Integration of Faith, Values, and Learning in Art Fundamentals as Experienced by Visual Concept Development Students

Ann Anolin, Eunice Aclan, Reuben Pagaduan

Abstract

Integration of faith, values, and learning (IFVL) is a feature employed by Adventist institutions but little is known how it works or what its outcomes are particularly in the teaching of fine arts. Thus, this phenomenological study was conducted to explore how Visual Concept Development (VCD) students of the Fine Arts Department of the University of the Philippines experienced IFVL in art fundamentals based on de Komiejczuk’s deliberate IFVL theory. Data were gathered through interviews. The participants of the study were 12 former VCD students from 2013-2016. The audio-recorded interview data were transcribed and analyzed using Lichtman’s analytical model. To triangulate the interview data, artworks collected from the participants were also analyzed. The results show that the participants identified art elements and principles through God’s creation and they related art fundamentals to spiritual implications and real life situations. The participants shared their IFVL experiences through God’s creation such as trees, birds, flowers, insects, or nature in general as instruments in discovering art elements of design (line, shape, color, tone, texture, and space) and basic principles (unity, balance, and dominance) which they reported have guided them in improving their creative works. They have become critical thinkers by reflecting what they produce as artworks to their ways of life and refer to God as the Master Artist whose creative works manifest art elements and principles. The findings of the study imply that IFVL needs to be deliberately designed in the curriculum where the role of the teacher in facilitating IFVL in the art class is important especially in outcomes-based Christian education.

Keywords: Art fundamentals, God’s creation, outcomes-based Christian education

Integration of Faith, Values, and Learning (IFVL) is a feature employed by Christian institutions in the learning to an understanding of the faith and to the development of Christian worldview. The broad concept encompasses the idea that the Christian worldview, faith, and practices of the students should be deeply connected within the learning experience (Dockery, 2002). Harris (2003) said, “If we understand faith in the broadest way, as the set of basic beliefs, preferences and presuppositions that guide our lives, then everyone - religious or not practices the integration” (p. 1). In Christian schools that uphold the Bible-based learning, a holistic approach is the ideal goal. It shapes how one sees all of the disciplines at their core and should not be limited to an auxiliary role. Gaebelein, the earliest proponent figure of the integration of faith and learning (IFL, later called IFVL), believed in the bringing together of parts into whole (Beers & Beers, 2008). The process of integration of faith and learning must be done intentionally and to be intentional one must understand it, Beers and Beers explained. However, little is known how it is implemented in Adventist education especially in higher educational institutions like in the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP), where this study was conducted.

Faith and learning integration happens through the teacher’s facilitation approaches. In the study of Burton and Nwosu (2003) on stu-
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The literature shows that visual art practitioners named the art fundamentals based on their understanding by way of experience making them varied and subjective. But to deliver them as lessons to a number of students inside a classroom/studio systematically with good results can be an art instructors’ dilemma that can affect the learners’ capacity to understand and implement. Each account from the artists/art instructors agreed on the importance and implementation (practice) of the fundamentals. CAE (2017) emphasized, “The toughest part is the beginning artists’ fundamentals will be understood better as you practice. Saying this isn’t enough; you really need to experience it to believe it” (CAE, 2017, para. 10).

In the study conducted by Pagaduan (2014), he proposed an Art Fundamentals Model adapting Ocvirk et al.’s (2009) art fundamentals diagram (see Figure 1); adding to it at the bottom, Unity: The character of God used to facilitate IFL to the course CVD. Pagaduan maintained that, to understand clearly the basics of art fundamentals, one has to look and observe the nature, examine the details carefully and from there one can see that they are present. He also maintained that the art principles have spiritual implications that is applicable to human relationships, which foster harmony and unity (Pagaduan & Anolin, 2016). Pagaduan’s research in 2014 with incoming freshmen who intended to take Fine Arts were given partial image that would require them to continue, finish, and submit finished output in a form of visual image/story, as the pretest. After which,

