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Aesthetic scanning: Refining critical thinking through oral language activities

Elaine Diana Golledge

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AESTHETIC SCANNING: REFINING CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Reading/Language Arts

by
Elaine Diana Golledge
June 2007
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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of aesthetics in the art education curriculum as a strategy for building oral language skills and critical thinking skills. In this study reproduced artworks were used to stimulate discussion; students learned to scan paintings using a technique called aesthetic scanning during which they learn how to look at a painting and practice discussing elements about the painting orally through guided questioning by the classroom teacher. It was concluded that providing oral language opportunities through the implementation of the aesthetic scanning program was an effective way to promote oral language skills and critical thinking skills in the kindergarten classroom.
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Brooke, remember keep reaching for your dreams and never
give up. You can achieve anything you want if you try. I believe in you. Always believe in yourself. I love you forever and always!

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DEDICATION

To Brooke, my beloved daughter, you are the light of my life, and my inspiration for completing this project. I love you.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

What is Aesthetic Scanning?

A female kindergarten student looked carefully at
Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte by
Georges Seurat and said, "This painting reminds me of the
big beautiful park I go to when I visit my grandparents.
The painting makes me feel happy because I love to play at
the park with my big brother. I wonder how the artist made
the painting look so pretty with such tiny dots. I like
the way the dots magically turn into colorful pictures! My
favorite part is the greenish-blue colors that sparkle all
over the picture."

In many ways, including the development of oral
language skills, students in the primary grades can
benefit from lessons in aesthetics. Aesthetic scanning is
employed as the primary means through which kindergarten
students in this study refined particular aspects of
critical thinking as they engaged in various oral language
activities in response to artistic media. Unfortunately,
many schools are not emphasizing the role art plays in
elementary education. Parkay and Hass (2000) indicate that
cultural aspects of education are not emphasized due to
perceived societal fear of, "...loss of [the] intellectual mission for the schools" (p. 11). The term art will refer specifically to the visual arts for the purpose of this project. Students are not going beyond art production to enter the world of aesthetics. Nowadays with the emphasis on assessments and test scores, the curriculum is heavily math and language arts-based where often art education is left out as a means of reaching academic goals. According to Dean (2005), "Both quantitative and qualitative data exists that implementing arts into the schools curriculum will improve students' scholastic ability, motivation, and social environment" (p. 7). Art education experiences can provide a great way for students to study the elements of art and apply what they learn to all other areas in the curriculum as well as in their lives. Parkay and Hass (2000), in explaining the position of Essentialism, assert that creative art has enhanced our cultural heritage, and that the arts should not be left out of the curriculum. The goal of this project is to convince educators that there are many crucial benefits to an integrated art-based curriculum. Educators need to know the benefits of taking children beyond the production of art to become motivated to implement the kind of art program that is comprehensive and sequential. To clarify, students need to be actively
involved in an art program which allows for not only creating and producing art, but also, employing critical thinking skills through studying, analyzing, and reflecting on works of art. In an effort to show the importance of incorporating the arts into the curriculum, Deasy, R. (2002) states:

Arts education advocates have long made an essentialist argument for the arts: they are such an important dimension of life they must be included among core academic subjects. Their efforts have been rewarded by inclusion of the arts as a core subject in the recent No Child Left Behind legislation and earlier Goals 2000 legislation (p. 1).

Arts, as a core subject, can be taught through Disciplined Based Art Education (DBAE). In 1983, DBAE was created to inspire educators to go beyond the production of art and include all aspects of art into their art curriculum: art production, art history, art criticism, and art aesthetics. With DBAE all students are given the opportunity to actively engage in oral language activities as they aesthetically view works of art. The contributions that students make are valued as they describe, interpret, and judge works of art and describe and discuss what they see. As stated by Loudermilk (2002), DBAE caused interest
to be rekindled in aesthetics education causing reason for art curriculum and methods of teaching art to be brought up-to-date. As Loudermilk (2002) explains, the attitudes of many educators reflect the belief that it is possible for students to think critically through looking at art. If students are given the knowledge, then they can begin to develop analytical skills through participation in aesthetic education. It would appear that there are many educators that believe art education has a positive effect on children in many critical ways.

Studies demonstrate that Art education has positive effects on children’s critical thinking. One such study discusses the positive effects art education has on student success. In 2002 the College Entrance Examination Board that administers the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Advanced Placement exam released a study stating that, “students who studied visual art show a 47 point advantage in math and 31 points for the verbal portion over nonarts students” (Cornett’s study as cited in Dean, 2005). The Board also found that students with continued interaction with the arts, “for four or more years, scored significantly higher on the SATs than their counterparts with less coursework” (Dickinson’s study as cited in Dean, 2004). Another study focuses on refinements in cognitive
processes; this study took place in Seattle at Washington Concord Elementary School. This elementary school placed great emphasis on the importance of integrating arts education throughout the school curriculum. Washington Concord Elementary School provided students many opportunities to participate in cross-curricular projects founded in the arts. Some art projects included creating large-scale murals, developing art infused timelines of history, and performing plays. As stated by Dickinson (2004), the results show that in one year of student participation in an art-based curriculum, fourth and fifth graders improved their scores in reading on the MacMillan Reading Inventory. As Dickinson (2004) explains the California Test of Basic Skills shows students increasing their scores by at least twenty points or more.

Indeed, these test results ought to be a calling for educators to make aesthetic education a priority. Educators need to understand that aesthetic education for young children not only can lead to a passion for art, but talking about art helps develop skills in critical thinking and expressive language because they begin to notice more about the world around them. Parkay and Hass (2000) found that it is important for students to feel comfortable in their surrounding technical, natural or
cultural environments. Parkay and Hass (2000) also contend that educators need to, "...cultivate wonder and appreciation for the human-made world" (p. 14). Educators can work with their students to build meaning during aesthetically-oriented conversations about artworks. If educators acknowledge students' strengths and interests during curriculum planning, students are more likely to stay engaged and opportunities for learning increase (Copland & Knapp, 2006). Talking about art with children should be embraced by primary teachers as a valuable language building and cognitively engaging strategy. Parkay and Hass (2000) suggest that the best way to learn begins with what is of interest or concern to students. Allowing children an interactive experience with art provides for rich and meaningful engaged learning. Parkay and Hass (2000) maintain that famous people and famous artworks can spark children's interests.

Further, the National Standards in the Visual Arts (see Appendix A) state that learning about art should go beyond the production of art to allow students to become actively involved in the process of learning and thus students to begin to utilize their critical thinking skills. Activities that foster critical thinking skills would include: problem solving, analysis, thematic
descriptions, comprehension, higher level thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). This kind of powerful and equitable instruction allows all students to develop the skills they need to function in society as they are immersed into deeper and more involved subject-matter knowledge (Copland & Knapp, 2006). The National Standards were published in 1994 by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. Through the direction of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts, the Consortium developed arts standards for all K-12 students across America.

The Consortium not only found it necessary to develop art standards, but they also defined various art vocabulary. For example, according to The National Standards, refers to students actually creating art and allowing students to go through the various art processes as they produce art. Also, as seen in The National Standards, “art” means the study of art forms for intellectual purposes and cultural appreciation. The National Standards help define what a good education in the arts should provide, as well as, once adopted by the state and school districts, the arts must become an essential part of the curriculum, not merely an optional subject. As a result the Consortium of National Arts
Education Associations (1994) go on to explain that, “Arts education benefits the student because it cultivates the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication” (p. 3). In other words, attitudes toward learning are ingrained during the early years. As a child’s curiosity and ability to imagine develops, education in the arts can play a critical role. The arts combine an array of learning styles which can keep students stimulated and engaged as the study and creation of art works engages the entire brain.

Discussion about arts-based media can stimulate critical thinking in young children. With this thought in mind, the following questions are posed in an effort to guide this study: How do oral language activities foster students’ ability to think at a more critical level? And, how can educators give primary grade students aesthetic opportunities? These will be some of the issues related to aesthetic education in the primary grades discussed herein.

The purpose of this study is to employ specific oral language activities in response to selected art prints. Students discussed such prints according to a specific
methodology generally referred to as aesthetic scanning. Aesthetic scanning is employed as a method for activating critical thinking skills in young children.

Critical thinking refers to being able to problem-solve and the ability to come up with original, different or unique solutions; divergent thinking (Schirrmacher, 2002). Oral language is about verbal signs which communicate meaning, intention, ideas, and emotions. More specifically, oral language involves the listening and speaking of the pragmatic, semantic, syntactical, morphological, and phonological aspects of language (Genishi & Haas, 1984). Aesthetic scanning refers to describing, analyzing, interpreting, and making judgments about works of art. The aesthetic scanning approach allows children to learn how to talk about and better understand a work of art (Broudy, 1987). The idea is to get the student to analyze and talk about sensory, formal, technical, and expressive properties of a particular work of art. Each one of the properties is followed by a series of questions that are designed to aid the child to understand the property through verbal answers.

