

STREET YOUTH VOICE AND SOCIAL ART

STREET YOUTH VOICE AND SOCIAL ART

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to examine how street youth use art as a mode of voice and what messages they choose to bring forward in their art. To complete this research a critical, post-modern framework was consulted. Alongside this a three-day, art-based research activity was planned and developed for street youth to participate in. Six street youth gathered at a drop-in centre/shelter to work on a collective art piece. Once the art piece was finished, messages from the art were analyzed through interview discussions with the youth, the literature, field notes and my own interpretations of what I was seeing. Findings of the street youth's messages were categorized as follows: public perception of street youth, being ignored/not being heard, expressions of hunger, sadness/pain, and coping/strengths. Art as a tool for voice was explored in the literature, and it was found that it has the ability to send powerful messages that can have consciousness-raising abilities, and even has instances of impacting organizational/structural changes. This research contributes to knowledge in various ways. First the community can learn from street youth voices that were gathered by an alternative medium. Also art-based methods can prove to be a more accessible way of collecting and interpreting data depending on the population you are working with. Finally, in the field of social work, it could be that art-based research is an alternative way to engage communities in research while at the same time challenging dominant knowledge processes.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Theoretical Framework	3
Literature Review	6
Study Description	16
Methodology	18
Study Findings	25
Discussion	42
Challenges/Limitations	60
Study Implications	62
Conclusion	65
Appendixes	68
References	82

Introduction:

Examining street youth voice with art-based research methods may not readily appear to be a fit. I recall discussing my research interests with a colleague of mine. When I had explained how I would like to use art-based methods to complete my thesis, they had replied: “Is that even research?” I therefore decided that one of the goals for this Masters of Social Work thesis will be to investigate the use of art-based methods in exploring social phenomena. In this case I would like to focus on the street youth population since I have had experience working with that community. The focal point of the research is on the expression of street youth experiences through the use of art. More specifically, the research questions I would like to focus on are as follows:

- i) What key messages or issues do street youth choose to depict in their art?
- ii) How can art be re-conceptualized as a tool for voice?

As a step in addressing this inquiry, I developed a three day arts-based research project where a group of youth collectively worked on an art piece. Upon completion we met again and discussed the art work and process of the project. It is this research that is the focus of this paper. In this paper I will examine the research questions listed above by first describing the theoretical framework. Then there will be a discussion of the literature to provide a grounding in street youth issues, the concept of voice, and art as a tool for voice. Following that I will

describe this study's methodology and design. I will then present the research findings and my analysis of these findings and, finally, end with a discussion of the finding's implications for the street youth community, the research community, and the field of social work.

Theoretical Framework:

Within this paper I will be utilizing a combination of critical, anti-oppressive, and post-modern theoretical frames. Essentially, I will use these frameworks to challenge silencing and injustice that often occurs with those who are societally marginalized, such as for the street-involved youth community (Kovach, 2005). Some sources suggest that youth are not often heard from, and I am interested in the recognition of voices which are considered socially “marginalized” (Johnson & Patterson, 2005; Vengris, 2005; Whitmore, 2001). Here is where I feel that I am incorporating postmodern concepts, and I attempt to draw on the works of Pease and Fook (1999) as a theoretical guide. Postmodernism refers to the belief of multiple truths and realities that are socially constructed (Pease & Fook, 1999). However, postmodern thought has to reconcile the notion of relativism: which involves the dilemma in recognizing multiple truths where it is believed that no truth is more valuable than another (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006; Pease & Fook, 1999). If all realities were relative to one another those professing oppressive values could not be challenged for it would be seen as their right to uphold those beliefs. For instance, racist viewpoints would not be seen as wrong for it would be true for those who believe in it (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006; Pease & Fook, 1999). This stance is problematic, because in not reconciling relativism a person’s analysis would ignore how some knowledge bases are not only oppressive but privileged over another. For instance, it is

common for people who experience societal marginalization to jointly experience injustice and a silencing of their voice (Kovach, 2005). So while there are multiple voices, interpretations and knowledges, they are not equal voices and some people in this society have more persuasion behind their voice due to dominance in varying parts of their social location. Therefore, critical applications of postmodern concepts are needed, a consideration that leads me to conclude that research can never be neutral with the presence of power imbalances in our society. Here is where a critical postmodern perspective connects with anti-oppressive practice.

Anti-oppression is a theoretical frame that challenges systems that work unjustly against individuals and communities (Baines, 2007). Essentially, this framework looks at how systemic oppression (from a variety of areas: race, class, ability, sex, age and other areas of discrimination) can influence unjust policy and practice enactments (Baines, 2007). An example that touches on age and class issues would include how street youth are required to navigate various bureaucratic obstacles (similar to adults) in order to apply for social assistance (Vengris, 2005). Once on financial assistance they could easily be cut off for not adhering to bureaucratic regulations, such as long, and often confusing forms that the youth are required to fill out on a periodic basis, or absence in school without consideration of how the school system may not be a fit for some of these youth. Finally, as I wish to promote the voice of a marginalized population that is often

not heard from - it is imperative that this notion not compromise commitments to combat these social justice issues, and also ethical commitments (Pease & Fook, 1999). Otherwise in the recognition of voices, oppressive values would persist (Pease & Fook, 1999). For example, Whitmore (2001) explained that during her research she would "...not (be) prepared to put (her) knowledge and skills at the disposal of those whose goals or values (are harmful to others)...or unethical" (p.95). Similarly, I would not support a youth creating art that was racist, sexist or homophobic.

Literature Review:

This section will use the literature to explore street youth issues, the concept of voice, and how art can be a form of voice in social issues. First, I find that a common street youth definition should be developed for the purposes of discussion in this paper. Alongside that, I will look at issues this population often faces, which will help to outline a general understanding of the community. Afterward, a look at voicing issues for that population will be explored. Then I will finish the literature review by addressing ways art (the central part of this research) can be a tool for expression of social issues.

Street Involved Youth Defined:

Like most community definitions, describing the street-involved youth population is not without complications, due to its diversity (Vengris, 2005). One of the many ways that this population is described is as youth (generally between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one) who have any combination of experiences that include those who are absolutely homeless, insecurely housed, those who have used street-involved services, or those who identify with street culture and spend a lot of their time on the streets (Vengris, 2005). Typically ‘homeless’ youth are actually considered to be a subsection of the overall street-involved youth population. Youth who are ‘literally homeless’ face *absolute* homelessness, which means they have had no place to live, and have stayed in shelters, abandoned buildings, or unsafe accommodations (Vengris, 2005). Burns (2006),

adds that the term ‘at-risk youth’ refers to young people who have life experiences that are particularly challenging and, while they have housing or shelter arrangements that are little more secure, this still may result in a failure to thrive in dominant socio-cultural structures. Yet this term has often been described as carrying negative connotations and youth in Burn’s (2006) study described that they feel they are treated differently as a result of being affixed this label. They see the words used to describe them as signifying that *they* are a ‘risk’ or dangerous to the community. This consideration adds an extra challenge when determining a term that will, essentially, categorize a group of people.

Additionally, it is helpful to look at key issues that affect this group of marginalized youth. The literature highlights how familial conflict and abuse is one of the main contributing factors that can lead to street-involvedness (Vengris, 2005). Kidd (2009), talks of how the majority of homeless youth have been pushed out of childhood and family through violence and neglect by their parents – including sexual violence. They then either run away or are thrown out of their homes. Kidd (2009) describes how youth “on the streets...face the literal outside accompanied by...a homeless identity dually imposed upon them and taken up by many as a means of adapting to the various social pressures of mainstream society and street cultures” (p.354). Another interesting note is how the street-involved population includes higher rates of youth with mental health considerations,

LGBTQ youth (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning), and youth of colour or aboriginal youth (Vengris, 2005).

For the purposes of this study, I will also encompass a variety of experiences faced by street youth into a working definition. The definition to be used is as follows: youth, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-nine¹ who have in the past or who are currently experiencing a time when they were homeless or ‘at-risk’ of homelessness.

Street Youth voice in policy and practice:

Historically, youth and other marginalized groups have not had their voices authentically incorporated into policy or practice initiatives since, in the past, youth were seen as not having any valuable input (Kidd, 2009; Vengris, 2005; Whitmore, 2001). It seems that the 1960s is the timer period where the many social movements occurring paved the way for youth rights to be considered (Kidd, 2009). Currently, various agencies and governments are seeking to actively engage youth in initiatives. For instance, the Hamilton Community Foundation (2006) developed the ‘*Building Resilient Communities by Engaging Youth*’ initiative that attempted to seek out youth participation and input into addressing issues of poverty. However, sources suggest that engaging youth voice is not often sustained (Johnson & Paterson, 2005; Kidd, 2009; Vengris,

¹ The age range (16 to 29) was chosen since it was the age requirement of the agency this research was located at.

2005; Whitmore, 2001). Johnson & Patterson (2005) discuss how they were street youth who felt very much left out of the decision-making and input processes despite having being 'engaged' by the staff to participate. Furthermore, young homeless people face social exclusion due to additional variety of factors that impact how they are included in policy. For instance, due to economic reasons (such as the worry of how food and shelter will be acquired or maintained) these youth may not have the energy or time to participate in civic engagement, and they can often be socially ostracized if they do attend these events (Johnson & Paterson, 2005; Vengris, 2005; Whitmore, 2001). I remember attending a youth voice forum that I had been a facilitator for. Its purpose was to determine which issues are most important to youth in the community and what solutions could be brainstormed. There was an attempt to include youth of all socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, there were youth who were active in school and also youth who had dropped out or had other life circumstances that prevented educational attendance. There was one youth at the event who did not want to continue with the forum, so he proceeded to make comments that made the other youth in the group uncomfortable. I explained to him that he did not have to stay if he did not want to – at that point he left. I also heard of other incidents taking place at the forum, such as a few youth getting into physical fights during the breakout sessions. Later, I noticed in the forums' evaluation forms that many people were saying how 'some youth did not belong' due to their behaviour.

These feelings, coming from their peers, combined with being in a very structured setting probably contributed to the unsuccessful inclusion of street-involved or ‘at-risk’ youth.