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Fundamentals</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>Proportion, ratio, proportionality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Difference, opposition, oppositional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>Precedence, priority, prime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Material, substance, substance</td>
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<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Application, execution, execution</td>
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<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Appearance, appearance, visual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Criticism</td>
<td>Critique, evaluation, evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Symbolism</td>
<td>Significance, meaning, meaning</td>
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Fussell (2017) viewed art fundamentals by categorizing them into two groups as elements of art (line, form, shape, value, space, texture and color) and the principles of art (balance, proportion, unity, harmony, variety, emphasis, rhythm and movement). All these, he said, clearly deal with placements of elements within the work. The principles of art are an organized way that elements of art are arranged in a work of art, typically deal with composition. There are other fundamentals that Fussell included and said that artists should understand and implement. These include, but are not limited to, composition, contrast, dominance, content, implementation, aesthetics, art criticism, and symbolism (Fussell, 2017). Similarly, Bond (2017), a practicing artist and art instructor, believes that creating strong meaningful art is a combination of understanding the fundamentals of art and developing one’s personal voice, or what he wants to communicate. To him, these are crucial. He names the most basic ones as: value, composition/design, drawing, color and edges, pattern, rhythm, movement, harmony, etc. Art fundamentals, Bond explained, are interdependent upon each other.

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In art education, like in other disciplines, teachers, tools, methods and approach are major factors in learning. The course is where the teacher uses the tools, methods and approach to reach the goals and objectives set for the learners. In this study, the integration of faith, values, and learning in the Christian worldview is infused in an art foundation course, the art fundamentals. Ocvirk, Stinson, Wigg, Bone, and Cayton, (2009), after numerous editions of their art fundamental books, said that the study of the principles that aid the art students’ learning in their application, as in the past, is still employed by all artists with the evolution of technologies having expanded and modified the way in which the elements can be put to use (Ocvirk et al., 2009). Even if AUP combined traditional and digital methods of teaching the arts, it is still guided by art elements and principles but the unique feature of AUP’s tradigital curriculum is the integration of faith, values, and learning.

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they were exposed to lectures and given exercises from his art fundamental model. The subjects were then handed again the same image on paper and were given the same instructions as the first. The result of the study showed that, there was a significant difference in the respondent’s score on movement. Specifically the post-test result (mean=22.00; SD=5.50) is higher than the pretest (mean=15.50; SD=4.21).

The result denotes that the art lectures conducted helped improve the respondents’ visual skills in evaluating/analyzing artworks with regard to movement or eye flow. Moreover, their final and total score also improved. It was concluded that skilled students in the pretest have an idea of what visual balance, dominance elements of arts are, even without being exposed to lecture and exercises. Visual flow or eye movement, however, was lacking (Pagaduan, 2014).

Figures 1 and 2 below show Art Fundamentals Model adapting Ocvirk et al. (2009) adding to it, at the bottom is Unity: The character of God by Pagaduan, (2015) used to facilitate the IFVL to the course, VCD.

![Figure 1. Art Fundamentals Model by Ocvirk, et al. (2009)](image-url)
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Through the student outputs as samples in Pagaduan’s study, nature/environment was examined and the elements and principles presented in Figures 1 and 2 were evident. These major and basic principles as balance, dominance, and unity have spiritual implications to human relationships. However, there is a dearth of literature on the experience of arts students in relating arts to spirituality particularly in the integration of FVL specifically in the Seventh-day Adventist context. Thus, the conduct of this study was necessary.

Knowledge in the art fundamentals given in art foundation course/s is crucial to students’ learning journey. The fundamentals of art are the building blocks for successful art-making, especially if explored in engaging manner through hands-on exercises. Today there are varied versions as to what the visual art fundamentals are. Visual artists, painters, and art educators offer their lists of what are they. Ocvirk et al. (2009) showed the Principles of Visual Organization by creating a diagram indicating the flow on how the elements and principles of art; on top of it is the development of form which involves media and techniques applied, explaining how they are dependent on each other to create a unified visual composition. For Panizo and Rustia (1969), the process of creation involves three steps. They identified the first one as idea. This is where sensitivities that contribute to decision to use them as basis for a picture, a poem, a play or a dance. Second is the material and process where the phase of creation upon which the artists consider medium, materials and method to employ, to enable them to give form to their idea. Third is the organization and form where organizing the idea and giving it form via selected medium material happens. The authors concluded that the third phase of the analysis of any work of art has form and organization and artists must decide whether the work has unity, and whether the organization itself calls for an aesthetic response.

Art students should understand to be able to express and communicate their visual art/design and message effectively. Students’ perceptions on their learning is valuable to determine how effective the given lessons were, the value and impact it left on them, and how it affected and improved their works. The study of Mahadi and Shahrill (2016) investigated students’ perceptions. The findings indicated that, although the students generally have positive perception on how they perceived good art teaching, the interview data, revealed what they experienced were somewhat otherwise. Evidence from the study indicated that some aspects of art teaching that the students experience are under-developed and thus impact the way students see and learn the art subject. The researchers’ recommendations are on the need to improve and diversify art teaching.