The next chapter reviews theory, classroom practices, and research related to aesthetic scanning, oral language
activities, and critical thinking. Such activity is linked to refinement of critical thinking (Cazden, 1988).
Aesthetic Scanning in Art-based Education Programs

Loudermilk (2002) offers a definition of aesthetics when she states that "Aesthetics has been a philosophical way to describe the relationship between the viewer and the art" (p. 2). Loudermilk (2002) goes on to say that, today we could define aesthetics as the study of beauty and the minds responses to it. Beauty is the elements of what is pleasing to the senses or the mind. Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy concerned with art. It specifically looks at arts creative sources, forms, and effects (p. 3).

This chapter focuses specifically on the key connections between aesthetic scanning and oral language; ultimately the focus is on how this procedure can positively impact critical thinking. Various verbal analyses and descriptions of art with peers and teacher underpin growth in students' critical thinking. According to Schirrmacher (2002), "The early years are a time of rapid language development..." (p. 46). Learning experiences through aesthetics in art education is an important way one can facilitate cognitive development in
young children. Lyons states, "...only face-to-face conversations...facilitate children’s language and vocabulary development" (2003, p. 46). Conversation is extremely beneficial and, according to Lyons, "Conversation also helps children learn how to attend to various aspects of the task, guide their behavior during the act, and manage their actions—all important prerequisites of learning" (2003, p. 47).

Aesthetic scanning is a method for looking at and responding to works of art. Art can be looked at or "read" to help develop oral language skills. Students can learn how to "read" art through teachings and discussions relating to four basic art concepts, called the Properties System: sensory properties, formal properties, technical properties, and expressive properties of art (See Appendix B). Primary educators will notice a wealth of familiar terms and concepts that young students will relate to with ease when discussing the properties of art, such as: line, shape, color, sizes, texture, etc. As stated by Broudy (1987), these are ideas which can build understanding of how it is possible for artists to communicate with us through their artwork. As Broudy (1987) explains, if students learn to "read" the message of art, through the Properties System, then it might be possible for students
to "read" even more messages from their culture or the world in which they live.

Therefore, talking about art in the aesthetic sense is a method for helping young children observe and discuss elements of a specific work of art. It is the conversation between educator and student as artwork is aesthetically scanned that promotes critical thinking. As stated by Morrow and Gambrell (2000), "Social interaction is central to the development of language and thought. According to Vygotskian theory, learning is facilitated through the assistance of more knowledgeable members of the community and higher level mental processes (pp. 574-575). Educators help guide students in "reading" artwork through the use of the aforementioned Properties System (Appendix B) and questioning techniques. Broudy's work on aesthetic scanning through the Properties System (Appendix B) combined with material adapted from the Getty Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts (Sorenson, 1988) makes for an engaging and thought provoking guide for teachers to follow as they guide their student discussions of art.

Talking with children about the aesthetics of a piece of art can begin with the sensory property (specific elements that can be seen, such as, line, shape, color, etc.). Looking for sensory properties in art is not about
simply recognizing familiar objects. Students have the opportunity to go beyond and stretch cognitively as they describe objects in greater detail. For example, a circle can be described as bumpy, deep, overlapping, etc. Second, students are guided through an artwork’s formal properties (the way elements are put together to form a work of art, such as, theme, balance, repetition, dominance, etc.). Through the guided questioning technique, questions such as these can help students to look for the important ideas from the way elements are put together: Why did the artist put squares there? Where did the artist put the important idea in the picture? Where do smooth textures repeat? etc. Third, students discuss the technical properties of an artwork (learning what materials, tools, and techniques the artist used in the artwork). Here, students are guided to look for evidence of how the art was made. Guided questions could include: Can you see brushstrokes? Can you tell what kind of art this is? etc. Opportunities to talk about ways of working with various mediums and different techniques helps students further develop their language in the technical sense.

Finally, students need opportunities to respond to the expressive character of the art, expressive properties. Expressive properties deal with how the
sensory, formal, and technical properties combine with familiar or unfamiliar objects, to create mood or feeling. Children are encouraged to use their prior knowledge of the world around them to help discuss mood language such as, sad, excited, and shy, etc. For example they are able to "read" a happy mood on a face by the raised eyebrows, up-curved mouth, and wide eyes. Talking about art that involves the expressive properties, is a way for children to develop a wealth of literal, symbolic, and metaphoric language descriptors that they can use, not only in their discussions of art, but in many other aspects of their lives as well. All in all, discussions regarding the Properties System further student opportunities to participate orally and think critically.

Critical Thinking in Response to Art

How then do oral language activities foster students' ability to think at a more critical level? There is debate over how much aesthetics in art education helps improve student language skills. However, there is an abundance of research showing that art education does indeed strengthen language skills, as well as confidence and many other important abilities. As stated in West's study (as cited in Chapman, 1998), art education is critical to a child's
learning experience and should be presented to students at
an early age. As West’s study (as cited in Chapman, 1998)
explains, a comprehensive arts program integrated into the
curriculum fosters students’ ability to comprehend ideas
and clearly express themselves verbally. Studies of the
effects of imagery on retention of knowledge, according to
Paivio’s study (as cited in Broudy, 1987), explain that,
“...according to neurological and psychological research,
the brain stores information in at least two different
modes: imaginal and verbal. Thus, imagery allows the
learner to elaborate a verbal input into the more concrete
imaginal one” (p. 12). Therefore, using imagery or
pictures to relate to words and thoughts facilitates
learning vocabulary thus contributing to enhanced critical
thinking.

According to Broudy (1987) images help build language
concepts which form, what he calls, the “allusionary
base”. Broudy also states,
The allusionary base refers to the conglomerate of
concepts, images, and memories available to provide
meaning for the reader or listener...the reader or
listener raids the allusionary base for relevant
words, facts, and images (1987, p. 18).
Consequently, when students are allowed to practice verbally expressing themselves through aesthetics, they are building a rich allusionary base from which they can draw relevant words, facts, and images. Talking about art fosters the development of cognitive skills as it provides meaning to add to children's allusionary base.

Likewise, cognitive skills are further developed as children participate in aesthetic discussion. The value of describing, discussing, explaining, exploring, and examining works of art provide opportunities for talk which in turn strengthen problem-solving skills, reasoning abilities, as well as, stretching the imagination. As stated by Tishman, MacGillivray, & Palmer (2002), a study involving 162 children, ages 9 and 10, the children were trained to look closely at works of art and reason about what they saw. Tishman, et al. (2002) explains that the results verified that children's ability to draw inferences about artwork transferred to their reasoning about images in science. In both cases, the critical skill is that of children being able to look closely and reason about what they see. It would appear that looking, scanning, and engaging in aesthetically-oriented discussion, then, can have a positive impact on students' critical thinking.
Students who are engaged in aesthetically-oriented discussion can become motivated to think more critically. How then does aesthetic scanning through oral language activities motivate children and enhance their ability to think at a more critical level? As oral activities and vocabulary are expanded, so does critical thinking begin to evolve (Almasi, 1995). Many studies which relate to the importance of an art-based curriculum show improved student motivation as one of the many other benefits when art is integrated across the curriculum. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) describe critical points that make for engaging and effective learning. This paper will focus on how aesthetic scanning within an oral language facility art education focus can improve critical thinking across the language arts curriculum. Studies show art as a way to engage and inspire students as they participate in art production and aesthetically-oriented art discussions where students can be proud of their works and feel comfortable sharing opinions. While art talk fosters one’s ability in verbal language skills, they become more confident in themselves and become motivated to participate in collaborative discussion groups as well as think independently.
In addition to becoming motivated through improved self-confidence, art education is also motivating as it involves a wide variety of learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic). According to Wiggins and McTighe (2005), educators must design curriculum around the diverse interests and needs of the students. As Cowan (2001) states, "...the learning process is energized when the arts become an integral part of the lesson. Everyone actively participates; everyone enters the conversation" (p. 12). So, arts-based approaches then, nurture a motivation to learn through active engagement and participation of every child. Engaged children will be honing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they are allowed to participate in aesthetic discussions of art. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) make the assertion that, "...provocative questions and challenging problems [have] already been cited as an effective way to provoke sustained engagement in students" (p. 202). For example, through aesthetic questioning, young children can be encouraged to think at a higher level with questions such as these: "How can you tell scribbles from abstract works?", "Does it matter how much time a work took to make?", "Why do you think the artist painted this?", "Does the way the artist used color make the painting look happy
and why?”, “What makes you think that the artist wanted us to like that figure?”, etc. These are all examples of higher-order thinking questions that young children are capable of discussing. Loudermilk (2002) refers to aesthetic inquiry as a way to, “...extend, enhance, and encourage the responding process...” (p. 30). Thus educators can use aesthetic inquiry as a method to support critical thinking among students.