I found an excellent article, written by previous users of street-youth services, in which the meaning of inclusion is reflected upon (Johnson & Paterson, 2005). One of the youth described how involvement in social services has not been a good experience for her since she felt that her “current situation excluded [her] from having a voice and taking [her] rightful place in the community” (Johnson & Paterson, 2005, p.184). The young writers in this article ended by suggesting that young people should be asked for their views more often – which includes their views on being a part of discussions on homelessness issues (Johnson & Paterson, 2005). This example illustrates the danger in planning or doing research without authentically hearing from those who have direct experience with the issue.

What do I mean by “Authentic” Voice

I wonder, if social policy is most often written for those who are marginalized in society, then should the inclusion of voice always be a concern in social policy creation? If so, then how does this voice play out? Within the literature, there are a variety of terms used to describe the process of policy-making using a collaborative approach with communities. Arnstein’s *ladder of citizen participation* (1969) seemed helpful in describing different manifestations

of participation. The model looks at participation as a continuum (1969). The bottom rungs describe levels of *non-participation* where people are just recipients of education or therapy (Arnstein, 1969). The next level of participation shows varying degrees of *tokenism* that typically take the form of consultation to power holders without having authority to make decisions (Arnstein, 1969). Finally, degrees of *citizen power* are located at the top of the ladder – it is here that those for whom a policy or program is directed would have the majority of decision-making ability/power (Arnstein, 1969). This is where I equate being authentic in practice or research with Arnstein's term citizen power (where authentic refers using genuine forms of participation). From this discussion, attention to the difference between 'token' and 'authentic' participation should be noted. In the end, I would place what I consider to be 'authentic' practice to ideally occupy the upper rungs of Arnstein's ladder. But is this authenticity absolutely achievable? I am not sure full authenticity is absolutely possible, but any way decision making power can be distributed to the community would be a step in the direction of a more authentic inclusion. Here I am drawn to my priorities of producing critical research – which I will discuss further in the study description section.

Art as a form of voice in social issues

Art can be connected to concepts of voice and the ability for the artists to speak to issues because it can act as an alternative mode of expression (Barndt, 2006; Chambon, 2008; Sakamoto, Ricciardi, Plyler & Wood, 2007). In this sense,

I am interested in using art-based methods for examining youth voice. How then can art be linked to social justice? Art-making can have the ability to recover histories, build communities and strengthen social movements – which Barndt (2006) suggests is a holistic form of action. Additionally, Hocoy (2007) stated that images can hold a power that has “the ability to bring to consciousness the reality of a current collective predicament” (p. 22). I connect Hocoy’s statement with the presence of photo-voice projects – where research participants are given cameras to document their lives (Mitchell & Allnutt, 2008). Afterward, photographs that are chosen by the researchers and/or participants are published or put on display and can serve to give voice to those participants. For example, in 2008 I attended a youth photo-voice event that occurred in Hamilton. After giving youth in the community disposable cameras and developing their images, there was a gallery displaying their photography. Here the goals of the project were to give youth an outlet to record their messages or concerns, promote a critical dialogue of issues, and reach out to policy makers to affect social changes (Photovoice Hamilton, 2008). However, a looming limitation of studies (both art-based and non-art-based) is that after the art or research is finished and presented, the issues are not usually revisited – therefore changes are often not enacted (Vengris, 2005; Weber, 2008; Whitmore, 2001).

Whitmore (2001) offers an example of doing research that is inclusive of and incorporates art-based elements when trying to access street youth voices.

Street youth participants were recruited to co-evaluate a drop-in centre that they used. The researchers of this project assert that the youth “know their reality far better than anyone else” (Whitmore, 2001, p. 84). After the evaluation data was collected, the youth created a report that was visually accessible to their peers. The drop in was able to successfully implement a majority of the suggestions that came out of that research. As a result, the action that came out of the research was the inclusion of voices that otherwise go unheard. There was even the introduction of alternative ways of knowing through interactive and visual methods. Although some of the youth did not respond to the introduction of such methods, the process was still valuable to others as it opened up a different ways to engage youth who may not normally have participated. However, Whitmore (2001) had ideal conditions with full support of the centre that she was working with, ample allowance of time to accomplish tasks, and the all the required resources - resources that are not readily available to all researchers who wish to perform similar social action research.

Moreover, there are times when strategies like this do not work. Burns (2006), wrote an article about some challenges she had making a community art mural with youth. She had intended for the piece to be on public display as an on-going cultural conversation piece. She wanted to create an environment where she would not smother her participants’ creativity. On the first day of art work she announced for everyone to get started and she found it a bit chaotic – with paint

everywhere. Further, at first, the youth kept to themselves instead of working as a team to complete the project. Burns felt a lot of tension and the need for structure. At one point she noticed that the art piece was not coming together and it seemed the ideas were disconnected. This is when she mentioned to her participants that they may need to organize themselves differently. Despite not wanting to control the situation – Burns allowed herself to guide the group in a direction, which did not necessarily have to be a negative or uninspiring experience.

Links to social justice can be achieved if art contains critical, emancipatory elements (Chambon, 2008; Eisner, 2008; Barndt, 2006; Sakamoto, et al, 2007). But, since the impact of art takes time to assess, it could be questioned if art motivated by social justice can initiate action. As can be seen with some photovoice initiatives, participants who worry about what will happen after the project is complete voice how action does not necessarily occur after the pictures have been shown (Weber, 2008). Here is where I look to Eisner (2008), who comments on how art can evoke a variety of feelings within an audience. Although feelings from an audience can range from low to high impact there is the possibility that some may be inspired to make positive social changes (Eisner, 2008).

An example of how art can address social issues includes the community and art-based action research conducted by Sakamoto (et al, 2007) called *Coming Together: Homeless Women, Housing and Social Support*. It was a study located

in Toronto that consisted of twenty participants who identified as women and trans-women from various cultural backgrounds, all of whom experienced various levels of homelessness issues – including those being precariously housed (Sakamoto, et al, 2007). The project used photography to illustrate how the participants use social supports to survive and their vision of what social housing should look like (Sakamoto, et al, 2007). Out of the experience, the participants constructed various recommendations for social service change: including the need for more aboriginal-led services, more trans-inclusive services, availability of accessible counselling, and the need for safe spaces in subsidized housing (Sakamoto, et al, 2007). What is paramount is that the project gained the ear of the Toronto mayor – who showed interest in policy transformation based on the voices of these women (A. Fudge Schormans, personal communication, 2009). This example provides the hope that changes through alternative research methods is possible.

Study Description:

To revisit the purpose of this research, I would like to know: what key messages a group of street youth choose to depict in their art work, and at the same time assess how art can be re-conceptualized as a voicing tool. To explore these questions a study was planned that asked a group of youth, who were currently or previously homeless/at risk of homelessness, to construct a collective art piece that would show their story, experiences or messages that they had for the community. This study was conducted over a period of three days at a youth shelter/drop-in centre for a few hours at a time. In the first two days participants were invited to work collectively on a wooden canvas with a variety of art materials. Then in the final third day a focus group was to discuss the meanings behind their art and their experiences in the workshop.

Essentially this research is arts-based and interpretative. Arts-based research means that artistic processes are systematically used to examine or get an understanding of an experience (Finely, 2008). Yet some may still ask: why choose arts as a research method? I believe this comes back to where I position myself theoretically – and what I like about critical-postmodern thought is that the landscape of social research can be re-conceptualized to consider non-mainstream paths of understanding (Pease & Fook, 1999). Also, as Finely (2008) suggests that the use of arts-based research makes a bold statement about knowledge production:

By calling upon artful ways of knowing and being in the world, art-based researchers make a rather audacious challenge to the dominant, entrenched academic community and its claims to scientific ways of knowing (p.72).

It is also important to note that this method seems to be a fit with the street youth population since art research methods can have accessible elements that “allows (for) community members to participate in (the research through) a variety of ways regardless of different abilities such as literacy level or language” (Sakamoto, et al, 2007, p. 16). A combination of the above points is why I decided to use art as a tool I use to explore street youth issues.

In using the arts, this research will also lend itself to being interpretative. Interpretative research refers to the use of subjective and inter-subjective meanings to understand phenomena (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). Here is where I will look to meanings from the participants as well as my own interpretations of the art. I am interested in multiple understandings, but at the same time I am also interested in applying the interpretative design critically, so that attention is given to issues that address oppressive situations experienced by the youth.

Methodology

How were participants recruited?

Members of the street youth population are often hard to locate since they often have insecure living arrangements (Vengris, 2005). For instance, the youth may move from place to place often with little notice – perhaps due to sudden financial and relationship changes. Also I have found from my experience in working with this population, that successful street youth programs have a drop in style – where youth can come into the program when they are available to do so. This posed a challenge for creating research that required some structure around who would be participating. This meant that in starting with sampling I would need to be purposive, which allows a researcher “to select members of a difficult to reach, specialized population” (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006, p.211). In order to locate these voices I would have to seek them out at street services that are targeted specifically to that population. There were a variety of locations in Hamilton area that would have been appropriate for the study. I used the “Inform Hamilton” online database to gather contact information of those various locations. Then I sent email to each of the places. Even though I expected delays in correspondence, getting a response back from an agency took longer than expected. However, once I had heard from and secured a location I was able to give that agency posters and flyers to distribute (see Appendix A)

From an ethical standpoint, passive recruitment strategies such as this are preferred since they are the least intrusive way to obtain participants (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). However, I felt that I had to take some steps beyond this to ensure that I had enough participants. As discussed previously, people from this population are hard to reach, often have trust issues and require flexibility in programs (Vengris, 2005), this meant there was a need to use more active methods to contact street youth –especially those who would have an interest in art. I decided to contact various youth support staff who may have a better idea about who would be interested in this research project. To avoid coercion to participate, I sent the workers an email with a script of how to approach potential youth participants (See Appendix B). Names of youth were not taken; instead flyers would be handed to youth who might have an interest in attending (See Appendix A).

On the first day of the art work, after going over the informed consent forms (See Appendix C), I used both convenience and snow-ball sampling with the youth. Convenience sampling was used to ask people to participate in the study who were most readily available at the research site (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). Although the literature identifies this method as ineffective since it produces ‘unrepresentative’ samples, this may actually be an effective way to reach out to interested members of the community – who may or may not have connected with a worker or seen the posters advertising the research workshop.

