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## High School Visual Arts and Student Civic Engagement

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Running head: VISUAL ARTS AND STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

High School Visual Arts and Student Civic Engagement

by

Benjamin R. Rupers

A culminating thesis submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education

San Rafael, CA

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This thesis, written under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor and approved by the department chair, has been presented to and accepted by the Department of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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### **Abstract**

A democracy is healthiest when civic engagement is valued and demonstrated by its citizens. Although many have studied ways to increase civic engagement, the relationship between civic engagement and fine art education has not been included. The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between art education and civic engagement in a select sample of eight AP visual art students from a high school art program in Northern California, as well as identify the level of civic engagement demonstrated by the students. The students will be interviewed and evaluated according to Hauptmann (2005)'s seven elements of civic engagement activity. Three themes emerged from the findings: A high awareness surrounding civic issues, a failure to satisfy Hauptmann (2005)'s requirements for civic engagement activity, and noted factors by the students which possibly inhibit their ability to participate in civic engagement activities. A greater emphasis on art education in schools may benefit the goals of civic education, as well as raise students' awareness regarding civic issues. However, the study did not find any evidence supporting art education as having a positive influence on the civic engagement activity of high school art students. In most cases the activities by the students fell short of legitimate civic engagement, but nonetheless there was an effort to stay informed and active within their abilities and around their day-to-day responsibilities.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

There are many negative consequences that occur when the youth of a country fail to participate within a democracy. Most easily noted through voting records, it is common theme throughout the history of the United States that youth are not adequately represented on issues that will impact them the most. A strong voter turnout among the youth would lead to a healthier and more sustainable democracy, but a lack of educational focus on civic engagement in the public education system does not produce an effective, engaged citizenry. This study hopes to inspire more research aimed to find ways to increase the civic engagement of the youth through secondary education.

As an art educator, I have the opportunity to observe and critique student work in a variety of mediums. From my experience, student work, oftentimes, takes on a very political agenda. For example, this past year I have witnessed numerous students work in a variety of different mediums, both 2 and 3-dimensional, to create art that reflects the political climate we live in. As a result, I have come to realize a potential connection between the visual arts and civic engagement. Therefore, I have chosen to research this connection and study high school visual art students and their civic engagement.

According to Sir Ken Robinson, the purpose of education is “to enable students to understand the world around them and the talents within them so that they can become fulfilled individuals and active, compassionate citizens” (Robinson, 2015, pg xxiv). There is a question as to whether the education system is appropriately satisfying this definition of education’s purpose. As it is understood that the arts have been marginalized throughout the history of



education (Baker, 2012, Dolan, 2001, Robinson, 2015, Sabol, 2013, Wexler, 2014), art education may have a unique impact that has yet to be seen due to this historical lack of respect.

In the past, the role of the arts within education can only be interpreted through the “social demands that affected general education” (Efland, 1984, p. 268). In other words, art has served as a way to increase the positive experiences students have in school, as well enhance the learning within other subject-areas. The arts have been treated as a supplementary course, an elective that is not required as much as other, more academic subjects. Through the years art has supported aspects of general education, and has been valued accordingly. Yet, scholarship suggests that the arts provide an important element of education in its own right. Sabol (2013) argues that art education is an essential aspect to a complete education. However, it is difficult to assess the many benefits that the arts provide. According to Sabol (2013), “Traditional assessment methods often fail to explore the most significant kinds of learning taking place in arts classrooms, such as growth and sophistication of thinking and development of problem-solving or creative thinking pathways” (p. 36). This may be a reason why art education is not adequately studied as it relates to civic engagement.

Scholarship has studied civic engagement through formal academic courses, yet far less research has tested the possible connections between art education and forms of civic engagement. However, scholars have noted how art often grapples with political concerns. Dolan (2001) is quoted:

One way to prepare students for democracy might be to argue that the arts are indeed political—that they create a space for dissent and debate, disagreement and critical

refinement, a forum through which to think about values and in which to install new visions of self, community, and nation. (p. 5)

In any art classroom, creativity is placed in high regard. Sabol (2013) goes further to state, “Creativity traditionally has been expressed in works of art, and its manifestation in arts classrooms is likely to remain a goal of all arts education programs” (p. 36). Creativity and expressionism will continue to be encouraged in all art endeavors, and includes the artwork made within art classrooms. Therefore, this study aims to ascertain how prevalent civic engagement is among high school visual art students in order to understand the value art education may have in promoting participation within a democracy.

### **Definitions of Terms**

**Civic engagement.** Hauptmann (2005) defines civic engagement as “Active involvement in the affairs of an organization including setting (if at all possible) and working toward the achievement of organizational goals, while clearly expressing personal goals and striving for identifiable results of the activities for which and for their consequences one is responsible” (p. 5).

**Citizenship.** In his book *Toward an Anthropology of (Democratic) Citizenship Education*, Levinson (2011) writes, “Citizenship is constituted by the meanings, rights, and obligations of membership in publics, as well as the forms of agency and modalities of participation implicated by such membership” (p.280).

**Political art.** According to Maria-Alina (2015), “Politically engaged art usually discloses social injustices and takes a critical approach to hegemony. Many contemporary political artists

deliberately produce an art as unappealing to the senses as possible because they attempt to raise awareness about social injustices and other troubles” (p. 2).

### **Theoretical Rationale**

Hauptmann (2005)’s central points of civic engagement are used as theoretical rationale for this study. According to Hauptmann (2005), in order to be considered a civic engagement activity, the seven elements are:

Civic engagement is a rational goal-centered activity, sharing responsibility for its actions and concentrating on its results and consequences; Civic engagement is an individual non-violent voluntary action, generally within an organizational framework, but possibly also an individual pursuit; Civic engagement emphasizes the interrelationships of all its activity areas, since effects in any of them influence others as well; Civic engagement has to place its activities in the global framework, since all its activities may have global effects and consequences; Civic engagement expects organizations, including the academy, to be models in its administration and activities, which assigns a special function to the academy’s teaching concerns; Civic engagement recognizes the existence of value frameworks, in which organizations and individuals operate. These frameworks may provide motivations and an understanding of vocation for individuals affected; And civic engagement necessitates periodic assessment and evaluation of its activities, going beyond quantitative forms, and implying the possibility of modification and even abandonment of its goals and activities. (p. 7)

This theory relies heavily on Max Weber's ethics of responsibility, in that the elements of civic engagement are determined by the assumption of responsibility for measurable goals for individuals (Hauptmann, 2005).

### **Background and Need**

This study involves visual art students in their last year of high school. These seniors are ages 17-18, therefore in a relatively short time they will all be living as adult citizens in the U.S. democracy and eligible to vote among other responsibilities. In terms of civic engagement, this is a crucial age in which opportunities to participate in civics are made possible. In such close proximity to this threshold of citizenship, high school seniors as participants allows for a unique perspective on the youngest adult citizens in this country. According to Hart, Donnelly, Youniss and Atkins (2007), important aspects of civic participation in the U.S. have been decreasing for the past 50 years. There are many political theorists who worry about the interest or commitment to the democratic processes of the American people (Hart et al. 2007). The lack of civic engagement, especially among the youth, is an increasingly known problem in this country (Addington, 2016).

