

The Pennsylvania State University

School of Visual Arts

Art Education Program

**HOW, WHAT, AND WHY STUDENTS LEARN IN AN ART WORKSHOP SETTING**

An Action Research Project in Art Education

by

**Kelli R. Reppart**

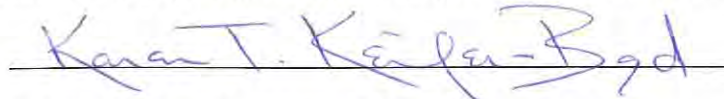
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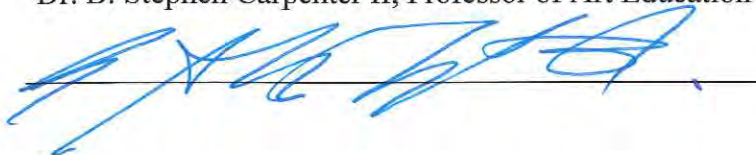
Master of Professional Studies in Art Education

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### Abstract

According to the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, the 4 Cs—Communication, Collaboration, Creating, and Critical thinking—are the skills that will be needed for students to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace and world (Our Mission - The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, n.d.). I observed that the *Fired Up!* Program, located in Benton Harbor, Michigan, was informally teaching these skills in their after school glass arts program. I questioned, “How do the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills manifest in students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in the *Fired Up!* program?” The findings of my case study of the *Fired Up!* program could have an effect on art education curriculum and pedagogy in general by understanding students’ perception of their learning. If the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills are important for students to obtain, is learning in a workshop setting vital to students’ success? Three students were recruited for the case study. After interviewing each participant on his or her learning in the *Fired Up!* Program, I concluded that they were, in fact, learning 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills even though none of the participants ever used that term. My analysis of the interviews revealed that the three students felt a very deep commitment to the program and felt that it had improved their lives for the better, teaching them skills such as communication, teamwork, collaboration, dedication, in addition to learning a new exciting art medium.

### Introduction

In this action research case study, I used the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills framework (i.e., critical thinking/problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity/innovation) to analyze three student participant’s perceptions of what, how, and

why they learn in the *Fired Up!* program (P21 Framework Definitions, 2009). My research question is: “How do the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills manifest in students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in the *Fired Up!* program?”

Water Street Glassworks started the *Fired Up!* program in 2004 to engage economically disadvantaged youth of Benton Harbor, Michigan in art experiences. *Fired Up!* was originally funded with grants from the Michigan Office of Drug Control Policy/Recreation, Arts and Culture Committee/Citizens for Progressive Change, Cornerstone Alliance, and The Kellogg Foundation. (J. Katania, 2013) It has grown during the past decade and now serves students ages 13-18 throughout the Great Lakes region. The program stipulates that students make a two-year commitment to actively participate in a minimum of two afternoons a week to complete the curriculum. Students are also required to complete service hours every semester. They can work the gelato shop/gallery/store front, the local art fairs, or help clean and maintain the workshop. Students are able to sell their art in the gallery or at the local art fairs. They receive 80% of the income from sales, with the other 20% going back to the program. Part of the curriculum is a class called *The Business of Art* where students learn how to price, display, and market their art. Students spend time in their primary studio (either glass blowing, glass fusing, or lamp work/bead making), as well as in other studios, where they take a drawing class in addition to the *Business of Art* (Water Street Glassworks, 2013).

Our *Fired Up!* after-school teen glass program offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity for youth to develop creatively, personally and learn valuable business skills and is offered tuition free to all students. Our general education program offers classes in the many different techniques of glass and metal art and draws students and faculty from all over the great lake region to experience Water Street Glassworks and beautiful Southwest Michigan. (*Fired Up!*, n.d.)

According to The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (P21 Framework Definitions, 2009) to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, students will need to be in possession of the four C's or 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills:

**1. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:**

Critical thinking skills are to reason effectively, use systems thinking, make judgments and decisions, and to solve non-familiar problems in both conventional and innovative ways and to ask significant questions.

**2. Communication:**

Communication skills are to have the ability to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly using various methods in a variety of contexts. Communication skills also mean to listen effectively, to gather meaning about what is said, and to use communications for a variety of purposes (e.g. inform, instruct, motivate, persuade).

**3. Collaboration:**

Collaboration skills involve working effectively in groups by exercising flexibility, respect for others and their ideas, and sharing responsibility.

