Contextual considerations that include the physical environment, sociocultural factors, and economic and political challenges are salient factors to consider with respect to teaching art. The form, content, meaning, and value of art teaching are determined by the context in which they are used. They range from the local to the global and are full of complexities and contradictions. Complexity in this case concerns the difficulty of conditions, and contradictions refer to those conditions that may not be solvable.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF CONTEXTUAL STUDIES IN ART EDUCATION?

In the first briefing papers of the National Art Education Association Task Force on Contextual Research, Congdon (1996) referred to research about teaching and learning contexts as "knowledge and insights into environments, cultures, and histories [that] provide important information throughout the development and implementation of art educational programming" (p. 51). She provided some background history of contextual research in art education and suggested questions and content areas of study, related to its history, values, culture, environment, instructional settings, collaborations, and policy. Stuhr and Ballengee Morris (1998) later added achievements of the Contextual Research Task Force that included symposiums, conferences, model programs, a list of contextual-based issues, action-oriented workshops, a task force newsletter, and anthologies of invisible histories (Bolin, Blandy, & Congdon, 2000) and histories of community-based art education (Congdon, Blandy, & Bolin, 2001). This chapter continues documentation of the history of contextual research and its implications for the field of art education.
WHY DID I SELECT THESE STUDIES?

This chapter focuses on instructional contexts and reveals their complexities and, at times, their contradictions. I searched the literature, from 1985 to 2002, for the word “contexts” and found 12 studies related to contexts for teaching art. Sources were the NAEA Art Education Index, Studies in Art Education Index, the Journal of Multicultural and Cross-cultural Research in Art Education, ERIC, NAEA publications, and several recent InSEA publications. Contextual studies also will be included in other chapters in this Handbook, such as curriculum research and historical research. Other useful terms searched were case studies, “hyper” (media or text), multicultural, and teaching art. Several art educators also offered suggestions of which studies to include. Some studies offer early attempts (Jones, 1977; Wilson, 1977), exemplify breakthrough areas of contextual research (Bullock & Galbraith, 1992; Garber & Stankiewicz, 2000), and present related issues about the area of context (Ballengee Morris, 1997). Other examples are well known to me (Clark & Zimmerman, 2000; Day, Eisner, Stake, Wilson, & Wilson, 1984); still others are marginal in that they deal with extreme cases such as jails (Congdon, 1984; Dennis, Hanes, Stuhr, Walton, & Wightman, 1997).

Lack of space, practical interests on instruction and student learning, and a focus on qualitative research limited this selection to approximately 50 studies. I borrowed categories of school, community, and multicultural contexts from Lieberman (1992); added the category of electronic contexts, and changed the term multicultural to intercultural to reflect changes in thinking “beyond multicultural perspectives” (Boughton & Mason, 1999). The categories that I use in this chapter are as follows:

- **School contexts**: These include school culture, schools as tribes, inservice programs, and effective and ineffective teaching.
- **Community contexts**: These include community-centered education, folk art sites, diverse population adaptations (lifelong learning and gender issues), and museum-enrichment programs.
- **Intercultural contexts**: These include multicultural clarifications, indigenous cultural understandings, cross-cultural comparisons, international summer schools, intercultural education, and globalization of popular culture.
- **Electronic contexts**: These include electronic environments such as videodiscs and hypertext, interactive Web sites, teleconferencing, and distance education courses. Selections occasionally may overlap.

WHAT IS A CONTEXT?

A context is a complex of factors, conditions, and contradictory elements that support or limit a historically and culturally related framework that is constantly changing. Some art educators have conceived of context as a sociocultural phenomenon (Anderson, 1995; Jones, 1988). Other art educators consider contexts as multi-interpretive because of differences in particular group values (Neperud, 1995). Contextual studies demand field study and an interpretive type of research that positions a local context, such as a class, a school, a community center, or an institution, within larger embedded contexts within a given culture (Graue & Walsh, 1998). For study in contextual research, a case can be a person, a class, an institution, a culture, or a hyper-mediated environment. Such studies can focus on individual sites or multiple cross sites. Because contextual research is multimodal, researchers have a wide selection of methods from which to choose. Methods range from qualitative examples such as case study, ethnography, and cross-site analysis to quantitative techniques of surveys, interviews, and computer data analysis.
WHAT CONTEXTUAL CONTRADICTIONS HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN ART EDUCATION?

Contradictions involving school contexts entail impersonal versus intimate settings (Guilfoil, 1990), structural and extrastructural learning (Wilson, 1977), and ethics that reflect and/or challenge the community (Stokrocki, 1986). Other conflicts include student-centered (Hafeli, 2000) versus discipline-centered instruction (Wilson, 1984b), popular culture versus fine art interests (Donnelly, 1990), dissonance (Bullock & Galbraith, 1992) or harmony, such as creativity concepts and ideals (Irwin & Reynolds, 1994), with inclusion or separation of students experiencing disabilities (Guay, 1993). Contradictions in community contexts include museum instructional differences between museum and art educators (Vallance, 1999), between leisure and lifelong learning (Lackey, 1999), and between ethnic and homogeneous art offerings (Young, 1985). Intercultural contexts deal with contrasts of assimilation or adaptation of indigenous people (Stuhr, 1986) and localization and globalization (Irwin, Rogers, & Wan, 1998). Electronic contexts favor student-centered versus teacher-centered instruction (Galbraith, 1996), interactive versus passive learning (Julian, 1997), multidirectional rather than linear thinking (Taylor, 2000), and a conversational learning style rather than a talking-heads television format (Garber & Stankiewicz, 2000).

WHAT ARE DOMINANT WORDS OR THEMES IN CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH?

One frequent term is the prefix “inter,” noted at least 30 times in my review of research related to contexts in art education. Related themes are interests, interactive, interdisciplinary, intergenerational, international, and intercultural. The first theme of interests emerged with such studies as catering to preadolescents’ popular culture interests (Stokrocki, 1997), determining family interests (Schrubbers, 1996), and sharing similar interests among people in diverse sites (Mason & Richter, 1999). Another theme is development of interactive sites, such as interactive exhibits found in museum-enrichment programs (Wilson, 2001), intense peer teaching and student interactions (Wolfe, 1997), cross-community communication (Clark & Zimmerman, 2000), cross-cultural interactions (Smith-Shank, 1997), and an interactive teleconference course (Garber & Stankiewicz, 2000). A third evolving theme is interdisciplinary or interrelated factors, such as ecology (Birt, Krug, & Sheridan, 1997; Julian, 1997), puppet plays and art and reading programs (Stokrocki, 1986), and the arts and integrated interdisciplinary curricula (Stuhr, in press). Four studies dealt with intergenerational contexts (e.g., Clark & Zimmerman, 2000; La Porte, 2000), and four studies involved the Internet (e.g., Julian, 1997; Rogers & Erickson, 1997). Finally, there are studies of international concern, such as promoting understanding of international perspectives (Irwin, Rogers, & Farrell, 1999) and studies of intercultural approaches concerning education (Davenport, 2000a, 2000b), citizenship (Hernandez, 2000), and exchanges of artwork and ideas (Stokrocki, 1989).

Variation of the word “critical” appears at least 10 times as an effort to expose hidden sociocultural differences among moral, political, and ecological concerns. Various usages of critical theory research related to contexts for teaching in art education revealed different styles of cultural representation (Mason, 1988), indigenous peoples’ reactions to space (Sikes, 1992), and marginalized group learning (Dennis et al., 1997). Other occurrences of the term “critical” include complex ideas on identity and values (Stuhr, 1991), cultural patterns that are being replaced by economic values (Stokrocki, 1995), and ideas of economic and political power (Irwin, Rogers, & Wan, 1998). Critical examination of community centers further entailed...
ideological review of differences in the meaning of art, education, leisure, and work in school and in recreation centers (Lackey, 1994, 1997).

BIG SCHOOLS OR SMALL SCHOOLS?

