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THE ART MATERIAL GIRL--A GUIDE TO SAVE AND FIND FUNDING FOR ART MATERIALS

by

YURI A. STROM

Under the direction of Melanie Davenport

ABSTRACT

The current economic situation in the U.S. has demanded budget cuts in all areas of American life, including education. Faced with these unprecedented cuts, many arts programs are losing their funding. Many art educators are finding it a challenge to provide art education without compromising the quality of the curriculum and program. Through a comparative analysis of materials and fundraisers and a document analysis of money saving tips, strategies are suggested for art teachers to save and find money.

INDEX WORDS: Art Education, Art materials, Art supplies, Blog, Budget cuts, Comparative analysis, Fundraising, Grants, Hazardous art materials, Website

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by

YURI A. STROM

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art Education

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2010

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2010

THE ART MATERIAL GIRL--A GUIDE TO SAVE AND FIND FUNDING FOR ART MATERIALS

by

YURI A. STROM

Committee Chair: Melanie Davenport

Committee: Melody Milbrandt

Kevin Hsieh

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It's the beginning of the school year. Students arrive at school in new clothes and new shoes with new backpacks filled with unspoiled notebooks, freshly sharpened pencils, and pristine crayons. Their teacher lines them up to visit the art room for their first class of the year. They sit down for their first drawing lesson and are given new crayons and fresh markers to color. To their sad disappointment, the markers dry out quickly, and the crayons break easily. Why did the markers dry out so quickly? Why did the crayons break so easily? Unfortunately, the art teacher was trying to save money on supplies because the budget was cut and bought unfamiliar brands. The sad realization of this scene it that it really happened… to me.

My early experiences of ordering supplies were like Russian roulette. I was never sure if the supplies I ordered were going to be the quality I needed. After all, for making my own artwork, I always purchased my art supplies from local stores where I could test it first instead of blindly ordering. Also, for my college studio classes, I always purchased professional-grade supplies. How was I supposed to be familiar with brands such as Crayola, Rose Art, Sax, and Nasco if I have no experience with them (or at least, not since I was in grade school)? Even now, I do not order confidently. Budget cuts have forced me to experiment with unfamiliar brands I have never used in the past. I feel that purchasing materials blindly can be a slippery slope where poor-quality materials create poor-quality art that creates poor student confidence in their skills. This could have the ultimate consequence of a negative perspective from parents and administrators that the art program is poor and unnecessary.

Purpose of the Study

Because there are usually only one or two art teachers in elementary schools, being an art educator is quite solitary. Because of this, there is rarely an opportunity to ask advice or to share ideas with someone who completely understands the needs of an art program at your school. The intended outcome of this study is to create an online resource for teachers (especially new elementary school teachers) to have easy access to find information about materials such as safety information and quality comparisons. This online resource will also have information about various forms of funding art programs. This new resource intends to be a teacher's resource for making knowledgeable choices in order to support more cost-effective purchases for their art programs.

Need for the Study

It is becoming increasingly important to be conservative with spending in education, so it is necessary to have a resource for educators, especially new teachers who do not have much experience in purchasing, to use to make better choices on ordering supplies they may not be familiar with so that they will not have to spend their own money or their meager budgets on materials that could be potentially a waste of money. Teachers need information about purchasing wisely, stretching the dollar, and funding their program. They need this information in a format that is user-friendly and easy to access. They also need to be able to get information from other teachers who have experience with various materials in their classrooms, techniques for saving money, and alternative sources of funding for their programs.

Methodology/ Participants/ Timeline

I conducted a comparative analysis of the most popular brands of several different student-quality art supply supplies (such as Crayola) as well as several different fundraising services. The criteria I used to compare the products and services are specific to the product or service. It has a numerical rating based on its relation to the other products or services in that category. The rating system creates a quick reference, but a brief justification statement or description accompanies each rating to give more in-depth information. I conducted a document analysis to supplement the comparisons of products and fundraising services. I analyzed articles, journals, manuals, public recalls, safety guidelines, and other published documents about art supplies, alternative funding, and money-saving techniques. I then developed the information and findings from the comparative study and document analysis into a website and blog for art teachers specifically about product information about supplies for their class, how to save money, and how to find alternative funding.

I analyzed the products based on my use, and no human subjects were used in this document analysis and comparative analytical study. Though teacher use and comments are a likely side product of my online resource, there was no direct solicitation of human participation and was not used in my findings, so the IRB process was not be necessary. I did not promote or endorse any brands or fundraising companies for personal gains in order to keep the information objective and non-biased, but I did name the brands I tested with their results. Because of copyrights and other publishing restrictions, documents I posted are documents written by me based on my document analysis and literature review.

My literature review focuses on the inter-related subjects of quality materials and funding for arts programs. Some questions that guided my reading were 1) how does funding

impact teaching art in regards to curriculum, teachers, students, and safety; 2) what do teachers do when their budgets are limited; and 3) how do teachers get information about materials and supplies? This review of literature prepared me to learn about how do art teachers fund their programs to purchase materials needed for their curriculum and their classroom and whether an online resource might be helpful. This information inspired my statement of the research.

The analysis of materials and documents was conducted between May 2010 and June 2010. During this time, I used *SRA Art Connections* instructional guides to analyze what materials are suggested for one year of a K-5 art curriculum to compile a list of the top five materials that are used most in the suggested lesson plans. I decided to use *SRA Art Connections* for K-5 because it is the suggested instructional material for the art curriculum for Fulton County School, where I am employed. I also contacted School Specialty to determine what are the most popular brands amongst their customers. With this information, I determined which brands of each material to analyze. I chose to use the School Specialty company to order my materials for two main reasons: they are the only company out of the three (Nasco and Blick were the other two) who responded back to my needs, and I have prior experience ordering from them. To define what criteria I looked for in the materials, I used my own experience in the classroom and also researched opinions of other artists and teachers that have been documented online or in print.

Specific Methodology for Website and Blog

Based upon the advice offered by friends and colleagues who have professional and personal websites and blogs, I decided to use iWeb to create my website and blog. This is a program for Mac computers that allows novices such as myself to create websites and blogs by

using templates that can be personalized. Mac also provides tutorials on its website for using iWeb. Since I own a Mac and have iWeb on my computer, I chose to use this program to design my website and blog.

The website is intended to have a fun personal tone where I shared some anecdotes related to funding issues and art materials as I presented my research findings. It have a welcome page with a pseudo-mission statement of what this website is and how to use it. Tabs for pages for reference information such as safety, blogs, fundraising, grants, money saving tips, and contact information are at the top of each page. The blog page is for entries about the materials I analyzed. Embedded in these entries as well as the references pages are links to other online sources, scholarly articles, and articles written by me based on my document analysis on the related topic. If the web site or blog subscribers or users would like to offer comments and questions, they are also welcomed to do so through email.

Limitations

Due to time constraints and budget limitations, I limited how many brands I compared to no more than five per product. My fiscal limitation for the research was one hundred dollars for materials. Because of a lack of information about national fundraisers, I was limited to fundraising companies located in my region that I have worked with in the past or through information from colleagues that were offered to me.

Research Questions

Which brands are more cost-effective than others?

What are some published strategies for saving money for art programs?

What are some published strategies for supplementing art programs?

Which fundraisers are available for art programs?

What are some other factors art teachers should consider when purchasing art materials?

Terminology

AP Seal: An ACMI (Art and Creative Materials Institute, Inc.) seal used to label arts and crafts materials. A rating of an "Approved Product" that is certified as non-toxic in accordance to federal standards and labeling laws (ACMI, 2010).

Blog: A website or section of a Web site where users can post a chronological, up-to-date entry of their thoughts. It is an open forum communication tool that, depending on the Web site, is either very individualistic or performs a crucial function for an organization or company. There are three basic varieties of blogs: those that post links to other sources, those that compile news and articles, and those that provide a forum for opinions and commentary (Net Lingo, 2009).