In fact, through aesthetic inquiry, educators can provide students with many aesthetic opportunities for expanding oral language and critical thinking. How, then, can educators give primary-grade students such opportunities? An Artist-of-the-Week lesson (Appendix C), based on Broudy’s aesthetic scanning technique, is included as an example of how one may create an aesthetically-oriented art lesson that adheres to state and national standards. The teacher provided weekly art lessons that integrated across the language arts curriculum and provides opportunities for students to continue building critical thinking and expressive language skills as well.
Brain Research, Critical Thinking, and Oral Language

Through brain research one can see how language development is fostered through rich meaningful experiences, as well as through heredity, throughout the early childhood. According to Schirrmacher (2002), “During the early years the brain has the greatest capacity for change. How the brain develops hinges on a complex interplay between one’s genes...and life experiences” (p. 15). Looking further into brain research findings, studies by Richey and Wheeler, (as cited in Schirrmacher, 2002), show that neural pathways develop through opportunities that children experience during their early years. These studies seem to indicate that learning experiences play a critical role in developing all areas of the brain. The more learning opportunities children experience, the more connections made, thus more developed the brain will become.

As submitted here, focused language discussions about art expand critical language and thought processes. Looking, viewing, scanning, noticing, discussing, collaborating, judging, etc. works of art not only helps to facilitate language, but divergent thinking is developed as well. Divergent thinking refers to being able
to problem-solve and the ability to come up with original, different or unique solutions (Geneshi, 1984). The nature of aesthetics allows for children to verbalize with each other as they view works of art and answer open-ended questions as they are led to reflect upon and critically think about the art they see. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) warn that educators need to be aware of their “fun” activities not actually leading to improved intellectual learning. However, lessons in aesthetics can be “fun” as well as provide for intellectual purpose through hands-on and “minds-on” activities.

As students are thinking about an artwork, they develop feelings and attitudes about what they see and become engaged. As children are exposed to works of art they will build an appreciation of art, thus students will become motivated to talk about what they see, and “...most of the children [will want] to contribute different ideas” (Schirrmacher, p. 31). Aesthetic discussions encourage students to practice communicating their feelings and ideas as they actively learn about artworks. Students must be given opportunities to build the background information and vocabulary that makes art meaningful. According to Wolff and Geahigan (1997), “Language is critical to this process, as is the ability to identify with the thoughts
and emotions of the young” (p. 97). However, because aesthetic discussions involve opinions, educators need to keep an accepting attitude toward contributions made by all students to encourage participation.

Classroom Environment and Aesthetic Scanning Strategies

Educators’ attitudes can play a critical role, and have a positive or negative effect, in the analysis of each art lesson itself as children learn to reflect on a work of art. Weaver (2002) contends that most effective classrooms are filled with a positive atmosphere and are devoid of harsh, demeaning criticism. Educators can best promote discussions as a facilitator being careful not to be judgmental of the thoughts and opinions of the children. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) maintain that a safe and comfortable environment invites children to take more risks. The classroom environment should be one of acceptance so children will be comfortable sharing verbally all of their ideas, thoughts, and opinions without hesitation. A teacher’s mood and behaviors are critical to the attitude and success of the students (Erlauer, 2002). In an informal atmosphere, students can build their level of confidence in what they contribute verbally as they enhance their language abilities and
become uninhibited as they share their thoughts. According to Lyons,

No matter how children react to a situation, however, parents' and teachers' responses to them have a positive or negative impact on their future emotional, social, and cognitive development...In fact, children's ideas and feelings about themselves reflect, in large measure, parents', teachers', and significant others' attitudes toward them, (2003, p. 58).

In other words, as long as educators have an attitude of acceptance, students can continue to respond freely to art in a variety of ways.

Oral Language Activities that Promote Critical Thinking

Student's responses to art can be promoted through various methods. Through the use of open-ended questions and personal response questions, students become actively involved in the discussion as students clarify and explain their answers allowing for more language building practice (Horowitz & Samuels, 1987). Effective educators will, "...cultivate an openness to experience, a heightened attention, and a willingness to reflect upon initial impressions in order to promote future involvement" (Wolff
Open-ended questions allow for an array of answers, not just one correct answer. Educators can encourage students to "stretch" their language by getting away from discussions that lead only to single-word or single-clause responses (Gibbons, 2002). The nature of open-ended questioning allows for divergent or creative thinking because children are engaged in higher level thinking as they are afforded opportunities to actively construct answers.

Personal-response questions encourage discussion and reflection as students are given opportunities to articulate personal involvement and reaction to works of art. Personal-response questions have to do with one's feelings and personal beliefs brought to bear on a piece of artwork. Again, like open-ended questions, personal-response questions do not call for one correct answer and they allow students to think at a higher level (Goldenberg & Patthay, 1995). According to Wiggins and McTighe (2005), a good design for learning includes performance goals based on challenging curriculum. In this study, students are encouraged to think at a higher level and participate in class discussions as they look at and talk about art.
Vincent Van Gogh's, *The Starry Night* painting, provides wonderful aesthetic opportunities for children to exercise their verbal skills and think at a higher level through open-ended and personal-response questioning. For instance, as students aesthetically scan this work of art, they are going beyond factual questions which may require a single right answer such as: What color are the stars? And what shape is the sun? Students are reflecting on and discussing such higher level questions as: What does this picture make you think about? How does this work of art make you feel? Does this picture make you think of anything in your own life and why? What parts of this work of art do you like the best? What part do you like the least and why?

Personal response questions are a good way to start class discussion and help children actively participate (Block, 1993). Students become engaged as they are guided to find personal meaning in the artworks. Parkay and Hass (2000) claim that optimum learning conditions arise when one’s own interests are piqued. According to Wolf & Geahigan (1997), "Personal response set the stage for further inquiry; genuine involvement with a work of art inevitably arouses curiosity about its artist, other works of art, and the context in which it was made" (p. 176). As
a result, through personal response as a motivator, students can be encouraged to ask and answer questions, as well as locate problems to try to then solve.

To summarize, aesthetic scanning methods have been reviewed and linked to refinement in critical thinking. Expansion of oral language processes in connection with art analysis is seen as inherently—if not synonymously—linked to growth of cognitive processes. Thought and language growth takes place in contexts that promote engaged and aesthetically motivated discussions. Specific methods for aesthetic scanning in response to art are offered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In previous chapters, the issues related to aesthetic scanning and oral language development was discussed. As the research has indicated, there is a positive correlation between the aesthetic study of art and expressive language skills. Also through the avenue of art, research shows that students can grow in their ability to understand the world in which they live. As they discuss and create visual artworks, they learn how to express themselves and how to communicate with others. This chapter will present methods used to explore the influence of aesthetic scanning on critical thinking and thus oral language skills. Key elements of this chapter are seen next in Table 1.
Table 1. Key Project Elements

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class of twenty middle-class kindergarten students: Males: 8 Females: 12</td>
<td>Student previewing: Looking, viewing, scanning art print before discussion</td>
<td>Michigan Literacy Progress Profile 2001-Oral Language Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic make-up:</td>
<td>Teacher used guided questioning strategies to lead students in an oral discussion involving the Properties System: Students were encouraged to aesthetically scan art prints through discussion of the Properties System: sensory properties, formal properties, technical properties, and expressive properties. Students were encouraged to describe, explain, explore, interpret, analyze, and judge works of art.</td>
<td>Field Notes/classroom observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Proficient: 10% Proficient: 55% Basic: 20% Below Basic: 10% Far Below Basic: 5%</td>
<td>Students compared and contrasted works of art they created with famous works of art that they had studied: Venn diagrams were created through whole class discussions, and used to make comparisons.</td>
<td>Student interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic make-up: Caucasian: 75% African American: 5% Hispanic: 20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants

In this chapter, a specific group of students was studied based on a results-focused design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), using a method of looking at art called Aesthetic Scanning. The teacher determined appropriate
instructional activities after clearly identifying the intended results and appropriate assessments were considered (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Aesthetic scanning, adapted from Harry Broudy's work on aesthetic scanning, is an approach which teaches students how to "read" or interpret art. Being able to talk about what they see provides students with symbolic and metaphoric expressive language skills. Aesthetic scanning is one method for developing these skills. The development of an art vocabulary can be a natural outcome in working with the aesthetic scanning. "Children learn art vocabulary when they are actively involved in using the Properties System (Appendix B) to talk about works of art" (Sorenson, 1988). The teacher assisted children in this learning process by: (a) incorporating relevant art terms throughout discussions with students (b) creating visual examples that reflect art related concepts (c) illustrating a complex concept like asymmetry (d) designing learning center activities related to art concepts (e) planning lessons with art media that encourage children to use the language as they learn to use concepts such as repetition, contrast and skills with art media to express their ideas, and (f) using higher-order thinking skill questioning techniques (Sorenson, 1988).
The teacher created an aesthetic scanning vocabulary guide (see Appendix B) to aide in aesthetic discussions with the students. The aesthetic scanning vocabulary guide lists descriptors within some general categories that distinguish elements or specific characteristics for each of the properties. The use of these categories may suggest ways of helping children to move from a beginning stage of simply labeling an art element to an in depth discussion such as making comparisons and/or noting relationships.

