

Art & Design Education **Theses Exhibition**



Pratt Institute
2009-2010

April 28, 2010

Danielle Barbaro

Understanding Teacher Motivation Through Identity and Role A Comparative Case Study of Three Art Teachers

This study explores the factors that impact on teacher motivation. While many methods of motivating students have been researched, this study investigates how the teachers' identity and role impact on their motivation. The research involves comparing and contrasting three art teachers in a New York City school. They have between three and five years of experience teaching a class called Basic Art in the same high school in Brooklyn. The comparative case study involves interviews, observations and surveys of each teacher and studies in what ways the teacher's identity translates and is carried through into their actual role in the classroom and in a school. Findings suggest that while all the teachers assumed student based theories and motives, such as creating lessons based on student interests, their philosophies of teaching, and their pre-conceived notions of what it means to be an art teacher affect the efficacy of their intentions.



Karin Lee

A Caring Community **Portrait of a High School Art Teacher and his School**

Community-based art education has aroused the interests of many educators and scholars within the last two decades. It is generally linked to adolescents' healthy identity development and how connections between the self and surrounding community can further such growth. This thesis considers how a high school art teacher encourages similar dynamics within an art classroom. Through the practice of group work, collaboration, socializing, trust, freedom, and discipline the art teacher provides a caring community that seems to foster positive self-identity. The thesis also considers the school context, which incorporates the local community and the arts as an integrated component of the overarching curriculum. The findings demonstrate that the personal history of the teacher, as well as the history of the school, contributes to a unique caring community in the art classroom.

This case study of an art classroom in a small high school is based on extensive teacher interviews, classroom observations, student work, school documents, and external reports. The thesis provides an in-depth portrait of an art teacher who participated in the development and design of the school and shaped the school-based, as well as community-based, arts programs.



Melanie E. Schuster

The Pleasures and Perils of Early Childhood Art Collaborations **A Discussion of the Factors that Influence Parent-Child Partnerships in the Studio**

Although parents' participation in children's activities can be extremely beneficial to both parties, not all parent participation is constructive. This thesis explores the complexities of parent-child art partnerships through a case study of fifteen partnerships enrolled in a Saturday morning art class at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. While recognizing the significant variability that can occur from partnership to partnership, this thesis identifies 5

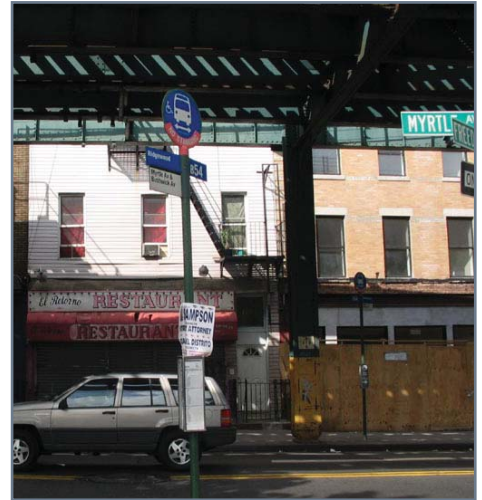


factors that appear to influence the quality of parent-child collaborations. As anticipated, the environment, the teacher and the presenting relationship between the parents and their children were found to influence the quality of the art collaborations. In addition, the findings of this study reveal that the representational or abstract nature of a project, as well as the degree to which the parents valued the art-making process—as separate and distinct from the product--also impacted the quality of the collaboration. Understanding these factors and how they can affect parents' interactions with their children is important for teachers who want facilitate high quality parent-child collaborations in the art studio.

Eileen Hillery

Bushwick Adolescents' Perceptions of Artmaking In and Out of School

This thesis explores how high school students in a small, urban high school perceive art education in the context of their lives inside and outside of schools. The thesis argues that art often plays a role in students' lives and that family, in particular siblings, are an important factor in how students feel about their art classes in school. Students perceive that their art classes are important because they provide a break from other academic classes and an opportunity for students to express themselves in an environment where they often feel that their voices are insignificant.



The thesis is based on a series of individual interviews with three high school sophomores at a school in Bushwick, Brooklyn, as well as observations of their art classes over a four-month period. The selected students are all Latino but are in no way homogenous. Although they share certain perspectives on their in-school art education, students' out of school experiences are shaped by immigrant status, family composition, and socio-economic background.