CL Seal: An ACMI (Art and Creative Materials Institute, Inc.) seal used to label arts and crafts materials. A rating of "Caution Label" that is certified as safe to use under appropriate use even though it does contain some toxic ingredients which may be necessary for certain creative processes in accordance to federal standards and labeling laws (ACMI, 2010).

Furlough: a temporary short-time leave of absence from employment without pay.

Non-Toxic: Safe or non-poisonous. Does not cause chronic health hazards (ACMI, 2010).

Post: As a noun, a message entered into a network such as a blog or discussion forum. As a verb, it means to publish a message, document, or image online (Net Lingo, 2009).

Recall: A public request from a manufacturer for the return of specified products or batch of products, usually due to a defect in manufacturing or safety concerns.

User: a person who uses online sources.

Website: A group of World Wide Web pages usually containing hyperlinks to each other and made available online by an individual, company, educational institution, government, or organization (Merriam-Webster, 2010)

Webpage (*or simply,* page): A singular web document apart of a website.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The current economic situation in the U.S. has demanded budget cuts in all areas of American life. Education is not spared from the cuts. In 2009, furloughs, program cuts, and job cuts became the nightmare that came true for many educators and school administrators nationwide (Badertscher & Knorr, 2009; Banchero, 2009; Kolodner, 2009; Martinez, 2009; Monahan & Kolodner, 2009; Scheck, 2009; Toppo, 2010; Turner, 2009). Just before the beginning of the 2009 school year and again at the beginning of the 2010 state legislative session, Governor Sonny Purdue of Georgia announced furloughs for all state employees including, for the first time in Georgia history, teachers (Jackson, 2009; Sheinin & Salzer, 2010). Since 2003, "austerity reductions" in the state budget have been made annually with a total of $1.5 billion by 2009 and an additional $450 million will be cut from the 2010 education budget (Jackson, 2009; Sheinin & Salzer, 2010). Though there are drastic cuts to education, the expectations for higher quality in education is more demanding than ever (LaFee, 2008; Spohn, 2008). With so much being cut, yet so much more demand for higher test scores on reading and math, the cuts seem more severe in areas such as art because it is seen by some people as a "frill" or simply not as important as math, language arts, or science (Chira, 1993; Monahan & Kolodner, 2009).

In this financially tense situation in education where the arts programs are commonly neglected, it is important to see how art teachers meet this challenge. This literature review will investigate how poor funding in arts education impacts teachers, curriculum, students, and even safety. I will also review what teachers do when they have a small or no budget through analyzing aspects of fundraising, grants, and other strategies such as using donated items and

using personal money. Finally, I will examine how teachers get information about supplementing their budgets and make informed decisions about purchasing supplies and materials for their class.

The Effects of Poor Funding in Art Education

One major effect poor funding has on educators is a lack of funding and support creates low teacher morale and early teacher-burnout causing good teachers to leave the profession (Cohen-Evron, 2002; Fong & Jeffers, 2000; Kaufhold et al, 2006; Lankford & Mims, 1995; Spohn, 2008). High teacher attrition is nothing new, but it has been studied extensively since the 1970s (Boyd et al, 2009; Eggen, 2009; Farber, 1984). These studies show an attrition rate of 20-40% amongst teachers who leave within the first few years of teaching. It seems that the attrition rate has remained high since Ferber's 1984 study over two decades ago that showed 20-30% of teachers leaving within the first five years. If anything, the attrition rate has become more severe since the same or higher percentage is leaving within the first three years as shown in the other two studies by Eggen and Boyd, et al. These attrition studies identified low self-efficacy as the major reason for leaving with other factors such as poor relationships with co-workers and administrators, student behavior management, and workload also contributing to teachers' decisions to leave. Interestingly, the studies of attrition in the areas specific to educators in the arts do not rate those factors as highly as the problems of lack of funding and lack of support for arts education (Cohen-Evron, 2002, Fong & Jeffers, 2000; Lankford & Mims, 1995). Fong and Jeffers' study does address self-efficacy in art teachers as a factor for attrition, but their argument is that self-efficacy is a by-product of funding. They found that between two groups schools with different amounts of funding, the schools that had higher funding had teachers with higher self-

efficacy because they had more in-service training, curricular support from their administrators and parents, and enough money for a wide variety of mediums for high-quality art-making experiences for their students.

Another consequence of poor funding is a crippled curriculum. Money does not guarantee the best art program, but some of the quality of art-making experiences for students could be limited with poor funded arts education programs because of a lack of quality supplies and materials. Limited funds can also lead to a lack of quality in-service training to help teachers learn new and innovative techniques in art-making and teaching. As director of the NEA, Lambert (1963) conducted a study about what is needed for teaching art and music in public schools. He found that classrooms had teachers with very little training for arts education, varied times ranging from 40-100 minutes a week, and only 74% of the classrooms had even basic supplies for art such as paint and paper. Lambert concluded that teachers should be specialized for these areas, more funding should be supplied, and adequate consistent time was needed to teach. Has this scenario changed since 1963? Earlier, I reviewed a 2000 study by Fong and Jeffers. In that study, they found that the group with lower funds believed they were not sufficiently trained as the higher funded group. This group also emphasized their art education program heavily on aesthetic and art criticism in order to "stretch out funding earmarked for media and supplies" (p. 37). The mediums they used were common for any art classroom such as crayons, markers, paint, and pencils; but it was rare to have mediums such as clay, oil pastels, charcoal, or ink.

The worst effect of poor funding in art education is the need to purchase inexpensive low-quality supplies, materials, and equipment that could jeopardize, not only the quality of the art making and learning experience, but the safety and health of students and teachers.

The study of hazardous materials in the art studio spans back to the eighteenth century when an Italian doctor published *De Morbis Artificum Diatriba* in 1713 that uncovered the health risks of materials used by stone carvers and painters (Fields, 1997). A resurgence of interest in studying the dangers of art materials gained momentum during the late 1970s through the mid 1980s (Fields, 1997; Gupta, S., McCann, M., & Harrison, J, 1991; Hagaman, 1986; McCann, 1992; Science News, 1981). It was because of a marriage of concerns between the medical community and the art community that found a higher number of chronic illnesses such as cancer amongst those in the art profession compared to any other profession (Hagaman, 1986; Science News, 1981). Because of the published medical findings that correlated art materials with illness, the U.S. government took stringent action to enact the Hazardous Art Materials Labeling Act in 1988 (US Consumer Product Safety Commission (c), n.d.).

Since 1988, all art materials must meet certain regulatory criteria to be deemed non-toxic or have sufficient labeling to indicate otherwise, such as an AP seal or CL seal. This should mean that art teachers would know the dangers of the materials in their classroom, and they should be able to confidently purchase safe supplies… yet there was a huge glitch--inexpensive foreign-made products. 2007 was dubbed "The Year of the Recalls" after numerous recalls were announced for products that ranged from peanut butter to children's toys with most of the products made in foreign countries such as China (Consumers Union, 2007; Kids in Danger, 2008). Art products such as crayons, easels, paintbrushes, and other materials made in China were also apart of numerous recalls (Cushman, 1994; Discount School Supply, n.d.; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 2007 & 2008). Advertised in discount catalogs and websites such as Discount School Supply, it would have been a great money saving deal for many teachers on a budget, but who could have guessed that these items specifically marketed

towards classroom use actually contained toxic levels of lead? These inexpensive, low quality products are too much of a risk.