At no time was the problem of school size noted by art educators in their research findings. Teachers complain of tight classroom spaces and high enrollments, yet schools tend to be problematic because of administration surveillance policies (Wilson, 1977), lack of articulation (Wilson, 1984b), working conditions (Sacca, 1996), environmental conditions (Asher, 2000), or spatial design (Guilfoil, 1990; Susi, 1990). Small schools are not always superior to large schools due to lack of subject choices, low funding, and social discrimination due to some students’ family backgrounds. Large concentrations of disadvantaged students can become problematic because school administrators may neglect some of their needs. Thus, moderate-sized schools, schools within schools, or specialty areas are promising alternative environments (Lee, 2000). An arts complex or a community art wing can be an effective specialty area. Environments are complex entities. It takes an active collaboration of teachers and students to effect change. The emergence of art tribes, times when students separate themselves into their own communities, also can accelerate change (Wilson, 1977). Governance of public education is complex because of its many internal and external conditions and influences (Hodges Persell, 2000).

HOW DO CONTEXTUAL STUDIES CONTRIBUTE TO CONCEPTUAL PROGRESS?

Because some contextual studies may evolve from doctoral dissertations, they initially may have a narrow conceptual focus, such as behavioral considerations and space relations. More seasoned researchers can add breadth by comparing three or more contexts (Irwin et al., 1998). When researchers investigate multiple sites, their research scope can be broadened further. When researchers from several countries can address contextual issues, then their research can become global (Boughton & Mason, 1999).

There is a wealth of multicultural opinions in art education, but transnational research is lacking due to limited funding and vision; “more” sites, therefore, do not imply better research. Contextual concepts may seem sophisticated because they deal with multiple ideas; however, contextual studies need depth through consideration of multiple dimensions, including philosophical ideas.

SCHOOL CONTEXTS

School Culture

A school culture tends to be a complex phenomenon affected by students and teachers, curriculum content, and internal and external political and social forces. Champlin (1997) referred to school and culture as “the shared characteristics and features of the environmental conditions, physical space, human relationships and interactions, and pedagogical milieu within the instructional setting of the institution called the school” (p. 117). Over the last 100 years, rapid sociocultural changes have affected school cultures. These include “changes from an industry-oriented society and international dominance, demographic shifts, increase in the
older population, a work force composed of immigrants, and negative assessment results of U.S. students’ scores in sciences, critical, and problem-solving skills” (Darling-Hammond, cited in Lieberman, 1992, p. 112). McFee and Degge (1980) recognized the complexities of teaching and stated, “As our environment and our resources decrease and our numbers increase, we may need to understand our own needs, those of other individuals, and all groups to make our lives together workable” (p. 270). In their Perception Delineation Theory, they spoke of embedded contexts beginning with the readiness of the individual student, the psychocultural classroom environment, and the larger visual–physical learning environment. They believed that teachers who are aware of such complexities would be open to future contextual changes. Eisner (1998) explained, “Teaching always occurs in highly contextual situations; there is not now nor will there ever be a replacement for the teacher who understands which course of action and which decision is most appropriate in this particular circumstance at this particular time” (p. 209).

Environmental Conditions

Environmental factors and changes can affect teaching in many ways. Based on research observing classroom environments, Susi (1990) discovered the effects of environmental stress (bad lights and air, acoustics, white noise, intercom announcements, clutter, room temperature, and cleanliness) on effective teaching. He explained how environmental changes, such as seat location (eye contact and distance from speaker), space arrangements (clustered, circular, or theater style), and aesthetic quality (comfortable, pleasing, and flexible) can impact student behavior. Susi concluded that teachers could manipulate such variables to support student learning and that good environmental contexts result from informed decisions about social interaction patterns.

The culture of a school also has an invisible personality affected by environmental conditions bound by sociocultural characteristics (Birnbaum, 1988). Using participant observation techniques, Guilfoil (1990) observed the daily life in a rural Eskimo village for 3 months. She focused on behaviors and the built environment in a one-room school. By using behavioral mapping, she coded student location and movements on a floor plan, and through behavioral sketches, she described and determined social distances done at regular intervals between students and staff. Additional research and art teaching experiences involved informal interviews, essays, photography, and cognitive mapping—students’ diagrams of what is important. Guilfoil interviewed elementary students for their ideas on school layout and noted their preference for close proximity and the constant issue of inappropriate settings—impersonal areas. She concluded that students learned valuable inquiry and spatial skills as they collaborated with her to discover the “intimate nature” of this rural school culture that included the importance of teachers and friends, close positioning, and small group spaces.

In another study involving action research, Asher (2000) explored her own teaching in an alternative high school in the Bronx, New York, with at-risk students from African American, Hispanic, Caribbean, and South East Indian backgrounds. She described the environment as a “landscape of hopelessness,” a place of despair and decay. She offered a course called “Bronx as Art,” which afforded students opportunities to view their environment in new ways and develop positive images of self and surroundings. Opportunities included sketching and photography in the school vicinity, collage, and silk painting. Besides teaching about past and contemporary artists who were influenced by their urban spaces, Asher invited a community artist who made paintings of his local neighborhood to share his work and experiences. She also encouraged memory writing, in which her students described and shared stories about where they lived, and engaged them in process writing, which is critical to thinking about their problems with unfamiliar materials and skills. The findings of Asher’s study include successful activities such
as making high-quality artworks, sharing of life experiences, developing trust among students, recognizing relationships in form and environment, creating new views of a familiar world, and developing a sense of beauty amidst the squalor.

Working Conditions

School culture also consists of a combination of working conditions that affect a school setting. Sacca (1996) reported a case study in a secluded logging camp in Vancouver Island in 1928. A lonely female art teacher wrote about her feelings of estrangement from her community and committed suicide. Some school board members unfairly criticized her teaching and ideas, which challenged their sociocultural values. The outraged community dismissed the school board and the Minister of Education and designated a welfare officer to investigate living and social conditions in rural districts. Sacca suggested that such conditions are similar to those academic curriculum controls and tight surveillance of teaching conditions under which women continue to work. She argued for additional action research undertaken by art teacher scholars who can readily pinpoint problems. Sacca concluded that socially conscious research modifications could help serve young teachers by addressing issues that affect teaching conditions, embrace contributions of women, develop new forms of collaborative research, and offer alternative means of publication.

Findings from studies of school culture, environmental conditions, and working conditions suggest that researchers and teachers can determine and change the nature of a school culture (from that of despair to that of hope), adjust environmental conditions, and affect positively negative working conditions.

Schools as Tribes

Schools also can be characterized as tribes with distinctive lore, symbols, and rites of passage (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Schools publicly proclaim their missions and mascots and arrange sports and academic rites. These rites include periods of separation, transition, and integration (Van Gennup, 1961). Schools separate academic disciplines into different subjects, such as art tribes, which further divide into art classes and student art groups. During the transition phase, students undergo trials and learn the sacred lore. Finally schools integrate students back into society at graduation.

Educational tribes can be public or private, dependent or independent. Art programs tend to be independent tribes in a school culture. The tribal character of an art program in which social interaction and knowledge tend to be loosely structured is as important as the intellectual character, where interaction and knowledge are highly structured.

Art teachers may allow and even instigate tribal behaviors and learning. Using ethnographic methods, Wilson (1977) described structural restraints of an extremely intense high school environment in New York where she taught. She noted conflicts between administrators and students who were angry and bored. In her drawing class, she focused on the emersion of “extrastructural learning,” which is a form of relaxed attention. More specifically, she noticed the emergence of such playful and creative art forms as drawing games, making witty statements (puns on artists’ names and class banter), role-playing (the jocks, greasers, heads, punks, and intellectuals), arranging rituals (class parties, portfolio arrangements, and art exhibitions), and developing an in-depth sense of community. She concluded that community cannot be forced but evolves around teachers who facilitate an atmosphere for learning and at the same time tolerate a degree of rule breaking.

Using similar methods, I (Stokrocki, 1997) also explored how an art teacher at the middle school level structured his teaching and captured his Southwest preadolescents’ interests
through focusing on rites of passage. He separated students into tribes, in which they named and designed related tattoos (a popular culture fad). He taught them the sacred lore, for example, about mask-making and death in different cultures. He furthered their camaraderie by assuming the role of jester and through videotaping that allowed for play and acting out of masked characters. He finally recommended that teachers use exaggerated stories and cultural events, such as the Day of the Dead, to capture student attention and ease their transition into the study of art history. Such teaching experiences appealed to his students’ existential interests and may deepen their and other students’ understandings of the social nature of art.

From studies focusing on schools or art classes as tribes, a few researchers concluded that schools and teachers publicly broadcast “structured” objectives, policies, and curriculum, but operate effectively at other levels as well. These other levels included extrastructural teaching or relaxed attention that allows for “antistructural” group identity and concerns metaphysical values that appeal to students’ curiosity about life and death concerns.