Although art education can hold numerous benefits for those that pursue it (Mitchell, 2015, Melnick, Witmer, & Strickland, 2011), the current standards movement has negatively affected the funding for art departments (Wexler, 2014). In addition to creating real anxiety and fear for young students, Wexler (2014) suggests that the corporate reform movement that has created such standards "is the final insult to our children and their future" (p. 60). Much of the issue with the Common Core State Standards deals with the over-emphasis of subjects such as English and math, and the subsequent lack of emphasis on the arts. Baker (2012) notes that there

is a general problem when it comes to art education access, and in many cases a lack of emphasis can mean elimination of art programs.

This study addressed the educational inequity that fine art programs face within the United States school system. While art does play an important role in most schools, its potential benefits are not understood or valued properly by the U.S. education system. This study includes interviews with art students in order to gain the perspective of those who value and practice art within the school system. Through the limitation of the possible benefits that art can provide to students, there continues to be educational inequity in terms of the value the education system places on the arts compared to other subject-areas.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is widely understood that a lack of civic engagement within a democracy is a problem (Berson, Rodriguez-Campos, Walker-Egea, Owens, & Bellara, 2014). Thus, many have attempted to find ways to increase civic engagement so that American democracy may become healthier through greater participation by its citizens. While it has been found that participation in the arts is positively correlated to civic participation (Leroux & Bernadska, 2014), visual art education has not been studied as it relates to the civic engagement of high school students. High school civic engagement has been studied as far as student knowledge (Feinberg & Doppen, 2010) and in terms of the effect of civic education courses (Berson et al., 2014), but the arts have not been fully studied as a potential support to the intended goals of civic engagement within education.

This study is significant for high school students and the level of quality that their education provides. High school students may learn behaviors and values through art education

that benefits the greater population in the ways that those students engage with their local and national community. School administrators and educators may learn more about the ideas that are practiced by high school art students, and may be beneficial to the greater youth population in terms of the education that they are provided. Ultimately, every citizen of the United States may benefit from this study in terms of the potential civic education has to increase participation within the democracy and strengthen the will of the people and the influence of the youth.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to identify what the relationship is between art education and civic engagement in a select sample of visual art students from a high school art program in Northern California. Another purpose is to find out the level of civic engagement that the selected students possess. Each student was interviewed and asked questions relating to the seven elements of civic engagement, according to Hauptmann (2005). This study aims to connect the scholarship of visual arts and civic engagement, respectively, and address a public concern with a possible solution through visual art education.

### **Assumptions**

This study assumed that the sample of students share characteristics of typical California high school students, and not just high school visual art students. At the same time, this study assumed that each of the students interviewed are committed to an art practice, and engage in a creative process on a regular basis as part of the requirements of their AP art course.

## Summary

Political scientists have observed a decrease in civic engagement in a variety of forms, and this trend is genuinely worrisome in terms of the health and effectiveness of a democracy (Hart et al., 2007). Moreover, the CCSS and the concurrent national focus on high test scores in English and math have forced schools and school districts to “re-assign students from arts education courses to additional instruction in English and math” (Baker, 2012, p. 17). There is evidence that this hierarchy of subjects is problematic in terms of the civic engagement of the youth, as it has been argued by Leroux and Bernadska (2014) that there is a connection between civic engagement and participation in the arts within adult populations. Likewise, Dolan (2001) has noted that her theatre art students display civic engagement based on the content of the theatre program. However, high school visual art students have not been studied in terms of their levels of civic engagement. Hauptmann’s (2005) central points of civic engagement were used as a foundational theory to study 8 northern California visual art students in an interview process designed to discuss civic engagement and the influence of art education on civic engagement.

The study found that students did not demonstrate high levels of civic engagement activity, according to Hauptmann’s (2005) definition. However, the students did demonstrate high levels of knowledge and awareness surrounding civic topics, both nationally and locally. While there was no evidence that the art students engaged in civic issues on a physical level, there was evidence that each student engaged with the issues on an intellectual level. Moreover, additional research needs to be done in order to fully understand the potential benefits art education may have on civic education.

## Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

### Introduction

This section is an examination of the research literature on art education and civic engagement, specifically as it relates to youth. Information was gathered from academic library sources using online resources, scholarly books, and peer reviewed articles. Most of the literature included in this study was published between the years 2010 and 2015. The two streams of literature include civic engagement and art education, as well as scholarship involving civic engagement theories. The current nature of the scholarship is meant to maintain relevant data and information regarding art education today as well as recent civic engagement trends among the youth.

On this issue, scholars have studied the influences on art education and the current changes that are occurring within the larger field of education. Wexler (2014) describes the new reforms as having “consequently marginalized the arts and exacerbated the inequities of poverty and disabilities” (p.52). In the field of education today, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) wield the most power in terms of widespread implementation and influence (Wexler, 2014). Although the CCSS is widely used across the United States, critics continue to find fault in its design. According to Wexler (2014), the authors of the CCSS failed to value the arts in terms of their goals for students’ “College and career readiness” (p.52). Wexler (2014) goes further to discuss the corporate reform movement and is critical of its effect on a multitude of areas within the education system. What’s more, Sabol (2013) states “Education in the United States has experienced upheaval of historic proportions in the past two and a half decades” (p.



33). Due to the intensity of high stakes testing, schools are forced to prioritize subjects that require high stakes testing.

These reforms have threatened art education and compounded already existing problems of inequity for the poor and disabled (Wexler, 2014). According to Sabol (2013), art educators around the country have to advocate for their programs to exist, oftentimes needing to prove that the arts support other subject areas in the curriculum. While it is appropriate to consider art education as a support for academic subjects, it has also created a false assumption that art education is not as important.

Therefore, this study provides scholarship concerning art and the positive attributes of art education. Mitchell (2005) supports the concept that art making has social aspects and by nature is relational. The practice of art includes the consideration of the individual while also considering relationships with others (Mitchell, 2005). This is highlighted by art's ability to increase engagement in other subject areas, thus supporting those subjects and their goals for learning. Likewise, Melnick et al. (2011) studied the academic advantage that the arts may provide to art students. It has been found that student success on academic tests tend to decrease when art programs are eliminated (Melnick et al., 2011). Melnick et al. (2011) analyzed data of about 8,000 fifth graders who participated in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K). The first of five research questions involved student proficiency regarding reading and math concepts and their involvement with arts and was measured by teacher ratings on a five-point scale. Included in the results of the study was a clear positive relationship between art involvement and academic success (Melnick et al., 2011).

An article by Dolan (2001) discusses a connection between the performing arts and civic engagement. She recounts how her performing arts students grappled with ideas regarding their

influence as theatrical artists as well as other concerns that point to a genuine engagement with citizenship. However, in her words, “Civic engagement through theatre is obstructed by basic despair that real change can be effected in the traditional space of performance” (p. 2). Yet theatre arts, and art in general, is a way to educate students in civic engagement by celebrating the fact that the arts are political and an effective way to create forums for communication and dialogue around issues (Dolan, 2001). In giving students opportunities to be expressive, many are able to vent their frustrations with the status quo in healthy ways. These frustrations by her students resulted in an engagement of the issues by the whole class. Dolan (2001) advocates for the arts to be recognized as political and used to educate students about democracy and learn ways to participate within it. While there is literature on both arts education and civic engagement of the youth, the relationship between the visual arts and the civic engagement of high school students is a gap that has yet to be filled.