Many articles have been published including the Art and Craft Safety Guide published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission outline many hazards in the art studio that many people, including educators, may not be aware of such as the dangers of clay and ceramics materials, paints and solvents, dry drawing mediums, adhesives, and even computer use (Fields, 1997; Gupta et al, 1991; McCann, 1992; Zaske, 2003). Pre-service and in-service educators should review these guides before making informed decisions on purchases of inexpensive products, but there is a lack of training programs for art educators in the area of art studio hazards. From personal experience and informal conversations with peers, I know that a structured training program for hazardous art materials could be beneficial, but a study is needed to investigate this further since there seems to be very little published information about this topic.

What Teachers Do With Limited Budgets

There are countless fundraising companies targeting cash-strapped programs such as art. If you type in “art fundraiser” into Google, you will get over a million hits for professional companies such as Square 1 Art and Original Works in addition to grass-roots fundraising tips and ideas (Google, 2010). They advertise how “fun and easy” it is to use their company to raise money (Original Works, 2009; Square 1 Art, 2010). Though schools in areas where families are financially insecure do not have much support for fundraising because it is an extra financial burden, the Association of Fund-Raising Distributors & Suppliers (AFRDS) report that in 2009 eight out of ten parents nationwide participate in a school-related fundraiser yearly (AFRDS,

2010; Dryli, 2008; Fong & Jeffers, 2000). There are schools and systems that are supplementing huge cuts with equally huge fundraising efforts that bring in amounts over millions of dollars (Schachter, 2005). In Schacter's article, he outlined example of how some schools established 503 (c) (3) non-profit foundations and alumni foundations as well as seeking large corporate sponsorships. I found no published studies identifying how many art teachers participate in fundraising programs, what their reasons for fundraising may be, what their return is, or what type of fundraisers they use, but I know I am among many other art teachers in my school system who do participate in fundraisers to supplement our art programs. Though the benefits could be tremendous, the disadvantages may include decreased support from parents who are constantly bombarded by fundraiser after fundraiser year after year. Anecdotally speaking, a parent at my school remarked on the endless fundraising and resulting parent burnout! It would be interesting to investigate fundraising in art education and parental attitudes toward these activities.

Grants are also another way teachers find supplemental funds. There are local grants such as from the PTA, but there are also numerous national grants that are easy to access (NAEA (a), 2010; Wessel, 1978). Federal grants may be increasingly difficult to get because of a decrease of government funding for the arts (Brooks, 2001). Americans for Art (a non-profit organization "for the advancing arts in America") reported that there was an overall decrease of funds in local, state, and federal arts funding from 1994 to 2009 (Americans for the Arts, 2010). Brooks suggested conservative opinions restrict people from wanting government money going to experimental or controversial art projects. Controversial works that may be offensive to some made people second-guess whether or not to support artists and curators who create and display such work.

Asking for donated items or using found objects, using more non-production lessons, and spending personal money are other strategies many teachers use in lieu of using money from their budget (Dyrli, 2008; Fong & Jeffers, 2000; Lankford & Mims, 1995; Quality Education Data (QED), 2008; Rozelle, 1994; Szekely, 1994 & 2001; Wessel, 1978). Szekely (1994) argued that using found materials is actually beneficial to students because it forces them to think creatively about making art. Rozelle (1994) found that you could stretch your budget by spreading out production lessons by interlacing more criticism and aesthetic lessons, similar to what teachers in Fong and Jeffers study. One would hope that spending personal money would be the last resort for a teacher who need to supplement a small budget, but amazingly, 93% of teachers spend their own money for school supplies for their classrooms, which shows how under-funded classrooms really are (Dyrli, 2008; QED 2008).

Where Teachers Find Information

With the easy and quick access of the Internet, Americans are increasingly using the Internet as a popular method to find information they need (Estabrook, 2007; Mahajan, 2006; QED 2008; Smith, 2009). Teachers are also increasingly finding information through the Web, but teachers still consult each other about 10% more than the Internet especially when it comes to finding products such as supplies and materials (QED, 2008). In the QED study about teacher purchasing behavior, about half of the teachers reported using the Internet and 71% reported consulting with peers, but out of the half who use the Internet, 78% were younger teachers or teachers who have only been out of training for less than 5 years. The older the age group or higher the years of experience, the lower the percentage of teachers who use the Internet.

Other sources of information were conferences, professional magazines, books/ bookstores, catalogs, and retail or teacher stores with the highest percentage of teachers who used stores as a source of finding information about products (QED, 2008). Teachers may use stores more regularly because they can have multiple samples of products at the same time to compare whereas it is more difficult to do in the other situations. In addition to having the products in front you to compare, you could have a better direct experience with the products because you could test them out and ask experts in the store about the products.

Summary

Teachers seem to need a resource that is easy to access--such as an online resource, like a website--where they can learn and share information with each other about purchasing safe, quality supplies and materials that are tried and trusted by other art teachers, so they will not pose a health risk or hinder the art-making experience for their students. Teachers also need a resource for how to supplement their budgets through different methods such as fundraising and grants instead of using personal money and having feelings of frustration or low morale. In addition, teachers need tips on how to stretch a budget without compromising the curriculum, so they will not worry about the quality of their art program.

Funding is necessary for many needs such as in-service training for teachers on various topics, especially safety in the art studio. Unfortunately, funding may not always be available. In financially bleak times, it may feel easy to be despaired by shrinking budgets that could cut into the quality of an art program, but there is hope. Through the right information, teachers can have a quality art program that does not have to be measured by the size of its budget.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In the previous chapter, I explained that teachers need to be better informed about how to save money for their budget or find alternative sources for funding. Time and money should never be wasted, so I have analyzed various materials and fundraisers to determine what I would suggest to other elementary art teachers. My results eliminate the need for other teachers to do the time and money-consuming task of determining what brands to use since I have done it for them. I have separated the results into separate areas for Materials and Fundraisers.

Materials

Analysis of Supply Lists in Instructional Material

To start, I looked to the teacher's editions *of SRA Art Connections* that I use for my curriculum for Fulton County Schools (Ragans et al, 2005). I looked through every lesson for levels Kindergarten (K) through fifth grade (5), documented every material listed, and tallied every time it was listed again (see Tables 1a and 1b). Based on these results, I further analyzed the results to narrow the list to the top five most used materials to use for the analysis. The fourth most used material was miscellaneous found materials and was not logistical to analyze, so it was omitted (see Table 2). This allowed construction paper to move up to fourth and scissors up to fifth. The final list was then created.

To determine which brands for each material to analyze, School Specialty sent me a new special catalog, which is also available online, that is simplified to a few number of the most popular brands for each product (School Specialty 2010 Education Catalog, 2010). Some products had only a couple of different brands, and other products had several comparable brands. Because of financial limitations, I chose no more than five. Because this analysis is designed for elementary school, only products with an AP seal were selected.

Table 1a: SRA Art Materials List 1

Art material	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Drawing supplies							
Charcoal vines/pencils	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ball-point pen	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Felt pen/marker	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Permanent marker	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Color pencils	0	1	1	1	2	4	9
Chalk pastel	0	1	2	1	5	2	11
Eraser	0	0	0	0	8	9	17
Crayon (wax)	5	6	7	5	5	0	28
Oil pastel	5	5	7	6	6	3	32
Color marker	6	4	6	11	2	4	33
Pencils (drawing/ writing)	3	6	4	20	21	16	70
Paint							
Acrylic paint	0	1	0	0	2	1	4
Paint palette	2	2	2	5	5	3	19
Water color paint	0	5	6	4	5	4	24
Water color brush	6	5	5	5	5	2	28
Stiff brush	3	8	8	6	5	6	36
Tempera paint	3	8	10	8	4	6	39
Printmaking							
Block ink	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
Brayer	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
Foam paper	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
Fiber art							
Cotton coil	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Needle	1	0	1	2	1	0	5
Yarn/string	6	2	2	3	1	5	19
Felt/ fabric	5	2	3	2	4	4	20
Ceramics							
Glaze	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
Slip with brush	0	0	0	3	2	3	8
Clay tools	1	3	3	3	1	3	14
Clay	4	3	3	3	2	3	18