Urban, Suburban, and Rural Inservice Contexts

Some tribes are dependent, and others are independent. A large corporation or university tribe may or may not highly influence school district policies by their philosophical methods and ideas through inservice connections. In order to determine what factors engender support of strong art programs in a school district and evidence of teaching art history, art criticism, and art production, the Getty Center for Education in the Arts funded cross-site case study analyses to discern similarities and differences in themes discovered in urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Focus was on a curriculum venture that was known as discipline-based art education (DBAE) and included content in areas of studio art, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. The case study method began with a review of program materials including art curricula, declaration of philosophy, and such special components as school–museum collaborations. The next phase involved observation of instruction in schools and interviews with administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members.

In Ohio, for example, the suburban Whitehall Schools had a long kinship connection to Ohio State University and with the State Supervisor of Art. Teachers were initially attracted to the DBAE curriculum package and their lessons were heavily studio based. For art history and criticism, they first relied on prepackaged slides, filmstrips, and *Art and Man* readings and activities. Unique experiences were planning and designing a (theoretical) museum and gaining cultural understanding through an archeological dig. It was suggested that the success of the DBAE curriculum was not only due to the content of the curriculum but also to the dynamic teachers, nurturing relationships, and local group support (Wilson, 1984a). The major problem, however, was the lack of teachers’ ability to translate theory into practice into the DBAE content areas.

In contrast to dependent school districts in the Getty study were independent and decentralized school districts, such as Brooklyn District 15 in New York. In spite of this district’s strong connections to museum and community resources and the initial enthusiasm and commitment of its administrators, it lacked a unified curricula and connections to university theorists (Wilson, 1984b). Research also revealed other contextual problems such as endless contests and competitions, student discipline concerns, low funding for special subjects, math and reading emphasis, and lack of superintendent support (Wilson, 1984b).

In addition to the Getty study, Gunter (2000) reported the impact of discipline-based art education on Southern rural middle school students. Students reflected problems of art education in the rural South, as they were unable to articulate an understanding of the components of the DBAE framework and felt disconnected from art in their everyday lives. The poorly implemented art curriculum at the middle school level had little relevance to the Southern rural females. Lack of experiences with art, especially with artists of color, women artists, and
original works of art, contributed to an uncertainty about what art is and what artists do. In spite of dynamic leadership at the state level, lack of local coordinators, inadequate financial support, a misunderstanding of (DBAE) theory, and no input in curriculum planning, conditions led to younger teachers’ apathy and burnout and division among veteran teachers. Recommendations included increased funding for art programs, use of coordinators for DBAE facilitation, a network for recruitment and retention of rural art educators, and the use of arts integration with a culturally diverse curriculum to provide relevance for students.

Researchers can conclude from studies of these inservice art programs that carefully planned and well-integrated curricula were helpful, but a nurturing theorist–practitioner relationship and local group support were equally significant. A major problem included lack of teachers’ abilities to translate theory into practice. In addition, a program that is top-down with overarching ideals may not fit every site, especially if articulation between levels and curriculum is fragmented or if the program does not consider the regional arts and conditions and differences among urban, suburban, and rural settings as sites for art teaching.

School Contexts Reflect and Challenge Community Ethics in Midwestern Settings

Using participant observation strategies, I (Stokrocki, 1986) noted environmental conditions that affected an elementary school teacher in a Midwest suburban community. These conditions included a tight schedule, limited space, students’ expectations to make things and to celebrate holidays, and a teacher’s interests in accelerating her own growth through color xerography. I discovered that this elementary art teacher could offer more opportunities to students when she stretched her limited 30-minute class with after-school art programs, interdisciplinary arrangements (puppet plays and art and reading programs), and university affiliations. Successful art teaching reflected the hard-work ethic of this working-class community.

Zimmerman (1992) compared two painting teachers of talented adolescents in a summer program at Indiana University. Their structured teaching practices included demonstrations, lectures, and individual and group critiques. She found that the instructor who shared secrets of the trade, told jokes, gave imitations of popular heroes, and related stories that dealt with moral or political problems was the one who realized his goals for art teaching. She advised those who teach talented students to be mindful of their students’ needs to understand the contexts in which they create art, to examine their reasons for art making, and to discuss issues in the world of art. In addition, the context of summer programs seemed conducive to learning, because students were free from regular school obligations and probably accomplished more in a relaxed atmosphere than they did in their art classes during the school year. The academic university program challenged students from various parts of suburban and rural Indiana to learn about the nature of art in depth.

In a study of middle school students, many of whom were talented, Wolfe (1997) similarly focused on one art teacher in a Midwestern university community with rich artistic influences. By using constant comparative analysis and interrater reliability, she discovered the importance of good substantive teaching that consisted of a flood of images, student reflection in journals and sketchbooks, intense peer teaching and student interactions, and solid technical instruction. Assessment consisted of formal critique, exhibition, and in-process appraisal. She postulated that teachers should offer a plethora of organized artistic experiences and multimedia motivations while encouraging students to interact and react to what they were learning in art.

Using ethnographic methods that included daily observation and informal interviews, James (1997) postulated that instruction and creativity might emerge unpredictably from a class as an ecosystem of interacting people and materials. In other words, a class is a system of structure and nonstructure based on amplification of deviations. Through play and the utilization of the
unexpected, one professor modeled deviating practices in a beginning metal sculpture class at a large university in the Midwest. He offered multiple ways of knowing (perceiving, analyzing, interpreting, and self-evaluating) so that students could deal with the hard–soft nature of the sculpture material and the physical diversions of bending, twisting, and wrestling with metal. An atmosphere of mutual engagement emerged as students worked alone and with others. The students’ work evolved from mundane-found object sculpture to sturdy sculptural figures. In this context, the instructor primarily regarded sculpture as an expressive and formal aesthetic object. James concluded that teachers must understand the systematic complexity of their class context, namely, the creative and artistic processes. This class was based on an ethic of creativity that included divergence and uncertainty that was quite different from the conservative nature of their community.

In the previously cited contexts, teachers challenge their students. Outcomes regarding contexts pertain to excellent conditions outside the regular school environment that include university affiliations; high regard for art in the community; abundant program funding; and programs that are extrastructural, offer creative diversions, and encourage learning from peers.

Negotiation of Learning in Inner-City, Suburban, and Rural Settings

Contextual teaching and learning is all about “the individual creation of meaning and socio-cultural understanding through the development and recognition of different perspectives” (Hafeli, 2000). This meaning comes about through negotiation with students’ viewpoints, school policies, and community interests.

Using participant observation techniques, I (Stokrocki, 1990) documented an African American teacher who was committed to developing both students’ appreciation of their art heritages and confidence in artmaking and their recognition of art and avocational careers in inner city Cleveland. She presented an academic portrait lesson using artworks by famous African Americans and invited a Black cowboy artist to speak to her art class. She concluded that teachers of minority students must demonstrate how art is related to the students’ lives, their heritages, their interests, and their future aspirations.

Using qualitative analysis and data collection, Bullock and Galbraith (1992) focused on the concept of “dissonance” found in two teachers’ backgrounds, middle school policies, students’ cultural heritages, and lack of art backgrounds in Tucson, Arizona. There was dissonance between internal sources, such as teachers’ personal beliefs about art and teaching and their backgrounds, and external sources, such as students’ cultural heritages, school curricula, and local policies. One teacher valued teaching more in-depth art experiences through a discipline-based approach as opposed to the school’s limited exploratory art curriculum. The other teacher who was Hispanic desired to advance her Hispanic students’ skills and interests beyond “K-Mart aesthetics” and to teach them to appreciate their own Mexican heritage. To relieve some of this dissonance, researchers uncovered the teacher’s use of popular cultural hooks, such as Madonna’s preference for artworks by Frida Kahlo, to motivate young adolescents in this context. They concluded that teachers could easily modify their preferred teaching beliefs and practices to be more inclusive in their individual classroom contexts.