### **Civic Engagement Theory**

Theories are increasingly broadening the definition of civic engagement due to societal changes and changes within higher learning institutions (Hauptmann, 2005). “Civic engagement is not restricted or related to politics only. The reference to ‘civic’ suggests that any kind of involvement in the affairs of government, politics, administration, or organizations could be regarded as civic engagement” (Hauptmann, 2005, p. 4). Participation or observant participation is not the only factor of civic engagement, rather it emphasizes goal achievement, both personally and institutionally, and always in a global context (Hauptmann, 2005). Therefore, civic engagement involves a feeling of responsibility by its citizens.

Max Weber’s theory of responsibility maintains that an individual’s perceived goal achievement involves assumptions of responsibility and a clear idea of expected outcomes

(Hauptmann, 2005). In other words, one's motivation for participation within a democracy involves an investment in the outcome and a preference for the outcome to be a certain way. In regard to the youth today, there are opportunities and current trends that could possibly lead to a more engaged citizenry (Winter, 2003). In order to evaluate these trends, Hauptmann (2005) has created seven required elements for civic engagement activity. In the words of Hauptmann (2005):

Our discussions of civic engagement makes it possible now to state in a concise form the elements required for any kind of civic engagement activity: Civic engagement is a rational goal-centered activity, sharing responsibility for its actions and concentrating on its results and consequences; Civic engagement is an individual non-violent voluntary action, generally within an organizational framework, but possibly also an individual pursuit; Civic engagement emphasizes the interrelationships of all its activity areas, since effects in any of them influence others as well; Civic engagement has to place its activities in the global framework, since all its activities may have global effects and consequences; Civic engagement expects organizations, including the academy, to be models in its administration and activities, which assigns a special function to the academy's teaching concerns; Civic engagement recognizes the existence of value frameworks, in which organizations and individuals operate. These frameworks may provide motivations and an understanding of vocation for individuals affected; And civic engagement necessitates periodic assessment and evaluation of its activities, going beyond quantitative forms, and implying the possibility of modification and even abandonment of its goals and activities. (p. 7)

These elements imply that civic engagement requires more than just a specific action or set of knowledge. Civic engagement is held to a higher standard than simply reading the news or volunteering one's time. The seven elements make sure to satisfy the personal investment aspect of civic engagement as well as the deeper understanding of concepts of community and nation. This framework is important to maintain when studying the youth today, as Pearson and Voke (2013) states, "Today's young people are increasingly disengaged from political life; on the other hand, they are participating in civic life" (p. 15). Just as well, the youth of this country do not have the same views of citizenship as older generations and generally are in favor of government led solutions to problems (Winter, 2003).

Civic engagement as it relates to the youth has been studied and debated. Weiss (2004) states "Youth civic engagement (YCE) is an emerging area of practice and knowledge development that seeks to engage young people in democracy through in-school and out-of-school time (OST) learning opportunities" (p. 11). According to Winter (2003), "civic engagement as a youth leads to civic engagement in later life" (p. 17), and that participation as a young person directly lead to "attitudes and outcomes that are associated with engagement, in a rather direct way" (p. 17). This is key as civic engagement directed at the youth gives them the opportunity to affect change and offers a way to strengthen the democracy of the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Weiss, 2004).

### **Civic Engagement**

Civic participation, in general, has declined over the past 50 years (Hart et al., 2007). Most easily seen through voting records, there is a legitimate concern amongst political theorists due to this lack of participation during elections (Hart et al., 2007). In a study that collected five

sets of data between the years 1988 and 2000, the researchers sampled students in 8th grade, 10th grade, 12th grade, 2 years post high school graduation, and 8 years post high school graduation. The number of participants declined for each subsequent data collection, but approximately 18,000 students were included within the study. New students were included within the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade data collections in order to create a national representative sample (Hart et al., 2007). The authors found that voting is highly impacted by high school civic knowledge, and that community service and extracurricular activity opportunities have the capacity to create good citizens (Hart et al., 2007).

In addition, academic research has attempted to understand the extent to which high school students understand civic engagement. Feinberg and Doppen (2010) examined high school students in northern Georgia and southeast Ohio by administering the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Test with additional questions at the end. The article highlights the importance of social studies education and its intended purpose in helping to maintain American democracy. The findings suggest that a large percentage of students did not communicate adequate knowledge of historical and geographic events and landmarks relevant to the United States. The other part of the study asked the students questions regarding what it means to be a good citizen in the United States, and their responses to the test questions lacked an understanding of many elements of active and responsible participation in a democratic society (Feinberg & Doppen, 2010). In conclusion, the student responses on the naturalization test were subpar and their answers to questions regarding citizenship did not recognize the full number of responsibilities and rights that come with it.

Studies have found that personalized learning helps with regards to civic education. Addington (2016) relied on data from a project involving Washington D.C. public high school

programs that include constitutional law classes called the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project. The study found that students who frequently found themselves in situations with campus security or police had greater interest in knowledge pertaining to their rights with regard to the law. Addington (2016) states “The findings from this study highlight the importance of continuing to gain a better understanding for student’s experiences as a way to engage their interest and develop effective classes” (p. 820), and that these interests and forms of engagement may be used to increase the effectiveness of civic education in poor or disadvantaged communities and help attract attention to civic knowledge and participation within these communities to close the “civic empowerment gap” that exists within society.

Berson et al. (2014) performed a study in a large Florida district with intent to examine the level of civic engagement of students as it related to civic education. The researchers from the University of South Florida discussed the importance of civic engagement and the historic lack of participation by the youth. Berson et al. (2014) surveyed 4492 middle and high school students in the local school district about voting intentions, satisfaction levels, and plans in the future involving civic engagement. The study concluded with a prevailing notion that civic education raises the levels of civic engagement, including voting in elections. Berson et al. (2014) concluded by proposing that the opportunities civic education present may promote engagement through various forms.

Van Camp and Baugh (2016) had very much the same results in an experiment of civic education, as students self-reported an increase in civic engagement and other regarding behavior. Thirty-one female students attending a small university in Washington, DC were assessed before and after taking a psychology course specifically aimed at studying current events. Students were asked to self-reflect about personal engagement, and questions were used to evaluate the

students' civic engagement regarding exercising responsibility as a citizen and connecting academic knowledge to civic participation. The results showed an increase of knowledge and civic engagement as well as an increase in academic skills that are relevant to civic knowledge and engagement (Van Camp & Baugh, 2016).

