DEATH, GRIEF, BEREAVEMENT, AND TRANSFORMATION:

A CURRICULUM FOR THE ART ROOM

by

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

[Signature] Dr. Lynn Galbraith  April 29, 2003  Date
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Last but never least, to my husband - who loves me and wishes the best for me in spite of his short patience.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my brother Tom, whose death broke my heart.
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There has been very little research in the area of art as therapy with respect to curriculum for the art room. In-service and pre-service teachers are not trained, or prepared, to talk about death and losses with their students. This study surveyed pre-service teachers attitudes toward lesson plans for children about loss. The idea of using art as a creative way to mourn or grieve is an innovative idea. Future research must be conducted to determine if art specialists, in-service teachers, parents, and school administration would agree that curriculum on loss for use by an art specialist or regular classroom teacher would be helpful when presented as part of a death education curriculum.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Interest in research on death, grief, bereavement, and transformation began when I lost many family members to death. A detailed account of my experience is under the PERSONAL BACKGROUND following this introduction. Teaching about losses emerged when I was teaching a regular fifth grade class and confronted with students' losses. Because I am an art educator, I taught most subjects around an art component. One lesson plan, a writing project, consisted of creating "books," students wrote and illustrated short stories about each person in their family. The books were inserted into a "volume holder" when completed, and given as a Christmas gift to parents or primary caregiver(s).

During this project, many students asked if they could include a book for a deceased member of their family. It was during this project that many students talked about losses they experienced. Most explained they were not included in the symbolic mourning rituals for the deceased, but sent to stay with friends. Over the school year, each week students had time to express their feelings about loss. My interest in expressing grief creatively grew as I
listened to the narratives of the children. Out of a class of twenty-eight students, all had suffered life-changing losses. Some had lost a parent, sibling, close relative, or pet. A few had parents in jail and now were living with grandparent(s). Many moved from school to school without benefit of concrete connection with friends, relatives, or peers. The losses expressed in my classroom were from students anxious about their loss.

Questions that formed in my mind during these expressive times were:

- How can I teach lesson plans that address the loss of loved ones?
- What could I do for students who are grieving?
- How do teachers handle a student’s bereavement?

I asked other teachers how they dealt with the issue of loss or death in their classrooms. Many said that they did not talk about death to the students, nor did they approach the subject when a student experienced a loss. Questions surrounding these responses were:

- How do teachers feel about talking about death or teaching death education?
• What do regular classroom teachers think about teaching art?
• What do pre-service teachers think about teaching death education in their classes?
• Have there been research studies done on death education in public schools?
• Is there a curriculum available that addresses student’s losses?

After teaching a fifth grade class, I enrolled in graduate studies at the University of Arizona. While in graduate school I taught a Creative Art Methods class for two semesters as a teaching assistant. The course met twice a week Monday and Wednesday evenings from 4:00 p.m. to 5:50 p.m., consisting of enrollment of twenty-one multi-cultural students. The Creative Art Methods class is a pre-requisite for pre-service elementary teachers. Students introduced to a variety of methods for teaching art, participate in creating written lesson plans, and doing art projects for replication as in-service teachers. I taught the course using the Discipline-Based Art Education method covering four disciplines: art aesthetics, art history, art criticism, and art production (Greer, 1997).
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study attempts to ascertain the attitudes of pre-service teachers' toward death education in public schools, and seeks to open dialogue that will counter the reticence by examining death, bereavement, and transformation. In our present day society it is being reported that school violence is on the increase and the absence of the experience of death of a loved one at home, elementary teachers are increasingly asked to provide education that has traditionally been the responsibility of parents.

We live in a time when American society shuns the topic of death, and goes to great lengths to protect children from the experience. For today's children, death removed from the home is more remote than ever before. Therefore, children have less opportunity to acquire an ability to deal with issues related to death, and their own mortality. During the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, the experience of a death in the family was common to children. Children often helped in the care of the loved one, and participated in the funeral ceremonies. In 1900, the life expectancy of a United States citizen was a little over 47 year (Wass & Corr, 1984). They saw infants and siblings die from childhood diseases, family members
placed in coffins in the parlor, and photographs of the deceased hung on the parlor walls as memento mori.

Today's adolescents see the elderly placed in retirement, convalescent homes, or health care centers. People from the Hospice organization comfort the dying, while family and relatives tend to the business of living. Most children and adolescents no longer experience the face-to-face death of a loved one in their family.

An adolescent's personal experience with death of an elderly relative at home has become rare. More often, an adolescent's experience of death has been at school. The increase in violence in our society has witnessed children murdering classmates and teachers. There has been a transition from a personal experience of death at home of an elder or sibling, to televised violent "faked" death by an actor, and real life situations of violence and death in public schools, on urban streets, and in gangs. When death does occur on television, it is often without visible pain, blood, or tears. Most television deaths are the result of violent acts, and few people die a natural death. Rarely depicted is honest bereavement. Long dead actors, frequently are resurrected through reruns.
What understanding of the nature of dying and death can a child get from our eternal youth orientated culture of facelifts, thinness, sexual exploitation of child models, and violence portrayed in the media?

Why has talking about death become taboo in American society? After the end of World War II, American people experienced a time of great prosperity. Men and women moved from hometowns into larger cities to find jobs and greater opportunities. Because they did not directly experience the decline and death of a parent or sibling left behind, death became an abstract and distant event. Depiction of death in movies and television became a fantasy pastime.

As a result, two generations later, those adults have difficulty talking about death with their children or grandchildren. They are uncomfortable and lack skills and understanding for expressing shock, grief, sadness, and loss. There is an attempt among adults to shield children from having a direct experience with death and children's questions are often treated with embarrassed silence, or half-responses from parents and teachers.

Parents, believing that they can hide death from a child, or in some way play down the importance of the event, overlook the fact that children read their
environment. They read eyes, voice tones, and emotions (Schaefer, 1987).

According to David Berg and George Daugherty, developers of a thematic mini-course on death:

Young people today are placed in a contradictory and seemingly untenable situation. On the one hand, they are faced with life-and-death concerns, war, abortion, euthanasia, growing teenage suicide rates, and violence in the media all face young people today. On the other hand, adults deny them the opportunity to develop a realistic frame of reference through which to draw conclusions and formulate solutions (Beineke, 1979).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to address the following questions:

- Would the attitudes of pre-service teachers change toward death education after participating in the art lessons (treatment)?
- Would the pre-service teachers consider teaching lessons on death during art period?
- Did the pre-service teachers find the lesson plans helpful in opening dialogue about death?

METHODOLOGY

This study based on quantitative and qualitative research to assess the attitudes of pre-service teachers
toward death education, specifically for the art room. Qualitative factors include writings from students’ journals, observation notes, and photographs documenting students’ produced art. I developed four lesson plans, referred to as the “treatment,” that looked at creative ways in which different cultures and individuals mourn. The lesson plans dealt with issues surrounding death, grief, and bereavement.

An attitudinal survey on death education was handed out to the participants in the study before teaching the lesson plans. The survey was to ascertain the attitudes of pre-service teachers toward death education. After participation in the lesson plans, the survey was once again handed out. Several people have researched the attitudes of school administration, clergy, counselors, art therapists, psychiatrists, and psychologists toward death education in schools; however little research is available on how in-service or pre-service teachers perceive the issue.

**STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS**

One of the strengths of the study is that the students, enrolled in a required Creative Art Methods class, had little notion of how art is taught to children.
They were willing to participate in the lesson plans on death because they had completed several other non-related art projects with me and had acquired an interest in teaching art.

One limitation of the study is that I did not have the opportunity to present the lesson plans to in-service teachers, or art specialists. In addition, the class size was only twenty-one students, with three male students. Another limitation is the effect of religious beliefs on attitudes of death. Some students thought it difficult to discuss death outside of their religion, although all students participated in the production of lesson plans.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I have lost most of my immediate family to the great equalizer - death. In the sixty-one years of my life, I have seen twenty family members buried. In the years between 1989 and 1993, I lost five close family members one was my younger brother Tom; he died at 42 years of age. I also lost two beloved pets.

I experienced the news of each death differently; some family members were quite old and a long traveling distance from where I was living. Closure was not possible. My great-grandmother died at 104 years of age, great-aunt
Melissa, and maternal grandmother Evans both died at 98 years of age. The impact of the older relatives' deaths were not as great as receiving news of other deaths in the family, chiefly because many of them died young. News delivered by telephone that a loved one has died from an accident, collapsed with an aneurysm, or died in his or her sleep were the hardest to accept. My brother Tom's death was the most devastating. A phone call delivered the news. His death followed four other family members in less than two and one-half years. I thought that I would die after losing him. Tom's death transformed my life.

Because of his death, I moved to Trenton, New Jersey, where he had lived, from Woodstock, New York, to settle his estate. In his house in Trenton, I lived with his ghost. In anguish, I fled to Philadelphia. Profoundly deep in grief, and in need of a place to mourn, I decided to return to college to work on getting a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art. I applied to Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia. Several art professors reviewed my portfolio of paintings and drawings, gave me credit for six years spent at the Art Students League in New York City, and accepted me as a second semester junior. Then I got a
telephone call from Florida informing me that my stepmother had died.

In Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' (1976) book, On Death and Dying, she devotes several chapters to exploring the stages of death. These stages usually apply to the person who is dying. However, the stages are also valid for the person experiencing grief and bereavement over a loss. The first two stages of facing death seemed to last an eternity for me. The stages are:

- First Stage: Denial and Isolation. The first reaction may be a temporary state of shock. Denial is usually a temporary defense and will soon be replaced by partial acceptance.

  The reaction to the news of my brother’s death was strong denial; it just could not be true!

- Second Stage: Anger. When the first stage of denial cannot be maintained any longer, it is replaced by feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment. "Why me?" "Why couldn't it have been him?"

  In this stage I was very angry and thought, "Why couldn’t it have been me? Then I wanted to blame my sister-in-law, my mother, or myself for Tom’s death. Never-the-less, I knew my brother worked at killing himself - he was an alcoholic and drug user.
Third Stage: Bargaining. If we have been unable to face the sad facts in the first period and have been angry at people and God in the second phase, maybe we can succeed in entering into some sort of an agreement which may postpone the inevitable happening: "If God has decided to take us from this earth and he did not respond to my angry pleas, he may be more favorable if I ask nicely."

The Third Stage I wanted to be where Tom was, waiting to die. Because of so many family deaths, I felt abandoned and terribly lonely and wanted to die.

Forth Stage: Depression. When the terminally ill patient can no longer deny his illness, his numbness or stoicism, his anger and rage will soon be replaced with a sense of great loss.

These deaths were a great loss. All the family that I had history with was gone. Loneliness and depression became overwhelming. I needed a place to focus this negative energy.

Fifth Stage: Acceptance. If a patient has had enough time and has been given some help in working through the previously described stages, he (or she) will reach a stage during which they are neither depressed nor angry about their "fate." They will have been able to express their previous feelings, at envy for the living and the healthy, anger at those who do not have to face their end so soon.

Caught between stages one and three, I turned to that which always comforted me -- creating art. I had a need to submerge myself in something that would consume me, and focus attention away from the insufferable pain.
I did not arrive at the fifth stage until three years after the death of my stepmother. It was graduation day from Moore College, when the realization came that I had put the mourning energy to creative use. The depression was gone and I had a new beginning.

During the years at Moore College, I studied various art cultures from around the world, various death rituals depicted in art, sculpture, and literature, and the idea of transformation of the body and soul. The three years at Moore College, I submerged myself in the arts: art history, metalsmithing, and painting. In my junior year, I had an emotional breakdown in class after presenting a paper. The professor approached me a few days after the presentation and suggested that I see a grief counselor. I did not realize that I would benefit from grief work, work that would help me see the transformation I was going through, adjust to a new way of life, and regain balance. I came to understand that grief resolution and balance for daily living needed guidance and supportive intervention from people who are knowledgeable in what to offer in the way of help. The counseling helped me make a major break through in my painting.
My senior year thesis was a series of narrative, surreal paintings depicting my family in death. I envisioned how I saw my family in that transformation. At graduation, I surfaced from grief with a bachelor's degree, teaching certificate, and a body of work that revealed how I had handled the mourning of the passing of my family. I had experienced quite a transformation and adjustment to a new normalcy.

Following graduation at Moore, I moved to Arizona where I spent three years teaching in the public school system. My first year I taught art to K-12 grades, the following year I taught a regular fifth grade class. I spent many hours discussing death with my fifth grade students. It surprised me how eager the students were to discuss their feelings about the losses that they had suffered. The losses were many; divorce, changing schools, death of a pet, friend, and family members. The adults in their lives were unwilling to discuss death, or recognize children need to share the grief experience. Perhaps it is because adults are uncomfortable when dealing with issues of death and loss, that there is an attempt to shield children from having direct experiences, or allowing them to talk about death, grief, or other losses.
The experiences that I have personally encountered around death and the failure of the arts curriculum to engage with the crises in children’s lives lead me to graduate school with a curiosity about what is happening in research on death education, specifically, how the subject is investigated in the art room. I believe that there is a need for curriculum that could help children understand that death is truly a part of life, and that there are many creative vehicles available to help express grief and loss.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTERS**

Because this research is on an emerging area in art as therapy within art therapy, research lead me into the fields of education, death education, art therapy, anthropology, thanatology, and historical information on death in America and Mexico. Therefore, Chapter II presents a review of literature in the following areas:

1. Children’s Concept of Death
2. Childhood and Adolescent Bereavement and Grief
3. Social Support for the Bereaved Child and Adolescent
4. Importance of Death Education in Schools
5. Inservice and Pre-Teachers Attitudes Toward Death Education
6. Meeting the Needs of Death Education Through the Arts

7. Grieving Rituals

Chapter III contains the methodology of the study and quantitative data collected from the questionnaire.

Chapter IV contains the qualitative data from the lesson plans (treatment) including observational notes, interviews, statements from students' art journals, and digital images of students' artwork.

Chapter V is a summary of the study with conclusions and recommendations for future research. Lesson plans developed for the study along with images used for reference are in the appendices.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a review of literature that relates to death, grief, bereavement, and social support for bereaved children, art therapy, and teachers' attitudes toward death education.

The review of the literature revealed that there are very few studies done on death experience and creativity, or art as therapy. Therefore, research endeavors looked at art therapy, death studies journals, thanatology, children's literature on death and loss, cross-cultural rituals of death, and various forms of visuals by artists that depicted death, dying, grief, and transformation in works of art.

Out of my review of the literature, I have defined the following categories for study:

1. The child's concept of death
2. Childhood and adolescent bereavement and grief
3. Social support for the bereaved child and adolescent
4. Grieving rituals
5. The importance of death education in schools
6. Meeting the needs of death education through the arts.
The above categories are more closely examined in the material that follows.

1. THE CHILD’S CONCEPT OF DEATH

There is disagreement among researchers as to the exact age that a ‘death theme’ develops. Children between the ages of three and five either deny death as being final, (Melear, 1973) or believe it is life under changed circumstances (Stambrook & Parker, 1987). However, a majority of pediatricians and parents feel that children begin to correctly understand death between the ages of seven and eight, which as also been found in death concept research (Ellis, 2000). The stated ages also fall within Piaget’s (1976) cognitive development theory. According to Piaget, the ages of seven and eight are the concrete operational stage when children are able to solve concrete (hands-on) problems in logical fashion, understands laws of conservation, and is able to classify and seriate. This is the stage at which children understand reversibility.

Several studies have examined the child’s concepts of death. Wass and Corr, (1984) states:

Through numerous studies conducted over a period of more than 40 years, we know that children’s understanding of death depend to a large extent on their level of cognitive development, their experiences, and their perception of events in the world.
Various factors affect a child's understanding of death.

1. Religious explanations concerning death provided by parents and supporting adults convey philosophical and religious values about death to children.

2. Cognitive development is a significant contributor to the development of the concepts of irreversibility, and universality.

Research indicates that death proceeds through the following stages as the child develops cognitively. Understanding these stages can serve as a guideline for various ways in which adults discuss real death experiences with children of different ages. The three stages are:

1. **Irreversibility**: refers to the understanding that when a living thing dies, its physical body cannot be made alive again. Other words, for example, irrevocability (Kane, 1979), have also been used to identify this component. In defining this component, we differentiate between the irreversibility of the death of the physical body and possible beliefs about a spiritual afterlife.

2. **Nonfuctionality**: refers to the understanding that all life-defining functions cease at death. Other terms, such as dysfunctionality (Kane, 1979) and cessation (Nagy, 1948) have also been used.

3. **Universality**: refers to the understanding that all living things die. Other terms, for example, inevitability (Bolduc, 1972), have also been used to identify this component. (Speece, Brent, 1987)

Anthony (1972), Nagy (1948) agree that children have no concept of death before the age of two. However, research from
The Dougy Center, The National Center for Grieving Children and Families suggests that infants do in fact grieve. If there are people who have been consistently present in a baby's life, the child will have a sense of something missing. A young child often does not initially respond to hearing that someone has died. Many parents are concerned that their child has no initial reaction or visible grief. It is important to remember that a young child's perception is oriented in the five basic senses. It is concrete, short-range and based on what is felt in the moment. A young child does not comprehend the concept of death, but the experience of loss may still be felt. A person is gone; then a person is there. When a person is gone and then still gone, a child may grieve at each moment when he or she feels the person's gone-ness. A child may not grieve at all for these leavings until the accumulative affect of gone-ness inspires a longing or aching protest within the child. The child will miss the specific elements of the person: sound of voice, expression, smell, and activities experienced together. A child's missing of the person who has died will not necessarily be a result of hearing that that person is dead. Very young children may grieve for a specific person. The primary care giver is most missed by young children because of their smell, voice, and rhythm. Young
children also mourn the loss of secondary people in their lives such as other family members and persons with whom the child spends large amounts of time. According to Anthony (1972) and Mahler, (1975) the child does experience separation anxiety, but this includes all separation and not directly related to death, but may be related to grief (http://www.griefnet.org/KIDSAID/dougypage.html).