This study mainly builds on Pagaduan and Anolin’s (2016) paper which presented how the principles of design are revealed in nature. Five categories of sample photos from nature were evaluated: flowers, leaves, stones, people’s faces, and insects. The elements of design used were line, shape, color, tone, texture, and space while the basic principles considered were unity, balance, and dominance. Results showed that unity, balance, and dominance are seen in the samples and God’s character is reflected in His creation such as patterns that can be circular, linear and random or a combination of all three, sometimes obvious and sometimes require more effort and imagination to search out. Pagaduan and Anolin’s study concluded that God’s love is expressed in nature which is full of mysteries such as patterns that interact with each other that are worth seeing. They further concluded that with a discerning eye for detail, pattern and color can be seen in any natural object as simply a series of shapes composed of lines, curves, and circles and the way they relate with each other is amazing to human be-
ings who were created to have dominion over all creatures. However, this study focused on the perspectives of fine art mentors, not students'. This prompted the researcher to build on the literature by exploring students’ learning and skill building specifically how they experienced the integration of faith, values, and learning in their experience in the VCD course using the outcomes-based education (OBE) in an Adventist university setting.

Integration is the process fitting in new knowledge with existing knowledge, a process of coherence making, done naturally, everyday whenever new information or knowledge claims are presented (Harris, 2003). Harris further explained that by itself integrative is with the crucial addition of Christian knowledge, based on the Biblical authority in which Christian faith is both a type of knowledge or a set of truth propositions and a worldview or an interpretive framework for creating, understanding, and making sense of all reality. It is connecting Christian knowledge with other knowledge which must be undertaken with deliberateness, so “Christians must be intentional about making the connection between their faith and knowledge claims they encounter and careful to keep the Biblical framework in the foreground as the structuring principle of truth” (Harris, 2003, p. 3).

Integrating faith in art course is an important means to help values formation in the students’ character building, drawing examples from nature and from human relationships; by way of letting them see it in their immediate surroundings. Guptill, Johnson, and Tabelisma (2002) stated that virtue is an important value formation in the objects of IFVL. They become a value and character trait when they are adopted into one’s life; virtues and character traits help build moral knowledge for students as values go deeper than behavior, Guptill, Johnson, and Tabelisma concluded. Tyler (as cited in de Korniejezuk, 1998) described IFL or IFVL as a guide to learning experience; it is the horizontal relationships of curriculum experiences, and there experiences should be organized in such a way to help students formulate an increasingly unified view, and to behave accordingly.

Gaeblein (1968) stressed that Christian education can achieve integration into the all-embracing truth of God. He named three components in the integration and first is the teacher. He said, the teacher as s/he is genuinely regenerated, s/he becomes a Christian teacher with a worldview intelligently understood and held with conviction. Second component is, the subject/course taught. The St. Olaf College Self-Study explained that, the relationship with the subject and the individual during the integration, was that the sciences are closer to the humankind than the abstract sciences, because they assumed that the person is a believing, worshiping, loving, acting, knowing and creative creature of God. Therefore, they ranked the sciences from close to far proximately association from the human being as follows: Theology, Philosophy, Literature, Fine Arts, History, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Logic, Language and Mathematics (de Korniejezuk, 1998). Third vital component in IFVL, according to Gaeblein (1968) is the school atmosphere that extends beyond the classroom. AUP, the site of this study, is situated in a vast expanse of 165 hectares of lands on an uphill downhill terrain with natural landscapes. It is covered with lust vegetation of trees, shrubs, and grasses. It has well-maintained parks and forests which have become shelters for various birds, monkeys, and other creatures that can be subjects for Fine Arts students both in photography and artworks. Fundamental Arts classes are usually held in AUP’s scenic Art Park, decorated with recycled materials, and overlooking Laguna de Bay and Mount Makiling.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of Visual Concept Development (VCD) students on the integration of faith and values in learning art fundamentals.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

This study used qualitative research method. Its focus is to look upon the students’ experiences in their VCD class particularly on how they related art elements and principles to God’s creation, and how faith, values and learning were integrated. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, i.e., how people make sense of
their world and experiences they have in the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2013) listed five approaches: grounded theory, narrative research, case study, phenomenological research, and ethnography research. Phenomenology is the type of qualitative research used in this study as its purpose is to describe the lived experiences from which the students gained perceptions as they observed and participated in the learning process. Phenomenology (Husserl as cited in Patton, 2015), describes things and experience to perceptions and meanings that awaken one’s conscious awareness.