Similarly, Kahne, Crow, and Lee (2013) surveyed California and Chicago high school students in order to examine learning opportunities and their effect on civic and political engagement. The civic learning opportunities discussed in this article included open discussion of societal issues and service learning opportunities. Over a thousand junior high school students were surveyed in 2006 and 502 students were surveyed again the following year. The study concluded that both open discussion of societal issues and service learning opportunities benefited civic engagement. Furthermore, they found that service learning promotes more communal and expressive forms of engagement while discussion of issues encouraged more formal political engagement.

In a slightly different direction, Grillo, Teixeira, and Wilson (2010) wrote about an examination of civic engagement with regards to residential satisfaction. The study included 2,307 individuals from 21 major US cities to reflect on the relationship between civic engagement and residential satisfaction having to do with educational offerings, social offerings that include quality of jobs and health care, and basic needs such as food and shelter. The findings suggest that civic engagement increases with satisfaction of social offerings, while satisfaction with basic needs and educational offerings leads to less civic engagement (Grillo et al., 2010). While there is substantial research on civic engagement in both adults and youth, there is less on the topic of civic engagement as it relates to the arts.

### **Art Education, Civic Education, and the Gap**

Baker (2012) studied how art education is affected by high-stakes testing policy. In the study, 37,222 eighth grade students were used to find out if enrollment in music, visual arts, or dual arts contributed to higher test scores. The study found that art does impact test scores in a positive way. The study examined students' test scores on the 2008 LEAP language arts and mathematics tests, and separated the students into two groups depending on whether the student had received performance-based musical and visual arts instruction or not. Baker makes an argument for "the need for equity, access, and excellence in arts education for all students" (24). Numerous scholars have advocated for art to be re-examined in terms of educational policy (Baker, 2012, Martin, Mansour, Anderson, Gibson, Liem, & Sudmalis, 2013, Sabol, 2013). Furthermore, Baker (2012) implied that national goals involving civic engagement and student access to art education are within the same discussion.

Leroux and Bernadska (2014) studied data taken from the General Social Survey (GSS) with support and funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Data was used from the 2002 GSS to gather the responses from 1,341 adults to find correlations between participation in the arts and positive behaviors within civil society, mainly civic engagement, social tolerance, and other-regarding behavior. The study also takes into account audience-based participation within the arts as well as direct participation in the arts. The study found that both audience-based and direct participation in the arts positively affects civic engagement, social tolerance, and other-regarding behavior, concluding that the arts impacts civil society in many healthy ways. Although there is a very apparent connection with art and civic engagement in this study, the participants were not high school students.



**Summary**

Existing scholarship on art education, civic engagement and theories of civic engagement has established the current threat to art education, the perceived positive effects of art education, and the ways in which civic engagement has been effectively taught in the high school setting. Furthermore, civic engagement theories have been researched to provide a framework for this particular study as it relates to high school visual arts students and their civic engagement. While a number of researchers have studied youth and civic engagement, the discussion around the topic is limited and generally does not include or mention the effect of visual art education.

The purpose of this study is to identify how art education may potentially increase civic engagement for high school students. Visual art education is studied as it relates to the awareness and knowledge high school students demonstrate during the interview. These insights are meant to further the conversation regarding civic education at the high school level and art education's potential impact for accomplishing civic education goals.

### **Chapter 3 Method**

The purpose of this study is to identify what the relationship is between art education and civic engagement in a select sample of visual art students, as well as find out the level of civic engagement that the selected students possess. This study hopes to connect the scholarship of visual arts and civic engagement and address the public concern of decreased civic engagement with a possible solution in the form of art education.

#### **Research Question**

How are art education and civic engagement related for a sample of students from one high school visual arts program in Northern California? How strong is the relationship between art students and civic engagement? What is their level of civic engagement?

#### **Research Approach**

The intention of this study was to discern how high school visual art students describe their own civic engagement in relation to a study or practice of art. The study used a qualitative research design to collect the thoughts and considerations of 8 high school students. Qualitative interviews generally consist of a few open-ended questions that are designed to derive the views and opinions of the participants (Creswell, 2014). Unlike the quantitative approach, qualitative research examines the “why” and “how” through interviews and observation. For the purposes of this study, the “why” is important to know in order to understand the ways that the students describe their activities regarding civic engagement. The qualitative approach is also appropriate in order to give the students the opportunity to demonstrate their own understandings and knowledge. Lastly, the qualitative approach gives the students the chance to reveal their own experiences as art students in dealing with civic issues

Personal interviews were used in order to gather direct data from the high school students. The questions were based off of Hauptmann (2005)'s central points of civic engagement in order to adhere to previous standards of what exactly qualifies as civic engagement. The questions and prompts were asked of each student in the same exact manner in order to gather the most consistent data. The interview is designed to gather in depth knowledge and clear examples of civic engagement among this select sample of visual art students.

### **Ethical Standards**

This paper adheres to the ethical standards for protection of human subjects of the American Psychological Association (2010). Additionally a research proposal was submitted and reviewed by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), approved and assigned number #####. Written consent was obtained from all participants through a consent form. It was made clear to all participants of the voluntary nature of their participation, as well as assurance of anonymity, confidentiality, and data security. It was made known to each participant of his or her right to withdraw from this study at any time.

### **Sample and Site**

The 8 students come from the same AP Drawing and Painting class at a public high school in Northern California. The students were chosen to represent the class that produces the highest level of 2-D visual art at the school. The eight students involved in this study are public high school students living in the Bay Area, California. These teenagers are senior AP Drawing and Painting art students that have invested their time into art education. As a studio technician at the school, I spend 2 days a week working and observing the students work. During my time

at the school I have witnessed each student develop his or her own unique practice. The students that were chosen will represent the classroom evenly, including 4 male and 4 female participants. Only AP students were selected in order to maximize the relevance of art in the students' lives, as AP art students are generally the most invested when it comes to creating art. AP art students have had the most art education in the school and so they are the ideal participants to study the effect of art education on civic engagement. They will be selected to represent the general school population so as to remain representative within the community.

The sample school is located in the northern part of the Bay Area, and has about twelve hundred students in attendance. The schools demographics are 75% Caucasian, 13% Hispanic, 4% Asian and 2% African American. The sample study will represent the demographics of the school site. The school serves a high socioeconomic community, with 12.1% of students receiving free and reduced price lunch. All of the student names included in this study are pseudonyms so as to allow the student participants to remain anonymous.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected through audiotape and handwritten notes during the interview. Interview protocol was used to record data or information gathered during the interview (Creswell, 2014). The interview was recorded on a phone as well as a computer for backup purposes and precision during the transcribing process. Each student was interviewed at the end of the school day for 45 minutes and asked the same 8 questions in the same exact order. For each student the interview took place in the drawing and painting classroom.

The first 5 minutes of the interview were used to establish understanding and agreement with the participants. A pre-written statement was used at the beginning of each interview that

ensures how student responses will remain anonymous and confidential, as well as reiterated the voluntary nature of his or her participation (Creswell, 2014). After the entire interviews were transcribed, the participants were given the opportunity to make any necessary changes or omissions to their responses.