Students were encouraged to learn art vocabulary by interacting with an aesthetic object (e.g. people, the environment, serious and popular works of art, and by working with art media). For example, children were asked to describe what they see and how they feel when they look at Claude-Oscar Monet’s *Water Lilies* painting. As the teacher elicited oral discussion of the painting, she encouraged students to use descriptive vocabulary words found in the aesthetic scanning vocabulary guide. Students were asked the following questions: How would you describe the round shapes at the bottom of the painting? How does this painting make you feel? And, how do you think the artist made the painting look brighter in some areas?

The research was conducted over a two month period. In an elementary classroom, a group of 20 kindergarten
students were taught using the Aesthetic Scanning method, during the seventh and eighth months of the school year. The kindergarten students being studied came from a middle-class neighborhood in Riverside County, California. The students studied consisted of a variety of learners with various levels of expressive oral language.

The needs of the kindergarten population studied revolved around the need for the students to "...use spoken language to express ideas and feelings, to interact with others, and to facilitate daily activities" (Michigan Department of Education, 2001, p. 20). The California Language Arts content standards were adhered to as the teacher provided lessons using the Aesthetic Scanning method. California Language Arts standard 1.0 emphasizes the importance of word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development. More specifically, standard 1.18, contained within California Language Arts standard 1.0, explains that students should be able to describe common objects and specific language. This particular standard seems to support the idea that student's speaking abilities are critical to expressing thoughts clearly. Understanding how well a child can use spoken language, "...provides us with information about how a child may begin to process and use written language" (Michigan
Department of Education, 2001, p. 20). The students in the study had a variety of skills and were varied in their learning styles. As stated by the Michigan Department of Education (2001), literacy skills in children develop at many different rates. As the Michigan Department of Education (2001) explains, as levels of literacy improve, children may experience rapid growth at times and even level off or slow down at times as they move forward toward improved literacy.

Curriculum Reform

Students participated in Aesthetic Scanning at least once a week for two months. Depending on specific learning goals, the teacher would take on the role of direct instructor, facilitator, or coach as suggested by Wiggins and McTighe (2005). For one week, a poster of an art print would be visible in the classroom for students to view. An example of one complete aesthetic scanning lesson can be found in Appendix D. Each week children were introduced to a new work of art. Artists highlighted each week included, VanGogh, Seurat, Renoir, Picasso, Stella, Hokusai, Pollack, and Monet. Also, various hands-on art learning centers were made available for the students to use during their free time that related to highlighted artist of the
week. Some of the hands-on art centers included: mixing colors, paint splatter, drawing with colored chalk and oil pastels, copying art prints from postcards, designing paper collages, etc. Also, an assortment of art related books containing pictures of artwork were made available for children to read about and discuss. How the curriculum was modified is seen next in Table 2.

Table 2. Daily Art Lesson Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher displayed art print. Students were encouraged to look at print and think about it on their own before any discussion took place.</td>
<td>The teacher guided students to aesthetically scan the art print. Through guided questioning, the student discussion was based on the Properties System of Aesthetic Scanning (sensory property, formal property, technical property, and expressive property).</td>
<td>The teacher read a story related to the art work being studied. Students discussed the story, artist, illustrations and feelings they had about the story and the artist.</td>
<td>Students created their own version of the artwork being studied using various mediums and materials.</td>
<td>Further discussion, students reflected upon the week's lesson. Artwork created by students were compared and contrasted with the original art print of the week. Venn diagrams were used to show comparisons and students were encouraged to share feelings about other students' artwork in a positive manner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teacher provided opportunities for students to use art vocabulary each day during art lessons. The teacher also encouraged students to go beyond just using art vocabulary during art lessons. Students were encouraged to expand their vocabulary and use descriptors when participating in discussions across the curriculum (e.g. During a science lesson, students used descriptors to describe in detail what a tree looks like in the winter versus the spring). The teacher provided as many opportunities as possible for children to practice speaking and practice using descriptors. Children were encouraged to not only describe what they could see in detail, but they were also encouraged to share their feelings about what they saw across all curricular areas (e.g. In the book, Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King, by Jean Marzollo, how does the illustration of Rosa Parks sitting in the back of the bus make you feel?).

In this study, the research examined the development and extension of student’s expressive oral language skills through participation in weekly aesthetic scanning discussions. The research was conducted was mixed in design using qualitative and quantitative research analysis.
Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Levels of oral language skills were assessed through the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile 2001. Also, the researcher used student transcriptions to discover patterns in thinking. The MLPP 2001 is a "...system for assessment and instruction. It provides a consistent way to observe, assess, instruct, document, and articulate a child’s early literacy progress..." (Michigan Department of Education, 2001, p. 17). There is an assortment of research-based literacy assessments included in the MLPP 2001. Results from MLPP 2001 can be used to guide and inform instruction. These tools are designed to present educators and parents with information about what an individual child knows and can do well as they use their literacy and language skills to become a strategic and thoughtful communicator. The assessments included in the MLPP 2001 are designed to guide and support instruction: literacy attitudes, oral language, comprehension, writing, and oral reading.

For the purposes of this research, students were given only the Oral Language Assessment (OLA) portion of the MLPP 2001. As stated by the Michigan Department of Education (2001), students engaging in oral conversation provide educators a chance to listen to early attempts of
grammatical and meaningful communication and see how children apply what they've learned in the beginning stages of their oral language development. Transcripts taken from students by the researcher, during the administration of the OLA, can possibly reveal student critical thinking patterns, as well as student oral language levels. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) note, in their text, that creating assessments reflecting the point of the activity is critical to improving performance. The assessments used in this study will guide decisions about which concepts or skills need to be emphasized in order to meet the needs of each student.

The OLA provides information about a child’s ability to communicate through spoken language. The OLA was administered as a pre-assessment in February (before the implementation of the aesthetic scanning program), and was again administered as a post-assessment at the conclusion of the two month research period, during the sixth and seventh months of the school year (after the implementation of the aesthetic scanning program). The OLA was administered individually by the teacher to each student in the class. The OLA measured the students' ability to demonstrate syntax and complexity of sentences, vocabulary, identification and elaboration of ideas.
through an oral language sample picture prompt. Student transcripts of oral language expression were taken by the researcher, during the administration of the OLA, to reveal possible patterns of thinking and to show evidence of students thinking at a more critical level. The results will be discussed in the following chapter. The OLA included seven different picture card prompts (e.g. school related scene, home related scene, etc.). The complete list of picture content suggestions for the OLA, as well as the OLA Individual Score Sheet, the MLPP Oral Language Sample Scoring Rubric Preschool-Grade One, and Assessment Guidelines for Preschool-First Grade Oral Language Assessment (including specific questions to guide scoring and analysis of the assessment), can be found in Appendix D. (Michigan Department of Education, 2001).

The OLA was administered orally to students by their classroom teacher, the teacher who implemented the aesthetic scanning program. Students were assessed at a small table where the teacher sat beside the child in a quiet location, away from distractions, just outside the classroom. The procedure began with allowing the students to select one of seven picture prompt cards that were displayed on the table. Pictures were not discussed during the preview. The chosen picture prompt card was then
placed on the table in front of the child being assessed. The teacher would then say, "Tell me a story about the picture". The teacher would then transcribe the child's entire response. Pre-assessment transcriptions would be saved and compared with post-assessment transcriptions to chart potential growth and improvement in critical thinking skills. The teacher may have prompted the child further by saying, "Tell me more", or "What else can you say?" The teacher was to avoid asking leading questions. The teacher then used the rubric (based on a 4-point scale) to analyze and score the completed transcription. For the syntax category of the rubric, the teacher could use the child's typical speech to assess the use of regular and irregular verbs and regular and irregular plurals, if necessary. The scores were then written on the paper with the script. As the teacher analyzed and the child's performance, specific questions (see Appendix D) about syntax, vocabulary and elaboration were considered:

(a) Does the child's syntax match the standard English syntax used in most early readers? (b) Is the child aware of the names of most common objects?, and (c) Does the child's conversation indicate an understanding of typical experiences depicted in

The child’s number and date of the assessment were added to the scored script that was finally placed into the child’s portfolio. The teacher would then enter each of the three scores (syntax score, vocabulary score and elaboration score) on the Individual Score Sheet (see Appendix D) indicating the child’s oral language level. Student transcripts were used to reveal patterns in thinking and show evidence of students thinking at a more critical level. The teacher kept in mind that if any child scored very low, parents would be contacted to obtain some background on the child’s oral language development. Also, if any child had a history of ear infections that can delay speech development, the teacher would encourage parents to take appropriate action. If a child was simply late in developing strong speech patterns, it would be important that many opportunities are provided during each day to talk quietly with the child and for the child to talk with others.

During group time, the teacher would be sure to allow children to learn proper turn-taking procedures, to ensure others do not drown out a struggling child. The teacher would encourage the parents of a struggling child to talk
frequently with the child alone. If there were any other siblings in the home, the teacher would make sure that the parents understand the importance of the voice of each individual child.

The teacher also considered whether low scores were reflective of a child’s typical oral language or whether poor performance, at least in part, was due to lack of experience with the content of the pictures. If so, the teacher would consider taping an oral language sample without a specific picture prompt. A topic in which the child had expressed an interest would be chosen, and an open-ended prompt was provided; i.e., “Tell me about your birthday party”.

