

Art + Design Education **Theses Exhibition**



Pratt Institute

2011-2012

April 25, 2012

South Hall 210, 5:00 PM

Design in Classroom Instruction

Emily Brink

Typography and the Early Childhood Teacher



This is a case study of how early childhood teachers made choices about the typographical displays in their classroom. The study focuses specifically on the typographical information hanging on the classroom walls such as placement, size and color of text and the spacing between letters, words and sentences. The thesis argues that although teachers intended to use the classroom walls as a learning tool for all, their intentions did not always result in curricular and class information that promoted accessibility and learning. Some of the problems that interfered with the teachers' intentions were typographical readability and legibility, the use of handmade materials, and the need to reach a diverse range of students including those with learning disabilities.

The case study is based on classroom research in four first grade classrooms and one kindergarten classroom. The case study draws on observational field notes, teacher interviews, photo documentation and a teacher survey. The conclusion offers recommendations for improved readability and legibility of the displayed typographical materials found on classroom walls.

Sarah Holcomb

Space Design:

Creating an Effective Studio Environment in the Public High School Classroom



This thesis explores how a studio in a public school can be designed in a way that effectively enhances students' attitude and performance. Often, classroom design is an afterthought in the public schools, especially the design of the art studio. The thesis focuses on how lighting, space, storage and furniture can add (or subtract) to the high school studio environment and improve a student's ability to problem solve, collaborate, and create work autonomously. Findings suggest that an organized and carefully designed environment helps improve the quality of students' artwork and social interactions in the studio.

This thesis argues that it is ultimately the responsibility of the educator to implement effective design strategies within the classroom space. Careful analysis of interviews with students and teachers, as well as field notes, suggest that a teacher's educational background and practice as an artist can influence the design that is incorporated in the physical environment. Design can also inform a teacher's instructional strategies to improve student learning and the overall experience in the art studio.

Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Teaching Artists and Designers

Adnan Lotia

A Cultural History of Bauhaus Pedagogy

Historical Interactions from the Bauhaus 1919-1940		Evolution of the Preliminary Course				Prominent Voices in Architecture				Artist Teachers				Politically Persecuted Fine Arts				Innovative Bauhaus Graduate Educators			
Foundations of the Preliminary Course Formative Vision in Architecture Artist Teachers Artistic and Technical Foundations		Johannes Itten	László Moholy-Nagy	Josef Albers	Walter Gropius	Marcel Breuer	Hans van der Rohe	Lyonel Feininger	Paul Klee	Wassily Kandinsky	Gerhard Marcks	Oskar Schlemmer	Georg Meche	Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack	Herbert Bayer	Anni Albers					
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Although many art historians recognized the Bauhaus' significant influence on contemporary art and design education, few have provided insight into why or how this occurred. Because Bauhaus institutional literature often attempted to explain the school's enduring legacy, it largely ignored its pedagogy, which was inconsistent, experimental, contentious, and often undocumented.

This study locates Bauhaus pedagogy in institutional literature ranging from primary sources to contemporary educational analysis. Through historical research and data analysis, it argues that social and cultural histories are imperative in order to understand the relevance of Bauhaus pedagogy to contemporary art and design education.

Lucinda Kalin

Art as Experience Through Teaching Artist/ Student Collaboration



This thesis investigates how both student and teacher-artist gain generative knowledge, expanded perceptions of artistic processes and experience through their collaboration in art making. The thesis argues that teaching artists can tap into their own process and way of thinking as an artist to cultivate the perceptual abilities of the student-artists they collaborate with.

This study investigated how teaching artists' affected student learning through interviews and observations of five teaching artists and conversations with their students. Results indicate that many teaching artists share similar practices, and that these tend to change their own perception as well as the perception of their students about what art can be. Results also revealed a looping pattern of student/teacher collaboration, an increase in student autonomy, the development of generative knowledge and expanded student and teacher perceptions.

Arts Integration, Portfolio Development and Social Media in Secondary Education

Tina Stevens

Integrated Art Curricula at the Secondary Level and its Benefits to Student Learning



This thesis examines the varying degrees to which high school teachers are able to provide a multi-disciplinary arts curriculum that integrates other content areas such as English Language Arts and History. Findings suggest that an effectively integrated art curriculum that incorporates all art disciplines enhances students' abilities to make cross-curricular connections while simultaneously expanding their content knowledge. Imperative to effective integration is the ability of the art educator to implement art experiences that facilitate such connections. Findings reveal that the most effective strategies were those that bridged the gaps separating art from the content in other disciplines overcoming compartmentalization of classroom subjects to extend the benefits of the arts to other content areas.

The case study was based on a compilation and analysis of classroom observations, teachers' interviews and student questionnaires. The thesis looks at teacher educational philosophies, the school art curriculum, as well as the state and city art standards and requirements to identify effective and ineffective strategies and approaches to arts integration. Highlighted, also, are the many factors educators must address in designing their classroom curricula and the approaches they take in implementing it.

