Toward a Holistic Paradigm in Art Education

Peter London

and

The Study Group for Holistic Art Education

Karen Lee Carroll
Juan Carlos Castro
Aileen Pugliese Castro
Michelle La Perriere
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A Report from the Study Group for Holistic Art Education

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Preface

The publication of this monograph is the first in a new series from the Center for Art Education at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Distributed in limited edition as a monograph, the content will soon appear online demonstrating MICA's commitment to the advancement of practice and theory in art education. The Center for Art Education has become a dynamic part of our college, bringing together artists who want to become teachers, teachers who want to reconnect with the artists within themselves, and practitioners eager to finesse their practice through formal degree programs and study groups. We are especially pleased that one of MICA's art education alumni, Charles Ellerin, has provided funding to initiate the monograph series and the development of an online journal. His generous support makes it possible to share the findings of this study group with a broader audience.

Fred Lazarus, IV
President

It was our good fortune to have Dr. Peter London in residence with us for the 2001-2002 academic year. His contributions to the dialogue about art and education have greatly benefited faculty, students, and teachers who had the opportunity to work with him. In particular, his efforts to engage teachers in a study group that translated theory into practice with K-12 students provided an exceptional opportunity for professional growth and development. This monograph is the product of conversations that spanned well beyond the year of residency and now can be shared with others. We are grateful to have had funding from the Lucas Grant to support his residency here at MICA.

Ray Allen,
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by thanking Dr. Peter London for initiating and directing the Study Group for Holistic Approaches to Art Education. The teachers who volunteered their time to participate in the Study Group are to be commended for their interest, passion, thoughtfulness, and creative thinking. The core group included Juan Castro, Stacey McKenna, Aileen Pugliese Castro, Bonnie Reynolds, Diane Wittner, and Mary Wolf. Each brought richness to conversations about holistic theory, practice, and the potential of education to cause introspection, deep learning, and meaningful artistic expression. They are joined here by long-distance participant Amy Ruopp and recent member Michelle La Perierre to offer reports that come from all levels of practice.

I would like to thank the people at MICA who contributed so generously to this project: President Fred Lazarus for his assistance in securing a grant from Charles Ellerin to fund the monograph series and establish an on-line journal and Vice President Ray Allen who was instrumental in making available a special grant from the Lucas Fund to support Dr. London's year-long residencey with the Center. I owe a debt of gratitude to Juan Castro who designed and put the document together, Katie Faulstich for her excellent administrative support, Caryn Martin and Charlie Greenawalt for their careful editorial assistance, and Kim Carlin, Director for Communications at MICA for her advice. The faculty of the Center for Art Education join me in expressing our gratitude to Dr. London for the warmth and depth of his spirit, the quality of his mind, and his willingness to become an integral member of our community at MICA.

Karen Lee Carroll
Director Center for Art Education
Florence Gaskins Harper Chair in Art Education

Introduction

Dr. Peter London was the Visiting Art Educator-in-Residence with the Center for Art Education for the 2001-2002 academic year. Prior to that time, two faculty members and a group of interested students and teachers had taken his Drawing Closer to Nature workshop with him, experiencing first-hand "encounters" designed to take a holistic approach. During his yearlong residency, he contributed to class discussions, met with faculty and students, delivered guest lectures, and formally initiated the Study Group for Holistic Approaches to Art Education.

The Study Group for Holistic Approaches to Art Education met monthly with Dr. London. A core group of regular participants began with discussions about holistic philosophy, theory and practice, its sources and methods. Some had first-hand experience with Dr. London's methods having taken a weeklong workshop. They read *Dr. London's book, No More Secondhand Art: Awakening the Artist Within*, learning of encounters that worked well with adult audiences. Yet, the question remained: How does holistic practice translate to K-12 practice? The group accepted this as their mission: they would each work with their own students in an attempt to make their teaching more holistic in nature. Each meeting, they reported their efforts and findings. Early on it became evident that a teacher had to modify only a single aspect of their teaching to make gains in the direction of deeper and more purposeful learning.

As experimentations progressed, members of the study group discovered they were amassing a body of insights that greatly informed each other. Mid-year, Dr. London made site visits to schools to observe how
members of the group were changing their teaching and to witness student responses. By the end of the year, it appeared that each had the makings of an article. They continued to meet on their own the following year, sharing drafts of articles with each other, drawing more teachers into the conversation. Two submitted articles for publications elsewhere and soon found themselves in print.

Finally, after two years of working together, this monograph is ready to be shared with a larger audience. It contains articles from elementary, middle and high school teachers as well as college educators and a program administrator. It begins with two introductory essays, one from Dr. London that explains holistic philosophy and theory and its sources. A second from myself identifies conditions and habits that appear to be conducive to deep learning. The order of the articles reflects changes in methods that progressively move towards deeper engagement as different specific strategies are incorporated into practice. The articles can also be read by grade level to see how various strategies can be used with different age learners. Having participated in the study group myself, I know the level of investment each member of the group made to our collective inquiry. I, for one, have been greatly informed by the rich dialogue and the creative teaching shared within the group. I hope the readers will find it useful, perhaps even inspiring.

Karen Lee Carroll

An Introduction

to

Holistic Art Education

Towards a Holistic Paradigm of Art Education

Peter London

Peter London meeting with The Study Group for Holistic Art Education

Why a Holistic Approach to Art and Its Teaching

Our general social climate is for the most part inartistic; that is,underdeveloped and unaligned in terms of our quality of mindfulness, physical health/ grace, and spiritual elevation. Growing up in such a climate frequently breeds inartistic people who are underdeveloped and unaligned mind, body and spirit. This underdevelopment and dissonance is the common and almost universal state of being, individually and collectively of our society; our schools providing no exception. As a consequence, our general behavior is often awkward, weak, hesitant, distorted, unbalanced, anxious, exaggerated, too often unhealthy, even dangerous, for our selves, our environment, and our artistic expressions. It should then come as no surprise that we often find the initial quality of behaviors of our students to be awkward, weak, hesitant, distorted, unbalanced, anxious, and exaggerated. The teaching of the arts becomes the arduous task it so often is because the human beings who turn up in our classes are all too often damaged goods, damaged by their upbringing. This systemic condition of our society requires a commensurate systemic approach to education if any hope of transforming this state of affairs is to be effective. Such is a holistic approach, one that involves the whole person, their mind, their body, and their spirit.

A Corollary

There is an important corollary to the nuturance and alignment of mind, body and spirit—first observed in art education literature by Viktor Lowenfeld. It is this: when someone has something important to say to someone they deem important, the urgency to say that something full and clear, has sufficient force to craft that expression accordingly; full and clear and artistic.

There are two prime, and mutually invigorating principles of holism. First, a person who is developed and aligned, mind, body, and spirit, naturally and automatically is graceful, powerful and full in their expression. The second is, the urgency to say something important to someone of importance crafts expression to be artistic. A person seriously educated, mind, body and spirit, encouraged to address the important issues of their life, in their moment and place in history, will express themselves with fullness, wisdom and clarity in their quality of life, and in their symbolic expressions.

What we now refer to as the domain of art may be better understood as elevated living. The rarity of elevated living, the rarity of the congruence of mind, body, and spirit, make art the precious and the arduous enterprise it is often made out to be. Our admittedly bleak view of our general texture of our civiliza-

tion is relieved however by our observations over twenty-five years of holistic practice in teaching the arts, that a holistic paradigm for the teaching and practice of the arts can provide transformational experiences wherein the mind and the body and the spirit are all called into play and brought to congruence, resulting in individuals and communities of elevated character.

