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Making the Shoe Fit: Content for Contemporary Foundations

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Departments of Art and Design have changed, and our Foundations programs just don't seem to fit as well as they once did. In many ways the Foundation is like a pair of shoes. If our shoes are a poor fit, we do not walk well or far in them; the same is true of the foundation. The programs of study above the foundation will be more successful if the foundation fits them well. When most of us think about Art and Design Foundations, we have in mind some version of the Basic Course originally developed at the Bauhaus. Part of our problem with today's foundations is that we have simply outgrown the Bauhaus model.

The Bauhaus model was a sampler program. In addition to teaching valuable thinking skills, it was intended to track students into one of seven media-related disciplines: clay, stone, wood, metal, textiles, glass or color, which was roughly equivalent to painting. The media taught at the Bauhaus were rather limited due to difficult economic times and Gropius' belief that all of the arts serve architecture. Architecture is therefore the highest level of study in the Arts; at the Bauhaus it was the equivalent of graduate study. The Bauhaus Curriculum diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the curriculum structure envisioned by the Bauhaus Masters. The model was inwardly radial; progressing from the perimeter toward the center, which, of course, was Architecture. The Basic course forms the perimeter; students were evaluated at the conclusion of the Basic Course and if they were admitted to further study, students were tracked into the media for which they had shown the greatest aptitude.

Figure 1
Bauhaus Curriculum Model (Itten, 1964, p. 13)

The goals of the Basic Course were:

1. To free the creative powers of the student and give students confidence in their own creative ability

2. To make the student's career choice easier, discovery of affinity or talent with specific materials

3. To convey the fundamental principles of design (Meggs 1998 p. 278)

The problem is that in contemporary schools of Art and Design, disciplines and media have proliferated so that it is no longer possible to sample all of the media found in a post-secondary school of Art and Design. Realistically, by the time it closed in 1933, the Bauhaus itself had probably outgrown the sampling approach. Contemporary schools teach photography, printmaking, digital media, game design, interactivity, installation, animation, video, and more. A one, or even a two-year introductory course of study is simply not long
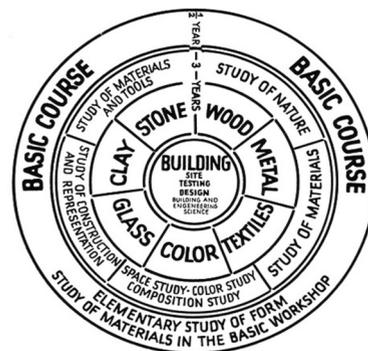
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enough to sample all of the media now taught in most post-secondary departments of Art and Design. The diagram below is probably a better description of what we are currently doing, and this model is outwardly radial; students progress from the center outward. Upper level students move toward one of many disciplines, not necessarily Architecture.
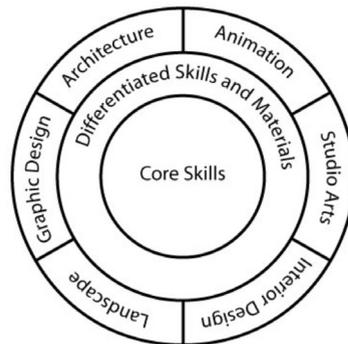

Figure 2
Contemporary Comparison Model (Venes 2009)

Furthermore, colleges and universities have restructured and expanded their offerings, so that the foundation must serve more programs and more diverse programs than ever before. In its present form, we cannot expect the traditional foundation to serve all of areas in a department. Programs contend with one another for the limited time available in the Foundations courses, and faculty are dissatisfied. Mary Stewart, Director of Foundations at Florida State University articulated the problem in a 2008 panel presentation at CAA:

The Foundations faculty believe in the value of the shared experience and are convinced that a deliberate transition from high school and art school is beneficial. Generally, the upper division teachers respect this commitment, but often question the education the freshmen receive. The material taught doesn't closely match the specific skills needed in each discipline. As a result, a "second foundation" must be offered in the sophomore year to provide the students with these specific skills. The upper division teachers conclude that the foundation program is a failure, and an endless cycle of curricular discussion follows. (Stewart 2008)

The evaluation committee at the College of Design at Iowa State University described the same widespread problem this way:

First, there does not yet appear to be a shared vision across the departments in the college about where the design core should lead. In other words, the potential impacts of this first year on succeeding years has not yet been fully envisioned or anticipated. (Melnick et al., 2005, p. 6)

Often, we hear that each discipline now needs its own foundation; and we wonder if a common foundation is even possible. Otherwise, if we continue to believe that there are "Core" skills in Art and Design, what are they?

The discovery of these shared core skills was the topic of a three-year study conducted at Iowa State University. Working with the theory that a good Art and Design Core program would be made up of content which is useful to all the disciplines that receive its students, this study used both qualitative and quantitative techniques to identify potential core material. The Iowa State study included over twenty in-depth interviews with faculty whose disciplines are as diverse as Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Interior Design, Community and Regional Planning, Graphic Design and Integrated Studio Art.[1] The faculty members were asked what thinking skills, knowledge bases, and manipulative abilities

1. It is perhaps worth noting that at Iowa State University Integrated Studio Arts includes Painting, Drawing, Photography, Mixed-media, Ceramics, Fibers, Printmaking, Woodworking/Furniture design, Art History, and Metalworking/Jewelry. Sculpture, especially large-scale sculpture, was not emphasized but did occasionally find a home in Ceramics, Metalworking or Woodworking. Students who demonstrated aptitude for three-dimensional form on a large scale gravitated or were directed toward Architecture.

students need in order to be successful in their respective disciplines. The interviews were transcribed and then analyzed for commonalities and similarities. The findings were validated by members checks followed by in a follow-up validation survey. Based on that study, we can believe that even diverse Art and Design disciplines continue to share similarities that provide ample material for a shared foundation.

The top twelve skills common to even diverse design disciplines were:

1. Thinking critically about: design inputs, client requests and motivations, art or design products and results, developing work, or design process.

2. Visual communication

3. Problem formulation: the ability to formulate, identify, and/or define, a design problem

4. The ability to connect or respond to the cultural context

5. The ability to work through a design process

6. Problem solving

7. Iteration / recombination / and ongoing filtration: The ability to improve a design or project by sequential development and ongoing assessment

8. Seeing alternatives and consequences

9. The ability to generate multiple alternatives in response to a design task

10. Evaluation / Assessment: Assess information and resources, use design criteria to evaluate results, distinguish designs that work from those that do not, and evaluate work in progress

11. A sense of professional ethics/ethical practice

12. The ability to see and manipulate space and spatial relationships

The discovered competencies were also grouped and ranked by category: thinking skills, knowledge bases, and manipulative abilities (for lists by category see Appendix A). Overall, the study revealed some interesting and perhaps new ways of thinking about Art and Design Education.

The Thinking Skills

Thinking skills appear central to success in all fields of Art and Design. In terms of time spent, the thinking skills occupied a large part of the interview sessions. Sandy, a faculty member from Graphic Design describes the importance of thinking skills:

"...I guess design is a lot about thinking skills. I think thinking is king... if you can't think it, you certainly can't make it. ...but there are a lot of hand skills that come into play..."

Many of the thinking skills identified would have sounded as much like Biology or English as Art and Design: critical thinking, evaluation, analysis, synthesis, and problem solving. What appears to define design thinking, however, is that we apply these thinking skills to art and design tasks not one at a time or in sequence, but in bunches and bundles. We are mental multi-taskers; multiple thinking involves bunching, or the simultaneous consideration and coordination of diverse lines of thought. These lines of thought are diverse in terms of level, scale and complexity, or parts to whole. The second and more prevalent thought pattern, bundling, is closely associated with design process, and it is a lot like spinning fragments of wool into yarn. Different cognitive abilities enter, contribute to the strand and then taper away; nonetheless, the process is continuous with several cognitive processes functioning simultaneously. Analysis overlaps selection; integration and synthesis happen simultaneously, somehow even analysis and synthesis coexist. This complex thought process is characterized by bundled thinking skills, multi-solving, iteration, and revision. Here Amy from Architecture and Bobbi from Interior Design reflect on these bundled thought patterns.

Amy: *"Design is all about iteration, and so many different kinds of levels, and so you analyze, screen and synthesize, and then oftentimes reanalyze, rescreen, and resynthesize... and you might do that about many things simultaneously."*

Bobbi: *"Well, if synthesis is a kind of pulling together of individual partial solutions, to problems, and to combine solutions, and a subsequent step in synthesis is pulling combined solutions together into the final solution, then I think that can happen... that better happen before analysis is complete."*

The diagram below represents the complexity of the thought process that characterizes art and design thinking.
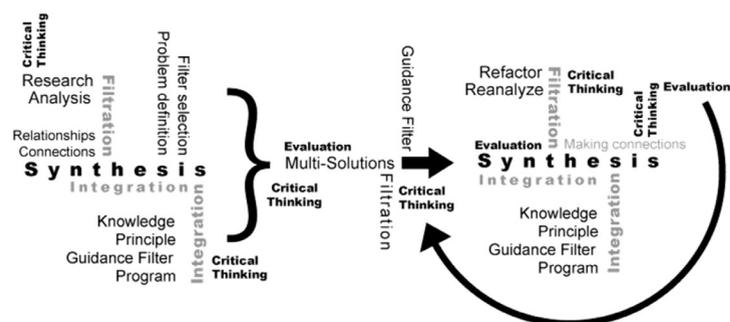
Figure 3
Bundled thinking skills (Venes 2009)

The Knowledge Bases

The Iowa State study also identified a group of knowledge bases that appear useful across the disciplines studied (Appendix A). In this area, it would be difficult to overstate the importance of the ability to see and manipulate spatial relationships; four of the top ten knowledge bases were directly related to that ability. Knowledge bases in general emerged as an important factor in directing design process. As the study progressed, four influences on design process became apparent: knowledge, principle, program, and filter.

Knowledge refers to the body of learned information the artist or designer brings to the task, knowledge such as, for example, that light colors generally advance while dark colors recede. Principle may take at least two forms, visual aesthetic and socio-ethical. It appears all artists and designers work on both kinds of principles to varying degrees. Visual-aesthetic principles are the familiar elements and principles of design with perhaps a few additions such as hierarchy. Socio-ethical principles include such things as concern for the environment, access and equality, fairness, or reduction of poverty. Visual-aesthetic principles are learned ways of considering visual problems and are therefore knowledge-based. Social-ethical principles are tied to value structures; students learn to be attentive to them, but they are only partially knowledge-based.

Program refers to the "givens" of a project, dimensions, needs, costs, and functions. In general the program is a list of specifications that the design or commission must meet. The program is usually negotiated with the client and involves little creative input. Filter, on the other hand, is a creative influence that the artist or designer develops and which is unique to each project. Filter development begins with research; critical thinking applied to the research begins to identify factors that will contribute to the project. As the problem solving process advances certain identified factors will become more prominent and in effect become

Figure 4
The Four influences on design process (Venes 2009)

criteria or concepts which drive the design process and eventually serve to evaluate the product. The interesting thing about filters is that the artist or designer creates them for each project.

Manipulative Abilities

The category of "Manipulative abilities" was intended to identify psychomotor skills such as drawing, model building, or carving. The common manipulative skills were representation, manual drawing, perspective drawing, and the ability to use technology. Virtually all of these could be considered aspects of drawing, although we do not usually consider digital drawing to be a part of the standard drawing curriculum. Digital media do, however, offer more efficient ways to teach some foundational concepts such as color or repetition/contrast.

One surprising discovery in the Iowa State study was that a large portion of the standard drawing curriculum was not entirely suited to the foundations level. The traditional drawing program spent nearly half the semester dealing with the effects of light and shadow; this was not wanted by most of the diverse upper level programs. Contour drawing and strategies for representing space were wanted; but, instead of light and shadow, the other programs wanted sketching and drawing for visualization or drawing from imagination. This indicates that in order to achieve a good fit, light and shadow should probably be placed above the foundations level in the Studio Arts program. Participants in the study identified four different purposes for drawing, and four different sources from which to draw.

Purpose

1. Drawing as composition

2. Drawing as communication

3. Drawing as thinking

4. Technical drawing

Sources

1. Drawing from Observation

2. Drawing from Imagination

3. Drawing from Visualization

4. Drawing from Experience

The various disciplines placed different emphasis on these eight variables. Drawing from experience, for example, was central to Architecture, but drawing as composition was not very important in that program. On the other hand, drawing as composition was the main purpose in Studio Art, while drawing from experience was not part of the mindset in the area. In the following comparison between Stu's view (Studio Art) of drawing sources to Sally's view (Graphic Design) we can see a disconnect between two different ways of thinking about drawing skills, and probably two different purposes.

Sally: *"I need them to simply be able to do ideation drawing, which is like a rapid visualization that you don't teach. We've tried to incorporate it into the drawing foundation class, but it doesn't... most of the people who teach that class don't think that that's a valuable skill."*

Stu: *"A lot of the programs said, 'we don't see the relevance of drawing from observation, because the rest of us are going to be drawing from their imagination'. They're going to be drawing and representing things that don't exist."*

Interviewer: *"So, in your mind, let me clarify this... what I think I hear you saying, drawing from observation informs drawing from imagination."*

Stu: *"Yes, exactly..."*

Interviewer: *"To draw from imagination... the learning experience for that is drawing from observation."*

Stu: *"Yes... or drawing from some other form of research. Imagination is always limited by your experience."*

The problem with the above exchange is mindset. For Stu, drawing things that don't exist is necessarily drawing from imagination.

Alice and Arnie from Architecture have something entirely different in mind.

Alice: *"It could be a very beautiful ash tray for all anybody cares, you know… because it's not related to inhabited space. So I think the ability to connect your own sort of body experience to what you are imagining, represent it, and communicate it to somebody else, is the real key."*

Arnie: *"Well, I think for me it's imagining one's body in some place and being relatively precise about it. I guess that's the only way I can say it, and part of that has to do with going to places to experience that."*

Alice and Arnie apparently want drawing from a sort of kinesthetic experience.

The Stumbling Blocks

Overall the Iowa State curriculum study identified seventy commonalities among the six diverse disciplines in the College. Considering the level of diversity, we had hoped for six; we found seventy. One has to conclude that there is no shortage of common core material. Less diverse colleges or departments would likely find even more similarities. If that is true, why are we having so much trouble developing workable foundations programs? The Iowa State study also revealed at least four stumbling blocks to curriculum development in the Foundation:

1. Traditional content blocks

2. Cross disciplinary communication

3. Knowledge bases and thinking skills

4. Media dependence

The light and shadow issue discussed earlier in connection with the drawing curriculum is an example of the issues that can develop as a result of traditional content blocks. The people who were teaching representation were from the Studio Arts Program, and they saw the entry-level representation course as a single drawing course made up of perhaps five or six essential parts. The light and shadow part of the course and the compositional strategies, however, were of little interest to other disciplines. It is likely that many times we tend to think we have a single unified course, when we actually need to see a number of elements and skills. This problem is about parts-to-whole thinking; we need to see both the whole *and* its parts.