Kasi Quinn

Arts Integration and Multi-literacies in the High School Curriculum



This thesis explores how students' multi-literacies are encouraged and supported through a high school's arts-integrated curriculum. Most arts integration methodology emphasizes interdisciplinary art based learning which enables students to make connections between subject areas. The collaborative arts integration projects in this case study took the standard approach a step further by emphasizing visual, written, and verbal literacy. This paper argues that even with the school's arts and literacy-driven mission and dedicated resources, teachers face significant challenges as they design and implement arts integrated curriculum and support students' multi-literacies.

The case study is based on arts integration efforts in a small, urban high school serving a high-needs student population. The research was conducted through teacher interviews, classroom observations, an analysis of curricular documents and photos of students' work. Although the thesis focuses on the art teacher and her collaboration with other subject area teachers, the thesis considers the challenges experienced by all participating teachers.

Jake Menichino

High School Portfolio Development for College Admissions



This thesis explores the process by which high school students prepare portfolios for college admissions. It focuses on how students are supported in different settings from a high school art classroom in an International Baccalaureate High School to a range of external programs the students choose to attend. The thesis argues that a certain set of conditions are necessary for effective portfolio development, especially for students who have limited opportunities to develop their foundational art skills. Students benefit from external program portfolio development activities when there is student, teacher, family, and institutional commitment. Students benefit from the International Baccalaureate art major or minor, when they have sufficient opportunities to develop both foundational and conceptual skills, even if they do not plan to attend art school.

The case study was conducted through interviews, observations, and document and website reviews of external programs and the high school art program. Interviews were conducted with external program providers, college admissions directors, museum educators, and high school teachers. In addition, students were informally interviewed during National Portfolio Review Days. A survey was administered to some of the students who attended the National Portfolio Review Days as well as to current Pratt students. The survey focused on what students thought of the portfolio development and submission process and the guidance they received.

Christine Major

Social Networking and Learning in the Art Classroom



The thesis explores the potential and existing benefits of implementing social based technology in the art classroom. The thesis focuses on how technology affects high school students' ability to access and create content autonomously while maximizing their engagement in collaborative work. Research findings suggest that students who engage in social media based art projects often teach each other and work more independently in a climate of mutual collaboration.

Through observations and interviews the study explores how social networking is currently used and why some forms of social networking prevail over others. The study analyzed data from interviews, observations, and class websites and blogs of two high school teachers, one in a public school, and the other at a private school.

Arts and (Dis)abilities in Art Education

Sonya Katcher

Visual Learning and Deafness: An Examination of ASL in Deaf Education



This thesis examines the historical, technological, and social influences of American Sign Language (ASL) on the education of American Deaf students. ASL has a complicated history in relation to d/Deaf education. Whether, when, and how ASL is used in d/Deaf schools remains a controversial topic that is in constant flux. The thesis explores two recurring issues, oralism and bilingualism, that have been key elements in the theory and practice of d/Deaf education in the United States. This thesis describes how the recent introduction of cochlear implants have resulted in a return towards oralist teaching methods, proscribing ASL in many classrooms.

Through an examination of three schools for the d/Deaf in New York City, the thesis argues that these schools experienced drastic shifts in student population over the past two decades, in part, due to the increasing marginalization of ASL. This thesis argues that despite the technological advancements that have allowed d/Deaf students access to different modes of learning, they are still primarily visual learners. Therefore, the thesis recommends that ASL should continue to play an important role in the education of Deaf students.

The case study approach is based on observations, interviews, and document analyses from two elementary schools and one K-12 school for the d/Deaf in New York City. The case studies examine school-wide and teacher perspectives in art and general education through a study of the schools' missions, history, demographics, and curriculum. The case studies are contextualized within the broader framework of the history and current trends in the field of Deaf education.

Harriet Harris

Enabling At-Risk Adolescents To Express Themselves Through Art Making



This thesis argues that art making possesses healing qualities for adolescents. These often rely on teaching approaches that are different from those used in art therapy. The thinking habits acquired through continual art making often better equip adolescents to cope with the environmental and internal factors putting them at-risk. This thesis investigates various strategies used by art educators to create a safe studio environment that promotes positive self-expression and resiliency for adolescents at-risk.

Through an analysis of observations and interviews of four New York City art teachers and a study of their adaptive strategies in the classroom, effective approaches to creating a productive studio environment are identified and discussed. Findings suggest that consistent engagement in art making in a supportive studio environment promotes coping mechanisms and enhances the well being of adolescents in the inclusive art classroom.