Speece and Brent stated in their findings referring to irreversibility, non-functionality, and universality, that young children think death is reversible and they themselves will not die; that the dead are only asleep. Children, ages five and under, seem to have a limited understanding of death that initially includes analogies that describe death as reversible (Swain, 1979). The suggested age of acquisition of a fuller concept of death are the ages of eight and ten when most children realize that death is irreversible, permanent, and universal. They tend to focus on concrete aspects of death and show relatively little understanding of its spiritual or psychological aspects (White, Elsom, & Parawat, 1978). This understanding can serve as a guideline for ways in which adults discuss real death experiences with children. When discussing death with children of various ages, these studies
indicated that there should be an emphasis on the permanence and universality of death.

It is important to understand the stages of grief, a child’s concept of death, and Piaget’s four stages of development in order to create curricula to meet the needs of the developing child. Piaget’s four cognitive development stages are:

- **Sensorimotor, 0-2 years:** Begins to make use of imitation, memory, and thought. Begins to recognize that objects do not cease to exist when they are hidden. Moves from reflex actions to goal-directed activity.
- **Preoperational, 2-7 years:** Gradual language development and ability to think in symbolic form. Able to think operations through logically in one direction. Has difficulty seeing another person’s point of view.
- **Concrete Operational, 7-11 years:** Able to solve concrete (hands-on) problems in logical fashion. Understands laws of conservation and is able to classify and seriate. Understands reversibility.

Sylvia Anthony’s study (1972) on children’s concepts of death classified children’s concepts of death into five stages:

- **Stage 1:** Before the age of five, children did not make a response.
- **Stage 2:** At age five or six, the children thought of death as “going to sleep,” or some other temporary state.
- **Stage 3:** At ages six to nine, they were able to relate “non-essentials” such as coffins, to death.
Stage 4: At nine or ten, most of the children were able to refer to death logically, but unable to generalize sufficiently.

Stage 5: By eleven or twelve, the children were able to accept the universality of death as well as understanding the biological essentials.

These stages also coincide with Piaget's cognitive development theory. At puberty, adolescents are experiencing many changes in their home and school environment, and in their bodies. Hormones are pumping through their veins causing changes in the body, and confusion in the mind. Some emotional confusion comes from the fact that they are cognitively confused. For example, Schaefer (1987), stated in Piagetian terms, formal operational thought is not yet mastered, but mixed with many of the concepts common in the earlier period of concrete operational thought. Some adolescents believe that because they feel a certain way, everyone else does, or should feel the same way. This mind set is why adolescents and young adults commit homicides more often than by persons of all other ages combined.

In a teen's mind death is something that happens to the "other person." These are the invincible years where death only touches others. In our present society, family members do not discuss death and all its ramifications. Violence on television and in the news teaches adolescents how conflicts are resolved.
All adolescents deal with changes tied to newly emerging developmental capacities and are challenged by additional developmental tasks; further, some must also struggle with the additional life stress of bereavement (Batten, Oltjenbruns, 1999). As researchers and professionals attempt to understand the bereavement process, it is necessary to consider the developmental changes that occur during a particular life stage.

Kenneth J. Doka, senior consultant for the Hospice Foundation of America, writes:

Children grieve in ways similar to and different from adults. Like adults, children experience grief physically, emotionally, cognitively, spiritually and behaviorally. As with adults, they experience grief as a roller coaster. However, since they are still developing, they may revisit their grief as their understanding of death deepens. Since they have a shorter feeling span, their expressions of grief may be intense and episodic. Among the manifestations of grief may be regressive behaviors, acting out, sleep disturbances or changes in grade or attitudes. http://pbs.org/wnet/onourownterms/articles/children.html

Chris Stone (2000) of Tower Hamlets, East London, writes:

It is not unusual for a child whose grieving has been suppressed to find that a seemingly small incident provokes an overwhelming response in later life. If extreme emotions are bottled up, they come out later in the form of delinquency or depression. Events build up layers and often an event that does not seem important
triggers a reaction. 
http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/0,,31017,00.html

The above statement is reflected in the following story from The Times, Family Health web site Children Need to Grieve as Well. When Zoe Stephens was 10, her parents were killed instantly in an auto accident. Zoe only had a small cut on her forehead. The tending doctor was the person who told Zoe her parents had died. She pretended that nothing happened and did not cry. At age 33 a conversation with a second cousin whom she had not heard from in 20 years, caused her to become very emotionally upset and she fell to pieces. It was then that Zoe started to do grief work on the loss of her parents (http://thetimes.co.uk/article/0,,31017,00.htm).

Many authors suggest that unrequited grief leads to physical and mental problems later in life. Without careful communication, it can be a time of irreparable omission and a core area for future problems.

Aileen Silverman’s 1987 essay, Children and Death Education, was concerned with repressed emotions. Silverman found experts point out that repressed emotions often surface in the form of either physical or emotional problems. In some adolescents, these problems are manifested by involvement in destructive behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse, risk taking, and delinquent behavior. It is important that
adolescents be allowed to grieve. The funeral is an extraordinarily important part of this process, allowing the adolescents to recognize their own feelings as well as the feelings of others.

Although bereavement during adolescence is not considered a normative life transition, up to 90% of adolescents experience a loss associated with death (Kandt, 1994). With such great numbers of teens dealing with death, the interaction between normal development and bereavement outcomes needs to be considered by educators (Batten, Oltjenbruns, 1999).

**SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE BEREAVED CHILD AND ADOLESCENT**

Teachers are the first contact beyond parents that a student has for socialization and can make the difference in how the student perceives death. Ewalt and Perkins (1979) found that 90% of 1,447 juniors and seniors in two Kansas City high schools had experienced the loss of a sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or someone else close to them over their life span. They also found that about 20% of the students had been present when a person died, 11% had lost a parent, and about 40% had lost a close, same-age friend (Journal of Adolescent Research, 2000). Teaching children about death is of great concern to those of us who are
educators. Ignoring death in the curriculum however, is a common educational practice (Croskery, 1979).

The above percentage rates suggest that children are in need of support for grieving. In A Teacher’s Guide to Grief by Edward Grassel, as presented in a special by Bill Moyers, On Our Own Terms. Grassel suggests that teachers have a three point plan to help the grieving student:

1. Help the student identify what he or she dreads most about returning to school after the death of a loved one.
2. Come up with a support group for the student or a friend or counselor who the student can go to if the emotional strain becomes too much to bear.
3. Find out how the student would like you to relate his or her loss to the class. Offer creative ideas for ways the student can cope with his or her feelings, such as keeping a journal or making sketches (www.pbs.org).

In Deaton and Berkan’s book (1995), Planning and Managing Death Issues in the Schools: A Handbook the authors stated:

In situations where educators and administrators decide not to guide the students to an understanding of death, and opportunity is lost to prepare students for the reality of life and death in an atmosphere where the normal grief reaction can be dealt with in a safe, supportive climate. Classroom goals should revolve around providing students with information about death issues and about where to go for help for themselves and friends to stop dangerous behavior and handle grief and loss.

A number of authors recommended that knowing how to support an adolescent who is grieving is quite important as epidemiological evidence points to a great incidence of problems for children and adolescents who have experienced a
significant loss. Long-term effects include the increased likelihood of medical illness (Ringler, Hayden, 2000). Adolescents have the additional stress of their bereavement because it is not acknowledged or recognized.

This last point is poignantly described by, Raphael (1983) in a case in which an adolescent’s girlfriend died in an accident, yet he was turned away at the door of his girlfriend’s house and was not allowed to attend the funeral. He was not recognized by anyone as having a loving and intimate relationship for which he deeply mourned.

In Adolescent Bereavement and Social Support: Peer Loss Compared to Other Losses, Ringler and Hayden (2000), stated:

Although the bereavement of adolescents has been noted, only a few empirical studies have considered adolescent bereavement after the loss of a peer.

Bereavement during adolescence is not considered a normative life transition, however, up to 90% of adolescents experience a loss associated with death. With such great numbers of teens dealing with death, the interaction between normal development and bereavement outcomes needs to be considered (Batten, Oltjenbruns, 1999).

According to Rowling and Holland (2000) there have been increases in the instances of violence and traumatic events in school communities over the last 20 years. Evidence of the
negative emotional impact of these events on young people has resulted in the need for schools to accommodate loss and grief issues. Peers and adults in the school environment are important particularly if the loss experienced involves the school community. Schools can help young people understand the patterns of loss experiences, identify feelings associated with their loss, and encourage them to seek support or be supportive to others.

Ringler and Hayden (2000) found that, although there are few reports on the types of social support given to bereaved adolescents, researchers suggest that support may be lacking. Adults often keep news of death or disasters away from children, believing that they are too young to handle death.

School administration and teachers are being asked to handle trauma and grief experienced by children. Unfortunately, there are few studies published on death education to assist educators in that process. Of those studies that do exist, parents and teachers do support death education programs.

**IMPORTANCE OF DEATH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

There have been more than a dozen school shootings since 1992, and a dramatic increase in suicides among teen and preteens. Today's over stimulating, unsupportive environment
for children requires multiple interventions by parents, schools, religious groups, volunteers, policymakers and corporate business to curb this moral panic.

The annual death rate is 1 in 1,000 high school students, 1 in 3,000 junior high students and 1 in 4,000 elementary students. According to Teen Suicide, An Epidemic of the 90's:

Every year, thousands of youth die in North America, not from cancer or car accidents, but by their own hand, they make the choice that they want to die, and they take their own life. Statistics show that suicide is the third leading cause of death among those 15 to 25 years of age, and it is the sixth leading cause of death among those 5 to 14 years of age. Children, are killing themselves at the age of five years! Statistics show that more than 13 of every 100,000 teenagers took their life in 1990, and that number is rising every year. Many think that these are isolated incidents, but they are not. It is estimated that 500,000 teenagers try to kill themselves every year, and about 5000 succeed. That [number] is right up there with cancer and homicide [http://library.thinkquest.org/12333/page.html].

Dr. David Fassler, Chairperson of the American Psychiatric Association Committee on Children Adolescents and Families, in an interview on National Public Radio on Kids and Depression stated:

The major leading cause of death of children and adolescents is suicide. It is the second cause among college students, the third among 15 to 24 year olds, and sixth among 5 to 14 year olds. More teens die from suicide than from AIDS, birth defects, influenza, cancer, heart disease, and chronic lung disease combined. He went on to say that one in four children thinks about suicide.
and nine percent have had at least one attempt. (NPR, Talk of the Nation, October 29, 2002)

Clearly there are very serious problems in our education system when children are depressed and see suicide as a way out. Dr. Fassler stated that children as young as five years of age are committing suicide before Piaget’s concrete operational stage. They do not understand conceptually what death means. My argument for death education is that it should occur throughout the educational development of the individual. As suggested by Stevenson, 1987, educational programs can provide information that individuals can then use to handle aggression intelligently and thus avoid problems. Virtually every researcher who has treated the topic of the fear of death (or death-related anxiety) in adolescence has spoken of the positive effects of direct communication about death and dying.

I think that teachers and health workers can be trained to deliver informative curricula about loss, such as death, grief, and the transformation that a student experiences, what constitutes a loss, and how the student could use the many subjects taught in school to examine thoughts and feelings. Teachers constitute the delivery system for the school curricula. Trained teachers can lead classroom discussions that focus on helping students understand issues surrounding
death by answering student's questions, without providing unnecessary details. It is important to give students permission for a range of emotions and questions and defuse the mystery surrounding death by providing activities, such as artwork, music and writing.

Preparation for helping with death education is mainly of two sorts (Corr, 1984):

1. initiating reflection on one's own thoughts and feelings about death

2. a study of relevant content in the field of death, dying, and bereavement.

One cannot "protect" young people from death-related encounters and exploration throughout their childhood years and still expect them to emerge as adults who are adequately equipped to cope with life.

I do not suggest that a special course on death be designed. Charles Corr suggests, and I concur:

One might find a unit on death and dying within a health education course; discussion of biologic aspects of death in a science curriculum; exploration of funeral costs as an example of economic and consumer dynamics; attention to a death-related storybook, novel, or nonfictional work in a section on reading or literature; consideration of conceptual and ethical issues related to definition of death, suicide, or euthanasia in a contemporary issues or honors seminar; or research on epitaphs and burial customs in a social science class.
In addition, Corr believes that brief exposures to death-related topics may be less threatening. Exploring death through the arts broadens the idea that topics of death are about living.

This approach to death education should start in first grade and continue through the high school years. I argue for the implementation of a death education program early in school curriculum, before traumas make it difficult for children to benefit from it. Ideally, death education should be the province of parents and religious leaders, however, as our culture changes, so do the wishes of some parents about what subjects are taught in school.

IN-SERVICE AND PRE-TEACHERS ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH EDUCATION

Pre-teachers, whether training to teach a specialized subject such as art, or a regular classroom, are also coping with the demands and requirements of the college or university teaching and learning environment (Cross, 1976). As pre-service teachers participate in their preparation programs, they are asked to wear two academic hats - that of the college or university student and that of the beginning teacher. It requires that pre-service teachers balance their personal identities with those of a more professional nature and intent (Galbraith, 1995). However, course requirements for both the
regular classroom and the art specialist teacher, does not include instruction on issues of loss. Both the specialist and regular classroom teacher will encounter students who are grieving, or suffering from trauma. When this encounter occurs, teachers will be confronted with personal opinions and beliefs surrounding the issue. They will need training on how to help students cope with their losses.

During this study, one pre-teacher informed me that talking about death was "taboo" outside of her religion. I asked how she would handle the situation if a student in her class lost a parent or sibling. She replied that she did not know.

In response to this student teacher's remark, I quote Charles A. Corr from his article in Helping Children Cope With Death (1984):

Responses that do not engage with real needs only frustrate children and discourage them from coming back to such sources in the future. We can become effective responders only by improving our awareness of developmental and environmental factors that relate to childhood and death and by listening in an active way to the concerns of each particular child. Knowledge about developmental and environmental factors in children's death concerns provides a broad framework for interactions with children.

Ignoring a child's grief and questions about death is a typical but sad way to handle the situation. We are teachers, and that suggests that we have a responsibility to the mind
and feelings of our students. Ignoring students feelings suggest that children do not grieve.

School administration and teachers are being asked to handle trauma and grief experienced by children. Unfortunately, there are few studies published on attitudes of teachers toward death education. Of the studies that do exist, parents and teachers do support the death education programs. The role of teachers' attitudes has been highlighted, Cullinan (1990) points to the need for teacher training in death education in order that the necessary skills to deal with grieving students may be acquired.

In McGovern and Barry’s article Death Education: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perspectives of Irish Parents and Teachers, (2000) examined were attitudes of parents and teachers concerning death education and childhood grief in an Irish context. In a country such as Ireland, where wakes were a tradition, the Irish society is experiencing a change in its social rituals surrounding death. Increasingly children are shielded from the death of a loved one, as traditional house wakes are being replaced with a more clinical approach to death and the dying. It was clear that both parents and teachers are dealing with children's experience of death and loss, and agree that unresolved grief could lead to problems
in adulthood. They found that the classroom experience of children coping with the death or loss of someone close were quite high. Some 35% of teachers reported dealing with the death of a child's parent, 23% with the death of a pupil, and 86% with the death of someone close to the child.

In the above study, both parents and teachers agreed that death education should be in the school curriculum. However, 90% in both parent and teacher groups agreed that further training for teachers is necessary on death education.

In Cooper-Hunt's 1998 dissertation entitled, Someone Special Isn't Here Anymore: Using Teachers' Experiences Of Coping With Student Death As A Way Of Informing Curriculum Practice, the teachers' responses in this study suggested that they all experienced a profound change in their attitudes about students and teaching after the death of one of their students. Each teacher wrestled with how to come to terms with the student's death and how he or she would help surviving students cope. The teachers reported they did not have any knowledge or awareness of formal death education curricula.

All of the teachers indicated the desire for in-service training to prepare them to facilitate death education in order to help their students.
Professional preparation in relation to teachers' own feelings and experiences is essential. A proactive approach to grief would provide a variety of learning opportunities for teacher preparation (Rowling and Holland 2000), in addition to providing an opportunity for talking with others about how to manage your own feelings and those of students.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF DEATH EDUCATION THROUGH THE ARTS

I was seeking evidence that a grieving or dying individual might find solace in expressing his or her fears, anger, and grief, through creative endeavors. My creative spirit supported me while I mourned. The pain I experienced, mixed with paint and applied to canvas, pictorially transformed my family in the arms of death. I speculated that if my creative energy could help relieve the pain and suffering I experienced, perhaps it could help others grieve through creative means. Specifically, I wondered how art could introduce, or expand issues of death, grief and transformation, within curriculum structured to look at the creative processes surrounding those issues.

Engaging in the arts and humanities can enable people to mourn, grieve, and celebrate life [with] their images, symbols, and sounds [to] express themes of life, death, and transcendence (Bertman, 1999). As stated in the paper by Work
Group on the Arts and Humanities of the International Work Group on death, Dying and Bereavement:

The arts and humanities with their images, symbols, and sounds express themes of life, death, and transcendence. They are the language of the soul and can enable people to express and appreciate the universality as well as the particularity of each person's experience. The arts and humanities reflect the existential, inspirational, and transcendent realms of experience and can contribute to creating an aesthetic, nurturing, and healing environment.

In Franki Sternberg's book *If I Die & When I Do*, she created a class on death and dying for her middle school students. The class came about in a social studies class while demonstrating how to deal creatively with controversy. When talking about death with her students she discovered it was the first time many of the students had talked freely about the topic of dying. From those first encounters she developed a nine-week course on death and dying, in which the student discussed the ways different cultures say farewell to the dead, how Americans mourn. Speakers invited to talk about their own terminal illness. Euthanasia and the use of medicine and technology to keep people alive were discussed. Students ranged from 11 to 13 years of age.

Sternberg's approach to exploring death through art was to bring: "paints, crayons, paper of different colors and sizes, old magazines, glue, musical instruments, records,
poetry, scissors, and short stories,” into the classroom. On the blackboards were put quotes, suggested topics for exploration, pictures, and questions. Students were free to do what they wanted with the materials provided, and left to express their feelings about death. This approach was merely instrumental for students to explore death through their own creative processes.

Marian S. Pyles (1988) suggests [that] a typical syllabus for a course in death and dying might include topics [such] as war, old age, disease, accidents, disaster, suicide, and murder. And asks, “What child is exempt from the possibility of or exposure to these occurrences?” Indeed, in today’s violent society children are more likely exposed to death from random acts of violence.

