. The most compelling reason for my choice of using their actual names in this study was that I believe that the study I clearly communicated the goals of the study. One primary goal for the participants

was their professional development in the area of inclusion. Therefore, they understood that there were no risks to them in this study, but only benefits and they all chose to use their real names. Further, I believed that if critical theory informed my theoretical framework, it should of necessity come to bear upon my methodology. Critical theory embraces multiple voices and seeks to equally distribute power. I sought to distribute power by presenting myself as a partner with the preservice teachers this inquiry. Zeni (2001) suggests that the guiding principles for teacher researchers are responsibility and accountability, rather than objectivity and anonymity. For me, this aligned with my personal philosophy of teaching and served as gauge for all of my actions. Soltis (1990) explains:

The unique relationship of teacher to student created a specific moral situation, one in which the student placed trust in the teacher and had a legitimate expectation of being taught..., not of being...harmed in any way, and, in general, of having his or her own well-being, not the teacher's, function as the guiding value. (p. 247)

The choice of using the preservice teachers' actual names was a constant reminder of my responsibility and accountability to them. I sought to tell a story of my practice and their development. I reminded myself that this was a story they were invested in and would read. To honor and include their voices, I used their actual names and gave them the opportunity to review their descriptions and the findings of the study, and to add any alternate explanations of the results of the study.

They were fully informed about my intent, my background and my beliefs about disability. They knew the purpose of my research. They trusted that I was acting in the role of teacher to study my own practice and how I fostered their development. This was confirmed in the results of the semi-structured interview (see Appendix J) at the end of the semester. When

each preservice teacher was asked what I valued, each one of them said I valued both their success and their opinions.

My duties as a university supervisor included making at least six school visits to each preservice teacher for the purpose of observation, evaluation and conference. On average, I spent approximately 2 ½ hours for each visit to a school site. I also had the responsibility of conducting a weekly or bi-weekly seminar on the site of the university for the student teachers that gave them an opportunity to discuss emergent issues from their teaching experiences. Each seminar lasted approximately two hours. I also used these seminar sessions as a means to implement the inclusion training I designed. I held eight seminar sessions during the course of the semester on January 23, February 6, February 27, March 6, March 27, April 3, April 24 and May 1, 2006.

Gesture Drawings of Each Participant

A gesture drawing is a common practice in art classrooms. It is typically done as an initial introduction to a subject. Gesture drawings become references for future, more developed drawings of the same subject. In a gesture drawing, the artist attempts to contain the substance and energy of the subject with economy of line. What I endeavor to do in this section is to make a written “gesture drawing” of each participant, where the reader is able to understand some of the defining characteristics of each preservice teacher as I saw it through my initial interactions with each preservice teacher, my own personal reflections, and their responses to an information sheet and a questionnaire for each placement (see Appendices A, E and H). It was essential to me to get a sense of who each participant in the study was, including their concerns about teaching and their perceptions of themselves as teachers. I saw it as a main endeavor of mine to support their professional and personal development, and I refined and developed these initial sketches

throughout the semester in order to complete a finished portrait of each participant, which will be shared in chapter 4.

Bill

Bill was a student in his mid-20s who had to maintain a job while completing student teaching. Because of this, he often struggled with time and personal management. When given an information sheet to fill out in our first meeting (see Appendix A), his reply to the question “Is there anything additional that you would like me to know about you as your college supervisor?” by saying “I am an insomniac and a pressure worker. If I don’t keep myself in check, I will overwork myself” (December 15, 2005). He came to the realization in the middle of his second placement that he needed to take better care of himself if he wanted to be more helpful to his students. Some of his primary concerns during his student teaching placements were how to maintain control of a classroom and gain respect. He said that many times he felt powerless to manage student behavior and often felt unsure of his ability to keep students interested in a lesson and respectful of him. We spent many of our discussion times after observations talking about these issues and developing ideas and strategies for his concerns. One of his goals for his second placement was to confirm with himself that he could hold a position of authority. He conceptualized himself as a teacher who was inventive and flexible. I found him to be a student who always responded positively to feedback and put it immediately into practice.

Erin

Erin was a student in her mid-20s who was quite apprehensive about teaching elementary-aged children. My first impression of her was that she was eager, outspoken and a natural leader. The more I got to know her, I realized how assertive she could be when it came to things that really mattered to her or that she was particularly anxious about. She was able to

identify early on some of the goals she had for herself as a first year teacher, one of them being an advocate on campus for suicide prevention training. She possessed a self-efficacy that allowed her to set goals for herself and achieve them. This assertiveness was sometimes misconstrued by others, however. She told me that one of the areas she struggled with was balancing her strong personality with groups of people in a class. She felt that this might be a detriment to her in teaching, and wanted to learn how to assimilate better into large groups. She, like Kari, also had a need to help others and to feel needed by others. By the time of her second placement, she felt she had gained mastery over this area because of the continual addressing of her concerns in our meetings and after observations. When given an information sheet to fill out in our first meeting (see Appendix A), she replied to the question, “Is there anything additional that you would like me to know about you as your college supervisor?” she replied “I can be a bit of a perfectionist. Tell me if I am overdoing it” (December 15, 2005).

Kari

My first impression of Kari was that she really wanted to please her teachers. A student in her early 20s, she was close friends with almost everyone in the group. As the semester progressed, I found her to be very passionate about issues of diversity. That being said, she was really the only student who admitted that she questioned whether or not inclusion was a good idea. She qualified that statement by saying that she was willing to consider all sides of the issue before making a decision on her opinion. Kari noticed that at her elementary placement, there were many students who were different. She said that her teacher didn't pay a lot of attention to individual differences of students. She also identified herself as a student with a learning disability, able to understand and empathize with these students and make things better for them. I found that she was very aware of other issues of diversity besides disability and wanted to

practice acceptance of these in her classroom. When I asked her what she felt accounted for these beliefs, she responded to me on a questionnaire from her second placement (see Appendix G):

You asked me why I usually seem to not judge people and why I am very accepting of most people. This semester, after being in elementary education, I realized I have a psychological need for everyone to like me and to be accepted by everyone. I have a need to have a connection with everyone (that can be a downfall). A friend told me that is probably why I like young kids—because they need the instant connection, too. It’s the same in my relationships. I always get into relationships where I feel like I need to save someone. I have a need to feel like I am helping, saving someone, or that someone needs me. (This is my psychoanalysis of what I have learned about myself). (March 6, 2006)

On her first questionnaire of the semester (see Appendix E), she described her greatest strength as a teacher: “I really care about the children so I want to help them learn. I try to help individual learners and I realize that every student learns differently.” (February 6, 2006). This attention to individual differences continued throughout both of her teaching placements. One of the teaching competencies that Kari struggled with throughout the semester was being assertive and asking for the feedback that she needed from her mentor teachers. This became a goal for her at both placements, and by the end of her second placement, she felt she gained proficiency in his area.

Kelly

Kelly was a student in her late 20s who had just gotten out of a long dating relationship when student teaching began. She identified herself as a twin who was often overlooked or overshadowed by other members in her family. She expressed apprehension about her art skills, because she had never taken art in public school. When I shared with her that my experience was similar, she seemed to feel a great deal of relief. Kelly expressed herself very well verbally, and

was less detailed in written accounts. Kelly, perhaps more than any of the other students, experienced a great transformation in her conception of her identity as a teacher. Student teaching was a cathartic and crystallizing experience for her, where she expressed that she finally felt like she had chosen the right path by becoming a teacher. Extenuating circumstances during both of her placements caused her to learn more about her strengths and gave her a degree of confidence about her resilience as a human being and a teacher. This transformation was recognized by the whole group.

Thai

Thai was a student in his mid-20s who identified himself as an artist first, then a teacher. He seemed very well prepared and anxious to become involved in every aspect of the student teaching experience. At the beginning of his first placement, he volunteered for a time consuming project with the school district in which he was student teaching. He shared with the group that this experience gave him a lot of insight into how districts operate. He always seemed to be aware of how his actions could help him network with others and make connections. He expressed concern with instructing students with disabilities and was one of the students who seemed to maximize the information given in the seminars. He never failed to have a question about inclusion or a particular student with a disability he encountered. He felt like one of his greatest strengths as a teacher was his ability to be a positive example to students, or a role model. He saw himself as somewhat of a “self made man” and felt like his experiences could give him an edge with students who may be marginalized or not see the relevancy in schooling.

Laura

Laura was a student in her late 20s who was married and a mother of two. It was apparent that she was well respected by the group and many of her peers referred to her as a “natural” in

the classroom. She, like Charissa, was very quiet during seminar meetings and gave minimal feedback on written forms and questionnaires. I often felt like she didn't really have any pressing issues about teaching that needed to be answered or solved. It also seemed like her attitudes about disability were equitable from the very beginning and that she didn't really have any major concerns or questions in this area. In the initial information sheet (see Appendix A) she cited her greatest strengths as being flexibility and having an open mind. She too, was very receptive to feedback. When asked on her questionnaire during placement one (see Appendix E) what her goals were, she replied

My goals for this placement are to learn from my teacher some of the tips and experiences that she has learned through her years of experiences. I am lucky I have been placed with an experienced open teacher who shares with me her good/bad experiences and I am ready to learn. I want to enhance my ability to create curriculum that meets so many students' needs—there are almost 700 students at our school—I want to be able to meet their needs from Kindergarten to 5th grade. How do you know if you are doing that (February 6, 2006)

Laura seemed to be very effected by the narratives of others. When people shared their stories, she was the student who was most likely to look deeper inside of her own story for comparisons and new realizations.

Charissa

Charissa was one of the quietest students in the group. Also in her mid 20s, she didn't seem to have any initial concerns or apprehensions about beginning student teaching or about inclusion. Her goals for each placement were simply to learn as much as she could. She was also very receptive to feedback. When given a questionnaire during her first placement (see Appendix

E), she responded to the question, “In what area of your teaching would you most like feedback from your mentor teacher and your university supervisor?” by saying, “I guess everything. If I am doing something wrong or if there’s a better way to do something or handle a situation, I would like to know.” (February 6, 2006) She seemed to be very skilled at differentiating instruction for students. She was aware of students who were having difficulty in her classroom and was eager to learn skills to help them or to pull them into the class more. Her attitudes about disability and inclusion were positive and she never reported any struggles or questions with students she encountered who experienced disabilities.

Data Collection—Introduction

This study explored two distinct phenomena: how critical theory defined my identity, role, and actions as an art teacher educator and how critical theory prepared preservice art teachers for inclusion. To begin the process of data collection, I developed frameworks for each of the phenomena under investigation Tables 5 and 1, respectively; detail the components of critical theory as they impacted my practice as an art teacher educator and the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers. I engaged in the action research cycle of thinking, planning and acting while seeking to implement these components into my practice and the curriculum. I collected all of the data for the study during the fifteen weeks of the student teaching semester with the exception of the semi-structured interviews (which were conducted during the three months after the study’s end).

Thurber (2004) maintains that data for action research projects are inextricably connected to the setting in which the research takes place. This setting for me varied from the seminar classroom, the school sites where I observed the student teachers, phone conversations and email

communications, my home where I made entries in my journal and the public space that each preservice teacher chose for the semi-structured interview (see Appendix K).

Data Triangulation

There were several sources of data utilized in an effort to answer the research question and create a multifaceted picture of my practice as an art teacher educator (see Table 4). Gall et al. (2003) and Mertler (2006) note that employing multiple data sources, types of data (both qualitative and quantitative) and analysts in a study helps to strengthen the trustworthiness of the research and reduce bias. This process, called *triangulation*, enables the researcher to examine all the data for their agreement *or* incongruity with one another. In this study, I utilized an array of data types and sources. Some of the data types had quantitative components to them, using rating scales and tallying of experiences and events (see Appendices F, G and I). I also practiced peer debriefing, (Creswell, 1998; Mertler, 2006) a process where an individual "...keeps the researcher honest; asks hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations, and provides the researcher with an opportunity for catharsis by simply listening..." (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, as cited in Creswell, 1998). My major professor and the members of my committee formally and informally reviewed my methods and findings and subsequently proposed alternate interpretations to the data. Member checks are another means to triangulate data and reduce bias. Mertler (2006) describes this process as having the participants in the study review the data and offer alternate explanations. I asked each of the preservice teachers to review the findings and propose alternate solutions to the data. I demonstrate how I utilized each type of data triangulation in chapter 4, where I review the findings of the study.

Data Instruments

The data for this study included a personal journal, a seminar curriculum and related questionnaires and interviews (see Table 4). All of the data instruments marked with an asterisk* can be found in the Appendix.

Table 4

Data Sources in This Study

Data Source	Date Administered	Purpose of Data Source
Student Information Sheet*	December 15, 2006	To gather preliminary information about the preservice teachers and get a sense of their personalities, strengths and needs
Personal journal	Entries from December 15, 2005 to July 18, 2006	To help me think, plan and act as I supervised the preservice teachers and implemented the inclusion training in seminars
Seminar Curriculum (worksheets, audiovisual presentations)	Created fall 2005; Administered from January 23 to May 1, 2006	To address key issues of inclusion in the art room
Seminar Transcriptions	Transcribed June to July 2006	To look more closely at the curriculum and verbal responses of preservice teachers during seminars
Questionnaire Placement One*	February 6, 2006	To help preservice teachers identify areas of strength and improvement and to give them an opportunity to express any concerns
Disability Questionnaire*	February 6, 2006 and May 1, 2006	To assess preservice teachers' prior knowledge and experience in disability and their beliefs and attitudes The post-questionnaire was administered to examine any changes in these areas, as well as describe the extent and nature of these changes.
Questionnaire Placement Two*	March 6, 2006	To help preservice teachers identify areas of strength and improvement from their first placement and to articulate goals for their second placement
Dilemmas in Inclusion Worksheet*	March 6, 2006 and May 1, 2006	To introduce preservice teachers to some of the inclusion situations they may encounter in the schools The post-worksheet sought to measure any degree of change in the preservice teachers' knowledge base of implementing inclusion and locating disability resources.
One-time Semi-Structured Interview*	From May 11 to August 11, 2006	To clarify, confirm or disprove issues that emerged from previous data

I will now discuss each of these data sources in detail along with my rationale for choosing and designing each one.

Student Information Sheet

I created a Student Information Sheet (see Appendix A) that I administered at my first meeting with the preservice teachers, before their student teaching placement began. The purpose of this sheet was to find out general information about each participant, such as work schedule and contact information. I also used this sheet as a way for the preservice teachers to identify some of their concerns and questions about student teaching. The last question on the sheet, “Is there additional that you would like me to know as your college supervisor?” gave the preservice teachers an opportunity to give me any “urgent” information about themselves that they felt I needed to know in order to understand them. As an art teacher educator, I have utilized this question for over six years in my classes and student teaching supervision, and I am always amazed at how students consistently use this question as a means to disclose personal information about their work habits, temperaments, and lifestyle: things that they feel impact their performance as students.

My Personal Journal

The journal detailed my questions, concerns, and approaches in creating mentoring relationships with student teachers and providing them with supports and resources in inclusion. It also helped me to see the ways that my practice was defined, guided and sometimes inhibited by critical theory. In a period of 8 months, I made 40 journal entries, averaging a journal entry every 3 days. I found that it was most common for me to write in my journal both before and after the seminars; both thinking through my course of action for the evening and reflecting on the events of the seminar after it was over. The journal length is 97 pages of single spaced type.

Many action research projects utilize journals as valuable sources of data (Galbraith, 2004; Hobson, 2001). Anderson and Herr (2005) underscore its importance in the action research endeavor:

...Keeping a research journal is a vital piece of any action research methodology; it is a chronicle of research decisions; a record of one's own thoughts, feelings, and impression; as well as a document reflecting the increased understanding that comes with the action research process. Beyond these, it is important to keep track of the ethical decisions made throughout the research process....the primary 'rule' in action research practice is to be aware of the choices one is making and their consequences." (p. 77)

In my journal, I was prompted to write after significant events occurred in observations, seminars, personal conversations with the preservice teachers or reviews of literature. Examples of such events include a-ha moments of preservice teachers, dilemmas they experienced in inclusion, insights I had into my own practice, and discrepancies between my practice and my beliefs. This instrument was a means for me to engage in the action research cycle of thinking, planning and acting. Researchers using journals are able to reflect on their practice, make observations, raise questions and act accordingly. Hobson (2001) conceptualizes a journal as an educators' "written record of practice" (p. 19). Journals help researchers keep an eye toward nuances in their practices and thinking (Galbraith, 2004). This process involves taking a longer look at educational phenomena and thus "rendering the familiar strange" (Hobson, p. 8, as cited in Gall et al., 2003). Hobson (2001) has developed suggestions for teacher researchers who engage in action research. He recommends that the researcher make daily entries and focus on description and reflection in each journal entry. In art education, this method has also been used

widely by Galbraith, most recently in her examination of the working life of Dr. Kit Grauer (2004). I discuss the means I used to analyze the journals in the Data Analysis section.

The Seminar Curriculum

The seminar curriculum included audiovisual presentations, class discussions and worksheets I created to guide such discussions. Each seminar meeting addressed general student teaching concerns of the preservice teachers and a specific topic relating to inclusion. The seminar curriculum was informed by literature from the fields of special education and critical theory (Andrus, 2001; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Blandy, 1999; Carrigan, 114; Fine & Weiss, 2003; Freire, 1993; Giroux, 1983, 1988, 2003; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999; Keifer-Boyd and Kraft, 2003; Mitchell & Snyder, 1996; McLaren, 1989; Sapon-Shevin & Zollers, 1999).

Before the semester began, I reviewed literature from these fields and delineated several components of critical theory and inclusion training that are effective in guiding a teacher educator's practice and in transforming preservice teachers' attitudes about inclusion. The components that guided the seminar design are: (1) Establishing a balance of power between students and teacher; (2) Providing mentoring; (3) Establishing a community of learners; (4) Fostering dialogue; (5) Enabling dialectical thinking and (6) Honoring student narratives. These were discussed at length in chapter 2. I sought to incorporate these components into my practice as a teacher and by doing so, to model the type of equitable practices that critical theory defines as being transformative for disempowered students in K-12 classrooms. I wanted the semester and the seminar curriculum to be experiential for the teachers. It was my intent that the simultaneous modeling of critical theory, the preservice teachers' experiences with inclusion at their student teaching placements and the seminar curriculum would result in learning that was transformative.

These components of critical theory helped me to define goals for the seminar. Once the goals were established, I chose seminar topics and activities that I felt would accomplish these goals. This alignment is shown in Table 5. I am indebted to the mentorship of Professor Lucy Andrus at Buffalo State College. Some of the course activities and topics (such as establishing class norms, simulated disability experience and the issue of disability as diversity) were first introduced to me by Professor Andrus when I was a visiting doctoral student in her course, *Art and Special Needs* in fall 2003 and an adjunct professor teaching that course in spring 2005.

I discuss the content and rationale for each meeting later in this chapter. I held eight seminar sessions on Monday nights during the semester at the university. Each session lasted for approximately 2 hours. I audio taped and transcribed each seminar session. These transcriptions enabled me to see the extent to which my theories about critical theory, mentoring and inclusion training matched my actual practice. They also helped me to observe how the preservice teachers' notions of inclusion developed. This method of recording and transcribing teaching is used in art education by Bresler (1993) and Galbraith (2004) and is cited by both as being an invaluable tool in recognizing themes and issues that otherwise might be missed.

Table 5

*The Seminar Curriculum: Goals and Topics*⁷

<i>Principles of Critical Theory Which Will Guide My Practice</i>					
Reciprocity Among Students and Teacher—Balance of Power	Providing Mentoring	Establishing a Community of Learners	Fostering Dialogue	Enabling Dialectical Thinking	Honoring Student Narratives
<i>Course Goals Aligned with Critical Theory and Inclusion Training to Transform Attitudes: The Preservice Teachers Should...</i>					
Consider the perspectives of persons with disabilities and establish a broader view of inclusion	Increase disability knowledge (classifications, effective teaching strategies and special education law)	Have opportunities to learn each others' stories	Engage in collaborative problem solving with one another	Examine inclusion as it exists in the public schools; Consider school culture and its effects upon marginalized groups	Explore their attitudes and beliefs about disability; Be able to articulate their own dilemmas in inclusion
<i>Course Topics (Each topic below includes a developed lecture and group activities)</i>					
Disability as Diversity; Disability Culture	Special Education Law; Individualized Education Plans and Art; Adaptations in the Art Room	Class Norms; Many course topics include paired discussion and activities	Disability Language; Artists with Disabilities	Inclusion Laws; Dilemma Cases in Inclusion	Weekly class discussions about inclusion issues in preservice teachers' classrooms

⁷ Informed by a review of the following literature: Andrus, 2001; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Blandy, 1999; Carrigan, 114; Fine & Weiss, 2003; Freire, 1993; Giroux, 1983, 1988, 2003; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999; Keifer- Boyd and Kraft, 2003; Mitchell & Snyder, 1996; McLaren, 1989; Sapon-Shevin & Zollers, 1999.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires during the course of the semester helped me to gather information about the preservice teachers' needs, concerns and questions as they related to general student teaching and inclusion-specific issues. Gall et al. (2003) note that questionnaires can provide information to the researcher about the participants' inner beliefs and experiences. Further, questionnaires are often more time-efficient data instruments than interviews. In some instances, I chose to use questionnaires as an instructional tool. I asked the preservice teachers to fill out some of the questionnaires I created at the beginning of our seminar as a means to direct their thinking and help guide the class discussion for that evening. I also chose to use questionnaires because of my knowledge that some people express themselves better in writing rather than speaking. Bill confirmed this when he told me in the semi-structured interview, "...It takes me a long time to open up to others. I feel like I learn more from thinking rather than thinking out loud" (August 11, 2006).

I created three questionnaires for this study. Two of them explored general student teaching concerns (these were the ones I used to jumpstart discussions during our seminar) and one of them addressed the preservice teachers' disability beliefs and experiences. I administered the two general student teaching questionnaires at the beginning of each student teaching placement, one in February and one in March (see Appendices E and H) which asked the preservice teachers to define their strengths as a teacher, list questions they had about each placement, and set goals for improvement at each placement. This information helped me to provide each teacher with context-specific resources and support related to general teaching issues. As the teachers' university supervisor, it was my primary responsibility to provide them with assistance in art teaching, not inclusion training. I was continuously attempting to balance

these two issues, and my design and use of these two questionnaires were one means I used to systematically address their general teaching concerns. Each seminar session also had time devoted to preservice teachers asking questions and sharing concerns about their placements. The questionnaires were modeled after many of the conversations I have had with student teachers following observations of their teaching. As such, in each questionnaire I ask the teachers to define areas of strength and improvement and to establish goals and an action plan for reaching those goals. Inherent in these questions is the action research process, whereby teachers identify an issue and make a plan for addressing this issue. I also wanted the teachers to develop their sense of teacher identity. While engaged in these processes, I hoped that the preservice teachers would develop their sense of personal power and active force (or agency) to solve real life dilemmas.

I created pre- and post-disability questionnaires (see Appendices F and G) which helped me define the preservice teachers' prior knowledge of, experience with, and beliefs about disability (Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999). I administered the pre-questionnaire at the beginning of the semester and the post-questionnaire at the end of the semester. The main difference in the two questionnaires was that post-questionnaire (see Appendix G) asked the preservice teachers to reflect on their initial responses to the last three questions and reflect on any changes they experienced during the semester. This questionnaire helped me to design learning experiences tailored to the specific beliefs and experiences of each preservice teacher. I was able to identify the areas in which had gaps in knowledge and make sure that I addressed these in our conferences after observations and in the seminar. With regard to beliefs, I wrote statements that sought to gauge the preservice teachers' attitudes about disability. In an effort to seek corroboration among the data they provided in this questionnaire, I

asked the preservice teachers to write down why they chose each statement. This triangulation helped to validate or disconfirm the statements they chose.

Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet

I created the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I). This worksheet listed six real life cases of inclusion that I experienced as a public school art teacher. I asked the preservice teachers to choose a case and answer a series of questions about the needs of the student and how they would assess and meet these needs. The purpose of this worksheet was to gauge the extent to which preservice teachers were able to assess student needs and the degree of awareness they had about resources in the school setting that they could utilize in implementing inclusion. This worksheet was used as an instructional tool in one of the seminars. After the preservice teachers completed it, we discussed their cases and we talked about strategies they could use to better assess student needs and specific Internet and school resources that could help them in this task. I administered the questionnaire again at the end of the semester in order to gauge what degree of change there was in the preservice teachers' ability to identify needs and resources.

Semi-Structured Interview

I conducted a semi-structured interview (see Appendix K) with each preservice teacher after the semester ended. Gall et al. (2003) note that researchers choose to use interviews and questionnaires to record "phenomena that are not readily observable: inner experience, opinions, values, interests, and the like"(p. 222). In a semi-structured interview, the researcher develops general questions related to the research issues and asks by asking spontaneous follow up questions that are relevant to the participants' experiences. The use of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research allows the participants to respond in their own ways and thus often yields

results that are both unanticipated and rich with meaning (Guest, MacQueen, Mack, Namey & Woodsong, 2005). Further, the use of interviews allows researchers to clarify vague information obtained from previous research instruments (Gall et. Al, 2003; Stake, 1995). I chose to interview the teachers after the semester ended, when grades were turned in and I had already written each of them a letter of recommendation. I didn't want any of them to feel like their answers could in any way affect my evaluation of their performance or my beliefs about them. The interviews lasted approximately 1 ½ hours and were conducted at places of the participant's choice: coffee houses, restaurants, etc. The structure of the interview addressed four broad areas: (1) Mentoring; (2) Identity Development; (3) Inclusion; and (4) The Preservice Teachers' Perception of My Role, Values and Effectiveness in Mentoring. I chose these areas and developed general questions for each one based on the gaps that I felt existed in the data to that point. I also used the semi-structured interview as a way to corroborate (or triangulate) the information with previous data sources. For instance, the issue of power redistribution was one that was central to this study. In my journal, I wrote continuously about my concern that I was distributing power equitably among the preservice teachers and myself. In the semi-structured interview, I asked several directed questions to the preservice teachers that gauged their perception of the amount of power they had during our seminars and the student teaching experience.