Clare Hilger

New Art Teacher, New Curriculum:

Fostering Independence and Self-Awareness for Students with Learning Disabilities



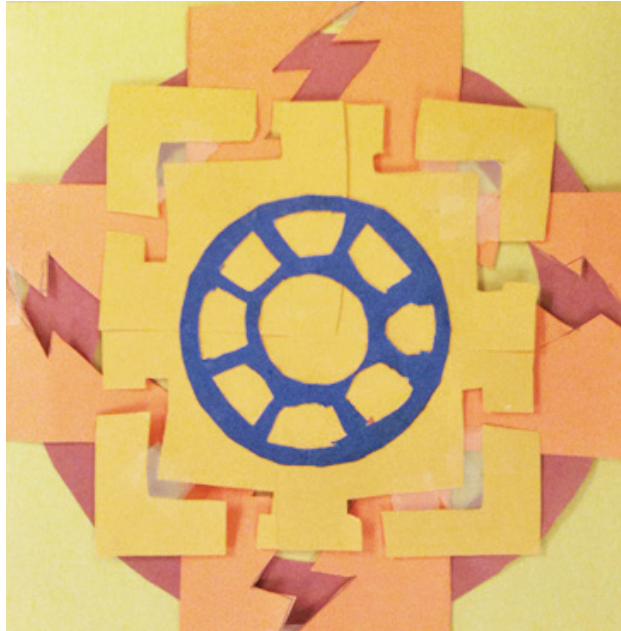
This thesis focuses on students with diagnosed learning disabilities (LD) who often struggle in academic settings that utilize a singular teaching mode. This thesis explores curricular and pedagogical approaches for fostering independence and student self-awareness in the middle school art classroom for LD students. The thesis argues that LD students benefit from learning opportunities that are explicit, provide multi-modal direction and material exploration, and are conceptually related to lesson products. This thesis also argues that teaching approaches require flexibility and teacher reflection to be effective for students.

The findings of this thesis are based on a self-study of my teaching conducted during my first year as a full time teacher at a middle school for students with LD. I documented and analyzed my teaching through a personal journal, unit plans, daily notes on curriculum and instructional modifications, notes from meetings with my co-teacher and middle school director, videotapes, and student work.

Gretchen White

Dealing with Distraction:

Autism and Art making in a Special Needs Middle School



This is a case study of student art making in a special needs, private middle school. The thesis explores how seven high-functioning autistic students and their teachers addressed students' daily distractions in the classroom environment such as disturbing sensory sensations, difficult social interactions, and changes in the classroom environment. When students were distracted they demonstrated, among other behaviors, task avoidance and obsessive thought patterns. The thesis demonstrates that students were capable of reducing the negative effects of distractions by developing a set of skills that included the ability to self-soothe and work collaboratively. They were also able to help and encourage each other. Teachers helped students develop these skills through scaffolding, interdisciplinary and differentiated teaching, and structure in the classroom. The thesis argues that a structured, supportive, goal-oriented relationship between students and teachers can minimize distraction, cool potentially harmful reactions to disturbing situations, and contribute to students' focus on learning tasks.

The case study is based on ethnographic and action research. Data collection included observational field notes from art and other content area classes, teacher interviews, school and classroom documents, and photographs of student work. In addition, an action research project, which involved teaching yoga to a group of middle school students in the school once a week for six months, provided further data on student behaviors.

Museum and Community Arts Education

Caitlin Reller

The Empowering Capabilities of Community Art Programs



This thesis considers how two community arts programs define their mission, set standards and attempt to ensure quality educational opportunities in the arts. Through an analysis of the relationship of the stated mission and standards to program implementation, the thesis argues that the two community art programs provided a setting for students to feel empowered. Students' sense of empowerment was supported by art and design pedagogy that nurtured studio habits of mind such as the ability to stretch and explore. In addition, empowerment was supported through relevant content centered around themes of identity, meaningful peer and mentor relationships, scholarships for students in need, and community field trips and exhibitions.

Research was conducted in two community art programs in Brooklyn based in an institution of higher education. Research was conducted through open-ended interviews of the administrative director, faculty members, and students, observational field notes of classes and exhibitions, and an analysis of relevant documents such as grant proposals, final reports, registration and scholarship forms, demographic sheets, and course evaluations.

Marissa Wendolovske

Contemporary Art-based Education for Teens in the Museum



Given that contemporary art is often lacking in K-12 curriculum, this thesis explores how the museums fill in this void.. Through a comparative study of the teen program G:Class at the New Museum and Youth Insights at the Whitney Museum of American Art, this thesis explores the different teaching strategies and approaches used by their museum educators. While the two programs differ in that one focuses on art making and the other doesn't, they also share many common practices including integrated curriculum, visual thinking strategies, professional development for teachers, and collaborations with guest artists to support high school students.

Research findings gathered from interviews, program observations, and analysis of student responses, indicate that students who participate in both programs expand their literacy and content knowledge of contemporary art. The thesis also argues that art educators can use these strategies to inform their teaching practices in the art classroom as well as other educational settings.