STRATEGIES AND ADAPTATIONS IN AN ARTS PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

WITH ATYPICAL COMMUNICATION

A Master's Degree Thesis by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to observe and implement strategies and

adaptations in an arts program for adults with atypical communication due to

developmental and intellectual disabilities. This study was conducted in the field using an

action research approach with triangulated methods of data collection including semi-

structured interviews, participant observations, and artwork analysis. While research was

conducted in two different art programs with similar populations, the main site of study

was at SpArc Service's Cultural Arts Center located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The

secondary site was at Center for Creative Works located in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.

The data collected between these sites produced common trends in strategies and

adaptations that are used in the art room. Individual case studies conducted at SpArc

Services allowed strategies to be implemented and documented in the art room. When

implementing these findings, I saw how these strategies supported the participant's goals

as outlined in their Individual Outcome Summary. While working with the individual

participants, areas of art making included textiles, mixed-media materials, and pop

culture references.

Dedication

Thank you to the clients and staff at SpArc Services Cultural Arts Center as well as Center for Creative Works for allowing me to explore this study with them as my guides.

I would like to thank my family, especially my mother, who always encourages me to pursue my artistic goals. I would also like to thank Steven Jacobs for being such a good support system throughout this experience.

I would like to thank Lauren Stichter for being such a positive force in this program and the reason I started this journey. Last but not least, many thanks to my Moore professors and fellow cohort for helping me walk me through the thesis process and being a constant sounding board throughout our time together.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

Background to Problem

Visual arts programs have had a role in the employment and development of style

and creative expression in individuals with disabilities in the United States, since the

establishment of Creative Growth Art Center in 1974. (Our Programs, n.d.) These

programs provide a service where adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

(Hereinafter known as ID/DD) can be uninhibited and free to engage in the art making of

their choice while being surrounded and inspired by their peers and staff. The participants

that attend these art programs have a place to come and be heard in a fast-paced world

that may not always be willing to slow down and take a look.

By immersing myself in a similar environment and teaching in an arts program

for adults with ID/DD for almost three years, I have been fortunate enough to encounter a

variety of artists of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. While having the opportunity to

explore a variety of mediums and subject matter, each artist or client can come into the

arts program and be a working artist. The benefits of these programs have been explored

in various studies while also providing information about how these programs are run and

emphasizing the mission of personal exploration through the arts. (Schlosnagle, McBean,

Cutlip, Panzironi, Jarmolowicz, 2014, p.110)

Although these art programs provide a powerful and expressive outlet for

individuals with ID/DD, instructors must also take into consideration the variety of

individuals who will enter the art room with varying needs and abilities. In the art room

at SpArc Services Cultural Arts Center, I work with many clients who do not have typical

communication skills. This atypical communication can be due to a variety of diagnoses

such as intellectual disabilities, which will be discussed later in this study. This delay in

communication has hindered my ability to determine what my clients may need whether

it is in regards to their artwork or other areas of their lives. In an environment where the

participant is supposed to feel comfortable and listened to, I am unable to provide them

with the proper assistance and attention they deserve. This has led me to further

investigate this gap in communication and will be discussed further in the Problem

Statement section of this Introduction.

Problem Statement

Since the deinstitutionalization movement of the 1960's, which will be discussed

further in the Literature Review section of this study, art programs have been established

for adults with ID/DD (Our Programs, n.d.). These settings provide opportunities for art

making to a wide variety of individuals with disabilities that may show an interest in the

creative arts. As an art instructor at SpArc Philadelphia's Cultural Arts Center, a non-

profit day program for adults with ID/DD, I have seen the benefits of art making for these

individuals. Through cultural outings, exhibition opportunities, and choice-based art

classes, clients have the ability to create their own individual body of work.

Throughout teaching, however, a gap in communication has occurred with the

participants who do not have typical speech. Most of the population that participates in

this art program has some form of atypical communication, ranging from no verbal

speech at all to difficulty producing typical language. All of the clients at SpArc have

also been phased out of the K-12 school system, which means they may not be provided

with the assistance of high-tech Augmentative Alternative Communication (Hereinafter

known as AAC) devices for communication like Voice Output Communication Aides

(Hereinafter as VOCAs). Communication books or Picture Exchange Communication

Systems (Hereinafter known as PECS), have been provided to some clients but they are

often forgotten at home. In the classroom, these clients may have trouble addressing

concerns such as choice of material, subject matter, and technique, which may impact

their artistic identity due to communication difficulties. These experiences have led to

investigating art making with individuals who do not communicate typically.

  The topic under debate is a practical claim that was conducted in art programs for

adults with ID/DD, focusing on clients who use atypical communication. My claim is that

communication between the art instructor and non-verbal client may improve when

purposeful art making strategies and adaptations are implemented in the art room. I also

studied if these methods, when implemented in the classroom, can have an effect on the

client's outcomes for adaptive and positive behaviors. These outcomes enable the

participant to deal with the situations of everyday life, known in the field as an Individual

Outcome Summary.

  Studies have shown that art programs for these individuals provide strong

examples of programs that move beyond the traditional stereotyping of disabled artists as

outsiders by striving to understand how and what they communicate (Derby & Wexler,

2015). Although studies have been done on the benefits of these art programs,

throughout my research, the lack of evidence for art strategies with nonverbal adults is

evident. This area of study was investigated in order for the instructor to communicate

effectively with the client, and produce artwork that, in turn, may enhance other areas of

the client's life. Participants in these art programs have shown improved artistic and

professional skills, social integration, self-esteem, and sense of purpose (Schlosnagle et

al., 2014, pg. 110). For some clients who are completely devoid of verbal speech and do

not have access to high-tech AAC devices, communicating visually can be one of the few

ways in which they can be understood.

Research Question(s)

With the above in mind, I ask the following research question(s):

Given that the expression of needs and emotion can be inhibited in adults with limited to

no verbal communication skills, and Silver (1989) suggests that imagery may serve to

bypass verbal deficiencies to capitalize on heightened visual strengths, what strategies

and adaptations in art making can be used to create an artistic dialogue between the

instructor and the client in an Arts Program for adults with intellectual and

developmental disabilities?

Furthermore, I ask:

- *In what ways would these strategies and adaptations aid the client in other areas,*
  including their Individual Support Plan Outcomes, as established by their
  support team?

- *How can art programs with similar populations benefit the instructor by*
  adapting skills seen through observations and, furthermore, how can these
  strategies be implemented in the classroom?

Theoretical Framework

      While investigating literature that relates to my research questions, I have

discovered a generous amount of information that explores and informs the reader about

the development and implementation of art programs for adults with ID/DD. The benefits

of these art programs for adults with ID/DD have been discussed in quantitative and

qualitative studies that explore these programs by focusing on client feedback in regards

to their experiences in the art studio. (Schlosnagle et al. 2014) In many of the studies that

were researched, most discussed the benefits of these programs that included

improvements in the clients self esteem, social skills, and communication. (Lister,

Tanguay, Snow, D'Amico, 2009, p. 36)

  Although I was able to gather evidence that supported the benefits of these

programs, I was unable, at this time in my study, to find research that explored working

with adults who have atypical communication in these art centers. Research by John

Derby and Alice Wexler (2015) supported the importance of working with individuals

with communication impairments in art programs; however, their research focused on

how these techniques can be used in the K-12 classroom.

  With that in mind, I also researched how children with atypical communication

skills are impacted in the art room. I discovered that research in the K-12 classroom has

been more developed than in art centers for adults with ID/DD. This may be due to the

relatively new establishment of these art programs in comparison to the history of special

education in the K-12 classroom. In order to expand my knowledge and understanding of

where my clients are coming from, I also investigated the history and development of

laws and civil rights of students and adults with ID/DD in education.

  Next, I needed to understand what defines atypical communication and

characteristics of individuals who have these experiences. As the defining characteristic

and similarity of the participants in my study, this was vital in order to understand what

these individuals may be experiencing in the art room. Strategies and adaptations for

communication for individuals with atypical communication were explored and

considered when developing strategies for working with the participants in my study.

Due to the lack of research for my specific setting and participants, I needed to

hone in on my findings and begin to piece together the data I had found and apply it to

my research. For the next section, I will discuss the significance of this study and how it

can benefit both the instructor, client, and classroom environment.

Significance of the Study

In the field of disability studies, art programs for adults with ID/DD have helped

provide a creative outlet for expression and an alternative form of communication

through the arts. As artist David Byrnes (2015) explains, " For those who have

difficulties expressing themselves and interacting socially in a more obvious and

traditional manner-as many creative folks do-this alternative language is a lifesaver."

(The Creative Growth Book, p.16) As an artist and instructor that work with these

individuals, I have noticed that this "alternative" language can be misinterpreted if the

artist is not being understood. Without strategies and adaptations that can further

enhance communication in adults with atypical communication, the essence of what the

artist is trying to express can be lost. In order to facilitate a productive peer-teacher/client

relationship, the instructor can only benefit from having additional teaching tools to

enhance communication. Through this study, strategies and adaptations were gained that

may benefit individuals with atypical communication. The strategies explored in this

study can also be applied to art educators in the K-12 classroom as well as peer-

instructors and support staff that work in art centers for adults with ID/DD.

Limitations of Study

While conducting this study I considered the limitations in my research and data

collection. Although restrictions can be seen as a roadblock, they can also be used as a

way of defining the study and the areas that cannot change or be controlled. These

limitations included attaining permissions and pertinent information regarding my

participants, time, data collection, and communication.

Due to this multi-site study and the rules and regulations provided by art

programs to protect their clients, I needed to provide multiple permission forms that

include the clients, staff, and administrators. Examples of these are shown in the

Appendices section of this proposal. Although l only conducted client interviews at

SpArc, staff and clients at my secondary site, Center for Creative Works, needed to be

aware of my intentions. These permissions took into account the participants rights as

well as gaining access to the site itself. The clients were also made aware that during the

interview process, video recording would occur as well. Once obtained, I began to collect

my data and visit my secondary site.

Due to the fact that part of my study took place at another site, I was aware that

these art programs and the clients that attend them have a routine that should not be

disrupted by my presence. Some clients with ID/DD, have routines and enjoy structure in

their daily interactions, which the support staff and instructors at these centers were

already aware of. Given that the amount of time I had for my data collection was

approximately ten weeks, I limited my observations to one secondary site with four visits

in addition to having SpArc as my main research site. This gave enough time to properly

conduct my observations without feeling rushed or making the clients, staff, or

administrator feel pressured.

I conducted an action research study that involved multiple data collection

methods in order to have a range of data to analyze and use to address my research

questions. In order to conduct and implement the findings in my study, I was aware of the

amount of information I may obtain and followed the structured appendices I created.

This included observation forms (Protocol A.) and semi-structured interview guides

(Protocol B.). The appendices and methods used for this research will be discussed in the

Methodology section and shown in the Appendices section of this study.

At the core of this study was developing communication with individuals who

interact using atypical methods. The multiple research methods that were used required

interactions that elicit responses during semi-structured interviews. I experienced

difficulties in understanding some of these participants and videotaped the interviews to

look for gestures and body language. These limitations provided me with opportunities to

use visual strategies to interact with the participants and learn more about their individual

communication styles.

All of the limitations that have been stated provided opportunities to construct and

implement this study under specified terms and conditions. By acknowledging that these

aspects of my research can hinder or change the outcome of this study, I was better

prepared to enter the field with the knowledge that the limitations listed can and may

occur. By obtaining proper permissions, acknowledging participant rights and abilities,

and being aware of the amount of time this research will take while collecting multiple

sources of data, I was able to form a solid outline of this research topic.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of key terms along with their definitions that relate to the

topics in the study as well as methodology. Due to the fact that I am taking terms from a

variety of different areas of research, the key terms have been broken down into

categories that best fit the term described.

Communication and Language

Atypical language development- The impairment or "deviant development" of

comprehension and/or use of a spoken, written, or other language system. (Atypical

Language Development, n.d.) These may stem from:

- Specific Language Impairment

- Intellectual/Developmental Disability

- Autism

- Acquired Brain Injury

- Hearing Impairment

(McLaughlin, 2011)

Nonverbal communication- Communication with others by giving and receiving wordless

signals. Types of nonverbal communication include facial expressions, gestures, eye

contact, posture, and tone of voice (Boose, Jaffe, Segal, Smith, 2016).

Autism- According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.), Autism is described as a

variable developmental disorder that appears by age three and is characterized by

impairment of the ability to form normal social relationships by impairment of the ability

to communicate with others, and by stereotyped behavior patterns. Autism and its effect

on communication may include:

- Repetitive/Rigid language: Repeating words or phrases out of context, echolalia

   speaking in high pitch or robot-like speech.

- Narrow interests/Exceptional abilities: Can give an in-depth description of a topic

   of interest but unable to hold a two-way conversation about the same topic.

- Uneven language development: Individuals with Autism vary with their

   development of speech and language skills, progress can be uneven. Some may

   not respond to speech of others.

- Poor nonverbal conversation skills: Individuals with Autism may be unable to use

   gestures to give meaning to their speech. Without meaningful gestures or

   language to communicate, many individuals become frustrated and act out these

   frustrations through vocal outbursts or other inappropriate behaviors.

(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2016)

Augmentative and Alternative Communication- Strategies that improve communication

for those who are non-speaking or natural speech does not meet their needs for functional

communication

(Grandbois, 2012).

AAC (Augmentative Alternative Communication) devices- Devices and communication

systems ranging from low-tech to high-tech that are matched to meet the strengths and

needs of the user. These include communication books, PECS, VOCA's (Voice Output

Communication Aides), etc (Grandbois, 2012).

PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)- A modified behavior analysis

program that is designed for nonverbal communication through symbols and pictures.

(Grandbois, 2012)

Adults with ID/DD in Art Programs

Art Programs-The origins of independent art centers for adults with disabilities are

deeply rooted in the collaboration of art education and psychology, through the work of

Elias Katz and Florence Ludins-Katz. These Art Centers are the model for socially

inclusive studio programs. The goals outlined allow for the power of personal choice in

self-expression, the power of expression of feelings and emotions, empowerment in

creation of self-image, and opportunities to develop social skills. The model also

recognizes the potential for persons with disabilities to be included in art museums and

galleries, thus allowing the potential for income (Finley, 2013).

Individualized Support Plan (ISP)- "The Individual Support Plan (ISP) provides details

about what is most important to an individual with intellectual disabilities so that

everyone involved in supporting that individual can focus on those areas. Developed

through a Person Centered Planning Process (PCP), the ISP collects information

concerning personal preferences, dreams and wishes, medical history/current medical

concerns, and communication preferences." (Pennsylvania Department of Human

Services, n.d.)

Outcome Action Plan-A section of an individuals ISP that provides outcomes that are

important to the individual. The outcomes developed by the individuals ISP team along

with the individual themselves encourages the client to foster choice, develop

relationships, exercise control in their life, and experience inclusion in the community

(Individual Support Plan Manual, 2015).

Support Intensity Scale Interview- The Supports Intensity Scale (hereby known as SIS)

measures the amount of support an individual with ID/DD would need to participate in

the community. SIS interviews are conducted in order to make sure the individual is

involved in his support planning. The interview is conducted using a semi-structured

interview approach and involves the interviewer knowing the client in order to better

understand their needs and concerns. (Tassé, Schalock, Thompson, Wehmeyer, 2009)

Methodology of Study

Participant Observation- A qualitative research method in which the researcher is an

active participant in the environment they are researching. Observations take place in

community settings in the participant's own environment. (Flick, p. 313)

Semi-structured Interview- Interviews based on a set of prepared, mostly open-ended

questions, which guide the interview and the interviewer. This method should be flexible

for the interviewee to give his or her perspective and additional topics. (Flick, p.197)

Case Study- An intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community)

stressing developmental factors in relation to environment. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

Assumptions to Be Debated:

- Given that adults with ID/DD can benefit from an arts program as shown through

  quantitative research studies, it will be debated that participating in an arts

  program may improve and be beneficial for a clients ISP goals.

- Given that there are a wide variety of art programs for adults with ID/DD and

  these programs have similar missions including improvement of communication,

  social skills, and self-worth, it will be debated that these programs can benefit

  from each other through participatory observation and implementation of art

  techniques from other instructors and staff.

- Given that adults with ID/DD may have atypical communication skills but can

  express themselves through their artwork, it will be debated that art-making

  strategies implemented by the art instructor may improve communication in the

  art classroom.

Assumptions Not to Be Debated:

- Given that AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) devices such as

  PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) can be used for

  communication in the classroom but may be limited financially or in what they

  want to communicate especially when it comes to themes or abstract concepts in

  art making, it will not be debated as the main form of communication in the art

  room.

- Given that some of the research I have been collecting has come from an art

  therapists perspective and that the population I work with is largely researched in

  that area, I acknowledge that I am not qualified to approach my study from that

  angle and it will not be debated that my study may fall into the category of art

  therapy.

- Given that this study will be conducting flexible research methods and the

  participants come from a wide range of diagnoses, it will not be debated that this

  is a set list of rules and guidelines that will work for all adults with atypical

  communication in the art room.

- Given that the topic of facilitated communication has been used to describe

  controversial methods in communicating with individuals with atypical

  communication it will not be debated as a strategy for my study.

Summary/Roadmap of Chapters

As stated in the Background to the Problem, the development of Art Centers for

Adults with ID/DD is growing with research available that shows the benefits of art

programs in the lives of these individuals. However, when it comes to developing

teaching strategies in Art Programs for adults with ID/DD, specifically with atypical

communication, there is a long way to go in terms of resources and research. With that in

mind, this study aimed to develop strategies and adaptations in art making, in order to

create a stronger working relationship between the instructor and client with atypical

communication. I explored how these strategies can benefit other areas of the clients

lives, as well as, how observing and learning from similar art programs can improve the

instructors knowledge of working with these individuals.

When it comes to research regarding this topic, the work of psychologists and art educators Elias and Florence Katz, pioneers of the movement for Arts Programs for Adults with ID/DD is shown along with their model for an ideal arts program. (Finley, 2013) Research studies that focus on Art Programs and the benefits of these settings are shown, along with qualitative and quantitative data, proving these claims. Alternative communication with atypical learners is also explored, along with strategies and devices that's may show improvement in the classroom.

Though the significances and limitations of this study are known and stated in the previous sections, it is felt that the topic should be investigated in this assumed way and as such, issues such as AAC devices and language systems as a main form of assistive communication or looking at my study from the perspective of an art therapist, which I am not certified to give, will not be discussed.

As will be discussed in the forthcoming literature review, topic areas in relation to my study and experts in the field such as Alice Wexler and Florence & Elias Katz will be shown to highlight and inform this new information and problem under investigation.

In the Chapter III: Methodology section of this study, individualized case studies will be examined in order to further investigate and elaborate on the research questions asked in my Problem Statement. This chapter will also explain the ways in which I conducted my study including design of study, participants, setting, and data collection methods.

Chapter IV shows the results of my study and includes data collection and finding. In this chapter I use the data that I collected during my action research to answer the thesis questions asked at the beginning of the study.

This study was conducted with a bounded unit of three participants that fall under the category of individuals with atypical communication. This was conducted in an Arts Program, in order to investigate strategies and adaptations to facilitate communication in the art room. This was conducted using participant observations, individualized case studies, access to the participants ISP, artwork documentation, employee questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The following chapter will discuss the methods and resources I have found that relate most to the topics in the study.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

While assembling and gathering evidence that relate to the research inquiry,

themes that can assist in presenting information have been categorized and presented in

the following chapter. Given that one of the main issues in this inquiry is lack of research

in instructing individuals who have atypical communication in the art room, the evidence

presented is a collection of information that relates most to the topic and methodology of

the study. Figure 1 shows a chart that visually maps the path that this research has taken.

By presenting these findings in a chronological sense, I intended to give the reader a

glimpse into what these participants may have experienced throughout their lives.

Arts and Disability in the Classroom

Throughout this research, the majority of teaching strategies found for working

with individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities have been in the K-12

classroom. There is even less research to be found in the K-12 art classroom about

working with individuals with atypical communication. It is important to acknowledge

these settings in the literature review as they can help inform the research even if it's not

in the exact age range of the participants or setting of the study.