When teaching in an unemployed suburban context in Ireland, Donnelly (1990) serendipitously discovered popular culture references that motivated her large class of resentful adolescents. Whereas academic art history approaches of questioning and lecture failed, casual mention of the artist who cut off his ear (Van Gogh) piqued students’ interests in existential concerns, caused emotional reactions, and inspired further student–initiated inquiry. Students showed further curiosity about Van Gogh’s and other antiheroes’ art philosophies, attitudes, and values that matched their own sense of rebellion. Students imitated Van Gogh’s painting style through multimedia responses and empathetically initiated play.
By using participant observation and “stimulated recall,” a sociological method of eliciting comments about photographs and video sequences, Hafeli (2000) analyzed class dynamics in a suburban middle school in New York State. She concentrated on middle school students’ expressive self-portraits and on their paintings of people relating or not relating to each other. The assignment was to include as many people as possible in their paintings. She uncovered students’ acts of resistance and negotiation, such as one student’s bid to paint a ballgame from an aerial view, a more abstract approach to the painting. Such examples revealed a student-centered teaching approach and adaptive experiences that allowed students to form their own art education worldviews. These studies question the imposition of external standards regarding instruction and the need to modify practice to meet the needs, from a specific context, of the situation and of the students.

Using ethnomethodology techniques that included intense observations, interviewing, audio- and videotapes and photography, Guay (2000) discovered the importance of personal stories to culturally diverse eighth graders in a working-class setting in Ohio. The observed teacher empowered students to make “outrageous” subject matter and thematic choices, showed them tricks with tools or textural materials, extended the project throughout the semester, and shared art examples as they related to each student’s work. Results question the relevance of imposed standards, time constraints of teacher-designed assignments, and narrow objectives for all students.

Using a postmodern ethnography framework, Ballengee Morris (1997) explored cultural, political, and social issues in art education in collaboration with people in a rural context. She used interviews, observations, readings, and professional development with teachers. She presented a case study about the use of social reconstruction pedagogy through constructed stories that illuminate and address issues of power, voice, conflict, class, gender, and race. The goal was to help local people appreciate folk arts in an Appalachian mountain community of which she is a member. As participant observer, project coordinator, and co-artist, she focused on one rural elementary school in a West Virginia strip-mining town. Morris used peer coaching by modeling critical analysis to develop cultural pride, values, and a sense of place, voice, and identity in an elementary school. Students explored the sociocultural theme of John Henry, a local folk hero who was relevant to their culture. Activities included a visit to a coal mine, a student-scripted play, dancing body self-portraits and a flatfoot dance, a student-composed group song, and a culminating festival. Results included students’ growing identity with their cultural selves through stories and an increase of self-understanding.

Clark and Zimmerman (2000) reported on their efforts to promote community interaction of teachers, parents, and community members in arts programs in rural areas that included populations with similar backgrounds. Project ARTS (Arts for Rural Teachers and Students) was a 3-year research and development program that included seven rural elementary schools in the United States. These rural areas included two different community schools in Indiana (Appalachian, English, and Scottish), two schools in New Mexico (Hispanic and Pueblo Indian), and three schools in coastal South Carolina (African American, Gullah heritage). The project aimed at having rural schools and communities determine their own objectives, curriculum, and activities based on the theme of celebrating their local communities. Parent and community member involvement was crucial, in that they helped develop and implement identification, curriculum, and assessment procedures. Some parents were local artists, who spoke to school children about their artwork. Students interviewed elders about local architecture, collected stories from local people, and illustrated and videotaped the stories. Authentic assessment procedures included (a) portfolios of unfinished work, peer critiques, self-evaluations, contracts, student journals; (b) teachers’ observation comments; (c) videos of discussions with students about their artwork; (d) examination of students’ artworks based on special assignments, final
art displays, and group presentations that testified to art learnings. Students from rural pueblo and Indiana schools were surprised to discover they had similar interests, including basketball, and their art experiences and their awareness and appreciation of local community arts increased. Cross-community communications resulted in key findings that included sharing of interests in three sites, involvement of parents and community members for continuation of programs, locally designed evaluation forms and parent surveys, and continued incorporation of artistic heritages in local communities.

Findings involving inner-city and suburban settings, namely, at the middle school level, pointed to dissonance as a dominant condition in teaching students in diverse settings. These studies provided some reason to believe that a student-centered approach, negotiated learning, popular cultural hooks, and folk heroes were ingredients for successful art teaching. Key findings in rural sites also included sharing interests among sites, involvement of parents and community members for continuation of programs, locally designed evaluation forms, and continued incorporation in art curricula of artistic traditional and folk heritages in local communities. Effective teaching and programs appeared to be related to successful university connections and relaxed school environments. These studies also question imposition of external standards about art curricula offerings and assessments.

**Inclusion and People Experiencing Disabilities**

Inclusion is the education of students experiencing a so-called “disability” within a regular classroom as opposed to within a separate classroom. Blandy (1989) fought against a medical model of disability that assumed that disabled people needed to be cured and segregated into separate institutions away from normal contexts. Art teachers who used this model prepared “special” activities for disabled students, and learning became highly passive. He argued for an inclusive ecological approach, in which people and learning are interconnected, and for more “normal” or active utilization of their abilities and viewpoints. He referred to his case study at The Ohio State University Logan Elm Press and Papermill in which he worked with four youth apprentices in an arts-of-the book laboratory (Blandy, 1983). The so-called moderately mentally challenged apprenticed youths learned about book art skills, produced their own printed books, and shared their viewpoints. Blandy concluded that the book arts’ context empowered these participants to develop autobiographical statements based on their life experiences as seen in their valued material culture and institutional ceremonies. Blandy (1994) further argued for inclusive education, a process in which art teachers create learning environments that are flexible, dynamic, and adaptable, to meet the needs of all participants in normal school settings. He also believed that universities should provide educational opportunities to facilitate involvement of preservice art teachers with groups who experience various challenges.

Using cross-site analysis, Guay (1993), for example, reported adaptive teaching practices of eight art teachers in included and segregated art programs in Ohio schools. She discovered a balance of expressive and responsive activities, use of task analysis and partial participation and incorporation of a variety of adaptive tools. Partial participation (the modification of instruction to individualize learning) and task analysis (the process of reducing techniques into simpler steps) were used effectively. She recommended that teachers focus on student similarities and include students in comprehensive art programs, instead of specially designed activities.

Research with people experiencing disabilities testifies to successes such as inclusion in regular art programs, promotion of pride and autonomy and social contact, and development of successful art works in a comprehensive art program. The role of the researcher as participant tends to become more demanding at times, especially research with people who have physical
challenges, because the situation may demand that the researcher become a temporary teacher’s aide or social advocate for the rights of the so-called disabled.

COMMUNITY CONTEXTS

Community-based contexts stress site-specific competencies and out-of-school knowledge, rather than in-school learning. They include ethnic community centers; intergenerational programs; museum outreach programs; and partnerships to develop ecological settings, recreation centers, senior adult centers, and correctional institutions.

Museum Outreach Programs

During the changing times of the 1970s, museums began to adjust their focus from enlightenment of a few to demand for knowledge raised by the general public and schools at all levels. Newsom and Silvers (1978) presented a comprehensive overview of museum contexts, such as outdoor museums (Massachusetts’s Sturbridge Village), partnerships with schools (Cincinnati’s Taft Museum), and mobile units (Ringling Art Caravan in Florida). Successful programs found in science museums and in children’s museums, such as Teenage Explainers at the San Francisco Exploratorium, further challenged art museums to build concept-based exhibitions and participatory learning and outreach programs in rural areas (Berry & Mayer, 1989). Museum art programs now range from those for preschoolers and parents at the Cleveland Museum of Art to docent training and mobile arts programs for senior citizens at the Rochester, New York, Memorial Art Gallery.

From an international comparison of teaching methods used in museums, Jones (1977) found that personnel in American and European museums who participated both in her survey and in personal interviews favored school-visitation programs. Whereas in the United States museums educate volunteers to teach, Jones discovered that the European museums prepared paid teams of educational staff to accompany children and teachers on museum tours. In their field research, Ott and Jones (1984) later documented international museums and found remarkable exhibitions of children’s art, such as those in the Muzeum Tornuniu in Torun, Poland, and those in the Museum of the Blind in Berlin. Art programs in many community contexts seem to be thriving, while the survival of art programs in schools is sometimes more challenging.

Folk Art as a Context for Art Teaching

Blandy and Congdon (1988) argued that teachers need to include traditional arts from their students’ community in order for students to learn about their local folk backgrounds. Notable was their descriptive research on a controversial exhibit called “Boats, Bait, and Fishing Paraphernalia: A Local Folk Aesthetic” in Bowling Green, Ohio. They invited local experts from the fishing community to curate an exhibit and demonstrate such art processes as model boat constructing, fly tying, net making, rod wrapping, and taxidermy. Paraphernalia included fishing poles, photographs, lures, boats, clothes, and keepsakes (postcards). Also included were fish stories, movies, and food. Findings included controversial discussions, involving aesthetics, validation of local art forms, and national press attention. Because they do not represent static art heritages, these ethnic and folk sites also tended to incorporate new materials and ideas (Congdon & Blandy, 1999).