Towards a Holistic Paradigm

The stock and trade of schools and their teachers are data acquisition and deliberate reasoning. These two capacities of the mind form the basis of our curriculum designs and of our pedagogy. Arts education is rarely the exception. The construction of ideas and reasoning are extremely powerful strategies of the mind, and they frequently make us informed, even intelligent, often clever. But in and of themselves, they are not sufficient to make us whole; graceful in mind, body and spirit. Data acquisition, ideation, and reasoning, being only three of many capacities of the mind, rarely provide a critical mass of persuasion sufficient to change values and their consequential behaviors. Pity, would that it were otherwise. Every clinical psychologist knows this; knows that ideas and data alone have little force in ultimately modifying one's persisting behavior. Beyond our ambition to enable our students to fashion well made paintings, sculpture and shawls, if our ultimate ambition is to elevate behavior to the degree that the whole and integrated person appears the necessary precursor of the whole and integrated society, no less full and clear artistic expression, then it is the integration of mind, body and spirit that we must be after, and it is an holistic approach to education that we must employ.

Authentic, artistic engagements can provide a perfect model of holistic activity. Therefore teaching the arts within a holistic paradigm can provide an exquisitely made instrument for addressing this critical ambition; nurturing whole and elevated individuals and ultimately, a society to match. The mind being more familiar to educators than body and spirit, we begin our closer look at all three with the mind.

Mind

The mind has more abilities than to reason. Reason, as powerful a capacity of mind as it is, is after all only one characteristic of mind and is not in any way the only or even the prime agent of awareness.

For we not only reason, but we dream. We also imagine and we intuit; we fantasize, we exaggerate, we remember, we believe. We have the capacity for faith, wonder, awe. All of these are distinct capacities of our mind, and all of these, *together with reason* form the human array of mind. Yet our schools call upon and develop only one capacity of mind: reason. And for the most part art education is no exception. A great fault of our systems of education is taking reason and reasoning to mean MIND, when reason is only one capacity of the mind's intelligence. Cultivated by its curriculum, pedagogy, testing, and system of rewards, this single—albeit powerful—segment of the mind, to the exclusion, thus the atrophy of all the other forms of intelligence, damages the other qualities of mind, and in the end weakens and distorts reason and reasoning itself.

A significant observation that Gregory Bateson made in *Mind in Nature*, one that forms one of the basic tenets of the psychology of learning is this:
The mind has many ways to know the world, each way bringing distinctive and necessary news. When there is agreement amongst what is derived from reasoning with what we intuit, and what we hope, and what we dream, and what we imagine, and what we remember, we are prone to act accordingly. But when there is dissonance amongst the several intelligence's, we are reluctant to act. Any one, even more so, any group of intelligence's that are not in accord with the persuasion of others tends to veto the whole shebang and constrain consequential behavior. Only when all the news is in and there is substantial agreement amongst the reporting agencies of the mind, does the corpus of the self get permission to act, to behave differently. Learning is supposed to be this complex because learning new behaviors is so consequential.

The Artful Mind

Art Education may not employ and cultivate a holistic mind, but the artful mind is a holistic mind. Wonder, awe, intuition, dreams, fantasy, the subconscious, are all states of mind that are familiar to artists and the literature concerning how artists think. These states of mind of the artist, and in fact of all creative people, ought to find their way into the literature of art education, but they rarely if ever do so. In recent years, arts education has all but expunged these terms from its literature and from its state-mandated frameworks and standards of expectations for both students and teachers, minimizing their cultivation and importance. It should then come as no surprise at all that schools, cultivating only one of the many agencies of the mind, fail to elevate behavior, when they hardly even elevate the mind. In contrast, holistic education calls upon and cultivates reason, but it also calls upon and thus cultivates wonder, memory, awe, intuition, dreaming, fantasy, and the like. Not peripherally and incidentally, but centrally, consistently and importantly.

How to nurture this domain of mindfulness? You don't have to teach a person how to dream, or imagine, or intuit, or to have a subconscious; these states of mind come with being born human. But as teachers we can allow these qualities of mind to atrophy by our neglect of them in our classrooms. So, how to nurture this broad and native array? No differently than how anything else is nurtured. Call upon dreaming and wonder and intuition and fantasy and all the rest as seriously, as often, as rewardingly, as instrumentally, as you now call upon reason. And just as reason flourishes or languishes based upon the degree and kind of attention it receives, so will wonder and dreaming and the rest of the array of mindfulness.

Body

The second element of being human that holistic education deliberately addresses is the body. A sound mind in a sound body was even the credo of the architects of reason, rationality and the academy itself, the Sophists. We intend not only to address the need to mindfully cultivate the body for healthful and graceful rewards, but in addition call attention to the fact that the entire body has intelligence. Every organ, every system, every cell has intelligence. That is, every cell, every organelle, every amino acid! knows what's happening inside it and outside it, and knows what to do when things are OK, and when they are not OK, and of course knows what is OK and what is not OK. Its pattern recognition is uncanny, its awareness is constant, its manufacturing agility without peer, its ability to surmise from the scantiest of evidence unrivaled, it can improvise, heal itself, make new parts, and so on.

The body is constantly critically, truthfully telling us how it is functioning. But we were never taught how to interpret its form of "speech." And so the critical information that this billion year old system of refined awareness is constantly providing, is all but opaque to us. We must learn the language our medulla and our cerebellum and our spinal cord, our musculature, skin, and the entire network of our central and peripheral nervous system is speaking. The news is vital. If the intelligence's saturated throughout the body conclude something at variance with the intelligence arrived at throughout the mind, then just as dissonance within the mind inhibits behavior, dissonance between the body and the mind also inhibits behavior. The fields of physical and mental health are coming to study and understand the synergistic nature of the human being. Deep ecologists know this, theologians know this, physicists and cosmologists know this. It is high time that teachers of art know this too, and build a practice accordingly.

Holistic education carefully, explicitly, constantly cultivates the multiple intelligences embedded throughout the entire body. How? The visual arts can learn a great deal here about what the informed, aware, practiced, and attuned body requires from what the community of dancers, musicians, athletes, and theater people know and practice. Too, many cultures have developed sophisticated systems of educating the aware, alert, intelligent body. Any one of the several forms of Yoga, or Tai Chi, Aravidic medicine, or the leading edge of our own western medical traditions, might serve as examples.

The Artful Body

The intelligent, harmonious body is no stranger to the arts. In truth it may well be said that the creative process is a process of embodiment. The accounts of artists: visual, theatrical, musical, are replete with

evidence of how much inspiration and guidance originates in their kinesthetic selves. The community of artists are constantly referring to feelings, literal feelings that often appear to them to be automatic, physically demanding of expression in their artistic forms. These physical inclinations need not be the sometimes, vague and untutored phenomena as they are now treated. There is a non-rational intelligence that is characteristic of ourselves that is located all throughout our many cells, organs and systems. An education in and through the arts that fails to cultivate this body-intelligence, reduces and distorts the full and proper education in and through the arts.

A novel idea? Not at all. The Bauhaus School in the 1920s and 30s incorporated these same principles throughout the curriculum and, as a result, created the new languages of the arts which still dominate our current vocabulary of all the art forms. Beyond the European tradition we can turn to any, no every, tradition from Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas and find this same basic appreciation of a tuned body being the prime instrument for the artistic enterprise. Does the vocalist, the dancer, the actor, the instrumentalist, no less the athlete, have nothing of importance to tell the visual artists about alignment, dexterity, control, endurance, balance, tone, embodiment?