Method of Data Analysis

In qualitative research, there are many means of analyzing data and many schools of thought on how data should be analyzed. Miles and Huberman (1994) recount that qualitative data analysis can be viewed as an artistic endeavor, where researchers following intuitive hunches in determining what the data mean. Some researchers, on the other hand, are hesitant to

rigorously analyze qualitative data because they feel that complex social processes are fluid and cannot produce generalizable results. Creswell (1998) reviewed three major textbooks on qualitative research and found over 13 strategies for analyzing data. There are a multitude of strategies for analyzing qualitative data. I utilized Creswell's (1998) data analysis spiral as a structure for my data analysis methods. To his sense, a researcher goes through the following cycle as they analyze their data: (1) Data Collection; (2) Data Management; (3) Data Reading, Memoing; (4) Describing, Classifying, and Interpreting (5) Representing and Visualizing (p. 143).

I will now discuss how I applied Creswell's (1998) data analysis spiral.

I collected data throughout the study. These data are listed in Table 4. I managed the data by using three ring binders and my home computer. In the binders, I stored each piece of data from the seminar curriculum in chronological order. Each handout I used and printed versions of the audiovisual presentations were the main pieces of data from the seminar curriculum. In another section of the binder, I kept each piece of written data that the preservice teachers filled out during the semester in chronological order. These data included the Student Information Sheet, Disability Questionnaire, Placement One and Two Questionnaire and the Semi-Structured Interview (see Appendices A, F, G, E, H and J). I grouped all like documents together so that they could easily be individually and comparatively analyzed. I made entries in my personal journal using my personal computer. My journal comprised one single document. I audio recorded every seminar session and I transcribed these tapes at home using my personal computer. Each session was transcribed and saved as a separate document.

In the data reading phase, I read through each piece of data several times without making any notes or observations in an effort to "get a sense of the whole database" (Creswell, 1998, p.

143). In the data describing, classifying and interpreting phase, I read through each piece of data again and noted where the components of critical theory I previously identified (see Tables 1 and 7) emerged. Mertler (2006) describes this process as the development of a coding scheme, and Stockrocki (1997) calls it content analysis. In both approaches, the researcher establishes codes or categories and looks through the data for evidences of where the categories emerge. To ensure that I coded the data accurately, I found examples of each component of critical theory practice in the literature. Therefore, when I saw these issues emerge in the data, I had a reliable referent. Gall et al. (2003) note that this process is similar to the inter-rater reliability used in quantitative research. I developed color codes for each component of critical theory and I used different fonts and colors to code data that spoke to emergent issues, silences and conclusions. In the representing and visualizing phase, I developed tables where I recorded written responses of the preservice teachers. In each table, I color coded where the components of critical theory emerged. I also developed a table for the analysis of my journal which listed the components of critical theory and examples from my journal where these emerged. The table also had a section where I kept a running list of questions and gaps or silences in the data. These gaps became issues that I addressed in the Semi-Structured Interview (see Appendix K). During this stage of representation, I noted where the highest number of occurrences of critical theory components appeared. I used the most prominent examples in reporting the findings in chapter 4. Qualitative researchers Stockrocki (1997) and Creswell (1998) note that when data are significant when they recur more than 50% of the time. Conversely, when something fails to occur that is expected, that too should be noted. Stockrocki (1997) also offers this advice for understanding when the analysis process is coming to a close and findings can be reported: “How do you know when you are finished? When the categories become saturated with examples...” (1997, p. 45).

Action research is set apart from some qualitative methodologies in the way that data are used and the times at which they are analyzed. In action research, data are analyzed continuously in an effort to improve one's practice (Carson & Sumara, 1997) and subsequently affect each course of action that the researcher takes. A researcher may have designed an instrument, but finds that the instrument needs to be changed or deleted based on data that has been collected and analyzed to that point. Data for this study included a personal journal, the seminar curriculum, transcriptions of the seminar curriculum, questionnaires and a final interview with each preservice teacher. Each piece of data were analyzed according to the eight competencies of critical theory and inclusion training. Emergent themes, questions and silences were also noted. In the next section, I will demonstrate how I analyzed each of the data sources in the study.

My Personal Journal

I used my journal as a space to reflect on my research, detail the events of observations of the student teachers and seminar sessions and propose solutions to dilemmas I experienced as an art teacher educator. As I made entries in my personal journal, I would often start off with a phrase that described the main idea or theme behind the entry. This theme could be one of the components of critical theory or an emergent theme that I had not previously identified. The subject matter of the entries could be influenced by a number of things: the ongoing review of literature, a significant event that occurred with a student teacher, a dilemma I was having in understanding or analyzing the data, etc. Often times, there would be multiple themes that I would address in one journal entry. Consider this example of themes I explored on January 23, 2006:

- The goals established for the seminar
- The class norms for our seminar
- First concerns of preservice teachers
 - Kari: Personal connections, individual differences

- Charissa: How to have the authority to discipline
- Thai: The school politic
- Laura: Eyes wide open
- Bill: It's us against them
- Whose narrative is this, anyway?
- The messiness of power redistribution
- Establishing trust as a precursor to changing power relations
- Other teacher educators' approaches to action research
- The problematics of data collection
- Establishing boundaries with student teachers: Is this part of power redistribution?
- Am I schmoozing the mentor teachers?

The Seminar Transcriptions

I audio recorded and transcribed each of the eight seminar meetings. The primary advantage of transcribing events is that in so doing, the researcher increases the credibility of the research. Gall et al. (2003) see transcribing as a way the researcher can reduce discrepancies among his or her beliefs and practices. Another advantage of transcribing events such as teaching and discussions is that it allows for careful study by the researcher. Researchers can replay tapes and read transcriptions multiple times to key into subtleties that might be missed in just simply recounting the events from memory. I manually transcribed each seminar session and read over the data multiple times. I highlighted significant phrases in our conversations. These were often new themes or emergent patterns and the process of highlighting was a reminder for me to return to the data. I looked also for the components of critical theory and I noted them at the end of the transcription. I created a table to help me analyze the data in the transcriptions. This table included the following headings:

- The seminar agenda
- My focus
- Observations and questions
- Intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics
- Participation

Here is an excerpt from my analysis of February 6, 2006 (Table 6):

Table 6

Initial Stage of Data Analysis for Seminar Transcriptions

<u>The seminar agenda</u>							
Disability Questionnaire		Questions/concerns		(No time for My Story)			
<u>My focus:</u>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am giving student teachers tips on interpersonal dynamics...helping them to Table out what might be motivating their mentor teacher's actions, helping them to realize how to treat someone's experience with respect, (I wonder if it was helpful for Charissa to hear my explanation of my actions at our conference?) I want them to honor their mentor teachers. • I am also putting the responsibility to change upon them. • I want them to realize their role as designers of creative experiences. 							
<u>Observations and questions:</u>							
<i>The process of listening to the tapes benefits me by helping me realize that:</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wonder why I let my actions be so motivated by fear that the student teachers would get tiered of hearing about inclusion. I was almost apologetic when it came to talking about disability related things. It seemed that the whole time, I was balancing this dual role of inclusion expert and university supervisor of student teaching, and critical theory was the police officer that helped to ensure that I didn't disproportionately focus on inclusion. Had critical theory not been the theoretical framework for this study, might I have been less self conscious about whether or not I was pushing an "agenda" of inclusion upon student teachers, and trying to keep inclusion talk to a minimum, making sure that I was addressing their concerns about student teaching? I ignored some of their questions and comments about disability! (Kari, Thai, page 14 in transcription) I didn't hear/listen to Thai's entire question and I didn't give him the info he needed. I noticed a tendency in me this semester, when I have been nervous or afraid that I might not appear competent in inclusion to give facts, information, to sound like I know what I am talking about, rather than listening first. 							
<u>Intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics:</u>							
Erin contradicts herself and I am not sure how to help her. She tells me that she doesn't want any positive feedback, only negative, but that it should be constructive feedback.							
Thai's self worth is tied up in his student's responses to him...he states this plainly. (page 11 in transcription)							
Laura appears very proactive, trying to get Erin to look at things from another perspective.							
<u>Participation:</u>							
Erin	Spoke up 45 times	Kelly	Spoke up 27 times	Kari	Spoke up 27 times	Thai	Spoke up 18 times
Laura	Spoke up 6 times	Charissa	Didn't speak out at all	Bill	was not present		

Even after this initial analysis, I went back and wrote in the margins where I noted the competencies of critical theory and other recurring themes and patterns (Sagor, 2003; Schwalbach, 2003; Stake, 1995; Stringer, 1996).

Questionnaires for Placement One and Two

I read through each of the general questionnaires that were administered at the beginning of each placement (see Appendices E and H) and made notes about the issues that the preservice teachers raised. I made sure that I addressed these issues in one of our meetings after an observation, after a seminar, or in a phone conversation or email communication.

Disability Questionnaire, Dilemmas in Inclusion Worksheet and Semi-Structured Interview

I administered the Disability Questionnaire (see Appendices F and G) and the Dilemmas in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I) at the beginning and the end of the semester. I administered the Semi-Structured Interview (see Appendix K) after the semester ended. I used a blank version of each instrument on my home computer to record my analysis. For example, I opened the blank Disability Questionnaire and read each preservice teacher's questionnaire and recorded their answer to question 1, 2, 3, etc. When I was complete, I could see each preservice teacher's response to every question. I coded the components of critical theory as they emerged in each of the above instruments. For those instruments that were administered twice (the Disability Questionnaire and the Dilemmas in Inclusion Worksheet), I noted the degree of change (if any) that existed. As I noted commonalties and sharp contrasts in the data, I highlighted these areas and made notes in the margins.

Establishing Reliability and Validity in Action Research

Action researchers don't rely on traditional quantities methodologies such as controlled experiments with independent and dependant variables, random sampling or laboratory settings

(Lagemann & Schulman, 1999) to attain reliability or the degree to which the results of the study can be generalized. Rather, they utilize thick description (Stake, 1995), where the researcher paints a picture of the phenomena being studied, so that the consumers of research can evaluate it to see how closely it resembles and thus applies to their particular situation. To Anderson & Herr (2005) and Schwalbach (2003), the action researcher has the responsibility of providing this thick description so that the consumer of the research can understand the context as clearly as possible.

Validity in research refers to the degree of credibility that a piece of research has (Gall et al., 2003). Questions that come to mind when addressing this issue include: Are the conclusions from the data analysis accurate? Can this research be trusted as a reliable source? A researcher must address bias in order to maximize the validity of a study. Action researchers often study both themselves and the outcomes of their work (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). This close association between researcher and outcomes is normal in action research and Anderson and Herr (2005) state that “bias and subjectivity are natural and acceptable in action research so long as they are critically examined rather than ignored” (p. 60). As such, efforts to reduce bias must be employed in an action research study. The first means of reducing bias is for the researcher to declare his or her beliefs, values and experiences upon beginning the research endeavor. This “critical reflexivity” (Anderson and Herr, 2005, p. 60) becomes part of the research cycle of thinking, planning and acting, whereby the researcher constantly articulates, questions and problematizes these stances in journal entries, field notes and also in the final reporting of the study.

Other means of reducing bias include utilizing a variety of validity measures. Gall et al. (2003) define five means of establishing such validity in action research projects: (a) outcome

validity, (b) process validity; (c) democratic validity; (d) catalytic validity and (e) dialogic validity. I will briefly discuss each validity measure and then describe how I applied each measure within my study's design.

Outcome Validity

Researchers and consumers of research can measure outcome validity by simply asking if the initial problem of the research was solved. Did the action research project reach its desired goal? In the case of my research, outcome validity is measured by examining the extent to which I gained insight about my process of providing preservice teachers with resources and support in inclusion in the context of a mentoring relationship.

Process Validity

Process validity refers to the extent to which the chosen research strategies match the research tasks. Simply stated, do the instruments and methods measure the intended information? Process validity also refers to the extent to which a researcher frames questions so that continuous inquiry is permitted. The researcher who establishes this validity will also pay attention to emergent data and revise instruments and methods as necessary. Action research, because it is a cycle of thinking, planning and acting, lends itself to utilizing process validity. In my study, I developed a framework for how critical theory would impact my mentoring process and the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers. I revisited this framework and the questions that emerged in my journal on a regular basis. These became touch points for me. Utilizing these frameworks, I was able to observe and note the impact that critical theory had upon my practice as an art teacher educator and the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers. Questionnaires and worksheets I created (see Appendices D, E, F, G, I, J) to gauge the preservice teachers understanding of inclusion gave me information about the concerns

of the preservice teachers and subsequently impacted my evolving approaches to providing support to the preservice teacher. I also looked for silences or issues in the research that were not addressed. I kept an eye toward what might be missing in the data and for alternate explanations of the data.

Democratic Validity

The researcher establishes democratic validity when he or she establishes ethical procedures to ensure that the voices of participants are included and equitably, accurately represented in the research. Gall et al. (2003) maintain that informing participants of the research goals and process is one way to foster democratic validity. I made the preservice teachers aware of my research goals. I also endeavored to establish trust and good communication among us and I continuously reminded them of the goals of my research. Each preservice teacher chose to use his or her real name in the reporting of the study. I practiced the qualitative validity measure of “member checking” (Gall et al., 2003, p. 464) as a means to check the accuracy of my perceptions of the preservice teachers and the outcomes of the curriculum. In member checking, the participants in the research study are given the opportunity to review the research findings and offer alternate explanations or comments regarding the data conclusions. I gave each preservice teacher the opportunity to review the description of themselves in this chapter and the findings in chapter 4. I incorporated any commentary they offered into the final draft.

Herr & Anderson (2005) say that democratic validity in action research is also attained by maintaining relationships with the research participants well after the study has ended. It has been one and a half years since the study ended, and every one of the seven research participants has maintained contact with me. We communicate through email and phone conversations, as well as face to face visits (many of them teach in the school district where I live). Five of the

seven participants are currently teaching in art classrooms and the two participants who are not teaching are pursuing alternative art teaching situations. Each of the seven participants have continued a dialogue with me about their professional lives and pursuits since the study ended a year and a half ago. They are all eager to share their accomplishments and the ways in which they feel they are successfully managing many of the dilemmas of teaching. This self reporting they are engaging in is but one means of verifying the catalytic validity of a study, or the extent to which the participants have investment in personal change long after the study concluded.

Catalytic Validity

This measures the degree to which the action research project produces change in and an intrinsic desire in the researcher and participants to continually improve practice. Anderson and Herr (2005) state: “The most powerful action research studies are those in which the researchers recount a spiraling change in their own and in their participants’ understandings” (p. 56).

Understandings about my role as an art teacher educator evolved during the study and continue to evolve. With regard to a continually improving my practice, because this research proceeds from my own narrative and interests, I have a commitment to the work that will remain long after this study is completed. The participants as well have a commitment to the profession of teaching as shown in many of our recent conversations. For example, Erin told me recently that she has begun mentoring new teachers at her school (personal communication, October 4, 2007) and Charissa recently worked with some of my current art education majors, inviting them into her classroom for observation and questions (September 11, 2007) .

This self reporting they are engaging in is but *one* means of verifying the catalytic validity of a study, or the extent to which the participants have investment in personal change

long after the study concluded. However, a limitation of this study, whereby participants may have been eager to please their instructor, might have influenced their self-reporting.

Dialogic Validity

Dialogic validity is essentially a process of peer review of the data and findings to ensure the efficacy of the researcher's claims (Anderson & Herr, 2005; Gall et al., 2003). This is one of the most critical means of reducing bias and is needed because of the unique situation in which action researchers conduct their research (Mertler, 2006). As such, I will demonstrate in the following paragraphs specific instances where I employed dialogic validity in this study.

When studying one's own practice, there is tacit knowledge about the situation that is a natural outcome of experience. Anderson and Herr (2005) state that this knowledge "raises epistemological problems in the sense that unexamined, tacit knowledge of a site tends to be impressionistic, full of bias, prejudice, and unexamined impressions and assumptions that need to be surfaced and examined" (p. 35). Anderson & Herr (2005) also suggest several ways to reduce this bias. One can maintain close relationships with other action researchers and dialogue with them about the work. One can also develop "critical friends" (Anderson & Herr, 2005, p.60) or "peer debriefers" (Creswell, 1998; Mertler, 2006) who look to the data for silences and taken-for granted assumptions. As I conducted the study, I talked with members of my committee about the findings. Each committee member helped me to keep an eye to my practice, in particular, the ways in which I might be privileging my own knowledge and asserting that my model of critical theory and inclusion training was the most equitable and desirable way of addressing this issue in preservice art education. In the writing of the study, my major professor acted as a critical friend, suggesting alternate explanations for some of the assertions I made. Her comments sent me back to the data to reexamine my assumptions. In particular, I recall her

response to the following statements in chapter 1: “Preservice training in inclusion occurs intermittently and without *any one well-researched approach*” and “Hutchens (1997) asks how one can begin to reform a field in which “there is *no consensus*—no single, widely accepted overriding philosophy of art education or of art teacher preparation? How can over five hundred programs involving thousands of faculty members and administrators have a unified philosophy?” (p. 149) [Italics added]. She asked me if there should be *only one* approach, and if there should be a consensus on the way to prepare art teachers for inclusion. These comments forced me to explore and legitimate other approaches and ideas on how to prepare art teachers for inclusion. After subsequent conversations with her on this topic, I found that my bias was affecting the way that I viewed the role of the mentor teachers and my perception of their lack of support for inclusion. In one phase of my data analysis of my journal, I gave myself the task of asking where the silences were; finding out which issues were not stated or addressed. I realized that I had made very few journal entries that addressed the mentor teachers who were proactive about practicing inclusion. I immediately made a journal entry which details this realization:

Am I setting myself up as an expert...do I speak with knee-jerk disdain about schools and their cultures? It was an epiphany to me today to realize that it is a significant finding that many art teachers spend their planning period in self-contained special education classes teaching art....I need to be exploring this issue further, finding out what motivates teachers to do this and sharing with our field that there are a number of teachers that are devoted to inclusion. (June 28, 2006)

The following sentence from my dissertation proposal is another good example of how the comments of committee members caused me to re-examine my tacit assumptions.” Lack of preservice preparation is a primary source of the problem of teachers having *wrong* beliefs about

disability”[italics added]. Several of my committee members questioned how I could delineate what was “right” or “wrong” beliefs about persons with disabilities. They also questioned whether this assertion proceeded exclusively from my own experience or was supported in the literature. Another committee member reminded me that a critical friend was not someone who just simply agreed, rather, they played more of a *devil’s advocate* role. In a conversation with committee members while I conducted the study, I told them that I was shocked when the preservice teachers did not have many personal experiences of exclusion to share as we began our discussion of inclusion. An excerpt from my journal details how this dialogue impacted my thinking and re-oriented my future actions. Thus, while being an example of the way that dialogic validity was built into my study, it is also an example of the methodology of action research. I evaluated my actions and used my emerging knowledge from the literature to propose solutions and new courses of action. Consider my journal entry which details this process of utilizing critical friends to foster dialogic validity in a study:

I think tonight was the first time I made explicit the connection I feel to persons with disabilities. I told a group of people this for the first time tonight. My experiences with struggling with body image and being obese as a teenager led me to understand how painful it was to be judged about my ability, my worth, on the basis of appearance. I felt my voice shake and my heart rate quicken as I shared this and became vulnerable to the group. I think it was important for me to put this out there, and I hoped it would open the door for the students to feel more comfortable about sharing their own experiences with being excluded. It seemed that Thai and Bill really opened up, but beyond that I felt like the group didn’t really have that many experiences with feeling excluded. I must admit that this was a bit of a let down for me, as I was expecting them to all have similar

experiences. Could it be, as Phoebe DuFrene (1996) suggests, that students from the dominant culture don't experience exclusion to the extent that someone with a more noticeable difference does? When Kari, Kelly, Laura and Erin all said that they didn't experience exclusion, could it be that they are correct? I kept on thinking, "surely they have experienced this...they just aren't thinking about the question deeply enough or I did not explain it or set up the activity in the best way." But it may be that I need to address this in the next seminar...they didn't experience exclusion because in many cases they were part of the dominant culture. I could share with them some of the diversity resources I have, narratives of people who battle this everyday.

I talked with Melinda and Rina about why they thought I got these reactions from the student teachers, and they suggested that perhaps my story was a bit too dramatic, and therefore the stakes were too high, the sharing was too personal, and therefore no one shared. They suggested that I also share some less powerful stories of how I have felt excluded...like being at a party and not knowing anyone. I probably should have started with the "easy" ones and then moved on. They also suggested that the reason that the men shared stories of their exclusion and the women did not was because the women had a strong need to belong, and didn't want to risk being isolated because of their difference. This is kind of hard for me to assimilate, but I am trying to Table it out. (February 27, 2006)

In conclusion, action research, because it is the study of one's practice, must be examined for the bias it contains. The researcher must take measures to ensure that this bias is examined and addressed. Anderson & Herr (2005) state that each researcher must endeavor to choose validity criteria that are the best fit for the research project they undertake. The measures of

validity I chose address my role as researcher, my relationship with the participants and the outcomes of the research. In this chapter I have described the action research method used in this study, the participants, the data collection instruments, the curriculum, the data analysis procedures and the means of attaining reliability and validity in this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present a summary of my research findings. For this study, I sought to answer the question, “How does an art teacher educator use critical theory to mentor preservice teachers and prepare them for the inclusive art classroom.” The participants in the study were myself and seven preservice art education teachers completing their student teaching in spring 2006. I used the methodology of action research to explore the two distinct phenomena in this study: how critical theory defined, guided and impacted my practice as an art teacher educator and how critical theory impacted the preservice teachers with whom I worked. Data sources included a personal journal, a seminar curriculum I created (which included worksheets and questionnaires) transcriptions of the seminar and a semi-structured interview at the end of the student teaching placement.

In my research design, I first developed a seminar curriculum (see Table 5) which detailed several components of critical theory that would define my general practice as an art teacher educator. I then developed a framework for how critical theory would impact the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers (see Table 1). These frameworks guided all of my data collection, analysis and the subsequent reporting of the study. In this chapter, I will show how I engaged in the action research cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting as I implemented each of the components of critical theory into my practice as an art teacher educator and into the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers.

Purposes, Activities and Structure of the Seminars

I conceptualize the seminar curriculum as being one of the primary means by which I delivered the inclusion training to the preservice teachers. As such, in this chapter I will refer to specific activities and events from each seminar session. For the reader's convenience, I include an outline of seminar activities below (see Table 7). A detailed recording of the purpose, agenda and structure of each meeting can be found in Appendix L.

Table 7

Outline of Activities for Each Seminar Meeting

<p><u>December 15, 2005</u> First general meeting at the university (before student teaching began) Student Information Sheet</p>
<p><u>January 23</u> Class Norms: Discussion Student teaching calendar: Handout Student teaching guidelines: Handout and discussion General questions and concerns: Group discussion</p>
<p><u>February 6</u> Questionnaire Placement One Disability Questionnaire General questions and concerns: Group discussion</p>
<p><u>February 27</u> Audiovisual Presentation: My Story and discussion Inclusion: Challenges and Solutions: Handout and Discussion</p>
<p><u>March 6:</u> New placement concerns: Group discussion Questionnaire Placement Two Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet and discussion Audiovisual presentation: Locating disability resources</p>
<p><u>March 27</u> Learning about yourself from your first placement: Group discussion Understanding the special education process and the IEP: Presentation and discussion Comparing inclusion at each site: Handout and group discussion</p>
<p><u>April 3</u> General concerns and questions: Group discussion Audiovisual presentation: Adapting the art experience Adaptive clay experience and discussion Adaptive art equipment and hands-on demonstration</p>
<p><u>April 24</u> Audiovisual presentation: Artists with disabilities General concerns and questions: Group discussion</p>
<p><u>May 1</u> Administer Post Disability Questionnaire Administer Post Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet Watercolor activity Informal talking about emergent issues, concerns</p>

How the Principles of Critical Theory Define and Guide my Practice

When I developed the seminar curriculum, I defined several goals of critical theory that would define and guide my practice as an art teacher educator (see Table 5). In the first section of this chapter, I will show how I engaged in the action research cycle of thinking, planning and acting while seeking to: (1) Redistribute power among the preservice teachers and myself, (2) Provide mentoring to the preservice teachers, (3) Establish a community of learners in the seminar, (4) Foster dialogue among the preservice teachers and myself, (5) Enable dialectical thinking and (6) Honor preservice teachers' narratives.

Redistributing Power

Beginning with the writings of John Dewey, critical theory emphasizes a democratic relationship between student and teacher (McLaren, 1989). Both Freire (1993) and Noddings (1992) assert that critical theory in practice hinges upon a caring exchange between student and teacher. To Freire, this exchange involves establishing a balance of power, whereby the student and the teacher each have contributions to make to one another. The teacher is not the sole truth teller or the expert. It was essential to me that I honored the voices and stories of my students, from the very first seminar. Critical theorists have documented that students often express resistance when they find a curriculum to be irrelevant or a teacher to be uninterested in their lives (Fine and Weis, 2003; McLaren, 1989; Noddings, 1992). With an issue as important as inclusion, I felt it was necessary that students saw the relevance of this issue to their job as teachers.

While I was prepared to honor their voices and narratives, I naively assumed that this would be an easy process and would naturally result in power being distributed equally among the preservice teachers and myself. I knew that critical theory was an appropriate framework for

such a task, because as a tradition of qualitative inquiry, it seeks to explore and transform oppressive power situations (Gall et al., 2003). As such, this issue would be the primary topic I dealt with all semester. I found it to be a taxing issue, as I wrestled continually with whether or not power was equally distributed among the preservice teachers and myself. The first indicator I had that power relationships were already set in place and would need to be addressed occurred at our first seminar meeting. I began the seminar with a discussion of classroom norms. I explained to the preservice teachers that we have the ability to create a dynamic learning environment by defining what we want to accomplish and what we need in order to do this. I asked them what they needed as students in order to be successful. It was interesting to me that all of them said they wanted specific feedback and practical tips. This wasn't the route I intended to take in my instruction. My understanding of critical theory was that it enabled teachers to find their own way. I began to worry that my critical theory approach would disappoint, or worse yet, fail to equip them to successfully instruct students with disabilities. I also felt like their desires put me in a position where I would be giving them advice and assuming the role of expert.