The exchange between Sally and Stu, Alice and Arnie about drawing is an example of a cross-disciplinary communication issue. Alice (Architecture Faculty) also corrected the interviewer (Graphic Design) on another occasion.

Alice: *"When I use the word 'rendering,' I mean the surface shading and coloring of a line drawing."*

Interviewer: *"Ahhh, you see, that's one of those terms that changes from…"*

Alice: *"When you put render on a computer modeling thing, it gives it the shades and shadows, and the surface textures. It's bringing to life the surface of something that may just be a line drawing."*

Interviewer: *"You see, and to me it would just be a kind-of generalized term for drawing... very interesting."*

Alice: *"Drawing is drawing and rendering is rendering."*

Interviewer: *"Rendering is more like coloring... I think, come to think of it, I've heard the Interiors use it that way too."*

Alice: *"Yeah, rendering is coloring as far as I'm concerned."*

Cross-disciplinary communication is a problem when we have different words for the same concept or when the same word means different things to faculty in different disciplines. It happens more often than one might think, and some awareness that these communication issues exist is necessary.

One of the more difficult stumbling blocks that became apparent during the Iowa State study is an issue related to knowledge-bases and thinking skills. It is clear that diverse art and design disciplines have more knowledge-bases and thinking skills in common than manipulative abilities. This is largely because many of the manipulative abilities are media related, and media tends to differentiate the disciplines from one another. A likely conclusion would be that the Foundation should focus on knowledge bases and thinking skills. We should remember that the Bauhaus Basic Course also taught ways of thinking and talking about art that continue to be central to art and design education.

> *The foundation of my design teaching was the general theory of contrast. Light and dark, material and texture studies, form and color theory, rhythm and expressive forms were discussed and presented in their contrasting effects. Finding and enumerating the various possibilities of contrast was always one of the most exciting lessons because students realized that a whole new world was opening up for them. Such contrasts are: Large-small, long-short, broad-narrow, thick-thin, black-white, mush-little, straight-bent, pointed-blunt, horizontal-vertical, diagonal-circular, high-low, plane-line, plane-volume, smooth-rough, hard-soft, still-moving, light-heavy, transparent-opaque, steady-intermittent, fluid-solid, sweet-sour, strong-weak, loud-soft, plus the seven color contrasts.* (Itten, 1964, p. 12)

The problem is that, ordinarily, we want the foundation to be at the entry level so that the student work can be used, as the Bauhaus did, to direct subsequent study. However, thinking skills have emerged as the most prominent common needs, and thinking skills do not exist in a vacuum. Thinking is an applied skill. It must always be thinking *about* something, and that something is usually knowledge. The problem, of course, is that at the entry level students have not yet acquired many knowledge bases on which to exercise the thinking skills. The successful foundation, therefore, must artfully integrate knowledge and thinking skills if the program is to function effectively. In fact, the study revealed numerous instances across the disciplines where knowledge and thinking skills are routinely integrated, including some skills that could not be classified as either clearly knowledge or clearly thinking, but some mixture of the two. It may well be that this is a natural direction and result of design process (Appendix A).

Conclusion

The study conducted at Iowa State suggests that a good fit between the foundations program and subsequent programs of study is possible, but we need to develop a contemporary foundations curriculum element by element, thinking skill by thinking skill, and knowledge base by knowledge base, not necessarily in the traditional groupings. This approach will enable current foundations to achieve a good fit with the diverse range of disciplines they now serve. We must simply change our mental model to foundations courses which provide students with knowledge that is truly transferrable to upper division coursework. Upper division programs will need to modify curriculum immediately above the foundation to interpret the thinking skills learned in the foundation through discipline specific media and tasks. Two of the three original Basic Course objectives remain fundamental: developing creative thinking and applying the elements and principles of design, but we must learn to recognize student aptitude independent of familiar media. The needs of every program will, of course differ somewhat. It is likely, for example, that schools with more lively sculpture programs may need to research how that must influence the foundation. Nonetheless, once we have understood the four influences on design process and the integrated nature of knowledge-bases and thinking skills, this study suggests that the following list of skills can serve as a starting point in developing the design foundation. Activities that lead students to develop these abilities should be provide a useful beginning to study in a wide variety of Art and Design disciplines.

- Apply thinking skills in bundles

- Balance opposing thinking skills

- Manipulate form and space

- Apply principles to visual process

- Invent and apply a filter

- Generate multiple solutions to a visual problem (Venes 2009)

Appendix A: Validated Results: The Most Common Skills Breakdown*

Thinking Skills

1. Thinking critically about: design inputs, client requests and motivations, art or design products and results, developing work, or design process.

2. Problem formulation: the ability to formulate, identify, or define a problem

3. Problem solving

4. Seeing relationships and connections / Seeing alternatives and consequences

5. Evaluation / Assessment: Assess information and resources use design criteria to evaluate results, distinguish designs that work from those that do not, and evaluate work in progress

6. Integration-Synthesis

Knowledge bases

1. Visual communication

2. The ability to work through a design process

3. See and manipulate space and spatial relationships

4. Connect / respond to the cultural context

5. Know and use appropriate research strategies

Integrated Skills

1. Iteration / recombination / and ongoing filtration: The ability to improve a design or project by sequential development and ongoing assessment

2. The ability to generate multiple alternatives in response to the design task

3. The ability to apply a filter to guide design process, choices, and results

4. See and manipulate the relationship of parts to whole

5. A sense of audience or user: Design for human interaction

Manipulative Abilities

1.   Representation

2.   Manual drawing

3.   Perspective drawing

4.   The ability to use technology

*   *Note —This list represents the items that elicited the highest commonality scores.*
       That is to say the skills that were of greatest value to the greatest number of disciplines.
       Departments with less diversity will probably find even more common ground.

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Article

Teaching Critical Thinking Skills Though Critique: Participation and the Empathic Environment

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Critique is the keystone of art education at the college level. When it works, the educational experience is strong and sustainable, but when it doesn't, the whole structure collapses. Student participation is necessary for the development of critical thinking skills and artistic growth, but unfortunately, some of the traditions and habits that exist within art school critiques discourage rather than encourage student contributions.

In art school, my fellow students and I often struggled to learn from critiques. Many of us were unable to participate in consistent, meaningful ways and were unsure how to begin to do so. We were uncertain of what was expected of us and emotions were often so high that we expended disproportionate energy protecting ourselves or other students rather than learning and practicing critical thinking skills.[1] Many professors did not, for whatever reason, keep the tone constructive, nor did they teach us how to use critical language effectively.

When I began teaching, and reflected upon my goals as an instructor, I saw the challenges I was presented with as problems I would need to "fix." Lack of consistent student participation was one that required urgent attention, because it was, and is, so fundamental to achieving my goals as a teacher. So I asked myself and others, "How can I get students to participate?" Over the years, as my teaching evolved and my perspective shifted with my experiences as an art student, a college teacher, and then a psychotherapist, I began to ask a different kind of question: "Why do students participate?" This question led me to refocus my energy. I turned my attention to creating a teaching and learning environment that encourages participation on a core level and frames challenges as opportunities for the building of critical thinking skills. I have developed teaching methods to this end over the years, at four different college art programs, and found them to be successful, flexible and sustainable.

Why focus on participation?

On a superficial level, group critiques are more productive when students participate. There is more variety than the teacher's single point of view and students have fresh perspectives to offer each other. On a much deeper level, however, participation in critique is vital because students must actively think and speak in order to learn. Silent critiques are not simply lost opportunities to get feedback about artwork, they are lost opportunities to develop students' critical thinking skills and encourage learning.

A paramount goal of critique is to help students develop the critical thinking skills that are required for meaningful artistic maturation and the building of sustainable learning practices to be used in the future. Critical thinking is considered a kind of higher mental process. The writer Edmund Burke Feldman defines the critical thinking skills that make up this process, in the context of art education, in the following way:

1. Common complaints about critiques are that they are not constructive or helpful, students don't understand what they are being told or what is being asked of them (Reaves, 1997), there are frequent "emotional outbursts (Elkins, 1991)", students feel isolated and/or attacked, comments can be abusive, faculty and students often have differing agendas (Kendall and Crawford, 2007) and biases based on their own experiences and, many times, students within the group have differing biases and agendas that are rarely disclosed or fully understood by anyone involved, and students feel uncomfortable, isolated or hurt when peers refuse to participate (Reaves, 1997).

These processes entail the following operations and skills: analyzing situations, identifying problems, gathering information, coping with ambiguity, reasoning from evidence, interpreting information, tolerating uncertainty, forming hypotheses, creating meaning, devising explanations, expressing opinions and defending judgments (Feldman, 1996).

Cognitive scientists have a handy way of conceptualizing how we learn these things. We create and hold in our minds structures that help us organize and make sense of information. As we are exposed to more input, these structures shift and change and become increasingly sophisticated. The more information that is put into this system, the more nuanced the structures become. So, information about how to "do" critical thinking comes largely from actually doing it. Students must construct, deconstruct and reconstruct ways of thinking as they go. Because of the way we learn complex mental processes, active participation in critique is necessary.

Equally important is ensuring that a critical mass of students participates in critique. The more students engaged in the process, the higher the sense of trust that is built through group participation. Sharing risk and establishing community through teamwork create the empathetic environment in which critique is most effective and educational.

When leading critiques, I focus on two goals. First, I want to work with students to create an environment in which they feel comfortable participating. Second, rather than just voicing an opinion, I want students to participate in ways that practice critical thinking skills. There are many challenges that make achieving these goals difficult. In this paper, I will address two examples of the challenges I have faced and which my research has shown to be common: language gaps and emotionality. In the second part of the paper, I will discuss some of the psychological theory that has informed my thinking.

Example #1: Language

One challenge to meaningful participation in critique is the language that is used to talk about art. This challenge has two aspects: the language gap itself, and the way this gap is addressed within the classroom environment.

When students are learning how to formulate and articulate ideas, as they are in critique, instructors and students need to speak the same language, or at least have some ability to translate information. However, in her 1997 MAT thesis on the characteristic of fine arts critiques, Katherine Reaves noted that critiques involve the use of an argot, *"a language clearly derived from the national language but which include special terms and special meanings…common words took on different or special meaning* (Reaves, 1997).*"*
This argot often leads to a language gap. After closely observing many art school critiques, James Elkins wrote that teachers often refer to sources or use language that *"require specialized learning that is not always available to undergraduates. Critiques can become places where a student scrambles to translate a teacher's language into her own* (Elkins, 1991).*"* Furthermore, and very importantly, the ability to critically discuss artwork requires that students learn to use language in a whole new way. It is very different from the language of personal judgment students are all too familiar with, but the two often get confused in the learning process.

When students misunderstand comments, they are likely to learn something other than what is intended and/or feel frustrated, discouraged and distracted. They are also unlikely to have a clear idea of what is expected of them in critique. The frustration caused by this language gap can discourage participation. However, the presence of the language gap is only part of the challenge. The deeper, more troubling dynamic that discourages participation is not the language gap itself, but failure by teachers to address and manage it.

Language gaps cannot be avoided, they arise in critique whenever a professor makes a comment about a student's work that the class can't understand. For example, a professor may suggest that something in the student's work "references" the work of a famous artist. In this case, a language gap may develop if the teacher fails to explain what "reference" means. In addition, the teacher may neglect to clearly articulate which element in the student's work lead to the comment, or to ask whether the students in the class are familiar with the famous artist. All of these instances have the similar effect of alienating or confusing students.

In another example, the professor may use vocabulary she assumes students would know but they don't such as, "these juxtaposing elements are confusing the delivery of your ideas." In this case, the student may only understand that there is a problem with her idea coming across but doesn't understand exactly what the problem is or what element of the work needs to be addressed.

In the examples above, the core problem is that if the professor has failed to create a critique environment in which language itself is a subject of conversation, in each example the student assumes she is supposed to understand the comment. Afraid of appearing deficient, she doesn't ask the professor to explain herself. Likely, others in the class do not understand the comment either. This creates a scenario in which not only is the critique ineffective, the students in the class feel increasingly self-conscious and vulnerable. As this kind of situation repeats, as it typically does over time, students lose opportunities to practice forming constructive comments with newly learned critical language.

Furthermore, and very importantly, the missed opportunities to address the presence of the language gap create a lack of trust in the room bred from empathic failure. Students are more aware of their struggles in understanding, their inability to use critical language effectively, and often think their professor doesn't "get it." Students become more protective of themselves, and more hesitant to comment on work.

Many students come to the critique experience already worried about embarrassing themselves by stumbling to find the right words or phrasing a comment awkwardly. My students often spend significant amounts of time trying to find the words they are looking for as they speak. They often repeat themselves several times, using different phrasing, in attempts to say what they really "mean to say." This is part of a normative, helpful, active learning process but it can be uncomfortable and embarrassing. When the classroom dynamic makes students feel like they should already understand critical language and how to use it during critique, their initial anxiety is compounded. In this situation, students become increasingly self-conscious, participate less and/or become increasingly frustrated.

The language gap is unavoidable, but it is not a bad thing. After all, our goal as teachers is to offer students the opportunity to learn new ways of thinking and speaking about their work. They need to learn the language, but they learn it best by practicing it and they won't risk practicing and making mistakes if the environment is too intimidating.

"Empathy," as I'm using it in this paper, is a kind of ability to see things from someone else's perspective and be sensitive to their needs. It is trying to imagine being "in someone else's shoes," so to speak. In the example above, faulty assumptions were made about the students' ability to process language and the instructor failed to empathize with students. The result was a loss of trust leading to increased discomfort for students and a less productive critique.

Unlike many things in the field of psychology, most professionals agree that empathic connection between people increases trust and is the foundation of effective communication and relating. So, empathy can be used as a teaching tool that turns the challenge presented by the kind of language gap in the example above, into an opportunity for growth.

Empathic connection can be strengthened when students understand that instructors assume they may not yet know how to use critical language effectively. Students are likely to be relieved by the knowledge that making mistakes or missteps is expected, part of the learning process and preferable to silence. Taking a few moments to convey this idea to students can turn a potentially destructive dynamic on its head. When students get this message, they are likely to feel understood. They become more willing to take risks because their lack of knowledge has been reframed as an opportunity for learning and growth, rather than a liability and chance for embarrassment. They also get the idea, however subtle, that their instructor "gets it" and is trying to work with them rather than talk at them.