Jillian Mee

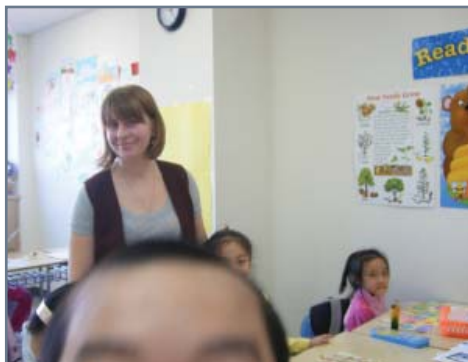
From Passive to Active Learners

Encouraging Students to Take Charge of their Education

Through a self-study of teaching in a Sunday art-school setting, this thesis considers the ways that active learning can counter the negative effects of passive learning. The thesis argues that relational pedagogy and student autonomy contribute to active learning in the classroom. The thesis defines relational pedagogy as a relationship between teacher and student based on trust and mutual understanding. Student autonomy is defined as the ability of students to pursue their own project ideas. Both relational pedagogy and student autonomy support active learning in the classroom which fosters problem solving, significant participation and critical thinking.



The self study is grounded in my teaching experience at the Angel Advantage Center, a test preparatory center in Sunset Park, Brooklyn serving students from New York City's second largest Asian community. Over a four month period, I observed my students during class time, interviewed them individually, conducted student surveys and asked students follow-up questions. I interviewed my colleagues and the assistant director of the program. I photographed and filmed the classroom and student work. I took notes during class and expanded these notes after each class. I used this data to identify significant themes and, in tandem with my literature review, I was able to define and illustrate what I mean by relational pedagogy, student autonomy, and active learning in a Sunday school setting.



Emma Stevenson

The Teacher's Role in Encouraging Self-Regulated Learning in the Elementary Art Classroom

Through a case study of an elementary school art teacher, the thesis explores the teacher's role in encouraging self-regulated learning. The thesis describes the ways in which the teacher helps students practice and develop the habits of mind of a self-regulated learner; metacognition, self-reflection, self-monitoring and self-discipline. The thesis argues that the art teacher engaged in more than one style of teaching to help students become more self-directed, including didactic instruction.

The thesis considers how the teacher's balanced instructional approach both contradict and align with some of the recent scholarship in the field of self-regulated learning in art education.

For example, choice-based pedagogy is not necessarily the only means to promote students' self-regulated habits of mind. The case study is grounded in an analysis of in-depth teacher interviews, classroom observations over a two month period, video tape recordings of lessons, and student work. The interviews and video tapes were transcribed and coded.



Kyle Garnett

Registration Marks: Putting Artists in Place


This research explores the factors that impact on the decision to become a professional artist. In a comparative case study involving three early career artists and three established artists, the study asked, “why do some choose a life of the arts?” While many artists are interviewed about their lives and careers, little analysis has been done to make sense of the factors that converged to make them commit themselves to life as a professional artist. Through interviewing six artists at different stages in their professional lives, a picture is created of the factors that impact on the development of a professional artist. Findings suggest that there is no one key moment, and that many factors converge and converge at different times including an early childhood interest in art, a supportive school education, early labeling as talented, family support and recognition, and professional mentoring. The findings also suggest that self-identification in the arts and an inner drive play an important role when becoming an artist.



Gina Llerena

Museum Perspectives

An Exploration of the Relationship Between Museum Field of Study and Mission and the Pedagogical Approach of the Education Department

This thesis explores two New York museum institution sites by examining the connection between museum collection and mission, as determined by the art and science fields of study, and how they relate to the pedagogical approach of the education department. Through a comparative case study of the adolescent programs of two museums, the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) and the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), the research explores the relationship between the museum mission and the pedagogical approach of the education department. The data includes interviews with the museum educators, observation of classes and analysis of museum websites. Findings suggest that while the AMNH and the MOMA exhibit a gap between museum public mission and actual teaching pedagogy, museum educators do fulfill their class pedagogical goals. In addition, both museum cultures share an elitist and innovative environment with regard to both collection and educational programming and share a common approach to pedagogy. However, the findings suggest that there exists a need for further study to establish whether there  erarching New York museum education teaching style does indeed exist.