Selection of Participants

Participants were purposively selected from past VCD classes that underwent the same lectures and exercises. Twelve participants were purposively identified based on the following criteria:

• Students who completed VCD class at AUP’s Bachelor in Tradigital Fine Arts major in Visual Communication and Design course program curriculum;
• Students from 2013-2016;
• Articulate, expressive and reflective;
• Willingness to participate;
• With portfolio, or at least three plates (artworks) one before taking VCD class, one during the VCD and one after VCD.

Creswell (2014) recommends 5-20 participants for phenomenological studies, while Morse (1994) recommends six. Guest, Bruce, and Johnson (2006) propose that saturation often occurs around 12 homogenous group. Latham (2017) said, it was consistent with his own experience during his recent CEO study where saturation occurred around 11 participants. This study involved 12 participants.

Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

Interviews and artworks were the sources of data in this study. Although interview could be a stand-alone data gathering tool in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015), image analysis was used to triangulate the interview data to increase the trustworthiness of the study. Artworks from the participants’ required portfolio were used to match the concept and themes that emerged from their responses to the interview. Visual images provide power and seductive nature of images cannot be ignored; they are central to culture and communication as they provide avenue of meaning and “they represent a kind of reality captured by the researcher” (Lester as cited in Litchman, 2014, p. 302).

Semi-structured interview guide was formulated prior to the interviews. Any pressure that would detract the participants from giving their answers freely and openly was avoided and flexibility was used to be able to mine rich data, responsive to shifts and changing conditions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher applied epoche or bracketing in which the researcher set aside her own biases such as avoiding leading questions to take a fresh perspective toward the experience being studied (Moustakas, 1994). Open-ended questions and probing techniques were used to allow the interviewees to give possible lengthy descriptions with their answers. Interviews which were held in a convenient and quiet place were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Data collection followed the following steps:

1. Formulated semi-structured interview guide.
2. Recruited participants and let them sign the Consent Letter.
3. Practiced interview.
4. Conducted pilot study after which the result of some questions and probes were adjusted.
5. Administered the interview one-on-one.
6. Transcribed the data for analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The analytical process started during the interview then with the reading of the first interview transcripts and the first set of field notes. Observations, notes, queries, and comments were written on the margins. The notations next to the bits of data were relevant for answering the research question; Merriam and Tisdell (2016) called this process ‘coding’. Coding, according to Saldana (2013), is linking the data to an idea and back to the other data. Code is a word, phrase or
sentence that represents aspect/s of a data or captures the essence or features of data. By assigning codes to pieces of data the researcher begins to construct categories (Saldana, 2013). Analytical stages as suggested by Litchman (2013) were followed to answer the research questions:

1. Preparing and organizing data. Transcribe interviews, notes on evaluation and analysis for images (artworks) goes to its folder/s labeled.
2. Read through all the material/s in folders adding thoughts and comments to each transcript. Review and record thoughts.
3. Applying Saldana (2013) on data analysis steps. From the raw material, inductive method was used to draw meaningful concepts or themes.

![Figure 3](image)

*Figure 3. Adapted from the Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers by Saldana (2013)*

**Ensuring Rigor and Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness can be ensured by using models but this study used Guba’s (as cited in Krefting, 1991) model with four criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility, the most important among the four, according to Krefting, was achieved by triangulation using participants’ artworks to verify their responses in the interview. The researcher requested the participants to show at least three artworks from their portfolio that include plates and or paintings from their VCD before, during and after the course criteria for analysis where formed based on matching evidence/s seen from the artworks. Also, to ensure the credibility of this study, member check was used. To test the overall interpretation, near the conclusion of the study, one must do a terminal or final member check with the key informants to ensure that the final presentation of the data reflects the experience accurately (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher contacted the participants near the conclusion of the study, let them check the transcript and the data analysis and waited for their responses for the researcher to finally proceed. Prior and after the data analysis, the participants were approached personally and showed them the raw data transcribed from their own words recorded through a recording machine, to double check. They were also contacted through electronic messengers for confirmation of the accuracy of the information gathered and the interpretation. For transferability and dependability, the methods and results were presented in rich and thick description. With detail description, the researcher enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics (Erlandson, as cited in Creswell, 2003). For confirmability, audit trail documented the course of development of the completed analysis by recording all research decisions and activities throughout the study through a research log and memos in a journal and documenting all data collection analysis and procedures throughout the study as suggested by Creswell and Miller (2000).