The Spirit

We come now to the dimension of holistic education that at first glance might seem quite contentious, or at least obscure: Spirit, the third dimension of Being, and thus the third dimension of holistic education. But it need not be either contentious or obscure if we simply define—for our purposes—spirit as any quality we hold to be of ultimate value. The spiritual dimension provides an essential quality to our being and the overriding complexion to our general behavior. Our spiritual center may be composed of a deity or deities, a pantheism, a philanthropy, a sacred geography, a cherished history. Whatever resides enduringly at the core of our belief and value system, or again, whatever is of ultimate and irreducible concern, can be said to create our spiritual dimension.

We should not be surprised to observe that just as dissonance within the mindfulness of the brain leads to inaction or weak action, and dissonance between the intelligences of the body and those of the brain lead to similar constrained behavior, dissonance amongst our spiritual convictions and those of our body and of our mind also confound and constrain behavior. The news is actually worse than this; for dissonance amongst mind, body and spirit does not simply dampen or inhibit behavior (learning). more perniciously, dissonance distorts, and warps behavior, more often than not with violent consequences for the practitioner and their surround.

However, when there is harmony amongst the mind, body and spirit, people experience what Abraham Maslow termed a “peak” experience, or what William James would call a “religious” experience, or an “ecstatic” experience, or Jamake Highwater would call a “spiritual” experience, or just being “in the groove”, as Micky Harte or Louis Armstrong would say. Whatever the name and from whatever the cause, when there is congruence across mind, body and spirit, people in such states of alignment all report remarkably similar states of being:

> ***Effort becomes light, ideas flow easily and rapidly, endurance is extended, so is patience; focus becomes more concentrated, time becomes extended, boundaries soften, definition becomes clearer, crisper, the ego retracts, all the senses become more acute; images appear entire, the world seems at very worst pleasant if not joyous, everything seems interesting, everything seems to matter, everything seems to be a portion of everything else; a feeling of affection attends to all, emotions are full but without strong eddies and turbulence, there is a sense of being both replete and full of appetite, it seems easy to be the subject and object of love, there is a sense that one has been privileged to glimpse the features of some divine plan: that somehow, everything will be all right.***

In other words, artistic behavior is the natural human behavior whenever there is a congruence of mind, body and spirit. It is nothing more or less than what artists and creative people and lovers report all the time.

How to evince and nurture matters of the spirit in art education? Here again, the response is straight-forward: raise the great perennial existential, philosophical, anthropological, theological, scientific, and artistic issues that every person and every society in every generation has wrestled with, with your own students as a basis for reflection and expression. The very same category of questions that lie at the core of everyone's arena of ultimate concerns:

Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? Who are you? Who are we? What is of ultimate value to me? About me? What price for glory? Where are we going? How shall we get there? How will we know when we have arrived? Is this the end of evolution? Is what I am all that I may become? Is this all there is?

Questions such as these, faced squarely, within a safe and promising environment, wrestled with the full array of mind humans are heir to, within an aligned body and elevated spirit, should prosper the adventure—the immense journey—towards the endlessly possible human, which not incidentally, has always been the central subject and task of art.

What evidence is there for this seemingly radical proposition aside from that which I offer from my own twenty years of its practice? The evidence is ample. It can be found in:

The method of instruction of the Bhuto school of dance-theater of Japan

The method of instruction of Gyoto chanting in Tibet and Nepal

The training of mandala painters of Nepal, Tibet and Navaho of the Americas

The method of instruction of the traditional martial arts of Asia

The method of training musicians and dancers of aboriginal Australians

The life and manufacture of traditional Shaker architecture, crafts, song and dance

The training of Olympic level athletes

The traditional way of instructing Totem pole carvers and mask makers of the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere across the continent

The training of sun Dancers of the Plaines Indians

The poetry and dance schools within Sufism

The traditional purposes and methods of mask making throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas

The purposes and method of instruction of the International Waldorf Schools

The training of atmospheric level astronauts

The musical training employed by Yehudi Menhuin, Ravi Shankar

The training of Tea Ceremony Masters

The mind, body and spirit of Yoga, Tai Chi, Tai Kwan Do

The method of instruction of the Kirov Ballet, Alwin Nicolias Dance Company, Mark Morris and Company

The purposes and methods of the Bread and Puppet Theater

The traditional training of cantors in Judaism and Islam

The purposes and method of instruction for Creation Theology of Mathew Fox

The purposes and methods of the deep ecology movements such as Culture's Edge at Black Mountain

The arts training programs at holistic centers such as Eselan, Naropa, and Omega

Holistic approaches to arts education a radical proposal? Perhaps for art education as most art educators have come to practice it, but common fare for practicing artists in many societies and times. There is no reason, no good reason, why any teacher and any student, interested in making an artistic enterprise of the entirety of their lives and not simply the entirety of the page, could not achieve harmonies of equal depth of meaning and grace of expression.

Developmentalism in a Holistic Context

Karen Lee Carroll

Developmentalism, in and of itself, is a holistic concept. It concerns the multi-faceted normative aspects of human growth and maturation as they occur in relatively predictable patterns. Yet developmentalism requires qualification that recognizes how typical patterns can be influenced by a variety of factors including genetics, environment, culture, education, life events, and even chance. Holistic development is concerned with deeper levels of integration involving the mind, body and spirit. This paper is an attempt to revisit these propositions in order to arrive at recommendations for developmentally appropriate practice that are purposefully holistic in nature.

The Convergence of Different Theories of Art and Human Development

Over the course of the last century, theories of development have evolved from earlier notions of linear sequences, tied to age, to more complex scenarios in which repertories of skills and concepts for creative expression and aesthetic response serve multiple ends. (Wolf, 1988; Kindler & Darra, 1998). Development appears to be a complex interplay of innate human propensities, the unfolding nature of cognitive, social, psychological, and physical growth and development, influences of culture and education, and motivational conditions for expression and response. Development has been variously described as moving in cycles between mastery and experimentation (Baker, 1987) and spiral-like in the manner in which skills, concepts, and insights are revisited and revised (Burton, 2001). It has also been portrayed as multi-dimensional, and as such, can be realized in individual and unique ways. At least two theories of art, if not more, are useful in thinking about the phenomena of development. Both a bio-behavioral view and a symbol systems view of art help explain certain complex aspects that have the potential to inform practice in art education.

Dissanayake (1988) has proposed a bio-behavioral or species-centric theory in which specific human propensities are seen as having evolved over time and contributed to the development of art. These include: an interest in making and using tools, a need for order and ways of communicating, the need to classify, and the mental capacity to entertain ideas about the past, present and future. In addition, human beings have the capacity for self-awareness, abstract thought, and symbolization. As well, humans are social creatures seeking emotional involvement and ways of entering into negotiation, collaboration and communion with others. In sum, she proposes that artistic behaviors such as making significant objects and events special and creating rituals, are evolved behaviors, selected for their survival value (pp. 107-131). Initially, these art and art-like behaviors contributed to a sense of "grouponeheartedness" among early humans. With the development of modern and post-modern societies, artful forms serve individual needs for thought, expression, and aesthetic response as well as collective and communal needs for the same.