In Discovering Death: A Guide to Death Education (1975) Gretchen Mills’ book outlined curriculum concepts presented in sequence from the most simple, basic, to the more difficult concepts. Mills suggests the use of poems, plays, and short stories to dramatize the concepts. Specific objectives and lesson plans are presented in outline form. Awareness of feeling, grief expression, life cycles, and death causes are some of the concepts examined at several ages and levels.
In a collection of essays *Meeting the Needs of our Clients Creatively*, Sandra Bertman, writes, aesthetic language of the human spirit is not the exclusive province of professional artists. Expressions in the form of dialogue and drawings, for example, give focus and vision to deeply felt feelings and concerns present in the student of any age. Working with the visual and literary modalities (story, song, painting, and film) can:

1. Identify sources of concern and consolation

2. Present materials and techniques for eliciting and expressing emotion

3. Underscore the "mutuality" - the universality and yet individuality - of each subjective experience.

In the same collection of essays, Gerry Cox continues:

We can use humor, art, and music to allow ourselves to grow and to learn, as well as to understand the more important uses of humor in facing what fate life has to offer. The sense of humor, music, and art as a therapeutic agent is possible. Humor, music, and art can function to relieve anxiety, stress, tension, anger, hostility, and allow one to cope with crises. They can temporarily neutralize emotionally painful situations (Morgan, 2000).
GRIEVING RITUALS

The social setting for death has changed in contemporary American society. Once a community event it has become a private one seen by only a few family members. In nineteenth century, death in America was at home in bed. The ritual was one of appropriate procedures, where the roles of the participants were predetermined. The lead player was that of the dying loved one. All others played the secondary roles, and their attention was on the lead character. The survivors viewed an unattended death as a tragedy. Attendance at the bedside was considered a privilege:


Because death is rarely experienced at home where grief gets shared with family members, children no longer view all aspects of the life cycle and are left out of the grieving process.

Many parents think this may lead to problems later in life. Teachers and school administrators are asked to handle trauma and grief experienced by children in an educational program at school. Research shows that teachers and parents are supportive of death education in school, but both groups feel uncomfortable discussing the topic of death.
Bereavement rituals have deteriorated in meaning in our society, which has led to insufficient grieving and inadequate resolution of grief. Too often, bereavement rituals are one-time events that fail to acknowledge grieving as a process that occurs over time (Romanoff and Terenzio, 1998). Funeral rituals are symbolic enactments that provide meaningful and affirming experiences for the bereaved [they] mediate the transition of the deceased from life to death. All too often children and adolescents' are left out of the rituals of the grieving process.

The function of funeral and bereavement rituals provides a therapeutic way of healing after suffering the loss of a loved one. These rituals help the bereaved through the transformation process. In the United States, because our culture has no "prescribed" mourning rituals and the experience of death removed from our daily lives, Americans are minimizing and deritualizing bereavement practices.

Anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep, identified rites of passage as facilitating social transition through a series of phases:

a) Separation phase, the individual is detached from the social structure
b) Marginal or liminal phase, the individual is between statuses and able to try on new identities;
c) Reintegration phase, the individual returns to the group in his or her new status. When these transition rituals of the culture occur in concert with the individuals' private or public acts of transformation, successful resolution of grief can occur (Romanoff, 1998, p. 701).

Romanoff and Terenzio (Death Studies, 1998) think that for successful grief resolution there should be three types of grief work performed through rituals. The three stages are transformation, transition, and connection. When a mourner does not have benefit of the three stages of grief, it can lead to disenfranchised or complicated grief. This happens when communal support offered by transition rituals are not offered, or because society fails to either acknowledge a relationship to the deceased and recognize the legitimacy of grief (such as in a homosexual relationship), or stigmatizes the death.

Prolonged grief and mourning is caused by the sudden death of a loved one. The funeral ritual and social support for the bereaved may not be enough because of its brevity. It is suggested, that a transformation ritual occurs in which the mourner is encouraged to select and object or memento that comes to symbolize the deceased and the relationship with the deceased. The examples of the rituals suggested are planting a tree, piecing a quilt, establishing a memorial fund, building a playground in the deceased's memory, or collecting a "memory
box." These symbolic objects, or acts, are a means whereby relationships can continue through a transformed entity. During this transformation period regular time is suspended, the mourner is encouraged to think about the past, and dwell in a time that was. The past transforms and a new future defined. Following this time the mourner is encouraged to say goodbye to the deceased in a leave-taking ceremony, when the symbolic objects are burned, buried, or given away. This is a cleansing ritual marking the end of the transition and reunion ritual.

A broader appreciation of the functions of ritual as transformation and connection as well as transition, and a matching of ritual enactments with the needs of the bereaved, would serve to legitimize the multiplicity of pathways through grief and aid the bereaved in appropriate and peaceful resolution. Rituals that help to recast the self can be helpful.

**SUMMARY**

The American experience of death for most individuals has changed since the 1900s. Now most parents or grandparents die in hospitals or nursing homes, not at home where children exposed to the cycle of life and death, come to understand death is a part of living. In fact, most parents go to great
lengths to shield their children from viewing the deceased or involving them in funeral rituals. This reaction of parents and guardians is in direct opposition to what researchers in the field of therapy think parents should do for their children. There is overwhelming evidence that children not only grieve, but need to be involved in family rituals in order to become emotionally mature adults. Certainly, inclusion of a death education program in schools would attempt to educate the "whole" student preparing him or her for adult life. A look at the arts and anthropology would educate students about how the peoples of our world ritualized death, as inclusion in a death education program.
CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This chapter proposes to ascertain the attitudes of pre-service elementary teachers toward death education in elementary schools. The investigation centered around three central questions:

1. What are the attitudes of pre-service teachers toward death education in the schools?
2. Will the attitudes of the participants differ after exposure to lesson plans (treatment)?
3. Are the participants open to an inclusion of art projects as part of a death education curriculum?

The first question answered by examination of the data item by item and a factor analysis to determine how the attitudes of pre-teachers in my study and in-service teachers in the Croskery study compared toward death education in the schools.

The second question answered by comparison of the pre- to the post-questionnaire. The last question answered by the qualitative data collection in Chapter IV.

The following were the methods used for data collection:
• The questionnaire (See Table 1, page 4)

• Four lesson plans designed to address issues of loss, referred to as the “treatment” (See Appendix B, page 173).

• Interviews with participants as they worked (data compiled in Chapter IV).

• Finally, re-administration of the questionnaire after teaching the lesson plans “treatment.” (See Table 3, Appendix A, page 152).

For clarity in this study, when I write about the “instrument” I am referring to the questionnaire. When referring to the “treatment” I am talking about the four lesson plans designed on issues of loss.

This chapter describes the participants involved in my study, whose names changed to “Student numbers” for reasons of confidentiality and anonymity, and data collected from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was the initial phase of the study to gather quantitative information followed by qualitative data collection in Chapter IV.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to pre-service elementary teachers of twenty-one students. The lesson plans consisted
of only four, to be delivered in an hour forty-minutes, which limited the time for discussion and presentation. I would like to see the study done with pre-art specialists for comparison.

**THE PARTICIPANTS**

While I was taking required courses to complete my master's degree at the University of Arizona, I was also teaching a Creative Art Methods class that is a general education requirement for pre-service elementary classroom teachers. The class met Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:00 p.m. to 5:50 p.m., consisting of twenty-six students, four males and twenty-two females. Three students are Mexican/American, one African American, and twenty-two Euro-Americans. Only twenty-one students responded to the questionnaire. Of the twenty-one students, nineteen were under the age of thirty, two were between the ages of 30-40 and had children. Eleven students lived in urban neighborhoods, four in a rural setting, and six in suburban Tucson. Upon request, these students volunteered to participate in my study while enrolled in the course.

The instrument used was a questionnaire designed by Beverly F. Croskery, in 1979 entitled, *Attitudinal Survey on Death Education* (See Table 1), to measure attitudes
### TABLE 1
ATTITUINAL SURVEY ON DEATH EDUCATION

Part I - Place a check under the answer that best expresses your feelings about the statements below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Children should be protected from the subject of death for as long as possible.
2. A child's death education should be the concern only of the parents and the church or synagogue (if the parents choose). The school would not be appropriate for teaching the subject of death.
3. Most parents are capable of explaining death to their children quite adequately.
4. Since death education is important for everyone and the school is the institution, which all children must attend, the school is an appropriate place for death education.
5. The schools' concern should be to teach the basics and stay out of the personal lives of children.
6. There is no way the subject of death can be avoided, so we may as well be open about it in all of society.
7. Death is a part of life. Learning about death can prepare us to lead better lives.
8. It would be impossible for the schools to teach about death without contradicting the religious or cultural beliefs of some of the children.
9. Even if the teachers were given special training about death, I would not be in favor of it being taught in the schools.
10. The church or synagogue is the only institution appropriate for assisting the family in the death education of the child.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. I think death education should be a carefully planned part of the elementary school curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Whether or not death education is a part of the school curriculum, school should play a supportive role in helping the child understand death.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I would not object to the subject of death being discussed in high school.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. A child should not have to encounter the subject of death until a loved one dies. That is soon enough to be told about it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. There is no way that children can be prepared to face the death of a loved one. If such a tragedy occurs, they will survive best of left alone to work things out for themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The concept of death has certain universal truths, which can be taught without contradicting religious or cultural beliefs of anyone.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The school already has too many issues to deal with, most of them more important than death education. It would be unwise to include it in the school curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The school should introduce children to the concept of death in the primary grades, following a step-by-step plan that will increase their understanding as they mature.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 1 – Con't

**Part II - Personal History**

The type of community in which you live: [Blank] urban [Blank] rural [Blank] suburban  
Sex: [Blank] Female [Blank] Male  
Do you have school age children? [Blank] Yes [Blank] No  

The following information will be of value in the tabulation of the data:

1. Did you lose a parent when you were still in school? [Blank] Yes [Blank] No  
   (If YES, how old were you? [Blank])  
2. Are you a member of a religious group? [Blank] Yes [Blank] No
toward death education. Obtained from a previous study, in Death Education: Attitudes of Teachers, School Board Members and Clergy, I chose this questionnaire because my study is about pre-service teacher attitudes toward death education in the art room.

It was important to start the study with a questionnaire relating to issues of loss to determine opinions of pre-service teachers on death education before the treatment. Subjects in the group informed that the purpose of the study was to determine student teachers attitudes concerning the subject of death education, and whether the lesson plans on loss are feasible for teaching in the art room. Then I taught four different lesson plans (the treatment) that dealt with the issues of death, grief, and bereavement.

As stated above, use of the instrument was designed to determine present day attitudes of pre-service elementary teachers about death education, and for comparison with Croskery’s previous study in 1979. Instructed to read the questions carefully, the participants rated the statements they identified with most by putting a check under the answer that best expressed their feelings. After teaching the treatment, I administered the questionnaire again for
statistical comparison with the pre-test to see if the treatment received had an effect on the participants' opinions toward death education.

INSTRUCTION

Before teaching, I held a general discussion with the pre-service teachers about losses their elementary students might experience.

A question and answer session followed. Issues that participants specifically raised were:

- Anxiety about teaching art,
- Apprehensive about addressing losses with students, especially death related issues, and
- Concern that art and death topics were not compatible.

Some participants had not experienced the death of a close family member, or friend, however, a few were still grieving over recent a loss. Of concern by two participants were personal religious beliefs, and how their beliefs might conflict with religious beliefs of children they would teach. Many were concerned with how parents of their students might react to death education, stating that the subject of death would be best handled in the child's home,
not in the classroom. Reflected in one student’s art journal, she wrote:

"Should death education be part of every school’s curriculum? It is an important subject that affects every person at some point in life. Does it need to be taught to younger kids before they experience it, or should it be ignored? Death is a touchy subject, especially for children that do not know how to express their emotions. I feel death is a serious issue that needs to [be] addressed - if the parents don’t discuss it with their kids, who will? Schools are excellent places for kids to learn the facts about death." Student 10.

The participants were required to keep a reflective art journal on their thoughts and feelings while participating in the study. I then taught four lessons that dealt with issues of death, grief, bereavement, and loss, showing images done by various historical artists. The lessons covered eight-weeks, two sessions per week, two hours per session.

To help facilitate talking about death, I displayed reproductions of works by famous artists. Using various mediums and materials, students explored emotions encountered as they created art. Each lesson plan designed used Disciplined Based Art Education (Greer, 1997) method covering four disciplines: art aesthetics, art history, art criticism, and art production. To open dialogue on loss, reproductions of artworks selected for this study were:
Figure 1.1
The Downtrodden
Kathe Kollwitz, German artist

Figure 1.2
Blood of the Revolutionary Martyrs Fertilizing the Earth
1926
Diego Rivera, Mexican artist
Figure 1.3 The Sick Room
Edvard Munch, Norwegian artist

Figure 1.4 El Jarabe en Ultratumba
Jose Guadalupe Posada, Mexican artist

(See Appendix E for historical background on artists.)
This session focused on providing a connection between student’s own feelings for someone, and how artists have depicted emotional situations in their work.

Over eight-weeks students viewed various images such as the following:

![Figure 2.1](Illuminated Manuscript)

*Figure 2.1*  
Illuminated Manuscript

![Figure 2.2](Dia de los Muertos)

*Figure 2.2*  
Dia de los Muertos
THE LESSON PLANS (TREATMENT)

The lesson plans developed for the art room posed a very specialized problem because of the narrow focus. Lesson plans on loss were not available. Using art as a
therapeutic way of grieving is a new approach in counseling, therefore, little information exists for teachers on how to plan such lessons, or how to approach a grieving student. Questions that I posed were:

- How can the subject of death be introduced and discussed in the art room using traditional methods of teaching art?
- Is the art room a place where death, grief, and bereavement be examined?
- Can students use creative processes to understand the grieving process?
- How is grief visually expressed in our society and other cultures?
- Are death, grief, and bereavement evident in works of art?

The lesson plans I developed looked at ways individual artists and cultures depict death. Revealed in aesthetic examination of the work was the artist's way of working out his or her grief. One lesson plan looked at how the Mexican culture grieves when celebrating Dia de los Muertos. Images depicted death in humorous and colorful ways.
I introduced the Illuminated Manuscript lesson plan by asking students if they were familiar with illuminated texts. Most students were not. Visuals exhibited were various manuscript pages from Persia, Austria, Ireland, England, and Germany. The periods were from Classical, Early Christian, Byzantine, Irish and English, Carolingian Style, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Arabic and Persian, Indian and Turkish, and finally, Hebrew. The oldest example of a manuscript illumination was from the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

Historical information provided was on how and why the creation of illuminated manuscripts came about. A question and answer session held after the visuals clarified what the illuminated pages represented. In this case, the creators of the illuminated manuscripts were depicting...
aspects of life. In the Gospels, for instance, monks illuminated the life of Christ.

Leading the discussion toward emotional observation, I displayed artwork depicting family members relating to each other, presented biographical information on each work, the artist's name, title of the work, and where and when it was created and asked the following questions:

- Who are some of the people in your life for whom you care?
- Who are some of the people who take care of you?
- Who are the people who have taken care of your parents, or aunts, uncles, and friends?

A discussion followed on how artists show caring. I asked the students to describe how the artists created emotional effects. Leading questions were asked, such as:

- What kinds of colors do you see?
- Are the colors bright or dark?
- Are the colors warm? (reds, oranges, yellows)
- Are the colors cool? (blues, greens)
- How do the colors used establish a mood or feeling?

Also included was a discussion about basic art issues, such as, how the use of color in the manuscript
symbolically evokes or expresses emotion. The goal was to have student's emotional experiences relate to an aesthetic response. The art production activity reinforced what they expressed about caring feelings and observations of the artworks.

For the second session, I instructed students to bring in a picture of a loved one, pet, or famous artist for use in creating an illuminated manuscript. The lesson plan emphasized the theme of caring for someone, as expressed in art and language. I also brought in my own photograph to share.

**LESSON PLAN TWO - DIA DE LOS MUERTOS - SUGAR SKULLS** (See Appendix B, page 181)

![Figure 3.2](image)

After creation of the illuminated manuscript, I introduced a lighter, humorous approach to looking at death and the depiction of grief. The lesson plan is cross-cultural, and cross-curriculum in design. The historical information provided was of a social studies nature, with
an introduction on how Mexicans use humor to diffuse grief. For example, artist and engraver, Jose Guadalupe Posada, popularized the figure of death known as "Calaveras" (skeletons) in the world of art. Calaveras depicted in everyday situations, such as a dentist drilling a patient's tooth, both the dentist and the patient are skeletons, is very funny. In this way, the viewer is reminded that we are only here for a short while.

I talked briefly about Mexicans blending spiritualism and religious rituals specifically related to ancestor worship. This discussion enabled me to connect Dia de los Muertos to an "Ofrenda" or alter piece, for the final lesson plan.

Several students did know about Dia de los Muertos, but equated it with Halloween. They did they realize the extent to which Dia de los Muertos is a religious holiday throughout Mexico. One Mexican/American commented about this project in her journal, stating:

"Dia de los Muertos - this project made me proud of my roots since I am Mexican American. I usually don't celebrate Mexican traditions. I did not even learn of it until high school. I am now trying to learn a little more of my culture and these projects helped me and make me want [to] learn a little more about my ancestors and the culture altogether." Student 16.
In northern Mexico and southern Arizona we see more commercialization of the holiday as represented in the Calaveras and sugar skulls. In central and southern Mexico, especially among the peoples of Oaxaca, the holiday is very spiritual, and very religious. For them life is no more than a passing moment, a dream from which one would wake up again among the dead.

We discussed the history of Dia de los Muertos; aesthetically examined the reproductions displayed, and critically questioned how the various artists created a mood with color. Students then went on to the production portion of the lesson plan.

The assignment consisted of making several sugar skull molds, and decorating the molds with colored icing. Historically sugar skulls used on "Ofrendas" or ancestor alters, celebrate the Days of the Dead.