They told me what they needed to be successful and then *they* shifted the discussion to what I expected from them. This was the first time any of them picked up a pen or a pencil and they began writing down every word I said. This made me feel really awkward. This initial insistence of wanting to please the teacher caused me to sometimes hold the preservice teachers' intentions suspect when they gave me "critical theory" answers later in the semester. I often wondered if their beliefs were their own, or if they were just telling me what I wanted to hear. Consider this excerpt from my personal journal on April 24, 2006:

When I heard the student teachers use the language I had been using all semester, that made me feel good as well...should it have? When Charissa talked about the norms she

wanted to see in her classroom or Bill talked about transitioning from a student to a teacher identity, I got excited. Was this a real sign of success? Or, am I just happy because they were using my critical theory lingo?

Sullivan (2005), in his review of postmodern and critical research approaches, acknowledges the conundrum that exists in action research. He explains that, while action research aims to empower individuals, it can sometimes result in a different type of control. He draws the comparison between the process of action research and an art critic who writes about an art show. To his sense, the critics' interpretation of the show can often tell the viewer more about the critics' theories than the artist's true intention. The central issue is one of representation: as an action researcher, I am continually re-presenting someone's experience. That is why, in the literature, so much attention is giving to reducing bias in this type of inquiry. I discussed the means I used to reduce bias in this study at length in chapter 3.

I explored this issue of power redistribution all semester, engaging in the action research cycle of thinking, planning and acting as I searched for literature on the topic that would inform my actions. Consider my journal excerpt reflecting on the work of action researcher Grimmet (1997):

Today, as I read Grimmet's (1997) chapter on his experiences as a teacher educator. Specifically, he addressed his struggle with learning how to redistribute power. In his job as a facilitator, he wondered when his assistance of students became a subversive means to push his own agenda. His students were frustrated at times, wondering how they were doing, if they were getting the "right" answers. I thought it was interesting that he never denied that there were right answers; he just wanted the students to find these answers themselves.

Grimmet (1997) found resolve by not being directive "...of the students, but of the process...not doing something to the students but with the students" (p. 130). I think that this approach is in line with critical theory, because it is about egalitarian participation in a process, rather than me just telling them what to do, or what is right and wrong. (January 23, 2006)

Power redistribution is not a new issue for teacher educators. Adler (2003) ended the article on her action research endeavor by concluding that power redistribution is desirable, but problematic insofar as she is still the one "giving a grade" (p. 80). I was aware, as desirable as power redistribution is that I do hold a large amount of power, as I am still the one "giving the grade" as well (Adler, 2003, p. 80).

I also wondered if some of my advice to them was too instructive, or perceived by them like I was telling them there was only one solution, which was mine. This issue emerged in a later journal entry after a seminar meeting:

I question if I was too directive with the student teachers tonight...giving them advice and tips on how to start conversations with aides in the classroom, saying that I was going to tell them the wise way to approach an aide. Am I circumventing the goals of critical theory by telling them what I think is "wise"...or, does the use of critical theory and action research presuppose that my bias is declared? What do the student teachers think? (February 27, 2006)

What is more, I also wondered if all of my concern about power redistribution was really practical when student teachers were wrestling with issues like student discipline. They needed immediate answers. I was telling them that they could redistribute power, but could they really,

when they were in a classroom that was not their own, for only 8 weeks? I felt duplicitous at times, as seen in this journal entry after a meeting with Bill:

In Bill's observation today, I became very uncomfortable with our discussion about discipline. I encouraged him to be firm with the students to make them aware that he was in charge, and to demand that they give him their attention. I wondered if such a directive was in line with the goals of critical theory. It felt to me like I was saying that he was the one with the power and he needed to show it. Interestingly enough, I was exploring the same issue with him as we met. He has not fulfilled any of the requirements of the seminar. I felt I had to be firm and let him know that this needed to change. His rating was low on professionalism. Did I cross a line? Was I not being equitable in letting him know what the expectations were and that there were consequences for not following them? I am reminded of how many people begin to teach students with disabilities and don't have expectations of them, all in the name of equity, or treating them with pity. This ends up creating a mass of problems...was I in effect, doing the same thing?

(February 14, 2006)

At the end of the semester, these questions about power distribution still loomed in my mind. Did I follow the principles of critical theory and redistribute power among the preservice teachers and myself? Was I too directive with them? In an attempt to answer these questions and others, I constructed a semi-structured interview (see Appendix K) and administered it at the end of the semester, after grades had been issued and evaluations were completed. Two questions in particular dealt with the preservice teachers' perceptions of power distribution during the semester:

Table 8

Semi-Structured Interview Response, Question 23

Preservice Teacher	Were there any instances where you felt like I was telling you what was right/wrong?
Bill	No. We learned but it was never forced. You stated that things were your opinion, not facts. You were subjective in critiques. You found weaknesses, but there was no negative feedback. It was always helpful. You showed flexibility in understanding each person's individual teaching style.
Erin	No. I never felt like you wanted me to agree with you.
Kari	No. You wanted everyone to choose the options that worked for them individually.
Kelly	No. We spent time talking ideas out and asking questions to one another. You helped us to Table out the answers on our own.
Thai	No. You gave us possible resolutions to the issues that were brought up—not absolute rules.
Laura	No. Choices were always given. We were always given the opportunity to explain a situation. You gave suggestions, rather than insisting.
Charissa	No. You went out of your way to not do this. You let students speak their mind. You were unbiased and nonjudgmental. You gave me the information I needed and then I made the decision about what to do.

Table 9

Semi-Structured Interview Response, Question 24

Preservice Teacher	<p>23. How much power do you feel you had in making decisions about student teaching this semester?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 I I IIII no power 6 7 8 9 10 power equal to instructor</p>
Bill—10	We were never told that we couldn't do something. We were allowed to question our evaluations, allowed to change our seminar policies if we needed.
Erin—10	You gave advice, but every decision was 100% mine.
Kari—10	No explanation
Kelly—10	We had the ability to pick the lessons that you came to observe. My mentor teachers were very different. One let me just try things out, which was great. The other suggested that I try a more scripted approach. I prefer testing myself.
Thai—8	You gave suggestions that helped us. They weren't from a textbook, they were from real life
Laura—10	I was in control in both placements.
Charissa—6	There were set guidelines. When and where to teach, the schedule. But, in general, things were very open. I could choose the lessons I wanted you to observe.

After looking through these results, I revisited my journal and found that there were indeed instances where I was very conscious of redistributing power. My journal entry after observing Bill provides an example:

I was thinking today about all of the synthesis that occurs as I observe a student teacher. My second observation of Bill is a perfect case in point. I was really struggling with what to say to him when I saw his lesson go downhill. I was already feeling a bit miffed that once again he did not have his lessons ready for me when I came to observe him. And, as I looked closely at the lesson it appeared that he had no plan at all for the day. I continually have to look down at my notes and consider what is essential to share with each student teacher about the observation...what is the most concise, cogent way to begin the discussion of the observation and what would be most helpful for them to hear. With Bill, I began by asking him how he felt the lesson went. Then I began to address some of the concerns that he put in his questionnaire about not having control of the class or the respect of the students. I underscored that I realized this was a difficult class and I told him that I was here to help him. We talked about what teachers did to gain respect and ways that he could begin to get the respect of this class—making the learning relevant to them, using differentiated instruction so that as many students had a way into the material as possible, being professional, consistent with discipline and prepared. I put all of these suggestions down on paper and we arranged a time for me to come back and informally observe the same class next week to see if some of these suggestions worked. I like the fact that I ask the student teachers to try these suggestions out and to see for themselves if they work...it seems like that equalizes the power, where I am not the one

saying that this is the only way it can be done...I am asking them to test it out and find alternatives if it doesn't work out. (March 1, 2006)

This evidence corroborates with Bill's response to my question of whether or not he felt like I distributed power. He replied to this question after the semester ended and the above incident occurred: "We learned but it was never forced. You stated that things were your opinion, not facts. You were subjective in critiques. You found weaknesses, but there was no negative feedback. It was always helpful. You showed flexibility in understanding each person's individual teaching style." (August 11, 2006)

Another journal entry showed me that even if I was the one "giving the grade" (Adler, 2003, p. 80), many of the preservice teachers really took to heart my admonition that I was there to be a layer of assistance for them rather than an evaluator who was there to make a final judgment without offering them any input:

Erin's mentor teacher, like Bill's, was shocked that she had chosen the class she did for me to come and observe...not a perfect class. I can only surmise that they did this because they wanted my feedback and assistance with a genuine problem, rather than showing me the "best" class. Other preservice teachers I have worked with in the past did the same thing. Kari also told her class in one of my observations of her "this is my teacher and she is here to help me and to give me advice to make me a better teacher. (April 4, 2006)

To my sense, evidence that power was redistributed among the preservice teachers and myself was that they felt like it was acceptable to disagree with me and offer alternate explanations, as in the following reflection in my journal after a seminar meeting:

It made me happy to hear Bill add a contrasting perspective on my belief that teachers should continually be available for students and walk around all class period. He said that some of his students were uncomfortable with that and needed a different approach. The fact that he and Erin can raise contrasting ideas makes me feel like I have established a balance of power in the class. (April 24, 2006)

I found that I was also very conscious about sharing power among the mentor teachers and myself during the study. It has been well documented in teacher education literature (Atweh, Kemmis & Weeks, 1998; Danielewicz, 2001; Richardson, 2001) how difficult it is to establish trust and a balance of power between university supervisors and mentor teachers. Every single time I walk into a classroom for the first time to meet a mentor teacher, I feel a slight tension, where it seems I am being held suspect. I think some of this comes from the mentor teachers feeling like they are being evaluated along with the mentor teachers. One way I made conscious effort in redistributing power between the mentor teachers and myself was by asking them to participate in the discussion/evaluation after an observation. After my first observation of Kari, her mentor teacher declined sitting in on our discussion. I gave Kari some suggestions on how to improve the lesson. I was unaware that it was her mentor teachers' lesson. Though the suggestions were minimal and offered as suggestions only, Kari told me that when her mentor teacher read the evaluation and got to that part, she threw it down on the table and read no further.

The tension also comes from teachers thinking that there is a great divide between what is taught in college and what actually happens in classrooms. Many perceive that university supervisors are out of practice, out of sync with the "real world." Kelly's mentor teacher made this plain to me when she stayed in the room during one of mine and Kelly's discussions after an

evaluation. I invited the mentor teacher to participate in our discussion, but she declined, saying she had some paper to cut. After the discussion was over, she came over to us and disclosed her real purpose for remaining in the room. My journal excerpt from that day details the events:

It was interesting to meet with Kelly today and have her mentor teacher still in the room. I didn't really feel uneasy, because I was confident that the information I was providing her was helpful and relevant. I feel like I have perfected my observation feedback. I put myself in the position of being an extra set of art teacher eyes, not a supervisor. I try to see every aspect of the classroom—space, student responses, visual aids, teacher presence, time—and put all these pieces together to form the whole. I tell the student teachers that I am attempting to give words/terms to the good practices they are adopting and to give them maximum feedback about the learning experience I observed. I tell them that my suggestions are just things for them to think about and try out to see if they are relevant or not. I feel like they appreciate this approach. The only times I have rated student teachers low is when there is apparent lack of proficiency in an area like discipline or professionalism. And, I encourage each student teacher to share the evaluation with their mentor teacher and to contact me if they have any concerns or questions. I feel like this is an extremely equitable process.

After going over Kelly's observation with her, her mentor teacher asked me if she could compliment me. She told me that my feedback was very practical and helpful, and that she stayed in the room intentionally to make sure that she and I were on the same page.(February 8, 2006)

Redistributing power in general necessitates that one think on ones' feet. I found that I had to be willing to be flexible and revise my actions or decisions in an effort to maintain a balance of

power between the mentor teachers and myself. Consider this journal entry after an observation of Charissa:

In Charissa's observation today, the one thing I did not see her do was "lead a discussion about the works of Maria Martinez." This was one of her objectives, but she just gave information. I completed her evaluation form with low ratings for that part and noted that I wanted to see her work towards developing this area in the next observation. I talked with her about it and she said that she did a discussion in the earlier class but her mentor teacher told her to cut it much shorter in the interest of time. We talked more and I got the sense that perhaps she didn't really lead a discussion, but just gave more information to the students. I told her that her mentor teacher had a point, you should be able to be concise with your information (yet still draw students in). My main point to her was that I wanted to see her interact with students while she was giving the demo and the information on Martinez and we talked about different ways that she could do this. At the end of the discussion, I decided to remove the ratings from that part of the evaluation and I told her that I was doing this because I did not want her to feel like there was a discrepancy between what her mentor teacher and I expected from her. I felt like this was a wise move on my part. (April 3, 2006)

I found that I was continually attempting to build bridges between the mentor teachers and myself. After a discussion of a lesson that Laura taught, she was very disheartened that the students were not excited and did not participate in her discussion as she had planned. During the lesson, I talked with her mentor teacher and she offered some explanations as to why she felt the lesson was not going well. During mine and Laura's discussion, I brought up what her mentor

teacher had said in an effort to fuse our voices and show Laura that we both were on the same page.

Establishing a Community of Learners

It was desirous to me that the preservice teachers in the seminar were part of a learning community whereby they constructed knowledge together, solved problems and felt a responsibility to one another. I sought to do this through first discussing class norms and then showing students in class discussions that I valued their presence and that everyone had a contribution to make. I don't feel like I was very successful in this endeavor. To my sense, the preservice teachers' interactions in the seminar didn't look like they were committed to one another. I took pains to make sure that every seminar session included times where the preservice teachers could discuss their concerns. Often times, this led to one or more of them dominating the conversation and not giving anyone else a chance to speak. I felt like I walked a thin line in balancing their need to be heard with the other preservice teachers. More often than not, I erred on the side of not being overly directive and letting the preservice teacher in question continue to talk. I feared this would create resentment among the other teachers. This was confirmed in the semi-structured interview after the semester ended as I asked the preservice teachers what they felt my weakest area was as an instructor:

Table 10

Semi-Structured Interview Response, Question 26

Kelly	In the seminars, I felt like you let us vent too much When I did vent, I just wanted to vent. I didn't necessarily want advice from everyone.
Laura	Sharing was a bit drawn out. It ended up being less seminar and more venting and talking.

Bill, when asked what my strongest area was as an instructor, acknowledged that the above situation existed, but had a contrasting view:

Table 11

Bill's Semi-Structured Interview Response, Question 26

Bill	In the seminars, students got cut off from speaking by other students. Some students were long winded and didn't really think before they spoke. You were good at finding a balance between them talking and you talking. You made sure everyone had a chance to talk. You didn't criticize anyone. You led them to reflect. You were empathetic towards individual situations. You were very concerned for each student and had a desire to help them out.
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In an effort to probe further and see if my suspicions were correct about whether or not the seminar truly resembled a community, I asked the preservice teachers a series of questions about the issue during the semi-structured interview:

Table 12

Semi-Structured Interview Response, Question 3

Preservice Teacher	3. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a community?
Bill	The way you aid others, what you bring back to those around you. How you help others who are in your community.
Erin	People with shared experiences, not necessarily values. For instance, we were all teachers, and all of the same age. A community offers support and problem solving for one another. In an ideal community, a sense of well-being would exist. It would be cathartic, making you feel like everything will be ok.
Kari	Working together as a team to make a whole. Cooperating with one another. Everyone is a part of each other and they have connections and relationships.
Kelly	People who are together for one reason or goal. There is a positive, supportive environment. People don't necessarily have the same beliefs.
Thai	Commonality of interests, shared experiences, relating to one another. There is an open-book policy where everyone participates.
Laura	A network of people working together to get the job done. People can have all different values.
Charissa	A group interacting together. There is a oneness and a wholeness. The district in a school is a community; you want to draw on them for help.

I sought to increase the validity of the preservice teachers' answers to the previous question by asking them if our seminar resembled a community. I wanted to see if they would utilize their previous definition in justifying their answer. What I found was that most of them defined community by shared experience rather than active participation in a process of collaboration. I thought being in a community involved collaborative activity: verbal exchanges, collaborative problem solving, and brainstorming. They felt that they were a community simply by virtue of the fact that they all shared the experience of student teaching.

Table 13

Semi-Structured Interview Response, Question 4

Preservice Teacher	4. Do you feel that the seminar resembled a community? If so, how?
Bill	Yes and No. During the semester and after was like a community. But, everyone had so much going on during the semester. It was hard for me, because it takes me a long time to open up to others. I feel like I learn more from thinking rather than thinking out loud.
Erin	Yes. There were conflicting personalities and opinions, but our shared experiences gave us a sense of togetherness.
Kari	Yes. The discussions we had involved everyone and pulled from each person's experiences. We gave advice to one another and helped with problems. It was an open environment where I felt like anyone could say anything.
Kelly	Yes. Even though we all had different backgrounds and different experiences with our cooperating teachers.
Thai	Yes. I shared experiences with my friends and colleagues. Everyone was very open when they shared and it was invaluable to have others give their input to you. It never felt uncomfortable. You were able to sense everyone's comfort level and you were careful to make sure you didn't offend someone.
Laura	Yes. Everyone came together with different experiences and we were all getting through student teaching together. Seeing someone else's success propelled you to go further.
Charissa	Yes. We all have something in common; a goal, a sense of companionship. There were people in the group that you could rely on to help.

My finding was that we had differing notions of what constituted a community. I realized that I never made explicit to them my definition of community. The data showed me that the

preservice teachers envisioned shared experience as the main component of a community. This could explain some of their lack of attention to the components I identified as essential. What is more, I realized that I was putting all of the responsibility on myself to develop and promote this community. A classroom is composed of many individuals, and each one has a responsibility to promote community. While the primary responsibility rests upon the instructor (who, even if he or she has redistributed power, still holds the most power), the other members of the class must fully participate in the process of creating community. hooks (1994) confirms this through her explanation of how to create community in higher education:

As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence. Since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor, any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged....Often before this process begins, there has to be deconstruction of the traditional notion that only the professor is responsible for classroom dynamics. (p. 8)

After reading her explanation, I began to look back over the events of the seminars and wonder if I put all of the responsibility upon myself to create this community, rather than articulating to the preservice teachers that this was an area in which they had a role to play. Perhaps I was privileging my own role as teacher, the one with the most power, and assuming that I had the wherewithal to bring about this intervention all by myself.

Fostering Dialogue

Dialogue is an essential part of mentoring relationship. It enables two or more people to have an open exchange of ideas and to fully explore all of the possibilities of a situation. It is a

give and take type of interchange, where each person has a turn at being the listener and the talker (Danielewicz, 2001). Power must be shared in order for dialogue to occur. The way that I shared power and fostered dialogue among myself and the preservice teachers was to begin most conversations by asking them what concerns they had in their teaching situations. I then helped them look more contextually at the situation, to find out the roots of the dilemma. I ask them to then propose solutions to the dilemma. I feel like, in most of these situations, time was shared and I didn't spend all of the conversation in the role of talker; I listened an equal amount. Many of the preservice teachers acknowledged this when I asked them what I valued and what my strongest area was as an instructor during the semi-structured interview after the semester ended.

In terms of establishing group dialogue, I don't feel that I was nearly as successful. Certain preservice teachers talked extensively when we addressed general student teaching concerns and I conducted many of my presentations in more of a lecture style format. My insistence that power be distributed, coupled with my developing understanding about what this meant, led me often times to be non-directive during the seminars when preservice teachers dominated group conversations. My review of the seminar transcriptions confirmed this. For each transcription, I tallied the number of times that each preservice teacher spoke up. I found that in every seminar session, the same pattern of speaking was repeated: Erin spoke up more than any other participant and Laura and Charissa spoke up the least. Many of the preservice teachers, during the semi-structured interview, noted this inability to equalize the talk time of participants as an instructional weakness of mine. The seminar transcriptions also showed me that during presentations, I delivered information in a monologue, attempting to "cover" all the necessary material. As I transcribed the seminars, I noticed a tendency in me to present

information in a lecture-style format, with very little opportunity for the student teachers to comment. Consider this analysis of the transcription from the April 3, 2006 seminar:

- The inclusion seminars in general found me cramming too much into one session. It was exhausting for me to listen to and to take in, I can't imagine how hard it must have been for the student teachers. So, the work needed to give them more time and space to assimilate all the important information.
- I speak a lot in run-on sentences. This was especially noticeable when I was leading the watercolor experience.
- Why do I find it necessary to tell student teachers that I have taught something before, or used a particular approach before? Is it because I don't buy into what I am doing, or am uncertain about what I am teaching? Why do I feel the need to make them "buy into" me and/or my competence? Did this tendency in me change after going through my job application process?

Enabling Dialectical Thinking

Dialectical thinking is essentially the ability to problematize situations, to see both sides of an issue. I found that, during the data collection and analysis phase of this study, that dialectical thinking is essentially the same thing as using critical theory as a lens. When the preservice teachers looked more closely at issues of inclusion and power distribution in their schools, they were essentially practicing dialectical thinking. Therefore, I discuss this competency and its manifestations among the preservice teachers in the section on using critical theory as a lens.

Honoring Narratives

Central to the notion of critical theory is honoring the narratives of participants. I sought to do this by modeling the process of sharing my own narrative. I found that preservice teachers looked closer into their own histories for how it impacted their interactions with and understanding of issues related to inclusion. During seminars, I continually asked students to look at their actions and try to understand them in terms of their own history. In some instances,

these reflections helped them to articulate a broader notion of inclusion and increased their positive beliefs about persons with disabilities. Consider these responses from the Semi-Structured Interview, when I asked the students to explain their attitudes towards disability in terms of their history and background:

Table 14

Semi-Structured Interview Response, Question 17

Preservice Teacher	17. Do you feel like you are empathetic towards persons with disabilities? Do you feel any connection to persons with disabilities as a result of your history, background?
Bill	Yes. I view disability as adversity. I have had my own adversity. I have felt the same anxiety and stress from needing to feel equal to people. I liked helping these students find their strengths. Art was the saving grace for many of them. Showing them their artistic strengths helped them feel more confident about themselves. Kids with disabilities were included in regular art classrooms.
Erin	Yes. Recently I saw a guy in a wheelchair who was homeless and I looked at him differently after thinking more about disability this semester. My experiences with kids this semester helped me to think of students as individuals and not cases.
Kari	Yes. I feel a connection with everyone. I couldn't be a therapist because I am too empathetic. I have had my own learning disabilities. It makes me understand others; I try to put myself in others' shoes. When I teach, I will research the disabilities a lot so I understand who they are and where they are.
Kelly	Yes. I put myself in others' shoes. I would have a hard time not being able to do anything. I would be frustrated to be in that position. I would want to make it different for them.
Thai	Yes. I had a student in my elementary placement who was thoroughly included, but she always felt like she didn't belong. I realized how important it was to be empathetic then. I shared her experience.
Laura	Yes. Disability is something that they have, it is part of who they are. They are just trying to make it work, just like I am trying to make my life work. Both of my parents have disabilities. My dad and mom have health problems, and I never thought of this as a disability before. They made life work for them. As a teacher, I need to Table out how to make my subject work for students with disabilities. (self awareness of disability) expanding notion of disability
Charissa	Yes. I don't see a difference in persons with and without disabilities. More experiences with persons with disabilities make you comfortable. I had many experiences with persons with disabilities in 4H and in high school, where many kids with disabilities were included. My mom is also a nurse.

This type of reflection, where preservice teachers are asked to connect their beliefs and practices with their life history and experience, enables inclusion to be more than an ancillary issue. Observing this type of reflection also enabled me to understand some of the results of my study. All semester, I wondered why Bill, Charissa and Laura reported little or no change in their attitudes about persons with disabilities. They weren't expressing the same type of a-ha moments as the rest of the preservice teachers. My hunch that their attitudes weren't changing was confirmed in the semi-structured interview:

Table 15

Semi-Structured Interview Response, Question 21

Preservice Teacher	21. Has your belief and/or attitude about disability been altered at all? If so, how so?
Bill	My beliefs haven't been altered, just reconfirmed. I always thought that inclusion should be dealt with in the way we talked about it, but I didn't have the skills to make it work.
Erin	Yes—I gained more knowledge and I can recognize patronizing attitudes towards persons with disabilities.
Kari	Yes—I didn't see people with disabilities as less than, I saw them as disabled, like they weren't as good as me. I see that they have other things to offer, they are equal, but different. They are just normal people, just different. Not less capable, they just live life in another way.
Kelly	Yes. Seeing examples of artwork from children with disabilities made a difference. Seeing what they can produce is motivational.
Thai	Yes. I developed stronger empathy with students with disabilities because of my experience working one on one with a student at my second placement I saw to it that this child's needs were being met. I realized I needed to take a more proactive role in his art instruction. I still am concerned about how to schedule a time for working individually with each student.
Laura	No.
Charissa	I feel more educated. My beliefs haven't changed but I know more about how to be successful in teaching.

When I interviewed each of them and they answered question 17 (see Table 14), I realized that their prolonged exposure to these issues, or their disability history, sensitized them to disability. Therefore, knowing and honoring student narratives can lend understanding to the

preservice art teacher educator about the effectiveness or necessity of instructional interventions. While this lends one explanation to the issue, contrasting data in my personal journal lead me to seek alternate explanations to why Laura and Charissa didn't experience as much change in their attitudes as other participants. Before the study began, I articulated my goals for the preservice teachers in a journal entry: "As they examine their own attitudes and beliefs about disability, gain knowledge in disability, they will have the tools to apply their understanding to real life situations and see transformation occurs as a result of their own actions (December 15, 2005). With that as a goal, how accurately can I gauge the effectiveness of the inclusion training for Laura and Charissa? In a later journal entry, I wondered if the reason they weren't experiencing a great degree of change was that they didn't relate to my approach. Consider this reflection from February 13, 2006:

I feel strongly that my work is about attitude development first, then practical skills. I had two instances this week that made me question the persona that I present. I wonder how much of my work can be chalked up to just having a charismatic persona...in some ways, I feel like I can make a strong case for anything that I believe in. I feel like I am a persuasive person, and that I can have an effect upon people's perceptions.