Making the language gap a subject of conversation is a way of communicating empathy before challenges arise, so when they do, students feel free to ask questions about it. When we take a moment, (and it often takes only a moment), to focus the conversation on how students are receiving information, we call attention to their critical thinking process, causing them to reflect upon their own experience. This involves more than asking if students understand a comment, which often elicits a yes or no answer. It requires asking students to explain what they understood from a comment in their own words or taking time to ask for follow up questions. These efforts allow us to assess students' understanding, give them opportunities for practicing skills and impress upon them that their learning experience is at the heart of the process.

It is also helpful to make sure students feel they have the time and encouragement to correct themselves when necessary. Silence can be uncomfortable in critiques, but if it is established as part of the culture of the class by an encouraging leader, students may feel more comfortable taking time to form and reform their thoughts. The less experienced the student is, the more of this we would expect.

As instructors, we can make our own language a subject of conversation. For instance, we may explain what we mean when we refer to things like "juxtaposing subjects" or "iconographic imagery." Rather than saying simply, "that mark is distracting," I might add, "my eye is consistently drawn to it and away from other important areas of the picture."

We can mention that we are aware that some of these words, or different uses of common words, are new to students. Additionally, we can suggest that a word we are using could be replaced with another, more basic term, while still modeling our use on the one we want students to learn. When we make references to historic or contemporary art or artists, we can take just a minute to acknowledge aloud that students may not know what we're talking about, and impress upon them how vital it is that they research references they don't understand. We can take a little time to explain why the student's understanding of the references in her work is important. For example, rather than saying something like "Your work clearly references so-and-so's work", and leaving it at that, I might say "Your work seems to reference so-and-so's work. I think it's your choice of such and such as a way to talk about such and such that reminds me of this artist. Are you familiar with this artist? If not, I think you'd enjoy getting to know her work—you seem to have similar interests and it is important that artists and designers understand the context in which we are creating."

When we misspeak or phrase a comment in an ineffective way, which is inevitable, we can point it out and correct ourselves in a self-forgiving and enthusiastic way. By doing these things, we are both modeling how to learn and communicating empathy.

By acknowledging the language gap and making it a topic of conversation, teachers can contribute to a sense of empathic connection and encourage both participation in the critique and subsequent reflection on the conversation in ways that promote deeper learning.

Example #2: Emotions in critique

Emotions often run high in critiques. This presents a challenge to teaching when it distracts a group from focusing effectively on learning. As instructors, we often react to emotionality in critique as if it is too hot to touch. We either wholly ignore it or deal with students on an individual basis and move on. We rarely make it a subject of discussion in the group. Although this tendency to avoid emotionality during critique is understandable, (after all, our job is to teach, not parent our students), avoiding it does not make it go away.

On the contrary, when students are left responsible for managing this element of the critique environment, they are likely to feel unsafe and be preoccupied with a sense of impending emotional upheaval. When students feel this way, they participate less. Instead of avoiding it, we can look at the challenge of potential emotional discomfort as an opportunity for building trust through empathic connection, which in turn sets the groundwork for participation.

First, we need to correctly identify the challenge. Emotionally loaded unpleasant situations do not, necessarily, discourage learning. Emotionally loaded unpleasant situations that are met with invalidating or hurtful responses do. Minimizing, blaming, shaming and ignoring are all examples of this kind of invalidating response.

By way of illustration, imagine the following common scenario. During a critique, someone makes a critical comment that is awkwardly phrased and directed more at the artist than at the artwork. Comments like this often take the form of questions. For example, members in a critique group often say things like, "Why did you choose to do such and such?" This kind of "Why" questioning instantly puts the artist on the defensive and causes emotional tension. Another common variety of troublesome comment is the empty judgment: "I don't

like that (period)" or "That doesn't work for me (period)." People often have strong opinions about art, but in the context of critique, this is neither helpful to the artist nor helpful to the critic's process of building critical thinking skills.

When the receiving student responds by becoming upset and/or behaving "defensively," the class becomes uncomfortable. The professor either does not intervene at all or blames the receiving student for the situation. Perhaps the professor tells the receiving student, "try not to get too emotional," or, "don't get defensive," or, "don't take things so personally," or, "you need to leave your ego at the door." All of these comments are forms of blaming, shaming and minimizing, and students are very likely to experience them as hurtful. Compounding their frustration is the fact that they are often unaware of what they could do differently. In the future, when they are asked to comment on a work, they are likely to be preoccupied with either protecting themselves or with the seemingly likely prospect of hurting a peer and causing upset and trouble. In fact, I have found that many students are preoccupied with emotional risk for themselves or others at the outset of a class due to past experiences.

I used to think that emotionality itself was the problem. This felt like an insurmountable challenge because there are so many reasons why critiques are inevitably prone to emotionality. But now I see the core problem differently. The problem in the example above is not that a student made a hurtful comment and another student got upset, which caused discomfort for the whole group. The problem is that the student who responded to a hurtful comment was either ignored or reprimanded for his or her understandable reaction.

In this type of situation, invalidating responses such as these saddle students with the burden of maintaining the emotional tenor during critiques and shame the receiving student in a way that is intimidating to others who assume their turn could be next. Invalidating responses represent empathic failure, contribute to a lack of trust in the room, and, importantly, fail to teach students how to proceed in a different way. For students, when a situation like this arises, the potential for discomfort (or "pain," if you ask most students) becomes part of the classroom environment. Students may not know how to phrase their comments to avoid being hurtful and may fear that they themselves will be hurt when it's their turn to present work. So, they just say nothing.

There are many ways that teachers can address this problem. We can explain ways to comment helpfully, model through our own behavior and, most importantly, make the process of critique itself part of the conversation on an ongoing basis. When students begin asking "why" questions of the artist, I stop the critique and work with the entire group, directing their focus to the process. I might say something like "It's so tempting to ask questions of the artist (validating and normalizing for the commenting student) because we are really trying to understand her intentions. It's often more helpful to sit with our own experience of the work for a little while and share that first, so the artist can benefit from hearing other peoples' impressions. If you are wondering about a choice the artist made, it might help to point out what it is you are noticing and what lead you to ask the question about artistic choice."

Comments that take the form of empty judgment can be addressed with a simple statement such as, "Although we value peoples' opinions, since our goal in critique is to help the artist progress, let's see if we can get into more of a conversation about what, exactly, we are experiencing, so we can be most helpful." Students often need to be reminded that the

primary goals of critique are to help each other progress as artists and to practice critical thinking skills. Students can learn helpful ways to achieve these goals by watching one another and instructors. So instructors need to model patience, persistence and generosity of spirit. We are all on the same team during a critique and our goal is to be helpful so the artist leaves the session with ideas about how her work is being perceived and either catalyzing questions about how to proceed or ways to do so.

Emotionality in critique happens, to a greater or lesser degree, and is due to many factors which are largely out of our control.[2] Although it can create unpleasant situations for both peers and faculty, constant pleasantness, by itself, is not a prerequisite for learning. What is vital for active learning to take place in critique is a sense of safety that results from trust. Students need to feel that their participation and the vulnerability that accompanies it serve a purpose and will further their goals. Periodic emotional discomfort can actually be a catalyst for growth if it is met with empathic response in the context of a trustworthy environment. Later in this paper, I will discuss Self Psychology, a theory that explores this idea among others.

When we make the process of criticism transparent, let students know we are paying attention to the emotional level in the room, and become mindful of the quality of the interactions occurring during critiques, we take steps toward creating a trustworthy environment. We need to apply this reflectivity to the behavior of students as well as to our own behavior.

In the case of students, non-constructive or hurtful comments often result from honest ignorance. As I discussed earlier in the paper, many students don't possess the language or experience to comment tactfully or effectively about artwork. However, through years of relating to others outside of critique, they have gained experience using language geared toward personal judgment. Most of them can easily use language to convey what they like and don't like but it's much harder for them to articulate what they see happening in a piece of artwork, how it affects their experience of the work and why. It is even harder for them to do so in a constructive, helpful way. So, the language of personal judgment often becomes the default in group critiques. But to further the goals of critique we want students to practice critical thinking skills, not just personal judgment skills.

In order to accomplish this goal, we need to demonstrate how to phrase comments directed at the work and not the artist, rather than demand students do so when they may not know how. Just demonstrating is not enough, however. We also need to be very explicit about what we are demonstrating. We may need to comment on students' comments, explain why they are or are not helpful, and model ways of re-framing or rephrasing them. This teaches a skill, demonstrates empathy and encourages students to empathize with one another. If it is done with a generous, encouraging and understanding tone, as it must be to avoid embarrassing or shaming students, it also implicitly communicates to students that critique is a learning process in which it is okay to make mistakes. I often miscommunicate my ideas during critique, and now I see these mistakes as opportunities to reinforce empathic connection with students. As teachers, we can do this by thoughtfully rephrasing comments we make when they are poorly worded or received in a way other than what we intended.

Instructors have an opportunity to set the stage for respectful discourse and avoid some un-necessarily hurtful situations before the critique even starts. For example, seemingly little, annoying behaviors like falling asleep during critique, talking with friends, answering cell

2. Students, especially undergraduates, are likely to be self-conscious. Most of them are adolescent, and most are highly concerned with the opinions and behaviors of their peers. During this time, we are notoriously emotionally vulnerable and hyperaware of this vulnerability. In addition to this, as Kendall and Crawford point out in their book, The Critique Handbook: A Sourcebook and Survival Guide students typically "have little perspective, they are often young and shortsighted, ascribing disproportionate weight to the critique experience and perceived outcome (Kendall and Crawford, 2007)." This adds to the pressure they feel.

Some students are highly competitive, and others are intimidated by this and have no desire to compete. All have ways of relating to authority figures, the product of their previous experiences with teachers, their parents and other adults. Through a process known as transference students react to instructors based on ways of relating that have little to do with actual experience with the specific instructor and everything to do with other, older relationships.

There are group dynamics that come into play in every group, that inherently lead people to behave in ways they would not behave in a one-on-one situation. Typically, none of this is operating consciously and each person reacts to psychological dynamics differently. Add to this the fact that the subject of conversation in a critique is directed at a piece of art or design that (we hope) students are somewhat personally connected to and it makes sense that creating an environment in which students would feel comfortable participating—in essence, making themselves more vulnerable to judgment and criticism than they already are— would be challenging. So, trust is a prerequisite to participation in critique.

phones and such are unacceptable and important to address prior to the beginning of the process. Things like this are hurtful to the group as a whole in that they communicate disrespect or apathy to the process. They can lead to unnecessary emotional distress for the person whose work is being discussed. By placing high value on respectful behavior during critique, we encourage empathic relating between peers, and help create an underlying sense of teamwork that fosters trust and participation.

The goal here is not to have critiques where students are always feeling good. Critical comments are sometimes hard to hear, but we need to hear them in order to grow. But criticism is only constructive when the person being criticized is able to take the information in and this happens best when it is coming from a trusted source. Emotionality in critique is a subject large enough for another paper. However, the kind of general awareness of and reflection on creating an empathic environment described in this paper can help teachers reframe emotionality in critique as an opportunity to promote trust and participation rather than as a challenge.

Self Psychology and Reflective Teaching

In this final section, I would like to briefly outline some of the psychological theory that has guided and informed the previous sections of this paper. I have applied it to interpersonal dynamics that arise in the context of language gaps and emotionality as examples. When the elements of the theory I am utilizing in this paper are embraced by instructors they can help to transform many other challenges in critique into opportunities for growth.

As I mentioned earlier, it is a largely accepted principle of interpersonal dynamics that perceived empathy builds trust in relationships. It is also understood that in group situations, trust enables people to participate in meaningful ways. A specific theory called *self psychology* provides an additional way of looking at some important elements of empathy in relationships. It positions rifts in communication, mismatches in emotional needs and other "empathic failures" in combination with empathic responses to these failures at the heart of growth.

Self psychology is concerned with psychic and emotional human growth, a concern more of parents than teachers. A full explanation of self psychology is beyond the scope of this paper, and I don't apply it to critique in the same way I use it in therapy However, to the extent that the theory frames a process of empathic relating and describes how the process might work, it can be extremely useful in considering the kind of growth we try to facilitate in college level art students. It can help us set the stage for meaningful participation in critiques. If we accept the premises that we are trying to help students build critical thinking skills in order to mature as artists, and that in order to learn to think critically one must participate meaningfully in critical exercises, our job as instructors requires us to act as catalysts for the process. This is especially applicable in the case of teaching and learning through critique because critique itself is fundamentally an interpersonal process.

A full explanation of self psychology is beyond the scope of this paper, and I don't apply it to critique in the same way I use it in therapy. Rather, here, I use one element of the theory to reframe challenges I perceive in teaching through critique. Because the critique process is fraught with potential for the kinds of empathic failures I discussed earlier in this paper, teaching methods that are informed by self psychology's view of empathic relating can transform dynamics that can potentially discourage participation into opportunities to encourage it.

Heinz Kohut developed his theory of self psychology and published the main body of his work in the 1970's and 80's. It is a theory of human mental and emotional growth based on two major themes. First, Kohut saw individuals as having a "tripartite self, driven by ambition, pulled by ideals, and needing to recognize itself in similar others (Berzoff, Melano Flanagan and Hertz, 2002)." The second theme, and the one I focus on when thinking about teaching critique, is Kohut's idea that empathy, "to understand from within the experience of another," is "the matrix in which all growth takes place." (Berzoff, Melano Flanagan and Hertz, 2002) He emphasizes the importance of "empathic attunement" between a person and important others in his or her environment.

Importantly, for Kohut, "attunement" requires empathic failures like mismatches in needs and troubles in communication. These empathic failures are required because they create the opportunity for reparation. Kohut recognized that empathic failures are not only inevitable but necessary because they provide opportunities for empathic response. In Kohut's view, these empathic responses, or "reparations," are not required most but not all of the time.

Because critique is largely an interpersonal experience, empathic attunement should be at the foundation of student experience. If instructors identify this element of interpersonal dynamics and commit to teaching practices that value it, students are likely to be freer to focus their energies on learning critical thinking skills and maturing as artists because they will not feel required to spend a disproportionate amount of time and effort tending to other needs (like self protection, nursing frustration, anxiety, anger or confusion).

It is inevitable that peers or teachers and students do not understand or agree with each other all the time. Kohut was not interested in sympathy, total understanding, nor emotional or psychological similitude. If we apply Kohut's view of empathic "attunement" to teaching through critique, it is actually acceptable and maybe even desirable that these breaches in understanding exist (how fortunate for us!), because they provide chances for reparation. The reparations demonstrate empathy. So, with respect to teaching critique, self psychology can provide support and focus, and the way it transforms challenges into opportunities can be liberating for conscientious instructors.