The object of the lesson plan was to help the students make connections between lost family members in a caring relationship, as visualized in works of art. The use of the skull as a theme in Dia de los Muertos is a constant reminder that we are only visitors here in life. In art terms, the skull is a sculptural shape. Students observed the effects of space, shape, and color, in addition to the
death icon, which creates a mood for the Ofrenda activity in the last session.

**LESSON PLAN THREE - RELIQUARIES** (See Appendix B, page 191)

Most participants had never heard of a reliquary. I showed images of religious and spiritual reliquaries from different periods.

![Figure 3.3](image)

Figure 3.3

Also shown were American and Mexican contemporary reliquaries.

Students were instructed to think about material things they owned that belonged to lost loved ones. Such items could be letters or cards, clothes, jewelry, photographs, or pressed flowers. The reliquary designed by the student would house the items collected, including the Illuminated Manuscript.

The image of the reliquary purse inspired creative thoughts about what constituted a container for “sacred” items. One student decided on a basket for her items, because her now deceased grandmother taught her basket weaving. Another participant sewed the bottom of a
sweatshirt closed and used it as a container because her now deceased grandmother supported her participation on a softball team.

**LESSON PLAN FOUR - OFRENDAS/MEXICAN ALTARS** (See Appendix B, page 197)

Altars (Ofrendas) are installations Mexican Catholics design for deceased family members consisting of artifacts, mementos, photographs, prefabricated objects, flowers, saints, and candles to create a sacred place either within a home or on public display for special feast days.

This was the last lesson plan of the four designed. The participants in the study assembled the illuminated manuscript page, the sugar skulls, and the reliquary on an "Ofrenda." I then photographed each Ofrenda.
DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for this study was quantitative and qualitative in methodology. I gathered information by administering a pre and post-questionnaire as discussed in this chapter, observing students create their projects, reading student’s art journals, photographing student’s work, and interviewing the participants about their feelings as the projects progressed, as discussed in Chapter IV.

La Pierre (1997), suggested that questions might arise as to whether there is a difference between research procedures used in the arts and those used in the sciences. La Pierre, described that researchers in art education are looking, thinking, and observing from an artistic perspective and creating new parameters that reflect a knowledge base directly related to the arts. It is not just a matter of the physical, perceptual characteristics of art; it is also the way, manner, or style in which individuals are asked to make art and respond to art (Hamblen & Smith, 1994).

She defined research in the arts as focusing on expressive representation and what it means to the field of
art education in learning, testing, behavior, and cognitive abilities (La Pierre, 1988) stated:

What is more important for the arts is the focus on intuitive, spatial, and concrete elements that characterize the cognitive structures of artistic endeavors, by choosing research methods that involve decisions among the following issues:

(1) Characteristics of individual participants (descriptive statistics) versus mean scores of a group of characteristics and subjects within groups (inferential statistics);

(2) Small samples versus large samples and how each affects reliability or the ability to generalize findings;

(3) Standardization practices to increase objectivity and consistency versus research involvement;

(4) Adapting research findings from outside the field and what effect this has on the validity of content from within the field; and

(5) Authentic, practical, or realistic settings versus laboratory-manipulated experimentation.

Marshall and Rossman (1999), state that qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering information:

(a) Participation in the setting which means involvement in the social setting,
(b) Direct observation referred to as field notes, entailing the systematic noting and recordings of events, behaviors, and artifacts,
(c) In-depth interviewing which falls into three general types: the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview; and
(d) Analyzing documents such as journals, and material culture as in patterns among an ethnic group.

Because all students were working on a project about loss, the emotional level in the classroom was very high, setting the stage for dialogue between the participants about loss and artistic approaches for completion of the work in progress. Several students were surprised at the intensity of emotion expressed by their fellow classmates, and then relieved that many people shared their same feelings. I found that direct observation of the production by the participants involved me in the intensity of emotion as they worked. When reading participants' art journals about specific projects, they wrote about the emotions experienced by all students.

Cole and Knowles (2001), advocated for the arts-based or, art-informed research, bringing together systematic and rigorous qualities of scientific inquiry with artistic and imaginative qualities of the arts. Thus, research becomes creative and responsive reflecting qualities of multidimensional lives through multiple media forms. This is a challenge to the rigid, linear, and formulaic qualities of conventional scientific inquiry.
This study involved me as researcher and as a teacher of the lesson plans developed. The role of a detached scientific researcher was quite impossible, and I believe, inappropriate. It seemed that research was happening simultaneously, as students created the artworks. True, I was the conveyor of information about art procedures, and recorder for the research; however, I also became personally involved in the emotional responses of the students. I found that direct observation of the art production by the participants, revealed the intensity of emotion as they worked.

**DATA REVIEW OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Undertaking the study concerning attitudes toward death education was to determine what the present day attitudes of pre-services teachers are, in order that curriculum be suggested for the art room to accompany a death education program.

As mentioned above, the instrument was a questionnaire designed Beverly F. Croskery, in 1979, entitled, *Attitudinal Survey on Death Education*, to measure attitudes toward death. I chose this questionnaire for comparison with her 1979 data. Please note that the data comparison on
Croskery's study was taken only from the data she collected on teachers' information.

Reverse scoring used in the questionnaire were on items 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, and 17. If the respondent checked "Strongly Agree" on any of these items, scoring would be "1" building to "Strongly Disagree" which was scored "5". In all other questions, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 18, the scoring was "5" for "Strongly Agree" to "1" for Strongly disagree" (See Table 2, page 150 and Table 3, page 152, Appendix A for scoring).

The participant's pre-test mean was 68.5% with a post-test mean of almost 64.8%. The drop in score of almost 4% was small. The teacher's score on Croskery's 1979 study was 60.8%.
TABLE 5
MEAN SCORES ON ALL QUESTIONNAIRES
THE ATTITUDES OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS STUDY, COMPARED TO CROSKERY'S STUDY 1979

Beverly Croskery's study, (1979) was a much broader study that included attitudes toward death from clergy, school board members, and teachers. The administration of the instrument in her study given only once did not include a "treatment." The instrument in my study given to pre-service elementary teachers included the "treatment" then a post-instrument test.

Her study included 77 teachers, of which 92% lived and taught in suburban areas. The remaining 8% indicated they shared equally urban and rural areas. Of the 77 teachers, 69 were female and 8, were males. Twenty-one under the age of 30; 26 were in the 30-40 age bracket, 24 in 41-55 age bracket, and 6 in the 56-65 age bracket. Twenty-eight teachers had children.

COMPARISON OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES: PRE/POST/CROSKERY

Consideration was given to the mean score on each item and ranked order of the questions. The analysis ranges from the lowest (more negative) attitudes toward death education to the highest (most positive) attitudes: 1 = lowest, and 18 = highest (See Table 4, Appendix A, page 154). Listed first are the most negative responses. The more positive views
listed last. When comparing mean scores with Croskery's study, I looked at the mean scores from the teacher response portion.

ITEM 8 - "It would be impossible for the schools to teach about death without contradicting the religious or cultural beliefs of some of the children."

This item received the lowest mean score on both the pre- (2.62) and post-questionnaire (2.67), and sixth on the Croskery list (2.85).

ITEM 4 - "Since death education is important for everyone and the school is the institution, which all children must attend, the school is an appropriate place for death education."

This item ranked second on the pre-questionnaire (3.29), fifth on the post-questionnaire (3.14), and fourth on the Croskery questionnaire (2.83).

ITEM 2 - "A child's death education should be the concern only of the parents and the church or synagogue (if the parents choose). The school would not be appropriate for teaching the subject of death."

This item closely related to four pertaining to parental responsibility ranked third on the pre-
ITEM 3 - "Most parents are capable of explaining death to their children quite adequately."

This item ranked fourth on the pre-questionnaire (3.33), second on the post-questionnaire (2.76), and eighth on the Croskery questionnaire (3.14).

ITEM 11 - "I think death education should be a carefully planned part of the elementary school curriculum."

This ranked fifth on the pre-questionnaire (3.33), third on the post-questionnaire (3.00), and first with the lowest score on the Croskery questionnaire (2.55).

ITEM 16 - "The concept of death has certain universal truths, which can be taught without contradicting religious or cultural beliefs of anyone."

This item closely related to item eight, was discussed earlier, ranks sixth on the pre-questionnaire (3.43), eighth on the post-questionnaire (3.29), and eleventh on the Croskery questionnaire (3.44).

ITEM 18 - "The school should introduce children to the concept of death in the primary grades, following a step-
by-step plan that will increase their understanding as they mature."

This item closely related to item 11, ranks seventh on the pre-questionnaire (3.43), fourth on the post-questionnaire (3.05), and fifth on the Croskery questionnaire (2.84).

ITEM 9 - "Even if the teachers were given special training about death, I would not be in favor of it being taught in the schools."

This ranks eighth on the pre-questionnaire (3.52), sixth on the post-questionnaire (3.14), and seventh on the Croskery questionnaire (2.85).

ITEM 5 - "The schools' concern should be to teach the basics and stay out of the personal lives of children."

This item ranked ninth on the pre-questionnaire (3.71), tenth on the post-questionnaire (3.67), and ninth on the Croskery questionnaire (3.40).

ITEM 17 - "The school already has too many issues to deal with, most of them more important than death education. It would be unwise to include it in the school curriculum."
ITEM 10 - "The church or synagogue is the only institution appropriate for assisting the family in the death education of the child."

This item closely relates to items two, and four, establishing the appropriate place for death education, ranking eleventh on the pre-questionnaire (4.05), ninth on the post-questionnaire (3.62), and tenth on the Croskery study (3.41).

ITEM 6 - "There is no way the subject of death can be avoided, so we may as well be open about it in all of society."

This item ranks twelfth on all questionnaires pre-(4.14), post-(3.90), and Croskery (3.77).

ITEM 14 - "A child should not have to encounter the subject of death until a loved one dies. That is soon enough to the told about it."

This item related to item one increases specificity, ranking thirteenth on the pre-questionnaire (4.19), eleventh on the post-questionnaire (3.67), and seventeenth on Croskery's study (4.20).
ITEM 7 - "death is part of life. Learning about death can prepare us to lead better lives."

This item ranks fourteenth on the pre-questionnaire (4.23), thirteenth on the post-questionnaire (4.19), and thirteenth on Croskery's study (3.87).

ITEM 12 - "Whether or not death education is a part of the school curriculum, school should play a supportive role in helping the child understand death."

This item ranks fifteenth on the pre-questionnaire (4.43), fourteenth on the post-questionnaire (4.19), and fourteenth on the Croskery study (3.85).

ITEM 1 - "Children should be protected from the subject of death for as long as possible."

This item ranked sixteenth on the pre- (4.50), post- (4.38), and Croskery questionnaire (4.07).

ITEM 15 - "There is no way that children can be prepared to face the death of a loved one. If such a tragedy occurs, they will survive best if left alone to work things out for themselves."

This item ranks seventeenth on the pre-questionnaire (4.50), and eighteenth on the post- (4.48) and Croskery questionnaire (4.26).
ITEM 13 - "I would not object to the subject of death being discussed in high school."

As stated in the Croskery study, the word "discussed" use purposely to help broaden the possibility for agreement. This item's mean score is eighteenth on the pre-questionnaire (4.57), and fifteenth on both the post- (4.23) and Croskery study (3.93).

FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES AND DISCUSSION OF ITEMS

This tool evaluated the attitudinal responses through a study of the frequency of responses to the items. (See Tables 6.1 - 6.18, Appendix A, pages 155-172).

ITEM 1 - "Children should be protected from the subject of death for as long as possible." (reverse scoring). Scores for item one seen in TABLE 6.1.

ITEM 2 - "A child's death education should be the concern only of the parents and the church or synagogue (if the parents choose). The school would not be appropriate for teaching the subject of death." (reverse scoring) Scores for item two seen in TABLE 6.2.

On the pre-questionnaire, the participants placed almost 43% in columns 4 and 5, which is close to the Croskery study. However, the post-questionnaire shows an increase in those columns to almost 62% indicating that
pre-service teachers may think education should come from sources other than parents and religious organizations.

ITEM 3 - "Most parents are capable of explaining death to their children quite adequately." (reverse scoring) Scores for item three seen in TABLE 6.3.

In the pre-questionnaire, scoring was almost 48% in columns 4 and 5, which is close to the scoring in Croskery's study. This question found more undecided than usual to almost 43%. Scoring is supported in item two when considering alternative educational sources on death outside the home and religious beliefs.

ITEM 4 - "Since death education is important for everyone and the school is the institution, which all children must attend, the school is an appropriate place for death education." Scores for item four are in TABLE 6.4.

In both pre- and post-questionnaires scoring for columns 1 and 2 were almost 48%, while in the Croskery study the scoring was fairly evenly distributed between columns 1 - 2, and 4 - 5.

ITEM 5 - "The schools' concern should be to teach the basics and stay out of the personal lives of children." (reverse scoring) Scores for item five are in TABLE 6.5.
In the pre-questionnaire, columns 2 - 5 scores were evenly distributed. In the post-questionnaire and in the Croskery study over 75% of the respondents agreed that schools should take a more active role in student’s personal lives this was the highest scoring on the questionnaire.

ITEM 6 - “There is no way the subject of death can be avoided, so we may as well be open about it in all of society.” Scores for item six seen in TABLE 6.6.

This is the first item where there is a large disparity between the two studies. In the pre- and post-questionnaire almost 86% and 72% of scoring were in columns 1 and 2. However, in the Croskery study over 75% of scoring were in columns 4 and 5. This indicates a change in attitude toward the subject of death in our society, compared to the 1979 study. However, it does not follow that there is an increased openness when talking to children about death.

ITEM 7 - “Death is part of life. Learning about death can prepare us to lead better lives.” Scores for item seven seen in TABLE 6.7.

Here too, as in item six, there is a disparity between the two studies. In the pre- and post-questionnaire scoring
in columns 1 and 2 were 81% and almost 86%, and in the Croskery, study 74% of scoring was in columns 4 and 5. Again, this indicates a societal change in attitude toward death as a part of life.

ITEM 8 - "It would be impossible for the schools to teach about death without contradicting the religious or cultural beliefs of some of the children." (reverse scoring) Scores for item eight seen in TABLE 6.8.

In the pre-questionnaire scoring in columns 1 and 2 (almost 43%) matched column 3 (almost 43%). However, in the post-questionnaire scoring was 52% in columns 4 and 5. In the Croskery study 52% of scoring was in columns 1 and 2.

ITEM 9 - "Even if the teachers were given special training about death, I would not be in favor of it being taught in the schools." (reverse scoring) Scores for item nine seen in TABLE 6.9.

In the Croskery study, scoring for this item was balanced between columns 1 and 2 at 48%, and 4 and 5 at 40%. In the pre- and post-questionnaire of this study, both columns 4 and 5 had a combined score of 57%.

ITEM 10 - "The church or synagogue is the only institution appropriate for assisting the family in the
death education of the child.” (reverse scoring) Scores for item ten seen in TABLE 6.10.

In the pre-questionnaire combined scoring for columns 4 and 5 was 90%, however on the post-questionnaire scoring dropped to almost 67%, which closely matched the Croskery study at almost 64%. This item closely relates to item two.

ITEM 11 - “I think death education should be a carefully planned part of the elementary school curriculum.” Scores for item eleven seen in TABLE 6.11.

In the pre-questionnaire scoring of almost 62% was in column 3. In the post-questionnaire, scoring increased in column 4. In the Croskery study, over 50% of scoring was in columns 1 and 2.

ITEM 12 - “Whether or not death education is a part of the school curriculum, school should play a supportive role in helping the child understand death.” Scores for item twelve seen in TABLE 6.12.

More than 90% of scoring on the pre-questionnaire was in columns 1 and 2, followed by almost 86% on the post-questionnaire. Croskery’s study shows almost 77% of scoring was in columns 4 and 5.
ITEM 13 - "I would not object to the subject of death being discussed in high school." Scores for item thirteen seen in TABLE 6.13.

Scoring on the pre-questionnaire was 100% for columns 1 and 2 combined, followed by the post-questionnaire of 90% for columns 1 and 2 combined. In the Croskery study the scores for columns 4 and 5 combined were 83%. I find the gap between scores in my study and the 1979 study puzzling since there is such a wide disparity. One conclusion drawn was that, this item got reversed scoring in the 1979 study, which would explain scoring in columns 4 and 5.

ITEM 14 - "A child should not have to encounter the subject of death until a loved one dies. That is soon enough to the told about it." (reverse scoring) Scores for item fourteen seen in TABLE 6.14.

Scoring on the pre-questionnaire of 81% for columns 4 - 5 combined, and the Croskery study for the same columns of almost 85% are very close. The post-questionnaire scoring dropped to almost 67%.

ITEM 15 - "There is no way that children can be prepared to face the death of a loved one. If such a tragedy occurs, they will survive best if left alone to
work things out for themselves." (reverse scoring) Scores for item fifteen seen in TABLE 6.15.

Scoring for combined columns 4 and 5 on the pre-test was almost 81%, on the post-test 95%, and on the Croskery study, almost 90%. All agree that children need grief support after a loved one dies.

ITEM 16 - "The concept of death has certain universal truths, which can be taught without contradicting religious or cultural beliefs of anyone." Scores for item sixteen seen in TABLE 6.16.

The scoring on the pre-questionnaire in column 2 is 52%, and almost 62% in the post-questionnaire the second highest scoring on the questionnaire. Scoring on the 1979 study for columns 4 and 5 combined is 57%, which indicates a shift in society in a more positive attitude toward the concept of death and universal truth.

ITEM 17 - "The school already has too many issues to deal with, most of them more important than death education. It would be unwise to include it in the school curriculum." (reverse scoring) Scores for item seventeen seen in TABLE 6.17.

Combined scores for columns 4 and 5 for the pre-questionnaire at almost 62%, and almost 48% for the same
columns on the post-questionnaire. Scoring on the 1979 study for columns 1 and 2 combined is 49%, with almost 43% in column 4 and 5, indicating a balanced split between the agreement and disagreement on this item.

ITEM 18 - "The school should introduce children to the concept of death in the primary grades, following a step-by-step plan that will increase their understanding as they mature." Scores for item eighteen seen in TABLE 6.18.