### **Interview Questions**

Interview protocol is followed as described by Creswell (2014). The interview was designed to engage the student participants and allow them to discuss concepts and ideas related to their civic engagement activities and art education. Student participants were asked the 8 primary questions listed below:

1. How do you think art relates to political causes or issues?
2. Tell me about a time when you were engaged with either local or national political issues? How did you engage with these issues?
3. Tell me about a time you volunteered with an organization?
4. How often do you participate in community projects, or help out with community events centered on a common goal?
5. Can you tell me about anything you do, individually or within a group that is focused on making your community a better place?
6. How do you feel your actions contribute to making your community/  
state/country/planet better?
7. How would you take action on an issue in your community in order to resolve it?
8. How does your education in art inform your engagement with a political cause or issue?

The questions were presented in the same order to each of the participants. Each of the first seven questions connects to one of the seven elements of civic engagement according to Hauptmann (2005). The final question brings the focus of the conversation on to art education and its influence on the students' civic engagement. Follow up questions were used to ask students to explain or elaborate on their ideas (Creswell, 2014). The entirety of each interview was recorded. At the end of each interview, the participants were thanked for their time and reminded of their rights as participants in this study.

### **Data Analysis Approach**

Interviews were transcribed and analyzed to find levels of civic engagement for each individual and as a collective whole. Their responses during the interview were analyzed in order to find common themes and trends in terms of high school art students and their civic engagement.

In the first step of the data analysis process, the audio-recordings were listened to and digitally transcribed. The transcriptions for each participant were presented to that participant, respectively, to sign off on their own answers and approve them for the study. The researcher coded each transcript in order to find key words, phrases, and common themes. The main points were identified and focused on by the researcher, in order to find the main ideas for each question and prompt, respectively.

The questions pertaining to Hauptmann's central points to civic engagement were meant to find out the civic engagement levels of the students. The final question of the interview was designed to discern the common ideas and relationships the students hold in their life surrounding art education. Both elements were analyzed together in order to maintain

consistency and direction insofar as the research question is concerned. This allowed the researcher to analyze multiple ways that the students speak about their experiences and activities pertaining to art education and civic engagement.

### **Summary**

The research approach involves an interview process with 8 high school visual art students with prompts and interview questions relating to political art, concepts of civic engagement as defined by Hauptmann (2005), and the perceived relationship of art education to the students' levels of civic engagement. Access and permission was granted through the school and each of the participants in the study. Each interview was conducted in the same manner, and involves 8 questions including one for each of Hauptmann's seven elements of civic engagement and the final question that connects civic engagement to art education. The audio of each interview was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed according the qualitative research methods as defined by Creswell (2014).

### **Chapter 4 Findings, Analysis, and Discussion**

Findings taken from the eight interviews conducted with AP drawing and painting students at a Northern California high school highlight the thoughts and actions regarding art and civic engagement as described by the students themselves. While each student described different amounts of activities and levels of engagement, the most common theme among the answers was the high awareness surrounding issues. In terms of this awareness, each of the eight students described art class as a way to learn and develop a personal engagement with issues in society.

Civic engagement activities that were described by the students rarely qualified for legitimate civic engagement activity as defined by Hauptmann (2005). The several elements within Hauptmann (2005)'s definition of civic engagement activity were not sufficiently present in full in any of the descriptions of personal activity by the students. However, while students spoke of their desire to increase civic engagement activity, they noted certain factors related to high school responsibilities that may inhibit their ability to engage in civic related movements or events. Additionally, it seemed some of the students interviewed lack an understanding of what qualifies as civic engagement activity.

The findings suggest that the high school AP Drawing and Painting students have high awareness surrounding civic issues yet lack the long-term, goal oriented dimensions to Hauptmann's definition of civic engagement. While there is potential for these students to develop a high level of civic engagement based on their knowledge of current events, there are factors that work to decrease civic engagement activity, including a high level of school responsibility and a lack of structure to support civic engagement practices for students. Each



student interviewed demonstrated an acute awareness of art as a medium for civic engagement activity, but few demonstrated the necessary qualities of actual civic engagement activity.

### **High Awareness Surrounding Civic Issues**

*“I really believe that making a visual out of politics creates a better form for people to understand it.”*

*-Emerson*

Each of the students spoke of their art education as beneficial in terms of their awareness and understanding around civic issues. Answers included the mention of opportunities for expression, ways to show support and passion, as well as platforms for discussion. Emerson, the student quoted above, posts her work to social media on a very frequent basis in order to maximize the influence her work might have on certain civic issues. The students believed that their understandings are strengthened as a class, with one student, Natalia, saying “as art students we are a little more knowledgeable about politics than our peers.” She insinuated that discussions and attitudes were healthier within their classroom, and that art allows for these environments.

Other students, such as Nick, felt their art was political, too. He stated that making art was “kind of like getting up in front of a podium and saying a message. In being that person or artist it’s a way to draw attention to issues or concerns or people that are in need.” Stan spoke about how art can be used to persuade audiences and showcase various points of view. He also mentions a “spectrum of perspectives” that can be shared in order to problem solve or improve upon civic issues.

Similarly, a greater understanding of current events was mentioned by Chloe when she stated, “I feel like art reflects what’s happening in the government and in society.” Still, another

student, Bill, mentioned that his work usually bases its content on what is happening currently in the world, and so helps him understand events and issues in his own personal way. Students described awareness around issues largely because they felt their work is constantly using political or civic issues as the context for their work. Erin mentioned that because artwork represents what the artist thinks or believes, the awareness of the artist leads the viewers and the artist to a deeper understanding surrounding the civic issues that are thematically included in the artwork. Bill spoke of higher awareness of issues and “a different sense and perspective” regarding the world and human’s role within it. Bill’s activities do not satisfy much of Hauptmann (2005)’s definition of civic engagement, but like his peers, he spoke of higher awareness of issues and “a different sense and perspective” regarding the world and human’s role within it. As a closing comment, Erin said, “It helps me in being around all these artists so that I can empathize with people and understand their perspectives.” While her activities cannot be regarded as civic engagement activity according to Hauptmann (2005)’s definition, once again she demonstrated how art education encourages civic awareness.

Furthermore, each student seemed to reflect a sense of pride in the awareness they maintained regarding current and past civic issues. Moreover, the high awareness within the class gave the students the confidence to discuss these topics and voice their own feelings about these issues. Liam noted that he felt “that art has informed me to make my own opinions and to voice my beliefs and opinions as well.” Each of the eight students recognized civic issues, and demonstrated high levels of awareness and concern. Yet that did not necessarily translate to high levels of civic engagement activity. There is a theme of awareness surrounding the art class and the students are clearly giving credit to their the art class as a positive influence in staying informed and engaging with issues in an intellectual capacity within the classroom.

**Civic Engagement Activity**

*“I’ve never really been engaged with any local or political issues.”*

*-Natalia*

Even though each student was clear in how they engage with civic issues through their artwork and in class discussion, they were less likely to believe they were engaged with politics outside of the classroom. Although Natalia initially said the quote above, she went on to describe community service and art projects she has participated in at school. However, much like her classmates the participation in community service has been as a requirement for certain programs within school. As these volunteering activities are forced upon the students, they can’t be counted as legitimate civic engagement activity. Natalia also did not see her community service as engagement with political issues. Another student, Stan, mentioned “I’m not going to vote or run for elections or start organizations, because I’m still in high school.” There seems to be a sentiment among the high school students that they don’t have the ability to participate or engage with civic issues in the way that adults can.