History of K-12 Special Education

In order to research special education in the K-12 art classroom, acknowledging its

history in education is important in order to understand how far we have come in art

and disability education. Although this is just a brief summary, highlighting

achievements in disability education can also relate to advancements in art programs for

adults with disabilities, which will be discussed further in this literature review.
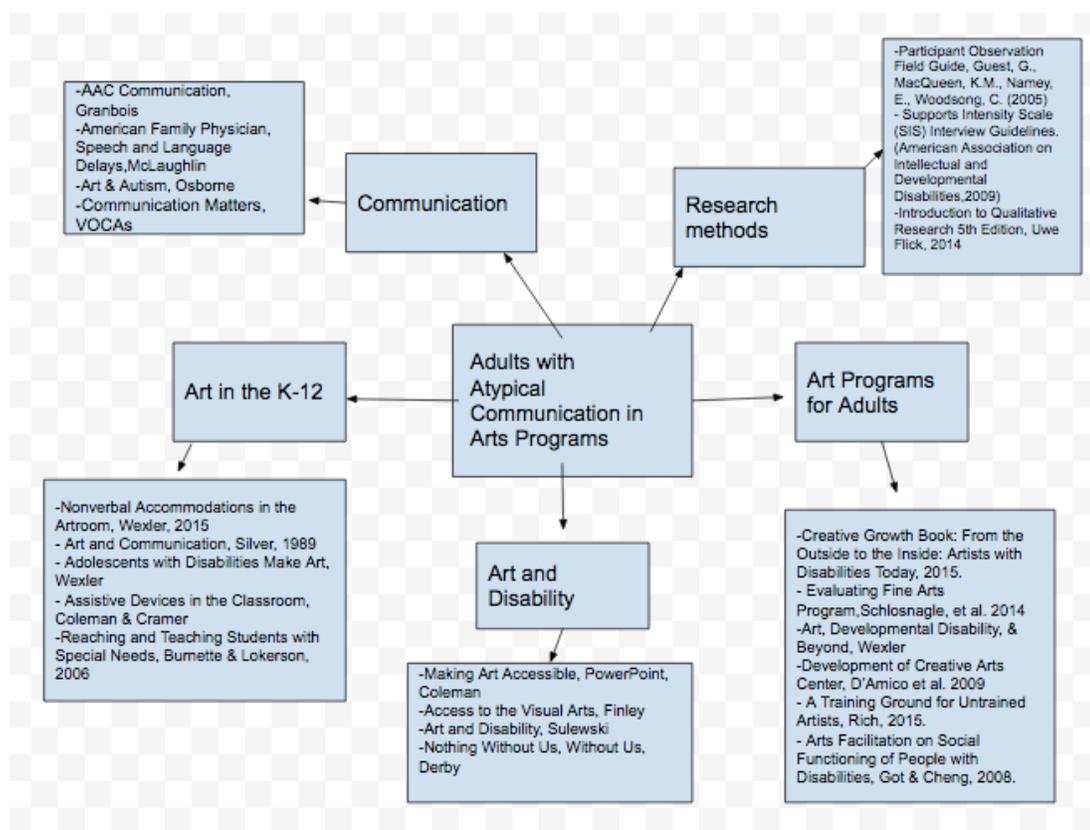
Figure 1. Concept Map.
-This map shows the layout of the research used for the study.

In the book *Reaching and Teaching Students with Special Needs through Art*, art

educators Jane Burnette and Jean Elizabeth Lokerson discuss the shift in disability

education.

     After the civil rights movement of the 1960s came a call to action for other

individuals who needed a voice, including people with disabilities (Burnette & Lokerson,

2006). Parents and educators demanded equal educational opportunities in the classroom

because prior to the 1960s, many people thought that individuals with disabilities were

incapable of learning (Burnette & Lokerson 2006). Although this was almost 60 years

ago, the participants in this study are around the age where they may have been affected

by this movement or were unable to have the opportunities to learn like individuals with

ID/DD can today.

Following the civil rights movement came the implementation of very important

laws and movements that helped shape disability education (Burnette & Lokerson, 2006).

For the purpose of this study, I will mention the laws implemented, but expand on the

ones most relatable to the research in this section. These laws include the Education for

All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which turned into IDEA and the No Child Left

Behind Act of 2001 (from now on referred to as NCLB) (Burnette & Lokerson, 2006).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 required that public schools

serve students of all abilities and that students were entitled to a *free, appropriate, public*

education (Referred to as FAPE) This law also included specially designed instruction,

referrals for evaluations, being educated in a least restrictive environment, providing

Individualized Education plans (hereinafter known as IEPs), and laws to be applied when

there are disagreements between the school and the parents in regards to the students

identification, eligibility, or placement (Burnette & Lokerson, 2006). This law applied to

general education but do not have any specific mentions of art education. It did include in

the comments under related services that a student could receive, may include, "other

developmental, corrective, or supportive services (which may include artistic and cultural

programs) if they benefit the students special education" (Burnette & Lokerson, 2006).

As these laws began to change and grow over the years, the Education for All

Handicapped Children Act was reauthorized into IDEA (Burnette & Lokerson 2006).

Since then, IDEA has gone through many phases, most recently updated in 2004 (U.S.

Department of Education, 2004). These changes focused on recognizing individuals with

disabilities at varying stages in their lives and the services they would require. In terms of

art education, IDEA of 1997, focused on art in the general education curriculum, arts

included in statewide testing, accommodations in the classroom, and being included in

students IEP development (Burnette & Lokerson, 2006). In its most recent update, IDEA

helps to ensure accountability and improved education for children with disabilities,

which aligns with the No Child Left Behind Act or NCLB. (Burnette & Lokerson, 2006)

The No Child Left Behind Act is a general education law, put into affect during

the Bush Administration. This required all states, schools, and districts to be accountable

for the academic achievement and progress of all students (Burnette, Lokerson 2006). As

for the arts, it was officially identified as a core academic subject under the law

(Burnette, Lokerson 2006). Secretary of Education at the time, Rodney Page, had this to

say about art education: "I believe the arts have a significant role in education both for

their intrinsic value and for the ways in which they can enhance general academic

achievement and improve students social and emotional development" (Burnette,

Lokerson 2006). The arts enhancing social and emotional development has also been

researched in arts programs for adults with ID/DD, showing improvements and benefits

of making art. This will be further discussed in another section of this literature review.

Throughout the history of Art Education in the United States, progress has been

made to further enhance the experience and full inclusion of children with ID/DD in the

arts. Although there is always progress to be made, with each incoming administration,

changes could be put into effect that can push education forward and hopefully not

backwards. As the NCLB Act begins to phase out, work is being done on the Every

Student Succeeds Act or ESSA signed by President Barack Obama in 2015 (U.S.

Department of Education, 2015). ESSA plans to expand from the NCLB Act and focuses

on issues such as protecting America's disadvantaged and high needs students (U.S.

Department of Education, 2015). Even though the research site and participants for this

study is geared towards adults, they may have been influenced at some point in their lives

by the education system and depending on when they lived through it, how these laws

affected them.

Adaptations/Teaching Strategies in the K-12 Art Classroom

In the K-12 art classroom teachers are able to develop their teaching methods and

strategies in order to maintain classroom management and effective learning. Through

curriculum and lesson planning, art educators may be able to develop a structure in how

they teach in their classroom. In an art program for adults, teaching focuses mainly on

listening to what each individual client is interested in and helping them develop their

own artistic styles. Yet, each of these scenarios still requires adaptations and strategies in

order to enhance creative expression and understanding.

Educators in the K-12 classroom have the opportunity to provide open art

instruction, where the student is able complete an assignment or project that has many

solutions, so students of varying abilities are able to express themselves creatively

(Coleman, n.d.). There are a variety of different teaching strategies and adaptations that

can be used to enhance the experience of students with disabilities. For the purpose of

this study and the participants that have been selected, the research focused on

accommodations, adaptive tools, and strategies that can benefit individuals with atypical

communication.

Alice Wexler discusses in her article, "Beyond Accommodations: Designing for

Nonverbal/Nonauditory Learners in the Inclusive Art Room," the challenges students

with atypical communication face in the art room:

Children who are not neurotypically wired do not perceive the world in a unified

way. Once in school, the inability to self-organize one's space and mind leads to

frustration and failure, because information is usually presented for auditory

learners in a sequential and logical spatial pattern. Autists and children with other

learning disabilities have difficulty in interpreting, analyzing, and understanding.

Most students will not experience the frustration and confusion of their

nonverbal/nonauditory peers. (p.15)

Instructors should take into account their entire environment when considering the

needs of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. From the

arrangement of the room to the placement of art materials, these decisions can help or

hinder the flow of teaching. Wexler also suggests the ability to have a moveable

workspace where tables and chairs can be arranged quickly, even adjustable for height to

meet the varying needs of the students (Wexler & Luethi-Garrett, 2015). However, many

teachers have to work with the tables and chairs they get for their rooms and adjustable

and moveable tables and chairs may be a cost their school or organization is unable to

cover.

Students who are unable to verbally communicate might struggle with how sound

is transmitted in the art room. Wexler states that, "an art room's size and dimension have

a direct connection to how students receive information. Ideal art room space and

audibility of sound depend on volume, pitch, and duration- components that must

function equally well in order to convey the message successfully" (Wexler, Luethi-Garrett, 2015). SpArc's art room, the Main Site of the study, is located towards the back of the building, in an area that has less foot traffic, resulting in a quieter, calmer environment. However, because it is an open teaching studio and drop-in style class, there is no door, which causes sound to travel into the room that at times caused distractions for the participants. In many cases, teachers are not able to pick the space they work in and must be creative when accommodating the classroom for diverse learners.

Although I have previously discussed the use of AAC devices, there are other adaptive tools that can be used to facilitate communication that do not require any expense or extra materials. While this review has introduced language systems or PECS, in the art room, teachers have the opportunity to make specific vocabulary relating to the medium they are focusing on. On the following page, Figure 2 shows the use of a high-tech art board showing a variety of symbols to represent the arts in terms of materials and what they want to show or express in the art room (Coleman, n.d.). The use of PECS and communication boards will be further discussed in Chapter 4 of this study.

Although there are a variety of accommodations for the art room, these were a small sample that relate to the research questions. The strategies mentioned were considered for this study and a specific kind of communication board or visual chart was created for a participant in the study.

Art Programs for Adults with Disabilities

The focus of this study is the participants that I teach at SpArc Philadelphia, an arts program for adults with ID/DD. Working in this creative and unique environment has

given me the opportunity to create with individuals who have the ability to produce

personal work of their choosing.

High Tech: Painting Board

	yes	no	I don't know	not on this board		

I need help	I need	I want	I don't want	I like	I don't like
more	different	I have something to say	Ask me questions	Ask me a yes/no question	Do you understand?
What are you doing?	Tell me about that	What do you think?	What is your favorite?	Which do you like?	That's cool
painting	paint	paintbrush	paper or canvas	easel	mix
line	shape	color	texture	tint	shade
white	black	red	yellow	blue	light
brown	green	pink	purple	orange	dark

Figure 2. Example of a Communication Board.
-This board was used in the art classroom with students who
have atypical communication (Coleman, n.d.)

This atmosphere, which nurtures and encourages exploration of each client's individual

style also promotes the mission of community involvement, socialization, and

development as a working artist. (SpArc Philadelphia, 2016) These art programs are

fairly new, with the first art center for adults with disabilities established over 40 years

ago. A recent topic, research on these centers has been limited. A majority of the findings

discussed benefits of art programs and ways to establish your own art program. Best

teaching practices in this particular environment, especially when working with adults

with atypical communication, has been non-existent when exploring the topic.

Interacting with individuals of varying cognitive levels and abilities and watching their creative process while also trying to effectively assist them is what led to an action research study in this area.

Emergence of Programs after Deinstitutionalization

Art programs for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities were established in response to the deinstitutionalization movement of the 1960s. Signed in 1967 by Governor Ronald Reagan, the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act aimed to end the involuntary and indefinite commitment of people with mental health disorders, developmental disabilities, and chronic alcoholism (The Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 2014). This was a step in the right direction for how we treat individuals with disabilities but many patients who were hospitalized now had no place to go which led to a rise in homelessness and imprisonment.

Enter Elias and Florence Ludins-Katz, psychologists and art educators who developed the first United States model of an art center for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Derby & Wexler, 2015). Although there have been art centers established in other parts of the world such as Gugging House of Artists in Austria, for the purposes of this research I will be focusing on the development of these programs in the United States. In 1973 in Oakland, California the Katz's established Creative Growth Art Center, which focused on providing a safe environment for creative expression for individuals who may not have had anywhere else to go (Finley, 2013). The development of Creative Growth, as cited in the book *Arts and Disabilities: Establishing the Creative Art Center for People with Disabilities,* describes how an arts program is created and run. The Katz's describe their program as " a full-time supportive and stimulating

environment without pressure, threat, or competitiveness in which creative work in

painting, sculpture, printmaking, creative crafts, etc. is carried on in a studio setting for

people with mental, physical, or social disabilities" (Finley, 2013). Matthew Higgs, an

artist and curator, writes about his first visit to the program in the introduction of *The

Creative Growth Book, From the Outside to the Inside: Artists with Disabilities Today*:

> Crossing the threshold into the center's gallery and studio for that first time was,
>
> and remains, the single most significant encounter I've had with art. Everything I
>
> thought I knew about art up to that moment both subtly and dramatically changed.
>
> If art had previously seemed a somewhat ambiguous or amorphous idea, at
>
> Creative Growth it appeared to be a tangible and life-affirming force. Art's
>
> potential- its ability to represent and transform an individual's life- was viscerally
>
> present. It was as if I was encountering art- for the very first time (despite having
>
> worked as a curator of contemporary art for a decade.) (p. 8)

Creative Growth also emphasized the opportunities participants can have in the

art world, by giving them the opportunity to show and sell their work in galleries. This

center provided a national model for a "socially inclusive studio art program- or art

center" (Finley, 2013). The Katz's went on to establish other art programs for adults with

disabilities in Northern California, such as Creativity Explored and Creativity Unlimited.

Eventually, the Katz's determined the need for a national organization of these centers,

which became the National Institute on Art and Disability or NIAD created in 1984

(Finley, 2013).

Since the development of Creative Growth art centers with similar missions have

been established across the United States, giving more individuals with ID/DD the

opportunity to explore and express themselves through the arts. For this study, I

conducted action research in two Philadelphia area art centers, SpArc Services and

Center for Creative Works in order to understand how these programs are run as well as

what strategies and adaptations could benefit individuals with atypical communication.

Ways Art Centers Teach: Mission

Throughout this research into various art programs, I have noticed a similar

pattern in the goals for their programs. The Katz's describe this mission best by dividing

it into four differences when comparing arts centers to regular community based services

for adults with disabilities.

Artists are given a choice and have control over the work that they create. Art

centers focus and encourage the artistic process in a least-restrictive environment where

artists can work at their own pace (Finley, 2013). For many art centers, teaching staff can

be called peer-teachers and describe their goals as, "bringing the artwork to the level that

the artists want it to be" (Wexler, 2012). By giving participants time to develop their

artwork, these artists can truly enjoy what they're doing without being pressured by strict

project requirements and deadlines.

This art center model also gives the participants a sense of achievement by

creating original artworks and having the opportunity for their work to be shown, as

many centers collaborate with outside galleries, institutions, and companies (Finley,

2013). This will be further discussed in Chapter IV of this study. Art Programs like

Center for Creative Works in Pennsylvania have had the opportunity to showcase their

work at the Outsider Art Fair, held in New York City, showcasing work from many

galleries and programs who represent "self taught" artists of all backgrounds (Outsider

Art Fair, 2017). The subject of Outsider Art can also be associated with art by people

with disabilities, but also has a wider range of "self taught," secluded, or eccentric artists.

For this study, I will not be discussing the relationship between Outsider Art and art

programs, as it does not relate to my research topics.

Inclusion, or the opportunity for these individuals to participate in an art studio

setting while working with other artists and instructors with similar passions, gives the

participants exposure to all types of art making and styles by working with teaching

artists in these settings. Kathleen Henderson, a longtime staff member at Creative

Growth, describes working with clients as a fellow artist (as cited in The Creative Growth

Book, 2016): "We are mindful of the artistic process. We know that some days are not

very productive and some days, even weeks, are not. We know that some progress is

sometimes made by going backwards we are also on the lookout for happy accidents and

experimentations" (p. 66).

A unique part of these art centers that differ from the limits of the grades of K-12,

is the variety of ages that can participate in these programs. Although art centers have

various qualifications or requirements for enrollment, whether through community or

state provided agencies, the ages of participants can range from 21 and up. The

opportunity for participants to work together, young and old provide younger clients the

chance to see how older participant's function in this environment, while the older

generation can learn and collaborate with younger participants in the program.

The goals of these art programs can also align with participant's Individual

Support Plan outcomes, which can be essential in developing and maintaining what a

participant learns through this program. Individual Support Plans, similar to an IEP for

K-12 students, is a "written report that details the supports, activities, and resources, that

an Individual, Personal Agent, or Service Coordinator, and other people of the

Individuals choice agree are important to or for achieving and maintaining personal

outcomes" (Oregon Department of Human Services, n.d.). A participant may have a ISP

outcome to be more involved in social activities. This is the case for a participant in this

study, which will be further discussed in Chapter Four, Findings. Being involved in an

arts program that focuses on community involvement is a way for the participant to

achieve their goals while contributing to community arts.

I have researched art programs from all over the world both for this study and as a

personal interest since working at SpArc. Learning from these programs and artists is

important in order to keep improving and expanding these ideas. Because of the lack of

research regarding strategies for working with adults who cannot typically communicate,

having the chance to see what other programs are doing and how they are doing it is

important to make progress in these environments. Collaboration and learning from other

art programs will be further discussed in Chapter Four, Findings.

Case Studies: Benefits of Art Programs for Adults with DD/ID

Throughout the research into this topic the bulk of the studies that have been

found related to the benefits of art programs for adults with developmental disabilities.

Research studies using qualitative and quantitative data have shown improvements in

participant behavior by enrolling in these programs. Most of the research consisted of

qualitative data, which used methods such as action research and participatory

observations, which is further described in the next section of this literature review. The

flexible nature of these research methods works best in these environments, which need

to be able to adapt to changing surroundings in these open and exploratory settings. This

study uses triangulated methods of data collection that include a variety of qualitative

data methods which will be further discussed in Chapter Three, Methodology. I have

been unable to find studies that discuss strategies for working with adults with atypical

communication in these settings, but being informed by the research that has been found

can benefit the study and data collection methods.

   In a study that evaluated a Fine Arts program at the Center for Excellence in

Disabilities, the researchers used an action research approach to see if the program

enhanced community inclusion, socialization, and employment for people with

disabilities (Schlosnagle, et. al, 2014). This approach will be discussed further in the in

Chapter Three, Methodology. Through questionnaires and interviews given to clients in

these centers, researchers asked a convenience sample of eight artists about their quality

of life before being enrolled in this program, along with how their artistic skills have

changed or improved since (Schlosnagle, et al., 2014). There was no mention in this

study of the client's communication level, which indicates all of the clients were able to

respond to the questions in some type of verbal response. When the questionnaires were

given, they consisted of open-ended questions regarding how they became involved in

their programs to more quantitative questions that included "How they have improved as

Artists since entering the program" along with a scale rating from 1 (much worse) to 5

(much better) (Schlosnagle, et al., 2014). When the questionnaires and data were

processed the results indicated that participants experienced positive changes after

enrolling in the Fine Arts Program (Schlosnagle, et al., 2014). Qualitative data identified

the most commonly mentioned improvements being: exposed to other artists, meeting

new people, increased self-esteem, and an improved sense of self-worth (Schlosnagle, et

al., 2014). These findings also align with the strategies suggested by the Katz's in the

previous section of this review as goals for a successful arts program. This study also

indicated the positive involvement of the staff as a benefit for the participants where,

"personal connection with the program staff seems to have maintained the participation

of the consumers" (Schlosnagle et. al 2014). In these programs the relationship between

the participants, instructors, and staff can provide a variety of roles. Matt Dostal, a studio

manager for Creative Growth, describes the relationship between the staff and the clients

at his program as, "Part coworker, part friend, and part family member" (The Creative

Growth Book, 2015).

    Other studies done in art centers also suggest the benefits of these programs. An

arts center in Toronto discussed their findings, which included a sense of pride in their

artwork, freedom to express themselves, and coming into a judgment-free environment

(Anderson & Reid, 2011). Participants also spoke about their ability to exhibit and sell

their artwork, which contributes to their "identity as an artist" (Anderson & Reid, 2011).

    Once again, throughout this review I was still unable to find specific instances of

working with adults with atypical communication in an arts center. Although I discovered

many positive studies and strategies for working with adults in art centers, the

participants in this study had been overlooked in my research. This gap in research served

as an exciting flaw in order to further investigate arts facilitation and benefits of working

with these particular individuals. Through similar qualitative research methods outlined

in these studies, I intended to gain a better understanding of how to develop beneficial

strategies for the participants. In the next chapter, I'll begin to discuss my methodology,

which include the setting, structure, and methods I used to conduct the research.

Atypical Communication

In order to understand how the participants in this study communicate, topics

including atypical communication, nonverbal communication, and Augmentative

Alternative Communication were explored. Understanding how individuals with atypical

communication interact and use nonverbal techniques to communicate can be a valuable

teaching tool in the art room and expand beyond the classroom.

Atypical Communication in Adults

Characteristics of atypical communication emerge when developmental

milestones do not occur typically throughout development (McLaughlin, 2011).

According to *American Family Physician*, atypical communication can develop due to a

secondary condition such as Autism or intellectual disability. Symptoms may include

speech delay, echolalia (repeating phrases), difficulty with conversation, pronoun

reversal, and speech and language regression (McLaughlin, 2011). This article describes

these characteristics as they are identified throughout childhood development while also

providing interventions such as language training programs and speech-language therapy

(McLaughlin, 2011). Because the subject of language and development is so vast, this

section will be focusing on what defines atypical communication in relation to the

participants I worked with for the study

As for the research group for this study, with ages ranging from their mid 20's to

late 50's, they have already developed their speech and language to the best of their

ability and due to lack of documents for some participants, will be unable to know what

their language development was like during childhood. Some of these individuals may have had language therapy throughout childhood, while others were never given the proper tools to help them increase their communication skills. The participants ISP's for this study discussed their current form of communication with a glimpse into their developmental milestones if it was provided. Working with individuals with atypical communication skills gave me an opportunity to interact with these individuals to the best of their ability, while also trying to comprehend the unique ways in which they can express their needs and ideas. Visually, in the art room this can be done with nonverbal communication skills, which doesn't require verbal speech to interact.