If this is the case, then perhaps an alternate explanation for why no great degree of change was experienced by Laura and Charissa was that they were disenchanted with my approach to teaching about disability. I wrestled with this issue later in the semester:

Am I a preacher of inclusion? I was thinking today before the seminar about my approach to any speaking I do about inclusion. It is almost as if my presentations are a matter of unction...inspired words that are made more potent by my passion and my deep belief in what I am talking about. I am not sure how much academic integrity this has. I feel like

disability is such a human rights issue, so tied to my own beliefs about how we should treat everyone without bias, that I get really worked up. And I wonder if there is much difference in me and someone who is speaking on religious matters. There is such a fervor that I feel and I sometimes get swept away in this...before speaking, I always meditate on why these issues matter, on what I want to convey to my listeners, I envision them being inspired, moved by my talk. And I feel really foolish for admitting all of this. I wonder how much of this work is made ineffective by my emotionalism. I think of learners like Erin...who are smart and analytical and critical of things that don't make sense to them or that seem illogical and I wonder if my seminar tonight made her lose respect for me or write me off as an emotional charismatic person. One thing that makes me question this is some of the emotional stories I tell about my students with disabilities...and I can tell that people are being moved...and of course the desired result is that people's actions and attitudes be changed. But, are my stories having an unexpected outcome of making my student teachers pity persons with disabilities or worse get warm, inspired fuzzies when they think about the "spirit" of a person with a disability? If a person with a disability were in the room, what would they think? Do I focus enough on the autonomy of the teacher and the necessity of problematizing these issues that I am avoiding such danger?

As I thought more about the temperaments of Laura and Charissa, I would not classify them as overly emotional persons. Thai, on the other hand, characterized himself as being emotional and I concur. He reported a great attitude and belief change regarding persons with disabilities. Perhaps the reason for this might be that my approach, which I would characterize as somewhat emotional, was more aligned with his temperament.

It seemed that so much of my study hinged upon finding standout examples of preservice teachers who experienced great attitude change. I found that Thai seemed very open to inclusion, and experienced attitude change. But, I wondered at what was at the root of this phenomenon.

Consider my personal journal entry from March 1, 2006:

Thai has been particularly sensitive to issues of inclusion, and I think that he may be a critical case that can help me to understand how to change attitudes about inclusion, as I explore the nature of his attitude development. I wonder if it is personal history that is the biggest determinant of whether or not someone will implement inclusion and be sensitive to these issues. If that is the case, what do you do when someone (presumably or self-stated) has no experiences of inclusion (as seen in our seminar last week)?

Could some of the reason that Laura and Charissa didn't seem to experience an attitude change also be attributed to the fact that the experiences they had with inclusion during student teaching were not as dramatic as others? I explored this in my journal and this led me to take further action to address Charissa's perceived lack of attitude change.

Consider this journal entry from April 24, 2006:

An issue I really want to explore with Laura and Charissa is whether or not they feel they benefited from the seminar at all...their situations have not been as dramatic as the others, and I wonder if I have helped them realize that they do encounter dilemmas, albeit on a smaller scale, that they can solve.

Charissa puzzles me because she hasn't had any real dilemmas. When I met with her this week, I focused on giving her questions to think about, helping her to articulate her practices and beliefs as an art teacher. I found it interesting that she was timid about sharing her work and exposing kids to her process of making art. It seemed like a

revolutionary idea to her that kids needed an explicit model of someone engaging in art making. She did understand that there was a problem...that some kids didn't "get it" and couldn't make art that had meaning. I asked her to think more about this and to get comfortable with sharing her work.

Could it be that Charissa had difficulty forming and articulating beliefs in general, not just as it related to inclusion? There are a multitude of explanations for the lack of attitude change. The data collected for this study lent the most credence to the fact that personal narrative or history determines ones' acceptance of inclusion and therefore produces a lack of significant change in attitudes. However, had there been more data in the other areas of inquiry listed above, more of the alternate conclusions listed above could have been substantiated.

In the second section of this chapter, I will show how the principles of critical theory guided the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers.

Components of Inclusion Training Informed by Critical Theory

Critical Theory as a Lens

Critical theory has the potential to enable teachers to look more closely at the ways in which power is distributed in schools. Disability and inclusion are both issues in schools that are affected by a number of things such as administrative policies, beliefs about difference, school culture and teacher practices. Teachers who are able to take a closer, critical look at the context of disability and inclusion generally hold positive beliefs about inclusion (Hutchinson & Martin, 1999). Additionally, because teachers are often deskilled by administrative policies and practices, they are an oppressed group (McLaren, 1989). In being more circumspect, teachers are enabled to assess these situations and change them.

I told the preservice teachers in our first seminar meeting that one of my goals for the semester was to help them to look more closely at every aspect of the schools in which they student teach. This was something that resonated with many of the preservice teachers, like Laura. Consider this reflection from my journal after a seminar meeting:

Laura said that she was very happy to be at her school, and that she was glad to have received the advice to examine her teacher's practices more closely. When I shared my story of student teaching in two perfectly managed environments and not realizing how my mentor teachers had designed these environments so that the discipline problems were minimal, she said that struck a chord with her. Her mentor teacher's class is very well managed, and she now wants to know how she got it that way. This falls in line with Carson and Sumara's (1997) recommendation that part of the challenge in teacher education is "learning to perceive freshly" (p. xvi). Brennan and Noffke (1997) similarly recommend that teacher education at its best should "help student teachers to make problematic the theories in practice at the school level...they should be enabled to look closely and puzzle at the policies and practices in place at their schools for the information it yields about their own preferences and philosophies" (pp. 27-28). I thought Laura really grasped this concept, and I hope that she is able to look closely at her school. (January 23, 2006)

When students use critical theory as a lens, they are able to see situations in the school in a more contextual manner. By perceiving things freshly, they can question their taken-for-granted assumptions and recognize and describe the school culture (or the norms of behavior that influence relationships among faculty, students and the community). This knowledge can become transformational if preservice teachers are given the opportunity to reflect and act.

The Ability to Problematize Disability, Inclusion, and School Culture

I found that the Disability Questionnaire (see Appendices E and F) provided a large amount of evidence that the inclusion training I was providing was helping the students to look closer at all aspects of their student teaching placements with the lens of critical theory. I noted significant changes in the following preservice teachers' responses to disability attitude questions when I administered the post-questionnaire. It seemed that the following teachers keyed into how issues of power and bias can affect the outcomes of students with disabilities:

Table 16

Post-Disability Questionnaire Responses to Question 6

Art teachers should include the work of artists with disabilities into their curriculum because...
Recognizing artists with disabilities would help kill some of the biased point of view of the special needs and their classmates that people with disabilities can't be successful in the real world (Bill).
It shows students with disabilities that they can succeed in art and shows other students that students with disabilities can be successful (Charissa).
Students with disabilities cannot complete the same kind of art projects as students without disabilities...
Yes, but the lesson may need to be modified to cater towards their specific needs (Thai).
Teachers should examine their beliefs about students who are different from themselves (including students from other cultures and students with disabilities) because...
The teacher wouldn't want to impose any biases on those students (Charissa).

Each of the above preservice teachers began to look at the way that teacher actions, student actions and curriculum could be oppressive to students with disabilities. When I analyzed Thai's pre- and post-disability questionnaires, there was a significant shift on the statement, "Students with disabilities cannot complete the same kind of art projects as students without

disabilities. In the pre-questionnaire, he answered “Untrue-to a certain extent. It depends on their mental and motor skills.” In the post-questionnaire, he answered: “Yes and no...The lesson may need to be modified to cater towards their specific needs.” He was able to see that a student’s disability was not a deficit that hindered their success. Rather, it was a difference that needed to be accommodated. In looking at disability more contextually, Erin also experienced a shift in her perception on the same question. Her initial response was that students with disabilities cannot complete the same type of art projects as students without disabilities “when their motor skills are not developed enough. Though the projects can be modified...” Her post-questionnaire response was that students with disabilities cannot complete the same type of art projects as students without disabilities “if they do not have the right kind of help and support (i.e., correct tools, prompting and guidance). However, many students with disabilities need no special help in art.”

This same shift from disability being a deficit to simply being a difference that needs to be accommodated was also apparent in analyzing another question on the Pre- and Post-Disability Questionnaires. I asked the preservice teachers to define the similarities between teaching students with disabilities and students of different cultures. In the pre- and post-questionnaires, all seven teachers expressed an understanding that the child’s difference was mediated by a host of factors in the classroom and school, and it was the teacher’s responsibility to help identify and remove these barriers.

Table 17

Post-Disability Questionnaire Responses to Question 7

Preservice Teacher	What, in your opinion, are the similarities between teaching students with disabilities and students of different cultures?
Bill	There are a few similarities between the two. First, redirecting and resummarizing the lessons with the students helps them recognize what their objectives are.
Erin	Similarities: The teacher needs to understand the student's background. The students have similarities/differences with both the teacher and the students in the class that can be tapped into.
Kari	You have to change the way you communicate. You have to show them rather than tell them how to do something.
Kelly	The struggle with other students in the class and the attitudes of the teachers.
Thai	They face similar obstacles in terms of facing adversity. Their differences are noted by the other students in the class and affect actions.
Laura	They are both situations where you may not be familiar with. I am not completely familiar with all cultures or disabilities.
Charissa	There seems to be an information barrier between the teacher and the student. It should be the teacher's job to find a way to overcome the barrier in whatever way they can.

Further, I noted this change in the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I).

When asked to choose a case and identify the needs and strengths of a child, several of the preservice teachers demonstrated a shift in their understanding that they had responsibility as teachers to modify the curriculum. After discussing how they could look closer at all of the taken-for-granted aspects of school culture, they began to ask questions about how curriculum, policies, teacher actions and peer relationships could be changed in order to enable students with disabilities to succeed. Consider Kari's response:

Table 18

Kari's Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet Response, Question 2

<i>What are the cognitive/physical/emotional/artistic strengths/needs of this child?</i>				
Kari Case 6 Self- contained class in art.	<i>Strengths</i>		<i>Needs</i>	
	(If a strength is not listed in the case study, how would you assess this student's strengths?)			
	Pre-Worksheet	Post-Worksheet	Pre-Worksheet	Post-Worksheet
Cognitive	They cannot focus or keep attention. They cannot comprehend everything on the same level	Decision making, creativity	Something easy for them to comprehend on their level, something that keeps their attention	They might need help focusing, personal attention, differentiated learning. [The teacher needs] an awareness of how they learn.
Physical	Poor motor skills. Language and speech	Some might be able to do art physically but might be mentally challenged	Help with things that might be dangerous	They might need physical help or art making tools that accommodate their special needs
Emotional/ Social	Loyal to friends		Control, attention, someone who cares, structure, appropriate social skills	They might need emotional support, attention. Some might be too emotional, some might not have emotions.
Artistic	I have noticed from observation that sometimes these students excel in art (not all students but some, i.e.: autistic).	They can make choices; they can express themselves and be creative.	Mnemonic devices	They might have a physical need to make art.

One thing that accounts for this change in attitudes is the fact that I asked the preservice teachers to use all of the instructional tools I presented in the seminar as a means to look more closely at inclusion at their student teaching placements. In essence, I was seeking to make the content of the student teaching seminar relevant to them by connecting the instruction with their real world experiences.

Making Content Relevant

This was not a component of critical theory that I looked for in my initial data analysis, rather, it was an issue that emerged as I analyzed the data. The critical educator understands that knowledge that is transformative is that which is ultimately connected to a student's real life experience. Critical theory posits that a learners' cultural capital (Freire, 1993), or their thoughts, ideas and activities should be honored. Teachers can do this by constructing curriculum that gives students the means to solve actual dilemmas they experience (Applefield, Huber, & Moallem, 2000; Fogarty, 1999). In this study, I both made learning relevant in my conversations with the preservice teachers and by specific curriculum I constructed. I found that this aspect of critical theory struck a deep chord with me, and I continually reflected in order to discover the origin of my belief that all content should be relevant to students. An excerpt from my journal gives some insight into my philosophy:

How and why art learning should be relevant to students—My philosophy:

I learned informally as a child that there was tremendous pleasure to be gained from the arts...they were all around me. Music was continually playing in the house, Mom was cooking, drawing, sewing, always creating. My Dad was playing bass, fixing things, keeping order with the business and finances, it was all artistic activity. I had a broad-based conception of art from the very beginning. We lived artfully. My strong

connection to music found a parallel when I took my first art history class in college. I heard and visually read the narratives of the artists and I realized that they were much like the narratives of songwriters that I so treasured. In the narratives, I saw myself, part of my story resonating with the story of the artist. I saw the art piece as a tool for personal inquiry.

When I began teaching, it was critical to me that my students have this same accessibility to the arts. I wanted to show them the broader conception of art, so that more of them could find a way inside of that world that often is for a select few. Many of my students lived in rural, poor settings with families who were frequently transient. I wanted to show them that art could help them live better, as Dissanayake (1988) reminds us. Therefore, I never ceased to begin a project by letting students know how it related to their lives...how it would benefit them today and in the future. I have always had a firm belief that curriculum should be relevant and I don't like to waste peoples' time. I view one of my functions as a teacher as being a viable resource, providing relevant help to students that will enable them to meet their goals. I am resolute in this task. Education should foster personal agency. This is in line with what Fullan (1993) says on matters of transformative teacher education.

I feel like I carried out this role as I observed Erin on Tuesday (April 25) and began by asking her what she would like me to pay attention to as I observed her...specific things that I could give her feedback on. I like using this strategy, it helps me to be more focused and to feel like the feedback I give is relevant. (April 26, 2006)

Erin and I had several conversations that resembled the one described above. These conversations encouraged a relationship between us where she felt comfortable coming to me for

advice and input on a regular basis. She told me in an interview at the end of the semester (see Appendix K) that it was very important for her to feel like she wasn't being told exactly what to do, but that she was given the freedom to choose the course of action that best matched her situation.

In addition to modeling this component of making learning relevant through my informal conversations with the preservice teachers, I also constructed curriculum that aided me in this task. I created a Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I) that I administered at the beginning and end of the semester. This worksheet included six actual cases of inclusion that I experienced as a public school art teacher. I asked the preservice teachers to choose one of the cases and answer questions about the student's needs and strengths. I found that all seven preservice teachers chose cases that were like what they experienced at their student teaching placements. In his post-worksheet, Bill commented, "I feel like I would be ready for this situation now because of my placement." He went on to say: "I have two students who are very similar to the child in this case. Observing these two is where I got most of my ideas for strategies I listed on this worksheet."

Self Awareness about Feelings of Disability

Preservice teachers should have opportunities to investigate their beliefs about disability (Horne, 1985). Teacher education programs that provide these chances have been effective in fostering positive attitudes about inclusion (Hutchinson & Martin, 1999). Such investigation of beliefs is essential, because beliefs ultimately affect actions. Critical theory provides a means for teachers to explore these beliefs through self reflection and group dialogue (Fine & Weiss, 2003; Freire, 1993; McLaren, 1989).

In schools today, teachers are often silenced from exploring their feelings about disability, especially when these feelings may not be politically correct. One way I sought to increase this competency of self awareness among the preservice teachers was to share my own narrative about my experiences as a public school art teacher. The following excerpt from my journal recounts some of the conversations I had with preservice teachers regarding my evolving beliefs about inclusion:

It seems like I have spent a lot of time in the past few days re-telling my story of how I came to this work. And, one part of my story that has come into sharp focus is the way that I viewed kids with disabilities. It is very clear to me that in many ways, I oppressed them as a means to cover up my inability to instruct them. I feel it is essential that I cover this issue with my student teachers, so that they are able to see the implications of not being prepared or having the necessary resources. I don't want them to be resentful of the child, I want them to have inclusive attitudes that look closely at every situation and view it not hastily, but with an eye to the context before they rush to judgment. I want for them to evaluate the behavior of students based upon their understanding that all behaviors are an expression of need. I wonder if I am helping them to see that discrimination exists in schools for kids with disabilities, and I wonder if they have the resolve to not proliferate such discrimination.

A big part of this work is helping student teachers to look at disability as part of the spectrum of human difference and helping them to see that children need to be looked at holistically. I also think that a part of this work is equipping teachers with instructional strategies that will help them to teach a range of kids...like differentiated instruction. If they conceptualize their role as being teaching all students, then they need to have

strategies that will help them to do this. This work/seminar also offers an inclusive model for student teachers...as I listen to their concerns provide and provide them with context-specific resources and feedback, I am showing that I value their autonomy. I hope they are able to see and understand this as inclusionary practice. (March 1, 2006)

I administered a pre- and post-disability questionnaire (see Appendices E and F). I created this document to help the preservice teachers begin to think about their disability history—the experiences they had with disability up to this point and their comfort level in interacting with persons with disabilities. I wanted to know the extent of their background and training in disability, as well as their beliefs about disability so that I could provide them with the most relevant instruction. I constructed eight statements about students with disabilities with which I asked the preservice teachers to agree or disagree, and support their answers with examples. I administered these questions to them at the beginning and the end of the semester. I found that there were two statements with which all preservice teachers expressed agreement on both the pre- and post-questionnaires:

Table 19

Statements from Question 6, Disability Questionnaires

Students with disabilities can experience success making, looking at, and talking about art...
Art teachers should include the work of artists with disabilities into their curriculum because...

There was agreement among all of the preservice teacher's answers when asked to support the statements above. In the first statement, preservice teachers justified their answers by saying that there is a pleasure inherent to the art process that makes it a successful endeavor for

anyone. Preservice teachers supported the second statement by citing that artists with disabilities can be role models for students with disabilities and can bring more awareness about disability to everyone. Teachers conceptualized curriculum as a means to change people's perceptions.

Consider these supporting statements from both pre-and post-questionnaires as to why preservice teachers believe the work of artists with disabilities should be included in the curriculum: Bill stated "Recognizing artists with disabilities would help kill some of the biased point of view of the special needs and their classmates that people with disabilities can't be successful in the real world." Kari, another preservice teacher, responded "People with disabilities can make amazing art work and they care capable. It might change people's outlook." Kelly justified her answer by stating "It's important to let every child know that a disability doesn't limit anyone." There were no significant changes in their pre- and post-questionnaire statements.

Six out of seven student teachers expressed agreement with the following statements at the end of the semester on the post-questionnaire:

Table 20

Statements from Question 6, Post-Disability Questionnaire

Teachers must learn to adapt instruction for all students, not just students with disabilities because...
Teachers should examine their beliefs about students who are different from themselves (including students from other cultures and students with disabilities) because...

In the first statement, five out of seven preservice teachers justified their agreement by saying that they understand that there are an array of learning styles in every classroom. In the second statement, six out of seven preservice teachers stated that they were aware that teachers could have biases that are detrimental to students. Consider Laura's response: "There are so many

differences in cultures, disabilities and social issues in the classroom that I think teachers need to always examine their beliefs so that the classroom can be an open environment for learning.” In analyzing the pre-and post-questionnaires I found that attitude changes were most pronounced in the following statements:

Table 21

Three Statements from Question 6, Disability Questionnaires

I feel sorry for students with disabilities because they have so much to deal with because...
Students with disabilities cannot complete the same kind of art projects as students without disabilities...
The main reason that students with disabilities are included in art classes is so they can socialize with students who do not have disabilities...

In the pre-questionnaire, five out of seven preservice teachers agreed with the statement: The first statement “I feel sorry for students with disabilities because they have so much to deal with because...” Three teachers supported their statements by saying that they felt this way because of how students with disabilities were treated. Two teachers supported their answers by expressing that students with disabilities had deficits. Consider Bill’s statement: “They really are in constant need of the teacher...” Only two teachers agreed with the statement in the post-questionnaire, again citing the way students with disabilities are treated as to why they feel sorry for these students.

In the pre-questionnaire, two teachers agreed with the statement, “Students with disabilities cannot complete the same kind of art projects as students without disabilities.” Erin supported her answer by saying that students’ motor skills may not be developed enough. Thai supported his answer by saying that students’ mental and motor skills may prevent them from doing the

same type of projects. In the post questionnaire, three teachers agreed with this statement, all supporting their answers by saying that the teacher needed to modify instruction for students. Consider the following examples. Thai stated: “The lesson may need to be modified to cater towards their specific needs.” Erin justified her answer by stating “Students need the right kind of help and support (i.e. correct tools, prompting and guidance).” Laura replied “You need to have modifications appropriate to help students.” Teachers’ level of awareness was raised with regard to the role of the teacher in providing supports for children with disabilities. Teachers realized that a child’s lack of ability is not the impediment in their success. This same shift in attitude was most apparent in Bill’s response to the statement, “Teachers must learn to adapt instruction for all students, not just students with disabilities.” Consider his pre-and post questionnaire responses.

Table 22

Bill’s Responses to Question 6, Disability Questionnaires

<p>Pre-questionnaire response: Taking time one on one with each disabled student makes the whole class fall behind. They must be adapted not just added on.</p>
<p>Post-questionnaire response: Students have multiple intelligences and excel in their own fields. That is why teachers should use visual, physical and audio cues.</p>

In the pre-questionnaire, two teachers agreed with the statement, “The main reason that students with disabilities are included in art classes is so that they can socialize with students who do not have disabilities.” In the post-questionnaire, these same two teachers disagreed with this statement.

Later in the semester, I administered a worksheet, Dilemma Cases in Inclusion (see Appendix I). This document presented six of my teaching experiences as I sought to implement inclusion. I used actual cases from my classroom in a further attempt to honestly share my experiences with the preservice teachers and model self-awareness of my own beliefs. I asked the preservice teachers to choose the case that they found interesting or relevant to them and answer a series of questions regarding how to solve the issue. The first question asked them for their *honest* reaction to the case. Many of the preservice teachers chose cases that were very much like the ones they were experiencing at the schools where they were student teaching. In the worksheet, they explored and expressed these feelings about disability. Consider these responses:

Table 23

Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet Responses, Question 1

1. Personally, what is your first reaction upon reading this case and considering that you might encounter a similar situation? (Be honest)	
Preservice Teacher	Pre-Worksheet
Bill Case 3 "Jane"	I had a similar encounter in elementary. I suppose I would be frustrated at first. I would feel like she wasn't listening to me. I would probably try to repeat the same instructions over, until I realize it's not helping. Then I would do some online research to Table out how to help her.
Erin Case 4 "Damien"	This reminds me of a student I already have in the elementary level and I hope she works through her mutism before reaching high school. It sounds like the student does not show interest in things that do not work directly with his preferences in art. I would actually like to encounter a situation like this. It seems like a student that I could help and possibly expand his interests. "Preps" teachers for possible situations like this.
Kari Case 6 Self contained class in art	I am intimidated by these students because I don't have that much experience with special needs. I don't know how to deal with them, I don't know what they are thinking, and I don't know how they will respond to me.
Kelly Case 1 "James"	We have a 1 st grade student that is autistic and a few times I have found him on the floor. [For this case], To keep him interested during class you may need to focus on his main interests. The act of laying on the floor screaming may be his way of getting attention and needs to be addressed.
Thai Case 6 Self contained class in art	The case I chose relates to me on how special education should be included into regular education classrooms. I would be in despair; with the aides in control, how could I possibly deliver instruction?
Laura Case 6 Self contained class in art	My placement does not have a class such as this. I would not be sure how to handle this. I feel comfortable working with disabled students even though I may not always be sure what to do; to have a complete class devoted to students with special needs would feel overwhelming.
Charissa Case 2 "Riley"	We actually have a student with severe cerebral palsy and that's what interested me in this case. Personally, I think it is horrible that the teacher would place the computer in the storage room. I would place the computer out in the classroom with the other children and in a way so she would feel part of the class. I would also make sure everyone was introduced and I would try to include a couple of lessons for the entire class using that program at the computer lab. I would also try to adapt lessons for her.

At the end of the semester, I administered the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion worksheet again. I found that two of the seven preservice teachers expressed different, more positive emotions at the end of the inclusion training.

Table 24

Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet Responses, Question 2

1. Personally, what is your first reaction upon reading this case and considering that you might encounter a similar situation? (Be honest)		
Preservice Teacher	Pre-Worksheet	Post-Worksheet
Bill Case 3 "Jane"	I had a similar encounter in elementary. I suppose I would be frustrated at first. I would feel like she wasn't listening to me. I would probably try to repeat the same instructions over and over again, until I realize it's not helping. Then I would do some online research to Table out how to help her.	I feel like I would be ready for this situation now because of my placement as a student teacher
Kari Case 6 Self contained class in art	I am intimidated by these students because I don't have that much experience with special needs. I don't know how to deal with them, I don't know what they are thinking, and I don't know how they will respond to me.	It will be hard to accommodate that many special needs at one time, but it can be done.

There were several other evidences of a greater self awareness of disability among preservice teachers. When I administered the disability pre-questionnaire to the teachers, only five teachers reported attending classes or working with a person with a disability. At the end of the semester, all seven teachers reported attending classes or working with a person with a disability. When asked about the gains from the inclusion training seminar, several teachers cited a heightened awareness about disability that led to attitude change (see Table 25).

Table 25

Selected Disability Post-Questionnaire Responses, Question 3

"I have also learned that these students, while they have their own individual needs, they can be just as successful if given a chance" (Thai)
"Students with disabilities are equal or even better at art than other kids without special needs. Art is about choices, they can make choices even if they can't physically make art" (Kari).
"I gained awareness, sensitivity/empathy, more respect for the disabled, growth in instruction and comfort level with the disabled" (Thai).