Using the rubric supplied (see Appendix D), the teacher would score the child’s recorded response. The administration of the OLA took approximately 5 minutes per student. The OLA was administered to each student in March, prior to the implementation of the aesthetic scanning program in the classroom, and then again in April, after two months of the aesthetic scanning program being implemented.

The methodological strategies that were administered in this study were appropriate for furthering the student levels of oral language and showed improvement by at least
one point on the rubric. The strategies involved in looking at art and talking about art can be an effective way to build oral language skills.

To summarize, the methodological strategies that were addressed in this study were appropriate for mid-year kindergarten students in that they will serve to lay the groundwork for furthering students' levels of oral language, as well as foster students' critical thinking skills. The strategies of guided questioning techniques and encouraging oral participation, through looking at art, are all integral parts of building oral language skills and critical thinking skills. This study examined the effects of these strategies, through the aesthetic scanning method, on this particular group of kindergarten students.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This research project analyzed data collected in a kindergarten classroom of twenty students spanning a period of two months, during the sixth and seventh month of the school year. In order to determine each student's oral language skill level during the research period, pre and post-assessments were administered one-on-one orally before and after the implementation of aesthetic scanning. This chapter will examine the data collected during these assessments and include information gathered from teacher observations, student responses to assessments, and field notes.

The classroom taking part in this study is located within a middle-class community in Riverside County, California. The teacher in this study has taught for seventeen years, fifteen of those years she has taught kindergarten. The teacher in this study has seen many changes in educational mandates, philosophies, and trends. From her experiences in the educational field, she has noticed a trend where educators have become overwhelmed by expanding mandates and an increasingly diverse student population. Oral language opportunities afforded to
children, through the arts, have fallen by the wayside as educators struggle to meet the demands of the academic curriculum. Therefore, she researched the effects of aesthetic scanning on oral language levels in kindergarten.

As the teacher in this study examined the key questions of aesthetics and oral language, those being: How do oral language activities foster students’ ability to think at a more critical level? And, how can teachers give primary grade students aesthetic opportunities? She determined that the aesthetic scanning method might improve oral language skills, as well as critical thinking skills in her classroom, and some of these questions would be answered through her observations of the effect of this method on her students.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, aesthetics in education has to do with talking about art as a method for helping young children observe and discuss elements of a specific work of art. Aesthetic scanning is a method educators can use to teach students how to “read” art. The levels of student’s oral language skills were examined at the beginning of the research period, prior to the implementation of the aesthetic scanning method. The pre-assessment consisted of a collection of pictures where
the students in the study group were asked to choose one picture and tell a story about it. Each student's description of the picture chosen was recorded on paper by the teacher to be compared later with post-assessment transcriptions. These transcriptions would be used to show potential improvement in students' critical thinking skills. The results to the pre-assessment are available on Figure 1.

Figure 1. Student Rubric Scores from Michigan Literacy Progress Profile 2001 Oral Language Pre-Assessment.
After each of the 20 students was individually asked "Tell me about the story in the picture", the completed transcription was scored according to the rubric. Student pre-assessment scores are as follows: In the syntax category, six students received a score of one, five students received a score of two, nine students received a score of three, and zero students received a score of four. Therefore, in the syntax category, most students could sequence most ideas and words in a logical manner with some transitional words and connecting ideas. However, when combining scores from level one and two there are eleven students that scored below the capable level in syntax, indicating that many are having difficulty presenting ideas in sequence, using transitional words, and connecting ideas. In the vocabulary category, four students received a score of one, ten students received a score of two, five students received a score of three, and zero students received a score of four. The scores in the vocabulary category indicate that most students are using minimal descriptive vocabulary in which the vocabulary they use is limited to their own personal experiences. In the elaboration category, two children received a score of one, twelve students received a score of two, six students received a
score of three, and zero students received a score of four. Scores in the elaboration indicate that most students are still at the developing level, and that they are mixing formal language with informal language conventions without regard for the context. Overall, in all three categories combined, zero students received a score of four, most students received a score of three in the syntax category, most students received a score of two in the elaboration category, and most students received a one in the syntax category. The researcher was not surprised by these findings. The scores show room for improvement in all three categories of oral language. According to the pre-assessment findings 45% of the students are capable in the syntax category; 25% of the students are capable in the vocabulary category; and 30% of the students are capable in the elaboration category. There are no students that scored above capable in any of the three categories. Out of the three categories, most students received a score of two for elaboration. Also, out of the three categories, the least number of students scored a one for elaboration. Overall, most students are at a developing level in the category of vocabulary and elaboration. These findings were in line with the researcher’s prior observations. Given the age, prior
knowledge, and experiences of the students in this study, the findings were expected.

The researcher investigated how oral language activities might foster students' ability to think at a more critical level through the aesthetic scanning method. Aesthetic scanning is a method for looking at and responding to works of art. The method of aesthetic scanning allows children to look at or "read" works of art as a way to help develop oral language skills. Using the aesthetic scanning method provides opportunities for students to "read" art through teachings and discussions relating to four basic art concepts, called the Properties System: sensory properties, formal properties, technical properties, and expressive properties of art.

The teacher implemented the aesthetic scanning method for a period of two months for a total of eight weeks. Each week began with a new art print that was displayed in the classroom for students to preview. The students were excited and the level of student engagement seemed to increase as the teacher unveiled the new work of art for the week. The teacher observed most students walking up to and looking closely at the art print on the wall at one time or another on their own. The teacher could hear students having conversations about the art which, in the
beginning of the study, were most often related to how much students liked or disliked the picture. One child said, "I like it." Another said, "That is neat." There was not a lot of conversation, and very limited verbal description, as to why students liked or disliked the painting. However, as students participated in more discussions through the teacher's guided questioning, children became more verbal and had more to talk about with each painting.

After a day of students viewing the art on display, the teacher guided students to aesthetically scan the art print. Through guided questioning, based on the Properties System of aesthetic scanning, the teacher was able to help students build vocabulary as they discussed each painting. For example, when the students focused on sensory properties of a painting, they were practicing how to describe specific lines and shapes that they could see. The teacher began the lesson by talking about lines, shapes and colors. The teacher then brainstormed with her students the names of various lines, shapes and colors and wrote them on the board. Then the teacher asked her students to describe the lines and shapes that they see in the artwork. One student said, "I see a curvy line." Another student said, "That is a pinkish-red circle."
After a day or two of discussions through guided questioning about the artwork, the teacher would read a story related to the artwork being studied as a way to build excitement and interest in continuing more discussions between students about the artwork. For example, the teacher read *Camille and the Sunflowers*, by Laurence Anholt, as a way to continue building interest in paintings by Vincent VanGogh. The teacher used the opportunity to discuss illustrations in the story with her students using the aesthetic scanning method. Students had daily opportunities to participate in oral language activities related to describing what they see. Through guided questioning, the teacher asked, “How does this illustration of VanGogh’s *Sunflowers* make you feel?” One student said, “I feel happy. It is bright yellow. It is really yellowish-orange”. The teacher began to notice students using more words to describe their feelings and constructing sentences orally with more vocabulary.

The next step, after story discussion, involved students creating their own version of the displayed artwork using various mediums and materials. The teacher noticed that each week her students could hardly wait to make their own paintings. She heard many students say, “Hooray! We get to paint!” In fact, all of her students
seemed very enthusiastic about painting each week. For example, the teacher heard one of her student’s say, as they were making their own version of a Seurat painting, “I love making dots with these Q-tips! If I put a yellow dot next to the blue dot, it will look green.”

Finally, as a culminating activity for the week, through more discussion, students were given the opportunity to reflect on the week’s lesson. Artwork created by students were compared and contrasted with the original art print. The teacher asked, “How is your painting different/same as the original work of art?” One student answered, “The sun is brighter in my painting.” Another student said, “The bluish-green waves in my painting are bigger.” Students were asked to share something they liked about their own artwork as well as what they liked about another student’s artwork. The teacher would align and guide the discussion around the aesthetic scanning technique to foster student’s use of vocabulary words from the Properties System. For example the teacher wanted to emphasize and review formal properties, from the Properties System, so she asked the students, “Why do you think the wave is the most important part of Hokusai’s painting?” One student answered, “Because the wave is in the front of the picture and it is
huge!” Students were encouraged to share their personal feelings about the artwork that they produced, they were encouraged to give their opinions about the original work of art, and through the aesthetic scanning method, they were encouraged to participate orally each day.

The teacher also encouraged students to participate orally, using descriptive words, in all other areas of the curriculum. When students were asked to retell a story in their own words, the teacher noticed that students were responding with more complete and descriptive sentences. For example, the teacher asked the students to describe elements of the story entitled, *Mouse’s Birthday*, by Jane Yolen. One student said, “The tiny mouse lived in a tiny pile of yellow hay”. Another student commented, “Mouse’s gray fur looks soft”. As the researcher continued to observe and write field notes, she noted more and more descriptive words were being used orally by the students in their sentences throughout the curriculum.