Snow-ball sampling also occurred – a method that allowed for the identification of additional participants through networks (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). It seems as though this was particularly helpful in the youth community, where participants from the first session could identify friends who would also be interested in an arts research project (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). One participant did bring an interested friend to the second session after I suggested this on the first day.

Finally, I felt strongly that appropriate participant compensation for time spent on the project was an ethical and responsible way to recruit members from this community. The youth I am contacting to participate would have limited resources and their time would be valuable to me – so I wanted to ensure that their time was adequately recognized. In order to do this, I provided a variety of in-kind compensation (such as snacks at each session, and free use of art materials for constructing the collective art piece). Also each day they attended I gave out gift certificates of a five dollar value for Tim Horton's and bus tickets for travel compensation. All forms of compensation were given regardless of level and length of participation and handed out prior to their commitment. All recruitment protocols were approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

What Data Was Collected?

The information that I gathered came in many forms. This included field notes that I took as I observed the youth working on the art piece, information

from participant interviews after the art was completed, and images in the final art piece that the youth collectively worked on.

i) Field Work Data

Field research refers to the notes I collected as my group of participants were interacting (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). As a field researcher, I observed the participants as they worked on their art piece. I wanted the youth to have a lot of control over the design and production of the art; therefore, I did not take up space by also working on that art; however, I still talked with them during the process about their art work and how it related to their experiences (if they were willing to share that information). In this sense, I found myself in the position of a *participant as observer* – where my identity as a researcher is explicit but I would talk conversationally with the youth in the research (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). I hoped that by doing this I would build rapport by interacting, sharing the group's language, and laughing with the group (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). To ensure that no information was lost I took field notes. These notes included what occurred during the day, my mood, my thoughts on how the day went, any interactions that I had with the youth, or how the youth were interacting with each other. I found field notes to be necessary since there were times some of the youth explained a piece of their art to me and I may have not gotten a chance to ask them about it again. It was later when I realized how critical these notes were since my focus group did not have a good turnout.

ii) Interview Data

Following the art workshop, I had planned to hold a focus group with the participants to gather more detail about the youths' voices expressed in the art (See Appendix D for the Focus Group Interview Guide). Before starting this phase of the research I revisited consent to ensure that everyone was aware of their rights as a participant (See Appendix E). With these interviews I was interested in looking at issues such as: youth having their voices heard, issues street youth face, and how art can be a way to express themselves. Although this was the plan, only two out of the six participants attended – as a result I ended up doing two individual interviews rather than a focus group discussion. The questions that I asked the two participants were the same as I intended for the focus group – however, there seemed to be less discussion between those two members. I asked the individuals who attended for consent to tape record the interviews. One participant requested that her answers not be tape-recorded. So during that interview I wrote notes down as we talked. The other participant had a lot of information to share and I asked her after a few minutes of talking if it would be ok if I tape recorded her answers for accuracy and to fully capture what she was saying. She agreed and her interview was tape recorded. To protect confidentiality names of participants will not be used, unless that youth expressed that they would like their name displayed. Otherwise code-names have been assigned to identify them.

iii) Arts-based Data

The final form of data that I am interested in is the art piece that the youth collectively constructed. As a central part of the research it was important that I documented information about the art, this is because those artistic images became central data as I asked my participants to create an art piece that relates to the research topic (Weber, 2008). Then once the art was finished, this art piece was the basis for further discussion, interviews and analysis. Digital photographs were taken of the art as it was being worked on and as a final product (participant consent for photographs was gathered – See Appendix F) . Similar to the interviews, I looked for issues that were being visually presented.

After the art was completed the group would discuss who would own the art and where it should be displayed. The art was a collaborative piece- that relied on many different talents of the participants (Barndt, 2008). In this sense, the art represents what Barndt (2008) calls an ecosystem of ideas and images. Therefore, it seemed logical that the art was owned by the group. It was decided that the art would have a home-base at the shelter-drop-in where it had been initially created - although all the members felt strongly about the piece also being displayed to the public. Interestingly, both Dominique and Emma suggested showing the art to high school students – since school youth may be able to connect with the images they have displayed.

Results/Analysis:

All of the data that was collected from the field notes, interview transcriptions, and art work images were coded or organized into conceptual categories (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). I started with themes of voice, art as expression, and street youth issues (which I imposed on the data based on relevant literature) – but I was open to other themes that seemed to emerge. Coding for a visual piece appeared a little more complex. Visual images give off multiple meanings depending on its audience, and this circumstance requires that a researcher be open to a variety of expressions and how art can occur in many forms and portray multiple issues (Eisner, 2008). With this diversity and multiple-subjectivity in mind it can be a concern of how to find links and commonalities between images (Eisner, 2008). However, I decided to use a combination of interpretations that came from youth explanations and the themes that I saw as they were emerging to inform how I coded the art. I started with two vague themes that would ensure my research questions were answered (in general street youth issues and art as voice), but I was open to additional categories and themes that I saw emerging.

Study Findings

In this section, I will first, briefly, describe the group's composition, my role, and important group processes that occurred. I will then be listing findings that were derived from field notes, the final art piece and the two interviews that were preformed. These results outline the messages that youth brought forward in their art work (and directly answer the first research question of this thesis). The youth participants did not directly speak to the second research question, (how can art be used as an expression of voice?); as a result I will be addressing this in the discussion section. As a note: all names used for the participants are pseudonyms that were chosen by the participants – except for Emma who chose to have her real name displayed on the art and connected with the answers that she gave in the interview session.

Demographics

There were six youth who participated and completed the art work. The age range of those participants was between the years of sixteen and twenty-nine – which is the age requirement of the agency that the research was taking place at. At first, it was unclear if participants under the age of eighteen could participate in a study without consent from a guardian. However, when I talked to the members at the ethics board at McMaster University the research was able to get clearance for younger participants because these youth are living in exceptional circumstances. I was happy that I would not have to exclude participants based on

their age. Yet, in the end, I am not entirely sure of the ages of the specific participants who attended the research. I intended to give out an information sheet during the focus group (See Appendix G) – where the participants would provide some basic demographic information – but, since I did not have a very good turnout, I was not able to gather the range of ages. On another note, it appeared that most of the participants were white, while one participant, Emma, identified herself as black on her information sheet during her interview session. It was also interesting to see that five out of the six participants were female since some sources state there are more males than females that access street youth services (Vengris, 1999). As for class location, all of the participants were experiencing or had experienced a time when they were homeless. Three participants had told me they were currently living at the shelter in the upstairs part of the drop-in centre where the research had taken place. The remaining three participants said they were currently living in the community in apartments. Two of those participants – John and Ecco – were living together, while Emma talked of living on her own.

My role & Group Processes

As explained earlier, my role in this research was as an observer. I recorded field notes about participants' moods, what they were drawing, my own feelings as I watched the art being created, and any conversations I had with the participants. As a facilitator of a collaborative art research piece, I wanted participants to have control over the artistic process, while, at the same time, I

hoped to help engage the youth in critical social analysis through the questions I asked them as they created the art, during the interview session, and also through the art's purpose: to visually display their experiences of being street involved or the messages they have for the community (Barndt, 2008). In this there seems to be a contradiction: having a critical stance infringes on the youth having full 'authentic' voice. As reflected on in the literature review, 'authentic' voice would mean that youth have an active role in all parts of the research and contain most of the decision-making ability. However, a critical application in research concerns itself with struggles of racism, sexism, colonialism and other forms of discrimination, with the goal of social justice for those struggling for power (Pease & Fook, 1999). Without critical elements in this community arts research, where "marginalized groups and communities (are offered) a space for articulating their own perspectives on the social conditions of their lives" (Barndt, 2008, p. 355) – there will be no room for social justice and activism that would allow these voices to be respectfully and equitably heard.

As for group processes, Ecko and John were the first two participants to join the group - together they both took up one side of the art board. As stated previously they identified that they had been living together. The remaining four participants shared the other side. Most of the youth started working right away on their art work. Emma was one participant who took more time thinking about what she wanted to do for the board. She approached me for ideas and I explained

that she could take her time. Later, she approached me a second time and I asked her if she would like to brainstorm. She agreed and we talked about how what she created did not have to be painted or drawn, and how it did not have to be about a bad experience. Following our conversation she decided to write a poem (see Figure 11). Overall, I found that there did not seem to be any conflicts – the youth appeared to get along well. They laughed together and shared stories about the art (although, Emma was more quiet than the other participants). On the second day, Emma seemed to be having a hard time getting some space on the board to create some artwork. She approached me about not knowing how to jump in – as the other participants were all crowded around the board. I had asked her where she would like to work on her art. She was not sure and stated she would wait until everyone else was finished. I will continue to talk about this in the discussion section of this paper.

Identified Themes:

After examining the artwork created by the participants, field notes and the interview discussions, a number of themes seemed to be generated. These include: public perception, being ignored, hunger, sadness, and strengths. As a reminder, all the participants in this study chose pseudonyms to be used to identify themselves – with the exception of Emma.

A) Public perception of street youth

Angel, a female participant, came to the first art work session when most of the other youth were ready to leave for the day. She got to work on her drawing right away. Her image contained some young people with Mohawk hairstyles. As we can see from the picture the figures have stick bodies and their hair is the most prominent part about them. The figures also seem to be on a spider web design – perhaps suggesting they are stuck there or trapped. Alongside the picture is the caption: “Being different isn’t always bad” that is written in big, blue and bold lettering. It seemed to me at the time that she may have been making a commentary on how people can make assumptions about another person based on how they look, and the web may symbolize how they are trapped in those assumptions/stereotypes. She did not talk much about her art and she was not at the interview session so I am relying a lot on the image and my interpretation of it.

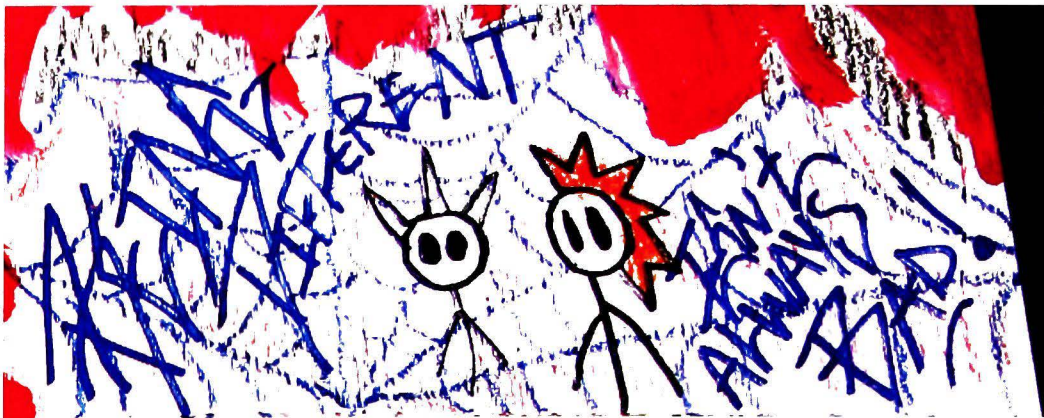


Figure 1: Caption says: “Being Different Isn’t Always Bad!”