Table 1b: SRA Art Materials List 2

Art material	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Assemblage							
Magazines	1	4	0	1	2	1	9
Scissors	8	10	5	10	6	11	50
Glue	12	13	7	20	8	10	70
Paper							
Water color paper	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mural paper	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Tissue paper	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
Newsprint paper	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
Scrap paper	5	0	2	0	1	1	9
Sketch paper	0	0	1	11	6	4	22
Cardboard/posterboard/matboard	1	5	2	7	3	6	24
Color construction paper	12	10	8	13	5	5	53
White paper	11	14	20	14	20	23	102
Misc. materials							
Carving tools	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ceramic tiles	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Glue gun	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Plaster	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sandpaper	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Spray paint	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tile paint	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Chenille stems/ wire	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Mirror	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Sponge	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Camera with film	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
Hole puncher	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
Ruler	0	1	0	1	0	3	5
Rubbing/texture plates	1	2	1	0	1	1	6
Tape	0	5	6	5	1	3	20
Misc. found non-art materials	14	13	9	7	6	10	59
Digital Art							
Scanner	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Computer with paint program	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
Printer with paper	3	3	3	3	3	3	18

Table 2: Top Used Materials

Art Material	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
White paper	11	14	20	14	20	23	102
Glue	12	13	7	20	8	10	70
Pencils (drawing/ writing)	3	6	4	20	21	16	70
Misc. found non-art materials	14	13	9	7	6	10	59
Color construction paper	12	10	8	13	5	5	53
Scissors	8	10	5	10	6	11	50

Drawing Paper

Drawing paper in elementary needs to be inexpensive, yet perform well. It also needs to be versatile because it is the most-used surface for making art. I do not use canvas surfaces for painting because of a lack of storage and funding, so I usually use paper for painting in addition to drawing. Most of the lessons for elementary art production are also multi-media (involving a combination of drawing, painting, or collage), so I need a paper that can perform well in all these areas but is also inexpensive.

In their simplified catalog, School Specialty only listed two kinds of drawing paper that comes in reams: Sax Value (V) drawing paper and Sax Sulphite (S) drawing paper. Even though there are only these two to compare, there are different weights also to compare within these brands. 50 lb and 80 lb of both of the brands and 90 lb of the Sulphite. I compared them by looking at opacity, brightness, texture, watercolor paint/ marker performance, tempera paint performance, pencil performance, crayon/ oil pastel performance, charcoal/ soft pastel performance, erasability, rigidity, size accuracy, ease of manipulation for construction, and price. I chose these areas to compare based on my preferences based on experience and documented suggestions of other websites about materials (Bell, 2010; Chowolsky, 2009; Dick Blick Art Materials, 2010; Ronski, 2009). A score of one is to indicate that it is first place in that category

compared to the rest. If all did well, then all received ones. If it performed well but only slightly worse than another, then the score would only increase by one point. The lowest score would then indicate the best score. The scores reflect that the 80 lb Sulphite paper is the best (see Tables 3a and 3b).

Table 3a: Drawing Paper Performance Results

Criteria	50 lb V	50 lb S	80 lb V	80 lb S	90 lb S	Comments
Opacity	5	4	3	2	1	Generally speaking, all the Sulphite papers were more opaque than the Value
Brightness	2	3	1	4	5	The Value brands were brighter than the Sulphites
Texture	5	3	4	1	2	Value papers had an eggshell texture with a little tooth
Watercolor paint/ marker performance	5	4	3	2	1	90 lb was the best because it held up to more strokes and had even absorption for even color application with clean lines. 80 lb S was a very close second. 80 lb Value was next with equal durability to brush strokes, but the absorption is noticeably less even and less clean (there was some bleeding around some of the edges). 50 lb is not enough for watercolor. It wrinkled and tore easily. 50 lb Value was the poorest.
Tempera paint performance	5	5	2	2	1	90 lb S was the best. You could mix straight on the paper without over-saturating it. Both of the 80 lb papers were equally good, but did show some wrinkling after drying. Both the 50 lb wrinkled terribly and could not mix on the paper without tearing
Pencils/ color pencils performance	2	1	2	1	1	All did well, but The Sulphite papers produced more subtle gradations, cleaner edges, and more saturated color.
Crayon/ oil pastel performance	2	1	2	1	1	Same as above.

Table 3b: Drawing Paper Performance Results Continued

Criteria	50 lb V	50 lb S	80 lb V	80 lb S	90 lb S	Comments
Charcoal/ soft pastel performance	2	1	2	1	1	All did well, but The Sulphite papers produced more subtle gradations, cleaner edges, and more saturated color.
Erasability	1	1	1	1	1	All erased equally well.
Rigidity	5	5	3	3	1	90 lb S was the most rigid, and the 50 lb V was the least rigid.
Size accuracy	1	1	1	1	1	All were accurate to the advertised size.
Ease of manipulation for construction	3	3	2	1	5	80 lb S was the easiest to tear, curl, and fold. 80 lb V would be next, both 50 lb tied, and the 90 lb S was the hardest (though, not really) because it was stiffer and thicker than the others (it's almost like the thickness of a thin card stock paper).
Price	1	2	3	4	5	For 9x12 ream of 500 sheets, 50 lb Value is the cheapest at $6.79, then 50 lb S at $7.29, 80 lb V at $11.59, 80 lb S $14.99, and the most expensive was 90 lb S at $17.99 (School Specialty, 2010).
Total Score	39	34	29	24	26	Lowest score is best

Construction Paper

Construction paper also needs versatility especially for three-dimensional construction. Many lessons emphasize the manipulation of paper for construction of masks, paper sculptures, book-making, architecture, and other three-dimensional work where it will be torn, ripped, cut, glued, woven, drawn on, and painted on (Ragans et al, 2005). I also use construction paper for other practical uses in the classroom and hallway, such as an inexpensive substitute for matting or mounting for displaying student art, color-coded labeling, and student sketchbook covers. For these purposes, the criteria I looked at were similar to drawing paper, but fade-resistance was also an important factor.

According to School Specialty, the top brands for colored construction paper were School Smart Construction paper (S), School Smart Sulphite Construction paper (SS), Riverside Construction paper (R), and Tru-Ray Sulphite Construction paper (T). I compared them based on color accuracy (I used Pantone Red 032 C as a standard primary red), size accuracy, weight, rigidity, durability to wet mediums, fade resistance, ease of manipulation, texture, and price (Eakin-Austin, 2010). I chose these areas to compare based on my preferences based on experience and published suggestions of other websites about materials (Bell, 2010; Chowolsky, 2009; Dick Blick Art Materials, 2010; Ronski, 2009; Shopwiki, 2010). A score of one is to indicate that it is first place in that category compared to the rest. If all did well, then all received ones. If it performed well but only slightly worse than another, then the score would only increase by one point. The lowest score would then indicate the best score. The results show that Tru-Ray is the best choice, but School Smart Sulphite would also be a wise choice because it was only separated by one point (see Tables 4a and 4b).

Table 4a: Construction Paper Performance Results

Criteria	S	R	SS	T	Comments
Color accuracy	4	3	2	2	None matched exactly, T and SS came close. S had a darker and warmer hue.
Size accuracy	2	1	2	1	R and T are both exactly 9x12, but both S and SS brands were slightly smaller or larger
Weight	3	1	1	1	They are all labeled as 76 lbs S. S had no weight listed.
Rigidity	4	2	1	1	The Sulphite papers seemed equally stiff, R was only slightly less, but S was very thin and limp.
Durability to wet medium	1	3	3	2	S lasted 20 wet brush strokes before the paper started to dissolve, T lasted 14 strokes, and both R and SS lasted 10 strokes (similar to the drawing papers I have already analyzed).