**Ethical Considerations: Confidentiality and Informed Consent**

As this research involved human participants, ethical procedure was observed before the start of the study. Dignity and confidentiality were ensured and potential risks that might arise in the course of the study were avoided as suggested by Tilly and Woodthrope (2011). The participants were requested to take part in the study voluntarily and the aim of the study was communicated to them before the interview process began. They were informed that all conversations were private and confidential. They were also requested to sign a consent form to avoid any ethical dilemmas that might arise from
data collection procedures and communication of the results. The participants were requested to schedule an interview with the researcher at their convenient time. They were assured that no risks involved and they were given time to ask any questions for further clarification. It was made known to each participant that their names have been changed in the study to protect their identities.

Results and Discussion

Participants’ Experiences on IFVL in Art Fundamentals

Two themes emerged on the participants’ experiences on art fundamentals in their VCD class: identifying art elements and principles through God’s creation and relating art fundamentals to spiritual implications and real life situations. Interview data or the participants’ verbatim responses are presented to support the theme. Also some of the participants’ artworks are shown to triangulate the interview data.

Identifying art elements and principles in God’s creation. Art and design fundamentals were associated by the participants to nature. They named things that were immediately found within the surroundings. They randomly named clouds, leaves, rocks, trees, bark branches, flowers, insects like, ants, beetles, heaven and earth, water, lakes, mountains, river, ocean rock, shells, vines, rock formations, landscapes, day and night, light and darkness, including people, faces, hands, the human figure. The participants have associated them to God’s creation. Cassandra experienced VCD classes eight semesters ago. She already graduated in Fine Arts and is now a part-time lecturer in a university and is currently pursuing her degree in Master of Fine Arts major in Art and Design. She said:

I believe that nature itself is the basis of the basics of art fundamentals, in a sense human beings search it from God’s creation. From one of the most simple things probably the shell. It has elements like texture, lines, shape, tone—all come together in unity. A leaf’s blade, in it we can see the elements of design such as lines, texture, shape, value. We have a variety of leaves, and each has specific design. The tiniest blade to the biggest perhaps umbrella tree of leaves we can see repetition in design. We can see that nature has in its own way perfect already. (Cassandra, 23 years old)

After taking VCD class two semesters ago, Tony, who is currently enrolled in the Fine Arts program. He is working independently as a comic illustrator to support his visual art studies. According to him, he does not have any formal training, so he enrolled and took up VCD classes Tony identified art elements and principles in nature. He relates:

I tend to give importance to my surroundings, nature, the living things, trees, everything I see now. These things are placed here for a reason. The most obvious elements I can see are variety and harmony. We see landscapes complementing each other, the trees, the rock formations, the rivers the ocean, they tend to give beautiful appearances. They harmoniously give us the best experience in living this kind of world. Value is my favorite. I love to play with the values, hues, and harmony. I like to put all the elements in good arrangement, which makes us appreciate. Because once the art is not in harmony, it also affects our eyes and our mind. I love putting harmony, values in my works. (Tony, 35 years old)

Kaye, an international art student from Indonesia who is currently taking up Fine Arts in the Philippines, finished VCD class three semesters ago. She identified elements of arts in nature as follows:

I think one of the elements is color. Without color in God’s creation, this world is just plain, not catchy. Just like flowers, they’re dull without colors. They have different characteristics such as texture, color, how they are balanced with other colors. God is an amazing artist. He knows everything. His creations are the greatest. (Kaye, 18 years old)
Kaye must be referring to complementary colors where the balance of color can be seen, from a color theory of the color wheel. According to Mackay (2002), biblical integration can be compared to a beautiful picture that uses exquisite colors. Individually, each color is attractive and alive, but integrated into a whole by the hand of the Master Artist; the colors cry out with the beauty of coherent, unified images. So, it is that integrating of faith, learning and life under the Master’s hand that has potential for creativity and attractive picture reflecting the splendor of the great Master Artist (Mackay, 2002).