**4. Creativity/Innovation:**

Creativity skills are to have the ability to use a wide range of idea creation techniques, to create new and worthwhile ideas, and to elaborate, refine, analyze, and evaluate ideas in order to improve and maximize creative effort. (P21 Framework Definitions, 2009, pp. 3-4)

An art education program can help students to gain and improve upon these skills. It is apparent from the curriculum and commitment that students are asked and expected to utilize all of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in the *FiredUp!* program. By creating artworks, students exercise creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking, then they are asked to take what they have learned and experienced beyond the workshop walls by working together and engaging the community in the day to day operations of the program and workshop. By selling gelato and works of art in the storefront, cleaning and maintaining the workshop, selling the artwork at art fairs, students are collaborating. There are opportunities to collaborate artistically but they also must work together to promote the workshop and the *Fired Up!* program.

### **Significance of the Study**

The unique situation of the *Fired Up!* program may not apply to every art education situation. However, insight about learning 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills from students' perspectives may be applicable to other art education settings; as well as help to identify challenges that could be in other sites. Education can change by looking at what, how, and why students learn. By examining what, how, and why students are learning from their perspectives can also inform art education curricula and pedagogy as well as be a resource for art education advocacy.

### **Methodology**

#### **Researcher's Role**

As the researcher, I recruited, organized, interviewed and recorded all research participants. I then analyzed and interpreted the data. I was introduced to the *Fired Up!* program in 2008 when I started teaching art in the area and purchased a home in Benton Harbor. I went to the studio to see what was going on and was blown away at what the students were able to create. I have been teaching since 2006. I have taught a wide range of students in age, ethnicity, ability, and race.

I have taught hearing impaired preschoolers, at a private Christian school that housed PK-8<sup>th</sup> grades, and now teach in a middle school that houses many of the counties special education programs and has a diverse population because the local Seventh Day Adventist university, Andrews University, brings to the area many international students and their families. Students' perceptions of their learning in the *Fired Up!* program is important to me because I saw how positive the workshop experience was for the students

in *Fired Up!* The school that I teach in has encouraged student acquisition of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills; and I saw how well the workshop setting enabled students to obtain those skills. I wanted to understand how the students perceive their learning and how they are learning these skills so that I might incorporate similar techniques into my classroom.

I had never conducted an action research study before but have taken two graduate level courses on the research methodologies. After this cycle of research, I plan to reflect on what I learn to plan how to make changes in my teaching and classroom. This will be the next cycle of action research, as a way to systematically assess my teaching practices and how they affect my students' learning.

### **Criteria for Research Participants**

The criteria for selecting research participants were based on the need to limit the selection to three participants given the scope and scale of this project. To provide understanding of why youth come to the workshop and decide to continue, I sought those who have been in the program for 0-2 years, one that has been in the program for 3-5, and one who has completed the program. Age, gender, residence, socio-economic status, and race did not play a role in the selection process because with only three research participants individual differences was not generalized to others of similar age, gender, and so on.

The research site is a multi-story building where student participants come a few times a week to learn the art of glass blowing, fusing, and bead making. There are spaces for each technique as well as a classroom, office, gallery, and gelato shop. The workshop is located in the Arts district of Benton Harbor, Michigan. The Arts District is a very stylish,

well cared for enclave in the city of Benton Harbor. It has many studios: art, music, dance. It has restaurants, cafes, and a microbrewery. Many open-air events are held in this area. Benton Harbor is one of the poorest cities in the State of Michigan and in 2011 the city was taken over by the state and appointed an Emergency Manager. (Liberty1955, 2011) This town was once a very vibrant town that housed many factories but the steel mill closed and with it went citizens and money. The Whirlpool Corporation has its world headquarters in Benton Harbor. Most of the manufacturing jobs have been outsourced to other countries but it is still a major regional employer. (Smith, 2012)

### **Limitations of the Research Design**

There were several challenges and limitations of this study. One limit to the research design was the small number of research participants. However, I was able to spend more time and get more detailed responses with students in reflecting on their learning by limiting to three participants. It was also difficult for teens to be self reflective on their learning experience to articulate how, what, and why they learned in a workshop setting. I anticipated this might be a problem and had sub-questions or prompts. I also would ask for clarification when needed. I tried to make them as comfortable as possible by holding the interviews in a very familiar place (the gelato shop) and limiting the questions to a few, to not burden them. Another limitation to this study was the two-week timeframe for interviewing students. To meet the requirements of my graduate degree program and to finish the program according to my desired time frame, the study was completed in a semester's time.