A symbol systems view of development provides another way of thinking about the development of artistic expression (Arnheim,1969; Gardner, 1980; Golomb 1992). It assumes that growth and development occur in predictable stages, one stage providing the ground for the next. Sensory perceptions and intuitive perceptual concepts are intimately connected to the development of cognitive concepts. The senses and the intellect are seen as interconnected, not separate. Seeing is regarded as an act of intelligence. Drawing is noted to involve problem solving and learning the conventions of representation. Human beings are regarded as symbol-users and meaning makers. Symbols

are used to denote, refer, confer, and construct meaning. Art is thought and feeling made visible. Art educators and psychologists have reported sequences and patterns in the development of artistic expression and aesthetic response. The course of development related to graphic representation is well researched, documented, and reported (Lowenfeld, 1957; Kellogg, 1969; Goodnow, 1977; Gardner, 1980; Golomb, 1992; Kindler, 1997). Because most assumptions about the course of graphic development are primarily based on drawing done from memory and imagination, a linear conception of development has become associated with this theory. When different representational strategies are used, such as observational drawing, development appears to be less tied to age than to instruction and practice (Winner, 1982; Smith, 1999). The course of development related to spatial representation suggests some parallels to graphic development combined with mastering the challenges of three-dimensional media (Golomb, 1997). Sequential patterns and common preferences have been identified in the early stages of aesthetic response yet development here too appears to be tied more to intervention or instruction rather than age (Parsons, et al, 1978; Parsons, 1987).

Both these theories contribute to a broader understanding of the complex nature of development. For example, while there are patterns in artistic expression and aesthetic response that are tied to holistic development (physical, cognitive, social, and emotional), it is also widely recognized that development is not necessarily even and greatly affected by a number of factors. Different learning styles or strengths, a notion supported by theories of multiple intelligences, can impact its progress (Gardner, 1985). Development can be delayed by one or more disabilities and/or accelerated by innate abilities, affinities, preferences, and needs. As well, development can be significantly affected by socio-cultural contexts in which family, schools, and community nurture, reward, forestall, or dissuade the pursuit of certain abilities and interests (Vygotsky, 1978; Baker, 1987; Freedman, 1997; Wilson & Wilson, 1982a, 1982b; Kerlavage, 1998).

While some argue that artistic development progresses because of its communicative powers, (Kindler & Darras, 1998), others suggest that it is the possibilities of representation that pull it forward (Golomb, 1992). For example, the narrative impulse, or the human need to use story as a way of constructing meaning, can be a powerful motivator for mastering conventions of a visual language needed to express ideas in a dynamic and effective manner (Olson, 1992, 1998). It follows that a sense of urgency, as in the need to express important and timely ideas and feelings, can also accelerate the mastery of conventions, skills and concepts (Mann, 2002).

A holistic theory holds that deeper levels of response are likely to be more finely developed, more carefully crafted, and thus more aesthetically conceptualized when body, mind and spirit are aligned. It suggests that deeper levels of engagement, wherein responses are held with genuine regard and motivated by compelling questions or concerns and executed within a safe and nurturing environment, may result in work that is fully funded at or beyond anticipated levels of expression and/or response.

Developmentally Appropriate and Holistic Practice in Art Education

The “zone of proximal development” refers to the difference between what students can do on their own and what they can do with the benefit of instruction (Vygotsky, 1978). Developmentally appropriate and holistic practice, with the objective of engaging learners at the deepest possible levels of meaning-making, appears to be nurtured by the following habits and conditions:

- A safe climate is created in which each learner is met with genuine regard.
- Knowledge of developmental characteristics is used to anticipate learning needs as well as shifts in attention or concern that might signal “teachable moments” or “windows of opportunity” for instruction.

- Information and insights about students are gathered. Students are invited to share their questions and personal learning agendas. Pre-instruction work samples and surveys (where appropriate) are used to identify attitudes and assumptions about art as well as interests, hobbies, and concerns. Developmental and process portfolios are kept. Students are regularly invited to reflect upon and assess both process and product; discussions and writing are used as reflective tools to evaluate where ideas come from, how they develop, and the role art-making and/or art-responding processes play in giving form to ideas, thoughts and feelings.

- Teacher time is taken to record observations, questions, ideas implemented, and their results. Samples of work are collected, carefully analyzed, and documented.

- The larger curriculum is plumbed to find sources of partially-processed information, ideas, themes, and questions that merit investigation visually and through art. Likewise, information is shared with colleagues about investigations in art that might connect with learning in other disciplines.

- Teacher awareness of the world in which learners live including popular culture, events, shared experiences, and developments in individual's lives helps inform instructional decisions. Students are invited to bring in and display work done at home. An effort is made to find out more about the school community, its history and contemporary issues, and the cultures represented in the population.

- Opportunities for expression and response are designed to call for deeper levels of engagement and accommodate choice(s) that encourage personal voice. Specific strategies are employed that will help align the body, mind and spirit in the processes of making and responding to art.

- Instruction is sufficiently varied to create opportunities to engage with different representational strategies, two and three dimensional media, and opportunities to work alone and collaboratively. Responses of different learners are noted and used to inform future plans for teaching.

- An exchange of insights with colleagues is pursued. Advocacy for those who are visual, spatial, and/or kinesthetic learners is voiced. Recognition is given to those who demonstrate high abilities through expression, response, or creative thinking. Observations about those who appear to struggle or need extra help in art are shared. Collaboration with colleagues results in plans for teaching and learning that are more integrative and benefit all learners. A sense of "grouponeheartedness" supports the entire teaching and learning community.

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Reports from

The Study Group for Holistic Art Education

Each member of the Study Group challenged themselves to revisit their teaching practice to see how they might move toward a more holistic approach. The following reports evolved through presentations, discussion, rewriting, and, in some cases, pushing practice farther. They are organized here as somewhat developmental steps one might take in moving toward holistic teaching. They are also identified by level as readers may wish to start with approaches tested with specific age groups.

Introducing Metaphorical Thinking to Children

Aileen Pugliese Castro

A Tree Like Me by Kayli Paugh. 2002. Kindergarten.
Medium: Tempera paint and oil pastels

Can a more holistic model of art education be adapted to the elementary level? I decided to see if using a metaphor, such as a "tree," might allow students to develop a sense of self and empathy towards others and how one grows. I started with the first graders and was so intrigued by the results that I eventually tried the exercise with all five grades.

The Exercise: "How are you like a tree?"

Inspired by an exercise Peter London uses in his workshops, I adapted this idea for use with my first grade students. I gathered them on our carpet in the art room. While they were seated I asked them to close their eyes.

"Think about the day that you were born. Somewhere on this earth a tree started to grow. That tree has been growing since the day you were born. We don't know where that tree is, but it is as old as you are today. If you were to see your tree today, what would it look like? Think about the kind of tree it is. How big it is? Where is it growing and is there anything nearby? What color is your tree and does it change colors with the seasons? What makes up your tree? What kind of leaves does it have? Does your tree grow fruit or flowers? How does your tree feel? How does it smell?

How is your tree like you?

When you have a picture in your head of what this tree looks like, go ahead and draw it."

The students went back to their seats and began drawing their trees. I chose not to show them a demonstration or visual exemplars hoping that the pre-visualization exercise would stimulate an authentic response to the question. They could choose from materials such as crayons, markers, pencil, colored pencils, oil pastels, and/or construction paper crayons on any color paper, 9" x12". Students seemed to select materials in keeping with their character. For example, one student who is meticulous in his work used colored pencils on white paper to get a detailed image. His tree showed a variety of objects that represented things that he would like to have with him. Another student decided to use oil pastels on a light blue paper. When she was finished the colored paper was barely visible for the way she built up the color. Her tree was near a road as a car was moving by.