Enrique, another Tradigital Fine Arts student who took VCD class eight semesters ago, related the Art Fundamentals by looking at and feeling the nature. A work scholar, Enrique, who graduated from Fine Arts degree last year, is now working full-time as an instructor in a university. He is currently enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts degree program. He grew up in the province and attended college in Manila. He sustained his matriculation by earning it as he works and tends the garden at the university’s Art Park. He won various major awards in national art competitions sponsored by the known establishments from the industry such as Petron that believe and uphold artistic talents and abilities of the local art students. Enrique narrated:

*In a mountain, you will see the flow of the lines, the tone; away from it the lighter color you will see, close to it, it becomes darker. You then can see contrast. Looking at nature makes me feel relaxed, comforted and peaceful. Our body is unified in nature.* (Enrique, 25 years old)

Like the other participants, Rey, who also finished VCD course eight semesters ago experienced integration of faith, values, and learning in VCD class through God’s creation. Rey stated:

*Basic example is the tree. When we look at the trees, we see thousands of leaves. Multiplied a thousand times, that is repetition. Balance, when a tree grows. Normally it grows a formal balance way. Dominance, another principle that if you look at the tree, the main thing that you can notice is the trunk itself, the leaves, the branches are part of the design but the dominant is the trunk.* (Rey, 24 years old)

Jay also related element of art, i.e. tonal value and balance as the principle of art to God’s creation. He explained:

*Light and darkness show contrast. The same as creating, so you can let things you want to emphasize in your painting clearly. God created not only the sea, but also land so there are creatures in the sea, same on the land, and that is balance.* (Jay, 25 years old)

Another participant, Glenn, also vividly related art elements and principles to God’s creation. He had his VCD experience six semesters ago. He placed a second placer in a national art contest sponsored by a popular brand of art materials, in cooperation with a university in Manila. He said, his knowledge of art fundamentals in relation to IFVL, particularly the appreciation of God’s creation, the nature, applied to artistic works such as painting or photography:

*In our surroundings, there is what we call art. Ours is filled with art; you just have to pop it out so that you can present it to others as visual representation. Repetition, variation, principles of design are all present in our surroundings, like composition, organization of each element. Element like branch of a tree. Not noticed, one can make a design out of it, or place any of its parts such as lines, colors, texture, to make a representation by way of drawing.* (Bong, 19 years old)

IFVL in the VCD class is evident in all the verbatim responses of the participants with consistency. Bert’s response can recapitulate what the all the rest of the participants shared as he he related art elements and principles to faith and values:

*After the VCD class, I know now that everything is art; every art is related to
God’s creation. Even with the smallest created being, there’s always a design. Beetles, ants, if you look at them in a microscope or macro photography, you will see the very fine details, art that God created. You will realize that God’s creation is beautiful; it is all awesome. Principles always exist, always shown, expressed, and foundation of everything like my belief, religion. God is love and love is principle itself. In art, principle must always be present. (Bert, 22 years old)

What the participants expressed in the interviews on their experience of IFVL in their VCD class were triangulated or validated in their artworks. For example, Cassandra said, “What I learned from the class, I brought it all the way ‘til now even after graduation. It brought a big impact in the way I create my works. As I compare my works to the elements and principles, constantly I’m in the process of developing in a sense, evolving as an artist.”

Similar to Cassandra, Ricardo also appreciated the value of IFVL in his VCD class. Ricardo described:

Every time I work on my artwork, being one with the faith, with His creation, He gave me the ability to create, so the fundamentals of art, I incorporate it when I do art. I put it in mind, that I have the power to create. In nature as composition in flowers, color combination, we have guide in textbooks; we have them already in nature. Then we should apply it. The impact was strong for me. Before, I did not have a label or name on things I was doing. I would just create, execute my drawings and paintings. But when I learned the art fundamentals in my VCD classes, that’s when I said ‘ohhhh…’ that’s what I call the nameless, but I have the idea what those are. Now, I have names for them.” (Ricardo 40 years old, Junior Fine Arts student)

Although VCD students do not necessarily draw or paint natural objects, they understand and appreciate that nature or God’s creations are best examples of artworks which apply perfectly the art fundamentals they learn in class which em-

Figure 4. Cassandra’s work before VCD course

Figure 5. Cassandra’s artwork after exposure in VCD course using IFVL
ploys IFVL. Below are Ricardo’s artworks: before VCD course, during, and after the course.