With interest in qualitative research in museum contexts, art educators also began to evaluate art programs in museum contexts. Through focus group meetings with staff members,
researchers uncovered hidden meanings and cultural problems embedded in museum education programs. In his institutional review of the Heard Museum (Phoenix, Arizona) which involved Native people from diverse backgrounds, Sikes (1992), for example, discovered that the museum’s mission-style structure, especially its barred windows, resembled a prison to these local Native people.

Research in museums abroad also revealed mistakes, successes, and differences in multicultural education contexts, content, and audience participation. In her effort to develop Turkish immigrant families’ interests in different museums in Berlin, for instance, Schrubbers (1996) found that the splendor of the Charlottenburg Castle setting overwhelmed Turkish families, especially when they discovered that the first Turkish migrants were servants in the castle. For these Turkish families, however, the Berlin Museum’s scale was more familiar and accessible. Using qualitative observation, she discovered that group discussions of toys and discussions of everyday life themes inspired reminiscences and were more successful than discussions about fine arts. She concluded that tours for immigrant families needed to be better planned and implemented. Dobbs (1996), who reviewed the research report, suggested that museum guides tried to develop visitor motivation through personal and family interests, but needed more information about dealing with cultural traits of diverse people. Due to language difficulties, researchers needed to employ follow-up questionnaires to study the impact of museum visits on participants.

Vallance (1999) clarified differences between the role of museum educator and that of art educator in promoting multicultural awareness. For instance, while the museum educator focuses mostly on objects, the art educator focuses mainly on students. To illustrate her point, she conducted successful ethnographic case studies at the Saint Louis Art Museum. The first study consisted of gallery talks that offered, as a kind of remedial education, a sample of culturally different artifacts to a wide range of novice visitors. Another study involved thematic cross-cultural tours that broadened the knowledge of multicultural issues for teachers with some background in art, but not their students’ understanding of multicultural art. A third study entailed participatory programs, such as a middle school cultural crossroads program that allowed small groups of racially mixed students during three gallery visits to discuss the art on exhibit and to reinterpret it verbally and visually. As a result of this research, Vallance challenged museums to determine what audiences actually learn in a multicultural sense and what art teaching strategies might be most appropriate in museum contexts.

Deconstruction of museum power and place has been expanded with interactive approaches, such as Fred Wilson’s controversial installation “Mining the Museum.” In this collaboration with the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, Wilson (2001), an African American artist, rearranged its collection with provocative titles that questioned the Eurocentric classification of its collections. Such endeavors empower community members to reinterpret artworks and artifacts through their own and others’ cultural lenses.

Whereas some art museums tend to overwhelm people, others are more family oriented and offer diverse art education programs. Some museums adjust their policies with input from indigenous peoples and immigrant families. Still other museum programs may empower disenfranchised and displaced people to communicate their spiritual and economic concerns and help other peoples to understand changing ethnic heritages. Art teachers therefore need to utilize such local museum programs as well and embrace similar practices such as family and even immigrant community involvement in their art classes.

Ethnic Art Community Centers

Some communities developed art centers in an effort to enrich students’ knowledge of their ethnic heritage. Young (1985), for instance, described a community art program designed to
supplement the art education of African American students. Students learned about African American art history using prints from the local African American community as inspiration. They later learned about printing processes and made their own art prints. Young argued for the need for such programs to help teach students about their heritages at a time when there was a shortage of African American teachers who were knowledgeable about African American art.

Using such ethnographic techniques as interviews, videos, journals, observations, and photographs, La Porte (2000) documented how 10 high school students and 4 homebound senior citizens interacted during a 6-month intergenerational art program at a community center in Harlem, New York. La Porte asked young and old participants to describe an artwork, for example, Hayden’s *Midsummer Night in Harlem*, and then encouraged students to direct questions to the older people so they could reminisce about their own experiences and relate stories of the context of life in Harlem in the 1940s. She concluded that the program dispelled ageism stereotypes; connected those who do not usually communicate; and encouraged art criticism discussions, oral history interviews, art history learning, and group collage making.

Art programs in ethnic community centers can impart knowledge, develop art skills, and build pride in one’s heritage with the use of local art resources and volunteers. Students interviewing elderly adults and making art with them may stimulate pride in the arts of one’s heritage and in the art created in other diverse contexts. Teachers, however, need to understand the history and sociopolitical position of such ethnic contexts that “provide a foundation for confronting the disproportionate degree of economic, social and educational problems some minority communities face” (Young, 1999, p. 29). Thus, these ethnic art centers have the potential to become active contexts for cultural change within a community and, hopefully, among communities.

Community partnerships are growing in response to community problems, such as ecological awareness in local environments. Pickering Elementary School in Ohio, for example, aimed to assist the school community in discovering the natural beauty within their own neighborhood (Birt et al., 1997). Students visited Pickering Ponds, a nearby wetland preserve, studied its ecology and wildlife, and later made their own clay tiles of the wildlife that was assembled into a mural and installed at the entrance of the preserve. With the help of teachers and university students from Ohio State University, an art teacher consequently transformed a poorly drained playing field near the school into a local wetland preserve. To create a supportive environment for local turtles, birds, and insects, participants added such ecological features as rocks, plants, dead branches, and even a raptor roost. According to Krug (Birt et al., 1997), “Art, culture, and nature can be investigated using cyclical inquiry processes that draw from direct experiences, observation and reflection, critical thinking, and collaborative action” (p. 9). These researchers concluded that schools should encourage interdisciplinary art teaching that seeks to investigate and solve real-life problems in community members’ own backyards.

Art in the Backyard

People who need to escape everyday problems may find solace in a backyard garden. Kakas (2001) described, for instance, Hartman’s historical rock garden that she stumbled upon during a road trip. This elaborate folk art site that was made during the Depression consisted of approximately 50 buildings and hundreds of cement figures strategically placed among flowerbeds. Kakas concluded that art teachers could teach folk art as a kind of healing. Folk artists may be untrained in art, yet are hardworking and dedicated people. They may employ artmaking processes that include collaborative appropriations of preexisting objects and images in one’s neighborhood. Art teachers who are involved in community-based art education can effectively utilize neighborhood sites for learning about the contextual values and beliefs of local people (Congdon et al., 2001).
Recreation Centers

Nearly every community center in America has developed some kind of recreational art program. As art learning resources, these centers have been underexplored and denigrated as mere entertainment facilities. Lackey (1999), however, investigated the plight of recreation centers, “wrapped and trapped in fun” (p. 36). Based on qualitative methods, she earlier examined two Canadian community centers in Vancouver using analysis of documents, staff and parent interviews, and field notes. She discovered prevailing notions of pleasure, freedom, and commodity that are subject to socioeconomic pressures. She later examined contradictions inherent in leisure and lifelong learning and discussed work, play, free expression, and free choice as notions that are related to social restraints. Lackey noted tensions between educators and community facilitators that included low status and territoriality. She considered negotiation of notions of school art and lifelong learning as a way of allowing schools and communities to coexist and endure together. Lackey’s reality-based example of a community art program seems to contradict the concept of genuine community that “builds on respect and recognition of multiple voices and perspectives” (Clark, 1999, p. 2).

Community Centers for Senior Adults

As both participant and observer, Barret (1998) reported results of her art program for African American elders in a senior center in Athens, Georgia. She discovered issues such as elders tiring easily or having health problems that may cause absences. From earlier surveys, she determined reluctant participation due to anxieties about lack of drawing ability and art’s usefulness in older people’s lives. She later found that the program’s success was due to flexible art media, such as clay, thematic lessons, incorporation of individual life experiences (family, friends, and church), and multicultural concerns (art of West Africa); and elicited stories behind the artworks, which were used for motivation. She concluded that these community sites demanded much dedicated teaching as well as researchers who are dedicated to understanding art in community contexts.