A Tree Like Me by Danielle Rowe. 2003.
3rd grade. Medium: Marker on construction paper

"I am like my tree because I am very pretty. I am also like my tree because I like animals and my tree likes animals too. Another thing I'm like my tree is that we grow alot when we get older. If you want to hear another one here it is. I am like my tree because we both have two arms. This is how I am like my tree." (see above)

A Tree Like Me by Megan Bishop. 2003.
3rd grade. Medium: Oil pastels on construction paper

"My tree is just like me because we are both 8 years old. Also we both like birds. Another way is we are kind of tall. We are kind too. These are the ways I am like my tree."

When they were done, I asked them to turn their paper over and list characteristics of their tree. “Notice how some of these characteristics may be similar to you.” One first grader described her self as “fast, full of energy, and loves to play.”

Given that this metaphorical question was complex for first graders, I decided to see how students in other grades would respond. I got similar responses consistent with developmental differences. Fifth graders were especially excited by this task. Among the interesting responses was this one by a boy: “I am similar to my tree because we are both lonely.”

A Tree Like Me by Dominic Williams. 2003
3rd grade. Medium: Oil pastels on construction paper

Third grader Dominic noted that while he has legs, can talk, and has a cast, his tree is different because it has leaves, does not move, has no arms, and cannot survive without sun. However, he writes that he and his tree are alike in some ways:

“We are the same age because both of us were growing the same time. Also, we both can not survive without water and at some point we will both die.”

Further Extentions with Fifth Graders

Subsequently, the fifth graders invited me to go on a science field trip. They were going to plant trees to prevent soil erosion caused by lawn chemicals and other forms of destruction caused by the building of a housing development. This was a great opportunity to work with the science teacher on an interdisciplinary lesson. I also enjoyed working in a small group of students to plant a tree near a streambed.

When this class came to art the following week, we talked about the trip and the reasons for planting trees. We decided to go look at the trees outside our school. “Can you find a tree that is similar to you? Think about your own characteristics and look for a tree that is similar.” While observing a tree, they did a drawing of it in their sketchbook.

After looking around for a tree, one child said: "I can't find one. None of these trees are like me. I am fast, I am always on the go, and I can run really fast too. These trees are not even moving." I said, "let's take a look" and asked him if he was sure they weren't moving. We walked closer to two trees. I asked him, "look at these two and tell me which one do you think would be more like you?" He looked at them for awhile. One was skinny and had a lot of branches growing sideways out from the center. The other had several branches growing out to the side. "This one," he said, "because it has a lot of branches, which are growing faster then this other one. It is also skinny like me because I keep active." I looked at him and tilted my head, with a smile implying, there you go. He turned away, said "thanks" and started to draw.

When we came back into the art room, we compared the new drawings to ones they had done earlier. I asked them, "How is this tree similar to the tree that has been growing since the day you were born?" We continued, thinking about the trees and what they would look like 10, 25, and 50 years from now.

Megan said, "My tree is like me because it has houses growing behind it and they represent how the world is changing around me." Kaitlin stated, "My tree is much like me. It is not too small and not too big. It has different colors just like the colorful clothes that I wear. Each time, my tree is growing something different, like roses, flowers, fruit and of course, leaves." Kaitlin continued, "My tree is the best multi-grown tree in the world."

The students selected their own materials and continued to work on their tree drawings for the next couple weeks. Some students worked with the same material while others experimented with materials. When all were complete, each child then mounted four drawings on a large sheet of paper. We gave the trees titles and wrote artist statements to explain our ideas. I want students to develop an understanding of their views on life and how they make sense of their lives. These students visually communicated their ideas through choices of materials. They began to make connections with how they will grow as a person. As Megan's statement suggests: "My tree is changing because it is getting taller and I am getting wiser." As my students grow, I hope they will reflect on this metaphoric question and think about how they can relate to other things in life. Meanwhile, I will continue to experiment with reflective questions as a way of getting children to think more deeply about themselves through art.

A Tree Like Me by Grant Caspar. 2002.
5th grade. Medium: Crayons on black paper

Visual Journaling with Middle School Students

Amy Ruopp

A selection of journal pages by 6th, 7th, and 8th graders

I was drawn to Peter London's workshop at MICA, intuitively sensing the deep connection between the way I work as an artist and the holistic methods he advocates. As my own art has matured, I have become increasingly aware of an unseen process where one skill and experience becomes the foundation for the next. This process seems to mirror life in the sense that each layer of experience, action, reaction, and emotion prepares one for the next. Further, with the awareness of how choices influence both one's path and ultimately the outcomes, a world of freedom opens up.

This article on visual journaling suggests how an extended process, exploring choices with material, image, and mark, can energize a community of learners and lead to personal insights. I have been teaching middle school students for over ten years now, and in that time I have consistently observed their need for self-discovery. I have done many projects which emphasize a student's own ideas and feelings as well as ownership of self-expression. Yet, until this experience, I had not really managed to capture the process in such a way that students could "see for themselves" how they got from point A to Point B and realize the growth that has occurred.

Awhile back I was sitting in the art section in the local bookstore and noticed several books that strayed away from the traditional "artist" book. They were Visual Journals. The art works of Candy Jernigan and Dan Elden kept me enthralled for hours. These artists collected thousands of visual mementos, photographs, ticket stubs, bits and pieces from a walk they took someplace. All these things were then arranged and put in a journal. Writing and commentary became patterns unifying the images. Layers of thoughts and emotions and events were present on every page. Drawings and paintings were woven into existing images. My time with these two books was so inspiring I started one of my own. And then that got me thinking about an entire course I could create for middle school kids!

Alyssa Budros, 7th grader: Double page spread

I started by showing the kids the artist's journals I saw at the bookstore. It had the same effect on them as it had on me. They had never entertained the idea that a sketchbook did not have to be filled with real-looking renderings and look perfect!

At the next class I gave a hardbound sketchbook to each student (a local bookstore had an unbeatable deal on them). I asked the kids to reflect on what was really important to them, an idea or theme that was general enough that it could go in different directions yet maintain integrity as a personal idea. Examples I gave them included friendship, the environment, and family. I asked them to write about that on the inside cover of the book, as it would be the constant unifying element in the pages to follow. Next they gathered images from magazines, newspapers, old home photo albums, and other sources and each student started an envelope of images that could be used through out the course. We then needed to make the journal our own.

They designed a cover that was a personal reflection using the theme they selected to work with throughout the course. Any solution was fine. Many kept asking me: "Is this all right?" My response was: "Does it feel right to you?" This new freedom to create an image with no predetermined outcome was daunting for some, and a complete joyous revelation for others. The kids who jumped fearlessly into the assignment inspired the others. They recognized that it was safe to take risks and that it felt great to be free of negative criticism.

After spending several 45-minute class periods on the cover, we dove into the book. The course was 12 weeks long, three days a week. I decided to give each week a direction. The first week had been the introduction and making the cover. Week two we worked with some compositional concepts. Working with their theme, I asked them to mix a minimum of three different materials and unify the imagery and materials on the page. We talked about what that means, but did not define how it happens. That was for them to discover.

Week three we tackled combining picture with text in nontraditional ways, such as using text as pattern, commentary, and light and dark values created by different fonts and sizes. Some students wrote rhythmic words on top of images, others found words and headlines and rearranged them to create new headlines accompanying images. Again, the final results were open-ended.