During his semi-structured interview, Thai added that the seminars gave him the chance to “Step back and view myself-how I interact with people with disabilities.”

The preservice teachers also seemed to become more aware of their personal connections with disability. Three of them did not list having a disability on their initial disability questionnaire, but told me in person or on their post-disability questionnaire that they did have a disability. One participant, Laura, told me at the end of the study that she had never realized that the chronic health problems her parents faced could be considered a disability.

Critical Theory as Transformational to Teacher Practice

When knowledge is made relevant to ones’ experience, it has the potential to change situations. The following sections address how the competencies of critical theory helped preservice teachers to recognize and, in some cases, solve dilemmas of inclusion in the art room.

Knowledge and Experience in Disability

In order for teachers to experience success implementing inclusion, they must be given information related to their dilemmas and the opportunity to put this knowledge to use. In the inclusion training seminars, I sought to provide the preservice teachers with relevant information. Several research instruments and documents I created gave me a clearer picture of the preservice teachers’ previous exposure to and comfort level with disability, as well as their gaps in knowledge. I first assessed their prior knowledge in disability by administering the Disability Questionnaire at the beginning of the semester (see Appendix F). This instrument gave me information about their prior experiences teaching students with disabilities, their prior experience with disability in general, and the extent to which their preservice training addressed disability (see Tables 26, 27 and 28).

Table 26

Disability Background

Preservice Teacher	Prior experience teaching children with disabilities
Bill	Yes
Erin	Yes
Kari	Yes
Kelly	Yes
Thai	Yes
Laura	No
Charissa	No

Table 27

Prior Experience with Disability

Type of Prior Experience with Disability	Number of Preservice Teachers who agreed with each response (out of 7 Preservice Teachers)
I have had prior experience working with children with disabilities	5
I received special education services as a child	1
A friend or family member has a disability	2
I attended classes or participated in extra curricular activities with persons with disabilities in Grades K-12 or College	7
I work(ed) with a person with a disability	4
I have not had any interaction with a person with a disability	1

Table 28

Preparation for Working with Students with Disabilities

Type of Preparation	Number of Preservice Teachers who agreed with each response (out of 7 Preservice Teachers)
Instructors give lectures, reading assignments on children with disabilities	7
Instructors spent time talking with us about our fieldwork experiences with students who have disabilities	6
Fieldwork placements include students with disabilities	5

The Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I) helped me to gauge the gaps in knowledge that existed for the preservice teachers with regard to how to modify instruction for students with disabilities and utilize special education resources at their schools. In my analysis of the preservice teachers' responses, I found that they had gaps in knowledge with regard to special education law, systems of support in schools and disability resources. I addressed these issues in a subsequent seminar.

Knowledge can be transformational when it is connected to experiences. I understood that in order for the seminar curriculum to be effective, I had to perform research in order to understand the preservice teachers' prior knowledge, or experience with disability. I also wanted to know their expectations for the seminar. I used the Pre-Disability Questionnaire (see Appendix F) to collect this information (see Table 29).

Table 29

Disability Pre-Questionnaire Responses, Question 3

Preservice Teacher	What do you expect to know and be able to do as result of completing this seminar on inclusion?
Bill	Information on how to best include students with disabilities
Erin	Strategies for specific disabilities...how to adapt to individual children
Kari	How to interact and respond to students with disabilities
Kelly	How to manage a full class with a few children with disabilities. How to create projects that accommodate children with disabilities
Thai	How to create instructional material...and accommodate children with disabilities
Laura	How to be more helpful in my classroom
Charissa	Learn different aspects of disabilities and the best way to approach them

At the end of the semester, I administered the Post-Disability Questionnaire (see Appendix G) and I asked the preservice teachers what they gained from the inclusion seminars. I found that several teachers became more aware of the resources they can use as they instruct students with

disabilities (see Table 30). These outcomes were aligned with their expectations for the course (see Table 29).

Table 30

Disability Pre-Questionnaire Responses, Question 3

Preservice Teacher	What did you gain from this seminar on instructing students with disabilities? What were your learning outcomes?
Erin	I learned a lot of instructional strategies, especially with adaptable supplies. I think that I will feel a lot more comfortable with students with special abilities. I never really knew where to start. So just talking through it has been a great help. It was also helpful to hear that you, the special abilities expert could not do all of this special one on one connection with students without the help of aides. It makes me feel like I really can do this.
Kelly	The resources that are available to teachers and how to maximize the students abilities.
Laura	I learned that it is OK to not know what to do. There are resources out there and people to help. I received lots of resources here to help.
Charissa	Lots. I learned about different disabilities, lessons that would be good to do with them, aspects of certain disabilities, and artists and websites of artists with disabilities. Also websites that help you learn about disabilities and how to work with disabled kids.

The preservice teachers sought out knowledge that was relevant to them through the course of the semester. It was not uncommon for teachers to come in early for the seminar and begin talking to one another about some of the experiences with inclusion that they were having in their classrooms. They brainstormed together to find solutions. Kelly noted in her semi-structured interview: “We spent time talking ideas out and asking questions to one another.” (May 18, 2006)

I encouraged preservice teachers to use their experiences as points of origin for their questions and examples during the course of the seminar. One way I facilitated this was by creating the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I), where I asked teachers to choose a case that they found relevant or interesting to them. Six of the seven preservice teachers

chose cases that were very much like the ones they were experiencing at the schools where they were student teaching. Many of the preservice teachers used this worksheet as a tool for taking a closer look at inclusion at their schools, thus combining their evolving knowledge with a real life situation they encountered. For instance, Bill said that the strategies he proposed in his post-worksheet were a direct result of observing and trying out some of his ideas. In Erin’s post-worksheet response, she indicated that she now realized that parents could be a viable resource for art teachers.

The Post-Disability Questionnaire (see Appendix G) also yielded valuable information about how important this connection between knowledge and experience is in inclusion training. Preservice teachers Bill and Thai both reported attitude change regarding disability that was a result of their newly acquired information about disability and the opportunity to test it out. When Bill responded to the statement “Students with disabilities can experience success making, looking at, and talking about art” in the post-questionnaire, he stated: “I agree because I have seen it.” Thai, in response to the same question, stated: “Very true, I have seen it firsthand. There is satisfaction in their reactions.”

In the same instrument, teachers reported an increased comfort level with working with students with disabilities (see Figure 1).

Please rate how you feel about working with children who have disabilities:		
Pre-Questionnaire:		
— 1	<u>IIII</u> 2	<u>I</u> 3
Least comfortable		<u>II</u> 4
		— 5
		Most comfortable
Post-Questionnaire:		
— 1	— 2	<u>II</u> 3
Least comfortable		<u>IIII</u> 4
		<u>I</u> 5
		Most comfortable
Individual Ratings		
Preservice Teacher	Pre-Questionnaire Score (out of 5)	Post-Questionnaire Score (out of 5)
Bill	4	4
Erin	2	4
Kari	2	3
Kelly	2	3
Thai	3	5
Laura	4	4
Charissa	2	4

Figure 1. Disability Questionnaire responses, Question 2

Supplemental information in the post-disability questionnaire supports the claim that the combination of knowledge and experience contribute to increased teacher competence with regard to instructing children with disabilities. When asked what was gained from the inclusion seminar, Bill responded by saying: “If nothing else, I got a true life experience, teaching in my classes to special abilities/needs, instead of just reading about it. I would not have stood a chance in the workforce if I did not have this as a preliminary study.”

Intensive Mentoring

To me, intensive mentoring meant providing preservice teachers with assistance, resource and support as they needed. I wanted to know if my definition of mentoring matched up with the preservice teachers’ perceptions of the characteristics of a mentor. I used the Semi-Structured Interview (see Appendix K) as a means to clarify some of my hunches about the preservice teachers’ notions of mentoring.

Table 31

Semi-Structured Interview Responses, Question 1

Preservice Teacher	1. In your opinion, what does it mean to mentor someone?
Bill	A mentor is someone who can be looked up to. They give motivation, help someone to improve. They are more of a guide than an instructor—not didactic. They show you multiple options and don’t dictate to you what to do.
Erin	A mentor is there for questions, not necessarily guidance. They address your concerns and are there when help is needed.
Kari	A mentor is a guide, helping student teachers with questions they have. They also point out problems they see, telling you what you are lacking experience in. They are an all-knowing source. You are aware of the theory [in art education classes] at UNT, and you need help putting it into practice. A mentor is someone who helps you do this. A mentor makes you aware of yourself, how you are doing, and tells you things you need to work on.
Kelly	A mentor is a support for you. They are an outlet for solving problems, brainstorming with you. They help you work through areas that are relevant, like class management and discipline.
Thai	A mentor passes on knowledge. They give input and their experience. They give you relevant information when you need it. There is a special bond between a mentor and a mentee. This will be different with every teacher, because of different temperaments.
Laura	A mentor guides and teaches someone in their behavior and actions. It happens through another’s actions and their speaking.
Charissa	A mentor takes you under their wing. They teach you what they know, they don’t mold you, but they assist you in gaining proficiency.

In an effort to seek validity among their experiences and their response to question one, I asked them a follow up question:

Table 32

Semi-Structured Interview Responses, Question 2

Preservice Teacher	2. Do you feel that you have been mentored this semester? If so, how?
Bill	Yes. I feel I have been exposed to many different teaching styles (from Dr. Bain and myself). I also feel like my lesson plan ideas have become more solid (as a result of classes with Rina Kundu). I have been given help in the job search process, and I have been mentored by peers as they have shared their successes with us. My cooperating teacher at the elementary level helped me to loosen up and feel less isolated. He helped me to get more “in relation” to the students. My cooperating teacher at the secondary level helped me get more rigid when I had become too loose with the kids.
Erin	Yes. My questions were addressed and answered. Professors, university friends, my cooperating teachers and my parents were all people who mentored me.
Kari	My elementary teacher told me what would not work, but sometimes I wanted to make my own mistakes. My secondary teacher let me make mistakes and then we talked about it. I felt like I was mentored more by him.
Kelly	Yes. My elementary teacher gave me great tips on areas like how to relate to the administration, retirement, lesson plans and just overall life tips. There was a connection between us where I was able to give her advice about her children. My secondary teacher had similar life experiences to me, so we had a relationship like sisters. If something went wrong in the classroom, we fixed it together.
Thai	Yes. Both of my cooperating teachers gave me input and told me about their experiences.
Laura	Yes. My elementary teacher was helpful in every way. She showed me everything there was to know about elementary. My secondary teacher wasn't as hands-on. She was more experiential. She let me try out my ideas on my own.
Charissa	Yes. Each cooperating teacher gave me as much assistance as I needed. They were always available. They modeled good lessons, classroom management and discipline. They were there to help in the areas I lacked.

I was torn at my response to this data. While I was pleased that each of the preservice teachers felt they had been mentored during the semester, I was taken aback that they didn't conceptualize me as a mentor to them. I discuss this issue and its implications for preservice art teacher training in chapter 5.

Shared Decision Making/Privileging Teacher's Autonomy

This is an essential component in preparing teachers for inclusion because of the current efforts to de-skill teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 is cited by Herr and Anderson (2005) as one way that teacher's professional autonomy is being compromised at the expense of short-sighted and limited accountability measures. Critical theorist Henry Giroux (1988) speaks prolifically about how schools provide teacher proof curricula, leaving teachers feeling unable and even unfit to construct their own curricula.

Because of this, I felt it necessary to make this an essential component of my mentoring approach and the curriculum I created. I made this goal explicit to the preservice teachers in our first meeting and really in every subsequent meeting. In the syllabus for the semester, I stated

that one of the goals for our semester together was to “help you articulate YOUR beliefs, preferences, strengths and needs as a teacher.” I revisited this all semester long in informal conversations, formal presentations, emails, and observations with each preservice teacher. At the end of their first placement, I administered a questionnaire that asked them to identify the most troubling dilemmas from their first placement and take the initiative to make sure these issues did not recur at their second placement (see Appendix H). This was especially helpful to Kari, who realized that she needed to be more proactive in getting feedback from her mentor teacher.

Collaborative Problem Solving

This was one of the areas that I feel was not successfully addressed in this study. Literature on teacher education and critical theory (Atweh et al., 1998; Danielewicz, 1994; hooks, 1994; Noffke & Stevenson, 1995) points to several indicators of collaborative problem solving and as I looked through the data for evidences of these instances, I found none. Preservice teachers who collaboratively solve problems together have a sense of responsibility towards one another. They are committed to holding one another accountable to solve dilemmas and are democratic in their sharing of talk time and listening time. They also create new knowledge together. In all of the data I collected and in my general observations of their interactions in the seminar, I did not find any evidence of these factors. The other area I feel I was remiss in was fostering dialogue among the preservice teachers. While I feel that I was able to collaboratively problem solve and have dialogue with them on an individual basis, these efforts failed at the communal level. I believe this to be the case because of the structure of the seminar and my developing understanding of redistributing power in the classroom. Because I sought to address both inclusion issues and general student teaching concerns in each seminar, I often felt very pressed for time. I also was

reluctant to abandon my agenda for the evening, because I felt like the material needed to be covered if it was to have an effect. A majority of the preservice teachers noted that my inability to balance these two areas in each seminar was one of my weakest points as an instructor (see Table 33).

Table 33

Semi-Structured Interview Responses, Question 25

Preservice Teacher	24. What, in your opinion, was my weakest area as an instructor/mentor?
Bill	Too many audiovisual presentations. I tend to lose focus in a class when it's not interactive. I think that more role-playing or more guest speakers would have been helpful. The room set up wasn't very comfortable.
Erin	Some seminars felt forced. There was often not enough time given to personal sharing.
Kelly	In the seminars, I felt like you let us vent too much (Erin said Kelly didn't get to vent enough!) When I did vent, I just wanted to vent. I didn't necessarily want advice from everyone.
Thai	Some of the seminars seemed tangential.
Laura	Sharing was a bit drawn out. It ended up being less seminar and more venting and talking.
Charissa	I would have liked to see you interact more with kids—to see you teaching.

Increased Teacher Competence

This seems to be a tricky endeavor, when most of the preservice teachers I worked with said they wanted practical tips on how to be successful in teaching. I knew that tips alone would not help them to feel competent. Rather, a combination of knowledge and experience was the means to help them feel more successful at teaching. I felt a continual pull between critical theory's emphasis on personal agency, or the ability of someone to have an effect on the world around them, and pat answer tips and tricks. I wondered throughout the whole course of the study if all of my emphasis upon helping the preservice teachers define and find their own way

was leaving them feeling disempowered, left to flounder without any practical advice. I resolved this by listening to their dilemmas and asking them how they intended to resolve them, and then offering them an array of options that they could try if it seemed like they needed something more. I felt like I reached a place of resolve, where I helped preservice teachers identify their dilemmas and find their own solutions. Consider this journal reflection after an observation of Erin:

I like using the tactic of identifying a students' strength and then asking them what enabled them to be strong in that area. With Erin today, I commended her on every student being on task and the wide variety of student responses to the project. I asked her to identify what instructional strategies of hers enabled this to happen. She told me that media exploration was the first step...just letting students "play" with the clay. And that specific redirection and dialogue with each student about what they wanted to do was the second part, as well as showing students a wide variety of examples. These were the same suggestions I had for her to improve her practice...to continue to enhance her skills of dialogue with reluctant students (and build a personal relationship with them in the meantime, which she identified as "something that is working for her" with reluctant students) and to provide students a multitude of examples to look at during the work process. I gave her those as goals to implement in her time remaining at this placement. Charissa's goals were discussion, dialogue...bringing students into the discussion. Kari's goals were to implement some lessons that were relevant to the students and to take the initiative to get the feedback that she needs. This process worked really well with Bill, as he identified his weakness area (establishing control of the class and gaining respect) and I asked him to identify ways that teachers gain respect (knowing their students and

interests, being competent, providing relevant instruction, being organized) and then told him to work towards putting those things into practice. This is how I mentor. A totally student generated dialogue on what problems they are encountering, their thoughts on how to solve the problems, and their accountability to me to implement those changes in their practice. (April 5, 2006)

Positive Beliefs about Persons with Disabilities

A goal of each seminar was to present the lives of persons with disabilities in an equitable way. I would like to see change in the way that all persons, especially art educators, view and respond to persons with disabilities. Such an imperative, to my sense, situates change in a much larger realm, namely, the preservation of basic human rights regardless of difference. I found that as I attempted to convey this perspective, my own notion of inclusion became broader. Because this issue was so connected to my own personal beliefs, I found myself sometimes becoming very emotional about the work. I explored this issue in my journal after a seminar where I shared some of the work that I did with adults with disabilities in Denton, Texas:

I was thinking today before the seminar about my approach to any speaking I do about inclusion. It is almost as if my presentations are a matter of uncton...inspired words that are made more potent by my passion and my deep belief in what I am talking about. I am not sure how much academic integrity this has. I feel like disability is such a human rights issue, so tied to my own beliefs about how we should treat everyone without bias, that I get really worked up. And I wonder if there is much difference in me and someone who is speaking on religious matters. There is such a fervor that I feel and I sometimes get swept away in this...before speaking, I always meditate on why these issues matter, on what I want to convey to my listeners, I envision them being inspired,

moved by my talk. And I feel really foolish for admitting all of this. I wonder how much of this work is made ineffective by my emotionalism. I think of learners like Erin...who are smart and analytical and critical of things that don't make sense to them or that seem illogical and I wonder if my seminar tonight made her lose respect for me or write me off as an emotional charismatic person.

One thing that makes me question this is some of the emotional stories I tell about my students with disabilities...and I can tell that people are being moved...and of course the desired result is that people's actions and attitudes be changed. But, are my stories having an unexpected outcome of making my student teachers pity persons with disabilities or worse get warm, inspired fuzzies when they think about the "spirit" of a person with a disability? If a person with a disability were in the room, what would they think? Do I focus enough on the autonomy of the teacher and the necessity of problematizing these issues that I am avoiding such danger? (February 27, 2006)

A question kept surfacing during the course of the study: Did my emotionalism have the unexpected outcome of making preservice teachers pity persons with disabilities? If a person with a disability were in the room when I shared my stories of working with students with disabilities, what would he or she think? One way I sought to resolve this issue was to ask questions in the Semi-Structured Interview that gauged the preservice teachers' attitudes towards disability. I found that asking the preservice teachers to connect their narratives to their beliefs about disability was one means of increasing positive attitudes towards disability. In an effort to seek more evidence regarding whether positive beliefs were fostered about persons with disabilities, I asked the preservice teachers in the Semi-Structured Interview if their attitudes about disability had changed:

Table 34

Semi-Structured Interview Responses, Question 21

Preservice Teacher	21. Has your belief and/or attitude about disability been altered at all? If so, how so?
Bill	My beliefs haven't been altered, just reconfirmed. I always thought that inclusion should be dealt with in the way we talked about it, but I didn't have the skills to make it work.
Erin	Yes—I gained more knowledge and I can recognize patronizing attitudes towards persons with disabilities.
Kari	Yes—I didn't see people with disabilities as less than, I saw them as disabled, like they weren't as good as me. I see that they have other things to offer, they are equal, but different. They are just normal people, just different. Not less capable, they just live life in another way.
Kelly	Yes. Seeing examples of artwork from children with disabilities made a difference. Seeing what they can produce is motivational.
Thai	Yes. I developed stronger empathy with students with disabilities because of my experience working one on one with a student at my second placement I saw to it that this child's needs were being met. I realized I needed to take a more proactive role in his art instruction. I still am concerned about how to schedule a time for working individually with each student.
Laura	No.
Charissa	I feel more educated. My beliefs haven't changed but I now more and how to be successful in teaching.

For those students who did not report an attitude change, such as Laura and Charissa, I found that their prior disability history and experiences with disability equipped them with a positive attitude. There was a connection between their narrative and their beliefs about disability. While I did not experience this during the study, it is probable that preservice teachers could have had negative experiences with disability in their past that would cause them to have negative attitudes towards disability. I found that, for the most part, the preservice teachers who had little or no disability experience were just intimidated by the prospect of instructing students with disabilities, not negative. The importance of addressing beliefs about disability in preservice art education is apparent when one considers the culture of schools and how it can impact

teachers' beliefs and actions about inclusion and a host of other issues related to teaching. I designed and conducted this study in an attempt to provide the preservice teachers with reinforcements to use when they enter schools: using critical theory as a lens, I hope that they will look closer at the way teachers and administrators talk about inclusion and the way students without disabilities treat students with disabilities. I hope that they will look closer at their own actions and realize they can have a positive impact on others and on the culture in their schools.

In this chapter, I have shared the findings of this study. I used the components of critical theory as a framework for my analysis and I noted the situations where these components surfaced in data. In the next chapter, I will discuss the implications of these findings as they relate to my role as an art teacher educator and the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers. Recommendations for future research will also be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will discuss the implications of the findings from this study. I sought to answer the research question, “How does an art teacher educator use critical theory to mentor preservice teachers and prepare them for the inclusive art classroom” by using the methodology of action research. The primary areas of inquiry were how critical theory defined and guided my practice as an art teacher educator and how it impacted the inclusion training I provided for the preservice teachers with whom I worked.

In chapter 4, I detailed the ways that the components of critical theory guided my practice as an art teacher educator; citing data from my journal, the seminar curriculum and an interview with preservice teachers at the end of the study. In this chapter, I will address how critical theory impacted me during this study, how critical theory impacted the preservice teachers during the study and emergent issues from the study that have implications for preservice art teacher education and inclusion training. I will conclude by offering recommendations for future research.

How Critical Theory Impacted Me During This Study

A primary outcome of this work was the articulation of my teaching philosophy. As I utilized the methodology of action research, I found that my narrative gave me insight on what I really believed about my teaching. My focus on exploring my narrative allowed me to see that empowerment is at the root of my teaching philosophy. Seeing preservice teachers develop into teachers is an amazing process to behold. When they begin to view their identity as that of a teacher and they begin to act with a new found confidence and fulfillment, I am captivated. I see this same parallel when students make art. It has always delighted me to see the accomplishment

of my students as they make art and to realize that there is something that now exists in them that was not there before. They have learned more about themselves, their strengths, their lives and this has changed them. This empowerment is what I am about as a teacher. I aim to foster this in all of my students.

This work of fostering empowerment highlights my ability as a teacher to creatively design learning experiences that are transformative. In this sense, teaching becomes a form of artistic expression. The key ideas behind art making: design, choice, intent, action all underlie the work of teaching. When I was hired as the only art educator on faculty at my current university, it was intimidating, because I felt like I had to convince others that I was an artist. I now realize that while I do make art and help others to make art, my primary form of artistry is teaching. I realized, through doing this work that I have the ability to design experiences that will affect the likelihood that preservice teachers will implement inclusion.

In this work, I felt the effects of an authentic connection among the components of critical theory and my practice as an art teacher educator. A clarity of purpose emerged for me as I redefined and refined my role as an art teacher educator. This was a direct by-product of the action research process, where I was actively involved in doing this work while writing and reflecting about it. The context of my personal life came to bear on this process of role redefinition as well. As a newly married woman, I was (and still am!) very excited about the work of designing a life together with my husband. My mother passed away during the study, which caused me to reflect on her influence on my views regarding disability and human equity. I began the interview process for my first full time position as an art teacher educator at a university. It seemed, at every turn, the counsel I was giving to the preservice teachers regarding interviewing for jobs, articulating their teaching philosophy, designing their classrooms and

norms was the same counsel I was following myself. In effect, parallel narratives were being told; that of the preservice teachers and myself.

Galbraith (2004) contends that action research enables one to address the “intellectual, emotional and moral elements of preparing art teachers, as well as offer contexts for self-reflexive discourse” (p. 125). As such, I was always hearkening back to my practice, my philosophies and my history to judge the efficacy of my actions. I was constantly deconstructing my own influences and refining my philosophy. I began to see that my narrative and the contexts of my daily life inform my development as an educator. There is an intimate, dialectical relationship between the phenomena I experience as a teacher and my temperament, beliefs, and attitudes. Investigating the boundaries between these phenomena and my identity during this study helped me to write another part of my story. As I conducted this study, I found that I was engaged in a process akin to looking at a painting (e.g., Greene, 1978, p. 202), where I was confronted with myself at every turn. My research question became a text (or site of knowledge; e.g., Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000) within which I found myself written (Wilson, 1997). That text was something I puzzled at, read, and re-read. Multiple texts were produced and the process of inquiry is ongoing. As a researcher, I want to explore the origin of the question I pursue, because I believe there to be a discernable interface between it and my lived experience. Galbraith (1995b) contends that the life histories of art teachers directly influence their curricular choices and beliefs. As such, it is responsible scholarship to investigate the connection between my life history and professional practices, insofar as it can provide insight into art education practice at large. I am persuaded that the field of art education will be different upon answering the research question that I have asked (Freedman, 2004).

Further, I realize that research enables me to be an agent of change (Fullan, 1993). My experience during this study of negotiating critical theory with my practice resulted in heightened awareness of the transformation that has occurred in my life as a teacher. Where I once felt disenchanting and disempowered in my profession, I now see that I have the ability to identify dilemmas in my field and propose and implement solutions. This work has brought me full circle, proposing solutions to the struggles I faced with inclusion as an art teacher and now preparing art teachers to become agents of change.

How Critical Theory Impacted the Preservice Teachers

Identity Development

The preservice teachers were engaged in a process of identity development, or learning to think of themselves as teachers and define their teaching philosophy. The first phase of identity development is the identification of the preservice teachers' stories or narratives and how this comes to bear upon their philosophy. I noted that as I shared my narrative, it became a catalyst for the preservice teachers looking deeper into their narratives and beginning to substantiate their pedagogical actions and choices with their narratives. A particularly clear example of this is contained in my interview (see Appendix K) at the end of the study with Laura, when I asked her if she had any doubts about whether or not teaching was the right field for her. In her answer, she refers back to the history of education and creativity in her family.