Scoring in columns 1 and 2 combined, match the score for column 3 of almost 43% in the pre-questionnaire. In the post-test scoring for columns 1 and 2 also combined, match column 3, at 38%. In the 1979 Croskery study, the score for columns 1 and 2 combined is almost 46%, and columns 4 and 5 combined the score is 36% with an 18% in column 3, showing a balance between agreement and disagreement. This indicates that the difference between this study and the 1979 Croskery study is currently, there is greater indecision on whether to implement a step-by-step education plan on death for school age children.

**SUMMARY**

Prior, to the study, most students had not thought about death, the rituals surrounding it or other losses children encounter. This is a paradoxical situation
considering many of the participants had lost loved ones. One reason I suggest for this paradox is that in our current fast-paced American society, students expected to "bury" their emotions when confronted with loss of a loved person or pet, then surprised to find years later they are still grieving. Society's message is to "buck-up" and get on with the business of living. During the study many students realized that they did not gain closure with the deceased loved one. This was evident in the emotional tension when presenting the illuminated manuscript.

Responses on the questionnaire indicate participants of the study agree grieving children need support in school and educational information on death and loss. They are not clear whether that support should come from parents and clergy as the only avenue. They agree that death is a part of life, and grief should not be ignored, and that it would be possible for teachers to teach about death without contradicting religious or cultural beliefs of some children. Participants were very concerned about cognitive levels of development and a step-by-step death education program, and whether the curriculum would significantly change at higher grade levels. Overall, there was openness toward the subject of death education.
CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

As stated in Chapter III, this chapter contains data collection from participant’s art journals, photographs of their art production, and statements from interviews. The data presented here is a result of the "treatment", or lesson plans that addressed issues of death. Represented artistically, they culminate in a statement about grief or mourning. After the students participated in the lesson plans, I again administered the post-questionnaire. I examined all data for any change in attitude. However, since I was specifically interested in attitude change on death education relating to art projects, I found the following data more interesting because it reveals much about emotional levels of the participants. This portion of research "humanizes" the statistical information gathered in Chapter III.

At the introduction of the lesson plans, several students were very uncomfortable about the subject of "death", and were unprepared to think or talk about issues of grief in their own lives. As I stated in Chapter III, the Illuminated Manuscript page was the hardest lesson plan for a majority of the participants, because it demanded they think about the person lost, how that person was important in their lives, and how
their lives had changed, or transformed since the person's death.

Once the Illuminated Manuscript page was completed and students read it aloud, the tension in the class collapsed. As each student shared their page, others began to realize that we all experience moments of grief, even though some had not allowed themselves to talk or think about events from the past because it was so painful. However, sharing the grief is exactly what was needed. All students agreed the first project was difficult, but the end-result was worth it.

PARTICIPANT'S QUOTATIONS AND ARTWORKS

The following pictures and quotes are from student's journals and from classroom interviews.

"The Lord is my Shepard
I have everything I Need. I will not be afraid, Lord, for
You are with me."

Student 1
Student 1 used part of the Twenty-third Psalm for her illuminated manuscript page. She chose to include mementos of her own life experiences to include in her reliquary. The container she used as a reliquary is the white purse she carried in her wedding. Scattered objects are coins from the year her son was born, a bracelet charms were added throughout her teen years, and a ring that her grandmother had given to her one Christmas.
Student 2 is the only participant that created a memento mori for a pet. She was an older student returning to school after many years in the business world. This close up shot of her illuminated manuscript page shows an original poem written for
her cat. This student really got into the art production creating very colorful works asking many questions about art methods and materials. She believed in the importance of having art in the classroom and planned adding an art component for most of her lesson plans when hired as a teacher.
"In life things come and go, we may notice these things, or we may let them pass us by. I have noticed many things in my life and fortunately, many of them have been pleasant. On of my gifts from God, is my grandfather. I was privileged to have grown up with him at my side. His stubborn habits, his protective heart and the constant comment of how I was just like my grandmother. Coming from him I would take that as a compliment even though she never cheered for a duke basketball game and according to him her cooking was never as quite as good as his, he still loved her. No one started to mess with my grandma, for if they did they knew they would have to answer to him. His love for her will live on forever, as our love for him.

This above is the first paragraph on Student 3 manuscript page. Her last paragraph follows:

"As you leave here today and recall all of your own memories. Don’t be overwhelmed with sorrow. Grandpa had a wonderful time here with us and continues to be with us in our hearts. He watches us from heaven and will be our angel in times of need. He can be found in our love for one another and seen in our smiles and he will be remembered every time we hear an airplane fly by."
Student 3 starts her manuscript page talking about her grandpa who tells her wonderful things about her grandmother. As you read on you realize this manuscript page is for both grandparents. She lovingly lets the reader know that she is comfortable with the grief she suffered, because both grandparents left loving memories.

In our interview, she told me the reason she used a basket as a reliquary, was that her grandmother taught her how to weave them. She thought the basket a good metaphor for life because traditionally people use baskets to hold items such as food that is eaten around a table with loved ones.
"Jackie taught me many things throughout my life, how to forgive how to let go, how to accept others, how to find answers to unanswerable questions, how to live, and most importantly, how to love. You will not be forgotten, always be missed, and forever remain in the hearts of those who knew her."

The sweatshirt pictured here sewn at the bottom, makes a container for Student 4’s mementos. The dragon is a freehand illustration created by the student for her friend Jackie who loved dragons, especially, "Puff the Magic Dragon." Various objects and photographs included are from good times shared with Jackie. Jackie passed away from cancer while in high school.
"Hold fast to dreams
for if dreams die
life is a broken winged bird
That cannot fly.
In art we are now doing a section on death. At first, it sort of freaked me out because I haven't experienced something like that, but after doing an Illuminated page, it showed me how much people in the class needed to do it, even though they will not say so. The only thing was that I felt that I wasn't worthy to be doing a page, I felt as if I was cheating in some way.

This student was worried about creating objects for a deceased loved one because she had not lost anyone close to her. After some discussion about doing a famous artist or other famous person, she decided to do something for her idol, Martin Luther King, Jr.
In interview, I questioned why there were photographs and articles relating to her infant son in her reliquary. She explained that while doing the project on reliquaries, she thought about the love she has for her son and how she might feel if she lost him. It was then she realized he was a precious gift and wanted to put mementos of his birth in a "sacred" place.

I think that at moments such as this, people truly experience what it means to be alive. Thoughts about what really is important in ones life come to the forefront.
Many of the students included mementos for inclusion in their reliquaries showing recent achievements, such as graduation from high school, or favorite pictures of friends. Student 3 defended the inclusion when she pointed out that the photographs were of the past, even though the recent past, the time was dead - never to be relived. Her manuscript page is for her grandmother, who died at the age of 90. I was curious about the photograph of James Dean, and got informed that both her and her grandmother thought him a wonderful actor - and sexy!
"Just keep trying," she said. "Just don't ever give up."
A voice as confident and timeless as the river itself
pouring over stone after stone as it continues its
perennial journey to the sea.

The above was written by, Student 8, for his manuscript
page about a woman who headed a river rafting expedition on
the Colorado River. He was her assistant, and greatly admired
her spirit for life. He did not reveal how or when she died,
but his memento mori for her included the jacket he wore on
the expedition and the journal where he recorded memories of
the trip. His choice for a reliquary is the purse in which his
journal was kept. The illuminated manuscript page created is a
freehand drawing of the Colorado River with a photograph
attached of some members of the party, including the deceased woman.

He told me that this woman died soon after he stopped working for her. He felt that she had a lust for life that he had never before encountered and considered her brave for choosing such an exciting and challenging way of life - and he that missed her.
Student 9 was one of two students who was concerned about talking about death outside of his religion. He participated in the lesson plans, choosing to keep the designs non-emotional. M. C. Escher is one of his favorite artists who he used as a focal point. He also used a favorite cartoon strip "Calvin and Hobbs." He did participate in making the sugar molds, but refused to decorate them with colored icing.

At introduction to the lesson plans on death, he was very adamant that talking about death outside of his religion was against his religious beliefs. Another student also took issue with discussing death outside of her religious beliefs, but found a way to participate in the study that did not conflict with her religion.
The lesson plans did not address religious beliefs of individuals. Rather, I presented religious information as historical "art" information about icons considered important to any lesson plan on art. For example, public school teachers cannot talk about specifics of their personal religious beliefs and teach a lesson plan on those beliefs because of separation of church and state laws. However, in the art room looking at reproductions of famous works of art, such as Christ on the cross, can be critically examined for aesthetic value. The teacher may discuss the artist's intent, materials used, application of paint, composition, and the era produced.

This experience was thought provoking and an area that would need investigation when writing other lessons for death education. My suspicion was that Student 9 used the religious concerns as a way of not engaging in conversation about death, that the real issue was that discussing issues of death made him uncomfortable.
The "Death of An Innocent", a poem reproduced for this student's memento is tragic in that it tells of a drunk driver killing a child. This student lost a high school friend when a drunk driver killed her in an accident. Elsewhere in this document, I mention that by the time students get to their senior year in high school, 90% of them have experienced a death, in some cases it is the loss of a peer. The poem reads as follows:
Death of An Innocent

I went to a part My, I remembered what you said
You told me not to drink, Mom, so I drank soda instead
I really felt proud inside, Mom, even thought the other
said I should

I know I did the right thing, Mom, I know you are always
right
Now the party is finally ending, Mom, as everyone is
driving out of sight
As I got in my car, Mom, I knew I’d get home in one piece
Because of the way you raised me, Mom, so innocent and
sweet

I started to drive away, Mom, but as I pulled out into
the road
The other car didn’t see me, Mom, and hit me like a toad
As I lay there on the pavement, Mom, I heard the
policeman say
The other guy is drunk, Mom, and now I’m the one to pay

I lying here dying, Mom, I wish you’d get here soon
How could this happen to me, Mom, my life just burst like
a balloon
There is blood all around me, Mom, and most of it is mine
I heard the medic say, Mom, I’ll die in a short time

I just wanted to tell you, Mom, I swear I didn’t drink
It was the other, Mom, the others didn’t think
He was probably at the same party as I
But the only difference is, he drank and now I will die

Why do people drink, Mom? It can ruin their whole life
I’m feeling sharp pains now, pains just like a knife
The guy who hit me is wailing, Mom, and I don’t think its
fair
I’m lying here dying and all he can do is stare

Tell my brother not to cry, Mom, tell daddy to be brave
And when I go to heaven, Mom, put daddy’s girl on my
grave
Someone should have told him, Mom, not to drink & drive
If only they would have told him, Mom, I would still be
alive
My breath is getting shorter, Mom, I’m becoming very scared
Please don’t cry for me, Mom, when I needed you, you were always there
I have one last question, Mom, before I say goodbye
I didn’t drink & drive, Mom, so why am I the one to die?

This was a hard page for the student to read - and for the class to listen. As the students worked it became clear that tremendous thought went into developing statements or selecting poems for lost loved ones. The items selected for inclusion in the reliquary, might be looked at as trivial item by item. However, when combined with the manuscript page the “ofrenda” read like a chapter from two people’s lives - the deceased, and the designer.
"I just finished making the [illuminated] manuscript. It was a lot harder to do than I expected. I had to call my grandma up to get my speech. She read it to me over the phone. She got upset and cried, which in turn made me upset. I thought that I was over his death, maybe it is something that goes on forever. It is just a process of learning how to recognize and handle your grieving emotions."

This student reconnected with her grandmother when she called to get a copy of the eulogy written for her grandfather. By revisiting their grief, they got an opportunity to connect and support one another. The student gave her grandmother the news that she was in the process of creating artwork about the deceased. Many families do not share grief after funeral rituals, rather the grief and bereavement
process is thought to be only at the gravesite, where life turns back to the business of living. However, as seen in this study, many students still had unrequited grief, and they were willing to share it with strangers.
"I found the unit on death was very hard. I liked the fact that everyone was able to talk openly and freely about their own special person they lost. However, it was personally hard for me because I had lost someone very recently. I found that I wasn't ready to talk about how I felt. Also, I would have some concern on how I would be able to teach different grade levels this unit. Altogether, this unit enabled me to almost have closure with my grandmother. It made me feel normal that other people were sharing the same emotions I had."

Many students experienced the thoughts of Student 12. It was amazing to see how each person overcame their grief as they worked. The Illuminated Manuscript page, although hard
for students, opened up scared over emotions, giving
permission for long buried feelings to come to the forefront
and venting grief in expressive means.
Memories of . . .
Loving,
Caring,
Gentle,
Patient,
My Nana and Papa.

Memories of . . .
Fritos,
Cotton Candy, my
first My Little Pony,
She-ra and He-Man
My Nana and Papa.

Memories of . . .
Stories,
Pictures,
Cards and letters,
my Nana and Papa.

Student 13

This student lost both her grandparents within a short
time of each other. Her grandmother died first, and
grandfather several months later. Of course, the loss was very
hard on the family with the deaths falling with so short a
period, but she said in interview that her family has strong
ties and the support was terrific.
Student 14
"Together we gather on this very day,
To hold hands and quietly pray.
The longer we gather and meet as a whole,
Though bound by the memories and strength of
his soul."

The above is a close-up view of Student 14's manuscript page and is the only one that closely resembles an illuminated gospel page. It is painted lettering on gold paper, painted flower designs, and geometric shapes.

Student 14 wrote this manuscript page for her grandfather.
"At first I thought you knew this goes against my religion. I felt awkward about doing this. As I started to think what I could possibly do for my grandmother, it hit me: Psalms. It was her favorite. I used to read it to her until she died. It brought back a lot of feelings that I kept in for so long. It helped me tremendously. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to grieve once again."

A few students worried over the religious aspects of death and personal religious rituals surrounding it. This student created a statement about her grandmother that fit into her religious beliefs, without challenging those beliefs. Teachers cannot know the religious beliefs of all their students, however, I think it possible to address issues of loss without addressing a persons religion or rituals.
Mourning, grief, and bereaving are an emotional response to loss and religion gives people rituals within those beliefs with which to grieve. By remembering that her grandmother loved psalms, which is part of this student’s religion, she relaxed and was able to mourn creatively.
In contrast, to Student 9, Student 16 chose to represent his reliquary as an interior of a church. Shown here is the interior with bench seats on either side and sugar skulls on the red carpet leading to his altar. He created a free-hand illustration of himself as a young boy, and copied it onto a
transparency that he hung in front of the altar. The circular
writing in the right hand corner is a quote from the bible:

"And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled
with fire." Apocalypse Chapter 15, 2.

This student believed strongly that children be taught
about death education at an early age and had no problem with
personal religious values prohibiting death education studies.
The majority of the participants did not indicate their
personal religious beliefs. How to talk about death to
children about death issues was the issue, not religious
beliefs surrounding death. I think this is an important point
since all people die whether religious or not. When religious
beliefs are evident, then it is important to consider how
those beliefs be respected.
Student 17

Student 17 is from Mexico, who spoke very little English. We definitely had a language problem, but solidly connected on an emotional level. While in my class she went into the hospital for a biopsy on one breast to determine whether she had cancer. She was extremely upset but managed to let me know what was happening to her. I have learned that hugging works wonders for both people involved in a hurtful and stressful situation, a hug worked wonders. This event ended happily, she did not have cancer and returned to class very happy.
Interviewing was difficult because of the language barrier. She did not identify for whom the manuscript page was designed, it says:

"I know you are close to god . . . When you died I was very sad and torn apart when you left me and did not understand. I was angry and confused. Now I know he is an angel in heaven."
Student 18


Student 18 is the only student that lost a parent while in school. She did not mention what grade she was in at the time, however, the picture attached to the illuminated manuscript page reveals that she was quite young and probably in elementary school. The reliquary created, is a workman's handkerchief sewn together to make a bag in which fishing gear is stowed. This student participated in the lesson plans, but it was obvious she was deeply disturbed about feelings over losing her father when she was so young. As in all the interviews held with the participants, I did not press them when they were reluctant to talk about a loss. Most students,
however, were very eager to engage in discussion with me, and classmates.
"Death should definitely be taught to children at a younger age (not too young!) It is eventually going to be something that every person must deal with. I liked the project we did in class. I enjoyed observing others, but fortunately, I haven't been close to anybody that died. My grandmothers both died when I was young. I thank God! The project was interesting and good luck with yours!"

Student 19 was one of only two in the study who did not have the experience of a close person dying, or the experience of grief and bereavement. She did, however, get to observe others grieving while participating in the study. Mozart is her favorite composer, and in the arts, therefore, she thought it fitting to create a memento morí for him. In an interview she admitted that the experience of seeing student's illuminated manuscript pages and earing words written about loss moved her emotionally.
Student 20

"This class has challenged me. It has sparked a new interest in me to learn art therapy, such as in death. Creating my Illuminated Manuscript was very difficult. I realized that the pain was still very fresh in my heart. I felt silly crying in front of the whole class, but it was a good release. This will be something I can always cherish. I found that death studies is a valuable, but missing factor of school. I was always a kid who held everything in, but would greatly benefit from an activity or someone just speaking to the class about an issue. I miss you Sophia."

Sophia, and her mother, shot by Sophia’s boyfriend, who then turned the gun on himself, committed this heinous crime in front of Sophia’s younger sister. Sophia thought the boy was 19, but he was 29. Student 20 and Sophia were best friends in high school. News of Sophia’s death was a sudden shock for her because there was no chance for closure. Sophia was alive - and in an instant gone. Many therapists agree that this type
of grief is the hardest for a person to overcome. When Student 20 arose to read her manuscript, the words would not come. The other participants got nervous with the pause, so I offered to read the manuscript page for her. However, she pulled herself together and began reading. Part way through the page, she began to cry, but continued reading to the end. As Student 6 said, "... after doing an Illuminated page, it showed me how much people in the class needed to do it."

In an interview with this student, she felt a release after reading the manuscript. She had wanted to do "something" for Sophia after she died, but was at a loss as how to what to do. I told her that one starts by admitting that grief and bereavement may linger longer that we expect, or want it to. By acknowledging grief, it frees a person’s emotions and allows those feelings to vent, and sometimes that “venting” can be used in a creative way.
"I could try to tell the story but every sentence would be lifeless and incomplete. In short, what a wild, inexplicable, wide-eyed, howling, blessed-out, tormented, big-assed throw down, with the cosmic event of LIFE on this here planet. You accepted no less. Acknowledged no authority other than yourself. Change was a law you couldn't break and in the end you didn't want to for the most honorable of reasons - LOVE AND LEARNING is what this is all about. Your spirit travels with me. Peace you wild and beautiful child - I love you with all my heart.