Nonverbal Communication

Everything we do as humans when we interact with each other that does not involve speech is some form of nonverbal communication. This can be as simple as a glance in someone's direction or a wave of your hand to indicate "Hello!" or "Goodbye!"

For some individuals, this form of communication can be the best and only way they are able to interact and be understood by others. This is described in the article "Cultural Commentary: Up in the Clouds and Down in the Valley: My Richness and Yours" by Amanda Baggs, a woman diagnosed with autism, which resulted in speech and language delays. In this section she describes how using nonverbal communication helps her interact with others:

> I also have many forms of communication in addition to, or instead, of language. I
> have a body language that some others -usually autistic people- can understand. I
> have the way I interact with things around me at a *particular* time, compared to
> how I usually interact with them. I have ways of arranging objects and actions

rhythms in general or those of my favorite numbers. (I really like the rhythm of

seven, for example.) I can speak Feline about as well as anyone with my limited

human senses. (2010)

Individuals can communicate using nonverbal techniques such as facial

expressions, body movement and posture, gestures, eye contact, touch, space, and even

voice (Boose, Jaffe, Segal, Smith 2016). The benefits of nonverbal communication are

further discussed in the Chapter Four Findings section of this study. Clients in the art

room can use gestures, like pointing or eye contact, to indicate objects or materials that

they would like to work with. This communication was essential when interacting with

the participants for this study during semi-structured interviews and participant

observations.

The instructor must also take into consideration how to effectively use these

forms of nonverbal communication in the art room. Many factors can influence the

instructor including stress, emotional awareness, and classroom management. According

to "Help Guide" an online platform that provides information on social, mental, and

emotional health, nonverbal communication requires the instructor's full concentration

and attention in order to pick up on nonverbal cues in the classroom (Boose et. al 2016).

Managing stress during these interactions is particularly important, as emotions can have

an effect on what the client is trying to relay via nonverbal communication. Many

educators can relate, however, that in a classroom full or students or clients with varying

abilities, having the opportunity to interact with each student individually can turn into an

overwhelming situation. Stress makes reading and reciprocating nonverbal

communication more difficult and easier to misread or send confusing signals (Boose et.

al 2016). Emotional awareness, or how one perceives their emotions and mood, can also

help interpret the feelings of others when they might not be able to verbally express what

they are feeling.

Although I have learned to communicate with many of the clients in this study

using nonverbal communication, due to delays in cognitive abilities or lack of time to

efficiently use these techniques, the clients may not be able to express what they need in

the classroom. Using nonverbal communication can be a tool to assisting individuals with

atypical communication and is further discussed in Chapter Four. Alternative ways of

communication that involve the use of technology or other assistive devices and media

can also be used to enhance communication in individuals with atypical communication.

Augmentative Alternative Communication

Throughout the years and with advancements in technology, individuals with

atypical communication now have opportunities to communicate with the assistance of a

secondary source or device. According to Kate Grandbois (2012), a Speech and

Language Pathologist, Alternative Augmentative Communication, or AAC, are strategies

that improve communication for those who cannot speak or natural speech does not meet

their needs in order to be effectively understood. For the purpose of this study I will be

focusing on two types of AAC, devices and language systems or PECS, and their relation

to the population I worked with.

AAC can include low-tech strategies such as language systems, which use

specific vocabulary that is important to the individual, and includes a communication

book. (Grandbois, 2012). A communication book, is a physical book that includes

pictures and symbols to represent what the individual would like to say or gives them

options for answers such as a section for color choices and materials in the art room or a

section for requests like going to the bathroom or needing a tissue. These symbols can

also be referred to as PECS or Picture Exchange Communication System (Grandbois

2012).

Mid-tech communication devices can include technology such as Voice Output

Communication Aides or VOCAs (Grandbois, 2012). VOCAs allow the user to

communicate through a device that may include symbols or messages such as "Yes" and

"No" or more advance phrases by using combinations of symbols and words to create a

sentence (Communication Matters, 2015). There are a variety of VOCAs available that

use single message, multi messages, or multi buttons to communicate (Grandbois 2012).

Single message devices use a recorded message, made by the clients caregiver, and can

be prerecorded in order for the individual to tell, for example their teacher, what they

brought from home that day (Communication Matters, 2015). This device comes with

many limitations because they are only given the options that have been prerecorded and

may be in situations where they do not have an appropriate recorded answer to respond

with. Multi messages allow the user to respond with a series of messages that can relate

to a more specific question that requires a more specific response (Communication

Matters, 2015). However, this can also be limited, as the user is still using prerecorded

messages. Overlay VOCAs, or multi-button, allow the user to use a keyboard with a

variety of PECS that correspond to a spoken sound when pressed, where the user can then

form more complex sentences when interacting with someone else, by using a

combination of pictures and symbols (Communication Matters, 2015).

Throughout this research I have seen these AAC strategies being implemented in the K-12 classroom, however in an art program for adults there is an extreme lack of these techniques. Upon further investigation and discussions with an employee at SpArc, I have learned that after clients transition out of the school system, access to these AAC devices through insurance can become more difficult. (Personal Communication, October, 2016). This also requires the advocate for the individual to be proactive in making sure their family member or client has access to everything they need in order to express themselves in and out of the art room. In reality, this is often not the case so the use of AAC is limited. Access to AAC devices for the participants in this study will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

Summary

Researching individuals with atypical communication in art programs informed me of strategies I can use to better work with clients in the art room. In order to begin to observe and implement these strategies it was important to have information regarding how atypical communication forms in relation to the participants in this study and the options that are given to help improve communication. Although this is such a large and diverse category, focusing on gathering information about people with ID/DD and addressing specific AAC strategies including how nonverbal communication can be used in the classroom, help defined what topics will be discussed in this study.

Chapter III: Methodology

Design of Study

Throughout the following chapter, the methods used to conduct this study will be shown. This will include the settings in which this multi-site investigation occurred along with the participants who were included in the main study. The role of the researcher will be discussed, as well as procedures and ethical considerations that were made in order to conduct a proper study, keeping the considerations of the participants in mind. Next, the type of study will be explained as a bounded system using action research combined with quantitative data methods. Then, how these methods will be implemented will be discussed as well as how they were chosen in accordance to the topic. Finally, data analysis will be introduced as well as what methods will be used to organize the data that is collected.

Setting

This study was conducted in two sites, with the main site located at my current teaching position at SpArc Services. The bulk of the research and participants for individual case studies were conducted there, while the secondary site, Center for Creative Works, an art program with a similar mission and population was for participant observations and data collection. This secondary site also informed my research question on how learning from other art programs can be beneficial for working with this population.

SpArc Philadelphia is a non-profit organization that falls under the umbrella of the Arc of Philadelphia, which is affiliated with the Arc of Pennsylvania and the Arc of the United States (The Arc of Philadelphia, 2016). According to the Arc of Philadelphia

web page (n.d.), The Arc was founded in 1948 by parents and guardians who wanted

better opportunities and services for their children with developmental and intellectual

disabilities. The Arc of Philadelphia was one of the first in the United States and still

provides a variety of services for their clients.

As a non-profit organization, SpArc relies on government grants, business

partners, event supporters, memberships, and donations for funding (SpArc Philadelphia,

2016). SpArc Philadelphia is a day program that provides opportunities for adult

individuals to get out and be involved in their community including employment,

community supports, and opportunities for community connections (SpArc Philadelphia,

2016). The program participants also have the option of exploring cultural and

community arts through the Cultural Arts Center where I am employed as an Art

Instructor. Clients who attend the Cultural Arts Center have the option of exploring visual

Arts, performing arts, music, and writing. These clients also are involved with institutions

in the Philadelphia area including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, LaSalle University,

and Moore College of Art and Design by providing their artwork for exhibitions and

collaborations. SpArc Philadelphia is a non-profit organization, so the clients who are

accepted into their program come through a variety of agencies committed to providing

their clients with a successful transition into the community (SpArc Philadelphia, n.d.).

The Main Site of my research will be at SpArc Services Cultural Arts Center, a

large converted warehouse, located in North Philadelphia. It is separated by a walkway

that connects most of the administrative offices to the main building, where the clients

are located.

The work center is on the first floor along with the downstairs Cultural Arts

Center, separated by an alcove. The nurse's office and maintenance area are also located

off of the downstairs Cultural Arts room. The rooms are very large open spaces for the

clients to work in and interact. The downstairs Cultural Art Center occupies around 15-25

clients.

On the second floor of the building, connected by an elevator and three separate

stairways, is the second floor Cultural Arts Center, Music Room, Administrative Offices,

Autism Support Room, and the Art Classroom. The offices are smaller and separated,

while the music room is located down a hallway on the right, along with a small

lunch/break room on the left, leading into the upstairs Cultural Arts Center, which is an

open space with round tables and chairs. This section occupies about 15-20 clients.

Going through the second floor Cultural Arts Center connects to a hallway,

decorated with artwork from the Autism Support room, which is located on the right side

of the hallway in a smaller, sunlit room that can accommodate clients who need a quieter

space to work. Around five clients occupy this room. At the end of the hallway is the art

room, where the main part of the study was conducted.

The art room is large open room with the maximum capacity for 15-20 clients.

Open shelves line the left and right sides of the room with four long tables pushed

together in the middle of the room, which are surrounded with chairs. The open shelves

provide storage and organization for client artwork, and artwork is also arranged by

program area and special projects such as work associated with LaSalle University and

the Philadelphia Museum of Art. On the left side of the room are two separate rooms, the

changing room and the kiln room, which is operated by the ceramics instructor who

comes on a different day of the week. On the right side of the room, towards the front, is

the sink and shelving for brushes, water containers, and other wet media tools. In the

right corner is the art room closet, which is small but efficient in housing all of the art

supplies for the room. Participant observations will be conducted in this room, as well as

interviews in the back of the room where there is a large, sunlit window and a large desk

big enough for two to sit comfortably.

   Participant observations were conducted in one other art program, Center for

Creative Works located in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. The addition of a second site

gave a better understanding of how programs with similar populations are working and

communicating with participant. In researching similar environments I intended to

expand my knowledge of these settings in order to better understand how these artists

work and what creates a positive space for individuals who may not be able to verbally

express what they need. This will be further discussed in Chapter IV, Findings.

Participants

   The participants in this study are two males and one female who range from their

mid 20s to late 50s. The participants involved are of African American and Caucasian

backgrounds, with one participant having limited mobility due to arthritis but is not

wheelchair-bound. The participants in this study have a variety of intellectual and

developmental disabilities, with the commonality of not being able to produce typical

language. This similarity in ability is what makes this wide range of individuals the group

I focused on for this study. These participants are described in more detail in their

individual case studies, located in Chapter IV.

The range of these inabilities consisted of no speech at all to some speech that include yes or no answers, severe speech impediments, or nonverbal communication. The clients I chose to focus on are participants I have known and interacted with for at least two years. Having the chance to work at SpArc for almost three years has given me the opportunity to get to know these individuals personally and, in turn, have developed a sense of how they interact with others in the art classroom. By choosing a variety of clients this study represents the vast range of individuals who participate in the SpArc program. The participants come from all different backgrounds and live in the Philadelphia area. Some participants live with parents or guardians while others reside in community homes with roommates, provided by government agencies.

When selecting these clients I took into consideration their availability for the study. The clients at SpArc have the opportunity to come to the program every day of the week or part-time. Some clients attend other programs or jobs during the week and may only be available on certain days. Other obstacles may be clients who need constant medical procedures, which require doctors' appointments and rest at home. This availability became an important factor in this study and one participant was unable to stay until the end due to absence. This will be further discussed in their individual case study.

The participants I worked with have attended art class throughout the last three years. Due to the way the program is structured, art at SpArc is a drop-in class, which clients are not obligated to attend and have the option to participate. I teach two classes from 10 am to 11:30 am and from 12 pm to 2 pm. Some participants come to both classes while others come to one or stay for their own duration. My role during this class is to

help facilitate individual art making with the clients while introducing techniques and materials that may be beneficial to them. Participants also work on collaborative and special projects through programs such as Cultural Collaborations with LaSalle University and Bridges with the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A personal goal as their art educator is to never touch their artwork or do anything for them that I do not think they can do for themselves. For example, if a client needs help drawing a house I will draw with them on a separate piece of paper, but never touch his or her artwork. This can be increasingly difficult when there is a gap in communication due to a client's inability to communicate with typical language. This is the case for a particular participant in this study who wanted staff to do the artwork for her. This is discussed in their individual case study. I selected clients for this study that enjoy art but struggle to communicate in the classroom.

Researcher Role

My role as a researcher in this study was a participant approach. Due to the fact that l conducted the bulk of this study in my classroom, I actively taught and collected data simultaneously throughout the research. These research methods were hands-on and required involvement in the field. In this particular population it can be difficult to be a non-participant, especially if you are already known in that environment. The environment at SpArc is like a community, in which everyone tends to interact and work with each other, especially if you are in the same program area. It seems natural for the clients to want to interact with the instructor, which is why the role of the participant approach was chosen.

The role of participant researcher relates to SpArc and my clients because I was actively involved with researching a topic that is intended to benefit the participants in the SpArc Cultural Arts program. By conducting the study at this site and observing in similar locations I used my role as a researcher to be actively involved in the participant's environment in order to understand how they interact in the art classroom.

Research Procedures

During my research, I worked in an environment that can change rapidly due to a variety of situations. SpArc is an open classroom and clients can come and go as they please, which means the population and mood can change based on who is in the room. Some clients may have violent outbursts, while others feel overwhelmed if there are too many people in the room.

By choosing to be actively involved in the field during the research, I needed to be prepared for situations to occur that are beyond my control. Some of my participants were not willing to stay for the entire class and I could not force them to due to the nature of the program. Due to that fact, the data I collected occurred during different situations over a span of time. For some participants, semi-structured interviews were done in parts in order to suit the client's needs and willingness to participate in the study.

When observing at other sites I needed to be mindful that I was a guest in their space and went into the field with an open mind and a respectful attitude towards the clients and staff.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, I asked my participants to take part in semi structured interviews, participant observations, and other qualitative research methods in order to help better

understand how to facilitate communication in the art room. Working with clients who

have intellectual disabilities, I took into consideration their understanding of the study

and what I needed from them in order to foster a good researcher/participant relationship.

 By working with an adult population I was not required to receive the same

permissions, as I would have needed in a K-12 classroom. However, clients required

permissions from their guardians due to their cognitive understanding. When explaining

my requirements to my participants, I looked for indicators, both verbal and nonverbal,

that they understood what I was telling them. I also repeated information such as when

our interviews were scheduled so they would remember when that was taking place. The

purpose of the study was visually presented with a Participant Bill of Rights as well as a

Consent form that will explain to the client, the intentions of the study and data collection

methods. Examples of these can be seen in the Appendices section of this proposal. I also

needed access to the participants Outcome Summary that are established in the clients

ISP. The study also researched how these outcomes can relate to strategies used in the art

room. The clients were not offered any compensation for this study.

Throughout this study I maintained a respectful distance in regards to my

relationship to these participants and how I conducted my research. During interviews

and observations I tried to let the client act naturally while I collected data and did not let

my intentions of the study affect the way I would typically interact.

Research Methods

This study is relatable among educators who have noticed gaps in communication

with their students. This is also prevalent in the field of individuals who work in art

programs for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Given that these art

programs have been established over the last forty years (Our Programs, n.d.), research

and development in these areas is still fairly new. These "gaps" have been known but

research on working towards strategies to help bridge communication between the

instructor and the client is limited. This is an ongoing issue that by addressing could help

aid the instructor and client in developing a productive symbiotic relationship.

Type of Study

When viewing these communication "gaps" during teaching, I have found

the most effective way to examine these issues is in the field with an action research

approach. This multi-site investigation is a bounded case study, due to the fact that I

observed these participants in art programs specifically for adults with ID/DD. These

participants display some form of atypical communication and use alternative forms of

communication. This hands-on approach to research will gave me the opportunity to

reevaluate and observe the strategies I am currently using and look at other programs

with similar backgrounds to see what strategies work for them. With the nature of this

study, action research was the most relevant way to conduct this study by using

qualitative methods to collect and analyze data.

Visual & Verbal Research Methods

My research consisted of verbal and visual methods that were collected and

evaluated to inform my study. Verbal methods, such as pre and post semi-structured

interviews were implemented in this study due to the flexible nature of the interview

process. This was important in this population because even though I asked my

participants the same questions, probing gave the participant the opportunity to elicit an

open-ended response.

Visual research methods such as participant observations, video recording, and artwork documentation, were vital in a study where the participant's communication may be improved through these methods. Participant observation involves the researcher delving into the classroom in order to visualize how these individuals communicate and what may work best for them in that setting. Video recording as another form of collecting data was necessary in my field, especially during semi-structured interviews and observations. This showed another way the client could be seen and how they visually reacted during that process. It is also important as an art education study, to view participant artworks by documenting samples over time, especially as strategies are implemented and the artwork can be visually analyzed for growth or change. Photo documentation was also helpful in explaining the strategies that were implemented in this study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

An interview is known as an effective way of collecting information from an individual. When the individual you are interviewing may have alternative ways of communicating, collecting that information may not be as easy. Semi-structured interviews are more flexible than a standardized interview and give the individual an opportunity to express themselves more openly and in alternative ways (Flick, p. 207). In my study it was important for the participants I was interviewing to have as much flexibility as they could in order to participate.

 I used the model of the semi-structured interview, which created a relationship between the interviewer and interviewee while also looking at strategies that are used in Supports Intensity Scale Interviews or SIS (Tassé et al., 2005). SIS is a scale that

measures what practical support individuals with developmental or intellectual

disabilities need to lead productive, independent lives (Tassé et al., 2005). SIS interview

protocol provides strategies to improve communication with individuals during the

interview process. This includes ways individuals may respond to the interview questions

such as body shifts and posture, utterances, eye tilts/nods, and PECS. It also mentions

how the interviewer should conduct the interview such as using "person-first" language,

allowing time and patience for responses, using simple and clear language, checking for

understanding, and looking for reactions to guide your understanding (Tassé et al., 2005).

In conducting these interviews with my participants, the goal was to understand

how these individuals view art making and the way they create in art class. Participants

were asked how they produce art in the classroom, if art is part of their lives outside of

the classroom, and how they feel about art and their work in general. These interviews

also focused on how they feel they are seen and heard in the classroom as well as

improvements that can be made to enhance the instructor/participant relationship. The

semi-structured interview protocol can be seen in Appendix B.

In addition to interviewing clients at the main site of study, interviews with staff

at SpArc and at Center for Creative Works were conducted in order to gain their

perspectives on working with individuals with atypical communication. These staff

members are interacting and working creatively with these clients daily, and their input

was a valuable addition to this study. A semi-structured interview guide was conducted in

order for the respondent to add additional information or insight to the open-ended

interview questions. This can also be seen in Appendix B.

Participant Observations

Observation was a key component in my research and was conducted at multiple sites for a wide range of data. The research method that fit within this study was participant observation, which involves the researcher being in the field and interacting with the clients to be studied. This method of observation works in the art room because, in many cases, the research is taking place while teaching. This method gave the opportunity to be face-to-face with the participants and observe exactly what worked and what didn't in the art room. This flexible method proved to be beneficial over time as strategies began to be implemented in the art room at SpArc. The table shown below (Figure 3) is taken from the Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide (Guest, Mack, MacQueen, Namey, Woodsong, 2005), and shows suggestions of what to consider during participant observations. These categories were helpful when collecting data and categorizing notes taken in the field and were used as a guide for my observation protocol (Appendix A).

While conducting participant observations at SpArc I had the flexibility to navigate the class freely without a specific curriculum, which gave me the opportunity to work with the clients on their own individual artwork. This flexibility was beneficial when observing the participants and provided some one-on-one time to discuss what they want to create in the classroom.

Conducting observations at an additional art program that works with adults with ID/DD, focused on the client/staff relationship and what tools and methods they use to create and discuss artwork. By observing the staff, participants, and environment I intended to get a sense of the way they interact together and what makes the class work

or not work. Although I did not use participants from other programs in my main study,

observations were helpful in looking at other perspectives and ways of learning in similar

environments.

Data Collection

While conducting this study at my main site, I was in an environment in which the

participants were accustomed to seeing me in regularly. By researching in a familiar

setting, I worked with the participant in order to facilitate a comfortable environment to

implement my research. Being able to inform the staff and clients of the intentions of the

study made them aware of what was happening in the classroom. This gave the chance

for the staff and researcher to work together, making sure all parties involved understood

the requirements of the study.