Ecko, another female participant, drew various images of youth around a police officer with an angry face. Some of the youth depicted in the picture are smiling perhaps just having fun. In the bottom right-hand corner there is a youth depicted, beside the police figure, with their eye-ball hanging out of its socket. As a viewer of this image I can see that this child has been hurt, I wonder how that happened and what is the relationship between a hurt child being placed near a police officer. On the other side of the police figure there is a youth holding an object that has fumes coming out of it. This may represent a youth who has been drawn smoking a cigarette or perhaps marijuana. The young artist did talk to me about some pieces of her art – but with this particular piece I did not get a chance to hear what she thought about it. It is interesting to note that while one of the youth may possibly be using drugs, the other youth do not appear to be doing anything that would upset a police officer. In this sense when I look at this drawing I am reminded of how youth stereotypes around crime can often occur.



Figure 2: Caption says: "Downtown"

B) Being ignored/not heard & resistance to that

Another art image by drawn by Angel shows a figure with a sad face playing guitar in the rain and being ignored by passer-bys on the street. If we note the use of colour, Angel used a lot of greys and blues for the rainy day, and then framed the picture with a very bright red border. Those passers-by are dark figures drawn in black, they are sheltered from the rain with pink umbrellas, and the most discernable feature about them is their bright yellow eyes. I find when I look at the dark figure on the left the eyes look angry, perhaps he feels the youth is bothering him/her on the street. Or perhaps this is how the artist is perceiving people who pass her by. Also in the image there is a mother who is saying "shh" to a child who asks "mom, what's she doing?" This was the first image that Angel started working on. When I saw this picture, I first felt that the people passing by were ignoring the singing girl or that fact that she was a street youth. In that sense, I see this image depicting a silencing of street youth issues. Angel, also put down the caption: "It's the rich man's war but the poor that die." It is a powerful statement that perhaps relates seems to relate to the socio-economic of those who live on the streets.



Figure 3: Caption says: "It's the rich Man's War But the Poor that Die..."

In other instances on the art piece, I found that some of the youth were using profanity in their art. Figure four was completed by Angel, and I remember her asking me if it was okay to put "swear" words into the art. I replied that this was fine – I did not have a problem with this. She wrote: "Fuck the system" in bold, black lettering on top of a piece of duct tape, she then surrounded the wording with a bright red border. As she did this piece of her art work I noticed she appeared calm and, afterwards, started to draw other, more light-hearted illustrations to fill the space of the board. For instance, there is a rainbow with clouds directly on top of the caption. There is also, a figure with an angry face on

the left. She had explained to me that this was spider man shooting a web. These images in close proximity to the caption are interesting. Perhaps this was a source of comic relief since the artist was laughing with her peers as she drew the other two images.

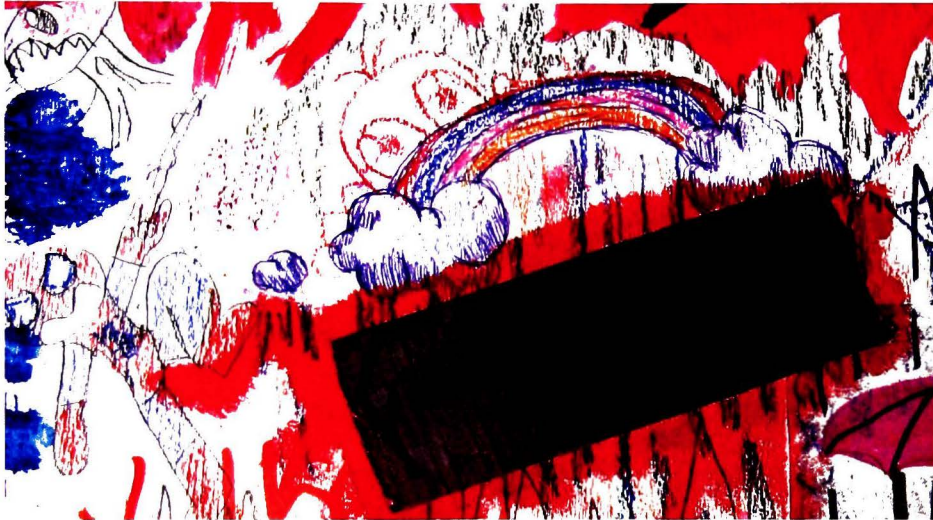


Figure 4: Caption says: "Fuck the System"

Profanity appeared again with Ecko, who wrote "fuck pigs" in a small font located underneath a picture that may be a face (where the eyes are x's, the mouth is a small dot, and the face is outlined with a squiggly line). I wonder if this is her face, one that seems confused and disorientated, in reaction to an incident that happened she was in with the police. I did not notice that she had written this until after the piece was finished – as a result I am unsure what was drawn first: the face image or the profanity caption. Perhaps this image is connected to her other experiences with the police/justice system, because her other drawings that she did on the art piece had similar themes.



Figure 5: Caption says:
“Fuck Pigs!”

Finally, John also used the word “fuck” in his art piece (see figure 6 and figure 7). Figure six is a close up, while figure seven provides a bigger picture of John’s story (which I continue to explain in the category that deals with sadness). I noticed that he drew the word more in a more blurred way – so it is harder to make out what it says. He seemed to use a lot of dark, muddy colours. His style of painting was interesting, he used the dirty water that the other artists had used to clean their brushes to create that muddy, cloudy effect in his art. I also noticed he layered his art and drew pictures on top of pictures; this is why it is hard to see that he used profanity in his piece as it seems hidden. However, I remember him being the first participant to use profanity with his piece – when he first put the word on the board I had thought to myself: what does profanity mean to this art work? I found theses instances where profanity was used to be interesting, and it seemed to be a way to draw attention to their art work.



Figure 6: Caption faintly says: "Fuck"

Figure 7: A full look at John's image – to be later explained in the "Sadness" section



C) *Hunger*

Figure 8: Caption says: "HUNGER"



Ecko, drew a figure with pink hair, looking down, with the word “hunger” above the drawing (see Figure 8). I remember this being one of the first images that she drew. Interestingly the young artist who drew this also has pink-coloured hair – so perhaps this was a self-portrait of a time that Ecko had been hungry or unable to obtain food. The figure in

the image also looks very young. I wonder what the artist may have been trying to say by depicting this figure in that way?

Alex drew a red haired figure, beside a Tim Horton’s dumpster. I remember this participant drawing in more of a rush and she seemed to be in more of a hurry way than the other five participants – who seemed to take their time. Despite this, I found she drew one of the most interesting stories. Her picture contained the caption “oh those dumpster days” and it also had the word “famished” above it. While she was drawing the picture, the artist laughed to her friends about how she used to participate in ‘dumpster diving for donuts’. She

then explained to me that she and other youth would go to Tim Horton's dumpsters at night, climb inside and get donuts that had been discarded so that she would have something to eat (see Figure 9). From looking at the image, it can be seen that there is a great deal of writing. In particular, if we look at the dumpster there are additional captions such as: "the downward spiral" and "the pits of humanity." I interpret these phrases as street youth. Finally I notice that the figure she drew is painted very thin, perhaps this is in connection with the hunger she has experienced.



Figure 9: Caption says: "Oh Those Dumpster Days", "Famished", "Pits of Humanity"

D) Sadness/pain

It seemed that everyone who participated wrote about or drew about something that suggested pain or sadness.² For instance, Emma wrote about being ‘beaten’ (See Figure 11). Ecko illustrated various sad faces and used dark colours. I remember her painting very intensely with dark blues and blacks (during this part of her painting she seemed very focused), it was hard to determine her mood in that moment as she had neither a smile nor a frown at the time. Dominique drew a word matrix, and some of the words she included were: “pain”, “regret” and “fear” (see figure 10 - for an example of her work). Alex also drew sad faces. I noticed when examining the picture more closely at the project’s completion, that Alex had written very small and faint the word ‘suicide’ with a line through it (it is very small – so it is not noticeable in reproduction). If I had seen her write this at the time I would have approached her about it.

Finally, I would like to revisit John’s piece (see figure 7) – who used very dark and muddy colours. He drew many overlapping images, and sad faces (for instance there is a figure drawn with black located in the middle of the drawing that has no mouth but it has sad looking eyes. Then there is a figure on the middle of his staircase, lightly drawn in pencil, whose eyes are drawn as x’s). Also he

² As a note: during the consent process, it was explained to all participants that, during this research, past experiences may be brought up that are saddening. As a result, I prepared a list of free counseling resources (see Appendix H) that the youth could access if they needed someone to talk to.

drew a staircase and explained to me that these were the steps in his life leading to nowhere. On that staircase there are various phrases and words; for example: “school” with a question mark beside it, “no one will hire me”, and in very big black lettering the word “drugs”. As I listened to his explanation and looked at his work I felt he was expressing a sense of hopelessness.

Figure 7: John's Steps in his life



E) Coping/surviving/strength/ hope

Even though all the youth had images of sadness, they also each displayed a sign of coping, strength and/or hope. John and Ecko both made references to drugs in their artwork (See figure 7 – John uses the word “drugs” in the bottom right hand corner. Also see figure two,



Excerpted from Figure 2:
Close up on smoking
youth

where Ecko depicts a youth smoking). Ecko and John also referred to the word ‘crack’ within their pieces. Possible interpretations could include admitting to a problem of substance use, or substance use as a mode of rebellion or resistance. When I noticed their references I wondered if this could have been a coping mechanism for the sadness they also portrayed in their pictures, such as John’s staircase depicting his hopelessness and the sad face both John and Ecko drew. I based my interpretation on what the youth were saying and what I was seeing.