Sarah Ellis


Constructivist Or Essentialist **A Comparative Case Study Of How Two Educational Approaches** **Prepare Kindergarteners to Meet New York State Standards**

Whereas an essentialist, or traditional, curriculum promotes direct instruction and core content, a constructivist, child-centered approach encourages hands-on experiences and grants students agency in determining the course of their learning. This thesis explores the different ways in which each of these philosophies are put into practice to help prepare kindergarten students to meet New York State Standards. The author investigates this question through a comparative case study of two New York City private schools, observing and analyzing how each approaches the subjects of math, English language arts, and the fine arts, as well as how the students respond to those methods. Through participant observation, interviews, and photo documentation, this thesis discusses each school's curriculum in the context of these three subjects, citing specific lessons and student-teacher interactions that inform the author's central question. Upon analysis of the findings, this thesis favors the constructivist approach, but ultimately concludes that the objectives of New York State are best met through a synthesis of both educational philosophies.

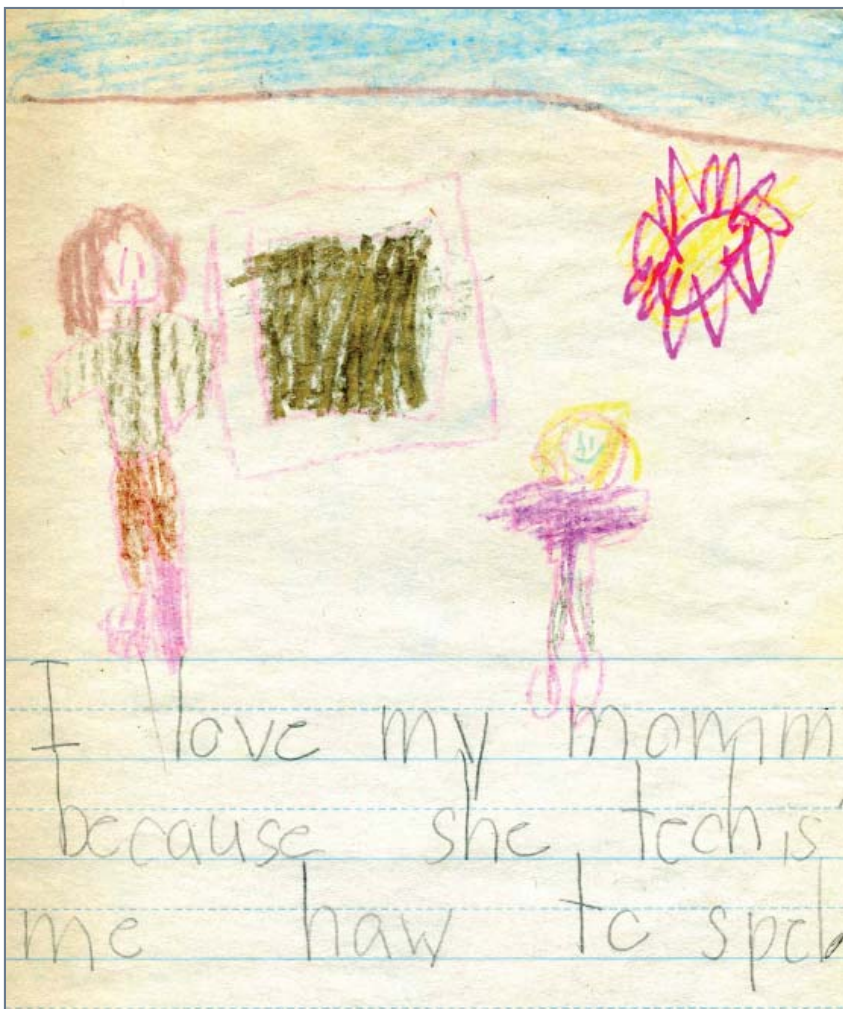


Hannah Brenner-Leonard

The Role of Interest-Based Learning for a Student With Dyslexia An Autoethnographic Study

In an auto-ethnography, a study into my own educational past, I compare the teaching of a student with dyslexia  early 1990s with the teaching of today and explore the role of interest-based learning. Interest-based learning refers to learning that is centered on a student's own personal interests, such as art, music or sports. This auto-ethnographic study analyzes interviews with my old teachers, my parents and documents relating to the special education I received, to better understand the impact of art on my own PreK-12 education. Findings suggest that interest-based learning combined with additional factors such as family advocacy and intervention strategies contribute to successful outcomes for students with

dyslexia. The results may also indicate that interest-based learning helps maintain a student's self-esteem as they often struggle in school.