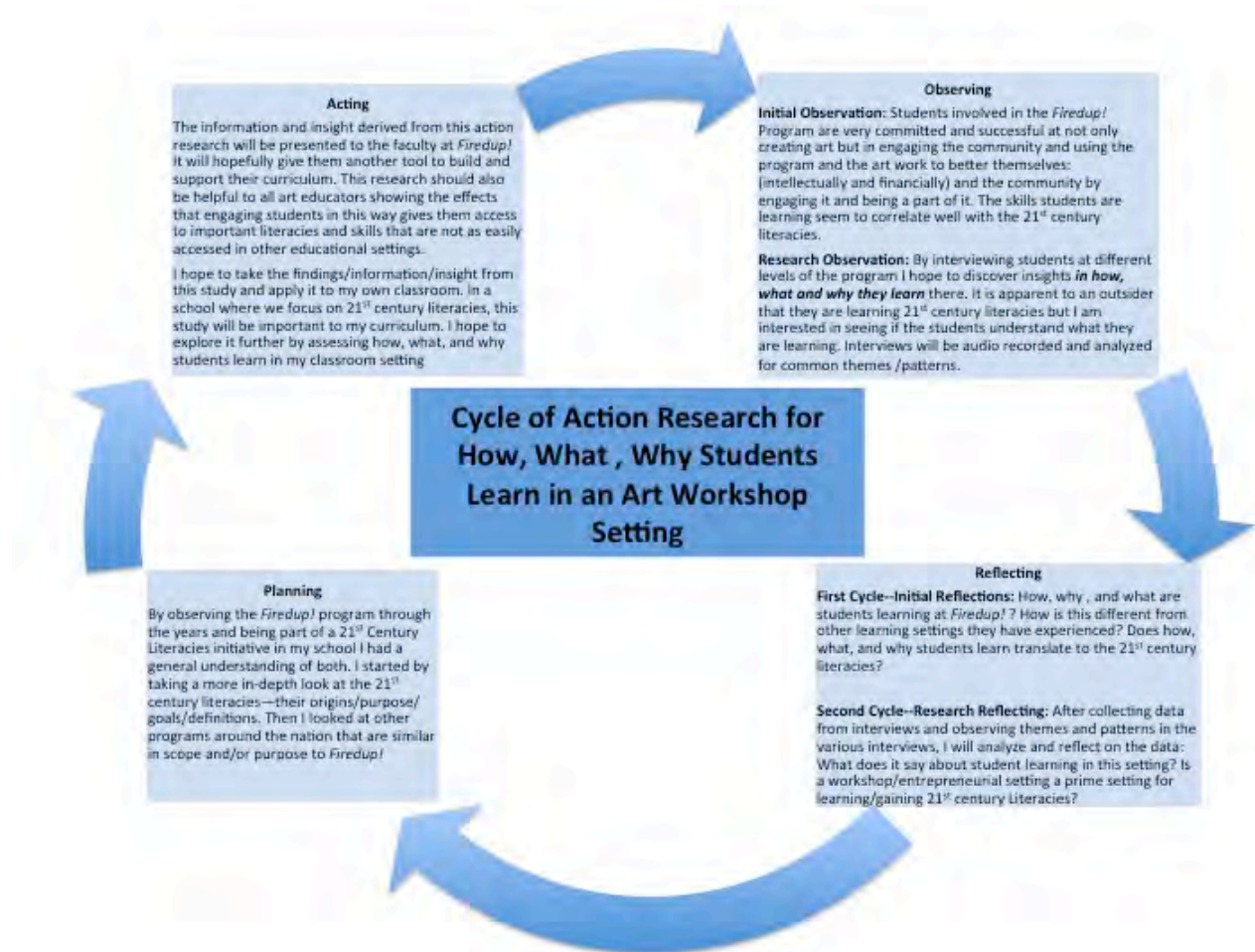


### Action Research Design

This study was conducted in an action research framework. It started with an observation of a successful program where students were not only learning how to make art but also seemed to be gaining 21st Century Skills. In the middle school where I am the sole visual art educator, we have had a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill Initiative in place for many years; before I was hired. I find great merit in these skills and I see the art room as a prime place for exercising and obtaining the four skills outlined earlier in this thesis. With my background in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, I was curious how the *Fired Up!* program is able to instill these skills without directly teaching them. I have reflected on what I know of the skills, the *Fired Up!* program, and what I know about art education theory and practice. I researched the way in which the *Fired Up!* program is able to teach and instill these skills in their students. As supported by research into informal learning this might happen because students are given a leadership role in their education. “The social and discursive practices that originated in activities in informal contexts were not the setting for learning but the medium through which learning occurred, the way the learning happened” (Vandeboncoeur, 2006, p. 254). In *Fired UP!* teamwork is not a standard in their curriculum but the item that was mentioned the most when students were asked what they learned. The learning came in the “doing”. In order to learn and be successful, team work had to happen.