I found also that strength showed up in a lot of the youths’ art. For example, Alex had the caption: “stay strong”. Dominique also used the words “hope” & “strength” in her word matrix (See figure 10). Her use of colours were very vibrant and bright with purples, greens, reds and blues. It is also noticeable that the word ‘strength’ is the biggest and boldest of the words she chose to write. This came up again when I was able to talk to the artist. She stated during the interview session that: “us people who have done this...(referring to her fellow participants in the study) are still standing, still going through life...We’re not giving up.”



Figure 10: Dominique's Word Matrix.
Includes words: "Strength", "Regret", "Hope", "Pain", "Alone"

Emma decided to write rather than draw or paint. She entitled her piece of text: "Words of a Strong Women".

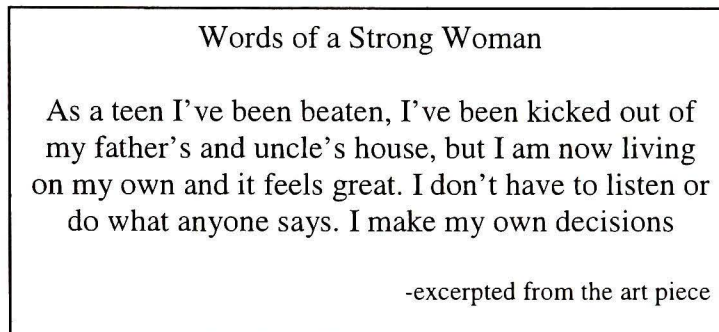


Figure 11: Emma's "Words of a Strong Woman"

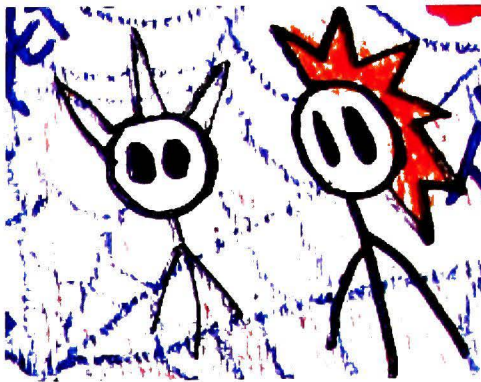
Emma's artwork really stuck out to me. She told a different story, about how being on her own has brought her to a more healthy place in her life. It was interesting to see this was an exception to what was being portrayed in the street youths' stories. Not only this, but Emma labeled herself a strong woman. Talking to her, I learned that she has great strength and she was able to get out of an abusive situation.

Discussion:

For this discussion section, I will continue to address the first research question: what messages have the youth displayed in their art? Here is where I will be re-visiting each of the categories described in the findings section and then connecting each of them back to literature and this paper's theoretical framework. Following that I will address this paper's second inquiry: how can art be used as a voicing tool? Since most of the youth did not attend the final session I will be using my own interpretation of the research to examine this question. I will end this section with some additional considerations that I would like to address (such as how race, gender and class played a role in this study).

1) Revisiting messages the youth displayed in their Art

a) Public perception of street youth



Excerpted from Figure 1: Close up on youth with mohawk haircuts. Caption of the larger image read: "being different isn't always bad"



Excerpted from Figure 2: Close up on smoking youth

Both of the images presented for this category (Figure 1 & Figure 2), seem to be addressing how youth and street youth can be viewed or publicly perceived by society. When I see these images, I connect with stereotypes and negative images based on appearance and age that can occur. First, if we look at Angel's picture (Figure 1), youth with mohawk hairstyles are being seen as 'bad' because they are 'different'. Kidd (2009) suggests that public perceptions of a 'morally bankrupt' and worthless youth can occur when they become associated with street culture – a perception so pervasive that it extends to how a person dresses or styles their hair. Then with Ecko's illustration (Figure 2), we see the police officer frowning at some youth – one of which may appear to be smoking marijuana. The literature does mention that engaging in criminal behaviour – such as drug use theft and violence – is a part of street culture (Vengris, 2005). If this statement from the literature is correct, it could be questioned whether the perceptions of street youth are deserved (A. Fudge Schormans, personal communication, 2009).. Youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can also be recipients of negative views from the community where they are seen as 'undesirable' youth (Whitmore, 2001). When becoming associated with a negative image it could be hard to break free of it. Here I find that it important for society to acknowledge and understand how street youth face a multitude of barriers. Such barriers include poverty, histories of abuse, lack of educational and employment opportunities, and mental health concerns (Whitmore, 2001). These various

barriers help to explain how the limits on their choices/opportunities can create a certain path or how the population gets labeled a certain way.

B) Being ignored/not heard & resistance to that



Excerpted from Figure 3:
Youth playing guitar on
the streets – ignored by
passer-bys

Silencing and injustice often happens within populations that are societally marginalized (Kovach, 2005). This would also apply to the youth who participated in this study. Street youth issues are not often top priorities, meaning that people do not often listen to what youth – particularly street youth- have to offer or say (Whitmore 2001; Vengris, 2005).

Looking at Angel's piece (Figure 3) we see an example of a youth being ignored despite performing on the street. I was unable to speak with Angel about her piece; however, it did come up during the interview session with Dominique. She talked of how she was friends with Angel and started to comment on the piece that Angel created. She stated:

Well this one was done by my friend (she pointed to Angel's drawing – see figure 3). I kind of know what she went through a little bit. And uh, she's lived on the streets and there has been people that just completely ignore her and people who have hurt her. That (the picture) shows it a lot too. And one of the things that she put down is really true- it goes: "it's the rich man's war but the poor that die" And that's just how it goes man. That's just how it is.

Dominique's quote not only points out that being ignored is central to the image, but it also links back to the public perception category as well, in the way people are ignoring her at the same time they are reinforcing that street youth are "worthless" or not worth their consideration for help or other assistance.



Excerpted from Figures 4, 5 & 6:
Various images that used profanity

This is where I found the use of profanity interesting in some of the participants' art (Refer to Figures 4 to 6). In my opinion, using the word 'fuck' demands that attention be given to an issue. I find that it works as a form of resistance. It could be that profanity was used to shock viewers so that they are made to listen. If we look back at figure 4, the phrase "Fuck the System" suggests

that social systems are not accessible or working for these youth - they are flawed or 'fucked'. Here words are not the only part that demands attention. I note, in particular, figure four as it uses bright red paint to frame the phrase "fuck the system". This sharp colour also demands attention and can evoke an emotion such as anger. Also, this is where the act of swearing and use of colour work together as it can jolt a reader/audience to pay attention through the use of a taboo word (Robb, 2009).

C) Hunger



Excerpted from Figure 8:
Pink haired girl with
word 'hunger' above her

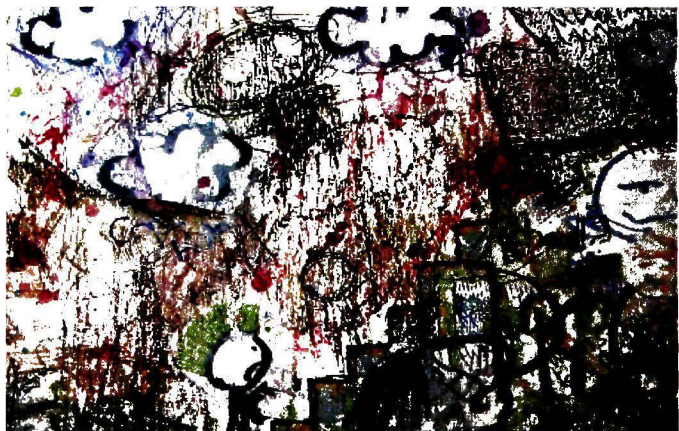


Excerpted from Figure 9:
Diving for Dumpster
Donuts

Despite the presence of programs and policies that address food access, there still seems to be evidence that youth experience problems in their access to food (Gaetz, Tarasuk, Dachner, & Kirkpatrick, 2006). As we can see with figures

eight and nine, these youth definitely had trouble accessing food at some points during their street-involvedness. During the interview session, Emma commented that Alex's piece (see Figure 9) really shocked her. It is interesting to note that in some research – such as Vengris (2005) – it was found that food access was not an issue for the youth that were interviewed since there were many places available to them that offered free food. This common answer in her research may be due to various reasons; for example, her study occurred a few years ago, and her sample may not have had those particular issues or it may not have been their most prominent issue to discuss. Despite what the Vengris study suggests, hunger did come up in the art piece therefore, reasons should be explored as to why youth are not accessing food. Research by Gaetz, et al, (2006) offers a number of possibilities. For instance, they may be unaware that programs exist for food access, or they may not know how to get there. They may have reservations about standing in a lineup to receive a 'handout', and/or they may feel that there are restrictions in the food offered so they would rather purchase their foods themselves (Gaetz, et al, 2006). This may help to explain why some of the youth drew about hunger, even though we were at a drop-in center that provides meals and food to youth.

Excerpted from Figure 7:
John's steps in his life



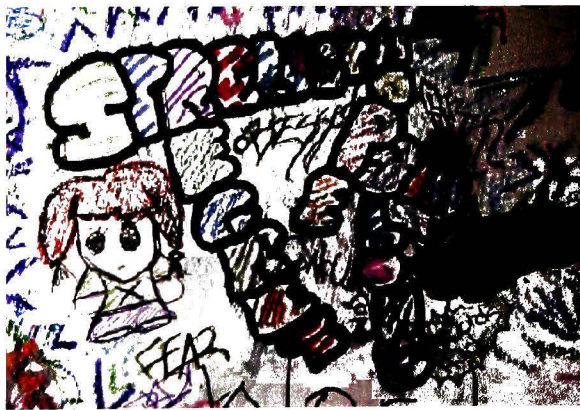
D) Sadness/pain

When I look back at all the instances where sadness or pain occurred in the artwork it leaves me feeling emotionally heavy. These youth experienced a lot in their circumstances. Mental health has been described as a common issue for street-involved youth (Vengris, 2005). It is also noted that “clinical depression, stress, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thoughts and actions are all reported to be higher among street youth” (Vengris, 2005, p. 25). Bender (et al, 2007) agrees that this population of youth has a higher magnitude of depression, anxiety and suicide. Similarly, Kidd (2009) adds that living on the streets has been connected with mental health issues such as suicide attempts, depression, low self-esteem and feelings of being trapped/helpless. With various sources describing how sadness or pain play a part in street youth lives, it is then not surprising that each of the youth participating in this arts-based research presented similar ideas of pain in their own way. In particular, if we look back at John’s image of a staircase, that he described as the steps in his life leading to nowhere, I interpreted his art as being a way that John expressed his own feelings of helplessness.