When the ideas that empathy builds trust and trust encourages participation are combined with the element of self psychology that focuses on the importance of empathic failures and reparations, we start to get an idea of how growth and learning through participation can best be facilitated by instructors in critique. Growth isn't clean. It comes through the process of making or allowing a mess and then trying to clean it up. But, as I emphasized in the examples earlier in this paper, the attempt to clean up is essential. Although we won't always succeed, simply trying is often enough to communicate empathy. To do this, we must be reflective, build awareness and learn to detect when empathic failures are imminent. Kohut's theory holds that empathic failures are tools for adaptive growth when they are met (not all the time, but more often than not) with empathic response. So, through this lens, frustration due to critical language and the inevitability of emotionality in critique are fantastic opportunities.

Conclusion

Within the context of the theories I've briefly described in this paper, established best practices for teaching at the college level, such as setting clear goals and objectives,

communicating expectations effectively to students, and practicing reflective teaching take on a whole new meaning. Beyond helping students focus their efforts most effectively, these practices communicate empathy, suggesting that the instructor is aware of students' learning processes and some of their basic needs. All this works toward building environments conducive to participation, which in turn, encourages the development of critical thinking skills and artistic maturation.

It is important to note that cultural influences also have a powerful effect on students' participation, or lack thereof, during critique. Although this is an important area for further consideration, and beyond the scope of this paper, instructors can communicate empathy to students of all cultures just by taking a curious, interested stance and recognizing that student behavior may be influenced by cultural norms beyond our personal understanding.

Critique is, after all, a process consisting almost entirely of interpersonal moments, and the field of psychology has a great deal to offer us in understanding and working with interpersonal dynamics. Part of the beauty of psychological theory is that, at its best, it can help us build clarity of purpose and focus our energies in the most productive way. A good deal of knowledge from this field suggests that by working to create a validating, empathically responsive environment in critiques, instructors may enable students to maximize their ability to learn complex critical thinking skills by encouraging participation.

Article

Intersections: Art, Sustainability, and Education

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In May 2010, I had the great fortune to attend the Integrative Teaching International's ThinkTank 5. My participation in this event led to a chapter written for the organization's new online journal, in which I explored the idea of contextualizing art foundations in relation to education for sustainability. This paper is the result of that exploration and more fully explores the ideas I outlined for that publication. As an introduction, I begin with the first three paragraphs of the FF2 article.

Throughout history, art has been a mirror of culture, reflecting the fears, aspirations, and realities of people in a particular place, and time. Our current time is one of change, fraught with disturbing messages about social injustice, environmental degradation, and political inadequacy. As they always do, artists and designers are re-orienting themselves in response to these conditions. Emerging genres such as culture jamming, community-based art, social sculpture, and eco-art reflect this re-orientation and many embrace place-based practices intended to reshape dysfunctional behaviors, reconnect broken communities, and restore damaged ecosystems.

Indicative of a growing acceptance of these new approaches, our professional associations are calling for new goals for academic programs. As an example, the Guidelines for Foundations (adopted and approved at the FATE 11th Biennial Conference, 2007) state that one of the four goals of foundations content is to "introduce and explore an expanded definition of the artist/designer within an historical and contemporary multicultural context; e.g. facilitator, organizer, community activist, collaborator, cultural producer."[1] This goal is echoed by statements made at a Stanford Centennial Roundtable Discussion (1991):

"Art is an invitation to become part of something that is larger than yourself."
"The artist's job is not to reject the society, but to engage it."
"Art is usually a criticism of the world as it is and a vision of the world as it might be."
"Most artists wake up and say, 'What do I want to do this morning?' That is not a
  very interesting or probing question. It should be: There's a whole world out there.
  What does that world require?"[2]

While these claims present a clear and compelling vision of the artist/designer as engaged citizen, foundations programs don't always expressly address the skills and behaviors needed to act in this way. As an example, a review of foundation drawing and design textbooks yields few examples of assignments whose primary learning goals are to help students contextualize their art and design activity — that is, to answer the question: "What does the world require and how can I, as an artist/designer, meet that requirement?" While exploring avenues of
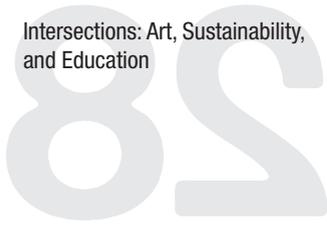
self-expression and experiencing the joy of skillful making are important motivators for budding young artists and designers, it is also important that students gain an understanding of the artist's role in relation to a bigger picture. For many, the most pressing "big picture" issue is the ongoing and increasingly urgent un-sustainability crisis.[3]

In this paper, I will expand on these thoughts by presenting the current best practice thinking on how to educate for sustainability in relation to art teaching. Further, I will discuss how artists and art educators can contribute to the global discussion of education reform. Finally, I will discuss the barriers that must be overcome if we are to achieve this new form of art education.

What is Education for Sustainability?

In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to start the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005-2014)[4]. Since then, an international body of governmental agencies have produced a large volume of material describing goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and proposing strategies for how it might be implemented on a global scale.[5] According to these and other authors, Education for Sustainability (EFS) is a term that refers to a specific form of education. Proponents reason that current values, pedagogies, and learning environments produce thinking and behaviors that result in un-sustainability, and that other approaches to education are immediately necessary in order to reverse the disastrous trajectory we are currently following. To those unfamiliar with the scope of activity regarding EFS, this pronouncement may seem daunting and untenable. Fortunately, this is not the case. As this paper will illustrate, many strands of the EFS fabric are already being woven into general educational practice and some institutions are even adopting a whole cloth approach.

Though most EFS activity currently tends to be clustered in Environmental Studies and related natural and social sciences, its interdisciplinary framework not only accommodates, but also requires participation and contribution from all disciplines, including those in the arts. In the following sections, I will present a general overview of the vision, learning goals, and pedagogies associated with EFS, as described by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).[6] In addition, I will suggest ideas for how EFS can be integrated into art programs. Some of these goals, such as diversity, inter-disciplinarity, and civic engagement, may be recognized as current trends in higher education; by understanding them in the context of EFS rather than thinking of them as separate initiatives, they can gain relevancy by becoming necessary components of an overall strategy for change.

EFS is a vision of education that:

1. **Understands the urgency behind the need to change.**

    While our childhood nursery rhymes caution us to avoid the fallacy of Chicken Little's falling sky, we should also guard against falling into the Ostrich's "head in the sand" syndrome. Climate change, mass extinction, peak oil, peak fish, peak water (or in Heinberg's words, "peak everything"[7]) and social inequities that result in war, displacement, hunger, and disease for a large portion of the world population all sound like falling sky scenarios. However, these assertions are not based on scant evidence collected by a misinformed populace but are instead conclusions arrived

at by an overwhelming international majority of natural and social scientists and are based on methodology and evidence that has been peer-reviewed many times over. There should be no question as to the urgent need to address these problems. Inertia and apathy are exceedingly difficult to overcome and, unless there is a foundational consensus that change is urgently needed, it is unlikely that we will be successful in our efforts to avert the worst of the predictions our scientists have laid out for us.

In the world of contemporary art, many practicing artists have risen to the need by producing work that inquires, informs, and inspires around sustainability issues. Art departments however, have been much slower to internalize this message of urgency. While there are a few examples of new courses, such as *Sustainability Studio Art* at the University of Florida and *Eco-Art: Creative Environmental Sustainability* at Long Island University, most art departments have yet to engage in a careful evaluation of their program structures and offerings with the intent to make the changes that would reflect the urgency of our situation.

2. **Questions the existing cultural paradigm and holds the critical re-evaluation of its formative values as an essential underlying theme.**

It is often said that human beings are not aware of their assumptions and basic beliefs, much as fish are unaware of the water in which they swim. From the moment we are born, we are surrounded by tacit messages that constantly mold and shape us so that we become imbued with a cultural code of values and behavioral norms. Because everyone and everything around us is in synch with this code, we can come to believe that our unique cultural code is common to all humans and even to all life. As educators, we are aware of this phenomenon and make efforts to mitigate it by promoting diversity, requiring a second language, or encouraging travel abroad so that students are exposed to different cultural formats. But these isolated efforts seldom go far enough to balance constant messages that promote privilege and hierarchy, consumerist lifestyles, competitive mindsets, and isolated individualism. Education, like art, reflects the culture that produces it and these messages are deeply embedded throughout our education system; sometimes in seemingly innocuous forms such as classroom sizes, shapes and furniture arrangements or, more blatantly, through grading protocols and tuition expenses.

As trained observers of culture who frequently reflect and question the status quo, artists clearly have a major role to play in this area and many artists have devoted their practice to informing their audiences of our cultural bias and inadequacies with the intent to inspire change. Some are taking a more radical approach and directly engaging with specific problems with the intent to repair or remediate. These genres have their origins in the work of conceptual artists of the 1960's and 70's, as described by Maja & Reuben Fowkes in their essay entitled "The Principles of Sustainability in Contemporary Art:"

Their radical questioning of the art system, alternative strategies for making and presenting work, engagement with social and political realities, ethics, and encouragement of independent thought, are all important legacies for contemporary art. Furthermore, dematerialization, through the disavowal of the art object and shift towards process-based practices, performances, actions, as well as ephemeral works that were created not to last, was an invaluable

inheritance for later sustainable art, as of course was the desire of conceptual artists to provoke on the level of idea or concept.[8]

As suggested by the above statement, sustainable artists often challenge our conceptions of what art is. They frequently work in collaboration with scientists, government agencies, and community members to produce such things as parks, landscape restorations, and proposals for natural and urban development. These may seem departure enough from art's object-based and exhibition-oriented norm but, with his introduction of the term "social sculpture," Joseph Beuys opened the door to an even more expansive definition of art practice. Using his ideas as a platform for innovation, some artists are experimenting with actions that shape the social landscape. Art educators who are frustrated with finding relevance within the norms of current scholarly art production might find that the concept of social sculpture allows them to re-vision and re-shape the education system as a form of art practice, for example. Though personal experience demonstrates that this conceptualization has its challenges when it comes to documentation for personnel committees, I have found this approach to be intensely rewarding and well worth the difficulties. As I will describe in later sections of this paper, scholarship and promotion are important areas that need to be addressed if we are to be successful in fully implementing EFS. Therefore, the process of working with committees to alter their perspectives on what constitutes scholarship could possibly be folded into a social sculpture art practice.

3. **Seeks to empower a community of learners to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future.**[9]

To illustrate this point, picture the cartoon that depicts a sinking boat in which a group of people is frantically bailing water from one end while those sitting on the other end of the boat congratulate themselves that the hole is not near them and consequently not their problem. Other illustrative phrases that could be applied are "All hands on deck," "We are all in this together," and even "Many hands make light work." While it may seem obvious in theory that un-sustainability affects everyone, we are far from achieving the kind of expectation of collective contribution that permeated our society during other periods of crisis, like World War II, for example. Without such expectations, it is easy to come up with plausible reasons for not getting involved —too busy, don't know enough, irrelevant area of expertise etc.

Fortunately a belief in shared responsibility is gradually entering academia as is evidenced by the focus on civic engagement in many general education requirements. And while leaving out environmental literacy, FATE's 2007 Guidelines for Foundations do mention the development of social responsibility as a learning essential for art students.[10]

As art educators, we can encourage our students to assume responsibility for taking up the challenge of addressing pressing problems regardless of disciplinary orientation, individual aptitudes, or expected career paths by adding "engaged behaviors" to our lists of course learning goals and, through assignments and assessments, ensure that our students are ready and able to become active contributors in service to the greater good, even before they graduate.

However, it is extremely important to note that, in this context, the "community of learners" not only refers to students *but also includes faculty, staff, and administrators*. While many educators are making personal decisions to alter lifestyles by choosing to buy organic, buy local, recycle, and walk or bike to work, most art programs as a whole have yet to make similar kinds of "lifestyle changes." This is understandable, given that inertia is always hard to overcome. Also, there is no existing blueprint for how to run an art program that is in alignment with EFS goals and few operating models to look to for guidance. Because "sustainability" is a state that can only be imagined at this point, we must all become learners, open to questioning accepted norms and exploring new approaches, both in our personal and academic lives.

4. **Knows there is no single route to sustainability and that diversity of approach is a key strategy.**

Some believe that the best path to sustainability is through economic and policy instruments. Others believe that green building or green businesses will save the day. Others are sure that social marketing, or organic farming, or community actions are the best strategies. Some advocate for addressing social justice while others promote environmental remediation. The list of potential avenues for action is extensive and much energy is spent on debating which is the most productive. Of course, the answer is that *all* of these directions are essential. In the words of Derek Jensen, "we need it all."[11]

Because the thinking that leads to unsustainable behaviors is pervasive in this culture, all aspects of the culture must be subject to examination and change. David Holmgren, one of the founders of the permaculture design framework, describes seven different domains of action that must be simultaneously addressed —the built environment; tools and technology; land and nature stewardship; land tenure and community governance; finance and economics; health and well-being; and culture and education.[12] Additionally, modes of engagement with these domains can range from individual through collective participation with actions that have effects on local, regional, or global scales.

One EFS learning goal is "systems thinking," that is "to understand the dynamic nature of complex systems over time."[13] One systems understanding is that diversity ensures resiliency. This insight provides a motivation for developing individual orientations that embrace a multitude approaches grown from shared understanding. As an example, training in art uniquely develops vision, creativity, and complex big-picture thinking. When combined with practical skills of bringing concept to reality these are not only useful for producing art but also essential tools for addressing social and environmental problems. Other useful art tendencies include the ability to produce sensitive and intuitive responses to cultural signals as well as expertise with non-verbal modes of communication. By conveying the full range of applications of art thinking and practice, art educators can open the way for their students to contribute to solving the un-sustainability problem in innovative, constructive, and productive ways.
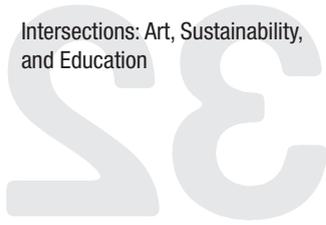
5. **Assumes that we will need to work together to negotiate the process of achieving sustainability.**

    Authentic problems can seldom be solved from a single direction of thought or with a single set of skills. Diversity of thought and the integration of multiple perspectives is a prerequisite for developing systematic solutions that do not cause more problems than they solve. In business, this idea is expressed by phrases such as "the triple bottom line" or "the three pillars," which refer to considering the needs of people and the planet in addition to the need for profit when making business decisions. This kind of lateral thinking requires simultaneous input from humanistic, social, environmental, and economic disciplines and is a foundational premise for those who advocate for developing interdisciplinary or, more expansively, transdiscplinary programming in alignment with EFS learning goals.