Cheryl Sozanski Fantacone

Using a Multi-Sensory Approach to Create Memorable Art-Making Experiences

A Qualitative Self Study of Teaching Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Although the clients with developmental disabilities in an adult workshop in New Jersey appeared to enjoy the process of art making, they often were not able to hold the experience in their memories. This self-study explores how engaging the five senses can help students retain the experience of art making-as a source of pride, comfort and inspiration for further art engagement. Eleven workshop clients participated in three biographical art projects over a period of two months. The projects were grounded in the literature about this particular population and art making. Case studies of artists with autism and artists with Down syndrome were reviewed and the literature investigating the connection between the senses and learning was studied. Each project was designed to engage the five senses and included looking at images from art history, listening to music and consuming food from the culture being studied. The researcher documented the clients' work and responses with photographs and audio recordings. The artists' memories were evaluated through one-on-one conversations and, informally, as they spoke about their work at an in-house exhibit. It was found that all of the clients were able to remember some aspects of the art-making experiences. This thesis concludes that engaging all of the senses during an art lesson can result in a fuller and more memorable art experience.



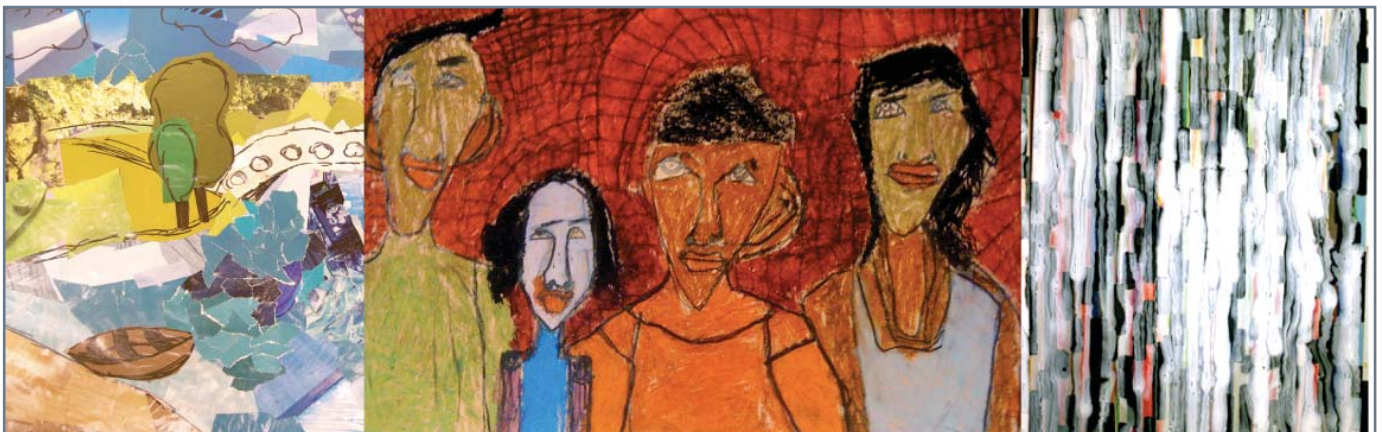
Stacey Blackman

Place, Self, and Transition in Immigrant Art

This thesis explores the artwork of immigrant artists. The thesis identifies three thematic aspects of artwork by children, adolescents, and adults, who recently immigrated from a number of different countries. The thesis argues that through the themes of place, self, and transition, the work of these artists reflects the multiple perspectives of new immigrants.