Week four I asked them to pay homage to someone. Again, who and how was up to them. At this juncture in the unit, I noticed some of the students had made

some exciting discoveries about materials and the effects the use of materials has on the power of an image to convey meaning. I encouraged them to explore that more and focus some attention on developing those skills while paying homage.

As students worked, they were free to move about the room and sit where they liked. I often found students moving from table to table weekly because they became curious or inspired by a technique of another student. Peer sharing and critiques were a natural occurrence here and took little prompting from me. I was able to sit back and truly savor a fantastic group process unfolding naturally.

Week five we worked with the idea of transformation. For my own example, I had taken a large two page landscape magazine photo and glued it into the pages. I then incorporated found images which were reflective of my own theme, cutting carefully around the edges, placing them into the landscape, changing the scene into a dream-like scene where size relationships nor logic were a concern.

Week six I gave them the assignment of "finding something squished." During their travels and daily events, I want them to be on the look out for something that had once been a functional object, and had been cast aside and squished, smashed or altered in some way. This is to be incorporated into a page, with commentary about what made the student choose the object. Among the items students found were bottle caps, smashed soda cans, a coin found by a railroad track, and a smashed toy car. I had found smashed eye glasses in a parking lot.

At this point in the process it was time for some more in-depth reflection. I collected all the journals and passed them back out to other students. They were given some questions to use in responding to each other's journals. Students were to comment on how their theme appeared throughout the journal, give some feedback about the discoveries made with materials, make some suggestions about material usage they have discovered, and offer a felt response.

Jeffery Bloom, 8th grader, designing journal cover

Danny McNair, 8th grader

Week eight they were to work with something they found in the newspaper that moved them in some way. I asked them to consider what it had to do with them and how they felt about it. They were to respond to it in their books in any manner they wanted, keeping in mind the visual unity of the page and thematic unity throughout the book. Because of the timing, many images of the World Trade Center appeared.

In the ninth to eleventh weeks, students were given an assignment based on the one of the themes in Candy Jernigan's journal *Evidence*. This time they were to consider "Who am I?" What had they done with their time and what can they collect in their daily travels and events that can be used in the journals? Students who traveled brought in brochures, ticket stubs, napkins from restaurants and other items. Other students found very old family photographs and personal items. They had three weeks to do this.

During the last week, I handed out a self-evaluation sheet that got incorporated into the books. They were to go back and track their own growth in terms of use of materials, the evolutions of their theme, and the assignments. Comments about what this process was like for them were invited. Was the process of creating as valuable as the product? How had their views of what a finished product should be change and why? By the end of the journal investigation, every student had completed a minimum of 33 pages.

Their reflections suggest the following discoveries and insights that occurred during the process:

-A new sense of freedom and exploration with use of media
-Self confidence and pride in the imagery they created
-True ownership for the process
-Respect for the differences in each other

I sense this experience in visual journaling gave my students a tangible way to explore choices and see outcomes. Sometimes even the same problem or challenge was revisited to develop awareness of how choices of material, image, and mark can open up different solutions. Further, when students became truly involved in this process, insights appeared including areas of struggle and success, ideas, and preferences for one thing over another. In short, the process gave students the freedom to function as artists: thinking about choices, charting their progress, exploring ideas in a new way.

Observing this class at work, I saw that the process created a sense of group synergy. It also seemed to feed the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. Privacy was respected. Images and processes were honored and validated because everyone was involved and in a way, exposed. In the way it fostered a real environment of safety, acceptance, diversity, and freedom, it felt very holistic.

Seeking Protection: Personal Gargoyles

Diane S. Wittner

No More War by Marshall Daly, 7th grade

Introduction

I first learned of Dr. Peter London's beliefs about holistic art education in the summer of 2000, when I participated in his weeklong studio-based seminar at the Maryland Institute College of Art's Center for Art Education. That week provided me with an introduction to Dr. London's ideas: we utilized poetry, dance, music, and brief meditations as we explored the creative process for ourselves as visual artists.

During our studio experience, Dr. London didn't only talk about creating art. He spoke frequently about his conviction that, as human beings, our minds, bodies and spirits all need to be equally nurtured. Such balanced attention to self would inevitably result in a sense of wellness and wholeness within us as individuals, something that is sorely missing from the lives of so many in contemporary society.

For two years following this experience, I participated in bimonthly seminars with Dr. London, where artist-teachers explored both the theory and history of holistic approaches to teaching art. I learned of some specific tools from holistic practice that we were advised to follow. For instance, when introducing an art problem, we were to pose "existential questions" to our students, questions not just about creating beautiful forms ("What is this?"), but about creating forms that would have personal meaning for each student ("What is this to me?"). Existential questions get to the core of our being as humans, and really get us thinking about what is important in life. In addition, as teachers, we were encouraged to become empathetic listeners, ready to truly hear what students had to say. From Dr. London, we learned that empathetic listening meant:

> "paying close attention to what the mind and the body and the spirit of the other is uttering.... The effective teacher...is one who can 'hear' what is being uttered by the other in all three dimensions of their being. Sometimes all the modalities speak from a consensual position. More often, they do not. The excellent teacher not only can simultaneously read the several languages spoken by the students but, if there is dissonance between what is spoken and how the body emits those statements, can discern which modality is uttering a deeper truth. The truly gifted teacher can then shape their own way of speaking to match that of their student's deeper truth and in this way help the student to arrive at deeper truths because they know that someone has been listening and that they have been 'heard.'" (London, 2003, Drawing Closer to Nature, p. 192)

We then discussed possible applications of the holistic art education paradigm to the real world of our classrooms, and were encouraged to experiment with this method of teaching in our classes.

In the fall of my second year with Dr. London, something finally clicked in terms of my teaching practice. At last I began to understand how to address my students' social, developmental, and expressive needs by employing techniques I had learned in our discussions about holistic art education. Finally, I was able to come up with a clearly defined existential art problem for my middle school students, an art problem from which every student would benefit. What follows is a description of what we did together.

Description of School

Stony Brook School is a private coeducational preK-12th grade Quaker school located in an affluent neighborhood of a major city on the East Coast. I teach in the middle school, where there are approximately 80 students per grade. There is some diversity in terms of the racial, socio-economic, ethnic, and religious make-up of the students, but the majority of the students are Causasian, U.S. born, Christian and middle to upper-middle class. The curriculum is traditional; additionally, students attend regularly scheduled Quaker meetings for worship in the nearby historic Meeting House. Thoughout their time at Stony Brook, students are reminded of the Quaker belief that there is God in each human being, and that Quaker communities promote peace. In addition, all the students are involved on a regular basis in community service in the city. In every other way, however, Stony Brook appears to resemble other traditionally academic private schools in the community; there is an emphasis on sports and academic achievement, and the students appear to feel a great deal of pressure to succeed in all of their endeavors.

Students' Social, Developmental, and Expressive Needs

Children in early adolescence are in the midst of many changes. They are straddled between childhood and adulthood in uneven, unpredictable ways. Each individual child is ever-changing, and is a unique combination of physical, developmental, and social forces that are very much out of her/his control. Therefore, the middle school years can be a bewildering time in life for students.

Choice of Art Problem

For the reasons cited above, it occurred to me that my students were generally a vulnerable group (even though they are fortunate to be enrolled in a private school). I decided to design an art problem for my students that would enable them to effectively address their individual areas of vulnerability, using a therapeutic medium, clay, that would not

be intimidating to those students who felt they were not skilled enough in drawing or painting to visually express their ideas. Individual "good magic" gargoyles designed by each student would address student fears through metaphor.