This student decided to create an illuminated manuscript for himself. In our interview, he told me that his previous lifestyle was dead and that he had transformed. He asked me,
"That since he though his old life "metaphorically dead," could he use the death of his past as an object for mourning?"

He wanted to make a statement about the person he had been, a traveler with no roots and no desire to settle down. He used a map of Tennessee as background for his manuscript page on which he outlined several places he has traveled. He considered himself a contemporary hippie. When we met in class, he was married with two small children whom he sometimes brought with him. Obviously settled down, and enrolled in Teacher's education classes, he intends to become an elementary teacher.
THE SKULLS
SUMMARY

This chapter reveals the depth of emotion put into the works of art created by the participants. Their journal writings revealed many questions about a subject many had not thought about - death, even though many experienced the loss of a loved one. Written were questions about how they would handle a student returning after suffering a loss. Many wondered if death education should be addressed in school.

When I first started writing death education curriculum for the art room, I did not envision an extensive curriculum on death education for the art specialist to teach. The lesson plans I developed for use by the art specialist could either enhance a course on death education taught elsewhere in the school, or be used over the school year in the art room. My goal was to help students and teachers see loss, death, grief, and bereavement as life events that expressed artistically can support the grieving process.
CHAPTER V

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I introduced the topic of research, a statement of the perceived problems and purpose, the methodology used, and personal background information.

Chapter II dealt with previous information on death education and the serious problems that could arise later in life, from lack of proper information on death. I undertook this study to suggest strategies to use by art specialists or regular classroom teachers when preparing lesson plans on issues of loss.

Chapters III and IV contain quantitative and qualitative information on the participants involved. The qualitative data in Chapter IV are images that are a result of the "treatment".

The results of this research indicate an openness to dialogue on issues of loss, specifically on death education. However, as in the Croskery study, the subject of death is still an unpopular subject of discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ART SPECIALISTS

Channel Thirteen WNET, New York, a PBS station aired a program entitled, On Our Own Terms, narrated by Bill Moyers. This
program was on dying and reproduced on the web A Teacher’s Guide to Grief, at this site:

The article listed several suggestions for teachers:

- **Have a plan:** If possible, help the grieving student identify what he or she dreads most about returning to school after the death of a loved one.

- **Come up with a support group:** For the student or a friend or counselor who the student can go to if the emotional strain becomes too much to bear.

- **Find out how the student would like you to relate his or her loss to the class.**

- **Offer creative ideas:** For ways the student can cope with his or her feelings, such as keeping a journal or making sketches by drawing pictures that represent grief and loss.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There is no doubt that research reveals that death education be addressed, sometime, somewhere, and by someone. The when, where, and by whom is the crux of the problem. Special training for teachers is very necessary when teaching a course on death education, and I do not see teaching a death education course the responsibility of an art specialist. However, by examining artworks dealing with issues of loss
aesthetically, critically, and in historical context in the art room can help students understand how creative energy transforms grief.

**SUGGESTED AVENUES FOR THE FUTURE**

There are avenues to investigate issues of loss rather than a formal curriculum on death education:

1. Encourage students to use the arts to express feelings of loss and grief. This would also include literature selections that deal with death (See Appendix C).

2. Encourage school administrations to offer inservice programs for teachers designed for helping the grieving child to cope, and to develop support systems within the classroom (Croskery, 1979). Findings in the research indicate that teachers and pre-service teachers agree that inservice seminars on how to approach the subjects of losses and death Education would be helpful. That does not mean a one-time seminar would prepare teachers to talk about death and loss with students. There is a need to remove the “taboo” in America from talking about death to help bring the comfort level up for those who would engage in discussions on death. One approach to talking about death would be to talk about the life affirming
aspects of a “whole life well lived”, which includes the fact that all of us die.

3. Encourage universities to offer courses on death education for both pre-service teachers and art specialists.

4. Continue with research surveys to determine how in-service teachers are coping with the subject of death and trauma in the classroom. The time to impart information on death and loss is when children are developing and asking questions about life while in school. It is important to inform teachers about what the symptoms of grief are and how to cope with them.

5. Post listings from the Internet for trauma and grief sites in the classroom and administration offices for teachers’ and students’ information. Post 9/11 has seen a tremendous listing of sites that offer help for teachers when faced with issues trauma and death.

CONCLUSIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

Art specialists can help students identify various values and themes present in art dealing with the subject of death, and help explain to what extent such values and themes correspond to the students’ own values and beliefs.

Researcher David Galin (1989) writes:
During our lives, we are taught about dying and the death process through art, literature, music, dramatic interpretation, religion and philosophy, and through the vicarious experiences of others. The use of literature and audio-visual media, to depict an event that is final and permanent for an individual, can be helpful in developing the knowledge to prepare the human for his/her own death or the death of others. By seeing, hearing, or reading about the process of dying, the human can be detached from the process but can voyeuristically participate and learn about the process and act of dying. Death education can nurture the strengths of each brain hemisphere and provide a balanced education for the human being regarding a basic fact-of-life - all living things die. (Springer & Deutsch, 1989)

Art specialists teach how to manipulate various medium, to critically examine works of art, question what makes art aesthetically pleasing, and how artists use various techniques to achieve an end result. Regular classroom teachers are also educated in how to teach reading, mathematics, social studies, biology, typing, and science. According to Kalish, (1984),

"...learning about death, dying, and loss, like learning about anything else, should combine personal experiences with the knowledge, insight, and experience of others. These others include not only behavioral and health scientists but also philosophers, artists, and persons who are most experienced in being with and working with the dying, the dead, and the bereaved."

Developing the lesson plans on death education was challenging because nothing existed that addressed issues of death and grief. While it is true that there are many works of art created arising from an artist’s grief, actual lesson plans examining these issues were not available for use. Part
of the research was to look for artworks by various artists that depicted grief and bereavement. There are several works of art that depict death, much of it religious, some about death in war, and others political, such as the moment of death in *The Fifth of May* by Francisco Goya.

At presentation of some the images to the participants in my study, I found that they got upset viewing the work. For example, Kathe Kollwitz' lithographs are very forceful when seen for the first time (See Figure 1.1). I lived in New York City for twenty years, and was a great museum and gallery visitor. I was not prepared for the lack of sophistication among the participants when examining art. I do not mean to imply superiority over the participants involved in the study. Rather, in large cities like New York, people have easier access to the high arts than do people in smaller communities who are exposed to local arts. In a city like New York, people get inundated by cultural happenings daily minute-by-minute, and can hardly avoid this ritual of intrusion.

Some participants could not imagine showing images such as Kollwitz' to children, even though the image included a child. If I were to re-do this study, I would make changes in the images by using works more familiar to the available
audience, E.g., southwest or Native American images, rather than Western European images.

I was not prepared for religious confrontations. I had not given thought to the idea that some participants might be offended about a discussion on death. The lesson plans did include a look at religious icons, but only viewed as art objects. The religious problem for some participants got resolved when I left them choose whether to make a religious statement, or not. Discussing religious beliefs with parents or students before teaching, would assure participants that the instructor was not imposing his or her personal beliefs on the class.

I am passionate about the idea of death education -- because it humanizes us. It puts us in touch with our mortality and, if we are very lucky, it helps us live a more fulfilled life. In my experience, ironically, children unlike many adults do not have a problem when discussing death. In fact, many really want to talk about death - it is a sort of fascination with them. During talks about death education with adults - silence fills the room - there is no conversation. After a lecture, few questions are asked from the audience floor, not so when talking with children. It seems that adults
are not in touch with what children are interested in, and capable of, but that is different research.

It strike's me as odd, that regular teachers and art specialists receive no training while in pre-service on how to talk to their students about losses. Considering there is much research supporting the fact that children suffer significant losses while in school, that suicide is on the rise among five year olds on up, and by the time a student reaches high school, he or she has suffered a major loss or trauma in life.

This investigation shows the need for further research, and the need for parents (and teachers) to educate themselves about cognitive abilities of children so they may understand the physiological and psychological ramifications of a death experience.

I am encouraged, however, by the result of this study, and disturbed that death is such a hard subject for people to discuss. The participants enjoyed the lesson plans because they approached the subject of death from a creative perspective. As stated by a participant three semesters after the study:

"I always say that your class was one of my most favorite calls of all. I incorporated a lot of Day of the Dead lesson into my classroom this year. I realized that even as young as 5th grade, kids can be mature enough to talk about death. I often remember all the stuff that I learned that semester with you. You changed my life for
the better. I am not going to pursue a career in counseling and look into focusing in either art therapy or play therapy. Thank you for all that you did to inspire me.” Student 20

The participants recognized the need for discussion about death during presentation of the Illuminated Manuscript page by participants. Yet, most are still undecided over how to teach children about death, and support them after experiencing a loss.

Reading over the research, I realize that the Personal Statement section is quite personal and long. I thought perhaps it should be shorter or taken out completely. On reflection though, I realize how important it is to the research. It lends my personal insight into death experience. This insight helped me to listen attentively to participants’ presentations, respond appropriately when they broke down emotionally, analyze insightfully, and represent meaningfully and respectfully, elements of their experiences. The telling of their stories and recalling mine represent epiphany events that brought profound realizations about the meaning of death and subsequent decisions.

Within the research itself are the reasons I came to graduate school. The lesson plans created were a personal
choice of how to present material that leads to a discussion of death. Choices made to use the images and artists chosen, reflect elements of my own life story. This research contains part of my life history. My Personal Background puts into context the reasons that brought me to graduate school and the interest in doing research on death education.

J. Gary Knowles in Lives in Context, (2001) states:

"... researchers research what it is that we need to know, both personally and professionally."

That it should happen that death education lesson plans should be for teaching in the art room is because I am a professional artist. The research done is as much about how my life was shaped by family members dying. I have made meaning of my experience of death through the life experiences and perspectives of the participants in the study. If I had not included a personal background section revealing my intense emotions, significant elements of doing the research would be lost. My belief is that the participants, and I, have made meaning and brought closure in the process of this research.

This research may have value for other teachers whose lives have been touched by a profound loss. However, I
realize that teacher's who have not had my personal experiences, would approach research of this kind in a very different manner. The lesson plans and images would be different, as would be interviewing techniques. Thus, the research itself would be quite different. Consider, even if an art specialist or regular classroom teacher were to teach the lesson plans as they are, the qualitative information would be colored by the experiences of the teacher and participants involved.

This research is of enormous benefit to me because it has brought closure over the death of my family. I hope it will bring meaning to others who chose to use the lesson plans.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Children should be protected from the subject of death for as long as possible.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> A child's death education should be the concern only of the parents and the church or synagogue (if the parents choose). The school would not be appropriate for teaching the subject of death.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Most parents are capable of explaining death to their children quite adequately.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Since death education is important for everyone and the school is the institution, which all children must attend, the school is an appropriate place for death education.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong> The schools' concern should be to teach the basics and stay out of the personal lives of children.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong> There is no way the subject of death can be avoided, so we may as well be open about it in all of society.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.</strong> Death is a part of life. Learning about death can prepare us to lead better lives.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.</strong> It would be impossible for the schools to teach about death without contradicting the religious or cultural beliefs of some of the children.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.</strong> Even if the teachers were given special training about death, I would not be in favor of it being taught in the schools.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2**

**ATTITUINAL SURVEY ON DEATH EDUCATION - Prettest**
TABLE 2 – con’t

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. The church or synagogue is the only institution appropriate for assisting the family in the death education of the child.  
   0 2 3 60 20 85

11. I think death education should be a carefully planned part of the elementary school curriculum.  
   10 20 36 4 0 70

12. Whether or not death education is a part of the school curriculum, school should play a supportive role in helping the child understand death.  
   55 32 6 0 0 93

13. I would not object to the subject of death being discussed in high school.  
   60 36 0 0 0 96

14. A child should not have to encounter the subject of death until a loved one dies. That is soon enough to be told about it.  
   0 4 6 28 50 88

15. There is no way that children can be prepared to face the death of a loved one. If such a tragedy occurs, they will survive best of left alone to work things out for themselves.  
   0 2 3 20 70 75

16. The concept of death has certain universal truths, which can be taught without contradicting religious or cultural beliefs of anyone.  
   5 44 18 4 1 72

17. The school already has too many issues to deal with, most of them more important than death education. It would be unwise to include it in the school curriculum.  
   0 0 24 40 15 79

18. The school should introduce children to the concept of death in the primary grades, following a step-by-step plan that will increase their understanding as they mature.  
   15 24 27 6 0 72

231 312 273 348 273
### TABLE 3

**ATTITUDBINAL SURVEY ON DEATH EDUCATION – Post-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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</table>

1. Children should be protected from the subject of death for as long as possible.
   - 1 0 0 36 55
   - 92

2. A child’s death education should be the concern only of the parents and the church or synagogue (if the parents choose). The school would not be appropriate for teaching the subject of death.
   - 3 2 12 40 15
   - 72

3. Most parents are capable of explaining death to their children quite adequately.
   - 2 12 27 12 5
   - 58

4. Since death education is important for everyone and the school is the institution, which all children must attend, the school is an appropriate place for death education.
   - 5 36 18 4 3
   - 66

5. The schools’ concern should be to teach the basics and stay out of the personal lives of children.
   - 1 4 6 56 10
   - 77

6. There is no way the subject of death can be avoided, so we may as well be open about it in all of society.
   - 30 36 12 4 0
   - 82

7. Death is a part of life. Learning about death can prepare us to lead better lives.
   - 40 40 6 2 0
   - 88

8. It would be impossible for the schools to teach about death without contradicting the religious or cultural beliefs of some of the children.
   - 3 6 2 40 5
   - 66

9. Even if the teachers were given special training about death, I would not be in favor of it being taught in the schools.
   - 3 6 6 40 10
   - 85
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<td>10. The church or synagogue is the only institution appropriate for assisting the family in the death education of the child.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I think death education should be a carefully planned part of the elementary school curriculum.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Whether or not death education is a part of the school curriculum, school should play a supportive role in helping the child understand death.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I would not object to the subject of death being discussed in high school.</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. A child should not have to encounter the subject of death until a loved one dies. That is soon enough to be told about it.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. There is no way that children can be prepared to face the death of a loved one. If such a tragedy occurs, they will survive best of left alone to work things out for themselves.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. The concept of death has certain universal truths, which can be taught without contradicting religious or cultural beliefs of anyone.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>17. The school already has too many issues to deal with, most of them more important than death education. It would be unwise to include it in the school curriculum.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. The school should introduce children to the concept of death in the primary grades, following a step-by-step plan that will increase their understanding as they mature.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
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|  | 194 | 340 | 198 | 400 | 222 |
# TABLE 4

ITEMS RANKING FROM LOWEST TO HIGHEST

1 - Lowest (Most Negative)
18 - Highest (Most Positive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Q Item</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.57</td>
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<td>4.48</td>
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</table>
TABLE 6.1

ITEM 1 - Children should be protected from the subject of death for as long as possible.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Pre-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-Questionnaire</th>
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<td>Relative Freq.</td>
<td>Absolute Freq.</td>
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<td>--</td>
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<td>2. Agree</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Undecided</td>
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<td>--</td>
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<td>4. Disagree</td>
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</table>

**Notes:**
- Pre-Questionnaire and Post-Questionnaire tables have been adjusted to match Croskery's results.
ITEM 2 - A child's death education should be the concern only of the parents and the church or synagogue (if the parents choose). The school would not be appropriate for teaching the subject of death.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Post-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Croskery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>4.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Agree</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Undecided</td>
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<td>4. Disagree</td>
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<td>5. Strongly Disagree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>21</td>
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</table>
ITEM 3 - Most parents are capable of explaining death to their children quite adequately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Croskery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1. Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Undecided</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
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ITEM 4 - Since death education is important for everyone and the school is the institution, which all children must attend, the school is an appropriate place for death education.

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ITEM 5 - The schools' concern should be to teach the basics and stay out of the personal lives of children.

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Total: 21 100.0 21 100.0 77 100.0
ITEM 6 - There is no way the subject of death can be avoided, so we may as well be open about it in all of society.

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ITEM 7 - Death is a part of life. Learning about death can prepare us to lead better lives.

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TABLE 6.8

ITEM 8 - It would be impossible for the schools to teach about death without contradicting the religious or cultural beliefs of some of the children.

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Croskery Absolute Freq. 77 100.0
ITEM 9 - Even if the teachers were given special training about death, I would not be in favor of it being taught in the schools.

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ITEM 10 - The church or synagogue is the only institution appropriate for assisting the family in the death education of the child.

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ITEM 11 - I think death education should be a carefully planned part of the elementary school curriculum.

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ITEM 12 - Whether or not death education is a part of the school curriculum, school should play a supportive role in helping the child understand death.

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TABLE 6.13

ITEM 13 - I would not object to the subject of death being discussed in high school.

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ITEM 14 - A child should not have to encounter the subject of death until a loved one dies. That is soon enough to be told about it.

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</table>
ITEM 15 - There is no way that children can be prepared to face the death of a loved one. If such a tragedy occurs, they will survive best of left alone to work things out for themselves.

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<th></th>
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ITEM 16 - The concept of death has certain universal truths, which can be taught without contradicting religious or cultural beliefs of anyone.

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21 100.0          21 100.0          77 100.0
ITEM 17 - The school already has too many issues to deal with, most of them more important than death education. It would be unwise to include it in the school curriculum.

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ITEM 18 - The school should introduce children to the concept of death in the primary grades, following a step-by-step plan that will increase their understanding as they mature.

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APPENDIX B

THE LESSON PLANS (TREATMENT)
ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

GRADE:
This lesson plan can be adapted for all grades, but recommended for fifth through twelfth grades adjusting vocabulary and images as necessary.

OBJECTIVES:
The students will:
1. Make connections between their feelings about caring and those feelings expressed by artists in works of art. (Art History)
2. Explain the theme of caring for someone as expressed in works of art. (Art Criticism)
3. Design and create an Illuminated Manuscript page for someone that has died (family member, pet, or famous artist.) (Art Production)
4. Make aesthetic responses to works of art and their own art. (Aesthetics)

ARIZONA STANDARDS:
http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/arts/arts-visual.htm
TIME:
Two class periods of one hour and forty minutes, or four class periods of one hour.