Another student, Liam, admittedly said, “I don’t think I’ve ever really been super engaged with political issues, both local and national.” While he conveyed awareness surrounding civic issues, his own definition of engagement is not met by his collective actions regarding issues. Other students, such as Bill, described a lack of engagement with national issues, but an ability to participate in local ones by “showing up.” Stan also touched upon this theme, stating that he would be voting when he gets the chance, and that he is more knowledgeable about national civic issues than local civic issues. The prevalent notions made by the students point to a fixed mindset about civic engagement activity and their abilities as young

adults to participate and make a difference. In other words, the students' belief about the impact or influence they can have on civic issues as high school students is relatively low.

Much of the activities surrounding involvement or volunteerism were short term rather than long term, and mostly lacked the qualities or elements that Hauptmann deems important in order to be considered legitimate civic engagement. Students spoke of attending the Women's March in Washington D.C. and San Francisco, respectively, but while these activities can be considered engagement they lack the consistency and fail to satisfy the several elements of civic engagement. Mainly, students were not able to satisfy Hauptmann (2005)'s definition in terms of sharing responsibility for actions, emphasizing interrelationships, placing activities in a global framework, and participating in periodic assessment of engagement activities and goals.

Overwhelmingly, each student failed to satisfy Hauptmann (2005)'s definition of legitimate civic engagement activity. While there were positive understandings about art and its place in society, there was a lack of demonstration of civic engagement elements. Natalia had not engaged in legitimate goal centered activities while sharing responsibility and concentrating on results and consequences, there was no global framework to her activity, and there was no periodic assessment or evaluation of its activities. Nick demonstrated a high amount of activity and awareness, as well as engagement in a rational goal-centered activity. Nick plays basketball with students with special needs on a weekly basis. The purpose of his activity is to share his love of basketball as well as give others an opportunity to play and socialize with others. Yet it is up for question as to whether his activities are placed in the global framework or if results are periodically assessed. With regards to Hauptmann's seven elements required for civic engagement activity, Nick's activities also do not satisfy the requirements enough to be considered civic engagement.

Just like her peers, Chloe stated that art reflects what's happening in society and plays a role in changing people's attitudes about certain topics. Having gone to both women's marches, she has done less localized activity, citing a mural in town as one of the only times she has engaged locally. The women's marches show consistency, but in general her civic engagement activity does not satisfy the seven elements of Hauptmann's definition. Emerson is highly aware of issues and her position as an artist to influence and bring attention to certain topics. Again, according to Hauptmann (2005)'s definition, Emerson's activities do not qualify as civic engagement, but there is a foundation of civic awareness and legitimate engagement with the community and society in general. In addition, Liam's awareness and tolerance are very prevalent in his answers, but evidence of legitimate civic engagement activity is lacking. For instance, he mentions the power of acceptance and ways it can lead to less conflict, but the only community service he participated in was in fulfillment of school requirements.

### **Student Awareness on Lack of Civic Engagement Activity**

*"I usually don't have much free time to volunteer because I play water polo."*

*-Stan*

The third and final theme features the attitudes and responsibilities that the students described as hindering their ability to consistently participate in civic engagement activity. With Stan, there is high civic awareness and notable concern surrounding the issues within society but a lack of legitimate engagement. It seemed sports and other priorities get in the way of consistent involvement in civic engagement activity. Another student, Nick, also explained that basketball takes up much of his time in addition to school, therefore he is not as active as he would like. Accordingly, the students displayed attitudes that were willing to participate in civic engagement activities, but either lacked the resources or the time to make it happen.

In general, students answered questions about their participation and engagement around issues by speaking about community art projects as well as personal teams or organizations that they were involved with. Students noted responsibilities like sports and school/homework. None of the eight students spoke of school specific programs that give them the opportunity to participate in civic engagement activity that satisfies Hauptmann (2005)'s definition. While the art classroom is creating positive feelings toward staying engaged and raising awareness of the issues within society, the class itself is not designed to provide structure or opportunity for students to go out into the community and participate in civic engagement.

### **Summary**

The study found senior high school AP drawing and painting students do not demonstrate high levels of civic engagement activity, according to the definition used by this study. However, a relating theme that emerged was a high level of awareness surrounding topics, both nationally and locally. Students expressed the influence of their art education as reasons for how they have the opportunity to think and create works of art about topics or issues they come across. While none of the eight students satisfied Hauptmann (2005)'s definition for civic engagement activity, the findings suggest there is a high potential for these students and their future civic engagement activity based on their awareness and concern they demonstrate at this point in their lives. The factors that may cause this high awareness and lack of activity are unclear, but may have to do with the responsibilities and priorities they develop as high school students as well as a lack of structured opportunities that might support genuine civic engagement. To an extent, the students demonstrated high engagement with the issues within their classroom, but less so outside of the classroom.

### **Chapter 5 Summary of Findings**

Based on the interviews of eight senior AP drawing and painting art students, the study found a high level of awareness surrounding civic topics, both nationally and locally. However, the students did not demonstrate high levels of civic engagement activity, according to Hauptmann (2005)'s definition. Moreover, the study found students wished to engage in civic issues, but cited responsibilities associated with high school life as reasons for their lack of civic engagement activity. While the students did not demonstrate legitimate civic engagement activity, the concern and awareness the students demonstrated regarding civic issues points to civic education and art education as mutually beneficial to one another. Furthermore, students spoke of their art education as beneficial for expanding their worldview as well as understanding various perspectives surrounding civic issues.

#### **Comparison of Results to the Literature**

The similarities between the literature used by this study and the findings includes the connection between civic engagement and the arts, as the art students who participated in the study had an increased awareness surrounding civic engagement issues (Dolan, 2001, Leroux & Bernadska, 2014). Students also spoke very highly of their art education and the benefits it has provided in terms of civic knowledge, opportunities for self-expression, and general happiness (Baker, 2012, Martin et al. 2013, Melnick et al. 2011, Sabol, 2013). This study attempts to fill in the gap in knowledge regarding high school art students and their abilities and understandings in terms of civic engagement and civic issues. Students demonstrated a unique perspective on their own art education in conjunction with their activity and understandings surrounding civic issues, both locally and nationally.

This study found high school seniors were, in fact, well informed about civic-related elements of society. Contrary to previous literature, which found high school students to be greatly lacking knowledge pertaining to politics, these students demonstrated knowledge and concern surrounding the issues. As previous research on this topic did not include visual arts students, the difference may be with regards to the influence of art education for high school students. This study adds a new insight to the conversation regarding civic engagement with regards to an art student specific perspective on civic issues. The researcher found art students showed a significant amount of care and concern surrounding civic issues, even if their activities could not be considered legitimate civic engagement activity. The thoughts and feeling of the students regarding their art education sheds light onto the perceived benefits of being an art student in terms of knowledge, awareness, perspective, and worldview. The evidence drawn from the data point to a high likelihood that art education may naturally lend itself to civic education.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The findings from this study suggest art education has an inherent connection with civic education, and so art educators may be in a position to educate their students on civic issues and concerns. As an art educator, I will begin to assume responsibility for my students' civic education in the hopes that it translates to greater civic engagement activity. While traditional teaching methods in the art classroom continue to naturally promote awareness, a change needs to occur in the focus and priority art teachers place around promoting action among student. The curriculum I teach will have a greater emphasis on current events and civic issues so as to inspire my students to grapple with these issues while they create. In teaching art students to use their platform as artists to express opinions and concerns surrounding civic issues, the students might



move past simple awareness of the issues and move into legitimate civic engagement involving the issues they are passionate about.