F) Coping/surviving/strength/ hope

First, I would like to address how substance use can be a coping mechanism for youth experiencing street culture. In the drawings by Ecko and John, we see a lot of sadness and, at the same time, they made many references to drugs (see Figure 2 & Figure 9 for examples). In Kidd and Carroll’s (2007) study

with homeless youth around suicidality and coping, they found that one of their “strongest hypothesized association(s) lie in the relationship between drug and alcohol use, (and) coping” (p. 293). Other sources agree that substances, such as drugs and alcohol, can be closely linked to issues of mental health and as a means to cope with street life (Bender, et al, 2007; Vengris, 2005). More specifically, the youth in Vengris’ article talked about recreational use of substance but, more often, they identified it as a means of coping with life issues (2005). Yet substance use could indicate other things, such as a mode of resistance. However, I focused on it as a coping method due to what I saw come out of the art, conversations with the youth, and what I also have seen in the literature.



Excerpted from Figure 10:
Word Matrix

Words of a Strong Woman

As a teen I've been
beaten, I've been kicked
out of my father's and
uncle's house, but I am
now living on my own
and it feels great. I don't
have to listen or do what
anyone says. I make my
own decisions

Finally, recognizing strengths of a youth who has experienced homelessness is important since research that is entirely problem-focused can label a population as deficient (Bender, et al, 2007). Despite all the sadness that

each of the participants portrayed, each other them also illustrated elements of hope and strength. I particularly saw this from Dominique's word matrix (See Figure 10) and Emma's poem (See Figure 11). Street youth should not just be talked about for their issues. Strengths and talents should also be acknowledged, as well as their ability to survive in dire situations (Bender, et al, 2007). At the same time there is an importance not to romanticize the strengths or the resiliency perspective as it can lead issues or action to a standstill. For instance, efforts such as poverty reduction could become depoliticized and, instead, self-help regimes would be emphasized, which is more in line with neo-conservative agendas that persuade the state to be less involved in community issues (Boyden & Cooper, 2007).

2) Art as a Voicing tool

"Don't knock it! Let it be heard, Let it be expressed"

-Quote from a participant when discussing art as a way to express oneself.

In this section I will be addressing the second question of this thesis: how can art be re-conceptualized as a voicing tool? I will be looking back at some examples in the literature that illustrate art as voice, as well as introducing a few other studies.

Art, in all its forms, sends messages and communicates to an audience (Barndt, 2006; Eisner, 2008; Kidd 2009; Sakamoto, et al, 2007). But it has been pointed out to me that, historically, there have been times when art has been harmful (for instance, racist and homophobic symbols that were used in Nazi Germany) (C. Sinding, personal communication, 2008). This is where I turn back to my theoretical framework to ensure the artwork created by the youth, and which I indirectly am promoting by virtue of its examination in this thesis, is linked back to a critical-postmodern perspective, where intersecting social issues such as racism, classism, sexism, ableism, ageism, and heterosexism are questioned.

To briefly review, there was some information in the literature review that I feel also applies here. Whitmore's (2001) research asked youth from a drop-in centre to co-evaluate the service. They even tried using some art-based methods to gather data, including drawing up maps with the youth participants of where they hang out or access resources in the community. In the end, a group of youth involved in the process created a report that was visually appealing to their peers to report their findings. The centre responded to the feedback given and was able to implement most of the suggestions from the youth. This is one example of how street youth voice came out of alternative, artistic methods. Also, there is Sakamoto's (et al, 2007) study that was previously mentioned. The arts-based research she worked on with young homeless women of Toronto used

photography and mask-making to make suggestions for services (ie. changes needed in social services, more aboriginal-led services, and more trans-inclusive services.). Afterward these women witnessed their artful suggestions become heard by the Toronto mayor, who was interested in implementing changes.

During the interview session I found that one participant, Dominique, also addressed art as voice when she stated that “...people (have to) open their ears and open their eyes. Because we may not be in college or going for a doctorate but we’re still making it through it”. In this statement Dominique makes some really thought-provoking points that challenge the way knowledge is valued and produced. These youth have important things to say and, because of their life circumstances, they have not had the opportunities to achieve the status needed for those opinions and thoughts to be valued (Kidd, 2009; Kovach, 2005). These points that make me think: why does this happen? So, what can we do now? How can we change this? She draws attention to the debate: who can know? North American society continues to be ruled by positivist thought – where experts are seen to hold the one-truth through controlled research trials (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006; Kovach, 2005; Pease & Fook, 1999). Additionally, only those with a degree or who have been ‘formally’ educated can have input into what is produced as knowledge in this society (Pease & Fook, 1999; Kovach, 2005). Yet Dominique, in her statements (and with her peers through their collective art work) challenges this status-quo of how knowledge could be perceived. Perhaps by at least starting

to look to youth for answers and input we can start to change some patriarchal system processes - and art could be an accessible and non-patronizing way of gathering those voices.

3) Other important considerations

In this particular project, I found that race, gender and class issues were immediately recognizable. In this section I will be looking at their implications, but, first, I would also like to note that other issues and forms of discrimination also have a play in street youth lives. For instance, heterosexism as well as ageism and ability issues are also factors that are strongly associated with youth homelessness. Despite how important these points are to street youth life, for this section I will focus on the issues that came up from this group: race, class and gender. I also want to mention that these issues are intersecting and multi-layered – even though I have separated them into categories, please think of them as interconnected and playing off of each other. Some of these links have already been made in the discussion section, such as gender and class, but here I would like to pay more attention to unpacking these concepts.

i) Race Factors

Regardless of whether my research topic specifically deals with race, or if my participants do not directly speak to it, I believe race issues are present. For example, race issues have a large impact on who had the opportunity to participate in my study. In Hamilton, it is noted that only “a small number of

youth of colour access services for street-involved youth” (Vengris, 2005, p.31). Vengris continues on to note potential reasons for this phenomenon. Some that were listed include: racialized youth may not feel as safe on the streets, therefore they are not as visibly homeless; and these youth may not feel safe or represented in services for street youth (Vengris, 2005). These points were elaborated on in her report. Yet Williams (2001) describes how institutional racism is rarely discussed when structures and practices serve to exclude ethnoracial groups. These leads me to conclude that if there are low numbers of racialized youth accessing these street youth services, then it plays a role in my research. This means that when I contacted mainstream youth services for participants, my sample largely excluded the voices of racialized youth. Since I was holding the research at an agency that was predominately white staffed, I knew that without time to actively reach out to youth who are racialized, my research would be inherently exclusionary. Yet, there was Emma, a black female youth, who attended. She did not bring up race issues, nor was race visually presented in her art – but perhaps if I had been more attentive in the interview session I could have pursued a conversation with her. I am not sure if, as a white researcher, I did everything I could to make her experience in the research respectful and decolonized.

ii) Gender themes

Similar to addressing race, gender issues are ever-present. For instance

gender issues illustrate how a person's gender has an impact on their social roles, interactions, and on their opportunities (Kovach, 2005; Krueger & Neuman, 2006). This means that gender has affects on this research whether the majority of the group is female or not; although, in this particular study, the youth who participated were predominately female (five out of the six participants). The literature suggests that most of the services in Hamilton are seeing slightly more male youth than female, however, the number of female youth who are homeless/at-risk of homelessness has been increasing (Vengris, 2005). Also, many sources agree that male and female youth have different experiences on the street (Gwadz, Nish, Leonard, & Strauss 2007; Johnson, Rew, & Kouzekanami, 2006; Vengris, 2005). Yet I found interesting that, when searching for sources on how gender effects street youth, the sources I located all seemed to focus on sexual activity or trauma/abuse. An example of how gender plays out for this population is that young woman who are street involved may feel more pressure to perform survival sex (a practice where sex is exchanged for food and/or shelter) (Johnson, et al, 2006). While males can also be pressured into survival sex, this activity has been more highly reported by females. Then, if we look to gendered differences in abuse, young women were twice as likely as the men to report "parental abuse" as the main reason for their homelessness (Johnson, et al, 2006; Vengris, 2005). This abuse can include a range or combination of physical, mental and emotional harm. And, while young men are less likely to report, they

are more likely to deny the seriousness or harmfulness of their victimization (Johnson, et al, 2006). Gwadz (et al, 2007) adds that, in their research, they found that when male street youth do report it is more frequently about physical abuse. It was also discovered that more than three quarters of the female homeless youth in their research sample stated they had experienced some form of sexual victimization (Gwadz, et al, 2007).

Words of a Strong Woman

As a teen I've been beaten, I've been kicked out of my father's and uncle's house, but I am now living on my own and it feels great. I don't have to listen or do what anyone says. I make my own decisions

-excerpted from the art piece
Figure 11: Emma's poem

Most of the participants did not directly talk about, or illustrate on the art board, abuse or what their home life had been like. However, if we look back to back to Emma's '*Words of a Strong Woman*' (figure 11), we can see that she makes connection to experiences of her abuse, and I notice that she focused on the fact that she is a woman in her title. During the interview session she did, briefly, describe her relationship with her father – who had emotionally made her feel down and eventually kicked her out of the house. She mentions the word 'beaten' in her prose, which I connect to the emotional and physical abuse that she described in her interview.

iii) Class issues

It is important to remember that there is no evidence to suggest that poverty is a cause of street-involvement (Rukmana, 2008; Vengris, 2005). In a study conducted with street youth in the Florida state, it was revealed that youth who identified with the streets had not necessarily originated from poor neighbourhoods, but came from a combination of parental-financial backgrounds (Rukmana, 2008). While the class origin of a street youth may be varied, class issues become a marked reality for them once they are street involved (Vengris, 2005). A combination of factors such as unemployment, low wages, inflated rents and social assistance restrictions (for youth access) contribute to an experience of poverty (Vengris, 2005).



Excerpted from Figure 8:
Pink haired girl with
word 'hunger' above her

In the artwork, the youth participants speak to class issues in varying ways: such as hunger, and the opportunities that are made available to them.