Table 3. What to observe during participant observation

Category	Includes	Researchers should note
Appearance	Clothing, age, gender, physical appearance	Anything that might indicate membership in groups or in sub-populations of interest to the study, such as profession, social status, socioeconomic class, religion, or ethnicity
Verbal behavior and interactions	Who speaks to whom and for how long; who initiates interaction; languages or dialects spoken; tone of voice	Gender, age, ethnicity, and profession of speakers; dynamics of interaction
Physical behavior and gestures	What people do, who does what, who interacts with whom, who is not interacting	How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions; what individuals' behaviors indicate about their feelings toward one another, their social rank, or their profession
Personal space	How close people stand to one another	What individuals' preferences concerning personal space suggest about their relationships
Human traffic	People who enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site	Where people enter and exit; how long they stay; who they are (ethnicity, age, gender); whether they are alone or accompanied; number of people
People who stand out	Identification of people who receive a lot of attention from others	The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether people consult them or they approach other people; whether they seem to be strangers or well known by others present

Figure 3. Table from Module 2: Participant Observation of Qualitative
Research Methods A Data Collectors Field Guide (Guest, et al. 2005).

Context of Study

When conducting interviews with the clients, I used a space that they are familiar with in the art room. Some participants have trouble with recall and memory and I consistently informed them of what will be happening including when, where, and how the interviews will take place. This was outlined in their contract (see Appendices) as well as repeated verbally prior to the interview. During the actual interview, I explained what I would be talking to them about as well as how I will be collecting data. In order to capture what my clients are saying, I used video recording during interviews and observations. After the interviews took place the participant and I watched the video so that they could see themselves on the screen. Because the participants have atypical communication, they used nonverbal communication to express themselves and would not translate as well in an audio recording. Video recording can seem intrusive but I stressed to the participant why it was important for the study as well as where the camera will be during the interview.

During my observations at Center for Creative Works I informed the director of my intentions as well as the staff what my role as a participant observer will be. The staff was accommodating and contributed by showing me around the site and what their experiences working there were like. I observed the setting as well as interacted with the clients by letting them know my role as a researcher.

Literature Sources

While researching for this study, I wanted to find resources that would work well with my population. Uwe Flick's, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, showed hands-on methods that benefited this research (2014). Semi-structured interviews and

participant observation as well as visual data such as images and video recording were

valuable tools throughout this study. I also needed to find resources that specifically

involve research methods for people with disabilities.

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

promotes the use of the Supports Intensity Scale, hereby known as SIS (2005). This is an

assessment tool that evaluates practical supports for people with intellectual disabilities,

focusing on what the person needs instead of what they lacks (Tassé et al., 2005). SIS is

also measured by an interview process where the participant is put first by implementing

strategies to make sure they are involved and participating. In the SIS guidelines the

interviewer is given tools to help guide the discussion. They look from the perspective of

the participant and the interviewer, with ways to respond and conduct the interview.

(Tassé et al., 2005) I used these strategies when conducting the semi-structured

interviews in order to accommodate the participant.

Methods of Data Collection

By collecting data through participant observation, I researched individuals in the

art classroom in their natural setting. By coming into the field and working with these

participants I collected data that could help me develop better teaching practices for

adults with atypical communication. Observing in this environment was essential to the

study because I was able to see strategies and situations in practice that were be

documented and used throughout this process.

In order to get a sense of my environment while observing at Center for Creative

Works, I needed to observe four times in order to familiarize myself to the setting.

Revisiting this program better informed my research and gave me a chance to view the

staff and individuals in varying situations. Many factors can influence a participant, so

multiple observations made the most sense in gaining an understanding of an individual

or setting.

Semi-structured interviews with SIS strategies helped me connect with the

participants and gain an understanding of what they as individuals needed in the

classroom. This was a chance to ask important questions regarding how they create

artwork and what I can do to connect with them as an artist and instructor. Interviews

before and after my research also informed me if the strategies implemented affected the

participant in the classroom and in other outcomes outlined in their ISP. By documenting

these interviews with interview questionnaires and video recording, I was able to collect

the data and begin to organize.

Interviews with support staff at the main site and at Center for Creative Works

informed the research from an instructor or staff perspective. By asking these individuals

about what practices work best for them when working creatively with their clients, I

used these tools to influence my own teaching.

In order for me to understand the participant's artistic style documentation of their

artwork was key component. By collecting, photographing, and analyzing these images I

saw visually if the strategies that are implement towards the end of the study have

influenced their work. These images were also useful to visually explain to the reader

how these strategies were conducted. Artwork that was created during participant

observations was informative to my study and the individual case studies. In-process

images were just as important as the final product and showed the participants individual

style. Art making strategies that were used during this research period influenced artwork

so documenting in- process images during this was beneficial to the study.

Limitations

Throughout data collection for this study, limitations were put in place such as

number of sites to include in the study. This also applied to the number of participants to

include in the main study as well as individualized case studies. Images collected to use

in artwork analysis were limited by the amount of participants and the time in which

work was collected. Observations at Center for Creative Works were limited to four visits

in order to allow ample time for collecting data.

Data Analysis

Due to the flexible nature of my research methods, data analysis would also be

subject to change throughout the study. By having the structure of the research questions

I was able to have a starting point in which to begin questioning and observing the

participants.

Organization of Data

While interviewing the participants, I was able to develop questions that discussed

the topic of art making and creating in the classroom. By asking questions that contribute

to art instruction the clients discussed, to the best of their ability, what they needed in an

instructor. This study also questioned whether their art making affects them outside of the

classroom in benefitting their outcomes as described in their ISP. By limiting the pre and

post interviews to three participants and constructing interview guides, the data remained

organized and efficient.

Image documentation was a helpful way to visually see progression over time when implementing new methods. By collecting and documenting imagery from my participants I was able to see if these strategies impacted their learning. Imagery also came into play during participant interviews and the participants discussed their artwork by visually seeing it in front of them and describe it through nonverbal communication.

Participant observations were documented through observation forms and field notes as well as video recordings in order to organize and collect relevant data. Due to permissions video recording was only used at my main research site, SpArc Services. During these observations, I looked for situations and instances where art making strategies occur.

Using individual case studies for each participant also allowed me to categorize information specific to that individual. Each case study showed the participant's background, qualification for the study, and the action research that was used to conduct the study. Images pertaining to the participant were also put in their individual case studies.

Coding of Data

During the observations for this study I looked for situations and instances where art making strategies occurred. At my secondary site, Center for Creative Works I looked at who was working with the participant and the ways they were working to create artwork. By developing an observation form for researcher use, it provided categories that can be looked for such as environment and behaviors and data was categorized more efficiently. This information was then used to develop trends that correspond with the

research questions in order to gain a better understanding of strategies for

communication.

When conducting semi-structured interviews, I aimed to find similarities that can

be used for coding data. Looking for keywords and subjects that the clients discussed

helped formulate the results in finding successful strategies and better communication in

the art room. In order for this information to be reliable, pre and post interviews were

conducted in order to maintain consistency and growth throughout the research.

When describing the images the client created before, during, and after the study I

could verbalize what changed or what stayed the same in their imagery. It was beneficial

to observe the participant during the process of creating these artworks, and was

informative when describing the image.

In order for the information obtained through this study to be properly analyzed

without unintentional bias, a fellow reader was asked to review the data collected. This

benefitted the study by allowing another set of eyes to look over the data collected

through observations and interviews. This was also helpful in finding themes or strategies

that may not have been seen the first time.

Methods of Analysis

The methods used to analyze the data collected throughout this study were

flexible in order to correspond and relate to the surrounding environments. By using

Grounded Theory Coding the research was flexible and then developed by creating a

structure based on initial interview and observation experiences (Flick, p.397-417). By

maintaining flexibility the participants in the study were able to act naturally in their

setting and allowed them to provide data that informed me of strategies that are working

in the classroom. The following methods were the most relatable to this study and data

collection.

During and after participant observations and semi-structured interviews, all of

the data collected needed to be organized and analyzed to inform the research questions.

Roulston recommends the phases of "data reduction, data reorganization, and data

representation" (as cited in Flick, 2014, p.237). She also believes in identifying relevant

themes and phrases in the interviews, which can be categorized to fit around the research

questions (p.237). However, Roulston warns the researcher of whether the data collected

during these interviews focuses on the issue coming from all interviewees or focusing on

a fuller picture concerning a particular interviewee (p. 237). This study focused on

atypical communication in all participants while discussing and discovering ways in

which to strengthen these interactions in the art room.

Color-coding data was also helpful in categorizing which data represented the

research questions asked of this study. Data coded in yellow represented strategies and

adaptations in the art room for individuals with atypical communication. Data coded in

red related to how these strategies related to the participants ISP Outcome Summary.

Data coded in blue represented what I had learned from other art programs. This made it

easier to see where data was when going through everything I had collected.

Timeline for the Study

For this study, the beginning of inquiries to potential research sites, as well as the

main site began in January 2017. This included emails to my secondary site that outlined

the main topics of my study as well as what I needed from these programs in order to

collect data. Figure 4, Located towards the end of this section provides a timeline chart

explaining in detail each step it took for this study to be completed. This chart needed to

be detailed due to the amount of sites that will be covered and the time it will take for

observation dates and permissions (see Appendices) to be completed.

In between the Fall and Spring Semester of 2016-2017, inquiries and permissions

pertaining to the main participants in my study were obtained. I also informed their

families or guardian of the details of the study as well as what I would need from the

participant. In this time I had my secondary site obtained as well as set dates for

observations scheduled. The proper tools needed to conduct my research, including a

camera, folders and organizers, as well as a secure filing cabinet to store these items were

gathered during this time.

During the Spring Semester of 2017, data was collected starting with Participant

Observations and Pre-Interviews at SpArc. As this data was collected, themes and

strategies that support the study were gathered. Artwork and in progress art making from

the participants was documented in order to have a starting point of when to analyze their

work. Participant Observations at Center for Creative Works began in February and

continued into March.

In March the data that was collected will inform me of strategies that seemed

beneficial for the participants. I began to implement these strategies in the art room

documented reactions and changes in art making or behavior. During this time I will also

put together individual case studies for each participant which gave the reader an idea of

where that client came from as well as if these methods used in the classroom have

affected them in any way.

In April, towards the end of Spring Semester I wrote Chapter IV which goes into

the findings and implications of my research as well as how this research can be applied

to the art education field. Along with my additional courses during the Spring semester,

Month	Process	Steps to Accomplish
November-December (In-process)	Emails of Inquiry	-emails to Stephanie at the Center for Creative Works and Pam at Pure Vision Arts, discussing my interest in their program as a research site **- have emailed Stephanie, no response, will do follow up this week (11/28)**
January (Beginning)	Gain Permissions	-Gain Site Permissions from SpArc, Center for Creative Works, Pure Vision Arts - Gain permissions from participants at SpArc including administrators, support staff, program coordinators, parents/guardians - Gain permissions for select staff at SpArc to be interviewed (Participants Program Coordinators) - Gain permissions from administrators at alternate sites, including description of study for staff and clients to keep them informed of my role and observations
January- End of Study (Throughout)	Continuing Literature Review (until end of study)	-Continue to gather information relevant to my study including methodology, teaching practices, and new information regarding arts centers for adults with disabilities
January (Mid)	Gather Research Tools	- Inquire about video camera rental, talk to TJ about possibly borrowing his camera (has a variety of cameras used for film **- Look into transcribers that can do video or have worked with transcribing videos with atypical communication participants.**
January (Mid)	Final Drafts of Questions for Participant Interviews (Staff and Clients)	- Go over interview Questions - make sure questions meet the needs and abilities of participants including staff and clients
January (Mid)	Confirm dates for Observations/Pre-Interviews (SpArc,CFCW, PVA)	Email Stephanie Petro (CFCW), Prefer Friday, OPTIONS: 2/3, 2/17, 3/3,3/17 Email Pam Rogers (PVA), Prefer Friday, OPTIONS: 2/10, 2/24, 3/10,3/24 Email Linda Price (SpArc), Prefer Monday for Pre-Interview, 2/6,2/13,2/20,2/27
February (Throughout)	Gather Data! (semi structured interviews at SpArc, Participatory Observations at All Sites, Gather Artworks from Participants for Pre-Evaluation of Artwork) Begin to Code Data	-SpArc:Begin my action research by conducting pre-semi-structured interviews to gauge clients needs, goals, and thoughts on artmaking. (VIDEO) -Interview Select Staff/Program Coordinator on Clients Needs Life Goals, Struggles in the Program, Ways they have found to work with atypical communication, etc. -CFCW: Begin Participant Observation, Gather information on Strategies, environment, techniques used, clients, staff (Worksheet for Observations) -Pure Vision: Same as CFCW
March (Beginning)	Continue to gather Data, begin to analyze strategies throughout observations Continue to Code Data	-Continue participatory observations at SpArc, gather data collected from participant observations at alternate sites. - Begin to code the data collected in order to find similarities and themes in my research.
March (Mid-End)	Begin to Implement Strategies Code Data, Formulate Findings Writing Chapter 4	-Themes and strategies collected through participatory observations and further literature review will be implemented. I will then begin to document artwork created throughout this process in order to have a visual record of possible changes.
April- June	Continue to Code and work on Chapter 4 & 5: Discussion and Implications for the Field	Continue to formulate and organize findings and results as well as how they affected the participants in the art room.
July	Present Thesis!	Present findings at the final Presentation :)

Figure 4. Timeline Chart of thesis study.

this timeline gives a glimpse into what it took to complete this study.

During the Summer Session of 2017, I continued to edit Chapters 1,2,3 and 4. The information was compiled and summarized in the final steps of the thesis document. Additionally there were courses to take on Moore's campus that assisted in completing my study. At the end of the summer session the findings are presented at Thesis Presentations, which gives a summarized version of how the study went, as well as the steps it took to get there. Throughout this time maintaining organization and proper documentation is key, in order to present an efficient and effective presentation.

By combining these qualitative research methods with flexible analysis methods this study aimed to find similarities and strategies that may be beneficial to clients with atypical communication in the art room. Due to the variety of diagnoses and the flexible methods of data collection, these participant vignettes intend to give the art educator ideas that they can implement in their classroom if they see similarities in their clients or students in these cases.

Chapter IV: Results of Data Collection and Findings

Introduction to Data Collection Processes

Essential Question
What strategies and adaptations in art making can be used to create artistic dialogue
between the instructor and the client in an Arts Program for adults with intellectual and
developmental disabilities?

Sub Questions:
- *In what ways would these strategies and adaptations aid the clients in other areas*
  of life, including their Individual Support Plan outcomes as established by their
  support team?
- *How can art programs with similar populations benefit the instructor by adapting*
  skills seen through observations and, furthermore, how can these strategies be
  implemented in the classroom?

While conducting action research multiple forms of data collection were used to

assist in answering the research questions asked of this study. While working with the

individual participants at SpArc Services Cultural Arts Center (Hereinafter known as

SpArc) multiple research methods were used including observation sheets (Appendix A),

field notes, visual and video documentation, access to Individual Support Plans

(hereinafter known as ISP) and pre/post semi-structured interviews (Appendix B). These

forms of data collection allowed me to formulate individual case studies of three

participants, which will be further discussed in subsections of this chapter. Semi-

structured interviews with staff at SpArc, along with a staff questionnaire (Appendix C)

allowed me to glean more strategies to use in the art room as well as discuss art programs

overall. At the secondary site, Center for Creative Works, formal and informal interviews

with staff and field notes, provided insight into how another art program with a similar

population is run. Weekly journal summaries gave a timeline of how and when the

research was conducted along with what components of research were implemented over

the course of the study.

This study was conducted over a ten-week period and involved working with three participants in the art room at SpArc. Participant F was included in the study for several weeks but data collection was cut short due to absence. The following section will further discuss these individuals and why they were chosen for this study, along with what was done during their time in the art room.

Individual Case Studies

When formulating these studies, an individual case study format was adapted from the medical field (Jewell, 2013). This format includes sections for an introduction, client description or background, symptoms, and treatment plan. The section on the client provides an overview of the individual including diagnosis, age and psychosocial information. The symptoms section has been adapted to how the participant qualified to be in the study and includes information on cognition, communication, and art interests. The section for treatment plan has been adapted to action research, which shows what projects were conducted with each individual participant.

     Client B

The following is a case study of Client B who is a 25-year old African American male that attends SpArc. He currently attends the program five days a week. Client B is diagnosed with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities and Developmental Dyspraxia, which will be noted in the qualifications section. He attends under the supervision of his Program Specialist and Direct Support staff in the program area. The purpose of working with Client B is to develop adaptations and strategies to communicate in the art room that, in turn, may enhance their ISP Individual Outcome Summary.

Background

Client B lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and has been attending SpArc since

2013. He currently lives with a family member to provide him with his daily living needs.

He is able to walk without assistance and is able to take care of his own eating, drinking,

dressing, and toileting needs. Client B is diagnosed with moderate intellectual disabilities

and developmental dyspraxia. This affects his verbal communication and as a result he

may be unable express his wants and needs.

Client B is an outgoing and energetic individual who creates large-scale mixed

media work during art class. He initiates interaction by giving fist-bumps or high fives

and pointing at different parts of his body such as his nose or feet. As outlined in his ISP,

"he is a creative individual who has a lot of physical energy and needs opportunities to

engage in creative activities as an outlet" (Pennsylvania Department of Human Services,

2017). Client B also enjoys physical activities such as playing basketball outside at

SpArc and going on outdoor field trips with other SpArc clients. Within the last six

months Client B has needed more prompting to initiate art making and has required more

one-on-one attention in the art room.

Qualifications for Study

Client B has been chosen for this study due to the fact that he is described as a

creative individual who is not be able to verbally express his needs in the art room.

Although his verbal communication skills are limited, he has good receptive

communication skills and complies with almost all requests from staff at SpArc. He is

able to follow instructions with some prompting and is able to get his own art materials as

well as put them away when he's finished.

When discussing communication, Client B is unable to ask for things verbally. He

makes some sounds such as "bah bah" and has been observed saying "nooo." He may

also express frustration through grunts or sounds of discontent. His ISP states that he

knows the sign for "bathroom," but it has not been observed in the art room. His ISP also

states that Client B used a communication board in school but no longer uses one at the

present time. At the time of this study, there has been no action towards receiving another

communication board or PECS book for him.

Client B participates in art class regularly and usually comes to both morning and

afternoon art classes at SpArc twice a week. He usually uses mixed-media materials like

oil pastels, colored pencils, and paint. He usually works on large mixed-media drawing

paper in the back of the art room where there is an area big enough for him to work in.

(Figure 5) Client B uses mark making and repetitive images to layer his paper.

Figure 5. Client B Pre-study Art Work, October 2016.
- This image shows Client B's mixed-media drawing. It is approximately 3 ½ ft. by 5 ft. Client B. uses many layers of materials to build up texture on his drawing surface. He also uses images and symbols that show up repeatedly in his work including the figures repeated on the bottom as well as repeated lines and sections of color shown throughout his piece.

Action Research: Communication through Mixed-Media Art

I conducted the action research portion of the study over a ten-week period at SpArc. Through observations, field notes, interviews, access to ISP's, and visual and video documentation strategies were implemented to see if communication with Client B could be improved in the art room as well as if these improvements would have any affect on his ISP individual outcomes. This will be further discussed in the findings section of this chapter.

I began with observation and visual documentation of artwork with Client B as well as introducing a visual chart, which will be further discussed in this section. Mid-way through the study an interview was conducted in the art room and videotaped in order to refer back to and look for forms of nonverbal communication, like gestures or body language. Each participant in this study was asked the same questions in a semi-structured interview format. The questions asked, referred to art in general, for example, if they do art at home or participate in art related activities outside of the art room. The participants were also asked how they felt working in the art room and what their art interests were and what materials and subjects they like to use as shown in Appendix B. Client B was shown some of his artwork throughout the interview as well as in his post interview in order to talk to him and point to different sections of his drawings.

At this point in the study, it was at week five when I conducted Client B's interview. A week prior to his interview a visual chart, shown in Figure 6, was introduced that displayed characteristics of his signature drawing style. During the interview Client B and I discussed the mark making and techniques that he uses in his drawings.

Client B's visual chart continued to be implemented throughout this study in order

to improve communication and as a reference when discussing his artwork. Each week

with Client B observations were noted as well as his progression with the visual chart.

This will be further discussed in the Findings and Data Analysis section of this chapter.

Throughout the study, Client B continued to produce large-scale mixed media

artwork. The first artwork produced in this study can be seen in Figures 7 & 8. Client B

was able to produce these large works in a short amount of time usually taking him two

to four one and a half hour classes to complete his artwork. As the study progressed I

introduced and observed various strategies in order to increase communication.
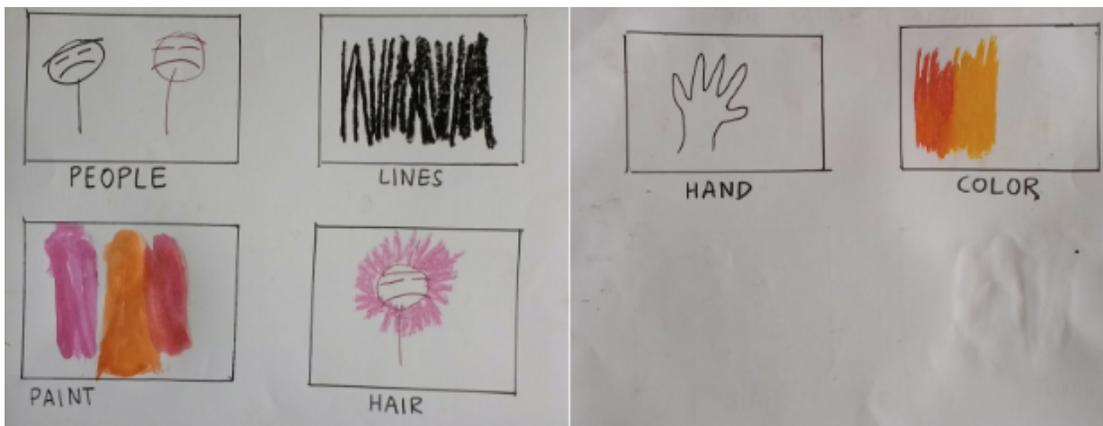
Figure 6. Client B Visual Chart.
-These images show the front and back of Client B's Visual Chart. By looking at the
majority of Client B's artwork, I was able to pick out images that seemed to be
representative of his work. This included people, lines, paint, hair for his figures, hand
tracing, and color. The hair and hand tracing were newer techniques that were
observed in his artwork prior to this interview.