Table 4b: Construction Paper Performance Results Continued

Criteria	S	R	SS	T	Comments
Fade-resistance	4	3	2	2	"Fade-resistant" seems to be a false claim because none of them resisted fading. School Smart that actually bleached to a salmon color. The best was Tru-Ray with only a subtle fade.
Ease of manipulation	2	2	1	1	Tru-Ray folded, twisted, curled, and tore the easiest. When you put this paper up to the light, you can see the fiber consistency. I think Tru-Ray was easier to manipulate since the fiber distribution seemed most consistent. School Smart was also easy to manipulate, but just not as easy as the others. Also, the fiber consistency was also the least even
Texture	2	2	1	1	The Sulphite papers were equally smooth, and School Smart had the most tooth with an eggshell texture. Riverside was similar to School Smart.
Price	1	2	3	4	For a pack of 50 sheets of 12x18 red paper, School Smart was the cheapest at $2.39, Riverside is next at $2.79, School Smart Sulphite is next at $3.49, and Tru-Ray was the most expensive at $3.69 (School Specialty, 2010).
Total Score	23	19	16	15	Lowest score is best.

Pencils

The pencil is one of my favorite drawing tools because it is so basic, yet it is so versatile. With a pencil, one can create basic line drawings, render realistic images, write down thoughts, create solid value or gradations of value, stipple, and hatch or crosshatch. I encourage my students to always begin any production with a pencil, so the pencil is a tool that is as important as paper in my class. Students in my classes plan, sketch, and write with pencils starting in the Kindergarten level because I want them to be in the habit of using pencils appropriately for

making art at the earliest level. Because my classes use pencils so often, I expend countless pencils over the school year. Though I have used drawing pencils in the past, my budget can no longer afford it. Therefore, regular pencils will have to replace them but perform as well.

The most popular brands I compared were School Smart Primary (SSP), Laddie (L), Ticonderoga (T), School Smart #2 (#2), and Oriole (O). Based on my experience and the documented opinions of other artists and teachers, I analyzed them based on strength, rate of lead loss, darkness of lead, ease of sharpening, ability to create the widest range of value with the most subtlety in gradation, erasability, smudging, the amount of damage to the paper, comfort, and price (Bradford, 2008; Michael MT, n.d.; South, n.d.; WikiHow, n.d.). A score of one is to indicate that it is first place in that category compared to the rest. If all did well, then all received ones. If it performed well but only slightly worse than another, then the score would only increase by one point. The lowest score would then indicate the best score. Based on the results, I would recommend the Laddie pencil (see Tables 5a and 5b).

Table 5a: Pencil Performance Results

Criteria	SSP	L	T	#2	O	Comments
Strength	1	1	3	2	3	Sharpened pencils were in position to draw on paper with pressure placed on it until it snapped. The more pressure I placed, the stronger the pencil. SSP and L did not break. #2 broke with significant pressure, and T and O broke with some pressure.
Rate of lead loss	1	2	3	2	2	SSP pencils had the slowest rate of lead loss with an average of 2/32 in per 100 marks. L, O, and #2 had the same lead loss rate (average of 2.3/32 in per 100 marks). T had the greatest lead loss rate at an average of 3/32 in per 100 marks)

Table 5b: Pencil Performance Results Continued

Criteria	SSP	L	T	#2	O	Comments
Darkness of lead	3	1	2	4	5	L had the darkest black, then T, SSP, #2, and O was lightest (like a dark gray)
Ease of sharpening	2	2	3	1	3	#2 was easiest to sharpen with a hand-held sharpener. The larger diameter pencils were next and equally easy to sharpen. T and O were equal and slightly more difficult to sharpen because the wood casing started to crack or chip.
Value and gradation	3	1	1	4	4	T and L performed the best with the greatest value range with the subtlest gradation (7 grades of value), and O only had 5 grades of value.
Erasability	2	2	2	2	2	All pencils erased equally. Some lead was left on the paper after erasing.
Smudging	2	1	3	4	5	Laddie smudged the easiest. Next was School Smart Primary, Ticonderoga, School Smart #2, and Oriole was the least resistant to smudging.
Damage to paper	2	2	1	4	4	T was the softest on paper with no noticeable scratches to the paper. L and SSP were next with a little bit of noticeable scratches to the paper (2 per 10 marks). #2 and O left noticeable scratches (5 per 10 marks).
Comfort	3	2	1	1	1	The regular pencils are equally comfortable and more so than the larger diameter pencils. Between the larger diameter pencils, Laddie is slightly narrower than the School Smart primary.
Price	5	4	3	1	2	For a box of 12, School Smart #2 is $1.19, Oriole is $1.39, Ticonderoga is $2.09, School Smart Primary is $2.79, and Laddie is the most expensive at $3.49. The Primary and Laddie pencils may be more expensive, but it is has a wider and longer lead barrel.
Total Score	24	18	22	25	31	Lowest score is best.

Glue

Glue was listed on materials lists as frequent as pencils and only second to white paper in the SRA instructional materials (Ragans et al, 2005). It is an elementary school necessity. Traditional white glue is especially a necessity for the elementary art room because of its versatility. It can be used for paper-mâché, black glue paint, paint thickener, bonding various porous surfaces, making relief plates for sculptures or printmaking, and other ideas. Though traditional glue is a must-have item for the art classroom, it is very messy sometimes. For some of the materials lists in *SRA Art Connections* K-5 instructional guides, glue sticks were listed interchangeably for white glue (Ragans et al, 2005). Because the two forms of glue are very different, I have broken this category into two separate comparisons: traditional glue and glue sticks.

For traditional glue, I compared bond strength, flow control, ease of use, resistance to running, dry time, resistance to clogging, ability to bond to fabric, ability to bond to wood, and price per quantity. I analyzed three popular brands that were ordered most from School Specialty catalogs: Elmer's School Glue, School Smart, and Crayola. For glue sticks, I analyzed them based on how many strokes are used per 1/8 inch, small area bond strength, large area bond strength, ability to bond to fabric, ability to bond to wood, ease of use, and price per quantity. I analyzed three popular brands that are the most-ordered in the School Specialty catalog: Elmer's, School Smart, and Prang. I chose the criteria to compare based on my preferences based on experience and published suggestions of other websites about materials (Jones, 2010; Manner, 2010; millinocket, 2008; Wagner, 2010). A score of one is to indicate that it is first place in that category compared to the rest. If all of the brands did well, then all of them received ones. If one brand performed well but only slightly worse than another brand, then the score would only increase by one point. The lowest score

would then indicate the best score. Based on the results, the traditional glue I would recommend is the Elmer's School Glue (Tables 6a and 6b). The glue stick I would recommend is Prang (see Table 7).

Table 6a: Traditional Glue Performance Results

Criteria	Elmer's	School Smart	Crayola	Comments
Bond strength	1	1	1	All bonded equally strong to paper
Flow control	1	3	3	Elmer's was the best because it has the easiest tip to adjust, so you could have thin or thick lines. The glue flow was very consistent to the amount of pressure you put on it. School Smart's flow was very slow and thin even though the tip is adjustable. Crayola No Clog has no adjustable tip, so you only get one rate of flow
Ease of use	1	3	2	Elmer's was the easiest to squeeze and easiest tip for flow control. Crayola was also easy to squeeze, but no adjustable tip meant it was hard to control. The cap is also 2 parts that you separate to open and snap together in another way to secure the top cap to the tip. School Smart was the most difficult to use. First, it has a seal under the cap that you have to peel off before you put the cap back on and use. Also, even with my adult strength, it was very difficult to squeeze and get more than a hairline.
Resistance to running	1	3	2	All of the brands advertise as "no-run". If you use a small dot (1/8 inch or smaller), they did not run when placed on a vertical sheet of paper. When you use a larger dot (1/2 inch), Elmer's still stood still, Crayola ran a little, and School Smart ran all the way down the paper.