Sketchbook Journals

First, students created unique and beautiful hand-made sketchbook/journals in order to have a special place to develop their ideas.

Gargoyles For Self Protection

Then we turned our attention to the main component of the art problem. We spoke about gargoyles in history (looking at only a few sample images). Rather than spending a great deal of time on the art historical or architectural use of gargoyles, we quickly moved on to their main purpose. At least one student in each class already knew that gargoyles were meant to serve as protectors.

I then asked students to turn their attention to themselves, and think about what truly bothered them in their lives, from what or whom they each wanted protection. I told them that they would each be making personal gargoyles in clay, based on their individual needs for protection.

Brainstorming

Students used the privacy of their new sketchbook/journals to begin to develop ideas. They were told that there was no "right" or "wrong" way to draw, that this was merely a warm-up exercise. This was helpful because students didn't feel pressure about making "good" drawings. Also, gargoyles can be part human, part animal. As gargoyles generally have grotesque features, students could make any live creature they wanted without feeling that there was one "correct" way to make a gargoyle. Advanced drawing skills were not necessary in order to complete this exercise.

Students were encouraged to generate ideas by making a list of what first came to mind when they thought about what truly bothered them, what negative feelings stayed in their thoughts as they tried to sleep at night, what unpleasant thoughts came to them in the pits of their stomachs when they awoke in the mornings. I reminded them that nobody else had their individual sentiments, that each list would be unique. Next, they did some quick small drawings to match the list of words.

This brainstorming session lasted several classes; I was not going to pressure the students by giving them a deadline on this important subject. Also, I knew that everyone had a heartfelt response to this exercise. At the end of the brainstorming sessions, each student had visually developed at least one topic that bothered him/her. Students would be allowed to carve words onto their gargoyles in order to make their protective qualities explicit. They were not allowed to move on to working in clay until they had resolved both the physical structure and the important messages of their gargoyles as best they could in two-dimensional form in their sketchbook/journals.

Protect Animals from Harm by Matt Moses, 6th grade

Turning to Clay

When my students began to work in clay, something interesting occurred. I found that prior experience working in clay and/or knowledge of handbuilding techniques were not factors in the success of these objects. Generally, students who had no prior experience in clay did equally well in constructing their gargoyles as did the students who had had previous experience working in clay. My suspicion is this: students' intrinsic desires to give form to their important messages meant that skill-development in clay happened quickly and intuitively. Their fingers spoke eloquently of their needs.

Fire Protection by Erin Donlon, 6th grade

Completed Gargoyles

My students created marvelous clay gargoyles, each one unique in its structure and size, each one matching individual quirks of its maker. There are gargoyles in relief and three-dimensional gargoyles. They have both animal features and human qualities. Some are portrait busts, but others are full-body creatures standing upright. Humorous gargoyles were created, but other gargoyles address serious issues related to phobias, home life, school and community life, or world conditions. Each gargoyle has a unique form, clearly expressing the deeply felt needs of its student creator. A sixth grader who created a gargoyle that protects animals from harm inflicted by humans had this to say about his piece:
"[I chose to make this gargoyle because] the fact that animals are being abused really bothers me because I think about being an animal and getting abused."

Students now have protection from: 1) having to wear braces, 2) baby cousins who dirty bedrooms, 3) vegetarians, 4) bad T.V. programs, 5) dunces, 6) boring Halloween costumes, 7) garden gnomes, 8) teachers, 9) spiders and ducks, 10) football, baseball and pianos, and 11) fear of heights.

On a more serious note, they also have gargoyles for safety from: 1) gun and knife violence, (one student's written explanation: "with a gun you can end someone's life with one shot! Any person can be a victim and can be for no particular reason."), 2) drug and alcohol use, 3) stress, punishment and bad grades from school, 4) shyness, 5) fires, nightmares, and lightening, 6) being too busy, 7) environmental destruction (here a student wrote "I want the earth to have most of its nature intact, the earth cannot do it for itself so my gargoyle protects the earth from destruction of nature and construction of commercialism."), 8) human harm to animals, 9) and war.

Stop Rushing Me by Max Walker, 6th grade

Mind, Body and Spirit Alignment

I was pleased that the ceramic gargoyle figures were such a success. But I also noticed that subtle behavioral changes were taking place among some students. And this is the cornerstone, the ultimate purpose, of holistic art education. Some students' confidence levels have gradually risen, and I can tell from the expressions on their faces when they work that my students are relaxed, excited and pleased with their hands' creations.

For instance, one sixth grader is having a challenging time with her other subjects, and she sees herself as a failure at this academically-driven school. Yet, having never used clay before, she created a stunning elephant-like creature with three long tails to protect her from fire. She is shocked and pleased that she made this piece, and she is excited to know that she is a respected and valued member of our art classroom community. She desperately wants to work in clay as much as possible for the remainder of the year, and is beginning to believe in herself when it comes to achieving success in any art problem she is given. In her written self-reflection handout, this student wrote: "I like drawing and clay because you can really show how you feel or what you like instead of in writing you can only tell."

An eighth grade student has social difficulties, especially with his teachers, but because his piece was large-scale and uniquely constructed, I have asked him to give other students advice on their work. He has responded with enthusiasm, and has become a kind of authority on how to create larger upright works in clay.

Yet another sixth grade girl suffers from shyness and anxiety. Her gargoyle reflects the challenges she faces daily. Her piece is gaudily colored and patterned, yet it is attempting to hide by cowering on the side of its base and shielding its eyes with a long tail. This is what she wrote about her experience:

"I chose protection from shyness because when I moved (here) and started going to (this school), I was very shy. Often I wished I had friends, and I knew

No More Shyness by Eliza Gilmore, 6th grade

that I was not getting any because I was too shy. I found it easy to draw my gargoyle. All I had to do was think of something that I wasn't. One thing that I thought of was bright colors. In my eyes, bright colors equals confidence. I thought that it was not that hard to sculpt my gargoyle...I like to draw. When I draw, my imagination goes wild, and I think of the craziest things! I find it exciting!"

I have praised her work frequently, and this student is gradually learning to relax and have confidence in her abilities as an art student. It is my belief that the qualities my students are developing inside the art classroom will positively influence their behavior in other areas of their lives.

The energy of the classroom as a whole has changed as well. Students are either working quietly, or when they are talking, they are most often giving each other suggestions. Dr. London has it right when he states that we need to attend to the mind, body, and spirit of each child we teach, and that we need to construct holistic art problems for students that do this very thing. I now have the full attention of my students when we are doing our tasks together in the studio classroom—it is because they truly have an important voice in what we are constructing. As art instructors, we can give our students a very useful gift: the ability to create "good magic" for themselves.

Creating Safe Art Environments for Troubled Youth

Mary Wolf

Symbolic Animal Self Portrait

When asked to respond to his painting, Omar responded with the following statement. *"My person/animal portrait represents what I am and how I feel inside. I choose to paint an eagle because an eagle represents a "lord of the sky" and also a leader and that is what I am."*

In taking a new teaching position, I was provided the perfect opportunity to start anew with a holistic approach to teaching art. The setting was an urban alternative middle school. My students, grades six through eight, had been expelled from their day school for chronic behavior problems. I knew this position was going to be challenging, but never dreamt how rewarding it would be. In this article I will describe some of the holistic strategies I found successful in this situation.