Client S

The following is a case study of Client S who is a 57-year old African American

female that attends SpArc Services Cultural Arts Day Program. She currently attends

program five days a week. Client S is diagnosed with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities,

which will be discussed in the following section. Client S attends under the supervision

of her Program Specialist and Direct Support staff in the program area. In this study I

implemented a variety of art projects and techniques in order to discover strategies

Figure 7. Progression of Client B
Artwork 1/30-2/1.
-This image shows the progression of
Client B's artwork over the course of
one week. The piece is approximately
3 ft. by 4 ½ ft. This image shows the
progression of layering that is
signature to Client B's drawing style.

Figure 8. Finished Client B
Artwork 2/6.
-This image shows the finished
drawing shown in progression in
Figure 9 The paper is almost
completely covered by various
mark making and sections of
color and line. Materials in this
piece include oil pastel, charcoal,
chalk pastel, and acrylic paint

and adaptations that could be beneficial for individuals with atypical communication, as

well as their ISP outcomes.

Background

Client S lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and has been attending SpArc since

2005. She currently lives in domiciliary care, which provides a home-like living

arrangement for individuals 18 years or older who need assistance with daily living

(Pennsylvania Department of Aging). Client S resides in her individual providers' home.

Client S is able to walk without assistance and can take care of her own eating, drinking,

bathing, and toileting needs. Client S is diagnosed with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities,

which has resulted in a severe articulation problem. She also has developed arthritis in

her wrists and knees.

Client S is friendly and affectionate. Often times she has to be reminded to have

appropriate personal space when interacting with others and these interactions have been

noted in her ISP as something to take into consideration when socializing with others.

Client S often socializes with her peers and Direct Support staff in the main program area

at SpArc. It should be noted that Client S also has difficulties staying in one place for a

prolonged amount of time. Prior to this study, Client S would come into the art room

before class and stay for approximately five to ten minutes. Client S can work on a

variety of projects at one time and has been observed working best when having the

opportunity to come in and out of the classroom when necessary.

Qualifications for Study

Client S has been chosen for this study due to the fact that although she has

limited verbal communication, her receptive language is strong. While observing and

interacting with Client S she has shown to understand requests and questions as well as a

strong memory. Often times in art class she asks what supplies have been brought for her

when bringing materials in for next class, such as yarn or thread. According to her ISP,

Client S is able to make her own decisions and problem solve. This has also been

observed in the art room and will be discussed further in the Findings section of this

chapter.

Client S can be difficult to understand due to impairments in her speech.

According to her ISP, "Client S's adaptive behaviors, communication sills, socialization

skills, and daily life skills have been assessed as delayed and has shown her functioning

ability to be at four years old" (Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, 2017).

Prior to this study, Client S attended art class infrequently usually coming in to

borrow materials or to see if any materials have been brought in for her. She has been

observed enjoying fiber art, which explores textile techniques such as beading, sewing,

and embroidery. She also enjoys projects related to upcoming holidays and making cards

to go along with these holidays. Client S prefers to work with others and may need one-

on-one support at times. She has also been seen asking staff to do the projects for her

even when she has been observed as having the ability to complete the task such as

coloring or tracing.

Action Research: Independent Art Making through Fibers

The action research portion of this study was conducted over a ten-week period at

SpArc. Through observations, field notes, interviews, access to ISP's, and visual and

video documentation, I introduced strategies to see if communication with Client S could

be improved in the art room, as well as if these improvements would have any affect on

her ISP individual outcomes. This will be further discussed in the findings section of this

chapter.

During Client S's interview we were able to discuss art and making art in class at

SpArc. Even though the interview was conducted in week six of the study, Client S had

been attending art class in order to work on a weaving project that was started in week

one of this study. When conducting this interview, Client S indicated to me that she

would like to continue to work on fiber arts. She also indicated in the interview that she

would like to explore more beading and jewelry in the art room.

Throughout the course of this study I introduced different projects that involve

fiber arts. This included a weaving (Figure 9) that involved the use of materials such as

yarn, ribbon, tulle, and trim. Dyeing fabric was explored using alternative techniques,

such as snow dyeing. The snow dyeing process involves sprinkling powdered fabric dye

on top of snow or ice covered fabric (Figures 10 & 11). The powdered dye then melts

into the snow and forms a pattern effect on the fabric shown in Figure 10. This dyed

fabric was then used as a background for a beading project in which the client used beads

of varying sizes and colors to stitch into the fabric and is seen in Figure 11.
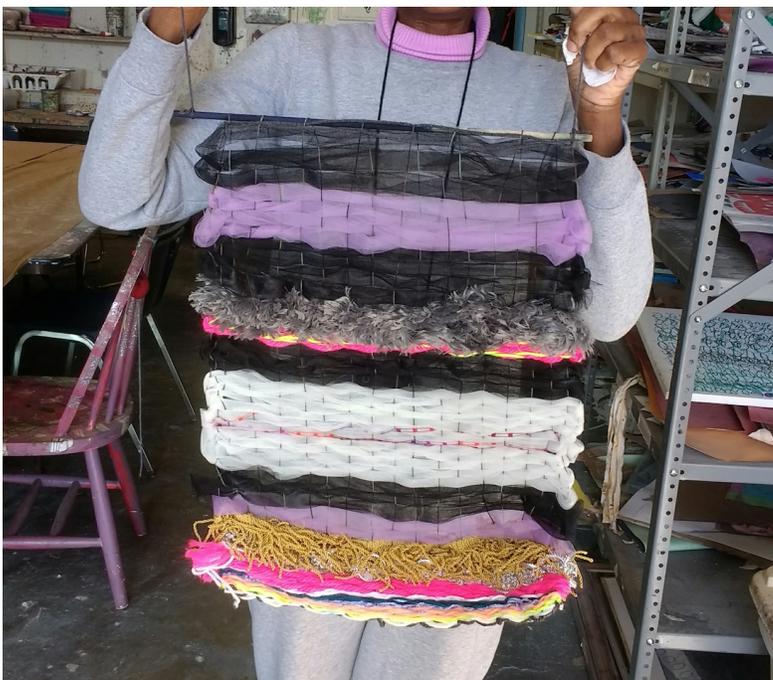
Figure 9. Client S Weaving. -This image shows Client S holding their completed weaving. This was created in approximately six weeks using a variety of materials including yarn, ribbon, tulle, and trim

Other techniques including sewing and soft sculpture were explored to correspond with

an upcoming holiday, which at the time of this study was Easter. Finally, beading and

jewelry were explored in shorter projects that produced necklaces made from various

beads. The strategies and adaptations used to complete these projects will be further

discussed in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Figure 10. Client S Snow Dye Fabric.
-This image shows the results of the
snow dye technique. This fabric was
created using a variety of powdered dyes
which were sprinkled on snow covered
fabric. Once the snow melts the fabric is
rinsed to reveal the dye pattern.

Figure 11. Client S Beaded
Fabric.
-This image shows a beading
project completed by Client S
By combining two techniques
of fabric dyeing and beading
the Client was able to explore
different fiber processes in the
art room.

Client F

The following is a case study of Client F, who is a 46-year old male that attends

SpArc. He currently attends program 5 days a week. Client F attends under the

supervision of his Program Specialist and Direct Support staff in the program area. He is

diagnosed with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities and Down syndrome, which will be

discussed further in the background section. In the case of Client F, data was collected up

until he was unable to attend program due to health issues. I collected data up until week

seven of a ten-week study. Though I did have inconsistencies due to attendance, enough

information was collected to include Client F in this study.

Background

Client F currently lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and has been attending

SpArc since 2012. Client F currently resides in a community home where he can live

with other individuals with disabilities under supervision. He can walk without assistance

and is able to take care of his own eating, drinking, bathing, and toileting needs. It is

important to note that Client F also has a 65-70% hearing loss in both of his ears. Client F

does have hearing aids but staff tries to make eye contact with him when addressing him

or getting his attention.

Client F is described as funny and easy to get along with. As stated in his ISP, he

is creative and highly artistic. It is also important to remind Client F of timing when

working in the art room. It is stated in his ISP and has been observed in the art room that

giving Client F time to process information that has been told to him has the best

outcome. He does not like a change in routine or being rushed.

Qualifications for Study

Client F has been chosen for this study due to the fact that communication barriers

and hearing loss make our interactions in the art room limited. While Client F has had

access to a PECS book, there has been little success using it as a communication tool. I

have not had experience using a communication book with Client F. According to his

ISP, Client F refused to use the PECS book and let staff at SpArc know that he did not

need it. The resistance towards these communication devices will be further discussed in

the Findings section of this chapter.

Client F is also an artist who enjoys drawing subjects including World Wrestling

Entertainment (Hereinafter known as WWE) figures, Michael Jackson, Sports Figures,

and other Pop Culture subjects. Client F usually works with materials such as markers

and paint on paper and has been observed working in various scales from small pieces of

paper to large wall pieces. He also has a folder to reference images that he carries with

him in his bag. Client F can become very involved in his work and when attending art

class he will stay after class in order to finish what he is working on.

Action Research: Exploring Popular Culture through Art Making

The action research portion of this study was conducted over a seven-week period

at SpArc. Through observations, field notes, interviews, access to ISPs, and visual and

video documentation, I introduced strategies to see if communication with Client F could

be improved in the art room as well as if these improvements would have any affect on

her ISP individual outcomes.

During Client F's interview, conducted during week four, I asked questions such

as what drawing materials he likes to use, if he sees art outside of the classroom, and art

subjects and materials he would like to explore for this study. Throughout this portion of

action research, subjects were explored that reference figures from popular culture. At the

start of this study Client F's artwork was smaller and referenced artists such as Vincent

Van Gogh shown in Figure 12.

As the study progressed Client F began working larger and focusing on his

personal interest on two specific subjects, which were Michael Jackson and WWE.

Large-scale paintings were created on rolls of brown paper and Client F was producing

approximately two large paintings in approximately five hours, or the length of two art

classes seen in Figure 13. At the end of data collection for Client F, a large body of work

on these subjects was progressing. The imagery and materials used along with how these

subjects were combined will be discussed in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Figure 12. Client F. Van Gogh Portrait.
-In this image the client is referencing the artist, Vincent Van Gogh. This was before Client F's pre-interview and prior to his large scale pop culture paintings were created. Client . uses a combination of watercolors and markers to create this piece.

Figure 13. Client F Large-scale Michael Jackson Paintings.
-These paintings were created over the course of two art classes at SpArc, which range from an hour and a half to two hours in length. Both paintings were done with acrylic paint on brown craft paper.

Collaboration: Learning from Art Programs

Along with having SpArc Services Cultural Arts Center as the main site of action

research, a secondary site was included in order to gain more information and strategies

from other programs that work with a similar population. The secondary site chosen was

Center for Creative Works (Hereinafter known as CFCW) and is located in Wynnewood,

Pennsylvania. CFCW is an art studio that combines supported studio art development

with work opportunities as well as foster individual expression and skill development for

individuals with intellectual disabilities (Our Mission, 2017). The clients that attend

CFCW learn and develop techniques in painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics,

woodworking, sculpture, and textiles.

Selecting a secondary site allowed me to collect data through field notes and

participant observations. Over the course of four, three-hour observations at CFCW, I

was able to observe and interact with participants who attend the program as well as learn

from the staff who work with this population. An observation form for this site was

created, and can be seen in Appendix A, in order to record what was seen at this site. This

included setting and environment, verbal behaviors/interactions, physical

behaviors/interactions, client observations, staff observations, and strategies and

adaptations. Field notes were also taken when the observation sheets were not in use.

This secondary site also allowed for informal interviews with members of staff

who work with the individuals attending CFCW. During these interviews I asked about

working with individuals who have atypical communication and what strategies or

adaptations they have seen that were successful for them. The role of art programs for

adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities was discussed along with what resources are provided to assist those working in these environments.

Data Analysis

For analysis, data that had been collected throughout this study was organized into trends that have been discussed and observed as strategies for individuals with atypical communication in the art room. Interviews, video/visual documentation, and strategies implemented with the three participants in the SpArc art room will be referenced. Strategies discussed with staff from SpArc as well as employee questionnaires will be included along with staff interviews and observations from the auxiliary site, CFCW. The impact of these strategies on the three participants in relation to their ISP outcome will also be explored.

Strategies and Adaptations: Trends

While organizing and analyzing data that was collected over the course of this study, trends and categories began to emerge which I put into the following sections; Visual, Independence, Motivation, and Material. Each section contains trends in strategies and adaptations that have been observed or discussed as being a positive influence in the art room. I would like to note that although these strategies and adaptations may work for some individuals with atypical communication, these have not been proven as successful for all individual and should be seen as suggestions rather than rules. The strategies and adaptations can also be used with individuals of all abilities and can be seen as Universal Design for Learning.

Visual

Throughout the study, visual strategies were explained and used continuously for

individuals with atypical communication. Staff questionnaires (Appendix C) that were

distributed at SpArc towards the end of the study, asked what strategies they've used with

clients who are nonverbal or have atypical communication. The results mentioned visual

forms of communication such as body language, visual references, giving options,

gestures, and demonstration. These categories were determined by the number of times

words such as body language or visual references were mentioned in the employees

written answer and is shown in Figure 14.

What are strategies you have used when working with clients who are nonverbal or have limited communication skills?

Demonstration
9.1%

Gestures
18.2%

Giving Options
18.2%

Body Language
27.3%

Visual References
27.3%
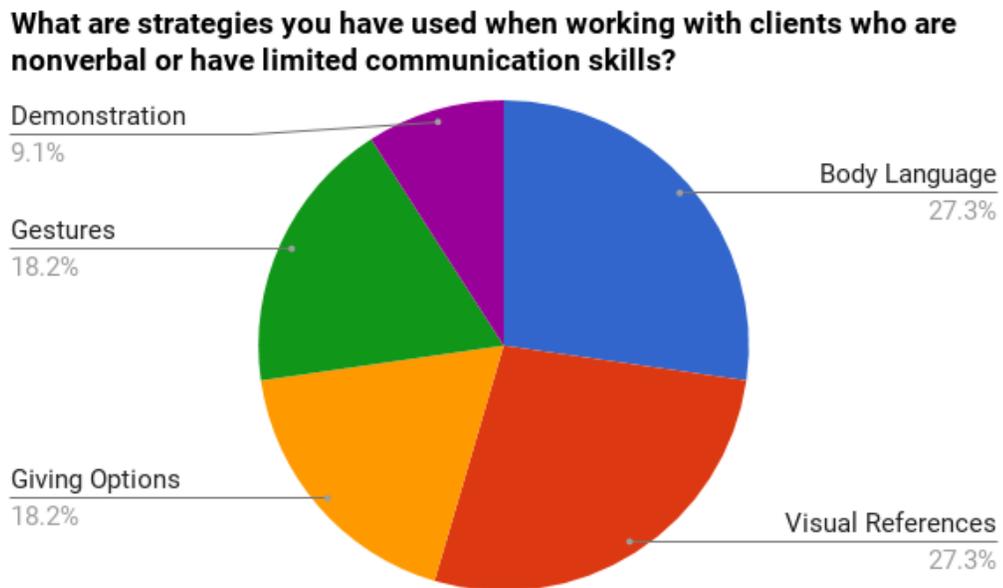
Figure 14. Pie Chart depicting Question # 3 of the staff questionnaire
for SpArc employees.

Visual strategies were also used during interviews as well as post-interviews with

the three participants mentioned in the individual case studies section. For example, with

Client F, using visuals and older drawings he had created and showing them during his

interview, formed a dialogue where we discussed his likes and interests, which included

figures such as Michael Jackson and WWE characters. This allowed us to continue using

the images to point and refer to throughout the interview as well as using pointing and

gestures to look at certain images, which will be further discussed in this section. Client S

also used her artwork as a visual during her pre-interview. When asked what she liked to

do during art class, she pointed to her weaving shown in Figure 9, which indicated that

she liked working with weaving materials. Visual strategies were also used in Client B's

interviews in order to talk to him about the work he has created as well as the work he

created during this study (Figure 15). During the post interview, Client B came into the

art room and immediately pointed to one of the images I had hung from the work he had

done. When asked which one he liked doing the most, he again pointed to the same image

that is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 15. Client B Post Interview Space.
-In this image Client B works on his in-progress drawing (middle) before his post interview for this study. The images surrounding him consist of the artwork created throughout this study.

A visual chart was also introduced to Client B in order to talk and refer to different parts of his work while he was drawing. When the chart was first introduced (Figure 16), it was meant to help him work more independently in class. As noted in my field notes from week four of this study, "Even in one two-hour class period I saw him working more independently and when I noticed I gave him verbal acknowledgment. Although I do not see this chart as a way to formulate the clients artwork, I did see it as a good visual tool for independence and reinforcement in the art room."
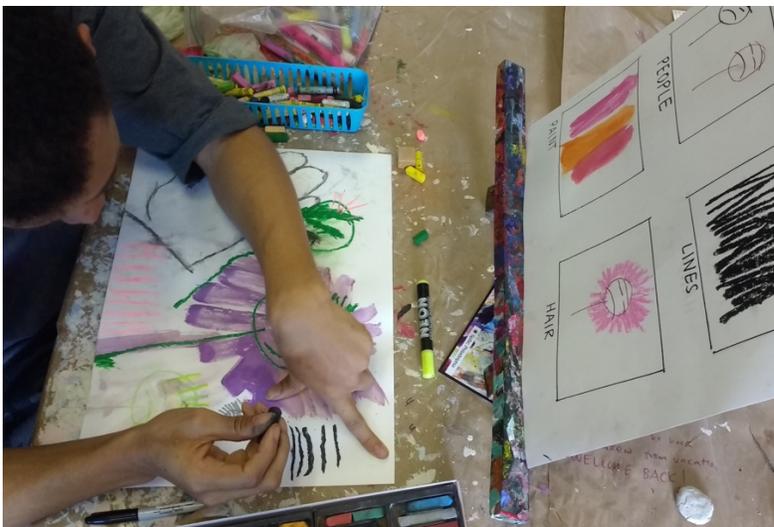
Figure 16. Client B with Visual Chart.
-In this image Client B is using his visual chart to draw lines on his paper. When he points at the lines on his chart and then points at the paper, he is showing me what he is going to draw next.

Throughout the study when Client B used the visual chart I documented when he would use the chart to identify different areas of his drawing either through pictures or field notes. When I saw him working independently I would write it down, along with when he correctly identified the part of his drawing with the symbol on his chart. This has been documented in the chart shown in Figure 17 and highlights Client B's progression with the Visual Chart.

Towards the end of this study Client B would come into the classroom and take the visual chart and put it on the wall next to his in-progress drawings. Although this

chart was extremely helpful for me in identifying what Client B was drawing, he did not

necessarily like using the chart. During the post-interview with Client B when asked if he

liked the visual chart, he nodded his head no. However, the following class he continued

to use the visual chart and hung it next to his work. The use of visual charts or PECS will

be further discussed in findings section of this study.

Date	Documentation of Visual Chart
2/16	Visual chart is introduced. Client B begins to become familiar with chart and the symbols associated with it.
2/23	Chart is used during the first interview with Client B. "Client B points at lines on chart and then points to his drawing during interview"
2/27	Attempted to add new symbols to Client B's visual chart. Client B did not pick up on the new symbols and continued to use the original ones provided.
3/3	"Observed looking at chart and drawing from it." "Brought chart to me at the start of class."
3/16	Continued to use visual chart. Client B's Program Specialist informs me the visual chart will be mentioned in Client B's annual assessment. The chart will be mentioned as a new communication tool.
3/20	Continued documenting use of visual chart. Videotaped responses such as showing me he wants to paint by pointing to it on the chart and gesturing towards his paper.
3/27	Along with visual chart we also hung up Client B's older artwork as inspiration while he was drawing. "Client seen using the symbol for Line most often."
4/3	Visual chart is used during post-study interview. Client indicated that he did not like using the chart but is willing to explore other ways to communicate.

Figure 17. Use of Visual Chart for Client B.
-This chart depicts Client B's use of his visual chart over the course of this study.
The data in this chart is taken from field notes and video recordings. Sentences in
quotation marks are taken directly from field notes.