The same assessment that was administered as a pre-assessment, was also administered at the conclusion of the research period as a post-assessment. The OLA post-assessment measured the levels of students’ oral language skills at the conclusion of the research period, after the implementation of the aesthetic scanning method.
Student transcriptions would then be compared with the OLA pre-assessment transcriptions to find any potential growth or patterns in thinking. Once again, the post-assessment consisted of a collection of pictures where the students in the study group were asked to choose one picture and tell a story about it. Each student's description of the picture chosen was recorded on paper by the teacher. The results to the post-assessment are available on Figure 2.

Figure 2. Student Rubric Scores from Michigan Literacy Progress Profile 2001 Oral Language Post-Assessment
After each of the 20 students was individually asked "Tell me about the story in the picture", the completed transcription was scored according to the rubric. Student post-assessment scores are as follows: In the syntax category, one student received a score of one, seven students received a score of two, eight students received a score of three, and four students received a score of four. Therefore, in the syntax category, most students could sequence most ideas and words in a logical manner with some transitional words and connecting ideas. However, when combining scores from level one and two there are now only eight students, not 11 as in the pre-assessment, that scored below the capable level in syntax. This shows a slight improvement in syntax because there are three less students that are not having as much difficulty in presenting ideas in sequence, using transitional words, and connecting ideas. In the vocabulary category, zero students received a score of one, eight students received a score of two, seven students received a score of three, and five students received a score of four. The scores in the vocabulary category indicate slight improvements, and that most students are using minimal descriptive vocabulary in which the vocabulary they use is limited to their own personal
experiences. In the elaboration category, one child received a score of one, five students received a score of two, 11 students received a score of three, and three students received a score of four. Scores in the elaboration indicate that most students are now at the capable level, and that they are using formal language conventions with occasional lapses, which are inappropriate for the context. Overall, in all three categories combined, 12 students received a score of four, showing significant improvement in all three categories, most students received a four in the vocabulary category, most students received a score of three in the elaboration category, most students received a score of two in the vocabulary category, and most students received a one in the syntax and elaboration category. The researcher noted slight improvements in all three categories for most of the students in the study. The scores show room for improvement in mostly the syntax and elaboration categories of oral language. According to the post-assessment findings 40% of the students are capable in the syntax category; 35% of the students are capable in the vocabulary category; and 55% of the students are capable in the elaboration category.
In comparing the results of the post-assessment with the pre-assessment, the researcher found a 5% decrease in student syntax abilities, a 10% increase in student vocabulary abilities, and a 25% increase in student elaboration abilities. A comparison of pre-assessment and post-assessment oral language scores are seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Oral Language Skills Assessment: Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RUBRIC SCORES</th>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, from these results, the researcher has found a significant increase in student elaboration skills and a slight increase in student vocabulary skills. The researcher was surprised to find a slight decrease in student syntax abilities. However, the researcher is attributing the slight decrease in student syntax abilities to the possibility that the age of the students
may have an effect on reliability of their answers, as their answers to questions can vary from day to day due to a kindergartener's age.

Pre-assessment transcriptions were compared with post-assessment transcriptions to find potential patterns in thinking or evidence of improved students' critical thinking skills. Results of the OLA post-assessment parallel with post-assessment student transcriptions. The researcher found, after comparing the transcriptions, that students still had some difficulties with syntactical skills when producing sentences. Word order and sentence structure, in the syntactical sense, did not show improvement. Next is an example of a post-assessment transcription from a male kindergarten student describing children bathing a dog, "They're taking it a shower."

Another example is from a female kindergarten student describing the same picture, "They're playing water with the dog. I like playing with my dog with water. They're playing water hose and everything else."

Although many students still had difficulty with syntactical structures, they showed improvements in vocabulary and elaboration, thus improved critical thinking skills. For example, a male kindergarten student described a picture of a child swimming in this way, "The
little girl is swimming fast, and she is diving all the way down to the bottom of the dark ocean floor." A female student described a picture of firefighters and a forest fire in this way, "The firemen are working very hard to put out the big fire. The red, yellow, and orange flames are very hot. The firemen just don’t know what to do because the fire is very hot and very big. I saw a fire in the hills by my house, and it was very scary, but we were lucky because the firemen came and saved us. I think the firemen will be able to put out the fire in the picture." The researcher found that these are example of students that are thinking more critically and thinking at a higher level. These students show evidence of incorporating their background knowledge to be able to elaborate. They also are using a greater number of vocabulary words and more descriptive vocabulary found in the aesthetic scanning vocabulary guide.

As the researcher continued to observe, interview, and write field notes, she found that students were using more colorful and descriptive words in sentences that were longer and more complete. Students were very interested, the researcher noted, in book illustrations as the researcher read stories to the class. The students wanted to look closely at illustrations and talk about what they
could see with more interest than ever before. The researcher noted that students were actually looking at all parts of the illustration including the background when describing what they could see. As the researcher concluded her study, she found that expressive oral language skills did improve as a result of implementing the aesthetic scanning method.

As the researcher reviewed and compared key data, provided by student transcripts and the OLA, as well as, noted observations and experiences of teaching using the aesthetic scanning approach, she came to some conclusions about its effectiveness, as well as the limitations of the study. The conclusions, limitations, and suggestions for further research are discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher in the study became interested in Aesthetic Scanning and its impact on oral language skills because of her own interest in art as it integrated in other curricular areas. Through many years of experience the researcher saw art education diminish as school budgets plummeted and academic standards increased. However, it was the belief of this researcher that the arts were an integral part of academia and that they could serve to further develop academic skills in her students. It was the researcher’s observation that basic language drill and practice activities did not seem to develop advanced oral lang. skills. Because of her own interest in art, she began to research the ways in which art could be used to develop language skills. Research indicates that students’ academic abilities will improve through the implementation of art education (Dean, 2005). Further research indicates that art education builds skills in communication as well as academics (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994). It is for these reasons that the researcher conducted this study, as it
was her desire to positively impact the oral language skill levels in her students.

In previous chapters, the following questions were examined: What is aesthetics? What is Aesthetic Scanning? How does aesthetic education foster expressive language skills and enhance student’s ability to think at a more critical level? And, how can educators give primary grade students aesthetic opportunities? As research indicates, the arts combine an array of learning styles which can keep students stimulated and engaged, and as Loudermilk (2002) explains, students can begin to communicate at a higher level through looking at art.

Aesthetics in art education, talking about works of art, can play a central role for positively impacting the growth of students’ oral language skills because it brings about conversation between the educator and the student. Talking with children about the aesthetics of a piece of art allows students the opportunity to go beyond and stretch cognitively as they describe objects in greater detail. Children can begin to build background knowledge or an “allusionary base” from which they can draw relevant words, facts, and images (Broudy, 1987). Talking about art fosters the development of cognitive skills as it provides meaning to add to children’s “allusionary base”. When
students are lead to find meaning in what they are learning, optimum learning can occur (Parkay & Hass, 2000). Also, as Copland and Knapp (2006) suggest, when they discuss interrelated learning agendas in schools and districts, the organizational environments of student learning and professional learning come into play in powerful and equitable education. The researcher in this study, as an educational leader, realized that student learning and system learning must intersect in order for the teacher to be successful in delivering appropriate curriculum which will foster engagement. Powerful and equitable learning opportunities, such as meaningful lessons in art education, can encourage motivation, as students and the professionals involved in teaching them come together to "...enable all students to develop what others have called deep subject matter knowledge" (Copland & Knapp, 2006, p. 18). Incorporating the use of imagery and pictures through aesthetic education facilitates learning vocabulary, thus allowing for students to practice and improve their oral language skills (Broudy, 1987).

Aesthetic scanning is a method that incorporates the use of imagery and pictures as a way to build vocabulary skills in children. The researcher has noted a positive
effect of aesthetic scanning on oral language skills. Talking about specific elements of art, through Aesthetic scanning, with children can build oral language skills as they guided to learn how to “read” specific works of art (Broudy, 1987). As stated in previous chapters, students discussed works of art, aesthetically scanned, through the Properties System. The Properties System provides for a wealth of art descriptors that children can use to begin building their “allusionary base” or banks of vocabulary. The researcher observed that students in this study were beginning to incorporate more descriptive language, not only in their oral communication, but descriptive language was transferred into children’s writings. In West’s study, not only does art education strengthen language skills and confidence, but a comprehensive arts program integrated into the curriculum fosters students’ ability to comprehend ideas and clearly express themselves verbally (Chapman, 1988).

The findings in this study support the notion that aesthetic education does indeed foster expressive language skills and enhance student’s ability to think at a more critical level. Research suggests that cognitive skills are further developed as children participate in aesthetic discussion. The value of describing, discussing,
explaining, exploring, and examining works of art provide opportunities for talk which in turn strengthen problem-solving skills, reasoning abilities, as well as, stretching the imagination (Tishman, et al., 2002). It appears, from the researchers observations, that looking, scanning, and engaging in aesthetic oriented discussion, then, does seem to have an integral impact on students’ language development. Aesthetic scanning allowed for the students in this study to be given opportunities to think at a more critical level. Thus, it seems likely that student’s oral language skills improved because they had opportunities to think at a more critical level, as well as, participate in more discussion using art vocabulary descriptors. Further research indicates that educators can use aesthetic inquiry as a method to support critical thinking among students. Loudermilk (2002) refers to aesthetic inquiry as an approach that will, "...extend, enhance, and encourage the responding process..." (p. 30).