    Unfortunately, siloed arrangements of departments into disciplinary schools and colleges tend to work against developing learning modules that allow students to experience and practice this premise. Even more difficult are separations between the academic and operational branches of a university. To give an example, students in a sustainability-oriented glazing and firing course might want to include a consideration of the carbon output of different firing methods or develop a capture/reclaim method for environmentally problematic glaze materials. In an institution where collaboration and cooperation across organizational lines are encouraged and expected, tapping into the science and facilities expertise necessary for the development of comprehensive, effective, and implementable solutions might be a simple matter. In an institution where such interactions are unheard of, these kinds of initiatives are much more difficult. The preliminary work of forming collaborative connections, negotiating administrative hierarchy and protocols, and drawing budgetary guidelines is necessary before attempting to incorporate such initiatives. Because this disconnected situation is very common, leadership attributes, such as the ability to listen to different perspectives and build consensus across structural lines, become required skills when developing innovative approaches. As educators, we can prepare future innovators by building opportunities for developing and practicing leadership attributes and skills into our courses and programs.

    Many art educators already include elements in their courses that are designed to help students learn to appreciate diverse cultural perspectives. But experiences that explicitly connect art thinking to natural and social science or math and engineering thinking in the service of pressing problems are less common. EFS suggests that these kinds of opportunities become more widespread for both students and faculty.

To summarize, EFS seeks to develop the following skills for both students and educators:

•   **Envisioning** – *Being able to imagine a better future. The premise is that if we know where we want to go, we will be better able to work out how to get there.*

•   **Critical thinking and reflection** – *Learning to question our current belief systems and to recognize the assumptions underlying our knowledge, perspective, and opinions…*

•   **Systemic thinking** – *Acknowledging complexities and looking for links and synergies when trying to find solutions to problems.*

- **Building partnerships** – *Promoting dialogue and negotiation, learning to work together.*

- **Participation in decision-making** – *Empowering people.*[14]

EFS Learning goals in Art Education

Authors who have described EFS learning goals have been remarkably consistent regardless of discipline, age level orientation, or geographical location. Rather than attempting to improve on any of these, I will simply present one of the more concise versions. This list of learning goals is part of a comprehensive plan for adopting state environmental literacy standards for K-12 schools and was developed by the "Oregon No Child Left Inside" task force that was appointed by Governor Kulongoski in 2009.[15] Though written for the K-12 educator audience, it is applicable to higher education in the same way that K-12 reading, science, and math literacy goals are applicable for all ages.

Some of the EFS learning goals may seem to be unrelated to art/design learning goals. For example, "understanding the physical and biological world and our interdependent relationship with it"[16] might seem to belong to the science department. However, it is possible to connect art instruction to this goal in many ways. As an example, students are often given a list of art materials with information about where to purchase them. Such a list doesn't promote awareness of how those materials came to be on the shelf and few students make the connection between the materials they use and the holes that were dug into the earth, the human and non-human life that was displaced, or the health and economic problems of the workers who processed the raw materials into the product on the shelf. It may seem unreasonable to ask students to make these depressing connections but that lack of insight might be a primary reason for the existence of these problems in the first place. It could also be argued that ignoring the problems might be more debilitating than exposing them, because students are surely aware of this "elephant in the room." But, without guidance for approaching it, they might decide that it is just something big and uncomfortable that they have to learn to live with. Even worse, they may develop the fatalistic attitude that they will probably eventually be squashed by it. Thoughtfully introduced, those same problems can potentially galvanize empowering responses that manifest in many forms. By presenting a whole-systems overview of the creative making process, faculty and students can discover new ways to conceptualize and give relevancy to their teaching and art practice.

The above is only one possible example and each of the following EFS learning goals can be infused into the standard art curriculum in a myriad of ways. For further information on specific art assignments that address these goals, see Integrative Teaching International's "Manifestos and Manifestations."[17]

Oregon No Child Left Inside Learning Goals (*authors comments in italics*)

1. **Understand the physical and biological world and our our interdependent relationship with it**

    Including physical, ecological, and human systems, and how these interconnected systems affect individual and societal well-being
    *   Structure, function, interaction and change in living and non-living systems
    *   Structure, function, and relationships of human systems to the environment and sustainability
    *   Interrelationships between people and the environment

    One way to bring out this information is to ask questions such as: What is the origin of art materials, is there a local source, what are the social and environmental effects of production, are there environmentally/socially benign substitutes, does the use of them produce waste, can that waste output be connected as an input to some other studio or system process, does the value of the work balance any negative environmental and social impacts caused by the making of the work, and why or why not?

2. **Understand and apply systems thinking concepts and tools**

    Analyzes and applies the properties of systems thinking to Earth's physical, ecological and human systems now and to inform future considerations
    *   Systems as a context for thinking and action
    *   Implication and consequences
    *   Strategic responsibilities of systems thinking
    *   Shifting mental models and paradigms

    Learning how to develop an effective composition is an excellent way to practice the concept of systems thinking. A composition is a system made up of elements that, when placed in relationship to each other, develops a synergy from which meaning emerges. During the process of making, the artist constantly evaluates the big picture view of how the elements balance and interact and makes adjustments in accordance with the desired result. A lesson in composition could be used to make a connection to other areas of experience by highlighting the holistic thinking process being used. While many students might not go on to use composition skills professionally as painters, it is almost certain that they will benefit from the ability to reflectively use big-picture thinking and planning in any future endeavor.

3. **Develop a sense of place, region, nation, and global community**

    Understands sense of place as the connection between people and a place and that sense of place encompasses the interrelationships among patterns of human settlement, social and culture relationships, and the natural world
    *   Characteristics of the region and /or community
    *   Interconnectedness in regions and the global community
    *   College community

To raise awareness of place, ask questions such as: What inspirations, materials, audiences are available locally, what is the geological, biological and social nature of the place that provides context for work, and how can your work draw on or serve that context.

4. **Investigate, plan, and create a sustainable future**

Understands importance of vision, imagination, planning, and civic action to the ability to address challenges and create a sustainable future
*   Work with flexibility, creativity, and openness
*   Investigate and analyze strategies that address challenges and create sustainable futures
*   Decision making and citizen action
*   Recognize citizens' rights and responsibilities of participation and leadership in both local and global contexts

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions artists can make to the global effort to change is their ability to envision and imagine something that does not yet exist and, through persistence, courage, planning, creative appropriation of resources, critical assessment, and iteration, cause that vision to become real. As art educators, we are already developing in our students exactly the attitude and skill set that is needed. Given that capability, all that remains is to learn how to focus these abilities on the problems that need solving. One possible approach is to use the Stanford Roundtable definitions of art quoted at the beginning of this paper as discussion prompts: What does the world require, what is our responsibility as artists to that requirement, and how can we, as artists (and art educators), contribute to meeting that requirement?

5. **Understand and achieve personal and civic responsibility**

Understands the rights, roles, responsibilities, and actions associated with leadership and participation toward healthy environments and sustainable communities
*   Apply self-confidence in their effectiveness as citizens (self efficacy)
*   Accept personal responsibility for the effects of individual and group actions
*   Understand the commons and its relationship to personal and civic responsibility
*   Understand consumption and consumer choices

Many universities are adopting civic engagement requirements for all students, and art programs can reinforce the learning those requirements are intended to produce in many ways. One possible approach might be to offer guided opportunities for collaboration on some assignments. Art is often seen as an individual pursuit but there are many examples of artists joining forces to create work they would be incapable of individually. Students working in groups can experience enhanced productivity (many hands make light work), synergy (the whole is more than the sum of its parts), and listening to and integrating multiple perspectives (holistic thinking and casting a wide net). In addition, responsibility to a group can develop work ethic sensibilities such as timeliness, communication, organization, and taking on different roles according to the need of the group.

EFS Pedagogies

Many assume that the primary focus of EFS is to infuse the curriculum with information about environmental and social problems. While this kind of information is important as a means of contextualizing learning, EFS is not merely a call for introducing a specific set of facts for students to memorize. Unless this knowledge is translated into behavior, nothing will change about our current situation. Therefore, in addition to presenting information, education needs to transform behavior. In many cases, transforming the behavior of students first requires transforming the behavior of teachers. In other words, EFS is not so much about what we teach as it is about how we teach. Through theoretical discussion, practice, and assessment, EFS scholars have identified inquiry-based and experiential pedagogies as being an effective means to develop the required paradigm-questioning change-agent attitudes. Place-based learning provides a context and arena for students and faculty to practice identifying and acting on relevant problems. Combining the three methods can produce a powerful learning environment that has the potential to galvanize faculty and students to pursue locally relevant solutions to difficult problems that institutions and communities might not otherwise have the resources to address.

Sustainability-minded art educators might be happy to realize that the experiential nature of EFS is closely aligned with traditional art/design teaching practices and many art educators are already highly accomplished at delivering some aspects of the kind of education known to produce desired EFS behaviors, skills, and attitudes. Consequently, art educators might find they are able to occupy an unexpected niche in the effort to reform education by helping colleagues in other disciplines become more conversant with these experiential teaching techniques.

1. **Inquiry-Based** – *reflective learning; learning how to learn*

    Because we don't yet know how to solve the un-sustainability problem, we are unable to present a step-by-step, testable, cut-and-dried formula for students to memorize. Like producing a successful artwork, achieving sustainability requires developing a new vision and following through on it by embarking on a necessarily open-ended journey that is bound to include false starts, missed steps, and closed doors. For this reason, inquiry learning is an important EFS element because it can develop the attitudes and awareness needed to negotiate this process.

    Art and design are inherently open-ended "what if" modes of interacting with the world. Imagination, innovation, and the ability to implement creative vision are core characteristics of any successful artist/designer and most art courses contain curricular elements designed to develop these abilities. But because students can easily become fixated on the art object itself as the end result of their efforts, it is important to help them learn to step back and reflect on the process of making so that they become aware of the thinking skills they are learning in addition to the more easily identified and immediately rewarding hand skills they are developing. To make the learning process more apparent, students might be asked to consider questions such as: What happened when you tried that? What did you do when you encountered difficulty? How did you respond to mistakes? What did you learn that you could apply next time? Who is your audience and how are you making your ideas accessible to them?

2. **Experiential** – *participation and leadership; action and agency*

While proponents of experiential learning describe its positive effects on academic achievement and professional preparation, EFS focuses on the empowerment aspect of this learning mode. Because the urgency of our situation implies a need to act quickly, it is important that students learn how to act. A classroom that follows the presentation of information with guided opportunities to apply and practice concepts learned through lecture and reading gives students an iterative framework for critically evaluating information, analyzing accessible and effective leverage points, determining strategies for action, applying that action, and then reflecting on the effect of that action. Service learning, cooperative learning, and project or problem based learning are just some of the forms of experiential learning that can be used to achieve the desired learning goals.

3. **Place-Based** – *thinking globally; acting locally*

Though un-sustainability is a global problem, few have the station or the resources to promote change on an international, national, or even regional level. But working for change within one's own community is well within the capability of most. In his book "Blessed Unrest," Paul Hawkens describes a global network made up of more than a million small organizations working to create change at the local level in each of the cultural domains described earlier in this paper. Even if these initiatives are unconnected organizationally, Hawkins believes that, by working from a shared understanding of social justice and environmental stability, their collective efforts will combine to achieve what is necessary on a global level.[18]

Art and design educators can easily incorporate place-based elements into their courses by considering the use of local materials and closed-loop making processes, using local issues and situations as concept/design prompts, and connecting to local audiences by exploring non-gallery exhibit venues. In a more expansive and challenging mode, faculty might consider initiating projects that reflectively apply artist sensibilities to community issues as a form of social sculpture practice.

Barriers to Implementing EFS

1. **Invisible structures and boundaries**

Teamwork, collaboration, and the integration of multiple perspectives are key strategies both for implementing EFS at a university and for tackling issues such as energy use, transportation, and apathy within a community. But forging the connections needed to create productive goal-oriented teams can be difficult for several reasons.

• **Time, energy, and other resources**
Faculty are constantly busy with students, classes, scholarship, committee work, and a multitude of other professional and personal commitments. How is it possible to find the time to address yet another looming problem on the horizon, especially when the grades are due tomorrow and the exhibit opens next week? A central tenet of EFS is to reorder the values and priorities promoted throughout the education system so that "sustainability" and all that it entails isn't an extra item on the to-do

list that we will get to someday, but is instead the heading under which all other activities are listed as bullet points. By finding ways to slow down and talk to each other about what we think is important, we may also find we have altered our rapid progression towards an undesirable destination.

- **Organizational structures**
  Organizational structures that reinforce disciplinary divisions between departments, schools, and colleges can discourage the development of collaborative, interdisciplinary, and multi-perspective mindsets for both faculty and students. Whenever possible, work to adopt policies, such as for interdisciplinary hiring, faculty development and promotion, and open times for meeting that encourage connective relationships between faculty in different disciplines and between disciplinary knowledge sets.

2. **Misconceptions** – *EFS as an emerging discipline*

   One major barrier to implementing EFS is a lack of understanding about what it is. A common misconception is that that EFS is just another form of environmental studies. Others think EFS refers primarily to learning about recycling and other green operational procedures. For those accustomed to thinking of bodies of knowledge separated by disciplinary boundaries, EFS's Inclusiveness may be hard to grasp. How to address the gap between understanding EFS and implementing it?

- **Leadership**
  Because they are the connection point that joins multiple components, supportive leaders can be instrumental in breaking down the organizational barriers that hinder the transdisciplinary nature of EFS. In addition, administrative leaders can support faculty development, foster productive relationships between faculty and staff, oversee hiring, encourage committee initiatives, influence purchasing, and more. While many department heads, deans, provosts, and presidents are providing appropriate leadership, many are not yet conversant with EFS precepts. In these situations, it is up to faculty, staff, and students to provide their leaders with information in addition to finding ways of implementing EFS within their own spheres of influence.

- **Faculty learning communities**
  While educators are experts at setting up productive learning communities within their courses, they don't often have the opportunity to participate in learning communities of their own peers. Because of their collaborative inquiry-based format, faculty learning communities might be one of the more powerful strategies for learning about and implementing EFS. When forming a learning community, it can be helpful to bring in a facilitator to guide the learning experience. Another option might be to send a few faculty members to attend a "Sustainability Across the Curriculum Leadership" workshop. These popular workshops are held twice each year on opposite ends of the country (Georgia and California) and are intended to help faculty leaders from across disciplines who wish to develop curriculum change programs at their schools. For more information on the content of these workshops, see the Piedmont and Ponderosa projects.[19]

  A creative approach to forming learning communities might be to offer a credit-bearing inquiry course, open to faculty, staff, students, and community members,

to explore a specific aspect of EFS. One example of this approach was the "Developing a Sustainability Curriculum" course offered at Amherst in 2002.[20] After a semester of research and discussion, the 22 participants wrote a concept paper and proposal that was submitted to the Faculty Senate Academics and Curriculum Subcommittee. This paper influenced decisions both within the institution and outside of it and it is often cited as an example of a problem and place-based inquiry course that produced work that was immediately useful to the institution that offered it. A potential topic for an art department might be to offer a course entitled "Art Foundations and Sustainability Education" and invite participation from across the college, including students and faculty that are already deeply engaged in sustainability issues. Participants might review EFS literature and consider ways to infuse this information into their art foundations learning goals and curricula.