I have decided to obtain this information from the students’ perspective. My first step of action was to administer a research questionnaire to three students in the *Fired Up!* program: one beginner, one who has been in for three to five years, and one who has completed the program. I analyzed their responses, looking especially for themes in their responses that aligned with or differed from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills of critical problem

solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity as outlined in the P21 Frameworks Definitions (2009). (See Figure 1.)



**Figure 1: Cycle of action research for  
How, What and Why Students Learn in an Art Workshop.  
2013 ©Kelli Reppart.**

## Data Collection and Analysis

I collected the data by asking study participants a series of questions (see Figure 2) in an interview that was audio recorded for accuracy and reference. I analyzed the data by looking for themes and patterns in the students' answers.

### Questions for Student Participants:

1. Why did you choose to participate in *Fired Up!*?
2. What did you think you would learn from it?
3. Why do continue to participate in *Fired Up!*?
4. What have you learned from *Fired Up!*?

Is that something you learned on your own?

Did you like learning in that way?

How did you think *FiredUp!* teachers would be good resources?

5. How did you learn?

Figure 2: Questions for Research Participants.

## Literature Review: The Importance of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills to Education and How They Relate to Learning in an Art Workshop Setting

A modern initiative in education is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills. It is a movement that was started in 2002. The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills brought together business leaders, educators, and policy makers to develop a criteria of what skills are needed to be successful in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global workforce and to kick start a national conversation of the importance of these skills (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, n.d.).

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many organizations have incorporated the 21st Century Skills initiative into their goal statements including the U.S. Department of Education, Apple Computers, Microsoft, and AOL Time Warner. Nation-wide, school

districts are adopting the initiative and developing their curriculum to the standards the Partnership has developed. The mission of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills is to prepare students for a future, as citizens and workers, in an increasingly global world (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, n.d.).

To serve as a catalyst to position 21st century readiness at the center of US K12 education by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders. [They developed a framework that says,] schools must align classroom environments with real world environments by fusing the three Rs with the four Cs. (Our Mission, n.d., paragraphs 1-3)

The three Rs refers to core subjects, which originated with the education cliché: Reading, wRiting, aRithmatics. Today, the core subjects include: English, reading or language arts; mathematics; science; foreign languages; civics; government; economics; arts; history; and geography. The four Cs are the skills needed for college, career, and life, which include: critical thinking and problem solving; communication, collaboration; and creativity and innovation. The emphasis on both the three Rs and the four Cs makes for a more well-rounded and prepared student who not only has the knowledge to succeed but the experience and understanding to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There are strong correlations between the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Framework and what is happening at the *Fired Up!* after school program. Even though the faculty at *FiredUp!* do not structure their curriculum according to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Framework, the nature of the workshop does align the classroom environments to real world environments. Students, therefore, exercise the four Cs in outside of the workshop environment on a daily basis. They work together to create art, organize the workshop and program, sell their art,

and educate the community on who they are and what they do. They are asked to be communicators, collaborators, critical thinkers, and creators. They are called to practice the three Rs in their daily activities by using resources and supplies, learning how to market, price, and sell their art, by communicating through their artwork to the community, and by exploring the science in the art of glass.

I was first introduced to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills initiative when I gained my current position as a middle school art teacher. My school has adopted the framework and applies it to the curriculum at every level in every subject. I was excited to learn about the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills because of their direct correlation to art. It seemed obvious to me that the art classroom is a prime setting to apply and practice the four Cs. Art, to me, is communication. To make art you have to create. Solving an artistic problem, like creating composition, is problem solving. Art can, and in my opinion, should call for collaboration not only from other artists but also from members of the community.

I viewed the four Cs and the framework as a very credible and important tool for art education advocacy. The vision statement in the school district I work in is, “Together, inspiring students to think, learn, care, and achieve in a global community” (Berrien Springs Middle School Handbook, 2013, p. 1). This vision statement aligns well with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Framework. Thinking and learning would correlate with critical thinking, problem solving, and creating. Caring and achieving in a global community would correlate with collaborating and communicating. All of these elements are focused on succeeding in an increasingly global world. It makes sense that my school would align itself with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills framework as a means to support its vision statement.

Other examples of an entrepreneurial-based workshop art education setting are the YAYA Inc. in New Orleans, Louisiana and the SeeSaw program in Durham, North Carolina. Both programs offer young people an opportunity to not only obtain skills in working with art medium or in design work but also teach them the skills and give the experience to exhibit their work in the community and the world as working artists (Malsbary, 2010).