Table 6b: Traditional Glue Performance Results Continued

Criteria	Elmer's	School Smart	Crayola	Comments
Dry time	1	3	2	Elmer's dried the quickest to make a bond with an average of 1:14 minute for a surface area of 1/2 inch. Crayola was 1:40, and School Smart was 1:57.
Resistance to clogging	2	3	1	Crayola No Clog really never clogs because of their cap that pokes into the tip. Elmer's will clog if it is left open and the cap is covered with glue or upside-down (closed or open), but it is also easy to peel of the dry glue around tip. School Smart clogged without me even trying to clog it.
Fabric bond	1	1	1	All bonded well with fabric.
Wood bond	1	1	1	All bonded well with wood (popsicle sticks).
Price per quantity	2	1	3	For a 4 oz bottle, School Smart was the cheapest at $0.52 (but you can only get them in a set of 48 bottles for $24.99 total), Elmer's was $1.09, and Crayola was $1.44.
Total Score	11	19	16	Lowest score is best

Table 7a: Glue Stick Performance Results

Criteria	Elmer's	School Smart	Prang	Comments
Strokes per 1/8 inch	2	3	1	1/8 inch of glue stick was evenly applied on a 9 inch wide piece of paper. Prang made the most strokes with the 1/8-inch of glue. Prang (20), Elmer's (18), School Smart (16).
Small area bond	1	1	1	An area of ½ inch dot was glued. All were equally strong
Large area bond	3	1	1	A solid area of 6x9 inches was glued. I was able to peel more than half of the paper with Elmer's after it was dry without tearing the paper. I wasn't able to peel the paper with Prang and School Smart at all.

Table 7b: Glue Stick Performance Results Continued

Criteria	Elmer's	School Smart	Prang	Comments
Fabric bond	3	1	2	School Smart held fabric the best (probably because it was the "gooey-ist"), and Elmer's barely held the fabric onto paper when it was dry. None of the glue sticks held very strong bonds with fabric or yarn to paper.
Wood bond	3	3	3	None of the glue sticks bonded wood together after it was dry.
Ease of use	2	3	1	School Smart was very gooey and messy. At the end of the glue stick, the Elmer's fell out of the tube.
Price	3	1	2	School Smart definitely gives you more glue for the money with $1.11 per oz, Prang gives comes very close with $1.86 per oz, and Elmer's is way over-priced with $2.76 per oz.
Total Score	18	13	11	Lowest score is best

Scissors

Scissors are different from the other materials I have analyzed so far because it is not really as exhaustible material that is used up and replaced very often since a pair of scissors should last more than a couple of years. Considering the frequent use of scissors for the suggested lessons in the *SRA Art Connections*, it is necessary that scissors can meet the demands (Ragans et al, 2005). I chose scissors meant for children from the School Specialty catalog. The brands that are the most-ordered are School Smart Kid's Scissors (SSK), School Smart Student Scissors (SSS), Fiskars Student Scissors (FS), and Fiskars For Kids (FK).

The scissors were compared based on comfort, ease of control, blade opening, safety, rust-resistance, cutting performance on various materials (paper, fabric, and

cardboard), durability, and price. A score of one is to indicate that it is first place in that category compared to the rest. If all did well, then all received ones. If it performed well but only slightly less better than another, then the score would only decrease by one point. The lowest score would then indicate the best score. Based on the results, I recommend Fiskars for Kids (Tables 8.1 and 8.2). Not only did it score the best, but Fiskars also offers guarantees for durability and quality for their products (Fiskars, 2010).

Table 8a: Scissor Performance Results

Criteria	SSK	SSS	FS	FK	Comments
Comfort	2	4	3	1	FK was the most comfortable even though it has an all-plastic handle. The other scissors had some kind of soft rubber on the inside of the handles. FS had larger finger openings, which would make it more comfortable for larger hands but too big for small hands. Not too many of my students have larger hands than me, and I still thought FK was as comfortable as FS. SSS was very awkward because its finger openings are only large enough for one finger each. The Fiskars scissors are all designed ergonomically so that your thumb fits in the top, 2 or more fingers in the bottom, and your index finger under the pivot point for better handling and control.
Ease of control	2	4	3	1	FK was the easiest to control because of the ergonomic design; SSK is next, FS, and finally SSS.
Blade opening	4	2	1	2	FS opens to 90 degrees, FK and SSS both open to 80 degrees, and SSK open to only 45 degrees.
Safety	1	1	1	1	All have a rounded tip for safety.
Cutting performance on paper	1	1	1	1	All performed equally well.
Cutting performance on fabric	1	1	1	1	All performed equally well.

Table 8b: Scissors Performance Results Continued

Criteria	SSK	SSS	FS	FK	Comments
Rust-resistance	1	1	1	1	The materials analysis was conducted only over a few weeks. To test rust-resistance, I left them outside during that time through the rainstorms, fluctuating temperatures, and fluctuating humidity to mimic extreme wear and tear over a long period of time. None rusted or showed a difference in performance.
Cutting performance on cardboard	1	1	1	1	All performed equally well.
Durability	1	1	1	2	All of the blades on the scissors except FK are inserted into handles and bolted with a metal screw at the pivot point, so they were very secure. Those blades and handles weren't budging even with all my strength. FK, on the other hand, have blades that are only sitting against the end of the handles and locked in place by a plastic rivet, then assembled by a bolt at the pivot point. After pulling the handles apart with some effort, the handles and blades became a little loose. On the scissors, there is a tiny bit of plastic that acts like a stopper between the handles stop the handles from sliding into each other and keep the blades aligned properly. Well, when the handles and blades are slightly loose, the stopper doesn't stop the handles, and the blade alignment goes awry. This affected the way it cut in a way that the tip would make a torn cut and not a clean cut. The good thing about the Fiskars is that the screw is exposed so you can tighten them when necessary, and they have a lifetime warranty if you need to replace them (Fiskars website).
Price	2	1	4	3	School Smart Student is $1.34, School Smart Kid's is $1.54, Fiskars for Kids is $2.05, and Fiskars Student is $3.31.
Total Score	16	17	17	14	Lowest score is best

Fundraisers

There are basically two types of fundraisers popular amongst my school system: art shows and product-based. The concept of art show fundraisers is to create an art exhibition of framed student art where parents can purchase their child's artwork. The fundraising company uniformly mats and frames all participating student work and set up the exhibition space. The concept of the product-based fundraisers is to reproduce student art on mass-produced items such as magnets or coffee mugs. To obtain information about these fundraisers, I researched their websites and had personal communications with their customer service representatives (Artome, n.d.; Artsonia, 2010, Kids Art Fairs, 2009; Original Works, 2010; Square 1 Art, 2008; and Young Masters, 2010).

The type of fundraiser should be based on the needs of the program, but art show fundraisers can accomplish two tasks at the same time by having an art show while making money for your program. The variety of pricing and products in product-based fundraisers give an advantage over art show fundraisers that only offer student artwork or reproduced prints of the original student artwork. A couple of art show fundraisers I compared are Kids Art Fairs (KAF) and Artome. The product-based fundraisers I compared are Original Works (OW), Square One Art (S1), Young Masters (YM), and Artsonia (A). I rated companies on profit, affordability for parents, quality of products, customer service, and ease of implementation. A score of one indicates that it is first place in that category compared to the rest. If all did well, then all received ones. If it performed well but only slightly less better than another, then the score would only decrease by one point. The lowest score would then indicate the best score. Based on the results, the art show fundraiser and product-based fundraiser I recommend are Artome and Artsonia (Tables 9, 10a, and 10b).