No, I don't have any doubts about whether or not teaching is the right field for me. I always knew I would be a teacher. My mom was a teacher. I saw her and I understood that teaching was a great profession with fulfilling relationships. Both of my parents are creative with their work and I never thought about the fulfillment that comes from a creative profession until now. (June 19, 2006)

This heightened awareness about creative work filtered through into Laura's teaching philosophy. When asked in the interview what key beliefs she would leave the seminar with, she answered "Children want to learn. Art is appealing to all kids. You are given the opportunity to help them to be creative" (June 19, 2006). When asked what the substance of her work would be as a teacher, she answered, "I want kids to understand that we all are related. Our artwork may be different, but we can create and find a way to communicate. This doesn't always happen in schools. I want to bring students together" (June 19, 2006).

A curriculum can be a vital tool in the identity development of preservice teachers (Danielewicz, 2001), especially when this curriculum emphasizes praxis, or the integration of beliefs or theories and action. The curriculum I created for this study was embedded in my personal narrative. I shared my story of being an agent of change (Fullan, 1993) and tools that I felt would be helpful to the preservice teachers as they faced the dilemmas of inclusion. I wanted my process of change to make an impact on the way the preservice teachers implemented inclusion, to be sure; but what was more desirable to me was that they became change agents for their own causes; issues embedded in their personal narratives. This outcome was felt by Kelly, who responded to the question of what she felt was my strongest area as a mentor.

You had good communication, good rapport with students. You were available to help and would go out of your way so that everyone's needs were met and they were satisfied. You used your passion for inclusion as an example to teach all of us how to find out what was important to us. (May 18, 2006)

And, when Charissa was asked in a final interview what I valued, she answered "Making a difference—sticking up for your beliefs. You have made it your mission to educate teachers about inclusion. You let students find out what kind of teacher they will be. You want us to come

out being the best teacher we can, having a purpose, knowing ourselves and our teaching philosophy” (June 7, 2006). A curriculum which enables the art teacher educator to model a process of narrative exploration can have a substantive impact on increasing teachers’ propensity for identity development.

Danielewicz (2001) contends that inservice teachers have theories of action that they have established through their experiences. Similarly, Zeni (2001) notes that action research helps teachers to confirm theories through their practice. Danielewicz (2001) proposes that preservice education should help teachers to formulate and refine these theories before they begin teaching so that they realize that “teaching is complicated and that it is a generative process” (p. 9). The process I engaged in with each preservice teacher asked them to look closer into their narratives and the particular contexts of their student teaching placement that inform their beliefs and actions. In short, this process helped them to refine their praxis.

When a curriculum is tied to real world experiences, dialectical thinking, comfort with ambiguity, and problem solving skills are all ripe for development. Preservice teachers learn that being a successful teacher is not a matter of only having techniques and tricks on hand; rather, it is an identity that is forged out as problem situations arise and are addressed.

This identity development is also socially mediated. These student teachers engaged in identity development together. All of the preservice teachers in a final interview (see Appendix K) noted that our seminar resembled a community by virtue of the fact that they were “getting through student teaching together” (Laura, June 19, 2006). Danielewicz (2001) notes that preservice teachers develop both an individual and a collective identity. In the individual realm, they align themselves—their temperament, beliefs and history with the profession of teacher. They begin to reason that they are a teacher because of these factors. In the collective realm, they

identify with the profession or the culture of teaching as they interact with groups of teachers and see themselves as part of this group. The presence of a student teaching seminar helped them solidify their group identity as developing teachers. The sharing of their personal stories with one another in this context and with me in meetings helped them define their individual teaching identity. As mentioned in chapter 4, Kelly experienced a lot of distressing experiences at her two student teaching placements. In our group seminars, as she shared her stories and told how she was overcoming these situations, the increase in her confidence was palpable. And, the other preservice teachers began to refer to her increased confidence and sense of self when they talked about their dilemmas. Essentially, Kelly's awareness that she could bring about change in the educational dilemmas she faced was increasing in tandem with the development of her individual and collective identity as a teacher.

Knowledge of Resources in Inclusion

An emergent issue in this study was that preservice teachers linked their future success in the classroom with their knowledge and use of resources. They understood that they were just one layer of support for students with disabilities, and as such, they could solicit the feedback of other professionals in the school setting who worked with students with disabilities. During the entire study, I made a conscious effort to tell the preservice teachers that I endeavored to be a resource for them. I also showed them, using the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I), that they had gaps in their knowledge of resources for students with disabilities. I then demonstrated to them where to locate these resources. In a final semi-structured interview at the end of the semester, I asked the preservice teachers how confident that they were that they could solve the educational dilemmas in their first year of teaching. Using a rating scale, with 1 being "not at all confident" and 10 being "most confident," all of the preservice teachers chose 7

or above as their indicator of level of ability to solve problems. When asked to justify these answers, several of them responded by citing their awareness of resources as the reason for their confidence. They cited their mentor teachers among these resources, an issue that has import for the way in which we build form and nurturing relationships with mentor teachers in the university context. I address this at length in the section on mentoring later in this chapter.

Increase of Perceptivity

A study that is couched in the theme of critical theory has as one of its intended outcomes a heightened awareness and sensitivity regarding matters of interpretation in everyday, taken for granted assumptions. McLaren (1989) calls this “pedagogical surrealism” (p. 164) and Eisner & Barone (1997) call it “educational criticism” (p. 80). In this study, the preservice teachers were encouraged to look at every situation with fresh eyes, as if they had never experienced it before. This enabled them to problematize the dynamics that undergird the everyday routines and actions in the public school classroom. To Eisner & Barone’s (1997) senses, this capacity enables teachers to choose areas of inquiry that are substantive; to investigate things that are below the surface and have an impact upon the outcomes in classrooms. To McLaren’s (1989) sense, this capacity enables teachers to transform situations. I believe this capacity makes teachers more circumspect and able to make decisions that are well informed, insofar as they take into consideration systemic factors (Senge, 1990, 2000) that inform each classroom context. I found that, in this study, all of the preservice teachers expressed a greater understanding of their responsibility for solving dilemmas and successfully instructing all students. The results of the post-questionnaire responses see Tables 18, 20, and 21 demonstrate a shift in the responses of preservice teachers when they were asked questions about why students with disabilities might have difficulty in the art classroom. Many of them perceived that the students’ difference was the

source of the problem. Post-questionnaire responses showed that they understood that it is oftentimes the classroom environment, curriculum, or teaching strategies that need to be modified in order to solve dilemmas.

Emergent Issues

Mentoring vs. Inclusion?

This process of becoming an art teacher educator has been a dynamic one. The role I perceive for myself has been in continual revision, especially as it relates to the activity of mentoring. It seems that I have gone from one end of the spectrum to the other. I conceive of my journey beginning when I entered the graduate program at the University of North Texas in 2001. I remember feeling so uncertain of myself, unsure if I could be successful in all of the academic endeavors. I was given the opportunity to teach a secondary art methods class. I envisioned myself as a resource for the preservice art education students, a teacher “fresh from the field” ready to help them combine their theory with “real life” practice. I was there to mentor. I lacked the academic grounding and theory as a beginning graduate student, so my practice and subsequent mentoring became the emphasis. The further I progressed in the program and defined my research goals, mentoring took a back seat to articulating the research agenda. I became very anxious to pursue the “real work” of research. This all came back to me when I observed Kelly during the study:

After going over Kelly’s observation with her, her mentor teacher asked me if she could compliment me. She told me that my feedback was very practical and helpful, and that she stayed in the room intentionally to make sure that she and I were on the same page. She went on to say that she hadn’t seen supervisors that really care as much as I do. I told her with great conviction that this was my work and I loved what I did. I think that is

interesting, because I remember being in Buffalo and thinking that my supervision of student teachers was just the “dirty work” I had to do in order to get to the work I felt impassioned about...the art and special needs class. I think I realized last semester that I am a mentor above all else...and my passion happens to be disability awareness. I am glad that my skills of mentoring are being refined during this time, because I know they will serve me in any type of work that I do. (February 8, 2006)

It seemed that mentoring occurred informally, rather than in the context of the seminar. It seemed to occur in each observation conference, in email correspondences, phone conversations and talking before and after the seminar. It was the one on one context-specific advice, offering preservice teachers insight about their practice that made a noticeable difference in the way the preservice teachers perceived themselves.

During the study, I struggled with whether I was mentoring the preservice teachers at the expense of inclusion. I often rushed through inclusion information in a seminar because we spent a longer time than planned on discussing the preservice teachers’ concerns. Many of the preservice teachers told me in their final interviews that they felt some of the seminars were packed too full of information. After reflecting on this issue all semester, I made a conclusion about the matter in my journal:

I feel a bit negligent with regard to the inclusion work I am doing for this study. It seems that mentoring/identity development has become a much larger issue than inclusion. Perhaps that is because a solid sense of teacher identity, facilitated by the presence of a mentor, is the foundation for a real sense of a teacher’s self efficacy. Doesn’t the inclusion literature (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Horne, 1985; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) show that competency, or teacher self-efficacy is the foundation for

being able to successfully implement inclusion? I feel a future study, which followed these teachers into their first year of teaching to see they address inclusion issues would further verify this. To my sense, there is not a strong or structured “lab” component of the inclusion training I am providing. Carrigan (1994), Keifer-Boyd & Kraft (2003) and Andrus (2001) all paired art education students with persons with disabilities and had them complete an in-depth assessment and design a plan of action. In this study, the preservice teachers apply many of the discussions and resources to specific students they are instructing, but there isn’t the same level of structure as the previous studies and programs. However, none of the previous studies or programs occurred in the context of a student teaching seminar.

Student teaching may not be the best context for such a lab component, due to the fact that the presence of students with disabilities and the roles the preservice teachers played in instructing them were inconsistent. Perhaps a future research design could make use of selecting a few students with disabilities at each school site for the student teachers to work with individually. My work this semester really ended up being about laying the groundwork; helping teachers to view themselves as teachers, leading them through a process of change when they encounter dilemmas and solve them. I would venture to say that each of their sense of self has increased ten fold, as well as their confidence in their ability to solve issues. They each came out triumphant as they articulated their problems/concerns, proposed solutions and implemented them. This study ultimately lays the groundwork for implementing inclusion: facilitating preservice teachers’ identity development and increasing their sense of efficacy/agency. As I have said over and over again, one course in disability is not the answer in successfully

preparing art teachers for inclusion. Definitions of disability and more information don't always meet the needs or fill the abysmal gap. Inclusion literature (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Horne, 1985; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) says knowledge and experience need to be combined, *along with* fostering teacher's competency and sense of self. I focused on this last aspect during this study. (April 24, 2006)

I have learned several things about mentoring since embarking on this study. I have learned that a seminar setting isn't really the most conducive setting for mentoring. I had an established curriculum that I certainly adapted to meet the needs of the preservice teachers, but there was always the tension between covering the material and making sure I gave everyone an opportunity to address their concerns. Mentoring cannot be contained or encapsulated in a curriculum, because it is about being in relation with another; (Noddings, 1992) being invested in and supporting another person's development and progress.

Many people play a role in the mentoring process of a preservice teacher. Bill noted in a final interview that he had been mentored by his former professors, his peers in the seminar and his cooperating teachers. Something that surprised me was that each preservice teacher, when asked in a final interview (see Appendix K) if they had been mentored, said yes and qualified this by talking about their mentor teachers. The fact that they did not name me as a mentor in that question disappointed me. Information I gained from asking the preservice teachers what I valued and what my strongest areas as an instructor were (see Appendix K), confirmed that they noted many of the qualities of a mentor in me. These qualities were those that I outlined at the beginning of the study. However, these qualities were not recognized by the preservice teachers as those of a mentor. It seemed that we had differing operational definitions of what the qualities of a mentor were, and that accounted for the misalignment of data on mentoring in this study.

However, I also acknowledge, from my own experience and from the experience of supervising over 30 preservice teachers to date, that the mentor teacher is one of the most significant factors in the developing praxis of the preservice teacher. I failed to acknowledge this influence at the outset of my study, and its absence yielded highly valuable insights. The influence of the mentor teacher, if acknowledged, valued and utilized, can lay the groundwork for truly collaborative partnerships among all the stakeholders in the training of preservice art teachers. The fact that the mentor teachers have such a significant impact upon the developing identity of the preservice teachers underscores the need for them to be brought into this conversation on inclusion in a substantial and authentic way.

Teaching as Artistry

I also found that this work has helped me articulate my role as creative designer. Teaching is my artistic medium and the work of teaching can be artistry. Designing learning experiences that leave students with a deeper knowledge of self and the fortitude to continue learning is an intentional act, akin to creating a painting. This notion of teaching as artistry privileges my agency as a teacher: I can design empowering learning experiences. I can adapt the curriculum to meet all students' needs. I can design experiences that reach outcomes that are important to me; outcomes that align with my philosophy. It seems that so much of my journey, of making sense of my past classroom experiences, has been about cultivating this capacity in myself. There is open-endedness in the visual arts where a dialogue occurs between the work and the artist. In this conversation, one discovers new possibilities. The process ends up remaking you. The "work" (used as a verb) of art remakes you (e.g., Booth, 2001). Similarly, I feel that the "work" of art teacher education has remade me.

I believe that exploring and understanding this process can be a great means of fulfillment for both art teacher educators and preservice teachers alike. There is an exhilaration that you feel when something works in the classroom; I think this is akin to the same delight small children express when they make a mark with a crayon; they realize that their actions have a visible, tangible effect on their environment.

I think it is essential that preservice teachers begin to understand that they have the power and agency to design equitable, transformative classroom spaces. I want them to see their work of teaching as a creative endeavor; a process whereby they have an idea, propose ways of carrying it out, try out these ideas to find viable solutions.

This is a relatively new idea in education that is only beginning to be articulated in the field of art education. Eisner makes the case in his book *The Enlightened Eye* (1991) that the work in the arts provides a substantive body of knowledge that is distinct from traditional forms of inquiry. He points out that his work as a painter informed his ability to see, to inquire deeper into other situations. Thus, making and looking at art can enhance ones' perception. Sullivan's thesis in *Art Practice as Research* (2005) is that the work of artists is as rigorous as the work of scientists. He further explains that the work of making art is socially conscious and has the potential of transforming oppressive situations.

Action research is the conduit between this conception of teaching as artistry and the ability to successfully implement inclusion. In action research, teachers engage in a continuous process of thinking, planning and acting. Artists engage in a similar cycle of creating, interpreting and acting (Sullivan, 2005). Both the work of action researchers and artists is aligned with critical theory, insofar as it aims for change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). If teachers are able to conceive that the work in their classroom is similar to the work they do in the studio, I

believe it would change their conception of the dilemmas they experience. The “drudgery” of accommodating the student with disabilities would no longer be outside of their realm of expertise or responsibility. Of course, for this attitudinal change to take place, preservice teachers must be introduced to and allowed to wrestle with these ideas while having authentic experiences with students with disabilities. A few personal experiences have verified this proposition. In my work with VSA arts, I had the chance to interview several non-disabled artists employed by VSA arts to provide art making experiences for persons with disabilities. I was ultimately trying to find out what type of training and supports they needed in order to successfully do this work. What I found was that they believed that the main resource they needed was their own capacity to creatively solve problems. As one artist explained to me, when he is asked to teach painting to a person who cannot use his hands, this becomes an opportunity for him to find a creative solution to a problem. He went on to say this is not unlike what he does each day in his studio. Those experiences with artists led me to teach about adapting the art experience for students with disabilities in an entirely different way. I began to share with university students, art teachers and also the preservice teachers in this study that adapting the art experience is a chance for them to be creative and to systematically solve a problem by thinking, planning and acting. However, if the net were cast wider and preservice art teachers saw the interplay between the work they do as artists and the totality of the work they do as teachers, I believe that much of the stigma that is associated with the perceived “burdens” of teaching—those things in art education literature (e.g., Loesl, 1999, Papalardo, 1999, Schiller, 1999, Witten, 1991) that seem to never be solved or carry with them an abysmal ring of despair such as inclusion—can be removed. If one were to doubt the existence of such a tenor in our field, Schiller’s (1999) exposition provides food for thought:

While most art teachers are inclusive by nature and have welcomed children with various disabilities into their classrooms, many still need to adjust their thinking. But are we, as art teachers, supposed to know all there is to know about children with disabilities, and should we be ready, willing, and able to take on new students with special needs, without any assistance? (p. 10).

There is much more that beckons exploration in this nexus of artist, teacher and researcher. The implications for making the connections explicit are profound. I found that, in this study, all of the preservice teachers understood and valued the artistic process and the benefits it offered for all students (see Table 21). If inclusion was embedded in the teachers' role as artist and viewed not as a problem but as an opportunity for creative inquiry and production, the outcomes would certainly change the tenor in our field.

Is Critical Theory Practical?

I chose the qualitative research tradition of critical theory as my means of inquiry in this study because I believe in its efficacy in changing situations. While all research has the potential to change situations, critical theory, because of its epistemological orientation, is particularly suited to bringing about change. Gall et al. (2003) note that one should choose the tradition of critical theory when they are interested in studying oppressive power relationships in a culture. Creswell (1998) notes that a researcher in critical theory is primarily concerned with studying "social institutions and their transformations through interpreting the meanings of social life" (p. 80). All that being said, it is easy to disregard critical theory as being merely "pie in the sky" talk and disconnected from the reality of schools. Further, Richardson & Placier (2001) contend, in their review of the literature on teacher change, that the change that is talked about in critical theory (where the teacher initiates changes that can have an effect on the entire ecology of a

class, a school, a community, and ultimately a society), hasn't been documented in the literature. All that being said, can critical theory really change things?

Critical theory can change things because of its emphasis upon praxis, or the authentic connection between theory and practice in teacher education. I saw this dynamic come to bear on my practice as I sought to integrate these two dynamics of praxis. Noffke & Stevenson (1995) note that it is difficult to balance the preservice teacher's need for direction and technical skills during student teaching while cultivating a reflective practitioner. All too often, Noffke & Stevenson (1995) contend, preservice teachers see a great divide between theory and practice when they are asked to synthesize all of their learning during student teaching. It becomes a matter of survival and oftentimes theories and reflection don't seem to yield immediate solutions. If their reflection were tied to the real-world experiences of their student teaching, then perhaps this reflection would take on more meaning and become part of their practice as teachers. I experienced the dilemma that Noffke and Stevenson (1995) describe. I struggled with finding the balance between giving the preservice teachers "the answers" and letting them struggle for a bit to find the answers themselves. It was difficult for me at times to discern how much guidance to give each teacher. I believe that an authentic connection can be made between theory and practice in preservice art teacher education when a curriculum utilizes the teachers' real life experiences in classrooms. It was natural for the preservice teachers to discuss what they were experiencing at their student teaching placements. As an art teacher educator, I keyed into these issues and used them as vehicles for transformational learning. Critical theory makes knowledge transformational by engaging teachers in a cycle of thinking and acting in the context of real life situations. The preservice teachers didn't have any difficulty identifying problems and dilemmas during their student teaching. What I was particularly vigilant about was placing responsibility

upon them to identify the sources of the problem and propose and enact solutions. As discussed in chapter 4, this process was very relevant and helpful for Kelly, who made great gains in her ability to solve difficult teaching situations.

Implications for Critical Theory in Preservice Art Teacher Education and Inclusion Training

The results of this study lead me to recommend several components that can be embedded into the art education curriculum and have a substantive impact on the way that preservice teachers solve educational dilemmas. The art teacher educator can (1) Understand and articulate their own narrative, (2) Foster preservice teachers' sense of identity, (3) Articulate a broader notion of inclusion and (4) Use context-specific instructional tools.

Understand and Articulate Your Own Narrative

The competencies that we want to see in tomorrow's teachers must be modeled and practiced for them in our classrooms today. Since critical theory places such emphasis upon honoring student narratives, it is paramount that the art teacher educator understands and articulates his or her narrative. Galbraith (1995b) contends that art teacher educators must model this type of story sharing so that our students will see the relevance in their education and so that we know more about our practices as a field. Narrative is a powerful thing: in art, in educational change. People want to hear other's stories. And, when we hear someone's story that is likened to our own, it is transformational.

I found that during this study, my narrative had an impact upon the preservice teachers. It seemed that they saw parts of themselves in me, which is part of the function of a narrative. For instance, when I asked Kari during the semi-structured interview what she thought I valued, she said: "Individual learners. Differentiated learning. Special needs and inclusion. You value the same things I value; being real, making connections, giving students all the feedback they need.

You care about everyone genuinely. You want people to be successful and you give people help with what they need” (May 19, 2006). Similarly, when I asked Erin during her semi-structured interview what my strongest area as an instructor was, she noted:

You were able to draw out everyone’s teaching strengths. I didn’t know my strengths, and I think you are really good at defining student’s strengths. There was so much we didn’t know about what was going on in your personal life. But, if we would have known everything that was going on, we might have felt bad about approaching you. I feel like we share the same values. (May 12, 2006)

Anderson and Herr (2005) note that vicarious experience is often viewed as more useful to teachers than traditional research. It seems that the preservice teachers in this study were anxious to examine their own narratives and to find themselves in the narratives of others, including persons with disabilities. When asked if they were more empathetic towards persons with disabilities, all of them said yes and they drew the comparison between the adversity that persons with disabilities face and the adversities they experience.

One reason that I feel that the preservice teachers were willing to look closer at their narratives was because I demonstrated to them that this was valuable by spending time explicating my narrative to them. bell hooks (1994) reasons “...Teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students” (p. 15). Critical theory and action research are one means of exploring this narrative and thus empowering students. May (1997) offers confirmation of this:

In art education, the subjects we teach and those who teach and learn have long been marginalized and decentered in our collective institutional press to ‘get the job done.’

Inquiry into our own practice centers us, grounds us viscerally in real place and time with real persons, begs our questions and possibilities, makes us responsible for what we believe and do. When done well, teaching as inquiry provokes our most aesthetic, pedagogical sensibilities. It helps us to envision and craft ourselves and our work. (p. 237)

Foster Preservice Teachers' Sense of Identity

Research in special education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Horne, 1985; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) has consistently shown that inclusion training that is comprised of knowledge and experience in disability have the greatest potential for increasing teacher competency and fostering positive attitudes about inclusion. Critical theory posits that taking a deeper look at inclusion has the potential to provide teachers with the opportunity to transform undesirable situations (Fine & Weiss, 2003). For the teacher educator, this means that tools or instruments should be created which help preservice teachers marry their evolving knowledge with their experience in field placements and take a deeper look at the situation. In this study, the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I) enabled preservice teachers to take a closer look at inclusion, pose questions that were relevant to their experiences and find answers.

Fostering teacher identity is a valid approach for inclusion training in art education. My first notions about what constituted effective inclusion training included a focus upon exploring attitudes and beliefs. I felt that other approaches, which relied primarily on tools, strategies, and tips did not really get at the heart of the issue in inclusion. The existence of exclusion must be considered. And the reasons that we as teachers practice exclusion are varied. It may be that we don't have the appropriate tools, but if the attitude and willingness to implement inclusion is not there, the existence of tools and strategies become a moot point.

As I conducted this study, I found that fostering teacher identity is the key ingredient to ensuring that teachers implement inclusion. This work, then, became more about identity development and the self-actualization of teachers rather than strict knowledge transmission. This idea is central to critical theory (cf., Freire, 1970), where education is not viewed as a banking system (where the teacher deposits knowledge into the student), but rather as a collaboration among teacher and student that results in the students' identity development. Galbraith (2004) acknowledges the moral dimension in art teacher education, and this reminds me that attention needs to be focused on how we talk to teachers about teaching, how we help them to define their teaching selves (Danielewicz, 2001).

One part of this work of identity development involved helping teachers to make sense of their histories, backgrounds and temperaments. This can be particularly tricky work, as it opens up the door to teachers' exploration of feelings and emotions. May (1997) writes that many art teacher educators struggle in

helping teachers make sense of their feelings and experiences in responsible but re-constructive, educative ways. Those who propose critical reflection...walk a thin line.

We are not trained as therapists, but our commitment to teaching as inquiry requires more sensitivity, personal introspection, theoretical grounding, and ethical consideration from us. (p. 235)

Addressing Emotional Intelligence in Preservice Art Teacher Education

What May (1997) describes above can be understood as emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) describes emotional intelligence as the awareness of ones' emotions and the ability to manage those emotions. At the outset of this study, I did not anticipate the necessity of addressing emotional intelligence with the preservice teachers. This issue emerged for me as I

saw many of my own tendencies and temperaments in the preservice teachers. In our first seminar meeting, many of the teachers identified themselves as perfectionists. I immediately saw myself and the troubles I had with this tendency in my life and I made a mental note to try to address this with each of them when I saw these tendencies emerge.

I will now demonstrate the ways that I tried to understand and address the concerns of one preservice teacher, Thai. While this was an issue that came to bear on all of my relationships with the preservice teachers, I found myself reflecting more often on my experiences with Thai because of the similarity in some of his tendencies and my own.

I observed Thai today, and I was very glad to start off our meeting with a discussion of how he was doing. It was clear to me that he was overwhelmed and I realized that we had to address what was happening with him personally before we went any further. As he talked about some of his stressors and the kids in the class, how he tried so hard to meet their needs but he wasn't doing enough, I was shown a picture of myself when I began teaching at the university in fall 2001. I remember saying the same things, and being so upset about not giving the students enough, then realizing that I was asking them to meet needs in me that they could not meet. I was putting all of my eggs into one basket, expecting that my role as teacher would take care of all of the emotional holes I was feeling at the time. Thai went on to say that he didn't feel like he was getting any feedback from anyone about his teaching and he didn't really know what he was good at. This I also recognized in myself as a form of perfectionism...he was getting feedback from multiple sources, he just wasn't hearing it. I began the discussion by telling him that he was a competent teacher and he had indeed received feedback, but something was blocking him from hearing it. I also reiterated to him his strengths. He

seemed pleased when I told him that one of his strengths I observed in this lesson was the specific feedback he gave students regarding their artistic strengths. I reminded him that we discussed this during his elementary placement and he put it into practice and made it one of his strengths. The practice of setting specific goals for the student teachers is one means of empowerment for them.