TEACHER MATERIALS:
1. Reproductions of works of art showing a caring relationship.
2. Illuminated Manuscript images.
3. Historical information on Illuminated Manuscripts.

STUDENT MATERIALS:
Tempera or Acrylic paints in these colors: gold, red, brown, yellow ocher, orange, blue, green, white, a medium yellow, plus one of your favorite colors, or favorite color of the deceased. Black India Ink, paintbrushes, rice paper or facsimile at least 8" x 10", container for water, paper towels. A photo of a deceased special someone, famous artist, or pet.

VOCABULARY:
- **Illuminated Manuscript**: Calligraphic manuscript pages, or hand-drawn scrolls and books, enhanced by artists with decorations and paintings.
- **Center of interest**: Area of a work of art that attracts a viewer's attention first.
- **Symbolic color**: color used to express an emotion, or evoke an emotion.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION:
This lesson plan will emphasize the theme remembering someone. Students will be discussing their feelings about a special person or pet in their life that has died.

1. The students are to bring in a picture of a loved one, pet, or famous artist.
2. Teacher shows reproductions and reads historical information.
3. Gather art supplies.
4. The teacher is to bring in something of his or her own to share.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND MOTIVATION:
This art lesson focuses feelings for someone special and providing a connection for the students. Questions should include a discussion of basic art issues, such as how the
use of color in a painting are used symbolically to evoke or express emotion. The goal is to have students' personal experiences relate to an aesthetic response.

ART RESOURCES:
Display reproductions showing a caring relationship between people and initiate a discussion about what is happening in each image.

Rousseau, Henri (French, 1844-1910), *Père Juniet’s Cart*, Musee de L’Orangerie, Paris

Tanner, Henry O. (American, 1839-1937), *Banjo Lesson*, Hampton University Museum, Virginia
Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881-1973), The Lovers, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

The instructor will share his or her photograph telling the story about the special someone. Ask questions such as:

- Who is your special someone?
- How long ago did they die?
- How were they special to you?
- What is the most wonderful thing that you remember about them?
- Look for common threads of responses from the students and make connections.

Introduce the Illuminated Manuscripts and give historical information. Ask the students to describe what they see in the artworks:

- Whom do you see? What else is in the artwork?
- What stands out most in the picture?
- Why does it stand out? Lead them into a discussion of the vocabulary words.
- Have the students compare and contrast the various images in the manuscript.
• How are they the same?
• How are they different?

**PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:**

1. The students will create an Illuminated Manuscript page about their special someone illustrating a written paragraph, or poem describing their feelings about the person lost.
2. Glue the photograph to the watercolor or parchment paper, or draw a freehand illustration.
3. A poem or paragraph will appear on the page expressing an emotion about the special person. The paragraph may be in the form of a poem, or describing something the deceased did or wrote.
4. The first letter of the first sentence is to be designed very fancy as in the displayed manuscripts, other wording is to be printed in black. Use stencils for fancy lettering.
5. Use only the colors mentioned above (plus one additional color, either your favorite color or the favorite color of the deceased.)
6. Apply gold paint and weave into the overall design.
7. Create illustrations in the border and throughout the page that are representative of the deceased.
8. Words may be included in the borders.
9. This is a work of art about someone, or pet, that you loved. Think of it as a work that will be cherished as a loving tribute.

**CLOSURE:**

Ask:

• Can describe what an Illuminated Manuscript is?
• Can someone tell me how an artist depicts feelings in a painting?
• Do colors used evoke an emotion?
• What is the center of interest?
• Name an artist who is famous for instilling emotion in art?

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:**

1. Were the students able to understand and correctly use the vocabulary words?
2. Did each student create an Illuminated Manuscript page with an illustration/picture and paragraph that describe feelings for the deceased person or pet?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES:
1. Students are to write about the process of creating the Illuminated Manuscript in their journals and what feelings got associated with the process.
2. The teacher might select a video or film that deals with the issue of death of a peer. E.g., *My Girl* (1991) video.
DIA DE LOS MUERTOS
THE DAYS OF THE DEAD
November 1 and 2

SUGAR SKULLS

GRADE:
Forth grade through high school.

OBJECTIVES:
The students will:
1. Make connections between family members in a caring relationship. (Art History)
2. Explain the theme of Dia de los Muertos as visualized in sculptural works of art. (Art Criticism)
3. Observe the effects of shape, color, and space in works of art and sculpture. (Art Criticism, Art History)
4. Use visual art elements to create a mood. (Art Production)
5. Design and create three-dimensional Sugar Skulls for an Ofrenda and placing on ancestor altar. (Art Production)
6. Recall historical content mentioned in the lesson. (Art History)
7. Make aesthetic responses to works of art and their own art. (Aesthetics)

TIME:
Two Class periods

ARIZONA STANDARDS:
http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/arts/arts-visual.htm
Look up the standards and apply those that are applicable to the grade level taught.

VOCABULARY:
• Dia de los Muertos: The Days of the Dead
• Sculptural: the art of carving, modeling, welding, or otherwise producing figurative or abstract works of art in three dimensions, as in relief, intaglio, or in the round.
• Ancestor: a person from whom one is descended
• Three-dimensional: having, or seeming to have, the dimension of depth as well as width and height.
• Transformed: to change in form, appearance, or structure.
• Panoramic: an unobstructed and wide view of an extensive area in all directions.
• Tribute: a gift, testimonial, compliment, or the like, given as due or in acknowledgment of gratitude or esteem.
• Space: Refers to the area around the object.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION:
Display Dia de los Muertos images and art resources.
Read historical information.
Gather art supplies for handout.

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:
1. Tell the students that their sugar skull production activity is a symbol used for decorating their memorial altars in another lesson plan.
2. Demonstrate how to make a Sugar Mold.
3. Demonstrate how to apply the colored icing.
4. Tell the students that color can suggest a mood and ask: What was the favorite color of the deceased?
ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:
1. Were the students able to identify color, and space in the Sugar Skulls?
2. Were they able to relate these elements to the artists’ expressions of mood and feeling?
3. Did students use the materials as instructed to create a Sugar Skull?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES:
• This lesson might be done around the time of Halloween so that a student might bring it home as a present.
• Use this lesson in conjunction with a social studies unit when exploring Mexican culture.

MATERIALS:
FOR MOLDING:
1. Corrugated cardboard, cut into 5-6 inch square (1 per each skull part made.)
2. Plastic bin size 15-25 quart, or a large metal mixing bowl or a large dish bin from the cafeteria for each station. A bin with a lid works for mixing and storing unfolded sugar mixture for a few days. A bin is also great for storing molds and other supplies until the next time used.
3. Set of measuring cups and measuring spoons.
4. Plastic spray bottle filled with water.
5. Hand washing set up (bowl of water and towels) if there is no sink in the room.
7. Meringue powder.
8. Plastic sugar skull molds available from CRIZMAC 800-913-8555 or http://www.crizmac.com
9. Plastic wrap
10. Large spoon
11. White royal icing (recipe attached) in a large zip top bag.

• FOR DECORATING:
1. Royal icing, prepared ahead of time and colored, in zip top freezer bags.
2. Scissors
3. Colored foil candy wrappers.
4. Sequins, beads, or plastic jewels.
5. White glue.
6. Miscellaneous decorative materials, feathers, ribbon, glitter, etc.

DIRECTIONS FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SKULLS: NOTE: Do not attempt to make sugar skulls on a humid day. It is not a good day to make sugar skulls if it has just rained or if rain is in the near forecast. Make test pieces before making the skulls with your class. Use the test skulls as examples for students. It is also a good idea to make some extra-undecorated skulls to use in case some of the students’ skulls break during the process.

SESSION ONE:
1. Set up station(s) for molding the skulls. Each station should include a large plastic bin or bowl for mixing the ingredients, enough molds (one mold per five students is a good ratio), cardboards, measuring cup and spoons, sugar, meringue powder, and water. Cut medium molds from the plastic sheet, leaving at least a half-inch border of plastic around the mold (otherwise it will warp out of shape).
2. Mix the dry ingredients together thoroughly. Disburse the meringue powder completely through the sugar.
3. Measure the water into the mixture. If you make a small puddle with each tablespoon that way you will be able to keep track of how many were put in, even if you get distracted while counting. (Variation: To make colored sugar, add paste food coloring to the water and mix completely, and then follow the same procedure with the colored water.)
4. Mix together with your hands. If you are using colored sugar, you may want to wear plastic gloves to avoid staining your hands. The mixture should feel like damp beach sand, and it should clump when you squeeze it in your hand.
5. Demonstrate to your students how to mold the skulls. Place a mold in your hand, with the chin side facing you and planted firmly in your palm. Scoop a handful of the sugar mixture with your hand and press firmly into the mold, beginning with the chin area. Pack the fold with sugar as tightly as possible. This will make a stronger skull that is less susceptible to breakage. Scrape the excess sugar back into the bin from the back of the mold with a cardboard piece. Place the cardboard on the back of the mold, carefully centering the skull under it. Flip the mold over, so that the
cardboard is on the bottom. Carefully lift the mold straight up and off the molded sugar. Dump the sugar back into the bin and try again, when parts are nicked. When it is just right, carefully place the molded sugar on its cardboard backing in a safe place.

6. Let the skulls dry overnight (the small molds only take an hour or so, depending on the climate). Students can write their names on their cardboards, or just pick one to decorate at random since they are the same.

SESSION TWO:

1. Prepare icing mixture at home. See recipe in this packet for royal icing. Note: with young students, you may decide not to have them decorate their skulls with icing, but instead just use glue and other materials.
2. Set up decoration stations or place an assortment of decorating materials for each table of students.
3. Demonstrate how to use the icing. Snip off a small corner of the zip top icing bags and squeeze out the colored icing onto the molded sugar. Sequins and foil pieces can be “glued” to the skulls with a bit of royal icing.
4. After decorating the skulls, place them aside on their cardboards to dry completely. Large Styrofoam plates can be used to carry the sugar mold home to completely dry.

NOTE: Omit Session 1 if you want to make all of the skulls at home or before class time. Parents may be able to help with this step. This may be a good option for very young students or if class time is not available for the entire process.

DIRECTIONS FOR LARGE SKULLS:

1. Set up station(s) for molding the skulls. Each station should include a large plastic bin or bowl for mixing the ingredients, enough molds (one mold per five students is a good ratio), cardboards (two per skull), measuring cup and spoons, sugar, meringue powder, and water.
2. Mix the dry ingredients together thoroughly. Completely mix the meringue powder through the sugar.
3. Measure the water into the mixture. If you make a small puddle with each tablespoon that way you will be able to keep track of how many were put in, even if
you get distracted while counting. (Variation: To make colored sugar, add paste food coloring to the water and mix completely, and then follow the same procedure with the colored water.)

4. Mix together with your hands. If you are using colored sugar, you may want to wear plastic gloves to avoid staining your hands. The mixture should feel like damp beach sand, and it should clump when you squeeze it in your hand.

5. Demonstrate to your students how to mold the skulls. Place a mold in your hand, with the chin side facing you and planted firmly in your palm. Scoop a handful of the sugar mixture with your hand and press firmly into the mold, beginning with the chin area. Pack the fold with sugar as tightly as possible. This will make a stronger skull that is less susceptible to breakage. Scrape the excess sugar back into the bin from the back of the mold with a cardboard piece. Place the cardboard on the back of the mold, carefully centering the skull under it. Flip the mold over, so that the cardboard is on the bottom. Carefully lift the mold straight up and off the molded sugar. If any parts get nicked, just dump the sugar back into the bin and try again. When it is just right, carefully place the molded sugar on its cardboard backing in a safe place.

6. Let the skulls dry overnight (the small molds only take and hour or so, depending on the climate). Students can write their names on their cardboards, or just pick one to decorate at random since they are all the same.

7. Several hours after molding, pick up the molded skull halves and scoop out a small hole in the back. Leave at least a half inch border around the edge, and be careful not to scoop too deeply or you will make the wall too thin. Dump the scooping back into your mixing bin and spray lightly with water. There will be enough recycled sugar mixture to make one medium skull for every large skull molded. If you are unable to hollow the skulls made at the end of the day because they are not dry enough and you can’t come back in a few hours to scoop them out, cover the skulls with plastic wrap to slow the drying process. These will be ready to scoop out in the morning.

**NOTE:** Depending on class time, you may want to join the skulls yourself. If you have your students do it, you may
want to set up a single station and help the students with the joining process. This step is simple and would not warrant an entire class period, so plan another activity to occur while the students cycle through the joining station.

Prepare icing mixture at home. See re recipe attached for royal icing. Use white icing to join the skull halves. Left overs can be colored for decorating the skulls in Session three.

1. Dust off the surface of the skull parts by running your hand over the surface. Use excess sugar to dust into the sugar-mixing bin for later use.
2. Snip off a corner of the freezer bag full of white icing and run a thick bead of icing around the back half of a skull. Join the two halves and wipe any excess icing off with your finger. Run a bead of white icing along the base of the skull to join.
3. Let the joined skulls dry for several hours.

*SESSION THREE: NOTE: With young students, you may decide not to have them decorate their skulls with icing, but instead just use glue and other materials.*
1. Set up decoration stations or place an assortment of decorating materials for each table of students.
2. Demonstrate how to use the icing. Snip off a small corner of the zip top icing bags and squeeze out the colored icing onto the molded sugar. Sequins and foil pieces can be “glued” to the skulls with a bit of royal icing.
3. After decorating the skulls, place aside on cardboard to dry completely.
4. Large Styrofoam plates can be used to carry the sugar mold home to completely dry.

Decoration ideas: Have each student make a design sketch of the skull before decorating. Transform large skulls into a panorama by hollowing out the eyes during the scooping stage. After the skull halves have dried completely, affix a scene relating to the Days of the to the inside of the piece that makes the back of the skull. Place in the skulls panoramic scenes of Ofrendas, cemetery scenes, or flowers. Decorate the skulls as a tribute to a deceased family member or a famous artist,
with the person’s name written on the forehead with icing.

ROYAL ICING RECIPE:
NOTE: We recommend that the icing be prepared at home and brought to the classroom in sturdy zip top freezer bags, one per color. In addition, make the following recipe in the quantity stated. If you need more icing, do not double the recipe unless you have a commercial grade mixer; just make another batch.

2-pound bag of powdered sugar
⅔ cup meringue powder
2/3 cup of water
Paste food coloring
Zip top freezer bags, one per color.

1. Put the powdered sugar and meringue powder in the bowl of a mixer. Blend with a spoon to distribute the meringue.

2. Add the water in small increments while the mixer is on low speed. After the ingredients are well blended, turn the mixer on a higher speed and mix for 9 minutes.

3. Using a toothpick or small spoon, put about a 1/8 teaspoon of paste food coloring in a zip to bag. Add about one cup of icing to the bag and seal the zip top closed. Mix the color through the icing by massaging the bag, until there are no spots of white or pure pigment. Repeat with each color. A word of warning: the paste food coloring is extremely concentrated and will stain your hands or clothing very easily.

4. Transport the bags of icing to school. When you are ready to use them, snip off a bottom corner of each bag and show the students how to squeeze out the icing onto the skulls. When not in use, the bags of icing will self-seal due to the fast drying power of the meringue.
Historical information on Dia de los Muertos:

The festivals of Mexico are world renown for their colorful decorations, energetic music, exuberant parades, and cultural significance. Los Dias de los Muertos, the Days of the Dead, are no exception. Often misunderstood by those who live elsewhere, the festival honoring the dead is one of the most important holidays celebrated during the year in Mexico.

http://www.crizmac.com

Death is often the main protagonist in many of the folkloric festivities in Mexico. Among these none are as well known or as impressive as the celebrations that take place in commemoration of All Souls’ Day: the day of the dead. As described in Death in Mexican Folk Culture:

It begins with the preparation of specific kinds of food: one of these, “calabaze en tache,” is a preserve made by combining small pieces of pumpkin with sticks of sugarcane, haws, aromatic spices and a peculiar brown sugar called “piloncillo.” There is also “an de muerto” or bread of the dead consisting of loaves prepared with wheat flour and decorated with stylized bones and tears of the same dough. To these are added a remarkable variety of meals spiced with chili and vegetables typical of each region, placed in bowls and dishes made of black ceramic as a sign of mourning. Among the special sweets which are produced only for this occasion are the famous “calaveras de azucar,” an amazing ensemble of
human skulls of all sizes and shapes, made in sugar, decorated
with colorful paper and labeled with an assortment of names.
In our times it is an All Souls' Day custom to purchase one of
these sugar sculptures labeled with the name of the buyer or
with the name of a friend; these are then given as gifts to be
eaten, and act that often puzzles those who are not acquainted
with ancient Mexican Traditions.

But the preparation of food is only a preliminary activity for
the most typical of Mexican customs: the fabrication and
decoration of family altars where the dead are honored. These
altars or "Ofrendas" for All Souls' Day consist of tables or
shelves on which the pictures of dead relatives are placed,
surrounded by garlands of zempazuchitl flowers, the yellow
blossoms used since prehispanic times have accompanied the
festivities of the dead. Food arranged at the feet of these
images is often side by side with alcoholic beverages. The
table spread with paper mats resembles a colorful and dramatic
mosaic. Complementing the practice of honoring the dead at home
is the tradition of going to the cemeteries to spend the night
after the graves have been decorated with the yellow flowers,
candles and dishes. The atmosphere is one of great solemnity
while the murmur of prayers offered by those waiting for the
coming of the beloved dead float up to the evening sky. The
following morning the vigilants walk away with the food, which
is eaten by their families (Kelly, 1975).
This lesson plan can be adapted for all grades. It is recommended for fifth through twelfth grades adjusting vocabulary and images as necessary.

OBJECTIVES:
The students will:
1. Make connections between their feelings about caring and those feelings expressed by artists in works of art. (Art History)
2. Explain the theme of caring for someone as expressed in works of art. (Art Criticism)
3. Design and create a Reliquary for someone that has died (family member, pet, or famous artist.) (Art Production)
4. Make aesthetic responses to works of art and their own art. (Aesthetics)

ARIZONA STANDARDS:
http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/arts/arts-visual.htm

TIME:
One or two class periods of one hour, and as homework.

