

Art and Design Education

EXHIBITION OF THESES



**2015-2016
Pratt Institute**

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Patricia Delgado

**Free Art Expression as a Response to
“Deviant” Behavior in the Artroom**

Briana Hill

From Urban To Roots

Jieun Lee

**Exploring STEAM Education in
South Korea and the U.S.**

Brittany Sauta

**Exploring Social Justice Art and Education:
Intersections, Possibilities and Challenges**

Shina Yoon

**Motivating Teens in NYC:
A Case Study of Pratt Young Scholars**

Zezi Zhao

**The Art Portfolio Assessment:
Questions of Selection and Criteria**

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Free Art Expression as a Response to “Deviant” Behavior in the Artroom

PATRICIA DELGADO

This qualitative study uses elements of Florence Cane’s (1951) pedagogic approach of free art expression with a group of 10 middle school students in an urban public school setting. The purpose is to bring Cane’s potentially therapeutic properties of art making to a contemporary learning environment through participatory-action research. The aim is to help cultivate a creative art classroom and reduce “deviant” behavior. The primary question for research, “Can free art expression reduce ‘deviant’ behaviors”

was both influenced by Cane’s pedagogy and my personal interest in the students behavior. Through qualitative field notes, art experiences, and observations of the site and participants, I assessed the affect of an increased engagement in art-making, confidence, and a positive influence on behavior. I found that certain strategies such as embodied and choice-based learning were successful in engaging students and reducing behaviors such as restlessness, avoidance, defiance, and violence.



From Urban To Roots:

An International Comparative Analysis of Art Education Practices in Four Public Schools between New York City and Jamaica

BRIANA HILL

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to compare/contrast the art education practices in four different public schools: two in New York City and two in Jamaica. The research explores the following question: What are the similarities and differences between the practices of art education in two public schools in New York City and two public schools in Jamaica? The data include classroom observations, photo/video recordings and teacher interviews over two days spent at each of the four sites.

The study stems from personal experience as a African American female born and raised in Harlem, who experienced a range of discrepancies in her own art education in the public school system. Based on this experience, the researcher developed an assumption that lack of access to quality arts education programs, corresponds to the presence of a certified art teacher in the school, as well as to socio-economic issues of race and class.

This study found that art instruction is included in all four sites but with varying

purposes and goals. In the two schools in Jamaica, art education is mainly used for promoting the preservation and understanding of identity, culture and heritage. In the two schools in New York City, art education is mainly integrated due to state mandates requiring the teaching of art in public education. Nevertheless, youth are practicing art in both locations even though in some schools, a certified art teacher does not teach art instruction.

Based on the data, including conversations with professionals in the four schools, the study shows that not all schools have art teachers but some still try to integrate art into the curriculum. However, those schools without art teachers who have a strong background in the arts, recognize that they need quality art teachers or at the least need adequate art training for educators who are asked to integrate art. Whether art educators are hired full time or have a teaching artist come in and educate youth on art skills and techniques, it is essential that youth are trained to create and think artistically.



Exploring STEAM Education in South Korea and the U.S.

JIEUN LEE

This qualitative study examines approaches to STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) in the U.S. and South Korea. Using an exploratory case study methodology, the study focuses on the Blue School, a K-8 independent school in New York City. This case study draws from interviews with the STEAM and art teacher, collection of field notes, artifacts of student work, and personal reflections. The study also includes a comparative analysis of art educators' perspective on STEAM education in the U.S. and South Korea.

Findings suggest that the South Korean education system is driven largely by governmental mandates, as compared to a more decentralized approach in the U.S. However, both countries seem to navigate a common or

shared vision of STEAM learning. The findings also highlight examples of high-quality STEAM instruction and an effective implementation of STEAM curriculum at the Blue School. These approaches resist standardized testing and instead embrace 21st century skills where ambiguity and failure are positive factors in the learning process. This model draws from project-based learning and design thinking strategies to encourage student exploration of real-life problems. Finally, although art and design are central to STEAM-based learning, these disciplines are often underutilized and considered add-ons to a final STEAM project. Design thinking is a strategy to address some of these issues by encouraging creative problem solving in a human-centered way.



Exploring Social Justice Art and Education: Intersections, Possibilities and Challenges

BRITTANY SAUTA

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore how social justice art education influences art making, as well as students' understanding of identity and self at the Community School for Social Justice in the Bronx, NY. The research includes conversational interviews with the art teacher and principal, observations, and review of relevant literature. Findings suggest that utilizing social justice art education is complex and challenging, but is also important in helping students understand themselves and the broader social context in which they live. The study also finds that social justice in the art classroom is

most successful when critical pedagogy is used as a framework to inform the setup of the learning environment, lesson planning, and instructional strategy. Utilizing critical texts and critiques that are inclusive of both aesthetics and the work's social implications are similarly vital to ensuring a deeper understanding of both art and its relationship to society. Finally, this research aims to encourage teachers to incorporate a variety of social justice-based pedagogical strategies and to expand and evolve the notion of social justice and its relation to visual arts education.



Motivating Teens in NYC: A Case Study of Pratt Young Scholars

SHINA YOON

This thesis is a qualitative research study exploring the value of mentorship pre-college programs and studio art experiences for high school-aged youth, and how these programs offer pathways to future careers in art and design. Using a case study methodology, the study draws from interviews, field observations of studio art class and a user camera study with two participants in the Pratt Young Scholars (PYS) program, a needs-based scholarship art program for high school students in Brooklyn, NY. Interviews and conversations with faculty involved in the program offer a unique insight into the challenges of working with minority youth in New York City, and especially

how socio-cultural, environmental and economic issues play a role in determining urban youth's motivation in pursuing their interest in the arts.

Findings suggest the important role of concepts such as “grit,” (Duckworth, 2007) affirming peer networks, and continuous family support. In examining the Pratt Young Scholars, I also found positive relationships are integral to expanding students' idea of success, increasing levels of confidence, and motivation. In addition, the findings highlight how programs like the PYS offer a level of quality art and design instruction, and that these resources can support access to higher education.



The Art Portfolio Assessment: Questions of Selection and Criteria

ZEZI ZHAO

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine specific factors that make an art portfolio successful for entrance into art school, and to understand best practices for art teachers in creating curriculum that helps develop and prepare students' portfolios. Research questions include: How do admission officers assess the high school art portfolio? How do high school students learn how to prepare their portfolios for successful entry for art college? Interviews were conducted with four groups of two to eight: admission counselors, high school students, high school art teachers, and art college students. The study offers a range of perspectives, connecting the conversations with each interviewee and their role in art portfolio assessment and preparation.

Each group of interviewees considered what a good portfolio is. While some similar

qualities were emphasized in all groups, other aspects were mentioned by admission counselors, but neglected by other groups. The findings indicate that the process and criteria for assessing what constitutes a good art portfolio are ambiguous and inconsistent. There are rarely written criteria for portfolio assessments or guidelines for admission counselors to follow. The acceptance of the art portfolio largely depends on individual admission counselors' personal preferences. Moreover, there exist certain disconnections in perceptions and assumptions between admission counselors and high school art teachers. The findings also suggest that students who attend external programs and specialized high schools have more advantages in developing a successful portfolio than students without access to these opportunities.