Marginalized Settings

Finally, some contexts are so marginal that they challenge art educational goals. Congdon (1984) reported personal experiences, a kind of action research, teaching an all-women’s art program in a Milwaukee county jail setting. She described women as minorities, unemployed, undereducated, drug users, and having a state of mind characterized as “in crisis.” The environment where art teaching took place was small: Space was tight and the institutional climate was tense and restrictive. Congdon’s goals were to develop pride and a sense of identity. The results were gift giving, sharing and discussing of values, and developing open communication between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves. The women decided to make clothes, embellishing them with embroidery and fabric jewelry, which resulted in garments that displayed their personal identities. Congdon concluded that the inclusion of inmates’ interests, ideas, and concerns was paramount to successful teaching in such a restrictive context.

Dennis, Hanes, Stuhr, Walton, and Wightman (1997) developed a case study of an art program, initiated by residents, which was operated at a state correctional facility in the Midwest. They described the findings of their research which took place in a prison setting where they observed and interviewed residents, all of whom were men, and their administrators, all of whom were women. Using critical analysis, they concluded that the residents regarded the art room as a fraternal refuge, and their ideas about fine art views reflected preferences for realistic
drawing and painting. Art produced by the residents for personal and social reasons was to be given as gifts. A power struggle between the residents and the administrators occurred over control of the art program. The atmosphere was relaxed and art instruction was informal and individualized to meet each resident’s needs. Unfortunately the art program was later canceled. Researchers concluded the probable reason for program dismissal was the residents’ hostile views toward the administrators.

Community partnerships appear to be growing in response to the need to investigate and solve real-life community problems, such as ecological issues. Several factors combined to influence successful art programs including promoting student pride and autonomy, enabling social contact between different social groups and age groups, and encouraging successful art making. Partnerships also provided some valuable learning tools such as understandings about oral history and local art resources. Some folk examples can be found in community members’ backyards. The negotiation of notions of school art and lifelong learning as found in recreation centers is one way of allowing school and community art teaching to coexist and endure. Research in correctional institutions, however, revealed contradictions between freedom and constraints in these artmaking settings. Restrictive contexts may demand more liberating materials and relaxed control.

CONFUSION OVER MULTICULTURAL, GLOBAL, AND INTERCULTURAL CONTEXTS

In a search for cultural understanding, some art educators changed their research foci in response to local and world pressures. With growing interest in cross-cultural research, Eisner (1984) clarified the movement as “efforts made by the investigator to compare and contrast ideas or practices in more than one culture” (p. 28). After World War II, global education emerged to promote international understanding and ensure peaceful coexistence. Later, it widened its global stance to address issues of limited planetary resources and economic competition in the global marketplace. The goal was to promote responsible international citizens, encourage appreciation of cultural diversity, and advance understanding of the complexities of international systems (Sutton, 1998). Global education research differs from cross-cultural research in its focus of looking outside one’s borders at people in other societies (Davenport, 2000a).

Multiculturalism

In the 1960s, during the civil rights movement in the United States, multiculturalism became a heated issue in art education. The term multiculturalism was a curriculum reform movement concerned with equal opportunity and human rights (Mason, 1988). Curriculum reform can only be successful with knowledge of diverse cultures or contexts. McFee (1995) felt that teachers needed to understand their students’ diverse culture differences, notably their perception systems, roles, and aesthetic preferences, group or self-motivation, and propensity for cultural change. She consistently argued that “art and architecture be understood through diverse cultural aesthetics, cultural images, design, and ranges of creativity, [that] can help humanize people” (p. 7). Thus, a number of art education researchers focused on understanding their students from diverse backgrounds and reported conflicts over teaching practices.

Mason (1988), for example, used participant observation research methods such as note taking and interviewing to report her curriculum trials and experiences while teaching two small groups of multicultural students in Leicester, England. She motivated Hindu students to create an animated film and Muslim students to write and illustrate a story. She wanted children to depict their daily surroundings, hopes, anxieties, and fears and to provide an
insider’s view of ethnic minority children’s lives today. Instead of the children depicting their so-called “real” settings, they portrayed family memories of life in India that were more fantasy based. Muslim children communicated the importance of Islamic religion in their life, by showing the daily task of praying. Children added script, which is an essential ingredient in the Koran, to their artwork. Novel, at that time, was the use of animated stories by the children to communicate their new bicultural lives. Cultural conflict arose over the English or Western style of mimetic representation and the children’s Middle Eastern or Asian mythic and abstract styles of representation. The term cultural pluralism has evolved over time with demographic changes and disagreements over selection of content and ethnic identity in art education. Multicultural education ideologies, however, often are at odds with those of indigenous peoples who seek to preserve their own educational approaches that are more holistic than Western art education teaching strategies and curriculum content (Irwin, Rogers, & Farrell, 1999).

Indigenous Cultural Differences

Indigenous people are those who inhabited each continent before the arrival of Caucasian settlers. The encroachment of White people into indigenous areas caused and continued to cause a history of conflict over land, values, and teaching in places all over the world. In the United States in the mid-1980s, Stuhr (1986) examined classroom environments in several Wisconsin schools and found conflicts between Caucasian and Native American values and beliefs. Differences in social and educational beliefs included Native American sharing and close peer grouping versus Caucasian focus on individual achievement. Teaching methods such as Native American informal teaching and gentle banter opposed Caucasian instruction based on singular commands. Only one Bureau of Indian Affairs school considered the aesthetic heritage of Native American students in its curriculum. Stuhr recommended that teacher training include more courses and information on Native American value systems and art forms. Using participant observation, photographs, document review, and interviews, she further examined the complex traditional arts system of the Wisconsin Native American. This system included pipe carving related to the Peace Pipe Ceremony (honoring the coexistence of earth, plant, animal, and people) and derivative arts that modify form and use acculturated materials (such as beading that has its roots in stories of nature). She also examined their contemporary art forms that incorporate 20th-century art forms and materials of Euro-American influence. Wisconsin Native Americans tend to assimilate recycled materials and references to nature and adapt their tribal influences in order to make statements about their “Indianness.” Thus, the idea of environment is related to a social process of preserving and adapting to cultural change and should be included in art teaching strategies when teaching this group of students.

Study about indigenous schooling practices also occurred in Arizona Navajo populations. Using microethnographic methods of participant observation, informal interview, photography, and data analysis, I (Stokrocki, 1995) studied schooling in rural Chinle, Arizona, and discovered that Navajo students are dualistically enculturated in American Indian education. Schooling included accommodating contextual differences of seasonal time, slow pacing habits, a need for free time, and a relaxed atmosphere. Insights from my research in several Navajo sites revealed the necessity of highly patterned art skills, basic schema, and arrangements for the more traditional Navajo students. Conflict exists among Navajo traditional, semitraditional, and nontraditional views on art education. Critical are the traditional cultural patterns that are being replaced by economic values that emphasize manual skills and trade exchanges in the context of a larger state economy. I concluded that successful art education for the Navajo seemed to be a blend of traditional and contemporary art forms and teaching methods.

From a phenomenological perspective in which a people’s world and experiences are studied, Irwin and Reynolds (1994) also found similar notions of Amer-Indian instruction and
aesthetics in Ojibwa (Canadian) experiences. They noted that instruction consisted of patience, repetition, and tools of listening, watching, and absorbing everything, which suggested a pervasive cultural experience. Through formal and informal interviews of 20 Ojibwa people, they focused on the socially constructed experience of creativity and concluded that creativity is a “negotiation of feeling and lived experience culminating in a synthesis of meaning” (p. 34). They summarized conditions for creativity: resource availability, sufficient times, cooperative rather than competition work, personal rather than external evaluation, need for psychological safety and freedom, and process valued over product.

Over the span of 2 to 4 years, Irwin et al. (1998) used ethnography to study the context of colonial destruction and reconstruction of indigenous cultures in Australia, Canada, and Taiwan. They discovered how contemporary artists reclaimed, reconciled, and reconstructed their local cultural roots through their art forms. Through oral history interviews and videos, researchers discovered how the artists developed new individual and community identities as they transformed conflicts in their lives. The authors further examined such global conflicts as economic and political power and how they might inform art teaching in their three different settings.

Such study of indigenous contexts may provide teachers guidance as they work with indigenous students who range from the traditional and semitradiional to nontraditional types. Teachers should be sensitive to traditional indigenous students’ preferences for more informal instruction, close peer work, patterned models, and conditions for creativity. Indigenous peoples struggle with notions of creativity as individual freedom versus collective responsibility and the infringement of popular culture on their youth as well. They seem to prefer not to change their traditional ways, but to work toward changing how other cultures view them (Irwin et al., 1999).