The YAYA program was started in 1988 when New Orleans artist Jana Napoli noticed that every afternoon young people would be out after school with few outlets for their energy. What started at a one-time collaboration between the local Rabouin High School art teachers and students, Napoli stretched the collaboration over a couple of weeks where they painted images of the buildings in the area surrounding Napoli's studio turned into an impromptu program. When the initial collaboration was completed Napoli showed the business owners the works of art. The business owners started purchasing the art and the students, the next week, showed up at the studio, hungry for more. (YAYA | Young Aspirations | Young Artists, n.d)

There are a few youth and community art programs in Durham. In his 2010 graduate thesis *SEEDS of Change: Community-based Art in North Carolina*, Aidan Walter Malsbary looked at the positive effect that youth engaging in a community art center can have.

The focus on the practical aspects of design and business (e.g., selling t-shirts, doing freelance work) allows youth to build on what they have learned in the regular school curriculum and add their own sense of entrepreneurship. It is evident that entrepreneur activities foster independence and leadership skills. (Malsbary, 2010, p. 15)

By giving students the chance to practice real-world activities such as, planning, creating, and selling a product they helped create or design is innately giving them the opportunity to gain 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

These two programs do not mention alignment with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, in what I have read on their websites. Yet, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills are embodied in a workshop/entrepreneurial setting where students take an active role in producing art, communicating to the community about that art, and marketing and selling it. Some of the statistics YAYA Inc. published on their website indicate that youth become independent leaders in their programs and communities. For example:

- 98% of the students who join YAYA graduate from high school.
- Most of their artists take their first trip outside of Louisiana through YAYA.
- YAYA participants are more than twice as likely as their peers to become independent entrepreneurs.
- YAYA has brought youth artists to over 15 countries for art projects and exhibitions. (YAYA, n.d., paragraph 1)

Community-based youth art programs inherently instill the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills by encouraging active, engaged citizens who take a leadership role by being a positive force for change in their own lives and in their communities, local and global.

### **Action Research Design**

Action research is a research technique that is done by the professional for the professional. It is where professional educators (teachers, principals, guidance counselors, etc.) see a need, gather information, analyze and interpret data, and develop an action plan. Also called that *Dialectic Action Research Spiral* it is “real-world” research that is specific and

relevant to its location and participants (Mills, 2011, p. 19). It is different from educational research in that way; action research is site and stakeholder specific. It is not done for or to education but for and with education. “Traditional research is often conducted by individuals who are somewhat removed from the environment they are studying. Action research however, involves the individual applying the scientific method to real life problems they may be experiencing within their own environment” (Action Research in the Classroom: Part 1). Action research allows for educators to apply a formulated method of research to their immediate needs and interests, to have an impact on their classrooms and students.

According to Mills (2011), there are two formats of action research: critical action research and practical action research. Critical action research is also known as emancipatory action research because its goal is “liberation through knowledge gathering” (Mills, 2011, p. 21). Critical action research derives its name from critical theory and post-modern perspectives that “truth is relative, conditional and situational” (Mills, 2011, p. 21). The idea that research was done to people not for people drives this format. It challenges the “*taken for granted assumptions* of daily classroom life” (Mills, 2011, p. 10). The second format is practical action research. Practical action research places more emphasis on a “how-to” approach to action research instead of philosophical. It allows for more autonomy for individual teachers and teams to decide the nature of the investigation (Mills, 2011, p. 22). I am following the critical action format by taking a body of research that has been “done to” education, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and assess its effects on education in a real world setting. I am using the Dialectic Action Research Spiral. (See Figure 1: *Cycle of Action Research for How, What, and Why Students Learn in an Art Workshop Setting.*) Through



researching other workshop-based youth art programs in other communities there is a correlation between the skills encouraged through the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and the skills obtained through the practice and participation of creating art in a workshop setting with an emphasis on entrepreneurship.

### **Case Study Findings: Learning Art in a Workshop Setting Teaches Critical Skills for Future Success**

The interviews were conducted before the students started their session for the day. I interviewed them individually in the comfort of the gelato shop at a table that was decorated with student-made glass bowls full of napkins that were held in place by student-made glass paperweights. Surrounding us were wall pieces, bowls, jewelry, glasses, coasters, Christmas tree bulbs, and decorative pumpkins and gourds all made by participants in the *Fired Up!* program.

The case-study participants included a first year student, a fourth year student, and a five-year veteran of the program who was also an instructor. All participants happened to be from the glassblowing studio, which may have some effect on what they learned. Students were interviewed once for approximately 15 minutes. The program starts in late September so the students were interviewed early in their respective years. After interviewing the three participants it was obvious to me that the experience of being involved in the *Fired Up!* program had profound effects on their lives. None of them sought out the program but were instead sought out and encouraged, or as one put it, forced into the program by an adult in their lives. None of them had any real expectations of what they would learn but thought it “looked cool.” From the beginning, they were almost

immediately in love with glass blowing. Words such as, love, dedication, addicted and phrases like “instant attraction” and “I couldn’t stop if I wanted” were used.