TEACHER MATERIALS:
- Reliquary images
- Historical information on Reliquaries.
STUDENT MATERIALS:
Students will choose colors, fabrics, wood, metal, or other materials to make a receptacle for "sacred" items.

VOCABULARY:

- **Reliquary**: A receptacle, such as a shrine or coffer, used for storing or displaying sacred relics and often elaborately decorated. [http://encarta.msn.com](http://encarta.msn.com)

PLANNING AND PREPARATION:

- This lesson plan will emphasize the theme of a sacred receptacle. Students will discuss their feelings about a special person or pet in their life that has died.
- The students are to bring in items considered "sacred" for storing in the reliquary.
- Teacher reads historical information.
- Art supplies: paint, brushes, markers, glue, water pans, paper towels.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND MOTIVATION:
This art lesson focuses on creating a reliquary for their sacred items. Questions should include a discussion of basic art issues, such as how the use of color is symbolical. The goal is to have students' personal experiences relate to an aesthetic response.

INSTRUCTION:
Each reliquary will be a different type of container. Therefore, technical questions about color, shape, design, and etc. can be offered by the instructor. However, the participants will have freedom to create on his or her own.

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:
The activity involved will depend on the materials selected for the type of reliquary being designed.

CLOSURE:
Ask:

- What is a Reliquary?
- How were they used historically?
- For whom?
ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:
- Were the students able to understand and correctly use the vocabulary words?
- Did each student create a reliquary that was a container?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES:
The teacher might select a video or film that deals with the issue of death of a peer. E.g., My Girl (1991), or Stand by Me, both available on video.

Purse reliquaries were most common early in the middle ages. They were used for individuals to carry with them. This one is extremely small, less than 10 cm square. It shows Peter and Paul with the Virgin and Child.

Silver and gilded copper riveted to hollowed-out wood, 7th-8th century.

Paris, Museum de Cluny
http://ishi.berkeley.edu

The Fang, Kota, Hongwe and Mbete tribal groups of Gabon share a similar practice of keeping skulls and small bones of lineage ancestors in cylindrical bark boxes or skin-covered baskets surmounted by guardian figures. These relic containers were housed in small huts built for the purpose at a little distance from the village, away from prying or sacrilegious eyes, and were tended by a specially appointed elder. The containers might also include "medicines" such as cowries, snail shells, small animals, seeds, etc., to increase the potency of the ancestral relics. The ancestors' help was invoke to procure blessings, avert misfortune, smell out witchcraft or Whatever else might be needed in a life surrounded by inexplicable and often dangerous forces.

Reliquary of St. Teresa of Avila.

St. Teresa was a Discalced Carmelite nun who became the first woman to be declared a Doctor of the Church. She experienced almost every phenomenon peculiar to the mystical state, yet she remained a shrewd businesswoman, administrator, writer, spiritual counselor and foundress.
The relics pictured above are identified, working from left to right:

Item used by ST. Teresa
Cloth used by St. Teresa
Chest of turtle shell and silver owned by St. Teresa
Bone fragment of St. John of the Cross
Rose petals touched to the body of St. Teresa
Staff used by St. Teresa in her last years
Autograph fragments of St. Teresa
Phial containing blood of St. Teresa
Sole of St. Teresa’s sandal
Ring finger of St. Teresa’s right hand
Saints rosary

http://home.earthlink.net/~saintsalive/teresa.htm

These are contemporary reliquaries mad in Mexico from reclaimed sheet metal. Topped with a sunburst design and adorned with embossed detail, they provide a niche for devotional offerings. Look closely and you can see that this was originally a can for peaches.

http://www.recycledartworks.com/reliquaries.htm
This statue served as a reliquary. Many miracles and healings were claimed to occur when a worshipper touched a piece of a martyred saint’s clothing or a preserved part of her body. It is supposedly a likeness of Saint Foy, a twelve-year-old girl martyred during the persecutions of Dicletian and Galerius in A.D. 303. Small bits of bone, locks of hair, ashes, or a cloth dipped in the saint’s blood were treasured reminders of the death the faithful one had died for the name of Christ.
This lesson plan can be adapted for all grades, but recommended for fifth through twelfth grades adjusting vocabulary and images as necessary.
OBJECTIVES:
The students will:

Make connections between their feelings about caring and those feelings expressed by artists in works of art. (Art History)

Explain the theme of caring for someone as expressed in works of art. (Art Criticism)

Design and create an Ofrenda to display the Illuminated Manuscript page, the reliquary, and the sugar skulls. (Art Production)

Make aesthetic responses to works of art and their own art. (Aesthetics)

ARIZONA STANDARDS:
http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/arts/arts-visual.htm

TIME:
One class period of one hour forty minutes.

TEACHER MATERIALS:
Images of Ofrendas
Historical information.

STUDENT MATERIALS:
Students will choose colors, fabrics, photographs, flowers, and sacred items to decorate their Ofrendas.

VOCABULARY:
• Ofrenda: The word ofrenda means offering in Spanish.
• Clacas: Skeletons

PLANNING AND PREPARATION:
This lesson plan will emphasize the theme of a altar for celebrating loved ones lost. Students will discuss their feelings about a special person or pet in their life that has died.

• The students are to bring in items considered "sacred" for placing on the Ofrenda.
• Teacher reads historical information.
• Cloth for the Ofrenda, photographs, sacred items, Illuminated Manuscript page, and sugar skulls.
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND MOTIVATION:
This art lesson focuses on creating an Ofrenda for photographing the produced artwork. Discussion of the compositional arrangement of articles on the Ofrenda is the central point of this lesson. This is the culmination of the eight-week production period.

INSTRUCTION:
Each Ofrenda will be a very personal statement. The participants will create an altar representing the deceased person(s).

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY:
Each participant will arrange items on the “Ofrenda” for photographing.

CLOSURE:
Ask the students to:
- Describe Ofrenda.
- How they are used?
- For whom are the Ofrendas constructed?

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:
- Were the students able to understand and correctly use the vocabulary words?
- Did each student create an Ofrenda that represent the Mexican culture?

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:
Ofendas are an essential part of the Day of the Dead celebrations. The word “Ofrenda” means offering in Spanish, also called altares or altars, but they are not for worshiping. Some people mistakenly think that Mexicans that set up altars for their dead relatives are actually worshiping them. Nothing is further from the truth. The ofrendas are set up to remember and honor the memory of their ancestors. Before setting an altar, they thoroughly clean their house. We must remember they are going to have very important "visitors". Salt and water are also essential; they are set to quench the thirst of the souls, tired from their long trip. Water also purifies and cleanses. Flowers, especially Cempasuchitl, adorn the ofrenda. Flowers represent the fugacity of life. The burning of Copal incense, is thought to elevate
prayers to God. Placed on the ofrenda are pictures of the dead, as well as some of their favorite clothes, perhaps a hat or a shawl. For the children, they place some small toys. Food is specially prepared for the souls. Favorite dishes cooked for the deceased and placed on the altar of mole, tamales, fruits, arrozrojo (red rice), hot chocolate, and dried fruit, along with cigarettes or liquor if the dead relative enjoyed them when alive. And of course Pan de Muerto (Bread of the Dead). It is important to mention the dead will not eat the food. They will only enjoy the aroma. Sugar skulls and clacas (skeletons) are also included. In many towns, there are contests of ofrendas. Judges go house by house and elect the three most beautiful altars.

Contemporary altars made by Joe Carrasco are one of a kind and come with a story and history of the materials used. The fabrics and photos used in these altars each have a story. Some of the fabrics are from Joe Carrasco’s infamous 1965 tour bus or from Mexican bags that have traveled the world at his side. They are made in the true tradition of Mexican Folk Art, all imperfections are left alone and add to the character of these very individual altars. www.joeKing.com
Mexican American Altars by Ofelia Esparza, Master Artist and Elena Esparza, Apprentice.

In 2001 for Day of the Dead at Self Help Graphics, Ofelia recreated a prison cell in a corner of the gallery. She intended the entire installation to represent "grief for the living dead"—those who are in jail, their loved ones, and others around the world who lead lives that are unfulfilled, tragic, or lack freedom. At the foot of the bed she assembled a small traditional ofrenda made from materials that would be available to prisoners: papel picado made from newspapers, paper flowers of toilet paper, small offerings of pictures and flowers. Thus she celebrated a universal human condition in a truly traditional Mexican manner.
APPENDIX C - HISTORICAL INFORMATION ON ARTISTS
Kollwitz strengthens the emotional power of this etching by contrasting its rich, dark, unarticulated background with the careful cross-hatching in the parents' clothing and the startlingly pale face of the dead child. As is typical of her work, here the artist provides just enough details—including the dramatic gesture of the father's left hand and the mother's stolid facial expression—to tell a story that, although it is rooted in nineteenth-century Silesia, still has resonance for working-class families the world over.

National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC
DIEGO RIVERA

Dia de Muertos - La Ofrenda, 1923-1924 Fresco
Day of Dead - The Offering

DIEGO RIVERA (1886-1957), muralist painter, was one of the greatest artists in the XXth century. Born in Guanajuato, Mexico, in 1892 he moved to Mexico City with his family. He studied in the San Carlos Academy and in the carving workshop of artist José Guadalupe Posada, whose influence was decisive. Later in Paris, he received the influence of post-modernism and cubism, the mediums in which he expressed himself with ease. Diego Rivera with the use of classicist, simplified and colorful painting recovered the pre-Columbian past catching the most significant moments in Mexican history: the earth, the farmer, the laborer, the costumes and popular characters.

Diego Rivera's legacy to modern Mexican art was decisive in murals and canvas; he was a revolutionary painter looking to take art to the big public, to streets and buildings, managing a precise, direct, and realist style, full of social content.
Edvard Munch was a Norwegian artist whose brooding and anguished paintings and graphic works, based on personal grief and obsessions, were instrumental in the development of expressionism.

Born in Løten, Norway, on December 12, 1863, Munch began painting at the age of 17 in Christiania (now Oslo). A state grant, awarded in 1885, enabled him to study briefly in Paris. For 20 years thereafter, Munch worked chiefly in Paris and Berlin. At first influenced by impressionism and postimpressionism, he then turned to a highly personal style and content, increasingly concerned with images of illness and death. In 1892, in Berlin, an exhibition of his painting so shocked the authorities that the show was closed. Undeterred, Munch and his sympathizers worked throughout the 1890s toward the development of German expression art. Perhaps the best known of all Munch’s work
is The Scream (1893) Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo). This, and the harrowing The Sick Child (1881-86, Nasjonalgalleriet), reflect Munch’s childhood trauma, occasioned by the death of his mother and sister from tuberculosis.

In 1908 Munch’s anxiety became acute and he was hospitalized. He returned to Norway in 1909 and died in Oslo on January 23, 1944.

http://sunsite.auc.dk/cgfa/munch/munch_bio.htm
Far from humorless, the impervious resignation of the Mexican people to the inevitability of death arose from a blend of the indigenous heritage of war and human sacrifice with the dance of death and memento mori traditions of Spain. The word "calavera" means skull and has evolved to designate the animated skeletons associated with the November 2nd celebrations of the "Día de la Muertos" (Day of the Dead or All Soul's Day). In the minds of the people, the dearly departed are not excluded from the world of the living—they are not really absent, they are close by.

Vanegas Arroyo and Posada used the "calaveras" to mock human existence and express the tragic destiny of man. The skeletons portrayed famous heroes, politicians, revolutionary leaders, and the common person -- the water-carriers, street sweepers, and vendors. They formed a fleshless depiction of Mexican society -- a sort of x-ray of the collective soul of the people.

http://www.hawaii.edu/artgallery/posada/Calaveras/Index.htm
APPENDIX D

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON BOOKS FOR CHILDREN
I recommend the following books for caregivers and teachers to share with children. In most of the following books the subject of death is embedded in the main theme, some do not specifically emphasize issues of death, rather it is depicted as a significant part of life within social, ethnic, and various themes. Other books are more straightforward with discussions about death and the rituals that surround it.

Bartoli, J. *Nonna*. New York: Harvey House, 1975. This story is about a young boy who learns to accept the death of his grandmother Nonna. At first he refuses to believe that Nonna is gone and he can no longer get cookies and gifts from her and she will never play with him again. The story portrays the need for patience and the need for understanding that young children may respond to the death of a loved one in a very specific and concrete ways. Preschool to 7.


Bruchac, Joseph

After the death of her Indian great-grandmother, Jamie remembers the many special things the old woman shared with her about the natural world.

Bunting, Eve


Buscaglia, Leo F.

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: a story of life for all ages. Thorofare, N.J.: New York, N.Y.: C. B. Slack c1982. As Freddie experiences the changing seasons along with his companion leaves, he learns about the delicate balance between life and death.

Byars, Betsy Cromer

Good-bye, Chicken Little. New York: Harper & Row, c1979. A boy discovers that he doesn’t have to feel personally responsible for his uncle’s drowning.

A Blossom Promise. New York: Delacorte Press, c1987. In the aftermath of a big flood in Alderson County, the Blossom family continues coping in their rare family style.

Carson, Jo


Carlstrom, Nancy

Blow Me a Kiss, Miss Lilly. 1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, c1990. When her best friend, an old lady named Miss Lilly, passes away, Sara learns that the memory of a loved one never dies. Nice, simple illustrations.

Coerr, E.  Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes. R. Himler, paintings. New York: Putnam's 1977. Nonfiction. Sadako Sasaki died on October 25, 1955, as a result of leukemia caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima 10 years earlier. This book tells about the last year of her life. In Japan, the crane is a symbol of longevity, and there is an old legend that the gods will give health to a sick person who makes 1,000 paper cranes. Before her death, Sadako folded 644 paper cranes. After her death, her classmates finished the remaining 356 cranes. Ages 12-14.

Coffin, M.  Death in Early America. New York: Nelson, 1976. Nonfiction. This is a reference work that describes artifacts such as tombstones, caskets, and mourning paraphernalia and explains how they are reflections of their culture and times.

Couloumbis, Audrey  Getting Near to Baby. New York: Putnam, 1999. Although thirteen-year-old Willa Jo and her Aunt Patty seem to be constantly at odds, staying with her and Uncle Hob helps Willa Jo and her younger sister come to terms with the death of their family's baby. The baby's mother is an artist who draws and paints the dead child as an angle.


DeBruyn, M. G. The Beaver Who Wouldn’t Die. Chicago: Follett, 1975. Fiction. Cyrus, a beaver who lives in the north woods, is granted through magic his wish never to die. As he keeps on growing and becomes larger and large, and particularly as he sees his peers and even his children and grandchildren die, he feels out of place and out of time, gets very lonely and depressed, and wishes he could die. Fortunately, his wish to die is granted, and he happily joins his love ones in a warm pool, where he hopes to stay forever. The story has an important message about the naturalness of the life cycle.


Fassler, J. *My Grandpa Died Today.* S. Kranz, Illustrations. New York: Human Sciences, 1971. Fiction. This story is about a little boy David who, in narrative form, tells about his beloved grandfather’s death and how he feels about it, how those around him feel, what they do, and how caring and understanding they are toward David. An essential part of this warm and comforting story are the illustrations that vividly depict the emotions of love, sadness, shock, comfort, and the joy of life. Preschool to 8 years.

Giff, Patricia Reilly *The Gift of the Pirate Queen.* New York: Delacorte Press, c1982. Sixth grader Grace, her mother dead and her only sister ill with diabetes, learns to be brave like the pirate queen Grace O’Malley, whom her Irish cousin says she resembles.

Hesse, Karen *Phoenix Rising.* New York: Holt, c1994 Thirteen-year-old Nyle learns about relationships and death when fifteen-year-old Ezra, who was exposed to radiation leaked from a nearby nuclear plan, comes to stay at her grandmother’s Vermont farmhouse.

Hughes, P. R. *Dying is Different.* Mahomet, Ill.: Mech Mentory Educational, 1978. Nonfiction. Preschool to 8. This book is intended to promote discussion of death between adults and very young children. The 18 children’s pages use drawings, strong colors, and poems to present a graduated succession of living and dead states in flowers, ants, fish, a cat, and a grandmother, followed by depictions of the inevitability of death. An introduction and concluding remarks for parents and teachers suggest questions and guidelines for discussion.
Jordan, Mary Kate
Losing Uncle Tim. Niles, Ill.: A. Whitman, 1989. When his beloved Uncle Tim dies of AIDS, Daniel struggles to find reassurance and understanding and finds that his favorite grown-up has left him a legacy of joy and courage.

Jukes, Mavis
Blackberries in the Dark. New York: Knopf, c1985. Nine-year-old Austin visits his grandmother the summer after his grandfather dies and together they try to come to terms with their loss.

Krementz, Jill

Levy, Erin Lin
*Children are Not Paper Dolls. A Visit with Bereaved Siblings.* Greeley, Colorado (Post Office Box 2404, Greeley, Colorado 80632): Counseling Consultants. Ages 8 and older. This book consists of direct quotes from six boys and girls who participated in a bereaved siblings discussion group, as well as drawings and poetry through which the children express their feelings. A photograph of each child and some information about one's life is appended.

Lindquist, Susan

Madler, Trudy
*Why Did Grandma Die?* Milwaukee: Raintree Childrens Books, c1980. When her grandmother dies, Heidi tries to deal with her feelings of grief and loss and comes to accept death as a
part of the life cycle by attending the funeral and talking to others about her feelings.

Park, Barbara  

Paterson, Katherine  
*Bridge to Terabithia.* New York: Crowell, c1977. The life of a ten-year-old boy in rural Virginia expands when he becomes friends with a newcomer who subsequently meets and untimely death trying to reach their hideaway, Terabithia, during a storm.

Paulsen, Gary  

Rylant, Cynthia  
*Missing May.* New York: Orchard Books, c1992. After the death of the beloved aunt who has raised her, twelve-year-old Summer and her uncle Ob leave their West Virginia trailer in search of the strength to go on living.

Smith, Doris Buchanan  
References


Berg, David W., and Daugherty, George G. (1973) Teaching About Death. Today's Education LXII p. 46