I also felt the need to address with him today that his perception was off. I told him that his beliefs that he was not a competent teacher and that he was not giving enough to his students were not accurate according to my observations and the observations of his mentor teachers. I explained to him that some previous belief or experience was coloring the lens through which he looked at this situation, almost as if he took a template from that past experience and placed it over his present experience in an attempt to understand it. He did say that he had a lot of self-doubt and was the primary caregiver in his family. He talked of making mistakes in his family as far as his care of his siblings. I told him that this was something that he would not be able to Table out all at once, but that the important thing now is that he realizes that his situation cannot be interpreted accurately by looking at it through a tinted lens. This classroom and these students are distinct from his family and any past experiences. (April 6, 2006)

I really struggled with whether or not these types of dialogue were appropriate. As such, I used my journal as a space to record these questions and change my practice if necessary:

Where is the line between the personal and professional here? These things needed to be said to him, and they seemed to help. But, is it my responsibility to deal with psychological issues? Insofar as I feel like they will affect his fulfillment as a teacher and the relationship he has with students, yes...it is my responsibility. (April 6, 2006)

I continued to wrestle with this issue of whether or not I was crossing a line with Thai and turned to the literature for some direction. This example from my journal details my thought process:

In reading Carson & Sumara (1997) today, I began to wonder if my puzzling about Thai is really an issue in critical theory. With critical theory, it seems that nothing is taken for granted. Others might pass his behavior off as being irrelevant to lesson planning or instruction, and some may even say it was remotely related to class management (insofar as your disposition/confidence affects your ability to manage a class). But, would others look closer to ask what these behaviors, when taken as a whole, tell me about Thai so that I can offer him relevant help? Might also these behaviors, if “made strange” or puzzled at, tell us about a lack in teacher education that needs to be addressed? Like the emotional health of teachers and how to help them to manage their emotional lives? (April 10, 2006)

This issue continued to surface in my experiences with the other preservice teachers. Consider this excerpt from my journal after an observation of Bill. I estimated that he had made great strides in his current placement in terms of feeling confident in front of the students, but his mentor teacher disagreed:

After talking with Bill’s mentor teacher, I wondered at my assessment of his progress. Was my estimation that Bill had become more empowered untrue? Am I disconnected from his actual skills as a teacher? Am I paying more attention to the emotional aspects of student teaching and letting the requisite skills fall by the wayside? Surely not? Critical theory does not in anyway advocate believing a theory at the expense of practice; rather, the two are dynamically interrelated. Critical theory balks at the de-skilling of teachers

and asks that they do more work to Table out the life histories of their students so that all instruction can be heavily individualized. (April 24, 2006)

While I feel like I was true to the goals of critical theory, there were times in my interactions with Thai that I felt uncomfortable, like I was crossing a line and becoming too didactic with him. It made me uneasy that sometimes my tone was insistent, and that I was basing some of my advice on my personal experiences. This zone of subjectivity, I reasoned, must be monitored when addressing emotional issues with preservice teachers.

But, what is an art teacher educator to do with the emotions that preservice teachers bring to the table? Consider the range of emotional information I was given by the preservice teachers in the Pre-Disability Questionnaire (see Appendix F):

Table 35

Disability Post-Questionnaire Responses, Question 10

Pre-Questionnaire Response to: Is there anything you would like me to know about you as we begin the semester?
Erin: I can be a perfectionist and sometimes things get to me more than I show. So I get frustrated easily. When I vent, I am not as upset as it might sound, I am just verbally working out problems.
Kelly: I hide my frustrations until I can't take it anymore. I have a hard time falling down and getting back up.
Thai: I am paranoid at times, overly emotional. I break down, I get stressed-I am fragile. But to criticism? I enjoy constructive criticism; I don't respond well to the "Brigadier General" approach to teaching.

Undoubtedly, preservice teachers gave me this information because they felt I needed to know it. And, I took these factors into consideration when I had interactions with them. A case in point is Kari, who shared with the group in a seminar meeting that she really wanted everyone to like her

and she experienced a lot of stress when students weren't warm towards her. I realized that this was an issue that could cause her trouble during student teaching, and so I addressed this issue both individually with her and collectively with the group. At the end of the semester, she shared with me: "I feel more confident as a whole. I can take on challenges and accomplish goals. Not everybody will like you but you still have to find a way for people to learn." (Disability Questionnaire, May 1, 2006)

When preservice teachers provide us with this information, we should be prepared to address these areas in a professional manner. Andrus (2006) suggests that teacher educators address the emotional issues, but always pull preservice teachers back to the professional issues that underlie each situation. She provides examples and a model in her chapter on therapeutic teaching in the book *Art and Special Needs* (Gerber & Guay, 2006). I feel like I did this with both Kari and Thai by engaging with them in a discussion about how the issues they identified can affect teaching performance.

Articulate a Broader Notion of Inclusion

In this study, all seven preservice teachers reported in the semi-structured interview that they felt that they were more empathetic to the experiences of persons with disabilities. In the same interview, five out of seven of the teachers reported that their attitude about inclusion had changed. The common ground in all of their accounts for change was the way in which they now felt they could relate and understand the experience of persons with disabilities. I think a primary reason for this change was the fact that I articulated a broader notion of inclusion throughout the course of the study. I knew that this was necessary, because the group of preservice teachers would be experiencing a continuum of inclusion. Inclusion is a spectrum term in the literature, referring in the narrowest sense to the presence of children with disabilities in a regular school or

a regular classroom. In the broadest sense, inclusion can be conceptualized as the appreciation for a variety of differences that affect learning, such as gender, ability, race, class and religion. Inclusion in both instances can be considered a matter not just of compliance, but also of social justice and equity (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 1997; Fehr et al., 2000; Sapon-Shevin, 2003; Sapon-Shevin & Zollers, 1999). During student teaching, some of the preservice teachers instructed a self-contained class of students with disabilities, some instructed only students with mild learning disabilities. For those preservice teachers who were not exposed to large numbers or types of students with disabilities, I wanted to show them that the knowledge from the seminar was relevant. One means of doing this was by articulating that classrooms can be spaces that challenge the practice of exclusion because of difference. Another means of fostering this capacity to view inclusion as an issue of difference was by presenting the work of artists with disabilities and showing how many of them deal with the same issues that non-disabled artists do: how they are represented, inequities in society and stereotypes. Five out of seven preservice teachers said during their semi-structured interview that the exposure to artists with disabilities was one of the most helpful tools they received as they sought to implement inclusion.

This broader conceptualization of inclusion and approach to the research is needed because the overwhelming resound in preservice art education and disability work is that teachers can't handle it all (Federenko, 1996; Loesl, 1999; Schiller, 1994); they are not equipped to teach their regular classes *and* students with disabilities. A broader view of inclusion can enable teachers to see that all students are unique and successful teaching often requires being aware of and responsive to those differences in our pedagogy.

Use Context-Specific Instructional Tools

I designed the curriculum for this study so that every activity had its footing in a real world experience of inclusion. Before beginning activities, I encouraged the preservice teachers to think about specific students, to ask questions and try to use the activity to give them insight on how to solve any dilemmas with the student they might be experiencing. For example, when we looked at adaptive art equipment, I challenged them to think about one of their students who was having difficulty with an art making process and decide which tool might be most appropriate for the student. If no tools were shown that were applicable to the situation, I encouraged the preservice teachers to creativity design their own. Even when I used the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion worksheet (see Appendix I), the preservice teachers thought of certain students who matched the cases detailed on the sheet.

The experience of this directed student teaching experience facilitated a dialogue between the preservice teachers and their mentor teachers and the preservice teachers and myself about inclusion. The topics we discussed in the seminar and the worksheets and questionnaires became lenses through which the preservice teachers could analyze, understand and process their experiences. The usefulness of and need for such tools in inclusion training is a primary finding of this study. These tools provided the vital link between knowledge and experience and allowed the preservice teachers to choose topics for inquiry that were within their comfort zone and relevant.

Erin and Bill's responses on the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I) are cases in point.

Table 36

Erin and Bill's responses on the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet

3. How do your own experiences of inclusion at your student teaching placements compare to the case you explored during this activity?		
Preservice Teacher	Pre-Worksheet	Post-Worksheet
Bill:	I think I have seen just about half of the scenarios at my elementary placement. I have found that you can only help them if you are consistent with your personal teaching strategy with them and they feel successful.	We have two students at the high school very similar to Jane in this case. The main difference is that they had a personal aide, which they really needed to take part in the class. Observing those students is where I got most of my ideas for questions 7, 8, and 4.
Erin:	This reminds me of a student I already have in the elementary level and I hope she works through her mutism before reaching high school. It sounds like the student does not show interest in things that do not work directly with his preferences in art. I would actually like to encounter a situation like this. It seems like a student that I could help and possibly expand his interests.	I had the selectively mute student in my elementary placement and by going around and talking to hear about the assignment in every class I could see her responding to my comments artistically.

Further, my own process of dialogue with the preservice teachers helped them to look more closely at the contexts of their student teaching placement. Critical theory makes knowledge transformational by bridging the gap between theory and practice. When the preservice teachers identified a dilemma in their placement, I asked them why they felt this dilemma existed and how it could be changed. At every subsequent meeting with the preservice

teacher, I asked them about this issue, in an attempt to hold them responsible for the change. I found that the end result was that each preservice teacher found resolve to their issue by the end of the semester.

The use of context-specific tools also enables the preservice teacher to think more deeply about the interactions he or she has with students. This occurred when I used the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion worksheet and each of the preservice teachers chose cases that resembled actual situations and students they encountered in the schools. Uses of tools, such as case studies, have been acknowledged as a means to help teachers begin to think of themselves as teachers (Klein, 2003). Cases are a means to help teachers problematize teaching (Danielewicz, 2001) and also bridge the gap between theory and practice (Klein, 2003), as well as provide vicarious experience that is perceived as more useful by preservice teachers than traditional research (Anderson & Herr, 2005). Further, I found that these tools helped preservice teachers to feel more competent. They became a means for them to explore the issue of inclusion more deeply, and this combining of knowledge and experience increased their confidence that they would be able to implement inclusion. When I asked Bill what he gained from the seminars on inclusion, he stated:

If nothing else, I got a true life experience, teaching in my classes to special abilities/needs, instead of just reading about it. I would not have stood a chance in the workforce if I did not have this as a preliminary study. I have also learned that these students, while they have their own individual needs, can be just as successful if given a chance (May 1, 2006).

Preservice art teachers need to be prepared for the dilemmas of teaching (Kowalchuck, 1999), and the connection of their experiences to a curriculum is one certain means of such preparation.

While the teachers certainly valued the praxis inherent in this study, I found that my ability to foster group dialogue and community were lacking. To my sense, the group of preservice teachers with whom I worked never fully developed into a community. While I found that they felt they were a community, I realized that we each had different notions about what community involved. I also found that my own perfectionist tendencies caused me to view the responsibility for creating a community as resting on my shoulders alone. In reviewing the seminar transcriptions, I found that very rarely if ever did I emphasize how essential it was for the preservice teachers to share ideas and construct knowledge together regarding the dilemmas of teaching.

Suggestions for Future Research

As with any in-depth inquiry of a phenomenon, the exploration inevitably leads to more questions. I found this to be no less true for this dissertation study. While it was apparent to me that critical theory made a substantive impact on my practice as an art teacher educator and on the experience of the preservice teachers, I find myself asking more questions that would permit continuous inquiry from myself and other art teacher educators. Some of these questions are:

1. If identity development is the foundational issue that increases the likelihood that preservice teachers will implement inclusion, then what discourse needs to occur in the university to develop preservice teachers' notions of agency, self, and the work of teaching?
2. In order for preservice teachers to be effectively prepared for creating inclusive classrooms, does systemic change need to occur in the university art education program? Would this training be most effective in the context of one class, or could the essential competencies of this training be embedded in all courses?

3. Does the structure of student teaching prohibit addressing topical issues such as inclusion in seminar meetings? Noffke & Stevenson (1995) acknowledge, as did I, that it is difficult to balance preservice teachers' need to "vent" about student teaching and formal instruction in topics related to teaching.
4. Would the benefits of preservice art education and inclusion training benefit from actively involving preservice teachers in the action research process?
5. Is fostering emotional intelligence necessary in preservice art teacher education? If so, how does an art teacher educator find balance and establish boundaries as they do this work? Is this competency of emotional intelligence most effective when it is addressed throughout a department, rather than just one course? If so, how might a department go about embedding these issues into all coursework? (see Bain, 2004 for suggestions)
6. During this study, I noted that many of the mentor teachers had very positive notions about inclusion. In fact, some of them spent their planning periods teaching art to self-contained classes of special education students. It seemed to me that the preservice teachers were very influenced in general by their mentor teachers. To what degree do mentor teacher's attitudes about inclusion impact preservice teachers? What dialogue and action needs to occur in preservice art teacher education in order to bring mentor teachers into authentic collaboration with university supervisors as each supports the identity development of the preservice art teacher?
7. Case studies can be performed of some of these mentor teachers who promote inclusion. Using instruments such as the Disability Questionnaire (see Appendices E and F) could provide knowledge about factors that influence a teacher's acceptance of inclusion.

8. What is the best way to understand and address preservice art teachers who already have a positive view of inclusion or who don't express any change in attitudes regarding inclusion? Is their narrative the primary reason they accept inclusion, or does there exist a lack of understanding about the dilemmas of inclusion?
9. To counter Richardson and Placier's (2001) claim that critical theory doesn't really change things, longitudinal studies need to be performed which utilize the components of critical theory and inclusion training identified in this study. If teachers were trained in these components, they could participate in a study which examined the degree to which they implemented these components in their first several years of teaching.

Conclusion

My chief aim as an art teacher educator is to facilitate students' professional and human development. To my sense, these areas are dynamically interwoven. I attempt to design individualized curriculum that reflects students' histories, beliefs, capabilities and interests while attending to their professional goals as well. The end result is that students have a deeper awareness of self and a sense of professional competency.

Many beginning teachers will enter the schools only to find a lack of support as they instruct students with disabilities. Some of them even may even begin to see the special education system as an impediment to the education of students with disabilities. I cannot help but think that one reason these sentiments exist is because teachers have not been able to make a bridge between the two worlds of general and special education, or more broadly, between the worlds of university learning and public school teaching. This bridge-building should begin in preservice education, as positive beliefs about inclusion are fostered. If they believe that teaching is about providing full and equal access to education for every child, then they will put forth the

effort to be proactive. My vision of change is that preservice art teacher educators would first begin to ennoble their narratives, thus explicating the “intellectual, emotional and moral elements of preparing art teachers (Galbraith, 2004, p. 125). What this means to me is that helping preservice teachers explore their narrative is intimately connected to their agency in fostering equitable practices in the art room.

With this essential component in place, courses on disability, while still needed, will be embedded within an essential framework that sets the stage for equitable treatment of students with disabilities.

In this part of my journey, I have focused on becoming a circumspect consumer and creator of research. It is a privilege to pull together sources and design a study; it is as creative of an act as making a piece of visual art. There are an infinite number of solutions, and I will settle on the one that fits with my way of understanding and negotiating the world and answering the question I have posed. I see the connectedness of research and life world and I am anxious to continue traveling.

APPENDIX A
STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

1. Full Name: _____
 First Middle Last

2. Home Address: _____
 Street City State Zip

3. Email address: _____ (Please list one you check frequently)

4. Home Phone: _____

5. Cell Phone: _____

6. Please list any responsibilities you will have in addition to student teaching (classes, work, etc). Use the table below to write those down, along with times.

Example: Monday: Art 4890 5-8 PM
 Friday: Work- 5-10 PM

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

7. What do you feel are your greatest strengths as a teacher?

8. Are there any concerns you have about student teaching or your particular placement?

9. Are there any areas you feel you need special assistance or help in with regard to teaching this semester?

10. Is there anything additional that you would like me to know as your college supervisor?

APPENDIX B

SEMINAR IN STUDENT TEACHING: GOALS AND GUIDELINES

Goals for the seminar

- a. To develop a mentoring relationship with you, where I provide assistance, resources and input as you need it
- b. To enable you to look closely at every aspect of the schools in which you are placed
- c. To provide you with problem solving skills, information and training for successful inclusion in the art room.
- d. To help you explore/articulate YOUR beliefs, preferences and needs as a teacher
- e. To create a classroom community where problems are shared and solved collaboratively

Establishing rapport with your mentor teacher

The questions below may help you as you begin each placement:

- a. How would you like me to begin teaching at this placement? Will I be assisting individual students, team teaching with you, taking on one class/level at a time, etc?
- b. How will I receive feedback from you on my teaching? Will we meet at the end of every day/during planning/once a week, etc?
- c. In what duties/extracurricular school activities of yours will I participate?
- d. What would the best time be for us to meet with my university supervisor?
- e. Is there a curriculum already set in place that you would like for me to follow? Are there certain projects you would like for me to teach? (Share ideas you have for future lessons) Would I be able to try some of these lessons out?
- f. What do you consider to be a process or lesson that you have perfected? Could I be exposed to this during this placement?
- g. Can I make copies of lessons/resources that you have?
- h. What lesson plan format do you follow?
- i. Can you share with me your process of creating curriculum?
- j. Can you share with me your process of creating procedures and a discipline plan?

Good teaching is artistry. Your mentor teacher has consciously planned every aspect of the classroom in which you are student teaching. Talk with your mentor teacher about how they began the process of organizing their room, planning their yearly curriculum, and establishing rules and procedures. What you are trying to get inside of is their thought process.

Consider asking them questions like: What made you choose the particular rules that you have? What other discipline strategies have you tried? What didn't work? What supplies were at your school when you began teaching? How much money did you have for your budget? How did you decide what to buy? How long did it take before the supplies came in? What made you arrange your room the way that you did?

General Guidelines for Student Teaching

I. Observations

- A. I will be observing you approximately 2-3 times per placement (4-6 times total).
- B. The Friday before it is your week to be observed, please email me your teaching schedule for the upcoming week (the classes for which you have full responsibility). Please list the class times, grade level and lesson title. Tell me which two classes you would most like for me to come and observe. I will try my best to observe you in those classes. You may teach your mentor teacher's lessons or your own.

Example:

January 23:		
7:45-8:15	1 st grade	Introduce lesson—Sea paintings
10:30-11:25	5 th grade	Continuing lesson—Clay tiles
January 25:		
2:30-3-45	3 rd grade	Introduce lesson—Self portraits*
January 26		
7:45-8:15	1 st grade	Continuing lesson—Sea paintings
10:30-11:25	5 th grade	Finishing lesson—Clay tiles*

- C. I will make out my schedule of observations and let you know by the end of the weekend when I will observe you.
- D. When I come to observe, please have your lesson or unit plan ready for me to look at before the lesson begins. You may use the lesson plan format that your mentor teacher uses. Please ensure, however, that the lesson plan you give me has objectives, steps of the project, and assessment included, at minimum. It would be very helpful if I could see a teacher product of the lesson as well.
- E. When I observe you, I will sit at a desk or in a chair to the side of the room where I have a clear view of your teaching and any visuals you may be using. When the students begin working, I will walk around and observe/talk with them. I will then go back to my seat and complete your evaluation form.
- F. Plan to meet with me after the lesson is over for us to discuss the evaluation. If we are unable to meet after the lesson, I will leave the STAR evaluation form with you and email or phone you later that day with comments and questions.
- G. It is not necessary that every lesson be a beginning one...I ask that one observation at each placement be a beginning lesson. Beyond that, feel free to have me come and observe a class/project you are really excited about, or a class that you are struggling with...remember, I am there to offer you constructive feedback that will help improve the situation.

II. Evaluations

- A. I will complete a STAR form each time I formally observe you. (2-3 times per placement). Both you and the College of Education (COE) will always receive copy of this.
- B. At the end of each placement, your mentor teacher will complete a Final Evaluation of your progress. At the end of your student teaching, I will complete a Final Evaluation of your progress. You will receive a copy of this form and one will be filed with the COE.

III. Calendar

IV. Miscellany

- A. Student teaching is a Pass/Fail course.
- B. If you are ever absent for any reason, you must notify both your mentor teacher and I as far in advance as possible.
- C. Please make sure that you have read the COE handbook. You should have an extra copy of this to give to your mentor teacher.
- D. Make sure to document your experience through journaling, digital images, lesson plans, resource files, etc. Begin compiling your teaching portfolio.
- E. Please alert me immediately if there is any situation that you need help with or that concerns you.

APPENDIX C
CLASS NORMS

Norms are patterns of behavior that exist in every social setting. We have all had the uneasy feeling of going someplace new and not knowing what was expected of us or what was “normal” behavior. This is reasonable, as we all have a need to belong and feel as though we fit in.

We have all had a lot of practice at being students. As such, we have a rich store of memories that will help us in determining what norms we feel are necessary for an empowering learning environment.

Think for a moment about the feeling that you want your students to have when they come into your classroom on a daily basis. What do you want to feel when you walk into this seminar classroom?

Norms, when decided upon collectively by teacher and student, can make those desires reality.

Questions that will help a group uncover class norms:

- *What do you need to be assured of in order to be comfortable and to fully participate in all aspects of our class time (discussions, group work, sharing personal experiences, etc.)*
- *What are your expectations of your instructor? Of one another? Remember to define what you mean when you set expectations. For example, if you believe we should “respect” each other, what does this look like? How will you know when you are being respected or disrespected?*
- *Imagine yourself fully participating in a class and having an experience with a group of people that you would never forget. Imagine being a part of something that you consider great; creating knowledge with a group of people that will help you to become a better person/teacher.*
- *In practical terms, what would this look like?*

1. Class Environment—Physical space, mood, energy
2. Instructor/Student Interactions
3. Peer Interactions
4. Discussions about placement/mentor teacher/students

APPENDIX D

INCLUSION: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTION DISCUSSION

In your small group, think about a time when you personally were excluded because of difference. List some words that describe how you felt. Then, if you feel comfortable, briefly describe the incident, giving everyone a chance to talk. (5 minutes)

- Words that describe how it felt to be excluded:

- Reasons that students in schools are excluded:

- Large Group Discussion of above Activity (10 minutes)

With this background, I now want to you to talk with your group and uncover at least four benefits of inclusion for each of the following groups: students with disabilities, students without disabilities, the teacher, the school, and community. (10 minutes)

For students with disabilities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

For students without disabilities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

For the teacher

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

For the school

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

For the community

- 1.
- 3.

- 2.
- 4.

Large Group Discussion of Above Activity (10 minutes)

Talk with your group about some of the challenges that inclusion poses for schools and for art educators specifically. Propose possible solutions that you personally would attempt. (10 minutes)

The Problem	The Sources of the Problem	Possible Solutions

Large Group Discussion of Above Activity (10 minutes)

APPENDIX E
QUESTIONNAIRE: PLACEMENT ONE

Name: _____

1. Share one thing that most surprised you about student teaching

2. What is your greatest strength as a teacher?

3. Describe what your ideal classroom would look, feel and be like. What are the students doing? What is the mood or energy of the classroom? What is your role in the class? What does the room look like?

4. What area of teaching are you struggling with/questioning the most right now? (Be specific)

5. What are your goals for this placement? What specific skills do you want to enhance, what questions about your teaching do you want answered?

6. In what area of your teaching would you most like feedback from your mentor teacher and university supervisor?

7. Is there anything that is unclear about your mentor teacher's expectations of you?

8. Do you have any questions about my expectations of you or the requirements for student teaching?
9. What are some specific topics you would like to cover in future seminar meetings?

APPENDIX F
DISABILITY PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

Please elaborate on how any of the experiences you listed above will help or hinder you as you seek to provide empowering learning situations for art students with disabilities:

5. Please check the way(s) in which your previous coursework at the University of North Texas has prepared you for instructing students with disabilities:

Instructors give lectures, reading assignments on children with disabilities

Fieldwork placements include students with disabilities

Instructors spent time talking with us about our fieldwork experiences with students who have disabilities

Instructors do not address the instruction of students with disabilities

Other (Please explain below)

6. Please check all of statements below that you agree with and explain/support your choices with personal experiences and ideas:

I feel sorry for students with disabilities because they have so much to deal with because...

Students with disabilities should be instructed in a classroom by themselves because...

Teachers must learn to adapt instruction for all students, not just students with disabilities because...

Students with disabilities cannot complete the same kind of art projects as students without disabilities...

____ Teachers should examine their beliefs about students who are different from themselves(including students from other cultures and students with disabilities) because...

____ The main reason that students with disabilities are included in art classes is so they can socialize with students who do not have disabilities...

____ Students with disabilities can experience success making, looking at, and talking about art...

____ Art teachers should include the work of artists with disabilities into their curriculum because...

7. What, in your opinion, are the similarities between teaching students with disabilities and students of different cultures?

8. What are you looking forward to the most as you prepare for student teaching and interacting with students who are different from you (including students with disabilities)?

9. What are you looking forward to the least as you prepare for student teaching and interacting with students who are different from you (including students with disabilities)?

10. Is there anything you would like me to know about you as we begin the semester?

APPENDIX G
DISABILITY POST-QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Please answer the following items to the best of your ability.

1. Do you have any experience working with children who have disabilities?

_____YES _____NO

If you answered “yes,” please name the setting, population (grade level/age and disability), length of time and the capacity in which you were involved.

2. Please rate how you feel about working with children who have disabilities:

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5
Least comfortable				Most comfortable

3. What did you gain from this seminar on instructing students with disabilities? What were your learning outcomes?

4. Please indicate below what experiences with disability during and after this seminar:

_____ I received special education services at some point during my K-12 education

(Please list the type of disability: _____)

_____ A family member or friend of mine has a disability

(what type of disability? _____)

_____ I attended classes or participated in extra curricular activities with persons with

disabilities in Grades K-12 or College (circle one or both)

_____ I work(ed) with a person who has a disability

_____ I have not had any interaction with a person with a disability

_____ Other (please explain below)

Please feel free to elaborate on how any of the experiences you listed above that helped or hindered you as you instructed art students with disabilities:

5. Please check the way(s) in which your previous coursework at the University of North Texas has prepared you for instructing students with disabilities:

Instructors give lectures, reading assignments on children with disabilities

Fieldwork placements include students with disabilities

Instructors spent time talking with us about our fieldwork experiences with students who have disabilities

Instructors do not address the instruction of students with disabilities

Other (Please explain below)

6. Please check all of statements below that you agree with and explain/support your choices with personal experiences and ideas:

I feel sorry for students with disabilities because they have so much to deal with because...