All students mentioned learning communication and teamwork along with art skills. One participant mentioned learning business skills. Another mentioned that he learned to be a better person because it allowed him to work closely with kids he would not have been on a “team” with because of going to different schools and being from different socio-economic classes.

When asked if they learned these things on their own, all participants mentioned being taught basics but two participants mentioned putting in a lot of time in research, reading books, and watching videos on their own. The more senior students mentioned being able to experiment once they learned the basics. “It’s an experience thing.” The least experienced student mentioned learning by trial and error. How the participants learn seems to be a mix of formal and informal learning. Students were instructed in technique and safety but then were allowed to learn by “experience,” by “trial and error,” and by “experimenting;” also, they learned by researching and reading on their own to gain knowledge of the art form. The most senior participant described being, “Totally immersed” in glass his first year: researching, reading, and watching videos on the Internet. “When I was at school, I was not thinking about school. I was thinking, ‘what am I going to make tonight?’”

This program has changed the lives of these young people. It has given them skill sets that will carry with them whether they will be blowing glass or working in an office in their future. If being successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means being literate in the four Cs: Communication, Collaboration, Critical thinking, and Creating, the *Fired Up!* after-school

glass art program is instilling these students with the skills to be successful and they know it. They all realized the importance to their art and their future to be able to collaborate and work as a team member, they all mentioned the importance of communicating with their partners and mention was made of customers. They did not mention the art itself as a form of communication but art is a form of communication. Solving creative problems and working with potentially dangerous materials and in potentially dangerous places, you have to be able to think critically, to be able to problem solve. These skills were not mentioned by the participants but were observed by me. For example, when watching a session on how to make a heart, there were groups of students weaving in and out of each other handling molten glass on the end of long rods. Everyone knew his or her place. When working together, they were assessing the quality of the glass to know when to stop or change direction in their technique. When things did not go as planned they problem solved to try to salvage what they were working on, adding to the shape and redefining it. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills are being instilled in the students at *FiredUp!* by creating artwork in a collaborative setting where you have to work with others to create, be successful, and maintain safety.

## **Recommendations**

Through the findings of this action research case study, it is apparent to me that the workshop setting, with its responsibilities, informal learning opportunities, and focus on collaboration, technique, entrepreneurship, and collaboration should be mirrored in the k-12 art classroom. By allowing students to focus on a media and refine their technique and skills in it, they develop a level of dedication that is profound. By giving them responsibility and control of their learning and success they obtain the skills deemed necessary by the

Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills: Communication, Collaboration, Creating, and Critical Thinking.

As a public school art educator, I am aware of the challenges this model for teaching and learning could pose in my classroom. For the benefit of my students and for the cause of art education advocacy, I see it as an important challenge to be faced: How can I make my art room a student-centered learning workshop where students focus on technique and skills more than learning general content and creating generic projects planned by me, the teacher? I will continue to teach various mediums, techniques, and history, aesthetics, and art criticism but the focus will shift.

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## Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval

**Date:** November 05, 2013

**From:** The Office for Research Protections - FWA#: FWA00001534  
David Goldstein, Compliance Coordinator

**To:** Kelli Reppart

**Re:** Determination of Non-Human/Non-Research Status

**IRB Protocol ID:** 44139

**Title of Protocol:** Case Study of What, How, and Why Students Learn in an Art Workshop

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has received and reviewed the above referenced eSubmission application. It has been determined that this project does not meet the definition of Human Participant Research, as defined by the DHHS Federal Regulations.

In meeting the criteria for the DHHS Federal Regulations definition of “human participant research”, the project must fulfill requirements for BOTH “human participant” and “research”:

- ☐ **45 CFR §46.102[f]** A human participant is defined as “a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains: 1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual or 2) identifiable private information”.
- ☐ **45 CFR 46.102(d)** Research is defined by DHHS as “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge”

Therefore, this project, as described in the application, does not require further review by The Pennsylvania State University’s Institutional Review Board or the Office for Research Protections. Your application will be closed out. You will receive no further communication regarding this matter. You may begin your project.

Should your project change in any way that would then involve human participant research, prior to initiating those new procedures, you must submit for review and approval the appropriate application for the use of human participants in research: <http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/humans>.

Please do not hesitate to contact the ORP if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued efforts in protecting human participants in research.