Students were lead to think at a more critical level through the implementation of guided questioning. Guided questioning, including open-ended and personal response questions, encourages meaningful and engaging discussions which allow for more divergent thinking and more oral opportunities. Through the accepting and encouraging
manner of the researcher, and allowing students to understand that open-ended questions can have more than one answer, students freely responded to the artworks presented in the study. The researcher found that students became actively involved in aesthetic discussions through the use of open-ended and personal response questions. The researcher noted that each time a meaningful question was posed; most students raised their hands high with excitement in hopes of being called upon to share their answers. This study seems to support the research which contends that effective educators will, "...cultivate an openness to experience, a heightened attention, and a willingness to reflect upon initial impressions in order to promote future involvement" (Wolff & Geahigan, 1997, p. 196). Meaningful open-ended questions seemed to bring out students' feelings and emotions, and these types of questions seemed to quell any fear of giving a "wrong" answer.

The findings in this study help one understand some of the elements which can positively impact students' oral language skills. In examining the research and through the implementation of the aesthetic scanning method, the researcher in this study determined that oral language can, indeed, be influenced through various teaching
strategies. These strategies, many which are part of the aesthetic scanning method, include: hands-on learning experiences, visual aides, Venn Diagrams, background knowledge building, vocabulary building, encouragement of active student oral participation, and guided questioning techniques to activate divergent and critical thinking.

From this study, it appears that aesthetic education can improve students' oral language skills. It is the researcher's opinion that the aesthetic scanning method positively influences oral language skills in children. The researcher found that when students are actively involved in aesthetic discussions, oral language skills tend to improve in most cases. When students were interacting with each other, the researcher not only heard students using more descriptive words in conversations, but she also found students writing skills began to show evidence of more descriptive and complex sentence structure. With this improvement in oral language skills, the researcher noted that more students were motivated to become actively involved in lessons across the curriculum.

It is the opinion of the researcher that further studies in the area of aesthetic education could be aided by a study period that extended for a longer period of time than was incorporated in this study. The researcher
noted that a longer research period may be beneficial in teaching aesthetic scanning as it would allow for more language growth. It is suggested that further studies be conducted over a period of no less than four months, with seven to nine months being preferable or a full school year. It is suggested by the researcher that further studies in this area should also include a writing element in the lessons because, as noted earlier, the researcher discovered that her students' written language also improved. Students used descriptive writing more freely and their oral language skills seemed to transfer to their writing more readily. It is suggested that further research include writing about art prints in various ways. Children may be interested in writing about their own art work. They could possibly write fictional stories that relate to the work they have created.

As further studies are conducted in the area of aesthetic education, it is suggested that the researcher conduct taped interviews as another way to compare pre-assessment and post-assessment results. With tape recordings, the researcher could listen to voice inflections and tone. Tape recordings may capture subtleties that may otherwise be missed through taking student dictation and simply writing notes.
In conclusion, it appears, from this study that student oral language skills can be positively impacted through participation in aesthetic education. Students with higher levels of oral language skills seem to be more successful in communicating and writing, and students with lower levels of oral language skills seem to struggle with communicating and other areas of academia. It further appears that, as one examines the results of the study, students participating in Aesthetic Scanning begin to build a wealth of vocabulary as they begin to participate in more critical and divergent thinking activities. The aesthetic scanning method seemed to have positive effects on student motivation, self-confidence, and student engagement. Also, the researcher noted that the attitude and mood of the educator can greatly influence the comfort levels of the children and whether or not students feel safe enough to give their opinions and make comments. The aesthetic scanning method seemed to have positive effects on the levels of students' oral language skills (see Figures 1 and 2 in chapter 4), as well as positive effects throughout the school curriculum. It is the opinion of the researcher that the aesthetic scanning method for "reading" art, implemented in the kindergarten curriculum, had a positive effect on students' oral language skills.
APPENDIX A

THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION

GRADES K-4
The National Standards for Arts Education
Developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (under the guidance of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts), the National Standards for Arts Education is a document which outlines basic arts learning outcomes integral to the comprehensive K-12 education of every American student. The Consortium published the National Standards in 1994 through a grant administered by MENC, the National Association for Music Education.

GRADES K-4 CONTENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS
The standards in this section describe the cumulative skills and knowledge expected of all students upon exiting grade 4. Students in the earlier grades should engage in developmentally appropriate learning experiences designed to prepare them to achieve these standards at grade 4. Determining the curriculum and the specific instructional activities necessary to achieve the standards is the responsibility of states, local school districts, and individual teachers.

VISUAL ARTS (K-4)
These standards provide a framework for helping students learn the characteristics of the visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions, to reflect their ideas, feelings, and emotions; and to evaluate the merits of their efforts. The standards address these objectives in ways that promote acquisition of and fluency in new ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating. They emphasize student acquisition of the most important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge offered by the visual arts. They develop new techniques, approaches, and habits for applying knowledge and skills in the visual arts to the world beyond school.

The visual arts are extremely rich. They range from drawing, painting, sculpture, and design, to architecture, film, video, and folk arts. They involve a wide variety of tools, techniques, and processes. The standards are structured to recognize that many elements from this broad array can be used to accomplish specific educational objectives. For example, drawing can be used as the basis for creative activity, historical and cultural investigation, or analysis, as can any other fields within the visual arts. The standards present educational goals. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose appropriately from this rich array of content and processes to fulfill these goals in specific circumstances and to develop the curriculum.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts and must exhibit their competence at various levels in visual, oral, and written form. In Kindergarten-Grade 4, young children experiment enthusiastically with art materials and investigate the ideas presented to them through visual arts instruction. They exhibit a sense of joy and excitement as they make and share their artwork with others. Creation is at the heart of this instruction. Students learn to work with various tools, processes, and media. They learn to coordinate their hands and minds in explorations of the visual world. They learn to make choices that enhance communication of their ideas. Their natural inquisitiveness is promoted, and they learn the value of perseverance.

As they move from kindergarten through the early grades, students develop skills of observation, and they learn to examine the objects and events of their lives. At the same time, they grow in their ability to describe, interpret, evaluate, and respond to work in the visual arts. Through examination of their own work and that of other people, times, and places, students learn to unravel the essence of artwork and to appraise its purpose and value. Through these efforts, students begin to understand the meaning and impact of the visual world in which they live.
Content Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

Achievement Standard:

Students know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

Content Standard #2: Using knowledge of structures and functions

Achievement Standard:

Students know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas
Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses
Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas

Content Standard #3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

Achievement Standard:

Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art
Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

Content Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Achievement Standard:

Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures
Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places
Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art

Content Standard #5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Achievement Standard:

Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art
Students describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks
Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks

Content Standard #6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Achievement Standard:

Students understand and use similarities and differences between characteristics of the visual arts and other arts disciplines
Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum

APPENDIX B

THE PROPERTIES SYSTEM/AESTHETIC SCANNING

VOCABULARY GUIDE.
The Properties System:

SENSORY PROPERTIES: (Specific elements of a work that one can see). Viewing works of art to identify specific art elements such as:

- **Line**: thick, thin, vertical, horizontal, diagonal, curved, straight, etc.
- **Shape**: geometric, organic, invented, natural, overlapping, behind, etc.
- **Color**: warm, cool, red, blue, magenta, turquoise, etc.
- **Values**: of light and dark, dull and bright, etc.
- **Spaces**: negative, positive, deep, shallow, real, imagined, etc.
- **Sizes**: huge, tiny, real, imagined, etc.
- **Texture**: coarse, smooth, actual, implied, bumpy, slick, etc.

FORMAL PROPERTIES: (the way elements are put together, organized, to form a work of art). Some of the ways these elements are put together are often called the principals of art.

- **Unity**: each part of the work is necessary. All the elements work together to make a whole. Nothing can be left out without changing the work. This is often done by using the following:
  - **Theme and Variation**: some feature that is repeated to give the work its character.
  - **Repetition**: art elements such as color, line are repeated in a variety of ways.
  - **Contrast**: use of opposites close together such as light and dark colors, complementary colors, large and small shapes.
  - **Balance**: using elements in different forms of symmetry or balance such as asymmetrical, symmetrical, radial.
  - **Dominance**: one feature more important than any other.
  - **Rhythm**: regular repetition of particular forms or accents: the suggestion of motion by patterns of recurrent forms or accents.

TECHNICAL PROPERTIES: Learning what materials, tools and ways of working (techniques) the artist used to make his art.

- **Medium**:
  - **Painting**: Watercolor, Tempra, Oil, etc.
  - **Drawing**: Colored pencils, Pastels, Paint sticks, Pen and ink, etc.