Cross-Cultural Contexts

In contrast to interests in safeguarding art traditions is the desire to compare and contrast these traditions. Eisner (1984) found some problems in conducting cross-cultural research, such as conceptualization (shared frames of reference), implementation (grade and instructional equivalency), interpretation (contextual cues), and practical concerns (funding and publication). Using a phenomenological stance, Mason (1994) overcame such challenges and examined curriculum and instructional practices in Japan where education is quite formal and compared Japanese art education to British art education. She discovered, for example, that Japanese teachers had no incentive to display artworks and that process was more important than products. They worked long hours; curriculum was standardized; art was mandatory; and Japanese educators seemed uninterested in multiculturalism. What persisted was dedication to teaching traditional folk arts and everyday aesthetics and a commitment to moral education involving required trips to Japanese historical places. In contrast, British education tended to be more informal, emphasized the display of finished products, had less standardized curricula and incorporated multicultural strategies and aesthetic interests for use with immigrant students from former colonies. Such contextual examination, as in Mason’s study, is the most significant part of cross-cultural understanding (Anderson, 1995).

Interest in examining craft education problems resulted in a comparison of information on courses, teacher attitudes, and curricula reform in both England and Japan (Mason, Najse, & Naoe, 1998). Using surveys, they discovered that both contexts had national curricula that included crafts under the rubric of Art, and they prioritized expression and technique; however, instruction in the crafts differed in both countries. In Britain, students learned from specially trained teachers and professional artifacts, whereas in Japan, secondary students learned to make crafts predominantly from standardized textbooks. Researchers discussed unique cultural
factors and contributions to character education in each context. The Japanese, for example, based their values on the apprenticeship model that focuses on discipline, technique, and moral and spiritual concerns that are associated with traditional craft skills. Mason further questioned whose identity and values and what national heritage should pluralist societies transmit. To improve the low status and identity of craft programs, they argued for the addition of crafts as part of national British and Japanese examinations.

By observing women at home and using interviews, Mason and Richter (1999) also compared aesthetic values and interests of housewives from different ethnic backgrounds. Richter conducted research in Santa Maria, Brazil, and Mason examined examples in England. They noticed the dominance of working with conventional textile arts and realized that persistent values involved homemaking, caring, giving small gifts, and joyfully working in groups. The researchers concluded that strong moral and family cultures and art making are necessary to support a healthy society. Furthermore, they also felt that the (masculine) cultural trend toward self-fulfillment through expressive individualism in all walks of life was not compatible with many women’s concerns in both contexts.

There seems to be a correlation among healthy societies, conventional arts, and moral education that includes the values of caring and cooperative art making. These concerns have great relevance for art teaching in a variety of cross-cultural contexts.

International Summer Schools

International education is a trend that emphasizes international understanding, exchange, and cooperation between two or more nations. Study of short- and long-term international art programs can promote similarities and differences of cultural understandings. An international summer school in Croatia, for instance, brought professors from three countries together to teach. By using a semiotic approach that involved an inquiry of meaning of a place in relation to signs within cultures, Smith-Shank (1997) reported how the ancient city of Stari-Grad off the coast of Croatia became a highly interactive classroom for learning. Just as this ancient city of Stari-Grad was a meeting place for past Greek, Roman, and Muslim peoples, it served as a neutral zone for exchange of world views between Chicago and Croatian students, who mapped places that were meaningful to their cultures. Students also shared their different ideas on schooling, art, architecture, and even war. Such international schools are forums of art teaching exchanges that may broaden understanding of people, places, signs, and meanings.

Intercultural Education

Intercultural contexts are those that cross physical or conceptual borders to link similarities and/or expose differences in peoples’ cultural thinking. The idea of interculturalism developed in Europe and “provides students with cultural tools to explore their former and present cultures, personally recreate them, and know about, interact with, and appreciate others and their customs” (Ligtvoet, 1987). Through participant observation, I (Stokrocki, 1989) studied one intercultural educator of multicultural students in Rotterdam and described his instructional practices and unique curriculum in developing a passport as an art project. Components included a symbolic portrait identification (Who am I?), a composite of place (Where am I from?), and a country destination to visit (Where am I going?). Results included students sharing cultural differences, opening art history windows to the world, contrasting old and new cultural contexts, appropriating images for communication, and self-evaluating their own work. I concluded that success of intercultural teaching was due to his encouragement of students teaching each other about their cultural heritages, his individual work with students, and a supportive context of teachers and superintendent who worked as a team.
In Spain, Hernandez (2000) rebelled against the concept of homogenous society as a static entity composed of adjacent ethnic groups without links. He proposed the idea of education based on active intercultural citizenship that is based on a democratic nurturance of people’s critical faculties to examine their life conditions in relation to those of others. He suggested ethnographic research as a way of examining such contexts.

Davenport (2000a) further suggested that the term interculturalism, which includes global, community-based aspects, enlightened by cross-cultural and anthropological views, replace the term multiculturalism. She further advocated the idea that interculturalism, which blends multicultural, community-based and global education, regards every student’s culture as deserving study and stresses cross-cultural interactions or communication across distances. She presented her own intercultural research in action, which was a collaborative electronic exchange between first and fifth graders in Indiana and fourth graders in Japan (Davenport, 2000b). In one lesson, for example, elementary-age students exchanged stories and drawings about the adventures of a stuffed animal. She concluded that teachers could use the Internet to bridge great distances.

Globalization of Popular Culture

With the rapid exchange of global images that permeate daily life, it becomes necessary to examine their messages and influences. In the 1980s, Nadaner (1985) argued that students use social criticism to explore controversial subjects including sex and violence in the media. Duncum (1999) later proposed that art education should adopt a wider framework for aesthetic education to embrace study of everyday cultural and commercial sites. Examples he offered included theme parks, tourist spots, television, and the Internet. In so doing, students can critique their visual culture, namely, their gender, racial, and xenophobic values. Freedman (2000) suggested that contexts in practice include contexts of production (cultural purposes, conditions, and artists’ personal histories), contexts of appreciation (institutional settings and meanings and functions of artworks), and structural properties of meaning (formal and technical qualities). An example of the practical teaching of popular culture via the Internet (Taylor, 2000) follows in the next section.

ELECTRONIC CONTEXTS

Electronic contexts for art education research include videodiscs, teleconferencing, hypermedia, and interactive Web sites and distance education courses, to name a few. Galbraith (1996) was one of the first art educators to explore, for research purposes, the use of hypermedia through the videodisc. A videodisc is a place to store data consisting of text, still images, or motion pictures. She transferred her case studies of elementary and middle school art teachers onto videodisc and presented them in multimedia hypertext. Hypermedia is a system of creating, retrieving, and linking data through different pathways that may be “linear, hierarchical, associative and multidirectional” (Keifer-Boyd, 1997, p. 29). These technologies enhanced pedagogical and contextual knowledge for her preservice art teachers. Fascinating were excerpts of teacher wisdom such as “reading a class is like scanning a painting—you do a great deal of detective work” (p. 97). Galbraith (1996) also offered videodiscs as valuable tracking devices of noticeable and hidden concepts and issues that can be used effectively for future art education research.

Taylor (2000) studied the effects of using hypertext at the high school level. She encouraged her art class to interpret Madonna’s music video, Bedtime Story, with hypertext. Hypertext transfer protocol (http) is the main programming language that incorporates rules
for transferring information on the Internet. Students generated a plethora of information related to Madonna’s video, but lacked the means to interpret it. Taylor offered the hypertext computer program *Storyspace* as a way to compile data, rewrite ideas, share insights, and make connections that present an alternative to teacher-centered instruction. She also challenged students to find historic influences in contemporary art and culture on the Internet. Upon reflection, Taylor discovered critical questions for discussion with students involving racism, sexism, social group privilege, and appropriation. She concluded successful teaching included liberatory education—an approach that stimulates thought and feeling to challenge the social, political, and economic forces of their lives—combined with computer technology—a context and process for the exploration of ideas.