- **Literature review**

  EFS is an emerging discipline supported by publications, associations, and conferences. Unbeknownst to many, there is a solid and rapidly increasing body of literature on the role of education in promoting culture change going back 30 years or more. This literature includes writing on theoretical underpinnings, conceptual frameworks, and inspirational case studies by authors from every discipline. Much of the information that is directed at the K-12 audience is equally applicable higher education, thereby increasing the size of the informational resource that is available. Some notable EFS authors include David Orr, Peggy Bartlett, Geoffrey Chase, Blaze Corcoran, C. A. Bowers, Stephen Sterling, Deborah Rowe, John Blewitt, Dilafruz Williams, and Gregory Smith. Organizations dedicated to fostering the growth of EFS in K-12 and higher education include the Cloud Institute, the Center for Ecoliteracy, and Second Nature. For information about art, artists, and art practice, see authors such as Linda Weintraub, Maja and Rueben Fowkes, Sue Spaid, Lucy Lippard, Miwon Kwon, Hans Dieleman, and Sacha Kagan. The "GreenMuseum", "EcoArtSpace", and "Center for Sustainable Practice in the Arts" websites showcase the work of sustainability-minded artists and provide inspirational and informative writings.

3. **Tenure and Promotion** – *expectations*

   Traditional art scholarship usually consists of producing work for exhibit in galleries and museums. For many, the safest way to promotion is to develop a successful body of work and exhibit it extensively; preferably through invitations for solo exhibits at prestigious institutions. This expectation can encourage faculty to spend considerable time in private studios, away from students and colleagues, creating work for a distant audience that has minimal connection to their institution as a learning and teaching organization. But because we are in an "all-hands-on-deck" crisis situation, it may be that a different form of scholarship is required. In its "Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System" (STARS), the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) gives more points for sustainability-related research and scholarship than for any of the sections on operations (such as greening buildings, socially and environmentally responsible purchasing, reducing carbon footprints, and energy and water use). In fact, the authors list faculty scholarship and promotion as second only to curriculum reform as an indicator of an institution's progress towards EFS.

But how to define the non-traditional activities suggested by the EFS paradigm as scholarship? One possible way forward is to start with what is already in existence. Many institutions already use the Boyer's template as a framework for assessing faculty development and scholarship. By exploring the lesser-used scholarship categories of integration, application, and teaching, a college might find ways to reward the kinds of activities needed to develop programs that will produce informed graduates ready to take on the challenges that await them.

Conclusion

Even though it may seem obvious to many that there is a need for change, the way forward is far from clear. While it is a simple matter to make individual changes in personal lifestyles, institutional change is much harder to come by, especially because the change that is needed reaches deep into our cultural identity and will affect its basic operating principles. An analogy might be to think about a football team where you can try to improve the team by replacing the coach or the quarterback, but that won't change the fact that you are still playing football. Making changes to the rules of the game will get you further but even that may not be going far enough if what is needed is a new game entirely.

Artists have always been out on the leading edge of the cultural new wave, but because of its institutionalized inertia, education can be very slow to respond to signals of change, even if they are loud and clear. As artists working within education systems, art educators are in the position to bridge that gap. But the barriers are many—departmental and institutional expectations for teaching and scholarship, apathy and territorialism in all of its many forms, lack of awareness of helpful frameworks, difficulty in crossing structural lines to access support and expertise all conspire to make the task seem daunting and even insurmountable. Therefore, courage is perhaps the first and most important attribute we need to cultivate in both our students and ourselves. Without the courage to take up these challenges and begin working to inspire and educate colleagues and students to imagine and work for a different future, we will be left standing on the beach, unprepared for the wave of change that is coming. While it should be understood that there is no way to avoid the wave, good planning can go far to capitalize on the opportunities it might bring. One of the permaculture principles of design is "The Problem is the Solution." By opening our minds and creatively applying the tools of our discipline, artists/teachers can transform education so that it becomes the solution we need.

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Article

Mis-teaching Art History

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"When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars."

Walt Whitman's poetic meditation, "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer," challenges all of us who profess to teach. How do we teach our subject without, in the words of another writer, Oscar Wilde, killing the thing we love?

Whitman's professor of astronomy would no doubt have scored very high on his teacher evaluations—had they existed in the 19th century. After all, "he lectured with much applause." Nor did he just depend on the spoken word. Instead, brandishing "charts and diagrams," he deployed the most advanced visual media of his day. In sum, he had good reason to be smugly satisfied with his public performance.

For Walt the auditor, admittedly a minority of one, it was otherwise. Unaccountably, he grew nauseous, intuitively sensing that the universe was a reality beyond accountancy, beyond proofs and numbers. Attribute it, if you will, to a conflict between a nature that simply "is" and a science that seeks to own it by a reductive act of quantification that strips nature of its mystery. Like the biologist who seeks to better comprehend a living organism by killing and dissecting it, the "learn'd astronomer" turned the majestic stars into a cosmic corpse.

Five decades ago at the start of my teaching career, a bright student approached me after class and said, "It's obvious you hate the Romans. If you didn't, you wouldn't teach Roman art that way."

Until then, I had thought I was doing a pretty good job. But because I respected her judgment, I began to wonder if I really was. In portraying Roman art as the tasteless abuse of a noble Greek heritage, I had demeaned it by judging it by standards that were not its own. I had imposed my own voice upon it instead of letting it speak for itself.

Ironically, that student comment would lead to my very first book, in which I argued that, unlike the idealistic Greeks who saw art as an end in itself, the pragmatic Romans saw art as a means to another end, a political one. That perception would also lead me to fundamentally reevaluate how I would approach the art of any distant culture. For before we can truly appreciate works of art for what they are, before we can in fact even understand them, we must immerse ourselves in the beliefs and challenges of the times in which they

were created. In short, we must view them not from the outside looking in but from *the inside looking out*.

Admittedly, this contextual approach can be quite daunting, demanding of the specialist a time-consuming self-education in literature, history, philosophy, and religion. Such an approach, I should add, was always *de rigueur* in the past for Classicists, who were, in addition, obligated to master not one but two entire civilizations, those of Greece and Rome. Yet, under the increasing strictures and (alas) rewards of specialization, today's Classicists often receive or (sadly) expect an education far less broad. For specialists in other disciplines, graduate training can be narrower still.

Such an approach to learning can be especially difficult because it requires us to travel back into time. Can we ever really see things the way an ancient Greek or Roman did, or a Medieval woman or Renaissance man? Can we ever, on our own personal academic odysseys, leave behind the mental baggage of our own cultural values so that we see the world with fresh eyes uncorrupted by the contemporary norms of our own society?

More daunting still is the effort to penetrate the mind of a prehistoric culture where the portal of literature is totally absent, as in the case of Paleolithic art, or the soul of a civilization, like that of the Maya, whose surviving documents offer little but sterile chronologies. Here we must necessarily rely on intuition and imagination alone to channel the spirit of an alien world.

A holistic approach, moreover, can endanger one's career. I once lost a job, in fact, when I insisted that my art history students, then taking "Egyptian Art," familiarize themselves with the spiritual beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. My chairperson in Art History at the time believed to the contrary that such cultural matters were beyond the proper pale of the discipline, where students should instead focus on matters of date and style. "Title, artist, date, and one important fact" was the standard format for her undergraduate slide quizzes, a format—to be fair to her—that is quite common in the field.

Another time, in a letter sent to the National Endowment for the Humanities, I was accused of being a Nazi because I had once lectured on the Classical spirit that had animated Fascist art and added to its inspirational power.

I began to reflect on all this last month when I learned of a special lecture on "The Architecture of the Third Reich," to be given by a graduate student at a nearby university. "What would he say?" I wondered.

His faculty advisor began the program with some introductory remarks designed to defuse what might have otherwise offended members of the audience. She noted that the timing of the presentation was a bit awkward, considering that the Jewish holiday of Passover was then in progress. She then went on to point out that some empires have existed in history that did not share our "correct" American views about human freedom and diversity, but that as scholars we have an obligation to study them ("while holding our noses," she seemed to imply). She then proceeded to introduce her protégé, who went on to give an expertly researched and admirably crafted presentation, illustrated with striking pictures of Hitler's Third Reich and its aesthetic plans and accomplishments. Eerily, he reminded me of me in those early confident days of my career when I thought I knew how to teach Roman art.

His presentation deserved the applause it received. But he had failed (even as I had failed decades before) in a way few if any in the audience detected. And so, like a tortured alter ego of Walt Whitman, I drifted out of the darkened lecture hall into the harsh light of day.

The student's mistake, his sincerity and accuracy notwithstanding, was that he had looked at Nazi art from the outside in, not from the inside out. As proof, he had offhandedly called Hitler's Mein Kampf "dry reading" and dutifully ended his presentation with a montage of the Holocaust. Despite his factual research, he had failed to inhabit, as nearly as one can, the mental and spiritual world of the Third Reich, its grandiose hopes and their intoxicating power. A dangerous undertaking, to be sure, to dwell within the demonic, but only by so doing can one become intimate with the mind and spirit that gave birth to both the glory and the horror, a mind and spirit that made so many, like architect Albert Speer and cinematographer Leni Riefenstahl, serve their leader and country with passionate dedication.

To truly recapture those times, he would have had to drink them in deeply: watching over and over again the hypnotic images of the great Nuremberg rally, listening again and again to the stirring strains of the "Horst Wessel Song," or, doing as I had once done in the secluded basement of a university library, leafing through an antique album into which had been lovingly pressed souvenir cards from propagandistic German cigarette packs portraying the leaders of the Third Reich—not unlike the American bubble-gum baseball-cards of a latter day—and studying the photographed faces of ordinary Germans jammed into street-side crowds, their hearts swelling with fervent pride, their hands joyfully raised in salute as the Führer's limousine sped by.

Surely, not all subjects should be approached through such exercises in psychological internalization. Our duty as teachers, after all, is not to address merely our students' emotions but their minds, and we must always reserve the right to pass moral judgment on the historical excesses of the past, especially when we teach art, a medium so deceptively seductive that it leads us to forget it is merely a neutral container into which any ideological liquid can be poured. The dome of Hadrian's imperialistic Pantheon, after all, can become the heavenly dome of St. Peter's or the democratic dome of Washington's Capitol or the Fascist dome of Berlin's People's Hall, for a dome is just a dome.

Yet despite such moral ambiguity, or perhaps because of it, we must also help our students to see the world of art "from the inside out" so they discover the universally human impulses that shaped the works they see and recognize the potential for such creative impulses, for evil or for good, in themselves.

If we must be the "learn'd astronomer," each of us in our own fields, then let us be him before the long beard grew, before the heady accolades came his way, before intellectual humility was covered by a thick, desensitizing callus of professorial conceit, and let us instead be him as he once was, young and innocent, eagerly fashioning with his own hands a tiny telescope so he could come closer to heaven's vault. Let us recapture that innocence so that we can still, in the company of our students, from time to time glide out into the "mystical moist night-air" and look up "in perfect silence at the stars."

Ken Wood
Assistant Professor
St. Louis Community College-Meramec

Giving the sketchbook a more dynamic role in a drawing curriculum

Most of the Drawing courses I have taught required that students keep a sketchbook. Until recently these were all courses that I inherited; their content was bound by the school's philosophy and expectations, and my job was to help students meet those objectives. While the expected outcomes for in-class work were spelled out clearly *(know how to construct one and two point perspectives, measure angles and proportions, create line and value drawings, etc.)*, the expectations for using the sketchbook were never clear, if stated at all. Yet this lack of specificity made perfect sense: prescribing how to use something as personal as a sketchbook seemed self-defeating. After all, if the students simply drew in them enough, the sketchbooks would automatically become what they needed them to be. Or so I thought. I soon realized that my students didn't necessarily share this vision, and many did not see the point of keeping a sketchbook. *How can a blank book help me learn?* I didn't realize how valid this question was until I tried to answer it.

Why we want our students to use sketchbooks

Sketchbooks serve many purposes, from the practical to the poetic. Practically speaking, they are versatile, portable and easy to use, and they are a great first place to capture and store ideas. In them, a student can be artist and muse, researcher and critic. A sketchbook can be the site of a workshop or think-tank, a place to flush out a dozen bad ideas while finding a way to the one good one. Speaking more subjectively, there is something very beautiful about the way a sketchbook fits in the hand, acting as an extension of the self or a security blanket. We lovingly recall the sketchbooks we kept as students: they are an imprint of ourselves from another time and, for many of us, have outlasted everything else we made in school. We want to pass this gift along to our students; we want them to realize that in using a sketchbook they become part of a tradition stretching back in time to Hopper, Turner and Leonardo.

Giving the sketchbook a vital role

The only way to integrate the sketchbook into a drawing course is to make it a vital part of the curriculum. To do this, it is useful to start by thinking about the main challenges of teaching drawing. How can the use of a sketchbook help address these challenges?

This question could be answered in many ways depending upon the course and its curriculum. For this paper I will talk about beginning drawing, as most of my experience has been in foundations or in the first year of a major. Some of the challenges I see for beginning drawing are:

- Encouraging students to develop an individual voice within a structure of uniform assignments;

- Responding to different learning styles and different paces of learning;

- Coaxing students to loosen up and trust themselves while at the same time developing technical skill;

- Convincing students to let go of preconceived notions about drawing without dictating a 'correct' way to draw;

- In general, getting students to invest in their work and be open to exploration.

This is a big list of challenges, but sketchbooks, used properly, *can* help address them. Sketchbooks are easily transportable and thus can act as an extension of the studio into the everyday life of the student; the data collected in them can be brought back into the classroom and can aid in developing a more independent voice. Students can work at their own pace and in a style of their own choosing. This is especially important if the in-class work is outside the student's comfort zone. The sketchbook is a safe place to make mistakes, and it's a place to exhaust the possibilities before moving forward with a definitive focus.

A particular focus of the sketchbook in my classes is on decreasing inhibitions and using experimental methods to discover new solutions. Changing the scale of the medium, exhausting possible combinations of materials, superimposing images through plan or accident: all of this experimentation allows students to become more comfortable with the notion of exploring the unknown. As they gain confidence exploring, they become less inhibited in their work, in both sketchbook and classroom.