Students with disabilities should be instructed in a classroom by themselves because...

Teachers must learn to adapt instruction for all students, not just students with disabilities because...

Students with disabilities cannot complete the same kind of art projects as students without disabilities...

____ Teachers should examine their beliefs about students who are different from themselves(including students from other cultures and students with disabilities) because...

____ The main reason that students with disabilities are included in art classes is so they can socialize with students who do not have disabilities...

____ Students with disabilities can experience success making, looking at, and talking about art...

____ Art teachers should include the work of artists with disabilities into their curriculum because...

7. What, in your opinion, are the similarities between teaching students with disabilities and students of different cultures?
8. What was the most exciting outcome for you as you worked with students who are different from you (including students with disabilities)?
9. Recall what you were looking forward to the least when the semester began. Did you experience success in this area?
10. What was the most challenging aspect of instructing students with disabilities this semester?
11. Is there anything you would like me to know about you as we end this semester?

APPENDIX H
QUESTIONNAIRE PLACEMENT TWO

Name:

1. What did you learn about yourself as a teacher during your first placement?

- What do you value?

- In what areas of art teaching do you excel?

- What areas of art teaching do you need to improve?

2. What are your goals for this second placement?

3. What questions/concerns do you have about your second placement?

4. What questions/concerns do you have about student teaching/graduation/job interviews, etc?

APPENDIX I

DILEMMAS CASES IN INCLUSION WORKSHEET

This activity is intended to be used as an informal assessment tool for you. We will spend much of the semester talking about how to assess what our students need, and examining resources that exist to help us in these endeavors. Read each case, which is based on actual teaching experiences. Answer the questions that follow.

Case One:

James is a 7th grade student enrolled in your art class who experiences Asperger's Syndrome. In addition to this disability, he also experiences Oppositional Defiant Disorder, where he has difficulty responding appropriately to authority Tables. He frequently yells when he does not agree with what he is being told to do and sometimes lays down on the floor and screams. He is overweight, does not have any close friends, and is frequently absent from school. He is often defensive and feels that people are picking on him all of the time. Some of his main interests are his cats and mechanical objects. He has said that he takes very good care of his animals and cares for them very much. He also said that in his house, he is the one that his parents ask to fix a lot of things. It is obvious that a lot of his self esteem and self-concept comes from his skills in these two areas.

Case Two:

Riley is an 8th grade student experiencing cerebral palsy. Her mother fought to have a computer purchased for her as an assistive device. These are present in every room that Rebecca receives instruction. The previous art teacher placed the computer in the supply room (apart from the other students) and installed an art program on the computer for Rebecca to make drawings with. Rebecca comes to class accompanied by an aide, and they have been working together on the computer for the first few weeks of school. The other students in the class don't know Rebecca at all.

Case Three:

Jane is a 6th grade student with moderate mental retardation. Many of the other students view her as an lower elementary student because of her cognitive and speech capacities and the way she interacts with them. Some students laugh at her when she acts this way, and other students get mad when she talks to them or accidentally touches them. She has only worked with crayons in previous art classes and is at the preschematic stage of drawing development. She does not come to your class accompanied by an aide. She is very affectionate and aware of some of the emotions people are feeling. She often asks them if they are mad, sad, happy, based on the expressions on their faces. She talks a lot about her family.

Case Four:

Damien is a selectively mute student who experiences mild mental retardation. He does not interact with any students in the class. He is enrolled in your Art IV class at the high school level. His father is a teacher at your school. He doesn't spend a lot of time on art projects that he is not interested in. When he has any free time, he makes elaborate pen drawings of super heroes that he has created.

Case Five:

Ron is a student classified as having emotional behavioral disorder and a learning disability. He is in your 7th grade art class, but he is about to turn 16 years old. It is obvious that he is self-conscious about his age, and he stays in a self-contained classroom all day except for art and physical education. His father is an alcoholic, and because of this, Richard is often left unattended at home for days on end. He will come to school with dirty clothes on and without having eaten. The special education teacher often takes him home on these days and has a change of clothes and food for him at school.

Case Six

The school where you teach has interpreted inclusion to mean that only students with mild learning disabilities are physical disabilities are incorporated into classes with general education students. As a result, you have been asked to teach one class of 12 students with moderate to severe mental retardation and emotional behavioral disorder. The students are at different cognitive levels and many of them have trouble maintaining focus while you are giving instructions. The students come accompanied by several aides who you feel intimidated by. They either do the work for the students (because they feel the student is incapable and/or because they enjoy the art making experience). Many of them will speak harshly to the students.

Group members:

CASE STUDY RESPONSE SHEET—CASE # _____

2. Personally, what is your first reaction upon reading this case and considering that you might encounter a similar situation? (Be honest)

3. What are the cognitive/physical/emotional/artistic strengths/needs of this child?

	<i>Strengths</i> (If a strength is not listed in the case study, how would you assess this student's strengths?)	<i>Needs</i>
Cognitive		
Physical		
Emotional/Social		
Artistic		

4. What information would you look for in the student's IEP? (Are there areas above that you were unable to fill out...can an IEP give you information about those areas?)

5. Who in the school would you consult about the needs of the student? What questions would you ask?

6. What disability organizations would you consult online to find out more about the child's disability?

7. List specific ways that art can validate the strengths and meet the needs of the student that you established in Question 2. Think in terms of art history, art production and the therapeutic benefits of art.

8. What norms would need to be established in your classroom in order for this child to experience success and validation?

9. What are some specific strategies you would use to improve the students' interactions with peers?

10. What questions/concerns do you still have regarding fully including this child in your art classroom?

11. How do your own experiences of inclusion at your student teaching placements compare to the case you explored during this activity?

APPENDIX J
INCLUSION AND SCHOOL CULTURE

Name: _____

School : _____

Mentor Teacher : _____

1. How is inclusion interpreted at your present school? Check all that apply.
 - Kids with mild disabilities are included in regular art classes
 - Kid with severe disabilities are included in the regular art class
 - Kids with disabilities stay in their own classrooms and do not receive art instruction
 - Kids with disabilities stay in their own art classroom and the art teacher goes to them
 - Other (explain below)

2. What has your mentor teacher shared with you about his/her views on inclusion?

3. What are some successful strategies they use to make inclusion work?

4. What, in your observation, are the biggest problems with inclusion at your school?

5. If you were hired as the new art teacher at this school, what do you think would help you with these problems?

6. What questions about inclusion do you want to explore further?

APPENDIX K
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Mentoring

1. In your opinion, what does it mean to mentor someone?

2. Do you feel that you have been mentored this semester? If so, how?

3. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a community?

4. Do you feel that the seminar resembled a community? If so, how?

5. How confident do you feel that you will be able to solve dilemmas in your classroom your first year of teaching? (Scale of 1-10)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not at all									most confident

6. What skills of yours/strategies learned this semester will enable you to solve these dilemmas?

Identity Development

7. What are your top three teaching strengths? What did you learn about yourself as a teacher during this semester?

8. In which areas did you make the greatest progress this semester?

9. Are there any doubts you have about whether or not teaching is the field for you? What makes you doubt the most?

10. What areas do you think will be the biggest challenge for you your first year of teaching? What are you most apprehensive about as you begin teaching?

11. How confident are you that you can solve these dilemmas?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not at all									most confident

12. What will help you to solve these dilemmas?

13. What do you need as a teacher in a school, faculty, administration, in order to feel successful/fulfilled?

26. What, in your opinion, was my weakest area as an instructor/mentor?

27. What, in your opinion, was my strongest area as an instructor/mentor?

APPENDIX L

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF EACH SEMINAR MEETING

December 15, 2005

On this date, I met the preservice teachers for the first time in a student teaching orientation at the university. My previous experience as a university supervisor convinced me that all preservice teachers feel trepidation at the outset of student teaching. My goal during this meeting was to acknowledge that anxiety and express to them that I aimed to help them experience success this semester. I told them that student teaching was a synthesizing experience, whereby they were expected to bring to bear all that they have learned, planned, and thought about as they have prepared to become art teachers. My job, I explained to them, was to help them through this process, as they connected their theory to practice. I assured them that it was normal to feel some trepidation in this process, because the task is a big one, and they have never been asked to do this before. The ways that I planned to help them in this task was by being a liaison between them and their mentor teachers and the university, giving them specific feedback, providing a bi-weekly seminar for them and being available. We talked about the fact each seminar meeting would address their specific concerns about student teaching and issues of inclusion in the art class. I gave them some information about my teaching background and research. In this meeting, preservice teachers were also given the option to not participate in the study and to be assigned to another supervisor if they desired. None of the participants chose to opt out of the study.

At the end of the meeting I also gave the preservice teachers an opportunity to ask questions. Most of their questions centered upon them asking for tips in how to have a successful semester. I suggested that they show initiative at each placement and be as fully involved as possible. I also urged them to utilize the resource of their mentor teachers and try to Table out how they designed their educational environment. I also told them that student

teaching was ultimately for them to decide what they liked and needed as teachers. In that way, it really is a lot like dating; you learn what you like and need before you make the “commitment” to your first job. I had them fill out the Student Information Sheet (see Appendix A) before they left the meeting.

January 23, 2006

The focus of this meeting was to discuss the general guidelines for student teaching and to establish norms that would guide our interactions with one another for the semester (See Appendices B and C). The class norms activity was first introduced to me by Professor Lucy Andrus at Buffalo State College. I began the discussion by asking the preservice teachers what they expected and needed from me in order for them to experience success. I asked them also what types of behaviors they expected from one another during class discussions in order for them to gain the greatest benefit. Then, they asked me what I expected of them during the semester. We concluded the meeting by having a roundtable discussion about the details of their first placement. Each preservice teacher was given the opportunity to share their concerns or questions.

February 6, 2006

By the time of this meeting, the preservice teachers had been in their first placement for three weeks. The goals for this session were to give them an opportunity to continue to discuss concerns. I reminded them of the norms we established in the last meeting and asked that they offer one another feedback and suggestions as they saw fit. I gave them an opportunity to also express in writing any concerns or questions they had about the placement using the questionnaire I created for placement one (see Appendix E). I chose to do this because I realize that not all people are comfortable thinking out loud and express themselves better in writing.

I also administered a disability questionnaire (see Appendix F) which sought to explore the preservice teacher's prior history, knowledge, experience and beliefs about disability. Prior to this, I had not discussed any issues relating to inclusion or my previous experience with disability. I wanted to get as clear of a picture as possible of their understandings about these issues prior to any formal instruction.

February 27, 2006

My goal for this seminar was to show the students my ties to inclusion and to begin a discussion with them about their perception of inclusion. I wanted them to begin to define their beliefs and questions about this issue, which was a primary goal of the curriculum (see Table 5). I began the seminar with an audiovisual presentation entitled "My Story." In it, I shared with them my process of making change in my classroom with regard to how students with disabilities were treated. I shared with them that they could follow this same process of change not only for dilemmas of inclusion, but for any dilemma they encountered in their classroom. The audiovisual presentation explored my beginning struggles with inclusion as an art teacher and the path I took to begin researching and making change in this area. By sharing my narrative, I hoped that they would begin to explore and articulate their own narratives and keying into their questions and struggles with teaching. This was one means by which I sought to honor their narratives (see Table 5).

Another purpose of sharing with them my narrative was to demonstrate that one's life history cannot be separated from the issues for which they care (Galbraith, 1995a, 1995b). Further, these issues are logical starting points for research, because they are intimately connected to self (Wilson, 1997). I shared with them that I felt so strongly about inclusion because I saw it as an issue that was connected to basic human rights. I explained to them the

ties between teaching and research by demonstrating that teachers are continually thinking, planning and acting.

In this meeting, I also wanted them to begin to think about inclusion in a broader way, and think of individual students and the effects that exclusion has upon them (see Table 5). This approach was informed by the work of Andrus (2001), Sapon-Shevin & Zollers (1999) and Sapon-Shevin (2003). Each of these scholars articulate that inclusion is ultimately about accepting difference, whether that difference be gender, race, appearance, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or ability. I shared with them ways that I had felt excluded in the past and encouraged them to share from their own experiences of exclusion. I wanted them to begin to think about the ways in which their rooms, their spaces, can begin to curb the effects of exclusion that many students experience. We utilized a handout I created on the challenges and dilemmas of inclusion to guide the rest of our discussion (see Appendix D). The preservice teachers did not fill these out; they used them as a guide for group discussion. I wanted them to begin to articulate some of the dilemmas of inclusion they saw in their first placement and think holistically about the causes of those dilemmas. Further, I wanted for them to begin to collaboratively propose solutions to those dilemmas. After the discussion, I re-emphasized the artistry that is implicit in teaching. I drew parallels between how an artist plans and executes a work of art to communicate a certain idea and how teachers can design norms and subsequent experiences in their classrooms that will bring about the effects they desire. The idea that a teacher is an artist in residence in their classroom is presented by Hubbard and Power (1999). I wanted to highlight this conception of teaching as artistry. In this seminar meeting, I wanted to show them that they could be the artistic designer in their classroom and an agent of change (Fullan, 1993). I also made explicit that the issue I sought to change was inclusion, but the

issues they seek to change in their classrooms may be different.

March 6, 2006

This meeting began with my administering the questionnaire for placement two (see Appendix H). I designed this instrument as a means to record and address the preservice teacher's concerns and questions about their second placement. In the questionnaire, I asked the preservice teachers to identify areas of teaching in which they excelled and areas they needed improvement. I also asked them to identify goals for their second placement. While giving them directions, I emphasized that some of the issues with which they struggled during their first placement, if not resolved, might be addressed as goals during their second placement. We discussed their responses as a group. The purpose of this activity was to foster a sense of responsibility and personal agency in each preservice teacher and a sense of community through shared stories among the entire group. Several of the preservice teachers struggled with getting feedback from their mentor teachers. We talked as a group about why this might be the case, and we proposed solutions for how they would change this situation with their next mentor teacher. By doing this, I hoped to foster the group's capacity to solve problems collaboratively; a component of critical theory in practice and a primary goal of this curriculum (see Tables 1 and 7). As per the practice of action research, I took all of the information from the discussion and questionnaires into account and made plans to address the issues that were raised with the mentor teachers and with the preservice teachers when I met with them after observations.

Also during this seminar I presented the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I). The purpose of this worksheet was to share with the preservice teachers some of my real life experiences with inclusion in the art room. I asked them to choose a case that

interested or troubled them. I proposed that they would choose cases that were similar to what they observed during their student teaching placements. This identification of a real life inclusion dilemma was a primary goal of the curriculum (see Table 5). I asked them to answer a series of questions about how they would begin to address this dilemma case. How would they begin to identify and meet the needs of the student? Who would they consult in the schools for assistance? What interventions would they make in the art classroom? This worksheet was an instructional tool that would show their base knowledge about assessment and resources and jumpstart a discussion on how to assess students' needs and locate appropriate resources.

Another intent of the worksheet was to help the preservice teachers begin to look at the students in their classrooms in a more holistic manner. A child's identity is not their disability, or even their behavior. Each child has social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs that should be identified and addressed (Comer, Haynes, Joyner & Ben-Avie, 1996). I ultimately wanted this model of observing a child, assessing their needs and strengths and making appropriate modifications to translate into the preservice teachers' actions during their student teaching and beyond. I was first exposed to such a model in Professor Andrus' Art and Special Needs course, where she asked her students to choose one child with a disability in the schools and perform a needs assessment on the child, identifying their social, emotional physical and artistic needs. Then, the students were asked to design an art lesson that met the identified needs of the student.

In an attempt to foster collaborative problem solving (a primary goal of the curriculum; see Table 5), we had an open discussion of possible strategies and resources they would use for addressing the needs in each case. I ended the seminar by showing the preservice teachers some online disability resources which would help them with any of the cases they identified. I

encouraged them to use these resources as they had questions about inclusion or certain students in this next placement and beyond. I noted during the meeting that many of the preservice teachers had no idea what an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) was or what it looked like. This caused me to address IEP's at length in our next seminar meeting.

March 27, 2006

This meeting was held a week later than I had originally planned. My mother passed away two weeks earlier and I rescheduled the seminar. I began this meeting with the goal of again fostering the preservice teachers' sense of agency by challenging them to compare each of their placements and to assess the degree to which they successfully addressed the issues and dilemmas they faced at this new placement. I asked them to respond to the following questions out loud: (1) What did you learn about yourself as a teacher during your first placement? (2) What do you value? (3) In what areas of art teaching do you excel? (4) What areas of art teaching do you need to improve? (5) What is your second placement providing you with that your first placement did not? (6) What are your goals for this second placement? and (6) What is the immediate challenge you are facing at your second placement?

True to the nature of action research, issues emerged that I had not anticipated addressing during our seminars...that of how to show caring for students who were "trouble kids." The types of trouble kids varied from school to school. For Thai, they were middle school-aged Hispanic boys who were challenging his authority. For Erin, they were affluent Caucasian high school males and females; for Kari, they were the middle school female cheerleaders. I was able to show each of the preservice teachers that the same process of observation, assessment and action that we discussed when they completed the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I) was the same process they would engage in as they

tried to meet the needs of the “rough kids.” In doing this, I was articulating a broader view of inclusion, a primary goal of the curriculum (see Table 5).

After this discussion, I asked them to compare and contrast how inclusion was addressed at each of their placements using a worksheet I created (see Appendix J). I intended for them to fill this out in writing, but because of time constraints, we just had a group discussion that addressed the main questions on the worksheet, which were (1) How is inclusion interpreted at your present school? (i.e., To what extent are kids with disabilities included in the art class?) (2) What has your mentor teacher shared with you about his/her views on inclusion? (3) What are some successful strategies they use to make inclusion work? (4) What, in your observation, are the biggest problems with inclusion at your school?(5) If you were hired as the new art teacher at this school, what do you think would help you with these problems? (6) What questions about inclusion do you want to explore further?

From our last seminar meeting, I identified the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as a knowledge gap among the preservice teachers. I prepared a presentation for them on the purposes of the IEP and how art can meet the needs and goals listed on an IEP. I asked the preservice teachers to identify needs from students they were currently teaching and ways that they could meet those needs. I reminded them of the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion Worksheet (see Appendix I) and encouraged them to take a closer look at the whole child (Comer, Haynes, Joyner & Ben-Avie, 1996). I also reminded them that many students in their classrooms will have needs but may not have an identified disability. Taking my cue from our earlier discussion, I drew the parallel of trouble students and any student who might be marginalized because of difference. By doing this, I hoped to articulate a broader view of inclusion. I did not want the preservice teachers leaving the semester thinking that disability was the only form of

difference that they would address in their classroom. My realization that many teachers marginalize students with disabilities because they perceive them to be the only students who require modifications in the curriculum led me to articulate and frame inclusion in this manner. I wanted the preservice teachers to seriously take into consideration the situation of every student and bring that to bear on their instructional practices and curriculum.

I ended the seminar meeting by addressing my Mom's recent death and telling the preservice teachers that I was able to understand better the connection between her life of caring as a nurse, mother and wife and my passion for equitable practices towards persons with disabilities. I ended by suggesting that they, too, continue to explore their own narrative and who and what influences the things they believe and practice as professionals.

April 3, 2006

In this seminar meeting, I wanted to show the preservice teachers a model for how to design and adapt art experiences for students with disabilities. One goal of the curriculum was to enable the preservice teachers to consider the perspective of persons with disabilities (see Table 5). One way I chose to accomplish this goal was by engaging the teachers in a simulated disability experience. This activity is used widely in art and disability courses (Personal Communication, National Art Education Association Special Needs Meeting, March 16, 2006) and has received mixed reviews from the disability community (Grayson & Marini, 1996). I first encountered this activity while I was a visiting doctoral student in Professor Lucy Andrus' class at Buffalo State College. She gave me the opportunity to lead this activity for the class, and then I adapted it one year later when I was an adjunct professor teaching her class. Those in the disability community who are opposed to the use of such simulations say that it is virtually impossible for a non-disabled person to understand the experience of a person with a disability.

I chose to use this activity because I reasoned that I was presenting disability in the larger perspective of difference. I also wanted the teachers to develop empathy through this exercise, trying to get inside of the experience of the students in their room who have disabilities. I also wanted them to see the impact that a teacher's actions and words have upon students. I asked each teacher to "choose" a disability: they could be blindfolded or have their dominant hand taped down. I then instructed them to create an animal out of clay. I walked around asked all the students who were not blindfolded what color of clay they wanted. To those who were blindfolded, I just threw a piece of clay down on the table and didn't consult them about what color they might want. I showed favorites in the class and I showed disdain towards others through my tone of voice and actions. I offered no feedback at all to some of the teachers and I did the work for other teachers. Once the experience was over, the teachers and I talked about their experience and I asked them: (1) What did you learn from this activity? (2) What emotions did you have during this experience? (3) What did you learn about being a teacher of students with disabilities? and (4) How might you adapt for this lesson and students with disabilities? As a group, we came to the conclusion together that making adaptations for students with disabilities was a form of showing caring in the classroom.

After this experience, I made an audiovisual presentation on an art education program I designed for 30 adults with disabilities in a sheltered workshop. This presentation sought to provide the preservice teachers for a model that they could follow when instructing students with disabilities. I was honest about my initial fears when I met the adults and I made explicit to the teachers my thought process as I designed and implemented the curriculum. I also showed them some of the gains from the program, as well as detailing things I learned about the value of art making for all people.

At the end of the seminar, I showed preservice teachers examples of adaptive art equipment. My work at VSA arts⁸ interviewing artists who worked with persons with disabilities helped me to understand that making adaptations for the art making process was essentially a creative problem solving activity. With that in mind, I showed the preservice teachers several pieces of adaptive art equipment that I made for students with disabilities with whom I had worked. We also looked through various books and Internet sites that sold adaptive art equipment. I asked the teachers to try and use some of the adaptive art equipment, and showed them a video clip of Dan Keplinger's art teacher. Dan Keplinger is an artist who has cerebral palsy and uses a helmet with a paintbrush attached to it to create paintings. His art teacher decided that he should try to understand what Dan experienced when he painted, so he tried on his helmet and began painting. Our discussion was brought full circle as the preservice teachers remarked that Dan's art teacher was showing caring as he tried to understand Dan's perspective. This was precisely what I was trying to emphasize by utilizing the simulated disability experience.

April 24, 2006

There were two purposes of this seminar meeting: I wanted to give the preservice teachers a chance to reflect and articulate the transition they made from student to teacher and I wanted to show them the ways in which they could incorporate the work of artists with disabilities into their curriculum. I began the seminar by engaging in the following dialogue with the preservice teachers:

I want you to go back mentally to where you were on December 15th. Try to recall all of the things that were running through your mind, all of the things that you

⁸ VSA arts is an affiliate of the Kennedy Center for the Arts and is designated by the U.S. Congress as the national coordinating agency of arts learning for persons with disabilities. I was as an intern at their headquarters in 2003.

were feeling—fearing about student teaching. You then had the identity as a student. None of you had the identity as teacher. I would venture to say that every single one of you right now fully feels like a teacher. You have told me that you feel competent, and I have seen that you are able to do the “stuff” of art teaching. You have pulled it all together—the discipline issues, the classroom management, the materials management, relating with human beings who might have different personalities than you, talking to students, being accepted by students, being respected by students—you have pulled all of that together. And, you have begun to assume the identity of teacher. This has been a gradual process, as you have said, “I am struggling with this, how do I fix it?” You have fixed it yourself. You have gotten some input from others, from mentors, but you have fixed it yourself and taken control of it yourself.

So, I want each of you to take about 5 minutes and go around the table in whatever order you would like and tell me what you feel like you have accomplished. What have you mastered? What are some of the difficult things you have encountered and how you have solved them? In short, share about your change process from student to teacher. (April 24, 2006)

The purpose of this dialogue was to foster a sense of personal agency in the preservice teachers as they shared their change process. Once they finished sharing, I delivered an audiovisual presentation on the work of artists with disabilities. I designed this presentation so that the teachers were able to explore why it might be important for them to incorporate the work of artists with disabilities into their curriculum and how they might go about accomplishing such a task. I showed them the work of over one dozen artists with disabilities and I drew parallels between the issues the artists with disabilities were dealing with (access,

representation) and showed them how non-disabled artists also dealt with these same issues. This was another means that I used to broaden their view of inclusion and help them to further explore the idea that disability is just another form of difference.

May 1, 2006

During our last seminar meeting, I administered the Disability Post-Questionnaire (see Appendix G) and the Dilemma Cases in Inclusion worksheet (see Appendix I). Both of these had been administered earlier in the semester. I wanted to gauge the degree of change that the preservice teachers experienced in their disability knowledge and attitudes after all of the seminar sessions and their experiences with inclusion during student teaching.

Once the preservice teachers had completed this activity, I led them in a watercolor painting and mixed media activity that could be taught to students of all levels and abilities (and that I had used in the workshop with the adults with disabilities). As they worked on their project, we talked about ways that they might adapt certain parts of this project for students with disabilities. This was the first time they had created art together as a group, and I chose to use this activity as a means to help them relax at the end of the semester and reconnect with why they chose the profession of art education: because of what the art making experience provides for us as human beings. During working, I let the preservice teachers direct the conversation and they began to ask me specific questions about inclusion and certain situations they experienced during student teaching.

The seminars were designed to accomplish the goals of the curriculum (see Table 5). I chose activities and topics that I felt would best accomplish those goals, but, as an action researcher, I was aware of the emerging issues and concerns of the preservice teachers through our conversations and analyzing the data instruments. I revised the curriculum as necessary to

accommodate these developing concerns. These emergent issues are discussed further in chapter 5.

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