Hunger and food access is linked to class since the ability to acquire stable food access requires money (Gaetz, et al, 2006). Without having the finances to make purchases, youth have limited choices about which foods they can have to eat and

perhaps worry about where their next meal may come from.



Excerpted from Figure 7:
John's steps in his life.

He has written
-“no one hire” and
-“school” with a question mark.

John's image (figure 7) of a staircase (which he described as the steps in his life), has a number of captions written on the steps, such as “no one will hire” and the word “school” with a question mark beside it. Being a street youth, this may relate to opportunities that are not available to him. For instance, he may experience more difficulty in finding a job and attending mainstream schools since he may not have a permanent address, clean clothes to interview with or access to a telephone/email that they could reach him at (Vengris, 2005).



Excerpted from Figure 3:

Youth playing guitar on the streets.

Caption says: “It's the rich man's war, but the poor that die”

Angel's image (figure 3) can also be linked to class – particularly when connected to the caption that she wrote alongside it: "It's the rich man's war but the poor that die". Similar to John's piece, Angel may be referring to opportunities that, as a homeless youth, she would not have whereas a person with more financial security would have these opportunities. For instance she is singing in the rain, possibly to make money, while those passing by do not have to worry about whether they will have enough money to eat/ have shelter for the night.

What I found interesting is that, during the interviews, Dominique made some powerful connections between class opportunities and the ability for your voice to be heard. As she states:

"I think the more academically inclined, the more driven people are heard more than the people who are stuck back and who have life circumstances that keep us back. We're not heard quite as much, because we are looked down on – and we really are because we are not 'doing something' with ourselves. Meanwhile there's the other kids, the other youth we have grown up with - are going to school, going to college now, going to do this, going to do that. And we're still stuck here for whatever reasons that we have."

She speaks of being looked down on because she does not have academic qualifications behind her voice and at the same time she recognizes that not everyone has the same opportunities to participate academically. But does that mean street youth should not be heard from, or that street youth should be ignored in our society?

Challenges/Limitations:*Funding:*

I found that gathering the funds necessary to run a successful arts research project can be complicated. As Gray and Cole (2008) commented, research funds are not often accessible to those wanting to incorporate art perspectives.

Governments and other funding bodies “mostly only fund quantitative or mixed method design studies” (Gray & Cole, 2008, p.504). This often leads to arts research to be funded by the researcher; a notion that can be especially concerning to a student with a passion to pursue a study in this resource-needy area (Gray & Cole, 2008). Luckily, some funding became available from the McMaster University’s School of Social Work to offset the costs of research. However, I still wonder about the availability of future funding for arts-related research.

Time and Scheduling:

As I worked through the summer on this research project, I became very aware of the limited time I had available for completing everything. After eventually hearing back from an interested agency, time was still needed to book space and schedule dates for the research to occur. I realized and respected that the staff persons I was in contact with had various responsibilities and deadlines of their own. In this way, I tried my best to allow enough time for correspondence, although I still found it a struggle. Once I had the research days booked, I felt a bit of relief. I thought the first two days were successful since a

total of six participants came forward to stay and complete the art. Then, when the final research day came, only two out of the six participants I was working with showed up. It was unfortunate since I had planned to do a focus group where everyone could talk about the art. Later, I decided to speak with a staff member about the situation. When I approached her she mentioned that it was the last day of the month and referred to it as “cheque day”. She continued on to say that, perhaps, the youth were grocery shopping. After reflection, I very much felt that the day that I had booked was inaccessible to the youth. Since I was concerned about this inaccessibility and the attendance in my final day, I attempted to go back to the centre to see if some people would be interested in follow up interviews. Unfortunately, I did not see any of the youth who were in my art-research group. In the end, even though it would have been ideal to have all the participants attend the final day, I feel that the interviews I did complete (combined with field notes I had taken) provided me with enough rich and valuable information to continue on.

Study Implications:

For this section I will be looking at how this study's findings are connected to the street youth community, the research community, and the field of social work. I will end with some suggestions for further research.

Youth, and particularly those who are street-involved have often been left out of decision-making processes of policies and programs, or involved only at a token level (Johnson & Patterson, 2005; Vengris, 2005; Whitmore, 2001). This research has shown me that the youth I worked with are very aware of societal processes that affect them, and that they are incredibly talented and resourceful human beings filled with strengths, who should have the most authentic voice possible over the services and other policies that affect them. These youth and their community do have important things say and offer, and it may be that through alternative voice projects (such as social art research) there is a potential way to impact the inclusion of youth voice in social policy/practice and also alternative ways to inform agency and governmental policy.

In doing arts-based research, I hoped to promote alternatives to the knowledge-making process. I have found that making the case for the inclusion of arts in research can be difficult when knowledge production in this society is currently dominated by positivist thought (Kovach, 2005; Pease & Fook, 1999). Despite this, I still felt the need to move forward and conduct my thesis in an alternative way. This is because art-based ways of doing research can engage

participants by offering different modes of expression; it can also speak to audiences through alternative presentations (Sakamoto, et al, 2007; Whitmore, 2001). I find this point critical to research production since it can reach out to people and communities who may not otherwise be able to participate or access information collected.

For the field of social work, art-based practices can be of value for the profession and the communities that are served by it. As we have seen in some of the literature, art-based methods have created or started to effect changes at practice and policy levels. In examining Whitmore's (2001) study, that evaluated a drop-in from an artistic youth perspective, and Sakamoto's (et al, 2007) study, that gathered artful suggestions from young homeless woman, we can see how art influenced service provision and has the potential to influence wider homelessness policies. Not only did the art in these circumstance have the capacity to make social changes but, from a critical perspective, art can act as a mode of resistance to oppression that has consciousness-raising capabilities (Barndt, 2006; Chambon, 2008; Damianakis, 2007; Eisner, 2008; Kidd, 2009; Sakamoto, et al, 2007). These are important characteristics of doing critical social work that challenges the status quo. Damianakis (2007) suggests that "social workers...need to remain open to the challenges that the arts bring—the ability of the arts to disrupt as well as add to knowledge and practice" (p. 533). Chambon (2008) agrees that social work can benefit from art, since it can question what are

seen as ‘natural’ ways of relating in society. This reminds me of hegemonic processes, where the dominance of one group over another group becomes accepted and viewed as the norm (Akua, 2007). An example of this is when people in society “come to expect images of homelessness in our major cities, (and) increases in child poverty...” (Akua, 2007, p.197). Homelessness is then seen as a natural occurrence, rather than class injustice. It may be that images, like the collective art piece created in this arts-based research, can help break audiences away from their complacency and challenge their acceptance of everyday oppressive events.

After looking at all the data collected, my analyses and the implications that were generated from this work, I find going through this research process leaves more questions than answers. This project seems to be a first step of a much bigger inquiry to determine how alternative forms of voice can be used. The main area that could benefit from further research is examining the various ways art can influence policy/practice and produce social changes. Art can send powerful messages and as has consciousness-raising capabilities, this is why it would be interesting to see what action can be created out of that consciousness. Perhaps a longitudinal study that examines public responses to a display of the art piece would help to assess its social change-making abilities. At last, I simply hope that through the process of this research a case will be made for the authentic inclusion of street-involved youth voice in policy and practice.

Conclusion

In this thesis I examined street youth voice with art-based research methods. I based the research on two questions. The first question I focused on was, What key messages or issues do street youth choose to depict in their art? Then I looked at how can art be re-conceptualized as a tool for voice? To start to answer these questions, I first developed a critical-postmodern framework to work from, and reviewed various texts on street youth issues and art as voice. Afterward a three day, arts-based research activity was developed and then implemented where youth, who were currently or had been previously street-involved, constructed a collective art piece based on their street youth experiences and/or messages they had for the community. Following that, I used the art piece in conjunction with participant interviews, my field notes and the literature to report results and discuss findings in the study. It was found that the youth presented various categories in their art that co-related to the literature. For instance, their art contained themes of: street youth public perception, being ignored or not heard, hunger, sadness/pain and coping or strengths. I found the messages very powerful. The images and words used by the youth to convey their stories opened up ways for art to be seen as a tool for voice; a voice that challenges dominant, oppressive societal practices of how street youth are viewed or treated.

This research has various implications: for the street youth community (in asserting their voice through various mediums), the research community (in making alternative modes of research more visible and accessible) and to the social work community (to also support alternative modes of knowledge-making and support communities who wish to disrupt dominant knowledge processes). Finally I would like to express that I learned a lot from the youth whom I worked with and enjoyed witnessing the way they presented their stories through artistic methods. I found this research to be a very rewarding experience and I plan to share those stories with the community by presenting the art on display (with any of the youth who wish to be a part of those presentations). Through this art piece, the young artists and I have an interest in raising critical consciousness and action toward street youth issues.

“While a research report only reaches its audience at one level, art speaks to people on many”

(Sakamoto, et al, 2007, p. 16).



APPENDIXES

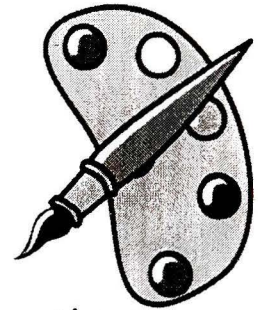
Appendix A Poster/Flyer

Do You Like Art?

- & are or have been a street youth
- & are 16-29 years old



**Come join a 5 day
art workshop:**



- Create a group mural that tells your story
- Answer questions about the art for research
- Date & Location: (information omitted for confidentiality)

You will get:

bus tickets

gift certificates

FOOD

Contact: Jen

Email: schulja@mcmaster.ca



Appendix B

Email Script

Subject line: McMaster Study: Street-youth & Art

Body:

Dear _____,

I'm a Social Work student at McMaster University. This summer I hope to do my thesis research with street-youth who have interest in art. In a 5 day workshop, I will ask a group of youth to complete a mural that is hoped to raise their voices to the community. Afterward I would be conducting focus groups and/or one-on-one interviews to talk about the art project.

Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 29.

To be held at ReCreate Outreach Art Studio, on (dates to be determined).

Please review the attached poster and flyer. I will bring hard copies of these to your agency and I ask that you please post the posters and give the staff flyers to distribute to youth who might be interested in coming out.

Thank you,
Jennifer Schultz



Appendix C

Letter of Information & Informed Consent

July, 2009.