Roadblocks

The first drawing class I taught did not have a classroom. Instead, I took the students around to different neighborhoods where they drew in sketchbooks. The sites were grand and beautiful, but the drawings the students made felt constrained and limited by scale and medium. Moreover, it was hard for them to comfortably hold a position long enough to make a decent, resolved drawing.

The next time I taught drawing I had a classroom. The students did not have to rely solely on sketchbooks this time, nor did they have the same limitations of scale and medium as my earlier students. But their sketchbook drawings were still constrained, even as they prospered with their in-class work.

I started thinking about ways to make a sketchbook less constrained. In my studio, I took apart and altered my sketchbooks so I could experiment with them. I tried to make them less constricted, more flexible, more personal and in general more useful as tools for exploring drawing. In devising an assignment based on these experiments, I tried to pinpoint what was not working in my students' sketchbooks. What were the factors that inhibited their creativity and productivity? What kept my students from doing sketchbook drawings that were as good, or even half as good, as their in-class work? I came up with four roadblocks.

The first roadblock is that sketchbooks can become too precious. Because they are always bound, it is hard to edit them, and there is the feeling that all drawings have to be flawless; this inhibits risk-taking and creativity.

Second is the fact that a sketchbook is a 'book,' which can bring with it associations that are limiting to someone who's actually trying to draw in one. Even students with a lot of drawing experience can sometimes be confined by notions of how to handle a book: always hold it vertically oriented within 18 inches of your face, make small marks in it, hold your drawing tool like a pencil, and steer clear of the margins. These self-imposed constraints can limit freedom.

Third, because only one page can be worked on at a time in a sketchbook, students are limited to dry mediums only unless they are able to leave the book open overnight to dry. It is also more difficult to work on a suite of drawings when only one page can be seen at a time.

And fourth, most manufacturers only make sketchbooks in two proportions: either a 3:4 ratio or a 1:1 ratio; this lack of variety means that most sketchbooks look exactly the same. This might seem minor, but it does make it harder to create a book that is personal and uniquely yours when its size and shape are industry standard.

Removing roadblocks

This curated sketchbook assignment is essentially an exploration in ground, mark-making and materials within a limited palette, resulting in a suite of drawings that are bound in a sequence. But the main objective is getting the students to discover how expansive a sketchbook can be once the normal constraints are removed. This is part of a larger goal of getting the students to think about ways to explore through drawing. I use the sketchbook as an antidote to the heavy emphasis on accuracy and measuring of the in-class work during this part of the course.

To begin, I have my students remove all the pages from their sketchbook. This works best with a wire bound (but not spiral bound) sketchbook. By opening the back of the sketchbook all the way, the seam of the spine is revealed. A long handled brush can be used to pry this seam open, allowing the pages and covers to be removed. The spine itself is then saved for re-binding the sketchbook later.

This takes care of the first three roadblocks mentioned above: the sketchbook is no longer bound, so it is easier to see each page as editable, not precious; when the book is turned into a stack of papers, there can no longer be the association that books are meant for reading, not drawing; and now wet mediums can be used more easily and multiple pages can be worked on simultaneously. Also, with the removal of the spine, an entire side of the page is opened up for marks that can bleed off the edge.

I next have my students change the proportions of their sketchbooks by cutting down the covers and pages to any ratio between (but not including) 1:1 and 3:4. Most students only remove a half-inch to an inch, but it still changes the feel of the book substantially. This takes care of the fourth roadblock, the one-size-fits-all issue, and is the first step in making the book more personal to the student.

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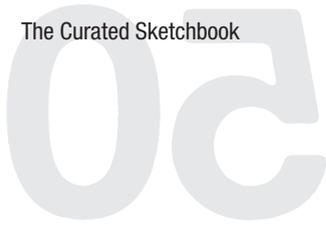
Materials and Grounds

Now that the pages are separated, the students are free to work on multiple pages at once, in wet and dry mediums. They can also use larger mark-making tools. There's no need to limit it to just pencils and pens.

I introduce a few ways to change the ground on the pages. We use a standard 12" roller to lightly roll a speckled white pattern on the page with gesso; various large brushes to put down washes of different hues and values; a toothbrush to spatter paint; palette knife to lay down gel medium, gesso or plaster; masking tape to act as a resist or a mark; rubber cement to act as a resist (in well-ventilated spaces only!); the broad side of a conte stick to act as a resist and to lay a pattern; or nothing at all, which of course is also a great ground to work on. This is the first step in a larger exploration of materials, and it also helps to alleviate the fear of the blank page.

Each student sets out at least ten sheets on the floor or table to start with, lays ten different grounds, and then starts adding more layers to each drawing. All wet mediums are water based, so drying time is quick.

I have the students work with four categories of materials: dry monochrome (white conte, charcoal and charcoal pencils); wet monochrome (gel medium, white paint and sumi ink); a single-hue dry media (usually a pastel); and an analogous-hue wet medium (gouache or watercolor). This introduces just enough color to break from complete monochrome without going into full color exploration (I save that for a later assignment).

I encourage them to work in layers and to combine mediums in as many different ways as they can discover. How many permutations can there be between wet and dry layers? How many different ways can monochrome mediums mix with color? I suggest creating drawings which have one to six layers each and then have them develop these drawings into a suite of images.

Subject Matter

When the entire assignment is done in-class, I set up a large still life with a lot of overlap, linear elements, and complexity. The idea is to have the students think about systems, not objects. When it is done mostly out of class, I have the students collect source images from various categories and draw from them. Some examples are: floorplans, shadows, silhouettes, blowups of text (written or typed), blowups of clothing details (stitching etc.), interior perspectives, landscapes, building facades, deciduous trees (in winter), plants, objects, objects that are made to appear transparent even though they aren't, street or county maps, lines, shapes, and figure-ground reversals in general.

Curating

Usually after three class periods of building up layers and mark-making, there is enough work to move to the curating stage. Fifty drawings should be enough. The homework for the fourth class is to edit the drawings down to a group that shares a fairly consistent language (in terms of palette, mark-making, subject matter, etc.), and then to put them in order. Students can edit down to as few drawings as they want to; the main criteria is that they work well together. Generally they use 15-25 drawings. The pages are pinned up in

sequence for a group critique. This is another advantage of removing the spine—both student and critic can get some distance from the drawings and view them all together. Following this are individual critiques with the drawings stacked in book form.

Returning the Drawings to Sketchbook Form

Once the final set of drawings has been chosen and the sequence determined, the students make a front cover for their sketchbook. This could be a new piece of cardstock, cut to fit and hole-punched to match the other pages, or it could be the original cover altered in some way: painted a solid color, or covered with a drawing from the stack, for example. The front and back covers are put back on the original wire binding, followed by the pages, and then the wire binding is carefully bent back in place to hold everything together. The 'seam' should be between the last page and the back cover. Lastly, the excess wire binding is cut off with wire cutters so it is the right length for the pages and covers.

General Use

This assignment has been flexible enough to use in many different classes: drawing from observation, conceptual drawing, drawing for painters, and drawing for architects. It works well at the beginning of a course: it is a quick project, so it helps build momentum, and it helps set the tone for good group dynamics (students generally borrow ideas, brushes, and materials from each other). While at the beginning it seems prescriptive to some students ('remove spine, cut pages, lay grounds'), the assignment opens up and they are able to create very unique projects by the end; many students continue to explore a sketchbook theme or technique in later projects. Most importantly, because they know that each page can be edited out, the students are able to let down their guard and explore, and in exploring, they can better find solutions that are thoughtful, creative and personal.

Book Review

# Art School: (Propositions for the 21st Century)

Edited by Steven Henry Madoff
The MIT Press, 2009

Reviewed by Brad Allen
Associate Professor
The University of Montana

Impressive is art criticism which so thoughtfully defines a crisis in art education that it can be understood and acted upon by both student and educator. *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)* is one such text. I identify it as art criticism rather than merely a book on art education, because its essayists go to great depths to establish their bearings and operative agendas within the context of the greater art world. Indeed, to isolate the subject of art instruction would shelter the academy in the very way that has lead to many of the critiques within the book. *Art School* locates the relationship between contemporary artistic practice and art education in a manner that considers bourgeoning art theory, out-of-balance paradigms and an ever-encroaching art market. The outcome of this self-location by *Art School*'s writers adds a refreshing reminder of current practices, failures and successes.

Steven Henry Madoff, who among many things is a writer for *Artforum*, The New York *Times* and a senior critic at Yale University, conducted five-years of research underwritten by the Anaphiel Foundation in Miami to envision the future of art education. *Art School* is the manifestation of these inquiries, involving over one hundred participants and symposia on multiple continents. Chief among Madoff's concerns is the open identification of the problems surrounding contemporary art education and the formation of new potential models (established by the many voices noted throughout). Madoff includes a refreshingly diverse list of contributors in the hopes of establishing a broad range of possible solutions to our predicament. To be sure, one consistent thread weaving all the essays together is that there is, at worst, a crisis in art education, and at least, the early evidence of a tired system.

Art School is at times very formally written and at others very loose, even poetic (See Liam Gillick's contribution *Nobody Asked You To Do Nothing/A Potential School*, a rollicking mishmash of rapid-fire descriptions outlining a potential academy). The format of the book, in fact, takes on a rhythm, leaping from essays, to conversations, to lists of priorities. Moments of intensity are spaced nicely throughout and are allowed to ruminate between more lower-pitched passages. The audience Madoff and his contributors seek are primarily those involved in any way with the transfer or establishment of knowledge from one person to another, especially as it involves an institutionalization of goals and value judgments. This would squarely include students of all levels, faculty, administrators, galleries, curators, critics, event organizers of all types, granting institutions, even government agencies.
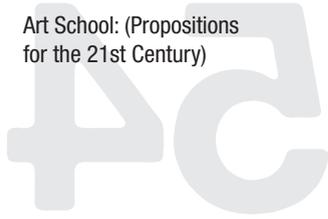
Our System At Its Worst

Arts education (as metabolized in *Art School*) is at an important historical juncture, not
without opportunities or consequences. Early in the book, Thierry de Duve gives us a bleak
but necessary reminder, " But I have not forgotten that art schools have not always existed,
that they are fragile at the moment, and that there is no reason to think that they will
always exist " (p. 24). I will further contextualize that quote in the closing section, but call
on it here, disembodied, to illustrate the tone set forth in several essays—which is a tone
of frontal questioning. Each writer seems willing to discuss the basic cultural function of art
education and whether or not it is mendable, replaceable, or necessary in the first place.

At its worst, it is argued by the majority of the writers that the art market has so
permeated educational centers that it not only puts pressure on students to constantly
and blindly produce, to produce a certain type of work. This dulling emphasis on the
creation of objects with the intent to exhibit seems to be a perverse stand-in for acts
of creativity and growth. Madoff adds, "Today, what the art school is in its current state
of exception, which is aesthetically underwritten by the marketplace, is a benign factory"
(p. 280).

Art School identifies world art fairs and biennial mega-exhibitions as institutions with
orbiting galleries, critical agendas, pedagogy, and even a curriculum. The biennial is
described as a potentially exciting alternative to its barnacled sibling, the academy, if not
for its inherent inability to be anything but a massive transmission of trend and power.
Luis Camnitzer (*In Latin America: Art Education Between Colonialism and Revolution*)
yet describes the successes of the Sixth Biennial of Mercosur in Brazil, 2007: "But the
experience in Latin America indicates that if we're to consider art as a cultural factor,
more education is taking place in nonacademic settings than in schools…" (p. 214).

The (many) Way(s) Forward

Among the many ideas posited by *Art School*, the most intriguing proposition for the
21st century might be the un-academy. That is to say, there have been many varying
manifestations of collectives that replicate the most effective parts of the academy
without being accredited or granting a single diploma. There is no bueacracy, no stencil.
To quote Future Academy founder Clementine Deliss (here the writer of *Roaming,
Prelusive, Permeable*), "Future Academy was set up in late 2002 to investigate the global
transformation of the art college and, with the input of students, forecast future conditions
for independent research and art production" (p. 119). It is supported by the Edinburgh
College of Art, but serves as a light-on-its-feet research collaborative that is flexible and
mobile, an integrated multi-disciplinary colloquium. Narrowly predating Futures Academy
was Charles Esche's Protocademy, and contemporary with it was Anton Vidolke's
Unitednationsplaza (a group formed literally on United Nations Plaza in Berlin). These,
in general terms, represent alternative methods to the cultivation and transmission of
knowledge, but unlike the solitude of the academy (*personal* studio, *individual* critique,
solo exhibition), these endeavors promoted a collective mindset, art dialog potentially
integrated with hard science, technology, social science, and humanities research. These
documented alternatives are never pushed on the reader as a wholesale substitute for
schools, but instead offer exciting instruments for the calibration of the traditional school.

Esche, in his contribution, *Include Me Out (Helping Artists to Undo the Art World)*, encourages us to not invest in an education revolution, but rather to build on what now functions—being more creative than inventive. Esche in speaking of the Bauhaus, Cal Arts, Goldsmiths, Free International Universities, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design says, "In all these places something occurred among the energy of the students, the commitment and courage of the staff, and the external and political circumstances that defined a new way of working with art and its education…Each was brought about by a confluence of individuals who shared certain ideals…"(p. 106). He goes on to encourage more dialog by faculty and administrators, suggesting that it is predictable that Art funding often gets cut when there is such a lack of clarity in our mission.

Ken Lum closes the essays in *Art School* with a letter to Madoff, *Dear Steven* (p. 329-339e). It is a compassionate call for a new ethical distribution of power within the entire system, voicing care for the student artist not seen in most of the essays—a fitting close. Book-ending the earlier quote from Thierry de Duve's *An Ethics* are these more optimistic and charged words:

> "I want to plead here for the maintenance of art schools as crucibles in which technical apprenticeship, theoretical instruction, and the formation of judgment are brought together to create a unique question of address. We should ask ourselves why Beuys had six hundred students lapping up his words at the Düsseldorf Academy…Perhaps the art school of the future will not necessarily be an institution made of bricks…but nothing more or less than a mode of transmission of art addressed to everyone *as if they were all artists*" (p. 24).

Applications for *Art School*

From a student perspective *Art School* seems to have a similar effect as reading Elkin's *Why Art Cannot Be Taught*—a sobering, exciting, self-realization that both artwork and the higher education itself, are products inside a larger network of systems. It must feel like reading "insider" information.