Table 9: Art Show Fundraiser Comparison

Criteria	KAF	Artome	Comments
Profit	2	1	KAF school proceeds are a flat 20%, and Artome is flexible for your needs ($23.99, which is KAF's price, would yield 33%).
Affordability	2	1	KAF has a fixed price ($23.99) and collect tax, whereas Artome has flexible pricing (base of $18) since you set the price and does not charge tax because parents are paying directly to the school.
Quality	2	1	Frame construction is similar, but KAF's sample arrived damaged (the framed fell apart, and the acetate was cracked).
Customer service	1	2	KAF is based in Florida but operates nationwide, and Artome is in Georgia but operates only in the Southeast Region. KAF provides all pre-printed promotional material, and Artome provides PDFs of promotional material that you could customize and print yourself. Artome relies on you and your volunteers to collect money. KAF's customer support phone line connects you directly to a representative, whereas Artome send you to a voicemail. Both companies have local sales representatives who work with you.
Ease of implementation	1	2	Both are pretty easy, but Artome does involve a little more work since you customize your promotional information and print it yourself. Finding volunteers for the event could be challenging if volunteers are not readily available.
Total Score	8	7	Lowest score is best

Table 10a: Product-based Fundraiser Comparison

Criteria	OW	S1	YM	A	Comments
Profit	1	1	3	2	OW and S1 offer 33%, YM has a tier system (proceeds are based on percentage of parent participation up to 30%, so if only 10% of the school participates, you only receive 10% of the proceeds), and A offers 15%
Affordability	2	2	2	2	Most products are under $20. S1 has the least expensive products with the greatest variety of products but charges $1 shipping for each order. A also charges shipping according to weight since it is shipped directly to the customer's shipping address. OW charges shipping to the school if the orders are less than $300.
Quality	3	4	1	1	S1 had the poorest. The rest were similarly consistent in good quality. Some of the S1 products arrived broken, and some of the scanned images were underexposed and looked darker than the original image. YM had the most unique products such as woven blankets. A is the only one out of these that have the products and also offer framed reproductions of the student art.
Customer service	1	4	1	2	They all have local representatives except A because it is completely online. OW is based out of New York, S1 and YM are in Georgia, and A is in Illinois. I had the best customer service from YM and A. S1 was the worst because they were slow on correcting orders and refunds. A few parents at my school were absolutely upset and disappointed with their customer service. OW is the most established out of these companies, so their customer service is seamless and very helpful.

Table 10b: Product-based Fundraisers Comparison Continued

Criteria	OW	S1	YM	A	Comments
Ease of implementation	3	3	2	1	YM and A were the easiest because I dealt with the orders the least. A takes care of the ordering, customer service, and money collecting because everything is online. All you have to do is get students to make a masterpiece and take digital pictures to upload it to your Artsonia exhibition site. YM has you collect the orders and money, but you don't have to count it or tally the orders. You just call up your representative whenever you need it collected. Unless you have help, OW and S1 are more difficult to do. The $1 per order for shipping for S1 was a difficult because almost everyone forgot to add it, so orders had to be sent back home (some never came back). OW is similar to S1 in that you have to collect the Magnet samples if they don't purchase it. Most parents will think it is free when it is not. OW and S1 also require you to collect and count all money for orders and make you accountable for the order mistakes. YM and A collect all money and orders and take accountability for them.
Total Score	10	14	9	8	Lowest score is best

CHAPTER 4: WEBSITE AND BLOG

One of my goals for this research was to present it in a form that was user-friendly and easy to access for art teachers. Based on the review of literature, most inexperienced teachers seek information on the Internet. The review of literature also showed that an increasing number of experienced teachers are also finding their information from the Internet. Because of this research, I decided to present my document, materials, and fundraiser analyses on a website. *The Art Material Girl* is the website I have created to present my findings (Strom, 2010). My website is designed to be accessible and readable for elementary art teachers. I intentionally created a website that is amusing and entertaining but with a large amount of information.

First, since I am not a web designer, I decided to use the Mac program iWeb to design my website. Friends and colleagues who have websites offered suggestions that it was not necessary to build a website the traditional way by using programming codes since so many easy website-building programs were available. Some options that were suggested to me were to create an online e-portfolio through the NAEA website, Blogger through Google, and Teacher Web (Blogger, 2010; NAEA (b), 2010; Teacher Web, 2010). I own a Mac and had iWeb already installed, so it made my decision very easy to use iWeb to design my website. Mac's parent company, Apple, also offers tutorials for novices to use many of their programs through their website (Apple, 2010).

The iWeb program offers many different templates that the amateur designer can customize. Because I wanted to convey a playful tone for my website, I chose the Bebop template. It has skewed placements for pictures and text, so it does not look rigid or static. A title for the website was needed to explain the purpose of the website in simple terms, so I decided on *The Art Material Girl* (after the Pop icon, Madonna's, moniker, The Material Girl). The name is

meant to allude to a tone of whimsy and fun about the serious subject of money, like Madonna's song, *Material Girl*.

The titles of the pages on this website are *Welcome*, *About Me*, *Safety First*, *Fundraising*, *Grants*, *$$ Saving Tips*, *Test Lab Blog*, *References*, and *Contact m*e. The *Welcome* page is where I set the tone and explain the need for the website as a resource for teachers to find information about saving and finding money for an art program. *About Me* explains a little about who I am and why the website was created. *Safety First* is a warning page about the dangers of some materials based on the review of literature. The *Fundraising* page also offers researched information about fundraising based on the review of literature. This page also presents the comparison of fundraising companies from my analysis and results of fundraisers. The *Grants* page also uses the review of literature to give research-based information, but it also gives information about where to look for grants specifically for art teachers. *$$ Saving Tips* uses the review of literature to suggest some ways to save money through non-production lessons and suggests non-art objects that are commonly used based on the analysis of *the SRA Art Connections* instructional material. The *Test Lab Blog* is where I used blog entries to present my analysis and results of the five most-used materials based on document analyses. To extend the Madonna theme, I appropriated some of Madonna's song titles, like *Who's That Girl*, for blog entry titles, like *Who's That Glue*. Currently, there are only entries for the materials I have analyzed for this thesis, but I plan to add more entries at a later date. The *References* page is where I listed my research references, and the *Contact Me* page includes an email address to leave comments or questions. Each webpage includes a small area that function as a quick reference guide for the information presented on the page with links to find further information. The images used for the website are a combination of personal photos and digital images found

through online sources. The image credits are listed at the bottom of the webpage where they appear. Those who have viewed the website have offered positive comments about the ease of use, overall fun tone, and useful information.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Based on my review of literature, document analysis, materials analysis, and fundraiser comparisons, I found answers to my initial research questions. I will revisit each of my research questions in the following discussion.

One of the questions I asked was which brands are more cost-effective than others? Since I believe that the best way to save money is to use it wisely, determining which brands are better than others is crucial in planning how to spend the art budget. I was limited to only a few brands per material item due to financial and time limits, and the School Specialty 2010 special catalog also had a limited list. Although I was limited, having a fewer items to compare and analyze was still a very tedious and time-consuming project. This materials analysis resulted in some surprising conclusions. For example, I was surprised that some of the brands I have trusted for many years were not the best choices compared to other brands. Because of the limitations, I also limited the list of materials to five items: drawing paper, construction paper, pencils, glue, and scissors. This list was a result of a document analysis of the materials lists of lessons in the *SRA Art Connections* K-5 instructional guides. These materials were the most-used materials according to this analysis. At first, I intended to use a basic criteria list for all materials, but I realized that each material needed to be based on criteria that was specific to that material for the best analysis. Although, the analyses were to determine the most cost-effective brand, it is not only about the price. Quality and performance were also major criteria points. After all, what good is something that is cheap but doesn't work well? Based on my materials analysis results, the best drawing paper is Sax's 80 lb Sulphite Paper, the best construction paper is Tru-Ray Sulphite Construction Paper, the best pencil is Ticonderoga's

Laddie pencil, the best glue (traditional) is Elmer's School Glue, the best glue (glue stick) is Prang, and the best scissors are Fiskars for Kids.