**This correspondence should be maintained with your research records.**

## Appendix B: Transcription of Interviews with Case-Study Participants

### Participant #1- Veteran Student

Kelli: Why did you choose to participate in Fired Up?

Participant 1: I was 12 when I started Fired up, and actually my parents made me do fired up. I was kind of interested in other aspects of art and music, but my parents directed me down this route. So it wasn't really a choice, it was, "you're gonna do it". But it ended up being a great, great thing.

Kelli: You stuck with it. Why did you stick with it? Why did you continue?

Participant 1: I fell in love instantly once I tried it. It just one of those things that not in your comfort zone, its not what you normally do, obviously (play with 2,300 degrees) but it was an instant attraction once I tried it.

Kelli: What do you think you learned from it, like from dealing with glass, the whole workshop, the whole setting . . . what do you think you've learned from it?

Participant 1: I've learned a lot about art and about glass in general, but more about being a good human and being a good person. The great part about fired up is that it mixes people that wouldn't normally be together. And especially in the glass blowing studio it is so team oriented. You know, it's a partnership and you work with at least two people. So those are normally people that I wouldn't have contact with and they end up being my best friends.

Kelli: Why wouldn't you have contact with them?

Participant 1: Different schools and different socioeconomic classes. I went to Lakeshore, and we had maybe three black kids in our entire grade. Here it was like we are family.

Kelli: Why did you continue to participate with fired up? So you got in, and you were in it for like five years.

Participant 1: I was in it for a long time, yeah.

Kelli: And you are STILL participating . . .

Participant 1: I've participated on a different level really. I love it. And more than love it, I was addicted, and it was the most accessibly way to get my hands on glass. There is no way I could have afforded to do it any other way. I mean, glass is a super expensive medium, but it was a great outlet for me to learn a lot from instructors and I couldn't stop if I wanted to.

Kelli: What have you learned, like specific skills, what have you learned from Fired UP



Participant 1: Definitely a partnership quality. Everything we do is using teamwork. It's almost like a sports team. This is the sports of the art world because there is a lot of communication that has to happen between you and your partner. Those are all really good skills to have: the cooperation, the teamwork, the communication. There is a whole list of things I have learned art-wise, but those skills in particular are really important in my development as an artist.

Kelli: Is that something that you learned on your own? (The cooperation, teamwork, communication) Or were you instructed on it?

Participant 1: You're kinda forced into it because you can't . . . especially when you are starting out, you can't do anything alone. You rely on those people to help you, and vice versa, they rely on you. It's almost important to be a better helper than it is to be a glass blower because you can go and work with anybody at that point. You kinda have to learn to work with somebody, and if you don't your work is going to suffer because of it.

Kelli: How did you deal with it? What is natural for you? Was it something you had to struggle with? Was it something you had to work at?

Participant 1: It was not natural, I don't think. I was intimidated at first, definitely. There are a lot of things that you have to learn at first to build up that muscle memory. You just don't know those things. There are a lot of danger zones that you don't want to cross. It was not natural, but the one thing that helped me is that I am super competitive. So I saw that, "those guys are doing better over there", and I couldn't let that happen. I am really a competitive person so it drove me to get better and better and better. Eventually things started to happen naturally.

Kelli: How did you think, those things that you learned, how did you think they would be a good resource? How did you think they would affect your life? Have you given it any thought?

Participant 1: No, you kind of live in the moment. Looking back, I see that it totally shaped who I was. The reason I was doing dual things, I was playing football, and I was pretty good, I was playing varsity as a Freshman year, and that was the route that I was going. I was going to play in college, but I got a couple of concussions, so it forced me to shift my direction. Now I look back and I wouldn't have had it any other way, but it was a forced decision at the time. I couldn't do that anymore. So I had to turn my outlet to, you know . . . yeah.

Kelli: How did you learn the things you learned? Was it taught? Obviously some of it was instructed, but the things you've learned, how did that happen? How did that come about?

Participant 1: Jerry is a fantastic instructor. He is so patient. He kind of sits back and waits for you to make a mistake before trying to correct it. He is just a really really good teacher, but more than anything I think I put in a lot of time outside of class reading and watching as many videos as I can. I totally immersed myself in it. When I was in school I was not

focused on school, I was focused on what I was going to make that night. About a year in, I was totally head-first and drowning in information.

### **Participant #2- 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student**

Kelli: Why did choose to participate in FiredUp!?

Participant #2: Well mainly because, May Reed called me, she knew my mom. She knew that I did bead making. I was originally going to do bead making. But there was an opening in glass blowing so I took that position instead. And I love it probably a lot than I would have because it is more of my thing.