Figure 6. Before VCD course

Figure 7. During the VCD course

Figure 8. After VCD course

God’s identity is not determined by creation, but it is through God’s actions in and through creation that people know him and He reveals Himself in a sensory and perceivable way (Myers, 2015). Creation is depicted as an active and evident witness to God’s identity and it bears witness that those with ears to hear can, but to hear, people have to approach creation with a well-ordered imagination, Myers explained. Having a good knowledge of the art fundamentals can set one’s imagination in order, as a serious art student realizes its importance and necessity (CAE, 2017.) Bell (2015) also said that, human beings as artists are also capable of aesthetic creation, reflection, self-evaluation, and visual communication. Bell continued saying that the Bible teaches about art, and has discovered many verses that deal with various aspects of art. She talks about secular artists who have always observed that art is universal; all societies in every economic or political situation, in all time periods, have produced art. Humanists have correctly observed that art is integral to human nature, but have not known why. Bell quoted Genesis 1:1, “God is the original creator”, the one whom the word “creator” is truly descriptive. Ex nihilo or He created out of nothing not the objects that exist, but even the materials out of which they are made (Holmes, 1975). Bell also quoted Psalm 8:3-4, describing the creation of the heavens as “the work of thy fingers”.
To follow Bell’s statement, Clowney (2011) writes about Plato’s idea on art/artists as imitating/copying nature; he said a feature of one of Plato’s theory is Art as Imitation. He was not the first or the last person to think that art imitates reality. In his Republic he said that art imitates the object and events of life; the idea was still very strong in the Renaissance when Vasari, in his Lives of the Painters, said that painting is just the imitation of all the living things or nature with their colors and designs just as they are.

The participants of this study identified art elements and principles by the examples from nature they named. They have already a strong notion and a belief that God is the creator of the universe, down to the examples they gave. Ellen G. White stated that, from home the only school room for children 8-10 years of age should be in the open air, amid the opening flower and nature’s beautiful scenery. Their teacher should be the treasures of nature. These lessons, imprinted upon the minds of young children that are pleasant, attractive scenes of nature, will not be soon forgotten (White, 2000). Like White, Holmes (1987) supports the deliberate training of students to integrate FVL. He said that, in the institution that integrates faith and learning, the atmosphere of Christian learning is cultivated. Such are the participants’ answers upon naming the elements and principles of art as they relate them to God’s creation. God also bestowed each of human being the desire to create in his/her own right. Young people have so much creative energy. Art educators have the special task to encourage the youth, the students, and help them hone their skills (Van Der Pol, 2006). Therefore, in an Adventist institution like AUP, students should be led to see God’s great power through His creativity evident in His creations such as those exemplified by the participants of this study. It is the through this that the outcomes of IFVL will be manifested.

Relating art fundamentals to spirituality and real life. Another theme that emerged on how the participants experienced IFVL in their VCD class is drawing of spiritual implications out of their artwork relating them to life’s situations. Both interview and artwork from the participants support this emergent theme. For example, Rey, who graduated recently from Fine Arts narrated:

When you incorporate elements and principles in your life in daily manner, things that you do repetitively, in the right manner, harmony comes in. And when you forget to do something, there is chaos, a possibility of chaos, it will ruin your day. Incorporating repetition in your daily life, you also incorporate harmony. In terms of balance as we studied here in this university, the four fundamentals as physical, social, mental and of course we cannot forget spiritual, the dominant principle, that is what you live your life for. If you speak about Christianity or certain religious beliefs, the dominant factor should be the Creator himself, the main thing that you should focus on. Same as lifestyle, same as design, same as in art, same as in your faith. (Rey, 24 years old)

Enrique also shared how he related spirituality to his art fundamentals class and to life’s situations. He said:

Like lines, we as humans have limitations. Line can be a guide that we can follow. We express feeling, what is inside us. If we’re angry and we scribble lines, we make fast lines, rough sketch. When in peace, at rest, for example typhoon, the horizon is not even, but if no typhoon, you can see calmness, you can see straight lines. (Enrique, 25 years old)

Charmaine, a senior Fine Arts student, expressed his view on the spiritual implications of art fundamentals such as harmony and balance as also manifested in the artworks presented below evolving from less to more meaningful with spirituality.