Other forms of nonverbal communication were used and discussed throughout the study including gestures, body language, and reading other peoples facial expressions. Referring to the chart in Figure 14, 45% of staff at SpArc mentioned nonverbal forms of communication in their list of strategies used for individuals with atypical communication. Staff at SpArc have also mentioned that picking up on these gestures and body language may help determine how a person is feeling. One staff member suggested that when referring to a client, "knowing that if they usually act one way and it's a little different, it's like are they happy or frustrated or anxious?" (Personal Communication, 3/6). Another SpArc employee on the staff questionnaire made a strong point when explaining what they have noticed when working with individuals who have limited communication:

Paying attention to body language and other forms of nonverbal communication is invaluable for me to understand what nonverbal clients would like to do, but it's also important to accept that sometimes a nonverbal client would like to simply relax. Assuming without evidence that they want activity 100% of the time is as erroneous as assuming without evidence someone who is verbal wants activity 100% of the time. (Staff Questionnaire #5)

This statement is valuable when working with these individuals because they may not be able to tell you if they are tired and want to take a break. While working with Client B gestures were also used to indicate certain symbols on his visual chart. Putting my hand over my head and mimicking "hair" showed Client B to add hair to his figure. This was used when observing body language and facial expressions that seemed like he was stuck

and did not know what to draw next. With Client F, gestures were used during his pre-

interview to indicate that he enjoyed painting and can be seen in Figure 18.

Figure 18. Client F Pre-Interview.
-In this still taken from a video recording, Client F. is asked what material he likes to work with in the art room. By gesturing and "painting the air" with his hand he is able to communicate to me that paint is one of his favorite materials to work with.

Motivation

While working with the participants for this study, along with observations and

interviews at SpArc and CFCW, a helpful strategy for working with individuals can be as

simple as being a positive support system for that individual. When interviewing staff at

SpArc along with CFCW, a common trend in this category was being an advocate for

individuals with atypical communication especially if they are unable to communicate

what they need. When discussing working with participants who attend these art

programs staff mentioned the importance of taking the time to get to know the individual.

One staff member from CFCW mentioned, "I think with the participants, for me, if you

don't give them the time then they have so much more to offer, so I want […] to advocate

for them" (Personal Communication, 3/3). At SpArc, this was also referred to when

discussing getting to know individuals with atypical communication. They explained,

"Especially with behavioral things for someone who does not have typical

communication styles, a lot of times whatever the behavior is, is a form of

communication. (Personal Communication, 3/6) When discussing Client F and his

interactions with staff, a long-time employee discusses the importance of understanding

him:

> With Client F they can be very good at giving folks a hard time if they don't want
>
> to do something. They'll pretend you are not there. But if you take the time to get
>
> to know them and build that relationship with them, then they want to listen to
>
> you" (Personal Communication 3/6).

Figure 19. Client S with a Peer Helper. -This image shows a peer helper (right) assisting Client S (left) with her sewing project. The peer helper holds the fabric while Client S continues to sew the project. Both of these individuals have atypical communication but are working together to help Client S complete her project

Working with a peer was also explored as a strategy when working with Client S on a sewing project. As indicated in her ISP and observed at SpArc, Client S sometimes has difficulties completely work independently. When pairing her with a fellow peer, who also has atypical communication, Client S was able to continue her sewing project while her peer held her project steady for her to continue sewing (Figure 19). Even though they were not able to communicate verbally, this assistance encouraged Client S to keep working on her art project.

Another factor that is important for the instructor or facilitator to remember when

working with individuals with atypical communication is patience. Shown in Figure 20,

when SpArc employees were asked what advice they would give to others starting out in

this field, 60% mentioned patience as an important quality to have in this environment.

Working with individuals who have atypical communication requires patience from both

the instructor and the individual who is nonverbal or has atypical communication.
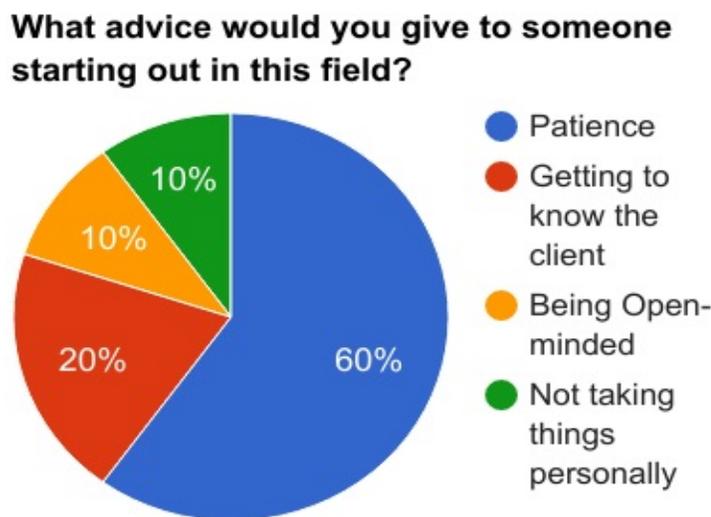
Figure 20. Pie chart depicting question #4 of staff questionnaire for SpArc
employees.

Material

A variety of materials both tactile and adaptive were used in this study to

encourage communication with individuals with atypical communication through art.

Adaptive materials are used with individuals with intellectual disabilities who may need a

tool, such as a paintbrush or pencil, to be built a different way in order for them to use it

independently. These can be done in low-cost ways such as attaching a smaller

Figure 21. Client B, 3/3.
-In this image, Client B is removing the tape when he is completed his drawing. This indicator of removing the tape shows the instructor that he is finished.

paintbrush to a dowel rod in order to make it longer for individuals who may be in wheelchairs and need a longer reach. The adaptive materials used in this study were low- cost and consisted of tape, a blunt tapestry needle for sewing, and an embroidery hoop. In order to increase communication with Client B, a way to indicate when he was done his drawings was discovered when his drawings were taped to the surface of the table. In week six of this study I began to notice that Client B would remove the tape from his drawings when I asked if he was finished. I began to video document this to see if he continued to remove the tape when asked if he was done his drawings. Throughout the remainder of the study the tape was used for Client B to remove when he was ready for a new paper (Figure 21). The low-cost addition of masking tape helped Client B indicate that he was finished and ready to start a new drawing.

With Client S, adaptive tools such as tape and a blunt tapestry needle were used in order for her to complete her fibers projects such as sewing, beading, and making jewelry. Although these tools can also be used for any individual regardless of their communication style, Client S was able to complete her projects independently, which was important to this individual. This will be discussed further in the Findings section of

this chapter. Masking tape was also used with Client S as a holder for her to make beaded

necklaces without having to worry about them falling off the string (Figure 22). This

small piece of tape instantly relaxed her and you could see in her body language and

facial expressions that she was enjoying the process.

Figure 22. Client S, Beaded Necklace Setup.
-In this image, Client S is making a beaded necklace using beads of various sizes.
When the string is taped to the table Client S. can put her beads through the string
without having them fall out. By using a blunt tapestry needle to string the beads
through she is able to easily fit them onto the string.

When working with individuals who have atypical communication, seeing their

choice of material in front of them has shown to be an effective way of picking a material

they would like to work with. When asked what material they would like, individuals

who cannot verbally speak may have difficulties expressing the material they need. When

giving the participants visual options, they are able to point and choose what is in front of

them instead of using an alternative way to communicate their choice. This strategy was

also noted by employees at SpArc, and described by one employee as a technique that

may be helpful for many individuals:

For some people, with audio processing, the last thing you say sticks in their

mind. So if you say, do you want red or blue, they'll say blue, but if you say blue

or red, they'll say red […] sometimes if you hold the materials in front of them

and ask them to choose, then they can look and pick. It's more visual. (Personal

Communication, 3/6)

Giving the clients visual options not only with their art supplies but with what

surface they are working on has also been observed and used as a strategy for individuals

with atypical communication.

Independence

A common theme in the mission statement of many art programs for adults with

intellectual disabilities is giving the clients a choice in what projects they would like to

create and what materials they would like to use to create it. This sentiment is important

for individuals with atypical communication and has been discussed at both sites for this

study. Independence and the ability to be able to complete a project on your own to the

best of your ability are also stressed as a key factor in these programs. At Center for

Creative Works, an employee describes how independence is important for their

program:

So that's what we really encourage here. Being engaged in activities and also

taking care of themselves and being adults, and being responsible. That's what we

encourage here. I can't say it enough. When we first came here, these guys were

treated like they couldn't do anything. Or they weren't given any choices.

(Personal Communication, 3/3)

As compared to an art program or curriculum where projects are already designed for the student, these programs emphasize client exploration and independence when instructing or facilitating art making. Giving the client independence while teaching is described by an employee at SpArc Services. The employee explains what they have seen as successful when working with this population:

It's important to give your influence and share techniques and style and let the client know about them. Because I have seen it in different ways. I've seen forcing your artistic style on someone or giving them suggestions, techniques, and materials to explore. As opposed to saying, draw like me! (Personal Communication, 3/13)

Independence and choice are themes that Client S explored when creating her projects. For some individuals with atypical communication working independently might seem more difficult due to the fact that what they want to make cannot be explained verbally. I have seen the look of frustration in clients' facial expressions and body language when they are unable to explain what they would like to do in the art room. With Client S, she has described what she would like to create through gesture or answering yes or no by nodding in response to questions such as, "Would you like to make a sculpture?" or "Would you like to use cardboard?" This has been the start of many of her project ideas in this study as well as introducing her to new techniques along the way. Client S and her independent art making will be further discussed in the findings section of this chapter.

To further emphasize that art programs promote an independent environment for individuals with atypical communication, a discussion between a SpArc employee and myself is shown below:

C: It's helpful to see that coming here and making art, especially if you can't communicate what you want. It could be a way to make some type of choice, expression, or control.

S: Maybe they can't control 99% of their life but they can decide what they want to make and how they want to make it. That's why it's important working here. To let that element come out and not to come to people with projects and say, "This is what we're doing." (Personal Communication, 3/3)

The adaptations and strategies discussed in this section were determined through triangulated methods of data collection, which included participant observations at two art programs for adults with intellectual disabilities. Semi-structured interviews with staff at both sites (Appendix B) and a staff questionnaire (Appendix C) at SpArc gave a perspective from the employees who work with individuals with atypical communication.

Individual case studies of three participants at SpArc were studied and documented through field notes, observation sheets (Appendix A), pre and post interviews (Appendix B) and visual/video documentation. Although these strategies and adaptations were successful in the SpArc art room it is important to emphasize that these are individuals with their own unique ways of communicating. The strategies and adaptations I have provided are to be seen as suggestions or options to use with individuals who have limited forms verbal communication. This will be further discussed in the findings section of this chapter.

Findings

The research questions asked in this study will be discussed in relation to the data

and evidence that I have collected throughout this ten-weeks study. Each question will be

allotted its own section in order to answer it as efficiently as possible. Findings that were

not addressed in the research questions will also be acknowledged, including use of

communication books, collaboration between art programs with similar populations, and

addressing the individuality of working in an environment with individuals who have

atypical communication skills.

Research Questions

1.What strategies and adaptations in art making can be used to create artistic dialogue

between the instructor and the client in an Arts Program for adults with intellectual and

developmental disabilities?

While collecting and implementing strategies and adaptations that have been

collected throughout this study, I have discovered that it is important to embrace the

individuality of the population you are working with. I discuss this during an interview

with a SpArc employee during week six of this study:

> There is no "perfect list" for everyone. But I'm trying to make a list for these
>
> individuals, plus things I notice, so I can have a general idea from both sites as
>
> well as lists that worked with the individual participants. Maybe someone will
>
> read this and when I'm describing them it might remind them of another client.
>
> (Personal Communication, 3/3)

By creating and organizing this list, as shown in Figure 23, I can only pass on the

information I have collected and implemented in order to give other individuals who

work with similar populations a "tool-kit" for working with individuals with atypical

communication. This "tool-kit" can continue to be adjusted for instructors or staff who

work in with individuals with atypical communication whether in an arts program or a K-

12 classroom.

For the participants in my study, I was able help facilitate projects and ideas that

the participants wanted to create without exchanging verbal dialogue. For example,

paying attention to a clients gestures and body language has shown to heighten the

instructor or facilitators nonverbal communication as well. This is explained by a SpArc

employee when they are asked about working with adults with atypical communication:

"That's something that can be challenging at times but also fun. It really heightens your

nonverbal communication skills as a person" (Personal Communication, 3/3).
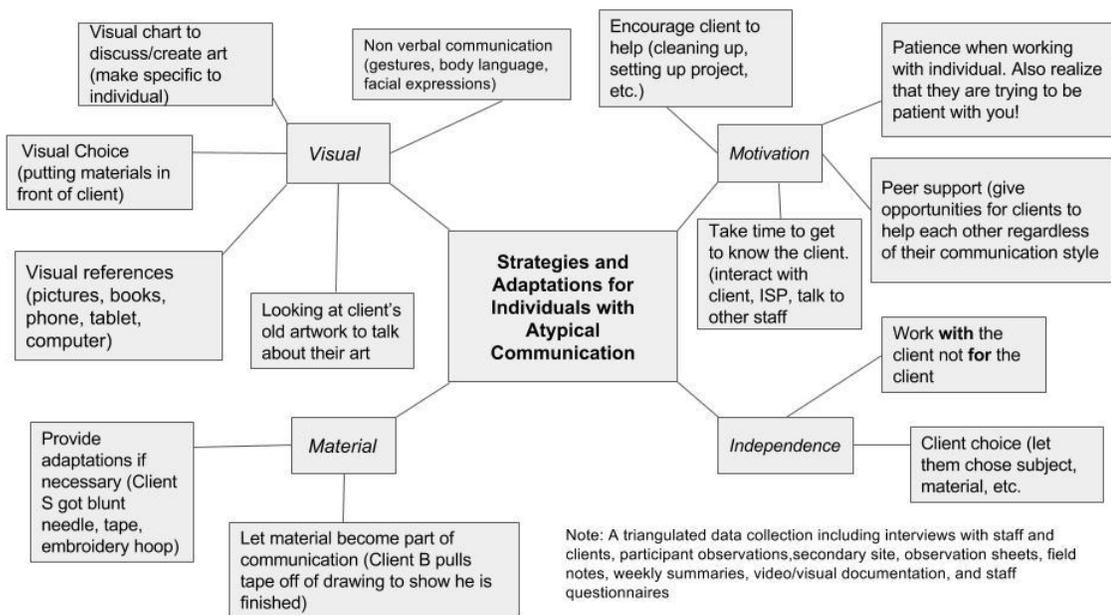

Figure 23. Chart of Strategies and Adaptations.
-This image shows a mind map of the strategies and adaptations used and
discussed during the study.

Recognizing the individuality of clients who attend art programs like SpArc

Services and Center for Creative Works was mentioned by several staff members I

interviewed and is shown in Figure 24.

During this ten-week study I had the opportunity to interact with a variety of

clients and staff who work in and attend these art programs. By focusing on three

individuals with atypical communication, I was able to implement a variety of strategies

and adaptations that increased their art making and my ability to assist these participants

in making artwork of their choice. I will discuss the continuation of this process in

chapter five of this study.

Documented Trends	Interview Quotes
Individuality	- "Everyone is so different from each other. That's what makes it so interesting to me." (Personal Communication, 3/3) - "It is impossible to put into a category. Every single person is so different." (Personal Communication, 3/2) - "You have to be willing to be open-minded to that and not just expect a cookie-cutter thing like everyone else." (Personal Communication, 3/10)

Figure 24. Documented Trends Table.
-Charting trends seen throughout the study.

2. In what ways would these strategies and adaptations aid the clients in other

areas of life, including their Individual Support Plan outcomes as established by their

support team?

Working with three participants at SpArc services Cultural Arts Center allowed me to investigate if working with individuals with atypical communication in the art room would have an effect on their ISP outcomes as established by their support team. A clients support team can include their Program Specialist, parent or guardian, Behavioral Specialist, Communication Specialist, or someone who can advocate for the client. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services describes an ISP as, "a plan that provides details about what is most important to an individual with disabilities so that everyone involved in supporting that individual can focus on those areas" (2013). The Individual Outcome Summary of an ISP describes specific goals the client would like to accomplish. The three participants in this study all have an Individual Outcome Summary that they are trying to achieve throughout the year until their next annual ISP meeting. The clients' outcomes will be described in the following sections as well as if the strategies and adaptation implemented related to the outcome stated in their ISPs.

Client B Outcome

Client B's Outcome Statement states that "Client B engages in creative activities with peers in order to build upon his artistic interests, to improve social skills, and build relationships" (Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, 2017). Throughout the course of this study Client B used a visual chart in order to have an artistic dialogue when discussing his artwork. This chart consisted of pictures representing symbols and mark-making reminiscent of Client B's artistic style.

This chart was used for six weeks of the ten-week study in order to engage the participant and give him the opportunity to talk about his artwork by gesturing to the chart and pointing to his artwork. Because this chart was a visual communication tool, the

use of this chart will be noted in Client B's Annual Assessment. This assessment is

completed by Client B's Program Specialist and is used as a resource for Client B's

annual ISP meeting. The visual chart will be seen as a tool for communication with Client

B and could possible be adapted and used by other staff at SpArc.

It is important to note that although Client B. did use the visual chart and used it

accurately to show what he was drawing or what he was about to draw, does not mean

that he liked using the chart. In Client B's post-interview, seen in Figure 25, I asked if he

liked using the visual chart. He shook his head indicating "No". The question was

repeated in order to insure the accuracy of his answer and again he shook his head "No".

Although this may seem like a setback, his answer relates to many individuals I have

talked to in regards to using communication charts or books.

Client B and Client F have both stated in their ISPs that they have used a

communication book at one point or another. Client B used a communication book in

high school but has not used one since according to his ISP. Client F was also given a

communication book but when staff at SpArc tried to use it, he said he did not need the

book or claimed he did not know where it was. A similar situation has also been

Figure 25. Client B Post-Interview. -This image shows Client B before his post-interview. Client B's artwork was discussed as well as the use of his visual chart throughout the ten-week study.

described at Center for Creative Works where clients have had communication books or

PECS during their K-12 schooling but have not been able to continue using them after

transitioning out of school. When I asked why these tools have not been as effective in

adulthood, staff at both sites mentioned a lack of training for these tools as well as not

having an ideal staff to client ratio to use these tools effectively with clients who have

atypical communication. Communication books or PECS can be tools that are successful

for certain individuals with atypical communication, but for this sample group there were

factors that made implementing these tools unsuccessful. When describing Client B's

visual chart to a SpArc employee they responded:

> That's something concrete and something they recognize, because I feel like a lot
>
> of times in this field, when we make those communication boards we're using
>
> images that, for us, have a connotation. Like a paintbrush means "art class" or a
>
> guitar means "music class"[…] Sometimes people with developmental disabilities
>
> may not be making that connection with the paintbrush or the guitar. (Personal
>
> Communciation, 3/13)

Once again, I am not stating that communication books or PECS cannot be

successful for an individual who is nonverbal. In these particular cases other factors

contribute to the clients inability to become acclimated to these communication tools.

When completing Client B's post-interview, I asked him if he would be interested in

exploring other forms of communication. He nodded "Yes". Alternative forms of

communication is something I will continue to explore in order to find a way for Client B

to communicate the way that he wants to.

In relation to his ISP outcome, Client B was also involved in a group exhibition held during the course of this study. In Client B's ISP it is important for him to interact with peers and engage in artistic activities. At this art exhibition, held at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Client B was observed interacting with peers and enthusiastically showing his artwork to others. Exhibitions that take place in the community give individuals with atypical communication a chance to interact through their artwork as well as have a chance to socialize with peers and others in the community.

Client S Outcome

Client S's Outcome Statement states that, "Client S participates in arts and crafts independently." The reason for this Outcome is that Client S enjoys art making and creative activities but has been observed having trouble staying on task and would like staff to make projects for her. The staff and I try to tell Client S that we can make her something but it would be nice for her to make us something in return.

Prior to this study, Client S would have preferred staying in the main program area instead of coming to art class. This is described in week one of this study:

> Client S does not typically stay in my classroom for long periods of time. She
> comes in and out of the classroom throughout the day and tends to stay if there is
> more one on one communication. If there are smaller classes she will stay if I am
> able to work with her on a specific project. […] When talking to other staff I have
> heard similar stories of this client working with one on one attention but having
> trouble working independently. (Field Notes, 1/27)

During Client S's pre-interview she stated that she would like to work with beads and

fabric. Client S was completing a weaving at the time of her interview and the weaving

was used to communicate and talk about fibers during our discussion (Figure 26). After

Figure 26. Client S. Pre-Interview.
-This image shows Client S pointing to the part of her weaving that she
liked the best. When asked the question, "What do you like to make in art
class?" Client S responded by pointing to her weaving. We continued to
use the weaving to talk about art.

the pre-interview I introduced other techniques, including dyeing fabric, beading, soft

sculpture, and jewelry.

While completing her projects, Client S was given tools, such as tape for support,

when beading and an adaptive cardboard needle, shown in Figure 27, which made

weaving fabric through the cardboard loom easier.

At week six of the study Client S still needed one-on-one attention, but was able

to weave the entire project on her own with vocal assistance from me. As the study

progressed, Client S continued to explore more fibers projects and explored beading,

which she was able to do independently with an embroidery hoop and blunt tapestry

needle.

During this study Client S accomplished something that I did not take into

consideration before this study. Throughout the three years that I have taught at SpArc

Services Cultural Arts Center, I have been unable to complete projects with Client S.

Figure 27. Client S
using adaptive
weaving needle.
-In this image Client S
uses a cardboard
needle to weave her
project. This
adaptation allowed her
to work more
independently on her
project.