Another question I asked was what are some documented strategies for saving money for art programs? Besides spending a budget wisely, there are other methods for saving money. Based on my review of literature, suggestions included integrating more non-production lessons and using non-art materials for production. My review of literature highlighted some of George Szeleky's suggestions for using found materials. He suggested that allowing students to build their own tools for making art from found objects fosters creativity and brings students closer to the creative process. My review of literature also highlighted some suggestion from Zach Rozelle for using non-production lessons. He suggested supporting a curriculum that incorporates more lessons on aesthetics, art criticism, and art history in an art curriculum. I would also include lessons on visual literacy and visual culture. This approach to education could cut the need for constant production needs. My document analysis of *SRA Art Connections* instructional materials also support these suggestions through the variety of lessons using found materials and non-production lessons. In the past, I have used a couple of lessons from *SRA Art Connections* that use only found materials where no art materials were expended such as creating a nature sculpture in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Student creativity does not have to be limited just because funding is limited, when quality learning is presented in every opportunity.

I also asked what are some documented strategies for supplementing art programs? When saving money is not enough because the budget is simply inadequate for the needs of your art program, supplementing your program may be necessary. Based on my review of literature, many teachers are using many different strategies for supplementing their programs such as

fundraising, grants, and using personal money. The NAEA website also support my review of literature with a webpage dedicated for finding grants for arts funding and a link to a prominent art fundraiser, Artsonia. The websites for the fundraisers I compared also have testimonials from teachers who offer positive feedback about how the fundraisers helped raise money for their programs.

In addition, I wanted to know which fundraisers are available for art programs? Many companies are available for fundraising, but there are only a handful of fundraisers that are targeted for art teachers. I based my list on fundraising companies I have used in the past and those about which other teachers have offered suggestions. The companies I compared were Kids Art Fairs, Artome, Original Works, Young Masters, Square One Art, and Artsonia. Through this analysis, I discovered that these fundraisers were categorized into two types of fundraisers: art show and product-based. Kids Art Fair and Artome were the only two that are art show fundraisers, and the rest were product-based. Based on my analysis and comparison of these fundraisers, Artsonia and Artome seem to be the best options for elementary teachers. Some of the other companies I compared were also good companies that I would recommend to many teachers, but Artome is only available in the Southeast Region currently (J. Bostwick, personal communications, June 15, 2010).

Finally, I asked what are some other factors art teachers should consider when purchasing art materials? There are many factors to consider when purchasing art materials. The analysis of documents from other artists and teachers who have published guidelines for choosing materials such as pencils, papers, and glue supported some of my personal criteria I have developed over my direct experience with such materials over my teaching years. Through this document analysis, I found that a generic list of factors could not be used because there were specific

factors to consider for each material. A generic factor that does apply to everything I analyzed was price. Beyond that, the other factors were quite different. For drawing paper, consider these factors: opacity, brightness, texture, watercolor paint/ marker performance, tempera paint performance, pencil performance, crayon/ oil pastel performance, charcoal/ soft pastel performance, erasability, rigidity, size accuracy, and ease of manipulation for construction. For construction paper, consider these factors: color accuracy (I used Pantone colors as a base comparison), size accuracy, weight, rigidity, durability to wet mediums, fade resistance, ease of manipulation, and texture. For pencils, consider these factors: strength, rate of lead loss, darkness of lead, ease of sharpening, ability to create the widest range of value with the most subtlety in gradation, erasability, smudging, the amount of damage to the paper, and comfort. For traditional glue, consider these factors: bond strength, flow control, ease of use, resistance to running, dry time, resistance to clogging, ability to bond to fabric, and ability to bond to wood. For glue sticks, consider these factors: how many strokes are used per 1/8 inch of glue, small area bond strength, large area bond strength, ability to bond to fabric, ability to bond to wood, and ease of use. For scissors, consider these factors: comfort, ease of control, blade opening, safety, rust-resistance, cutting performance on various materials (paper, fabric, and cardboard), and durability.

Another important factor to consider when purchasing materials for the elementary art classroom is safety. According to my review of literature, safety is sometimes neglected. This can lead to detrimental consequences such as health risks to yourself and your students. Reading the labels on art materials is a simple way to help guarantee a safer classroom, but it must be done correctly and thoroughly. Document analyses of *SRA Art Connections*, art safety websites, and the School Specialty art supply catalog support

my review of literature by outlining safety guidelines for teachers. The School Specialty catalog further support the need for safety in the art classroom by offering materials with AP seals for young art students.

Future Directions

In financially austere times, art educators must continually learn about ways to save and find money to continue a quality program. If parents, community leaders, and administrators can see that quality learning is being produced in even the direst of circumstances, then it will be viewed as a vital part of education and not a waste or luxury. It will then be less likely to be cut from the school curriculum.

Although there have been information about the effects of budget cuts on teachers, there have been very little information about the direct effects of budget cuts on students. The quality of student learning should never be hindered by the lack of funding, but the children are affected in one way or another yet I was unable to find research to support this theory. The child's development and learning is what is most important in education, but very little research has been done to study how budget cuts, especially cuts in the arts, are affecting this process for children.

Teachers are undoubtedly troubled by budget cuts. The fact that there are fundraisers and grants that are specifically designed for art teachers and their programs, in addition to my review of literature, support the need for teachers to have better funding. Another recommendation for future research is to analyze how much of a budget is given to art teachers on average and compare that to what art teachers actually spend over a year. This study could give a better accuracy of what the art budget should be. A formula could be created to determine a dollar

amount that is adequate per student for a successful art program. In any regard, funding for arts programs are inadequate and it is important to learn more about how it is affecting our education system so that we can improve the quality of American education.

Because I believe that the best way to save money is to use the best art materials that are also cost-effective, more research on art materials is needed. My comparative analytical study of materials was very limited. I limited the number of materials I analyzed to only five items. There are over fifty different items listed in the *SRA Art Connections* instructional guides (see Tables 1a and 1b). Because I limited the number of brands to less than five, many brands were excluded in my comparisons. In the future, more brands should be included in the comparisons. In order to be able to analyze all of the art materials used in a classroom and include more brands, assistance from other art teachers would need to be included. Expanding the website to make it more interactive so more teachers could also voluntarily post reviews of art materials to my blog may be one way to accomplish this.

My review of literature also revealed that many teachers are increasingly relying on the Internet for finding information, so I created a website that compiles all of my research into an easy and entertaining way to learn about art materials and funding. For my website, *The Art Material Girl*, to be a tool for all elementary art teachers, it needs to expand to a national audience. Some of the fundraising companies I analyzed are nationally available, but some were only regionally available to the Southeastern United States. Teachers nationwide need to be surveyed to determine what fundraisers are used in all regions across America. To gain this national participation, I may need to present at a national conference such as the NAEA annual conference or contact NAEA members directly.

Safety in the art classroom is a major factor to consider in choosing materials, but many teachers may be unaware of how unsafe some of the materials in the art classroom may be. From personal experience, there is very little pre-service or in-service training on safety for the elementary art program. My training on safety using art materials was given in my studio classes, but those materials are very different from elementary school art materials. A study to examine how much teachers know about safety may show a need for better training.

Eventually, I would like to make my website, *The Art Material Girl*, to become an interactive website for teachers to share opinions on materials, advice about how to save money, advice about how to make money, and other issues related to art materials and funding. An open forum discussion group could be created on this website. This discussion group can bring together new teachers with experienced teachers to exchange advice and ideas. This may make teachers feel less isolated and bring hope to teachers who may not know how to create quality art programs with limited budgets. In this financially turbulent climate, this kind of tool may prove to be very helpful for many teachers.

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