I think first and foremost, having the center of interest is an art principle. God is the center of our lives. Next, repetition can mean continuous in faith. We are only focused on the center of interest which is God. Harmony and balance? We know
how to balance school life. When God created the heavens and the earth, He has an eye for art. He is the one superior in art. He created the world in Genesis 1:1, with unity, balance, contrast, harmony, and with rhythm. That is what opened our eyes in experiencing art and understanding art.” (Charmaine 20 years old, senior Fine Arts student)

Bert also valued the enriching experiences he had in his VCD class. He shared how he discovered deeper meaning in applying art fundamentals in artworks and relating such to real life. He depicted his artwork prior to VCD (Figure 13) as his pre-test output as not showing harmony compared to his later works (Figures 14-15) in which he applied harmony and other art elements and principles he learned in the class which integrates FVL:

Before, I’d just draw, paint, make art. Before, I didn’t know what these all are about. After VCD class, I learned that everything is related to God’s creation. Even the smallest created being there’s always a design. I learned a lot about basic art fundamental, about art composition, about how to set the subject, how to portray ideas, how to apply it in real life. For example, harmony. As a human, we need to harmonize with people, with the humanity, to be with them, socialize,
share; apply in faith. (Bert 22 years old, second year Fine Arts student)

Values have also been practiced in the VCD class such as prayerfulness, perseverance, and professionalism. For example, Enrique who graduated from Fine Arts, narrated how he applied values in his creative works. As a result, Enrique, a national art competition champion, has developed his creative skills. Like the other participants who applied art fundamentals they learned in VCD class which integrated faith and values with learning, Enrique’s artworks has evolved from good, to better, to excellent:

Before I make a design, I always pray. I ask for creativity and I believe God gave me that creativity. God sustained me. I don’t want to mention my achievements, but God gave me inspiration. The first time I used brush, my hands were shaking. I developed perseverance, because passion motivated me to improve. In college, I constantly joined competitions. I trained my hand day and night. I apply professionalism in my works so I can...
compete. (Enrique 25 years old, Fine Arts graduate)

Figure 16. Before VCD course

Figure 17. During VCD course

Figure 18. After VCD course

The Christian worldview author, Harris (2004), speaks of what Bert and other participants said. White (2000) stated that creatures such as trees, birds, flowers, valleys, hills, lakes, and even the incidents around provide lessons to teach in life; the beautiful sceneries are God’s creations inviting humans to be acquainted with Him as the Creator. As shown in the results of this study, the CVD curriculum at AUP introduces God’s omnipotence through His wonderful creations that show art elements and principles and relate them to real life and spirituality. The participants’ answers resound what Young (2013) as professor, architect, and art and design practitioner, said on IFVL. He believes that the world people interact with daily is an evidence of God’s unlimited creativity. People’s ability to experience, question, and be instruments of change is an extension of His creativity. If humans claim according to Him, to be made in the image of God, they acknowledge that He is the Creator and Sustainer and has passed these characteristics on to them. (Young, 2013). Van Der Pol (2006), in his study on IFVL, states that in Christian Art Education, art is a process of making and interpreting visual reminders of God’s creation. It begins with a fact that God created humans in His own image as aesthetic beings, able to respond and appreciate the physical beauty of the world (Van Der Pol, 2006).
Integration of faith, values, and learning in the Visual Concept Development class was evident in the participants’ responses. Both interview data and the student artworks show how the students practiced IFVL. This study’s results show that a course that integrates learning particularly in the art with faith and values can be more meaningful. For example, the students identified God’s creation such as trees, birds, flowers, insects, or nature in general as instruments in discovering art fundamentals, i.e. elements of design (line, shape, color, tone, texture, and space) and basic principles (unity, balance, and dominance) which they reported have guided them in improving their creative works. They also related their application of these art elements and principles to spirituality and real life situations. They have become critical thinkers by reflecting what they produce as artworks to their ways of life. They refer to God as the Master Artist whose creative works manifest art elements and principles. It is in this beauty that humankind see in their surroundings that they reflect unity, harmony, and peace with their fellow human beings as shown in the responses of the study participants. These results imply that IFVL needs to be deliberately designed in the curriculum where the role of the teacher in facilitating IFVL in the art class is important. The findings of the study contribute to the limited literature on IFVL particularly in the teaching of art.

Further exploration and development of a well-designed CVD materials (interesting and challenging, directly connected to real life, and experiential) is recommended for a full integration of FVL. It will encourage students to develop their independent and critical thinking, and Christian faith and values because ultimately integration must be manifested as outcomes in students’ lives. Future studies will be directed to action research such as the evaluation of CVD teaching itself and teaching materials geared towards improvement of teaching and learning especially in outcomes-based Christian education integrating faith, values, and learning.

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