Through this study, we were able to complete five projects as well as have one of

her pieces featured in a group exhibition at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania. At this exhibition Client S was observed proudly standing near her piece

and showing peers and guests as they passed. In the three years I have been there I have

not seen Client S have individual work in an art exhibition.

As Client S and I continued to work on art projects, her attendance in art class

increased. Out of the 19 art classes that I taught throughout the course of this study,

Client S attended 17. Attendance may not have been for the entire one and a half hour

class, however it was an increase compared to before the start of this study.

Client F Outcome

Client F's Outcome Summary states that "Client F works with new mediums

and/or subject matters in his art so that he can broaden his artistic palette. Although I

believe the client should be able to choose what they would like to focus on, introducing

them to new subjects may help to expand their artistic expression.

Client F refers to pop culture images in his work, which includes subjects such as

Michael Jackson, WWE wrestlers, and Sports Figures. The idea of exploring Pop Culture

or fantasy has also been described as a positive area to explore by an employee from

CFCW. They explain:

Talk about fantasy with these guys, their imaginations and going with that.

Whenever we have new people here we're like, what are you interested in? Let's

make it work! You have to be willing to be open-minded to that and not just

expect a cookie cutter thing like everyone else. (Personal Communication, 3/10)
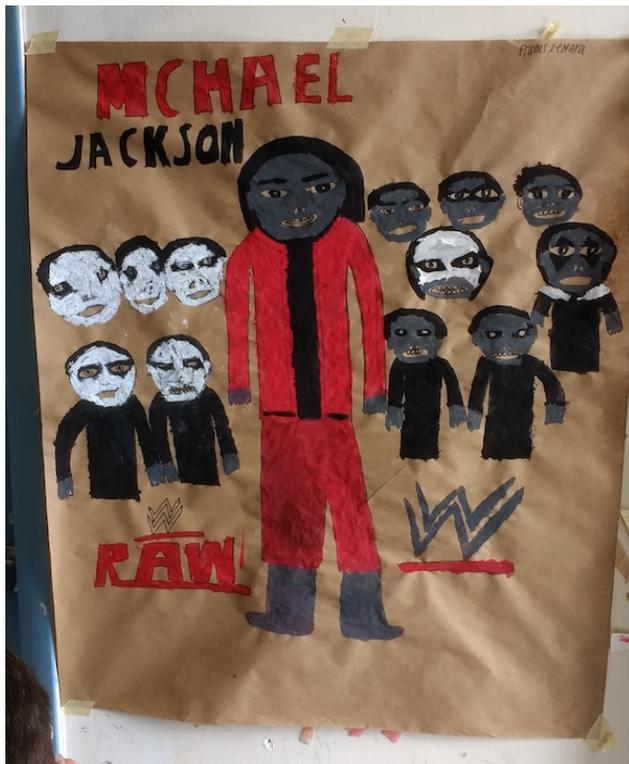
Figure 28. Client F Painting.
-In this image, Client F continues his exploration of Michael Jackson as a subject. In this image he is depicting Jackson in the music video "Thriller". Behind him are zombies that have their faces painted like WWE characters. Client F continues this blend by putting the WWE logo and Michael Jackson name on the piece.

During Client F's pre-interview when asked what he would like to explore more in art class he explained through pointing at artwork and gestures, shown in Figure 18, that he would like to use paint and use Michael Jackson as a subject for his work.

At the beginning of this exploration, Client F. would paint large pictures of Michael Jackson by looking at visual references on my phone or printed out from the computer. The images he drew from those visual references can be seen in Figure 13.

By allowing Client F to continue exploring this subject and medium I noticed he was creating in a way that I had not seen before in Client F's artwork. In week seven of this study Client F began to combine subjects that he likes in the same painting and is shown in Figure 28. This is documented in field notes and described below:

> He did continue his large-scale Michael Jackson series, using visuals on my
> phone for reference. Without prompting, they began to combine different pop
> culture subjects together, which I have not observed before. (Field Notes, 3/13)

By combining these subjects together, Client F was able to broaden his artistic palette, as described in his ISP outcome, while staying true to the subject and materials he is interested in. Although Client F was unable to participate in the post-interview of his case study, the work we were able to complete in the art room began to increase Client F's outcomes. Working in these areas gave him the choice of what subjects and mediums he would like to use and increased subject exploration as described in his Outcome Summary. When Client F returns from his leave of absence, I would like to continue to explore pop culture combinations and push the boundaries of what he would like to explore in art class.

With evidence seen through imagery, video, observations, interviews, and field

notes I was able to determine that the strategies and adaptations implemented in this

study were beneficial to the participants ISP Outcome Summary's. I would like to

continue working with these participants as well as their peers to provide techniques and

subjects that can correspond to their Outcome Summary. This continuation will be further

discussed in Chapter V.

3. How can art programs with similar populations benefit the instructor by adapting

skills seen through observations and, furthermore, how can these strategies be

implemented in the classroom?

By observing and interviewing staff at my secondary site, Center for Creative

Works, I discovered a trend that I did not set out to find at the start of this study.

Although I was able to observe staff interacting with participants with atypical

communication and using artistic techniques to create art, most of my discoveries

occurred during the interview process with staff.

When asked if there were any resources for working with individuals with

atypical communication or resources to see how other art programs are running, staff at

CFCW stated that there were none. This was also a similar response when asked at SpArc

Services. Employees at art programs for adults with ID/DD are required to receive

training in order to continue working in these environments. However, these trainings

may not specifically relate to art making or communicating with individuals with atypical

communication in art programs. Working in an art program environment requires time

that may be unable to be used to help facilitate these resources or outlets for relationships

with similar art programs. As a CFCW employee states, "I'm sure it's across the board. It's similar, everyone is kind of strapped so it's not like there's a lot of down time to get that information." (Personal Communication, 3/3)

When discussing conferences and presentations in regards to art programs for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities both sites stated it's hard to fit into the categories that are currently out there. I can personally relate to this in regards to an experience presenting at a conference attended mostly by K-12 art educators. Because the presentation was focused on an art museum experience for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities attendance was not as high. Staff at CFCW stated a similar situation when presenting at conferences, and explained that it didn't seem like they "fit in" due to the fact that it was not for K-12 students with disabilities.

The National Art Education Association is a powerful resource for K-12 art educators with a strong following and provides many ways to interact with other educators through websites, webinars, and state and national conferences. Once students with disabilities transition out of school, the resources needed for these individuals seem to decrease. This has been shown in my research for art making for adults with atypical communication as well as the use of communication devices for these individuals. Experiences described at both sites, recall participants who have lost skills such as writing or using communication boards after transitioning out of school due to factors such as staff to client ratio increase or the lack of training in these subjects for staff in art programs (Personal Communication, 3/3 & 3/13). These concerns are stated during an interview where I describe the need for these resources in art programs:

Just talking about programs in general. Everyone is so different. Maybe a

different philosophy or mission or focus? SpArc is community arts oriented.

CFCW is focused on mainly the arts. I have seen other programs who involve the

clients in a lot of the rules and decision making for their programs. There's a lot

of programs with different philosophies. But my friend just came back from the

NAEA and there are conferences like that for art educators from all over the

country. But where are the resources for you guys, who are also working in the

arts, and the individuals you work with are out of school? Can there be a support

system for that? (Personal Communication, 3/13)

The need for a support system or resources for employees who work at art

programs for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities will be further

discussed in Chapter V.

By collecting triangulated data I was able to have a variety of information to

inform, impact, and prove the questions asked of this study. Through strategies and

adaptation for adults with atypical communication, I was able to produce art projects with

individual participants that increased interaction in the art room. These strategies and

adaptations were able to impact the participants' Individual Outcome Summary as

well as discover other trends such as the complexities of using communication boards or

PECS in an arts program for adults with disabilities. Observing and interviewing staff

from another site allowed me to discover the need for art programs for adults with

disabilities to have more resources and interactions. Having the ability to work together

can contribute to a stronger united front when advocating for adults with ID/DD in the

arts. This study provided me with valuable resources for teaching. Providing a purposeful

environment for individuals with atypical communication and taking the time to get to

know them can increase and influence the way art is created in these program settings.

Chapter V: Conclusion

Summary

This study was able to explore a variety of strategies and adaptations for working with adults with atypical communication in an arts program. Through action research, I was able to work with a group of individuals who have varying levels of communication in an arts program. While working with these individuals I was able to develop a chart of strategies and adaptations (Figure 23) that were seen as successful by the researcher while creating artwork. By working with a group of individuals with different communication styles, I was able to create a more diversified set of strategies that may be used or adapted by art educators or individuals working in an art program for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Throughout this ten-week study, I was able to determine whether the adaptations or strategies I had implemented have had any effect on the participants ISP outcomes. I was able to introduce projects and art making techniques that, in turn, enhanced and accomplished their ISP outcomes. Each participant has individualized goals that cater to their personal needs and the strategies developed during this study. These techniques can be used by educators and can be adjusted and adapted to the individual they are working with.

This study also explored the relationship between other art programs for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. While conducting this study at two different arts programs, I was able to see the similarities in these programs as well as the need for support and collaboration between like-minded environments and individuals. Conducting research at SpArc and Center for Creative Works showed the importance of

getting to know the participants that attend as well as seeing the similarities in the lack of

resources that were provided to individuals in these programs after transitioning out of

the K-12 classroom. This will be further discussed in this chapter.

Implication for the Field

      While conducting the literature review for this study the lack of resources for

those working in art programs for adults with disabilities was slim. Most research

discussing arts and disability studies corresponded to the K-12 classroom. However, after

transitioning out of the K-12 classroom many adults with atypical communication risk the

chance of losing communication skills they were taught when provided with resources

such as a one-on-one or special education teacher as well as smaller class size and

individualized attention. As seen in Chapter IV, participants were not using

communication tools that were not easily accessible to them after their K-12 education.

These resources such as PECS boards or AAC devices, were either no longer available,

harder to maintain, or not requested by their guardian or advocate.

      By providing individuals ways to communicate visually through art making such

as using visuals references and nonverbal communication, the participants can interact

with the instructor and others through low-cost strategies and adaptations. The instructor

must also acknowledge the individuals "visual voice" and take the time and opportunity

to work with them and understand their artistic style. These strategies can also be adapted

to the K-12 art classroom when working with children with atypical communication as

well.

      Conducting this study has also shown the lack of resources for art programs for

adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. As discussed in Chapter IV, many

of the employees working in these programs are not provided with the same tools and

resources as K-12 art educators. Even though many employees I have encountered are

passionate about what they do and embrace working in these environments, the reality is

that government funding, which pays for non-profit day programs, simply cannot provide

the assistance that may have been available during a participants K-12 education. In these

environments it is important to remember that the skills and techniques individuals with

atypical communication use and learn in these programs can be applied to daily life as

seen through their ISP outcomes. This includes communication, community involvement,
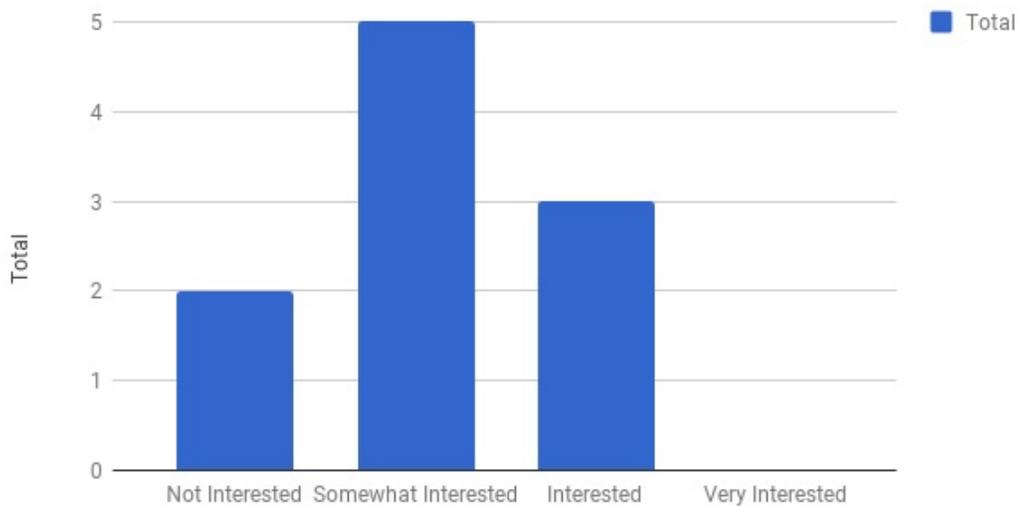

Figure 29. Employee Questionnaire #5.
-Chart depicting the staff questionnaire responses regarding the need for a meet-
up group for individuals who work in arts programs.

independence, and developing a career as an artist.

     While discussing this need for collaboration between art programs during my

study, I decided to ask employees at SpArc how they felt about interacting with

employees from different art programs for adults with developmental and intellectual

disabilities. When ask if employees would be interested in participating in a meet-up

group with individuals who are in the same field (Figure 29), the response was lower than

asked if an online meet-up could also be an option (Figure 30). Having the opportunity

to provide online resources for employees in these programs can be beneficial, as many

employees may not have the time to meet face to face. I would like to push this idea of

collaboration further and will discuss this more in the action plan of this study.

Would you be more willing to participate in an online group or forum with other individuals that work in art programs for adults with
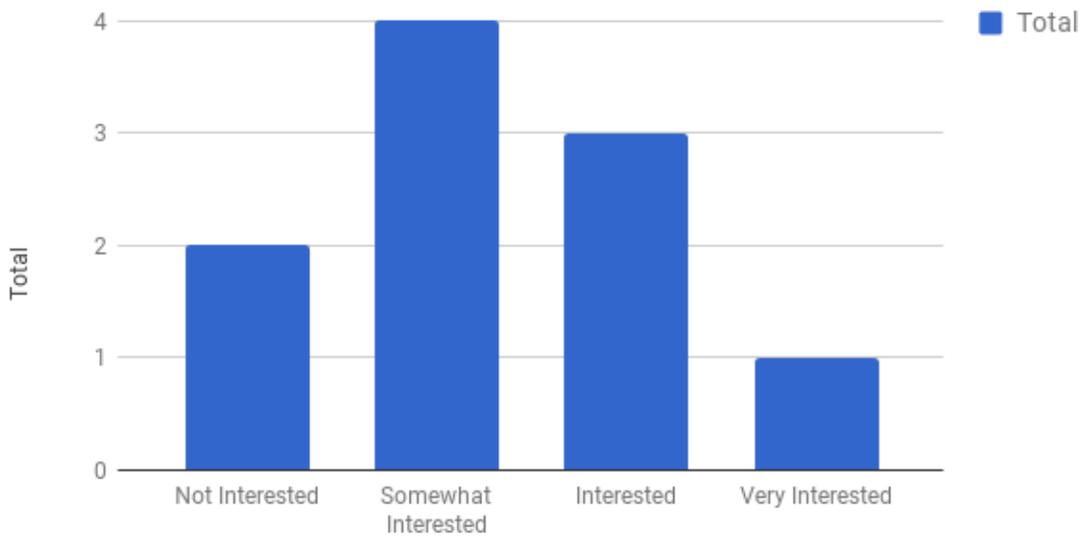
Figure 30. Employee Questionnaire #6.
-Chart depicting the staff questionnaire responses regarding the need for an
online forum for individuals who work in art programs.

Action Plan

During this study I was able to work with individual participants where strategies

and adaptations were discovered through art making. These were beneficial to both the

instructor and the participant while working in the art room as well as on the participants

ISP outcomes. After seeing the results of working with these individuals, I have

continued to implement strategies following my study as well as continuing to work with

artists with atypical communication at CFCW.

Client S continues to come into the classroom and explore fiber arts, recently

working on accessories such as designing t-shirts and hats. Client F continues to explore

his love of pop culture figures while working in a large -scale format. Recently, he also

began working on pieces for an exhibition at LaSalle University, inspired by African

American abstract art from its permanent collection. Client B continues to use the visual

chart to communicate what he is drawing in class. He is continuing to work in a large-

scale format and is still incorporating his symbols and figures into his artwork.

Due to changes in government waivers for individuals with developmental and

intellectual disabilities in Pennsylvania, the way art is taught in art programs for adults

may change within the coming years. These waivers provide individuals with disabilities

the financial ability to attend these programs. In 2017, the Department of Human

Services proposed changes to decrease the amount of time participants are allowed to

spend in community arts programs by providing community outings for the participants

(Rehabilition & Community Providers Association, 2017). By January 2018, participants

in day programs (which includes art programs) cannot receive in-facility services more

than 75% of the time (RCPA, 2017). As I am writing this action plan these changes have

begun to go into affect, with participants at SpArc going on community outings

throughout the week and during art class.

Although in theory, the idea of community integration up to 75% of the time may

seem beneficial for the participant, this is not the case for many individuals, especially

when they have a practicing art routine. These changes have affected participants in this

study and have not allowed me to have the class time to work with these individuals on

their artwork. I plan to keep developing techniques that can translate into the community

arts. Eventually my position may also require me to create art with participants in

different community settings so further exploring and adapting these strategies and

adaptations is essential in order to keep up with the changes in day program regulations.

Through this study I will also have the opportunity to show my thesis work at the

first International Conference on Arts, Disability, and Education taking place in Finland,

September 2017. Through this communication with other art and disability advocates

from all over the world, I hope to develop an international communication system in

which we can help each other provide strategies, adaptations, and opportunities to create

artwork with individuals with atypical communication.

Conducting this study at SpArc and Center for Creative Works helped provide me

with evidence of visual strategies and communication in an arts program through action

research. By having the chart of Strategies and Adaptations (Figure 24) as a basis for

visual communication with adults with atypical communication in the art room, I can

continue to build upon this knowledge through collaboration with other art program and

art educators from around the world.

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Appendices

Permissions

APPENDIX A

**MA THESIS LETTER OF RECRUITMENT
FOR PARTICIPANTS AT SPARC SERVICES**

DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ART EDUCATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SPECIAL POPULATIONS PROGRAM

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Date

I am contacting you to request permission for your child/client,

_____,

to participate in a research study at SpArc Philadelphia. My name is Christina Lukac, and I am a graduate candidate in Art Education with an Emphasis on Special Populations at Moore College of Art and Design. I am conducting my graduate research at SpArc where I will be examining strategies in the art room that can strengthen communication between myself and clients with atypical communication skills. I am currently the Art Teacher at SpArc and have been teaching there since 2013.

This research will be conducted at SpArc during regularly scheduled art classes, and will not impact time devoted to other obligations or therapies. Your child/client's identity will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used on all data collected. I will be requesting access to the clients ISP objectives and goals in order to see if the strategies I use will impact their objectives. The research study will take place over 2-4 months, with clients participating in observations done during regular class time as well as interviews done at their convenience. All participating clients will have the opportunity to look at the questions I will be asking them as well as the video recording that will go along with the interview. This video recording will assist me in looking for

ways in which a participant may not verbally speak but use other forms of nonverbal communication. I will also be documenting photographs of the client's artwork, but will not be photographing their faces in order to keep their identities confidential. All video and digital data will be destroyed upon conclusion of the dissertation excluding those used directly in my study and I will inform the client and caregiver of what will be used.

Attached you will find INFORMED ASSENT and PARTICPANT'S RIGHTS forms which further detail the research study. Should you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact me at (267)-███████ or clukac@moore.edu at any time.   If you have no further questions, you may sign and return these forms now. You will have additional time to consider your child's participation with a deadline of 1/15. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Christina Lukac

APPENDIX B.

MA THESIS CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH SITE SUPPORT FORM

Laura Princiotta, CEO
SpArc Services
The Arc of Philadelphia
2350 West Westmoreland Street
Philadelphia, PA 19140

11/24/16

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Laura Princiotta, give permission to Christina Lukac to conduct an action research
study at SpArc Philadelphia during the spring of 2017 in order to fulfill the requirements
of her Master's thesis at Moore College of Art and Design. I understand that this project
is intended to research best teaching practices in the art room for individuals with atypical
communication skills.

I understand that Christina Lukac will be a teacher-researcher who will be teaching art
while gathering data during art class. I understand she will be collecting data using
various methods including participant observations, semi-structured interviews with
clients and staff, which may be video recorded, and documentation of artwork.

Sincerely,

Laura Princiotta

Signature   _____

Date   _____

MA THESIS CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH SITE SUPPORT FORM

Linda Price, Cultural Arts Director
SpArc Services
The Arc of Philadelphia
2350 West Westmoreland Street
Philadelphia, PA 19140

11/24/16

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Linda Price, give permission to Christina Lukac to conduct an action research study at SpArc Philadelphia during the spring semester of 2017 in order to fulfill the requirements of her Master's thesis at Moore College of Art and Design. I understand that this project is intended to research best teaching practices in the art room for individuals with atypical communication skills.

I understand that Christina Lukac will be a teacher-researcher who will be teaching art while gathering data during art class. I understand she will be collecting data using various methods including participant observations, semi-structured interviews with clients and staff, which may be video recorded, and documentation of artwork.

Sincerely,

Linda Price

Signature _____

Date _____

MA THESIS CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH SITE SUPPORT FORM

Lori Bartol, Program Director
Center for Creative Works
241 E Lancaster Ave
Wynnewood, PA 19096

12/15/16

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Lori Bartol, give permission to Christina Lukac to conduct observations at Center for
Creative Works during the spring semester of 2017 in order to fulfill the requirements of
her Master's thesis at Moore College of Art and Design. I understand that this project is
intended to research best teaching practices in the art room for individuals with atypical
communication skills.