Julian (1997) explained that her hypermediated Web site, “A World Community of Old Trees,” began with a postmodern research objective of decentering knowledge and examining potential of the World Wide Web as a communication and exchange site for ecological art education. Solitary tree paintings on canvas, strangled by static convention and stretcher bars, became an electronic, collaboratively authored, educational art piece. Through this hypermedia environment, she speculated that people of all ages produced their own content (tree paintings), created their own navigational pathways, forged a field of relationships, and left behind the linear character of the old print technology. She advocated an interactive Web site as an art teaching opportunity that can offer a unique, dynamic ecosystem composed of interrelated units of hardware and humanity and provide an opportunity for research, worldmaking, and creative thinking of the highest order. Distance education is the delivery of instruction of geographically separated people via electronic means. Little research is available, however, on results of using distance education for art teaching and art learning purposes. Most published work is descriptive technical information on electronic media and its issues (Gregory, 1997). Some advantages are cost efficiency, quick access to students from a wide variety of age levels and international locations, accommodation of large enrollments with a number of part-time tutors who have smaller student loads, and empowering of students as co-learners.

Garber and Stankiewicz (2000) reported their collaborative experiment in interactive distance education. They co-taught a course, “History and Philosophy in Art Education,” through interactive television (Picturetel), e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face dialog. Early in the course, students who were all women expressed dislike of telephone interaction. They thought e-mail communication was more responsive for individual feedback. Students noted that they performed better as part of a learning community where professors become peer learners. Garber and Stankiewicz (2000) concluded that their students valued the “conversational learning style” (p. 37) rather than a talking-heads television format as a context for learning about art education.

In addition, a one credit, pass/fail, thematically based graduate course is available as part of Erickson’s (1996) “Worlds of Art,” a program on the Getty ArtsEdNet Web site. Rogers and Erickson (1997) revealed that the success of this curriculum resource Web site might be due to one person as the conceptual director, profuse corporate support, and layers of navigation. Since the first simple Web site and listserv-based efforts, which the Getty Education Institute funded, Erickson developed a much more sophisticated online course, again with major support from Getty. In collaboration with a computer expert and programmers at Arizona State University’s Hispanic Research Center, she designed an online course, called “Art Appreciation and Human Development,” consisting of both undergraduate and graduate versions. In addition, Erickson and Villeneuve (2001) have begun to analyze undergraduates’ and graduate students’ participation in online threaded discussion in an effort to gain insight into the design of developmentally appropriate online instruction. Using different tools, these electronic examples demonstrate that students and teachers can effectively communicate electronically and that collaborative teaching provides an important avenue for cross-site conversation.
In conclusion, models of teaching are changing from single-site or person instruction to collaborative and multicontextual operations with new electronic technology experiments. Such contexts seem to liberate teachers and students to become peer learners, to enable all parties to make conceptual connections, and to reflect on outcomes and make future plans for collaboration. However, electronic experiments involve factors often not reported, such as technical, logistical, access, and monetary problems. Teachers and researchers can examine information and research in depth and from different viewpoints in such interactive contexts.

**FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

A wide range of contextual studies that deal with school, community, intercultural, and electronic sites already exist. Findings reveal that contexts are complex and involve contradictory factors that may not easily be resolved. Research is not only about reporting best practices and technocratic solutions but also about raising questions.

What Complex Issue Dominated This Review of Contextual Research in Art Education?

To understand a context primarily involves the *politics of identity*: not only how a person views him/herself but also how people regard themselves. Preadolescents, for example, explore possible identities through hero worship and tribal formations. School culture prepares students for societal rites and responsibilities in an academic society, but a culture consists of plural societies. The problem becomes compounded with the challenge of whose identity and values to transmit. Understanding further demands an examination of the historical effects of political struggles involving various subgroups’ social and economic exploitation (Jagodzinski, 1999). More specifically, indigenous people’s rights, especially their essential relationship with the land and ownership of their sacred symbols, need to be addressed, not exploited. Although people may desire to preserve their traditional art forms and values, they also incorporate new art forms and materials (Congdon & Blandy, 1999). When studying a traditional context, teachers must also present its contemporary arts in relation to its living conditions with all its contradictory baggage. It is more important for art teachers to discuss such complexities and contradictions with students than to make imitative artworks. Teachers also should teach about the healthy benefits of societies that stress conventional arts and moral education and include the values of caring and cooperative art making.

Similar to Neperud’s (1995) findings, several contextual research studies seem to question imposition of standards regarding curricula offerings with so many conflicting conditions and factors. More studies are needed on how art teachers survive in diverse contexts, adjust programs to meet the needs of different populations, examine their indigenous and community art forms with students, and challenge global pressures.

Does Contextual Research Represent Multiple Views?

Some studies present only one researcher’s experience; other studies add participants’ opinions. Still other studies incorporate multiple authors. Then, too, some studies encourage participants, such as indigenous peoples, to speak for themselves. At times, results from contextual investigation reveal differences of opinion that may not be resolved and need to coexist side by side. The future demands *negotiation of contextual findings* as a method of conflict resolution and as a result of the “push and shove” of democratic ways. Negotiation does not come without
some degree of pain and heated argument. What is needed is research conducted in the same context but analyzed from a different perspective.

**Does Contextual Research Reflect Realistic Concerns?**

Contextual research for a real world (Anderson, 2000; Fehr, Fehr, & Keifer-Boyd, 2000) begins with thorough preparation—knowledge of school, community, culture, and intercultural contexts; careful analysis of data and relationships; and discussion of hidden issues and suggestions for improvement (Ulbricht, 2000). Researchers and teachers together need to investigate and solve real-life community problems in their own backyards. In order to democratize the study of art, teachers should investigate different art occupations in a community as sites for art teaching and broaden the definition of art, not just of the fine arts (Congdon, 1988). Schools and community centers should build linkages, for example, creative after-school art programs for latchkey kids that employ teachers who have art education backgrounds.

With school violence on the rise, the notion of “schools as tribes” warrants further investigation. Chambers (1978) earlier encouraged anthropological study of students’ out-of-school tribal arts, such as comics and graffiti. Duncum (1999) believed that teachers could develop rich ethnographies of everyday aesthetic contexts to investigate popular arts more critically with students. An entire issue of *Visual Arts Research*, guest edited by Duncum (2003) dealt with contemporary tribal contexts, such as television, surfing, and shopping malls for further critical investigation.

**What Are Methodological Concerns?**

Researchers characterized their methodology as interpretive at least 8 times and more specifically their employment of interviews on approximately 15 occasions out of a total of approximately 51 reported studies. Contextual methods demand *role-reversals*, in which researchers become learners whenever they step into new situations. Researchers are teachers too. Following Lackey’s (1994) advice, researchers should regard themselves as cultural workers for the betterment of equal access to art knowledge. They also need to be both ethical and self-critical (Bresler, 1996).

**Are Contextual Findings Useful?**

Translations of research findings are paramount if researchers expect to convince teachers to use contextual findings and the public to pay attention to contextual research results. Contextual studies and controversial problems can be presented on a Web site on which teachers and other researchers are invited to duplicate a lesson, research their own contexts, respond with alternate solutions, and critique results (e.g., Stokrocki, 1999). Translations of contextual research about teaching can take the form of NAEA advisories (e.g., Boughton et al., 2002), ERIC/ART reports (e.g., Zimmerman, 1990), and translations of theory into practice (e.g., Sandell & Speirs, 1999).

Researchers need to convert their research tools into teaching devices, such as interviews, and model critical analysis, by questioning hidden social issues such as power, voice, conflict, class, gender, and race. Teachers also need to model how to critique important issues in their own context with their own students (Freedman, 1997). More art-based methods of presenting contextual research findings can further readability. Researchers frequently used the word “stories” as a way of gathering data and reporting research. Examples include old wives’ tales (Smith-Shank & Schwiebert, 2000), stories of everyday teachers (Anderson, 2000), and narrative books (Stuhr, in press).
How Should Researchers Deal With Future Uncertainties?

Contextual research necessitates the building of networks that empower art teachers, community people, and university educators to conduct research together to ensure equal access to knowledge about the best teaching practices discovered in a variety of contexts. A blending of qualitative and quantitative methods seems ideal. The quest for rigor (Sullivan, 1996) takes time, so researchers also need to follow their hunches, speculate on possible alternatives, and help each other attain success through thoughtful reflection. Researchers must not omit the human experiences of serendipity, caring, joy, love, adventure, and suspension of disbelief as characterized in artistic experience. Tough-mindedness also demands tender-heartedness in order to prevent research from being inhumane in regards to contextual issues. These conditions demand courage in order for researchers to proceed in spite of criticisms and challenges, so that the art education community is continually informed about effective art teaching practices in diverse educational contexts.

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