While most of the essays seem to address graduate programs, many of the essays can easily be applied to undergraduate endeavors. The most pragmatic offering within *Art School* comes from a collection of questionnaires completed by educators and artists themselves. Among the revelations here are a call for early attention to technique and liberal arts/humanities supplements in foundations and a transdisciplinary approach to graduate students. Interestingly enough, the educators questioned saw less of a struggle between the market and curricular objectives than those most of the essayists. Several passages describe foundational methods of knowledge dissemination, most frequently, varying perspectives on the efficacy of the continued practice of Bauhaus model and several eloquent definitions of Post-Duchampian modalities. *On The Ground (Practical Observations for Regenerating Art Education)* by Ernesto Pujol queries, "The future of art education will be based on the notion of universal immediate access." He would go on to question, "So what does this all mean for foundation curriculum development? It means that art schools stand at the threshold of multidisciplinary art research and intradisciplinary art production"(p. 3). We can recognize the initial development of this in foundation courses throughout the country, regarding the inclusion of social, digital and time-based modes of research and production.
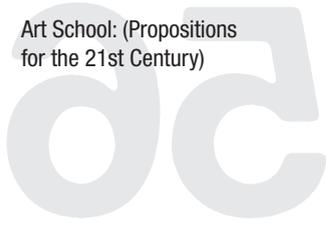
Art School can be vital as required reading in critical theory and pedagogy courses on the graduate level, but I believe the most immediate application for the book is to serve as an impetus of dialog amongst a faculty prepared at least to examine its objectives, its product, and its student's products. It is thorough, contradictory, argumentative, and at times humorous and offensive. It is a heated intervention—a necessarily imperfect seed.

List of Contributors to *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)*:

Essays:
Ernesto Pujol, Thierry de Duve, Boris Groys, Brendan D. Moran, Robert Storr, Raqs Media Collective, Ann Lauterbach, Charles Esche, Clementine Deliss, Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Michael Shanks, Charels Renfro, Ute Meta Bauer, Daniel Birnbaum, Liam Gillick and Students, Steven Henry Madoff, and Ken Lum

Conversations:
John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin, Marina Abramovic and Tania Bruguera, Dennis Adams, Saskia Bos, and Hans Haacke

Questionnaires:
Ann Hamilton, Dana Schutz, Fred Wilson, Guillermo Kuitca, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Matthew Higgs, Mike Kelley, Paul Chan, Paul Ramirez-Jonas, Piero Golia, Shirin Neshat, and Thomas Bayrle

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Book Review

Aesthetics & Painting

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By Jason Gaiger
Continuum International Publishing Group,
2008

Reviewed by John Dempsey
Associate Professor of Art
Mott Community College

This book is one in a series that explores the aesthetics of major art forms such as literature, music, film and architecture, edited by Derek Matravers for the Open University and the University of Cambridge, UK. *Aesthetics & Painting*, by Jason Gaiger, explores philosophy as it relates to painting. Painting and philosophy are acknowledged as independently useful modes of inquiry and, as such, complement each other, as well as aid in a better understanding of each. Because painting has a rich and long history, and the interplay of philosophy and art often finds its way into many foundations programs, this book can be useful in the foundations classroom as well as provide an instructive resouce for teachers.

A primary focus for Gaiger is on the nature of pictorial representation including an analysis of the central ideas of resemblance, illusion, denotation and semiotics. To this end, the text revisits ideas important to the aesthetics of painting by major contributors such as Leon Battista Alberti, Erwin Panofsky, E.H. Gombrich, and Clement Greenberg, and introduces more contemporary authors, most notably Nelson Goodman. The approach is a refreshing comparative study of the nature of visual communication.

As art has changed over time, so have the methods used to interpret and understand it. *Aesthetics & Painting* explores this dynamic not in terms of the formal differences of style, but rather in terms of differences in interpreting and understanding ideas central to painting such as resemblance (ex: Gombrich) and denotation (ex: Krauss). Gaiger not only introduces the reader to a variety of these ideas relevant to painting but he also effectively defines and compares ideas from a number of theorists in a way that provides a broad, current framework and overview for understanding the contemporary discourse in philosophy as it pertains to the discipline of painting.

Definitions and concepts are presented in rapid succession. Gaiger's approach is both accessible and challenging to students of philosophy and painting alike. It favors neither. It does, however, effectively present a researched perspective for understanding contemporary discourse. Gaiger's introduction to Nelson Goodman's ideas on symbol theory proves a particularly useful addition to the general discussion of art as a non-verbal symbol system and helps to rethink ideas central to Gombrich and Panofsky in particular.

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Aesthetics & Painting ranges widely to cover ideas that should provide food for thought to both painter as well as to those interested in art and philosophy. Insofar as ideas are important raw materials for painters, this book should prove invaluable. Foundation studio art students would also benefit from this book's overview, although it could prove challenging for students with limited prior exposure to useful, but dense, lines of philosophical arguments. For a foundations instructor, this book can serve as a valuable resource.

Book Review

Art Elements:
Biological Global And
Interdisciplinary Foundations

By Cynthia Bickley-Green
Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2011

Reviewed by Dr. Rosemary Wright, Ph.D
Steinhart School of Education
New York University

This fine volume belongs on the bookshelf of every art educator in America, and especially in the collection of instructors with richly diverse student bodies. Bickley-Green provides a resource which can inform and excite educators interested in building curricula that explores global, traditional and contemporary cultures. As a reference, it is full of stimulating ideas for artists, designers and planners of all kinds and represents the varied range of aesthetics currently found in our global visual culture.

Organized around the familiar categories of line, form, color, texture, value and space, the text examines these fundamental elements from several innovative frames: Biological, Global and Interdisciplinary. Each is supported by incisive and illuminating examples from a wide range of periods and cultures. Chapter six's exploration, for example, of space and pictorial perspectives is especially effective. Its discussion of how we perceive rational space moves smoothly from a culture's assumption about spatial organization, to examples of irrational interventions by noted contemporary artists and architects.

Other chapters expand the discussion beyond formalist design traditions to consider broader themes. Chapter seven offers the reader a short history of the creative process, providing examples by contributing authors. Chapter eight considers the question of 'meaning' in visual expression, interestingly creating connections to the biological foundations of perception. As Semir Zeki observes, "…to understand the biological foundations of art, we must enquire into the biological foundations of knowledge, for art constitutes a form of knowledge, indeed is knowledge…" And this reviewer would add that art is the earliest form of mnemonic imagery and so retains a profound connection to the archetypes, which have been critical to our evolution and survival as a species.

Finally, "Art Elements" is also a workbook, with thoughtful questions at the end of each chapter providing springboards for the reader to pose generative questions about their own image-making. The 21st Century has been described as the 'world of the eye', so visual education is key to joining the critical conversations in visual culture today.

President's message for FATE in Review, 2011-2012, Volume 33

Scott Betz, President
Foundations in Art: Theory and Education
Professor of Art
Winston-Salem State University

FATE continues to grow in numbers and quality in its 34rd Year. Below are some highlights:

Financial

We continue to have a solid base of savings promising the continued growth of our organization. Our members and institutional affiliates play an indispensable role in keeping us in the black through modest dues FATE uses that drive our programs and activities. While we are not currently increasing our $50 biannual dues, we are creating levels of extra opportunities for members who want to support FATE more and can afford to contribute at the new Silver or Gold levels. The new levels of Silver at $65 and Gold at $75, both good for two years, would significantly enhance FATE's ability to offer more for our members. For example, additional revenue could enhance *FATE in Review* through larger editions with more articles and color image pages, or aid in facilitating participation of interested parties in our organization, including graduate students and adjunct faculty. If FATE has made a significant impact in your career, I strongly encourage those members—especially Associate Professors and Professors, to consider these advanced levels of support.

Thanks to Jeff Boshart, Diane Highland and Jesse Payne for their teamwork as we transition from the Eastern Illinois University system to the "MembersClicks" system of membership management. At each point in the road, FATE has made sound decisions about how to handle finances. As individuals and universities change their payment preferences and new, more efficient and inexpensive payment products become available, our organization needs to respond to such transformations. Part of this transition is changing banks from a regional Illinois bank with a checking/saving system to a Wells Fargo national bank with a checking/saving/credit card system. In this new system, our profits and expenses are automatically directed into specific operating accounts and short-term and long-term savings accounts. Our members should be happy to hear our research and ultimate decisions have yielded a saving on service fees of up to 10%. All these changes allow your dues and registration fees to go to less over-head and more direct FATE product that enhances your professional and teaching goals.

National Conference

We are moving from our successful conference in St. Louis, Missouri to Savannah, Georgia, where Savannah College of Art and Design will host *Posthaus 2013*, our next national conference. With each conference we gain valuable experience which helps the next. For example, we now know how to better serve members and student exhibition logistics. We believe it will be easier for our members and less expensive for FATE to move away

President's message
for FATE in Review,
2011-2012, Volume 33

from an outsourcing company for the submission of art and fees and instead handling it internally through a .pdf process similar to the way SECAC handles their member's exhibition. We look forward to the opportunity to showcase the best professional and student art at *Posthaus 2013*.

Communications

Jerry Johnson continues to work hard on our communications. In 2011, we regularly reached 4,000 artists, educators and schools via our email blasts that updated interested parties in our three newsletters each year. We remain in touch with 524 friends on Facebook as well (an increase of approximately 100 more than this time last year). As we move into 2012, we have transitioned away from mailing a physical paper newsletter of static text and images into a digital .pdf newsletter with the possibility of color, video, audio as well as longer articles and active links. It makes sense in terms of greener and cheaper choices for FATE. Furthermore, "MemberClicks" reminds members of dues renewal, thus eliminating much need for paper letters and envelopes. This convenience will provide fast if not immediate production of confirmation and receipts for conference registration as well. Some of these ideas have already been put into place and we hope you enjoy the new format. I appreciate the assistance Greg Skaggs has offered the board with some of these new processes. Jerry and Greg have spent much of their time renegotiating FATE's ability to work with some of these new systems.

Even with improvements in digital technology, direct, in-person discussions with administrators, faculty and students is still important. Since opportunities for such interaction normally exist at only the comparatively expensive national conferences, Heidi Neff, our new Vice President for Regional Conferences has already put into place some innovative standards for hosting a regional conference. These can be small or large depending on interest, experiences and facilities. As a Regional Coordinator of 8 years, I have been happily surprised to find so many willing and enthusiastic neighbors to discuss Foundations issues. From my experience, either scenario is extremely rewarding and I highly recommend you try one in your community.

Lastly, there is something *you* can do to help get the word out about FATE. Add the FATE url to your signature information in each of your emails: **www.foundations-art.org**

FATE in Review

FATE in Review too continues to provide a forum for discussion of our collective ideas and experiences in foundation teaching and learning. It remains an important and competitive peer juried journal with nearly three times as many submissions as accepted articles. This year we are creating a system in which FATE members whose abstracts are accepted for the conference have those abstracts channeled directly to Kevin Bell, Editor of *FATE in Review* for consideration.

Recently I was rereading the 1992 *FATE in Review* and was amazed by how much of the topics covered are still relevant 20 years later. There seems to always be a cautionary tale about the "end of something" and concerns about the "rise of a technology" and the eponymous "lament of the quality of student interest". But as I began to read the articles, I realized that even though the big issues and challenges that we face every year have

some superficial connection to the decades before, the unique insights and experiences of faculty and arts professionals grow and evolve each year to the unique situation of the time. Such timely information is not only available at national and regional conferences but also available in issues of *FATE in Review*, like this one in your hand. And even better, you can compare ideas easily by comparing the different issues. FATE intends to make this more convenient by offering access to past issues to members in .pdf form.

Thanks go to Editor Kevin Bell and his efforts to continue *FATE in Review*'s tradition of intelligent, thoughtful discourse on pedagogical ideas and innovation while still remaining accessible and relevant to all foundations instructors.

Future Directions

The board has identified a central focus on quality growth and financial stability for the near future. To increase financial opportunities, the board has, through member vote, added the position of Vice President for Development. Jesse Payne was elected to this position. Reid Wood, FATE President 1999-2001, worked to develop a 501c3 status for FATE so that we might pursue funding through grants and gifts. Up until now, we have not fully utilized the possibilities of this status because of a lack of personnel. The Vice President for Development allows us to pursue other avenues for revenue beyond the very affordable membership dues and enhance our ability to deliver support for our mission. While we are only in the beginning stages of our development plan, Jesse has been working hard to form a simple but effective system to engage industry around the arts and specific Foundation areas and grow our connections and funding with them.

This is my last term as President of FATE and while there are several initiatives I continue to work on, my key task is to leave FATE with a connected, efficient and migratable operating system. In other words, I realize that change is constant and the volunteers on the board shouldn't have to reinvent the wheel each two years as people change on and off the elected board. I also recognize (as I've heard many members remark) what is so special about FATE and what we wouldn't want to lose in the years ahead. While we need to insure that FATE is efficient, financially sound with continued membership growth, we shouldn't become a "mega" organization that sacrifices the human scale we now enjoy. I believe that growth in quality comes before quantity, and such growth should reflect member needs and goals. In keeping our growth strategies transparent and community informed, I have often asked for suggestions. New ideas are essential. As it stands now, each board member has been asked to actively recruit for their replacement as they come up for re-election and as they step down. I encourage you to self-nominate and introduce yourself at the next event and participate in the leadership of this organization.

Thanks for all you do for students, for foundation teaching and for your investment in the future of FATE.

Scott Betz

FATE Officers 2011-2012

President
Scott Betz, Winston-Salem State University

Vice President for Development
Jesse Payne, Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar

Vice President for Communications
Jerry Johnson, Troy University

Vice President for Regional Coordinators
Heidi Neff, Harford Community College

Vice President for Biennial Conference
Chris Kienke, Savannah College of Art and Design

Editor, FATE in Review
Kevin Bell, University of Montana

College Art Association Representative
Sara Dismukes, Troy University

Mid-America College Art Association Representative
Marlene Lipinski, Columbia College Chicago

Southeastern College Art Conference Representative
Stacy Isenbarger, The University of Idaho

About FATE

Foundations in Art: Theory and Education, FATE, is a national, non-profit 501(C)(3) organization dedicated to the promotion of excellence in the development and teaching of college-level foundations courses in both studio and art history. Founded in 1977 as an affiliate society of the College Art Association (CAA), members include approximately 500 studio and art history faculty and administrators, and over 100 sponsoring institutions. The organization sponsors a national conference bi-annually, regional conferences in interim years, panel sessions at CAA and regional associations, and publishes a professional journal (FATE in Review) and a newsletter. For more information, please see the website at **www.foundations-art.org**.

FATE Membership Information

Regular membership dues are $50.00 for 2 years.
Graduate student membership is $20.00 for 2 years.
Institutional sponsorships are $100.00 for one year.

Membership information can be found online at
www.foundations-art.org

FATE logo

Philip B. Meggs
(1942-2002)

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