Project Title:

Street Youth Voice in Art.

Student Researcher:

Jen Schultz, Department of Social Work, McMaster University. Hamilton.

Email: schulja@mcmaster.ca

My Supervisor:

Ann Fudge Schormans
Department of Social Work, McMaster University.
Hamilton.

Email: fschorm@mcmaster.ca. Phone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23790

Why are we doing this study?

I am asking a group of street-youth to do a mural that shows your community vision, experience of being a street-youth, and/or other issues that you face in the community. After the art is done I would like to look at how art can be a way to speak up about issues. I am also interested in how youth evaluate this project.

What will happen?

If you decide to be part of this study, you would be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a 3-day art workshop. We will meet for about 3 hours (with a break) each day to do art work. Lunch will be provided. I hope to take pictures of the art and pictures as the art is being created. You can choose to not be in the pictures or to be taken out of pictures at anytime during the project or before the work is published. If your picture is published I will not be able to remove it – but you can ask that your picture not be used anymore.
- After the art is finished, we will meet in a focus group to discuss meaning of the art and experiences in the workshop. This will take about 1.5 hours. At this time I will give you an evaluation sheet to fill out. The discussion will only be audio-recorded if everyone agrees.
- If you want you can do a one-on-one interview instead of a group one – Or you can choose to do both. The interviews would take about 30 to 40 minutes. The discussion will be audio-recorded only if you chose to.

Will anything bad happen to me?

-You may get emotionally upset when thinking about past issues. So I will be handing out a list of places that offer free counselling.

What good things can happen?

- Making art may be a way that your voice can get heard.
- The community might better understand street-youth issues.

Who will know what I said or did in the study?

You have a choice: to be known for the art work you have done and /or what you have said or to have your information kept private. This is a decision that you can change at any time.

Unless you tell me otherwise, I will keep information that you say private. It will be safely stored on my computer with passwords or locked in cabinets at my home office.

There is a chance that people may be able to figure out who had participated in the study. They might even be able to figure out what you have said.

Although I can keep information private, if talking in a group, I cannot guarantee that other youth will also keep that information private so only share what you are comfortable with.

Finally, if anyone talks about harming themselves or others I have to break confidentiality as I have a duty to report.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

You can decide to be part of the study or not. You can also stop at anytime, even before or after you sign this form. If you decide to stop you will not lose your bus tickets and/or gift certificates. If you decide to stop in the focus group you can leave the room or stop talking at anytime. If you decide to stop during interviews I can stop recording and asking questions.

You can tell me what you want done with the interview information.

How do I find out what is learned in the study?

After all the information is collected, I will be explaining what was learned. If you want a copy of the report please write your address or email at the end of the form. If you do not have either of these write a program you often go to and I can leave copies for that program to give out.

What are my rights as a research participant?

If you have any question please contact Jen at schulja@mcmaster.ca or my supervisor Ann at fschorm@mcmaster.ca

This study was reviewed and approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board, a group of researchers and people from the community. They make sure that research is done in a way that protects the people who take part in it. If you have

any concerns about being part of this study or how the study was done, please call:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat

Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142

c/o Office of Research Services, Email:

ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

I have read or had the above information explained to me about a study being run by Jen Schultz, a student of McMaster University.

Your Name

Date

- ☐ I would not like to get a study report
- ☐ I would like to get the study report about what was learned. Send the report to me at:

Email address:

Name of a program that you often attend:

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Guide

Short title of study: Street Youth Voice in Art.

Student Researcher name: Jennifer Schultz

NOTE: TEXT WRITTEN IN ITALIZED CAPITALS IS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR INSTRUCTION MEANT TO GUIDE THE FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR ONLY.

INTRODUCTION:

1. *[HANDOUT GIFT CERTIFICATES AND BUS TICKETS FOR PARTICIPANTS SHOWING UP TO THE MEETING]*. Hello, everyone. Thank you for agreeing to participate in the focus group. In this meeting we will be looking at the art that you completed and asking questions about it. I'm especially looking for your opinions of how it relates to being a street youth or community issues that you have.

2. *[POINT OUT REFRESHMENTS]*. Before we start, I would like to talk about consent. *[REVIEW CONSENT PROCESS, REFER TO VERBAL CONSENT SCRIPT/APPENDIX E. ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS]*

3. Before we begin talking about street youth issues and artwork, I would like to go over some basic guidelines for the discussion:

- Everyone's views are welcome and important.
- Try to speak one at a time, so that all voices can be heard.
- Anything heard in the room stays in the room. But remember, although I will be able to keep the information I collect confidential I will not be able to guarantee that others in the room will talk about what was discussed. So, only share what you are comfortable with.
- You can expect the discussion to last about an hour and 15 minutes.
- Feel free to stop or skip over any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. We will have a break have way through – but you can also take a break whenever you would like.

4. How we will record what is said:

- I will make written notes as we discuss things, and I may also record some ideas on flip chart paper.

- The discussion will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and help me to not miss what you said and help me to not assume something you did not say.
- All tapes and notes will be kept locked up so that only I and my supervisor can access them.
- If even one person does not want to be audio recorded I will take handwritten notes.
- Your names will not be included in my notes, unless you want to be identified for what you say about your art work. If you wish to remain anonymous for what you say you can pick a code name that will be used when I write the information up.

[ESTABLISH HOW EACH PARTICIPANT WOULD LIKE TO BE IDENTIFIED]

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION:

7. [FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION BEGINS WITH THE FACILITATOR ASKING THE FIRST QUESTION]

i) How did you become interested in art?

ii) What does art *do* for you/make you feel?

iii) Think about the part of the mural that you worked on. With examples can you tell us what the piece that you worked on means?

iv) When/where do you feel that your voice is not heard?

Follow up question: When/Where do you feel that your voice is heard?

[BREAK – 15 minutes]

v) Who do you think should see this art? (Follow-up question): Where would you want it displayed?

vi) When people see this mural what are some of the important things you want them to get out of it? How would you want them to react?

vii) I will be making a report about this project and subject. What are the most important points you want the report to include about...

-Street youth issues? Having your voice heard? Art as a way to express yourself?

viii) [*OPEN UP THE DISCUSSION FOR GENERAL RESPONSES*]

ix) Is there anything we forgot or something important we should know about: the art work you completed?

END.

Wrap-Up:

- Hand out the anonymous “Focus Group Demographic and Project Evaluation Sheet” (see Appendix G), and pens. Give participants time to complete the sheet.
- Clarify who in the group would like to be identified for doing the art work and/or what they have said. Let them know they can change their mind at any time.
- Thank participants.

Appendix E

Verbal Re-consent Script

NOTE: TEXT WRITTEN IN ITALIZED CAPITALS IS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR INSTRUCTION MEANT TO GUIDE THE FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR ONLY.

-Since we are now moving into the (focus group or interview) stage I will have to go over consent again.

-As you know, we are doing a project about street-youth voice in art. I am doing this study because I am interested in how art can be used as a way to speak out about issues, and I would like you to evaluate how the project went.

-What will happen today:

We will be meeting in a focus group to discuss meaning of the art and experiences in the workshop. This will take about 1 and a half hour. At the end of discussion I will give you an evaluation sheet to fill out. The evaluation sheet will take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. *[FOR AUDIO-RECORDING CONSENT PLEASE SEE: 'FOCUS FROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE – APPENDIX D]*

-You may get emotionally upset when thinking about past issues. If this is the case you can feel free to stop, skip questions or take a break at any time. I also have a list of places that you can go to for free counselling if you need to talk.
[PASS THE SHEET OUT]

-By participating in (the focus group/interview) you may help to explain some of the issues street youth face when they are trying to get their voices heard.

-You have a choice to be known for what you say in the (focus group/interview). Unless you tell me otherwise, I will keep information that you say private. All information will be safely stored on my computer with passwords or locked in cabinets. Be aware that there is a chance people may be able to figure out who had participated in the study and they might even be able to figure out what you have said. Also, although I will ensure the information is kept private, remember when talking in a group I cannot guarantee that other youth will also keep that information private - so only share what you are comfortable with. Finally, if (anyone of you talks/ you talk) about harming yourself or others I have to break confidentiality as I have a duty to report

-If you decide you no longer want to participate:

You can stop at anytime, before we start or during the (focus group/ interview). If you stop you will not lose your incentives (ie. bus tickets and/or gift certificates).

If you decide to stop in the focus group you can leave the room or stop talking at anytime.

-Once all the information is collected I will be making a report, please feel free to let me know how it should look or what it should say. I will get a copy of the study for everyone who would like one.

-If you have any questions you can contact me, my supervisor or the Research Ethics Board. The contact information is on the consent form. I have extra copies of the consent forms here if you need extra or have lost the one you had before [PASS CONSENT AROUND AGAIN, PARTICIPANT/S CAN TAKE IT IF NEEDED]



Appendix F Photo Release Form

I, _____, give permission for photographs to be taken

(print name)

of:

Check the boxes that apply

- ☐ The art I will be creating
- ☐ Myself, as I do artwork

I also allow McMaster University to use these photographs in any research report, publication, presentation or display that involves the study “Street-Youth Voice in Art”

I understand that I can request at any time to have the photos where I am physically in the picture removed. If my picture is in a report that is published the picture will not be able to be removed – but I can request that my picture not be used in the future.

I understand that my name will not be used to identify my photo, unless I chose to have it displayed.

Accepted and Agreed:

Signature of Subject

Date




Appendix G

Focus Group Information Sheet and Project Evaluation

Please fill out.

DO NOT
Put your name
on this sheet.

1. Age: _____
2. Male: _____ Female: _____ Transgender: _____
3. Ethnicity: _____
4. What I liked about the art project: _____
5. What I did not like about the art project: _____
5. Rate your experience:

1	2	3	4	5
				
BAD!		So-So		Great
6. Suggestions? _____

Appendix H

Counselling Resources

Places to go if I need to talk...		
Agency Name	Address/ Phone Number	Contact Person
Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre	71 Rebecca St. East. (905) 522-3233	Leslie Viner, Social Worker. * Speak to an intake worker to set up an appointment
The North Hamilton Community Health Centre	554 John St. North (905) 523-6611	*Make an appointment to speak to one of the social workers.
Notre Dame House	14 Cannon St. West (905) 308-8090	*Speak to the staff. Note: only for those up to age 21.

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