- **Tools and Equipment**: Brushes, Pens, Drawing pencils, Printing presses, etc.
Ways of Working: Painting
Drawing
Carving
Printing, etc.

EXPRESSIVE PROPERTIES: Responding to the expressive character of the art, the import of feeling of the work. How the sensory, formal and technical properties combine with sometimes recognizable objects to create mood or feeling.

Mood Language: properties or forms that express feelings such as sad, cheerful, bold or timid, tranquil or agitated.
Dynamic or Energy Language: properties or that express a sense of tension, conflict or relaxation.
Idea and Ideal Language: Properties or forms that express social events, psychological or political views such as nobility, courage, hope, and compassion.

### Aesthetic Scanning Vocabulary Guide

**The Facts (SENSORY PROPERTIES)** - describe what you are seeing in the art work.

#### LINES

What kinds of lines do you see?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>thick</th>
<th>heavy</th>
<th>jagged</th>
<th>sharp</th>
<th>choppy</th>
<th>vertical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>diagonal</td>
<td>fuzzy</td>
<td>curved</td>
<td>graceful</td>
<td>smooth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horizontal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other description...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SHAPES

What kinds of shapes do you see?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>circles</th>
<th>squares</th>
<th>rectangles</th>
<th>triangles</th>
<th>curved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>angular</td>
<td>soft-edge</td>
<td>hard-edge</td>
<td>geometric</td>
<td>amorphous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other description...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### TEXTURES

What kinds of textures do you see?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>rough</th>
<th>smooth</th>
<th>shiny</th>
<th>hard</th>
<th>soft</th>
<th>dull</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other description...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### COLORS

What kinds of colors do you see?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WARM COLORS:</th>
<th>COOL COLORS:</th>
<th>NEUTRAL COLORS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reds</td>
<td>blues</td>
<td>browns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oranges</td>
<td>greens</td>
<td>blacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yellows</td>
<td>purples</td>
<td>grays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blues &amp; oranges</td>
<td>reds &amp; greens</td>
<td>yellows &amp; purples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OPPOSITES:**

- warm vs. cool
- dark vs. light
- rough vs. smooth
- hard vs. soft
- high vs. low
OBJECTS
What are the objects you see?

a person  old people  young people  buildings
boats     animals     trees      sky
rocks     water       food       mountains
no objects musical instrument
other...

SPACE
What kind of space is used?
deep space  shallow space  ambiguous space

The Design (FORMAL PROPERTIES)- look at the way the “facts” are put together.

BALANCE
How is the work balanced?

(mostly) symmetrical  (mostly) asymmetrical balance

DOMINANCE
Where does your eye focus first?

(state in words)

CONTRAST
Are there elements that contrast?

light/dark  soft/hard  large/small  smooth/rough
curved/straight  complementary colors

RHYTHM
Are there regular repetitions of elements that cause the eye to move?

color  shape  line  texture  light/dark

How is it made (TECHNICAL PROPERTIES)- look at the way the artist used media
TOOLS
What equipment was used to make the art work?

- canvas
- paper
- brush
- knife
- oil paint
- acrylic
- ink
- watercolors
- (state other)

TECHNIQUE
Why did the artist use the media the way he did?

- heavy brush strokes
- light strokes
- smooth texture
- high contrast
- heavy texture
- low contrast

The Meaning (EXPRESSIONIVE PROPERTIES)— find the meaning in the work

Discuss which of these words best describe the meaning of the art work that students derived from the sensory, formal, and technical properties:

- strength
- courage
- hope
- fun
- complexity of design
- beauty
- sadness
- hate
- mystery
- (state other)
- love
- happiness
- anger
- interest in shapes,
- simplicity of design
- madness
- fear
- adventure
- interest in shapes,
- color
- excitement
- loneliness
- peace
- (state other)
- loneliness
- peace
- color
APPENDIX C

ARTIST-OF-THE-WEEK LESSON PLAN BASED ON HARRY BROUDY’S AESTHETIC SCANNING TECHNIQUE
Artist-of-the-Week Lesson Plan Based on Harry Broudy’s Aesthetic Scanning Technique

The goal of this type of lesson is to help the student analyze and talk about the sensory, formal, technical and expressive properties of a particular work of art to build the child’s expressive language skills.

Each property is briefly described below followed by a series of questions that are designed to aid the child to understand the property through verbal answers.

**Artist-of-the-Week**: Vincent Van Gogh


**Sensory (descriptive) Properties**: *The art elements of line, shape, texture, color, large and small size, deep and shallow space, dark and light, etc.*


**Formal (analysis) Properties**: *The way the art work is organized. Unity, repetition, balance, contrast, dominance, rhythm, variety, etc.*


**Expressive (interpretation) Properties**: *The mood, feeling or philosophical concepts of the work.*


**Technical (judgement) Properties**: *How the work was created. The medium used (watercolor, oil paint, acrylic, bronze, wood, etc.). The tools used (brush, pencil, crayon, ink, pen, printing press, camera, etc.). The method used to make the work (drawing, photography, painting, sculpting, printing, etc.).*

1. How did the artist make this? 2. How did the artist make this part look so rough? 3. What kind of tool did the artist use? 4. Do you think the artist used crayon to make this? 5. What is the difference between a pencil drawing and this work? 6. Do you think the artist drew a picture before making the painting?
APPENDIX D

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR PRESCHOOL-FIRST GRADE

ORAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT/ORAL LANGUAGE SAMPLE

SCORING RUBRIC/INDIVIDUAL SCORE SHEET
Assessment Guidelines for Preschool–First Grade Oral Language Assessment

Teachers will listen to each child in the classroom during informal interactions to determine which children are using oral language flexibly and readily to understand and express conceptual meanings with others in the classroom that corresponds with the rubric provided (Appendix D).

The assessment area should be quiet and free from major distraction. Generally, a small table where the teacher can sit beside the child is sufficient.

Procedure
1. Show all the picture cards to the child and allow her or him to select one. Do not discuss the pictures during this preview.

2. Place the chosen picture on the table in front of the child and say, Tell me a story about the picture. Transcribe the child’s entire response. You may prompt the child by saying, Tell me more, or What else can you say? Do not ask leading questions.

3. Score the completed transcription using the rubric. For the syntax rubric, you may use the child’s typical speech to assess use of regular and irregular verbs and regular and irregular plurals, if necessary. Write the scores on the paper with the script. Add the child’s name and date of assessment to the scored script, and place it in the child’s portfolio. Enter each of the three scores on the student record sheet (Appendix F).

4. Repeat the assessment during kindergarten and first grade as appropriate until the child obtains a score of three, indicating typical performance, on each element of the rubric.

Analysis
Analyze the child’s performance. Ask yourself the following questions as you consider the response the child has given.

Syntax
“Does the child use this language at home or in social situations?”
“Is the child aware that school language and home language differ?” (Look for play situations where the child is “playing” school.)

Vocabulary
“Is the child using language that is more familiar and affective?”
“Is the child using language that is comparative and formal?”
“Is the child able to separate description based on form and function?”

Elaboration
“Does the child use analogies and/or metaphors to connect ideas and experiences?”
“Does the child string events or ideas, rather than using categories of ideas and events?”

PreK–First Grade
Oral Language Sample Scoring Rubric

Syntax
**Experienced (4)** - Sequences ideas and words in a logical manner with effective transitional words and connecting ideas.
**Capable (3)** – Sequences most ideas and words in a logical manner with some transitional words and connecting ideas.
**Developing (2)** – Presents ideas with some attention to sequence, transitional words, and connecting ideas.
**Beginning (1)** – Presents ideas with little attention to sequence, transitional words, or connecting ideas.

Vocabulary
**Experienced (4)** – Uses descriptive vocabulary that goes beyond personal experiences.
**Capable (3)** – Uses some descriptive vocabulary; may go beyond personal experiences.
**Developing (2)** – Uses minimal descriptive vocabulary; limited to own personal experiences.
**Beginning (1)** – Little or no descriptive vocabulary.

Elaboration
**Experienced (4)** – Consistently uses formal and informal language conventions appropriate for the content
**Capable (3)** – Uses formal language conventions with occasional lapses, which are inappropriate for the context.
**Developing (2)** – Mixes formal language with informal language conventions without regard for the context.
**Beginning (1)** – Primarily uses informal language patterns including slang.

Oral Language Sample
Preschool–First Grade

Individual Score Sheet

Student ___________________________ Grade ______ Date ______

Enter the number of points given to the student after each task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Picture Content Suggestions
Check types of pictures used with child.
CS Child selected
TS Teacher selected

CS  TS
☐  ☐ School related (children playing with blocks)
☐  ☐ Home related (children getting into car or on bus, a few adults and children in a family)
☐  ☐ Sports related (soccer or basketball game)
☐  ☐ Pet related (child feeding dog)
☐  ☐ Chore related (people picking apples)
☐  ☐ Urban street scene with people of different ages
☐  ☐ Other—describe __________________________________________

REFERENCES


Sorenson, L. (1988). Young students look at art. California, United States: California State University, Northridge, Department of Art General Studies.