Implications for the school site may well be a new culture in the art department based on expression and action, and not just passive awareness of civic issues. Art classes and individual art students might assume responsibility and encourage others to do so as well. The ideas and awareness that are developed in the art department could potentially affect the whole school in a positive way. In general, educators may see an effective tool to promote civic awareness and engagement activities and feel a responsibility to teach beyond the current curriculum. Providing art students with venues to share their work in order to engage in political dialogue may well bring other students into discussions that they otherwise would not be apart of. Schools could achieve this by designating permanent spaces on campus for the presentation of artwork. On the district level, policies surrounding civic engagement should be made with a focus on art education. I suggest that the district use the art departments at each school site to begin a district-wide policy pertaining to the priority of civic education for all students. A successful implementation of such a policy may lead to a healthier community, state, and country.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations to this study that must be acknowledged. First off, as a site-specific study, findings may be limited to this specific research site. The school site is located in Northern California, in a high socio-economic community that is made up of mostly white or European-American residents. Findings from this research may have been different if the population was more racially and economically diverse. Furthermore, the interviews only involved AP art students, and so we do not have information regarding the school population's levels of awareness and civic engagement surrounding civic issues. No students were

interviewed that have taken the minimal amount of art classes at the school, and so the results from the AP art students cannot be accurately compared to the rest of the students at the school. As an art educator, I may have a bias towards the promotion of art education. As a proponent for the benefits of art education, my research may have been aimed at highlighting art's influence on students.

### **Implications for Future Research**

This study found that a highly relevant issue worth researching is the issue of legitimate civic engagement that high school students are capable of achieving, given the abilities and responsibilities they hold as young adults in school. Also, the high awareness and concern that the art students demonstrated may prove the high potential art education can have in terms of civic education and engagement. This study suggests future research dissect the relationship the various art forms have with civic engagement, including drawing and painting, ceramics, theatre arts, and music. Furthermore, different levels of art students should be compared in terms of their knowledge, awareness, and engagement with civic issues. Finally, this study suggests future research consider alternative definitions of civic engagement activity in order to better evaluate high school students' civic engagement activity.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

It is important to instill a strong sense of civic responsibility in the youth. The youth have the most at stake in the decisions and actions of this country while it moves into the future, and yet historically the youth has been the least engaged on civic issues (Addington, 2016). Just as well, education has historically marginalized the arts (Baker, 2012), and possibly marginalized its potential in terms of civic education. This study hopes to highlight a connection between civic issues and the arts as a way to increase civic education in an effective way. Research has not adequately studied the impact the arts have on high school students, nor the benefits the arts provide in terms of knowledge and concern regarding civic issues.

This study found that art education and civic engagement are not strongly related for a sample of students from one high school visual arts program in Northern California. Students did not demonstrate levels of civic engagement that satisfied Hauptmann (2005)'s several elements that define civic engagement activity. However, this study did find a connection between art education and a high level of knowledge and concern surrounding civic issues. Each of the eight students interviewed offered information highlighting the ways that their art education has informed them and allowed them the opportunity to discuss and express their opinions on civic-related matters.

While it remains unclear the impact that art education can have on civic engagement activity, it is clear that the arts have a high potential to raise awareness and concern around civic issues in society. It is important for the education system to prioritize civic education in high school in order to create a more engaged citizenry and a healthier democracy. The school system should create curriculum addressing civic education as a means to assess the development of students from their freshman to senior years. It is the belief of this study that the arts may

provide an accessible and effective path towards greater knowledge and expression for the youth, and should be included in a meaningful way within the proposed curriculum. Students that are educated in the arts are generally more comfortable expressing opinions and concerns regarding civic issues, and thus may lead to a greater understanding of different perspectives. Art education has a high potential to revolutionize civic education and create more knowledgeable and concerned citizens, especially among the youth.

While civic education is not a main course taken at the high school level, teachers nonetheless attempt to instill civic values and motivations within their students. No matter what subject taught, educators should be aware of efficient ways to teach students about their responsibilities as adults in the United States. This study hopes to educate teachers on the accessible ways art can lend itself to civic education. Discussions surrounding art and its meaning can amplify students' understanding of civic or political issues. Schools can increase civic education by implementing policies that promote art as a way to engage high school students with civic issues. Whether it's at the district, state, or national level, educational policy should increase its focus on developing a better citizenry through high school students. As young people are generally less civically engaged than older citizens, creating a more civically engaged citizenry among young people can contribute to social change and foster a healthier democracy.

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**Appendix A: Principal Cover Letter/Consent Form**



## Principal Cover Letter/Consent Form

Dear Principal,

My name is Benjamin Rupers and I am a graduate student at Dominican University of California. I am conducting a research study to examine visual art students and their levels of civic engagement. This research project is an important part of my graduate thesis requirements, and will be supervised by Suresh Appavoo, Associate Professor of Education, Department of Education and Counseling Psychology at Dominican University of California.

I am seeking your permission and approval to interview students regarding their civic engagement and any connect this engagement may have with their art education. This study consists of a 45-minute face-to-face recorded interview with each of the eight student participants.

The privacy of all participants will be ensured, maintaining anonymity in any document that may be published. All data will be destroyed one year after research is complete.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding my research, please feel free to contact me by email at [carolina.garcia@students.dominican.edu](mailto:carolina.garcia@students.dominican.edu). If you have further questions or concerns, you may contact my research supervisor, Suresh Appavoo, [suresh.appavoo@dominican.edu](mailto:suresh.appavoo@dominican.edu) or the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at Dominican University of California by calling (415) 485-3278

After my research project has been completed in November 2017, I will be glad to send you a summary of my research results.

If my request to survey and interview your students, meets with your approval, please sign and date this letter below.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Rupers  
Dominican University of California 50 Acacia Avenue  
San Rafael, CA 94901

I agree with the above request

Signature

Date

School of Education and Counseling Psychology 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, California 94901-2298 p. 415-482-2462 – f. 415-458-3790 – [www. Dominican.edu](http://www.Dominican.edu)

**Appendix B: Letter of Introduction to Participants**

## Letter of Introduction to Participants

Dear Study Participant,

My name is Benjamin Rupers and I am a graduate Education student at Dominican University of California. I am conducting a research project as part of my thesis requirements, and this work is being supervised by Suresh Appavoo, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education, Department of Education and Counseling Psychology at Dominican University of California.

I am requesting your voluntary participation in my study, which concerns civic engagement as it relates to art education.