Kelli: What did you think you would learn?

Participant #2: I really had no idea. I really didn't.

Kelli: Why do you continue to participate?

Participant #2: It's a lot of fun. I am a very hands-on person. I love to do things, working with my hands, and I also kind like to do more of the dirty work. SO doing this is completely up my alley. I love it so much. Its just cool. You don't expect to see molten glass sticking on the end of a rod, turning it into a rod. I never thought I would see that.

Kelli: What have you learned?

Participant #2: Well I learned teamwork is a pretty crucial part. I learned how to make round balls and glasses. It doesn't sound like much but it is for me. I am very proud of myself.

Kelli: Was it something that you learned on your own?

Participant #2: We were mainly instructed. What I started doing was there were these books over there, Glass blowing for beginners. I basically read through ½ the book. At that was what he taught for the next two weeks. SO I read through everything and knew what was going to happen and then he taught it in more detail and demonstrated. So it was kind of nice that I already knew what was going to happen and knew what to do. But I don't know it is a lot of you figure it out on your own. It isn't just this is how you do it. You actually have to figure out how to do it.

It is just a completely different experience working with different people.

Kelli: Do you learn different things form them?

Participant #2: We have advanced students and new students. SO I would ask an advanced student what was going on during demonstrations.

Kelli: How did you learn?

Participant #2: Trial and error. Bad time-Its not really bad time but learning experience. I cant go in with a specific idea because I can guarantee it is not going to happen!

**Participant #3- 5<sup>th</sup> year Student**

Kelli: Why did you choose to participate in FiredUp!

Participant #3: Um, I didn't exactly choose to participate in fired up. Actually, the program was given to me by a person named Miss Bass. She came to me when I was 13, just turned 13, like the month after. And she knows I am an articulate person so she said, "Have you ever heard of fired up?" I said No. SO she gave me a bunch of samples. I came down here once. Next thing you know I was in the program.

Kelli: What did you think you would learn from it?

Participant #3: Nothing. I didn't think anything. I have learned everything I have. Like a bunch of art skills, a kind of the business field because you sell your own stuff, give your own prices, self encouragement, encouraging others, participation, dedication. The list goes on.

Kelli: So you didn't really have any idea you just thought it looked cool?

Participant #3: When I first started I just thought it did look cool but then when I got into it I said, "whoa there is a lot more to this than I thought."

Kelli: Why do you continue to participate?

Participant #3: Well when I first start something I like to go through to the end. So whatever series I do I want to see it all through to the end. So I am going to do it until I go to college probably.

Kelli: What have you learned from fired up? Not just the art but also other skills.

Participant #3: Lets see if I can pick just one

Kelli: No don't just pick one. Name them all!

Encouragement, self-encouragement, dedication, courage. If I could expand on that. With my studio you have a partner and you communicate back and forth so your partner is helping you so you have to help your partner so they know how to help you. Then with the people that come in... there is a person that comes in from Chicago who buys my stuff. So we have to kind of, I think I have talked to him once or twice on the stuff I have been doing. So when he comes down he knows what he is looking for.

Kelli: Are you taking commissions then? Taking orders to some degree?

Participant #3: To some degree, yeah.

Kelli: So are these things that you have learned on your own?

Participant #3: With my studio, they teach you the basics, and then from there, whatever else you learn is pretty much on your own. Its like an experience kind of thing.

Kelli: So how do you deal with that?

Participant#3: What do you mean how do I deal?

Kelli: Are you someone who likes to learn like “this is how we do it?” Or do you like to experiment on your own more?

Participant #3: When a person first starts they tell them, “This is how you do it.” Once you are where I am, I tell them this is how I want to do it. So I have authority over what I want to do to a certain degree.

Kelli: How did you learn?

Participant #3: How did I learn? Let see here, if I can explain it correctly. My original teachers were Mr. Jerry Catania and Mr. Eli Zeilke they taught me the basics. Everything else now besides that, they help me but I done it on my own. So I learned it on my own.

Kelli: So what did you learn from that? It is not often in life that a young person gets to learn and explore something on their own like this.

Participant #3: That’s the dedication side of it. Committing to one thing and doing that until you get it right. But with that, it takes me like 40 to 50 years to get it right. So I make sure I know it but I want to make sure everybody else knows I know how to do it.

Kelli: How do you now you got it right?

Participant #3: Um I guess that it kind of an instinct kind of thing... I got this, I got this but when it comes out and people say, “Oh that looks great!” but I know I didn’t do something right.

Kelli: craftsmanship.

Participant #3: SO once you get something right and you know it and then it looks right PAST what you did then you start, yeah.