Through representations of place in their work, these artists explore their present reality, cultural and social identity, and elements of memory and fantasy. They also develop identity in their artwork through negotiating between their self perception, culturally constructed representations of self, and their ideal or future self. Finally, these artists explore the friction found in the transitional moments that occur when their private lives intersect with public spaces, when infinite amounts of information are translated through finite amounts of time, and when one attempts to travel between past, present and future projections of self.

The thesis findings draw on a collection of over two hundred images of artwork from an elementary school in a culturally diverse area in Queens, a high school that serves newly arrived immigrant youth in Manhattan, and two contemporary artists whose work reflects their personal or family experience as immigrants. The interpretation of the artwork is informed by interviews with the art teachers and artists and by methodological insights about interpreting children's artwork.



Jonita Griffiths

Copies, Hybrids and Visual Mash-Up Popular Culture in Adolescent Artwork

This paper explores the influence of popular culture on the artwork and aesthetic values of adolescents. Historically, copying and appropriation have been used by artists to improve their technical skills, to develop satire or social commentary, or to create unusual juxtapositions. Adolescents receive different messages about originality from teachers, parents, contemporary culture, and from their peers. While some teachers and parents discourage different methods of copying, these practices are pervasive in contemporary art practice, and also in adolescent's sketchbooks. In an action-research project at Pratt Institute's Saturday Art School, popular culture in both self-directed and teacher-directed assignments was observed and documented. The findings suggest that many students who use images from popular culture are doing more than imitating what they see, and that they use these images to achieve a variety of artistic and social goals. The results may indicate that students are responding to cultural shifts regarding issues of ownership and originality.



Kristen Ossman

Community in the Art Classroom

Through a self-study of teaching and learning in a New York City public elementary school after-school arts program, the thesis describes three pedagogical approaches that foster social bonds among students: an open line of communication, interactive art-making, and collaboration. The self-study pays particular attention to the introduction to projects, collaboration among students and the responses of the students during reflections on projects. The thesis argues that the teacher and students form strong bonds through an open line of communication during the introduction, creation and reflection stages of the projects. The interactive nature of the art classroom, in which students learn from each other while creating art, contributes to the development of community. This case study also reveals the significance of collaborative projects, as they contribute to the formation of community in the art classroom. The self-study draws on classroom notes, journal reflections, photos, and student work collected over two-years of teaching.



Renee Sawyer

Engaging Middle School Students in the Art Classroom An Action Research Study

There are many factors that impede the artistic expression of middle school students. Among them are an increased reliance on verbal expression, a self-critical nature, self-consciousness, the desire for realism, and the challenges of abstract thinking. This action research study was conducted to investigate various strategies to combat these factors and improve middle school students' enthusiasm for, and engagement in, art making. Students enrolled in sixth, seventh and eighth grade classes at a Catholic school in Brooklyn, NY, completed a unit on public transportation, in which they designed and drew a complete transport system and built a three-dimensional vehicle. The projects incorporated representational drawing, symbol use, three-dimensional design, literacy, and film and class discussion. Student engagement in each of these components was assessed through participant observation, documentation of student work and student-completed questionnaires. This study found that the topic of urban public transportation and the various components of the unit engaged middle school students with varied effectiveness. Students in grades six and seven were found to enjoy, and seemed to prefer, representational drawing over using symbols. They were also found to have an affinity for working with clay. Students in grade eight displayed a distinct preference for symbol use, as evidenced by their inclusion of initials and names in projects and by their behavior during activities that required representational drawing. In addition, they showed a greater interest in projects that encouraged them to explore issues of identity.



Nolan Padraic O'Bryan

Art and Art Education During Northern Ireland's Peace Process

This thesis explores the role of art and art education in Northern Irish society from the late 1960's until the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. This time period, typically referred to as the 'Troubles,' was marked by neighborhood segregation, extreme violence, and terrorism from both Catholic/Nationalist/Republican forces, as well as from Protestant/Loyalist/Unionist groups. Through interviews with former



students, teachers, academics and artists, this research seeks to understand how visual culture was used to incite agitation during the height of the 'Troubles,' how it helped to define sectarian identities, and how art, culture, and symbols are being used today to bring communities together as they recover from a tumultuous past. Although it is not large enough in scope to encompass all of the factors of a peace process, this thesis examines how visual culture plays a role in defining identities that incite conflict, and redefining those identities to promote peace.