Participation in this study involves a 45-minute interview discussion during class time. Likewise, your participation or non- participation will not affect your class grade. In addition your survey responses will be completely anonymous.

If you have questions about the research you may contact me at

Benjamin.rupers@students.dominican.edu. If you have further questions you may contact my research supervisor, Suresh Appavoo or the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with protection

of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the IRBPHS Office by calling (415) 482-3547 and leaving a voicemail message, or FAX at (415) 257-0165, or by writing to IRBPHS, Office of Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 95901.

If you would like to know the results of this study once it has been completed, a summary of the results will be presented at Dominican University of California's Academic Showcase in December 2017.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Rupers

Psychology Student Research Box Dominican University of California 50 Acacia Avenue  
San Rafael, CA 94901

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## **Appendix C: Consent for Research Participation**

### Consent for Research Participation

Benjamin Rupers, a graduate student at Dominican University of California, is doing a study on the civic engagement of high school visual art students. Because art and politics do have a general relationship in society, the researcher wants to discuss art and civic engagement with high school visual art students in order to find out the levels of civic engagement art students possess as well as their views on art education and its effect on their civic engagement.

My child is being asked to participate because s/he is a high school senior AP visual art student.

#### Procedures

If I agree to allow my child to be in this study, the following will happen:

1. My child will participate in a 45-minute one-on-one interview during class time to discuss political art, civic engagement, and art education.
2. The interview will be transcribed in full and presented to your child so that they may approve of their responses.
3. The researcher will analyze the interview data.
4. The data will be included in the study while maintaining your child's anonymity and confidentiality.

#### Risks and/or discomforts

1. My child may become uncomfortable during the interview process. If your child is upset or uncomfortable, the interview will stop and your child may return to class and/or be given any necessary support.
2. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All personal references and identifying information will be eliminated when the data are transcribed, and all subjects will be identified by numerical code only, thereby assuring confidentiality regarding the subject's responses. The master list for these codes will be kept by Mr. Rupers in a locked file, separate from the transcripts. Only the researcher and her faculty advisors will see coded transcripts. One year after the completion of the research, all written and recorded materials will be destroyed.

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#### Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to me or to my child from participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of the effect of the chronic ear infections on the development of children's social skills.

#### Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no costs to me or to my child as a result of taking part in this study.

#### Payment/Reimbursement

Neither my child nor I will be reimbursed for participation in this study.

#### Questions

I have talked to Mr. Rupers about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may call him (415) 686-9855 or Dr. Appavoo (415) 482-3598. If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with the researchers. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS Office

by calling (415) 482- 3547 and leaving a voicemail message, or FAX at (415) 257-0165, or by writing to IRBPHS, Office of Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 95901.

Consent

I have been given a copy of this consent form, signed and dated, to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to have my child be in this study, or to withdraw my child from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to have my child participate in this study will have no influence on my child's present or future status as a patient in my pediatrician's office.

My signature below indicates that I agree to allow my child to participate in this study. Signature of Subject's Parent/Guardian Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

(Model letter adapted from USF IRPHS Handbook)

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**Appendix D: Student Consent Form**

## Student Consent Form

1. I understand that I am being asked to participate as a subject in a research study designed to assess certain personal attitudes related to death and dying. This research is part of Benjamin Rupers' Thesis research project at Dominican University of California, California. This research project is being supervised by Suresh Appavoo, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education, Department of Education and Counseling Psychology at Dominican University of California.
2. I understand that participation in this research will involve taking part in a 45-minute interview during class time.
3. I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and I am free to withdraw my participation at any time.
4. I have been made aware that the interviews will be recorded. All personal references and identifying information will be eliminated when these recordings are transcribed, and all subjects will be identified by numerical code only; the master list for these codes will be kept by Benjamin Rupers in a locked file, separate from the transcripts. Coded transcripts will be seen only by the researcher and her faculty advisors. One year after the completion of the research, all written and recorded materials will be destroyed.
5. I am aware that all study participants will be furnished with a written summary of the relevant findings and conclusions of this project. Such results will not be available until December, 2017.
6. I understand that I will be discussing topics of a personal nature and that I may refuse to answer any question that causes me distress or seems an invasion of my privacy. I may elect to stop the interview at any time.
7. I understand that my participation involves no physical risk, but may involve some psychological discomfort, given the nature of the topic being addressed in the interview. If I experience any problems or serious distress due to my participation, Benjamin Rupers will provide, at no cost to me, a one-time consultation with a licensed therapist. Mr. Rupers may be contacted at Benjamin.rupers@students.dominican.edu.
8. I understand that if I have any further questions about the study, I may contact Mr. Rupers at Benjamin.rupers@students.dominican.edu or her research supervisor, Suresh Appavoo at Dominican University of California at 415-482-3598. If I have further questions or comments about participation in this study, I may contact the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS Office by calling (415) 257-1310 and leaving a voicemail message, by FAX at (415) 257-0165 or by writing to the IRBPHS, Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901.
9. All procedures related to this research project have been satisfactorily explained to me prior to my voluntary election to participate.

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I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE ABOVE EXPLANATION REGARDING THIS STUDY. I VOLUNTARILY GIVE MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE. A COPY OF THIS FORM HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME FOR MY FUTURE REFERENCE.

Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Appendix E: Participation Bill of Rights**

### Participant Bill of Rights

Every person who is asked to be in a research study has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is trying to find out;
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice;
3. To be told about important risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that will happen to her/him;
4. To be told if s/he can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be;
5. To be told what other choices s/he has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study;
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study;
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise;
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is stated without any adverse effects. If such a decision is made, it will not affect h/her rights to receive the care or privileges expected if s/he were not in the study.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form;
10. To be free of pressure when considering whether s/he wishes to be in the study.

If you have questions about the research you may contact me at

Benjamin.rupers@students.dominican.edu If you have further questions you may contact my research supervisor, Suresh Appavoo 415-482-3598, or the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the IRBPHS Office by calling (415) 482-3547 and leaving a voicemail message, or FAX at (415) 257-0165, or by writing to IRBPHS, Office of Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901

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**Appendix F: IRB Approval Letter**

February 12, 2018

Benjamin Rupers

50 Acacia Ave.

San Rafael, CA 94901

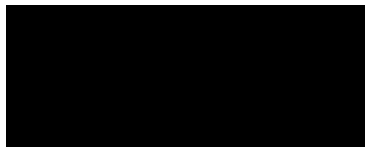
Dear Benjamin:

I have reviewed your proposal entitled *High School Visual Arts and Student Civic Engagement* submitted to the Dominican University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants (IRBPHP Application, #10677). I am approving it as having met the requirements for minimizing risk and protecting the rights of the participants in your research.

In your final report or paper please indicate that your project was approved by the IRBPHP and indicate the identification number.

I wish you well in your very interesting research effort.

Sincerely,



Randall Hall, Ph.D.

Chair, IRBPHP

Cc: Suresh Appavoo

**Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants**

Office of Academic Affairs • 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, California 95901-2298 • 415-257-

1310 [www.dominican.edu](http://www.dominican.edu)