I understand that Christina Lukac will be an active researcher who will be conducting
participant observations during art class. I understand she will be collecting data using
various methods including field notes and observation forms.

Sincerely,

Lori Bartol

Signature   _____

Date   _____

APPENDIX C.

MA THESIS ASSENT FORM

FOR CLIENT PARTICIPANTS AT SPARC SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ART EDUCATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SPECIAL POPULATIONS PROGRAM

INFORMED ASSENT FOR CLIENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study that investigates strategies and adaptations in the art room for adults with atypical communication, as well as if these strategies impact Individual Support Plan goals and objectives. It is hoped that valuable teaching methods will emerge that can help communicate more effectively in the classroom. For this study, you will participate in research sessions over the course of 2-4 months. These research sessions will include interviews as well as video recordings of these interviews in order for me to better understand how you communicate with me. I will be asking to view your Individual Support Plan, including your ISP goals and objectives in order to form a better understanding of how I can better communicate with you in the art room as well as what goals and objectives you are working towards. This study will also include observations, which will take place in the current art room at SpArc Philadelphia. These observations will be documented through field notes as well as video recording. I will also be documenting your art work over the course of this study to see if new teaching methods will impact your art making and style. The entirety of this study will take place at SpArc Philadelphia, and I, Christina Lukac, will conduct the research study.

RISK AND BENEFITS: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There will be no affect on your placement at SpArc or in Art Class if you decide not to participate in this study. The interview questions and observation experiences for the study will remain the same for all participants with slight simplifications made for participants who may have difficulty understanding. Therefore you will not be singled out if you choose not to participate in the study. The research has the same amount of risk you would encounter during a normal art class experience. Semi-structured interviews will involve additional time, but will be conducted in the time and place that is easiest for you. You will be told when video recording has begun and when it has been stopped through the study. These recording will be seen by me, the researcher, and may be used during the findings and final presentation of this study, with your consent. If you feel shy or uncomfortable at any point during the study, special arrangements can be made, and/ or you can be pulled out of the study without penalty or repercussions. The benefits of this study include being involved in a study that can benefit your experience in the art room. I will be working with you in order to find out how you participate in art class as well as what ways I can help give you a better classroom experience. Hopefully, this information can be applied to other Art Programs and you can be a part of creating a better art making experience for individuals with atypical communication.

PAYMENTS: There will be no payments for you for your participation in this study. A complimentary lunch or snack may be provided at the conclusion of the study.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: Subjects confidentiality will be preserved. I am the sole researcher of this study. For the collation, analysis, and reporting of all data, all of the participants will be assigned a pseudonym to prevent individuals from being identified. Any charts used in my dissertations or presentations will be coded. All of the data collected for this project will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home. The video recordings will be deleted on the completion of this project, expect for those that may be used in my presentation, and in that case the participant will be informed. I will reserve the right to use the data and photographs of client art work and in the classroom, but their faces will not be shown and their identities will remain confidential.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your Participation in this study will take approximately 2-4 months.

HOW THE RESULTS WILL BE USED: The results in this study will be used to draw conclusions if art making is affected in an Art Program, when purposeful strategies and adaptations are used for communication. This study will be reported in the form of a thesis, which serves to fulfill my requirements for my Masters Degree in Art Education with an Emphasis on Special Populations.

, Philadelphia, PA   –   - clukac@moore.edu- christina.e.lukac@gmail.com

MA THESIS ASSENT FORM

FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS AT SPARC SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ART EDUCATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SPECIAL POPULATIONS PROGRAM

INFORMED ASSENT FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study that investigates strategies and adaptations in the art room for adults with atypical communication, as well as if these strategies impact Individual Support Plan goals and objectives. It is hoped that valuable teaching methods will emerge that can help communicate more effectively in the classroom. For this study, you will participate in research sessions over the course of 2-4 months. These research sessions will include one interview as well as an audio recording of this interview in order for me to better understand how you communicate with the clients in an Arts Program. This study will also include observations, which will take place in the current art room at SpArc Philadelphia. You will not be asked to participate in these observations. These observations will be documented through field notes as well as video recording. I will also be documenting the participating clients art work over the course of this study to see if new teaching methods will impact art making and style. The entirety of this study will take place at SpArc Philadelphia, and I, Christina Lukac, will conduct the research study.

RISK AND BENEFITS: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There will be no affect on your employment at SpArc if you decide not to participate in this study. The interview questions for the study will remain the same for all participants. Therefore you will not be singled out if you choose not to participate in the study. The research has the same amount of risk you would encounter during a normal interview experience. Semi-structured interviews will involve additional time, but will be conducted in the time and place that is easiest for you. If you feel shy or uncomfortable at any point during the study, special arrangements can be made, and/ or you can be pulled out of the study without penalty or repercussions. The benefits of this study include being involved in a study that can benefit the clients experience in the art room. I will be working with you in order to find out how you facilitate communication and art making with the clients. Hopefully, this information can be applied to other Art Programs and you can be a part of creating a better art making experience for individuals with atypical communication.

PAYMENTS: There will be no payments for you for your participation in this study. A complimentary lunch or snack may be provided at the conclusion of the study.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: Subjects confidentiality will be preserved. I am the sole researcher of this study. For the collation, analysis, and reporting of all data, all of the participants will be assigned a pseudonym to prevent individuals from being identified. Any charts used in my dissertations or presentations will be coded. All of the data collected for this project will be kept in a

locked filing cabinet in my home. The video recordings will be deleted on the completion of this project, expect for those that may be used in my presentation, and in that case the participant will be informed. I will reserve the right to use the data and photographs of client art work and in the classroom, but their faces will not be shown and their identities will remain confidential.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your Participation in this study will take approximately one interview, time may vary.

HOW THE RESULTS WILL BE USED: The results in this study will be used to draw conclusions if art making is affected in an Art Program, when purposeful strategies and adaptations are used for communication. This study will be reported in the form of a thesis, which serves to fulfill my requirements for my Masters Degree in Art Education with an Emphasis on Special Populations.

████████, Philadelphia, PA ████████████- clukac@moore.edu- christina.e.lukac@gmail.com

MA THESIS ASSENT FORM

FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS AT CENTER FOR CREATIVE WORKS

DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ART EDUCATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SPECIAL POPULATIONS PROGRAM

INFORMED ASSENT FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study that investigates strategies and adaptations in the art room for adults with atypical communication, as well as if these strategies impact Individual Support Plan goals and objectives. It is hoped that valuable teaching methods will emerge that can help communicate more effectively in Art Programs. For this study, you will participate in research sessions over the course of 2-4 months. These research sessions will include two participant observations in order for me to better understand how you communicate with the clients in an Arts Program. These observations will be documented through field notes as well as an observation form. The entirety of these observations will take place at Center for Creative Works, and I, Christina Lukac, will conduct the participant observations.

RISK AND BENEFITS: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There will be no affect on your employment at Center for Creative Works if you decide not to participate in this study. The participant observations will be conducted without intruding on the environment or manipulating the surroundings. Therefore you will not be singled out if you choose not to participate in the study. The research has the same amount of risk you would encounter during a normal observation experience. If you feel shy or uncomfortable at any point during the study, special arrangements can be made, and/ or you can be pulled out of the study without penalty or repercussions. The benefits of this study include being involved in a study that can benefit the clients experience in the art room. I will be working with you in order to find out how you facilitate communication and art making with the clients. Hopefully, this information can be applied to other Art Programs and you can be a part of creating a better art making experience for individuals with atypical communication.

PAYMENTS: There will be no payments for you for your participation in this study.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: Subjects confidentiality will be preserved. I am the sole researcher of this study. For the collation, analysis, and reporting of all data, all of the participants will be assigned a pseudonym to prevent individuals from being identified. Any charts used in my dissertations or presentations will be coded. All of the data collected for this project will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home. I will reserve the right to use the data collected during my observation and include it in the findings of my study.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your Participation in this study will take approximately two observations, time may vary.

HOW THE RESULTS WILL BE USED: The results in this study will be used to draw conclusions if art making is affected in an Art Program, when purposeful strategies and adaptations are used for communication. This study will be reported in the form of a thesis, which serves to fulfill my requirements for my Masters Degree in Art Education with an Emphasis on Special Populations.

Philadelphia, PA ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮- clukac@moore.edu- christina.e.lukac@gma

MA THESIS ASSENT FORM

FOR CLIENTS AT CENTER FOR CREATIVE WORKS

DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ART EDUCATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SPECIAL POPULATIONS PROGRAM

INFORMED ASSENT FOR CLIENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study that investigates strategies and adaptations in the art room for adults with atypical communication, as well as if these strategies impact Individual Support Plan goals and objectives. It is hoped that valuable teaching methods will emerge that can help communicate more effectively in Art Programs. For this study, you will participate in research sessions over the course of 2-4 months. These research sessions will include two participant observations in order for me to better understand how you communicate with the staff and administrators in an Arts Program. These observations will be documented through field notes as well as an observation form. The entirety of these observations will take place at Center for Creative Works, and I, Christina Lukac, will conduct the participant observations.

RISK AND BENEFITS: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There will be no affect on your placement at Center for Creative Works if you decide not to participate in this study. The participant observations will be conducted without intruding on the environment or manipulating the surroundings. Therefore you will not be singled out if you choose not to participate in the study. The research has the same amount of risk you would encounter during a normal observation experience. If you feel shy or uncomfortable at any point during the study, special arrangements can be made, and/ or you can be pulled out of the study without penalty or repercussions. The benefits of this study include being involved in a study that can benefit the clients experience in the art room. I will be working with you in order to find out how you facilitate communication and art making with the staff and administrators. Hopefully, this information can be applied to other Art Programs and you can be a part of creating a better art making experience for individuals with atypical communication.

PAYMENTS: There will be no payments for you for your participation in this study.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: Subjects confidentiality will be preserved. I am the sole researcher of this study. For the collation, analysis, and reporting of all data, all of the participants will be assigned a pseudonym to prevent individuals from being identified. Any charts used in my dissertations or presentations will be coded. All of the data collected for this project will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home. I will reserve the right to use the data collected during my observation and include it in the findings of my study.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your Participation in this study will take approximately two observations, time may vary.

HOW THE RESULTS WILL BE USED: The results in this study will be used to draw conclusions if art making is affected in an Art Program, when purposeful strategies and adaptations are used for communication. This study will be reported in the form of a thesis, which serves to fulfill my requirements for my Masters Degree in Art Education with an Emphasis on Special Populations.

, Philadelphia, PA   - clukac@moore.edu- christina.e.lukac@gmai

APPENDIX D.

PARTICIPANT BILL OF RIGHTS

FOR CLIENTS AT SPARC SERVICES

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Christina Lukac
Research Title: Strategies and Adaptations in an Arts Program for Adults with Atypical Communication

- o I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.

- o My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.

- o The researcher may withdraw me from the research at her professional discretion.

- o If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.

- o Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

    - o If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is ███████████
        - o
- o If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Moore College of Art and Design Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (215)-965-4000. Or, I can write to the IRB at Moore College of Art and Design, 1916 Race Street Philadelphia, PA 19103.
    - o I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.

    - o If video recording is part of this research,

        - ▪ I ( ) consent to being video recorded.
        - ▪ I ( ) do NOT consent to being video recorded.

        The written, artwork and video taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator, inter-rater scorers, and members of the program faculty.

    - o Written, artwork, and video taped materials,

        - ▪ ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
        - ▪ ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date:____/____/____

Name: _____

If necessary:

<center>Investigator's Verification of Explanation</center>

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to
_____ (participant's name) in age-appropriate language.

He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

PARTICIPANT BILL OF RIGHTS

FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS AT SPARC SERVICES

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Christina Lukac
Research Title: Strategies and Adaptations in an Arts Program for Adults with Atypical Communication

- o I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.

- o My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.

- o The researcher may withdraw me from the research at her professional discretion.

- o If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.

- o Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

    - o If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
        - o

- o If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Moore College of Art and Design Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (215)-965-4000. Or, I can write to the IRB at Moore College of Art and Design, 1916 Race Street Philadelphia, PA 19103.
    - o I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.

    - o If audio recording is part of this research,

        - I ( ) consent to being audio recorded.
        - I ( ) do NOT consent to being audio recorded.

        The interview transcripts will be viewed only by the principal investigator, inter-rater scorers, and members of the program faculty.

    - o Interview transcripts,

        - ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
        - ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date:____/____/____

Name: _____

If necessary:

<div align="center">Investigator's Verification of Explanation</div>

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to
_____ (participant's name) in age-appropriate language.

He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

PARTICIPANT BILL OF RIGHTS

FOR CLIENTS AT CENTER FOR CREATIVE WORKS

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Christina Lukac
Research Title: Strategies and Adaptations in an Arts Program for Adults with Atypical Communication

- o   I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.

- o   My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.

- o   The researcher may withdraw me from the research at her professional discretion.

- o   If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.

- o   Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

    - o   If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
        - o

- o   If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Moore College of Art and Design Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (215)-965-4000. Or, I can write to the IRB at Moore College of Art and Design, 1916 Race Street Philadelphia, PA 19103.
    - o   I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.

        The field notes and observation forms will be viewed only by the principal investigator, inter-rater scorers, and members of the program faculty.

    - o   The field notes and observation forms,

        - ▪   ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
        - ▪   ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date:____/____/____

Name: _____

If necessary:

<div align="center">Investigator's Verification of Explanation</div>

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to
_____ (participant's name) in age-appropriate language.

He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

PARTICIPANT BILL OF RIGHTS

FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS AT CENTER FOR CREATIVE WORKS

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Christina Lukac
Research Title: Strategies and Adaptations in an Arts Program for Adults with Atypical Communication

- o I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.

- o My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.

- o The researcher may withdraw me from the research at her professional discretion.

- o If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.

- o Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

    - o If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
        - o

- o If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Moore College of Art and Design Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (215)-965-4000. Or, I can write to the IRB at Moore College of Art and Design, 1916 Race Street Philadelphia, PA 19103.
    - o I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.

        The field notes and observation forms will be viewed only by the principal investigator, inter-rater scorers, and members of the program faculty.

    - o The field notes and observation forms,

        - ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
        - ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date:____/____/____

Name: _____

If necessary:

<div align="center">Investigator's Verification of Explanation</div>

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to
_____ (participant's name) in age-appropriate language.

He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Protocols

APPENDIX A.

OBSERVATION FORM: PARTICIPANTS AT SECONDARY SITE

Participant Observation Form
MA THESIS: Moore College of Art and Design

Observation # _____ _____

Conducted By:

Site of Observation:

Date of Observation:

Length of Observation: _____ to _____

Setting/Environment	Verbal Behaviors/Interactions	Physical Behaviors/Interactions	Client Observations	Staff Observations	Strategies and Adaptations

Adapted from: Module 2: Participant Observations from Qualitative Research Methods "A Data Collector's Field Guide.", 2005.

OBSERVATION FORM: PARTICIPANTS AT SPARC SERVICES

Participant Observation Form
MA THESIS: Moore College of Art and Design

Conducted By:

Site of Observation:

Date of Observation:

Observation # _____

Length of Observation: _____ to _____

	Setting/Environment	Verbal Behaviors/Interactions	Physical Behaviors/Interactions	Strategies and Adaptations
PARTICIPANT A.				
PARTICIPANT B.				
PARTICIPANT C.				
PARTICIPANT D.				

Adapted from: Module 2: Participant Observations from Qualitative Research Methods "A Data Collector's Field Guide.", 2005.

APPENDIX B.

MA THESIS SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR:

STAFF AT SPARC SERVICES

Conducted and Video Recorded By: Christina Lukac

Date:

Hi _____, thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Today, I will be

asking you questions that will help my research study on strategies and adaptations in the

art room for adults with atypical communication. Take your time answering these

questions and feel free to ask any questions of myself throughout this interview. Just to

remind you, as it was written in your Consent Forms and Participant Bill of Rights, your

identity will be protected throughout this research study, so you are able to answer as

openly as possible.

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Video camera, field notebook

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:

What is your job title at SpArc?
How long have you been employed here?
Have you worked with this population before?
Do you have an art or education background?

MAIN QUESTION #1: What is it like working in an Art Program environment?

MAIN QUESTION #2: Describe your experiences working with adults with atypical

communication. (explain atypical communication if they do not know what that means).

MAIN QUESTION #3: Describe in what ways have you been successful or

unsuccessful in art making with clients?

MAIN QUESTION #4: What strategies or adaptations have you found to be successful

in art making with clients who are unable to communicate verbally?

Probes:

Describe that for me.

Can you tell me more about that?

What do you mean by [blank]?

 Go on.

Was that important/meaningful/memorable for you?

How familiar are you with these types of programs?

What makes an art program different than a regular classroom?

Do you rely on your colleagues for help?

Why do you feel that way?

Do you think that would be helpful?

Do the clients influence your own art making?

What made that successful?

If you could, how would you do it over again?

Thank you again for participating in this interview, I will let you know if I have any additional questions and feel free to contact me if you have additional questions in relation to this study. My contact information is available on your Participant Bill of Rights form.

MA THESIS SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR:

CLIENTS AT SPARC SERVICES

Conducted and Video Recorded By: Christina Lukac

Date:

Hi _____, thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I wanted to

ask you some questions about how you make art and art class with me. Take as much

time as you need to answer these questions and if you need a break at any time let me

know. There are <u>no</u> right or wrong answers in this interview. The answers to your

questions can help me understand how you feel about art and what I can do to help in the

art room.

THINGS TO REMEMBER: Simple/clear language but age-appropriate, allow

sufficient amount of time to answer questions, repeat again if necessary, keep questions

short, check for understanding, offer help or support in a respectful manner, use PECS if

necessary (PECS in progress of being developed).

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Video camera, field notebook, Participant artwork, Various art

materials (Pencils, colored pencils, markers, watercolors, scissors)

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:

How are you?
How is SpArc today?
Did you enjoy art class today?

(PECS can be used if necessary)

MAIN QUESTION #1: Do you like Art?

Probes: Do you like art class? What do you like about art? Do you like colors? Paint?

Pencil? Markers? Collage? What do you like to draw? People? Places? Things? Animals?

Fashion? etc.

(PECS can be used in necessary)

MAIN QUESTION #2: Do you see art outside of the classroom?

Probes: Do you go to the art museum? Have you seen your art in a museum? In a gallery?

How does that make you feel? Happy? Proud? Sad? Do you see art in books? Do you see

art on television? Where? Who?

MAIN QUESTION #3: What do you like about your artwork?

(Show Participant their Artwork) (Show them art materials)

Probes: Can you point to your favorite picture? Do you like the colors? What color? Can

you show me? Can you show me what you use to make these? What is your favorite art

material? (point to art supplies) Do you like making art in class? Do you like making art

at home?

(PECS can be used if necessary)

-BREAK IF NECESSARY-

MAIN QUESTION #4: How does working with me in art class make you feel?

Probes: How does it make you feel? Happy? Sad? Angry? Ignored? Focused? Do you

feel like you are getting attention? Do you feel frustrated? How do you feel when we are

working together in the art room? Do you feel like I am listening to you? Do you feel like

you are being heard? Do you like the projects we do? Which ones? Paint? Drawing? Do

you wish there were different projects? Different supplies? How can I help you in the

classroom? Listen closer? Take extra time to work with you? Different supplies?

Adaptive supplies?

(PECS can be used if necessary)

MAIN QUESTION #5: Do you think about art outside of the classroom?

Probes: Do you do art at home? Do you have a sketchbook? What do you draw outside of

class? Family? Friends? Pets? Roommates? How does it make you feel? Calm? Relaxed?

Stressed? What materials do you use? Who gives you materials? Is it hard to make art

when you are not in art class? Is it easier to make art when you are not in art class? Does

art affect your ISP? Do you use art everyday? Does art help you meet new people? Do

you feel confident/brave? Have you made friends through art?

Is there anything else you would like to say about art at Sparc? Any thing else you would

like to say about art class with me? Thank you so much for taking the time to let me talk

to you. You have been very helpful and will help me find ways to make art class better

for you. If you have any other questions please let me know.

APPENDIX C.

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR:

STAFF AT SPARC SERVICES

To Whom it May Concern,

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. I am currently in the action

research phase of my thesis, in pursuit of my Masters in Art Education degree at Moore

College of Art and Design. The answers provided will support me in my study of finding

strategies and adaptations in an arts program for adults with atypical communication

skills. Please **do not** put your name on this questionnaire, as the answers will be

anonymous to protect your identity throughout this study.

Best,

Christina Lukac

1. What do you believe is the most rewarding experience or of the most importance to a

client when attending SpArcs Cultural Arts Center?

2. What are some strategies or tools you use to create art with clients at SpArc? What

have you found to be the most successful?

3.What are some strategies you have used when working with clients who are non verbal

or have limited communication skills?

4. What advice would you give to someone starting out in this field?

5. Would you be interested in corresponding or having a "meet-up" with individuals who

are working in similar fields? (circle one)

    not interested   somewhat interested   interested   very interested

6. I know this job requires a lot of time and energy. Would you be more willing to

participate in an online group or forum with other individuals that work in art programs

for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities?

    not interested   somewhat interested   interested   very interested