Before the school year began, I met with the school administrators to identify the educational needs of my new students. I was informed that my students would be extremely challenging adolescents who habitually demonstrate negative behaviors for various reasons including: troubled pasts, difficult home lives, and diagnosed special needs. The administrators stressed that many of these students had been let down by so many adults in their lives that establishing trust would be difficult. Knowing trust is key to developing an open relationship with my students,

I began planning how I would establish, build and maintain a trusting relationship with each of my students. I decided to use the first art lesson as an opportunity to learn, rather than teach. The art problem I introduced to the students was to create an ID card using symbols that identified them as an individual. I provided a list of questions to help students brainstorm ideas for their work, and included topics such as: What is your most prized possession? What are the two most important things in your life that you couldn't live without? What are your favorite hobbies or things to do? And what is something you want everyone to know about you? To my surprise and advantage, many students struggled to answer these questions. This challenge allowed me the opportunity to begin a personal dialogue with each student helping them, and myself, to identify what was important to them. I kept the assignment simple, assuring students there were no right or wrong answers, and their best was more than enough for me. This simplicity insured student success, the subject matter kept their interest, and the personal dialogue with each student created a connection between each student and myself.

During this two-day lesson, I used students' work time to circulate and continue making connections with students individually. I asked open-ended questions such as, "Tell me about this…" to encourage open communication, show true concern, and learn more about each student. I used genuine and specific positive reinforcements such as,"I can tell you are really putting a lot of thought into your work" and "I like the way you …", to ensure students they were succeeding already. While learning more about each student, I also discovered how to best address each student. Certain students responded better to quiet private dialogue, others to humorous out-loud repartee, and some required their personal space in order to feel comfortable. All of these preferences I noted at the time and continued to respect.

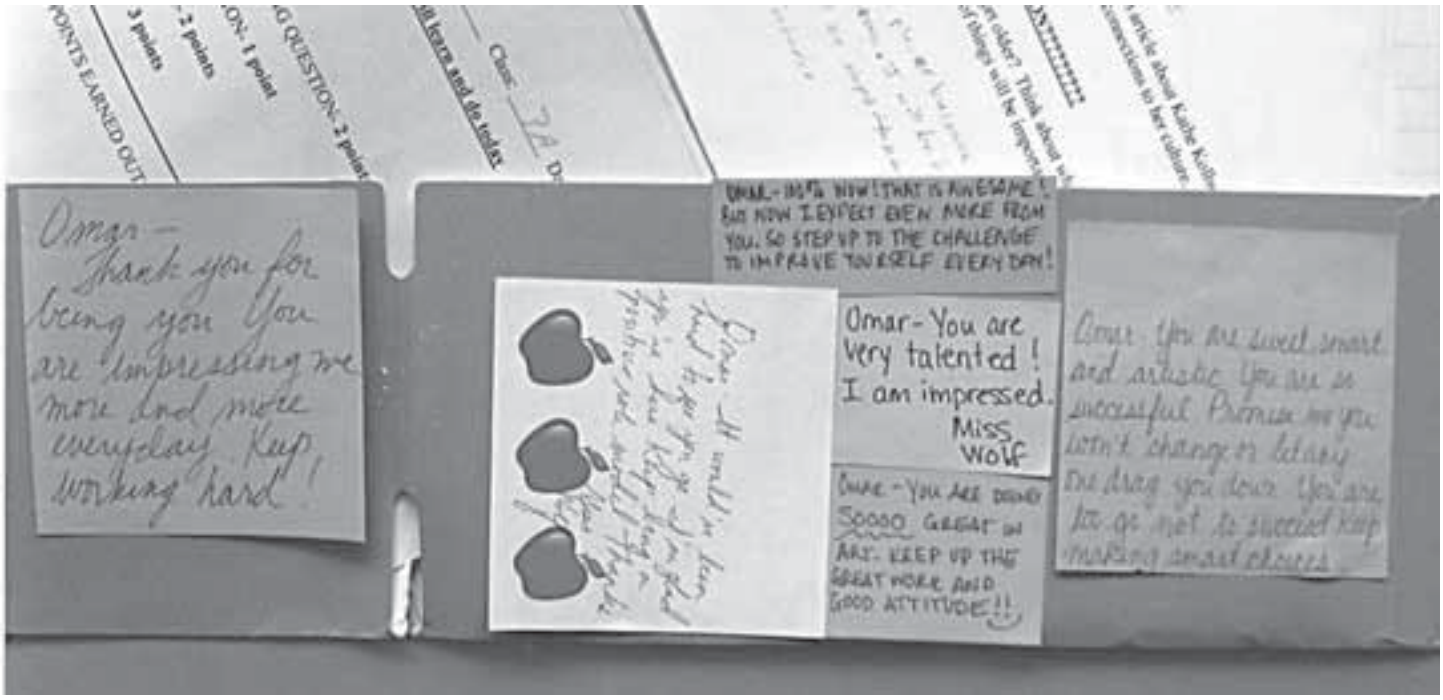
During this first art problem I also assessed the artistic ability of each student. Most students drew at an extremely low artistic developmental level, using stick figure schema. With such low ability, numerous students revealed negative attitudes toward art and their ability to succeed verbally informing me that they disliked art and were positive they would not succeed in my class. "I hate art." " I suck." "I've never been good at art and never will be." "Art is stupid." I listened, acknowledged their concerns, and tried to put them at ease by reassuring them their best was more than enough to succeed. My students' concerns and comments proved they would benefit from a variety of holistic approaches focused on mind, body, and spirit. I made it my mission to transform their views of themselves and art. I made a big sign in my room that reads, "You are not here to prove yourself. You are here to improve yourself." I discussed this idea saying,

"Who you are and where you are right now is fine, but where will you go from here?"—a quote I borrowed from a fellow colleague named Carrie Cook.

Two months later during a parent conference, one of my student's mothers asked which teacher taught her son the phrase "You are not here to prove yourself. You are here to improve yourself." I explained to the parent how this phrase is our class motto. She informed me that her son repeats it to all of his friends in the neighborhood and she appreciated the fact I was helping her son improve not only in art but also as a person.

After the first two assignments, I exhibited the students' artwork in the display case and in the hallways of our school. As simple and normal as this may sound, this gesture affected the climate of the classroom and relationship with my students by creating a more comfortable atmosphere. Students commented, "No one has ever hung up my work before!" Some even thanked me. Others questioned, "Why did you put mine up?" I told them I respected them as students and as artists and would always acknowledge their successes. Students felt appreciated, worthy, and respected. They saw me not only as a teacher but also as an adult who took the time to acknowledge them and believe in them. Though this helped, I still had not earned the trust of many students.

Evaluating the distance that still existed between some of the students and myself, I decided that these



Notebook/Journal
When asked to respond to his notebook/journal, Omar responded with the following statement.

"My notebook to me means that I am doing well in a class that I thought I wouldn't do well in. My art teacher Ms. Wolf is the best teacher in the world because not only is she nice, she tells us to not give up but to pick your head up and try again. The best thing I like about my notebook besides my good grades is the little sticky notes because it shows that someone likes what I'm doing."

up to me as much as the others. I developed and introduced notebooks that would be used in the classroom to brainstorm ideas, keep notes, and respond to questions they did not feel comfortable answering out loud. I knew many of the students were just scared to participate in class discussions for fear of being judged or laughed at by classmates. So, I encouraged using the notebooks in place of participating in class discussions. I also had an alternative reason for these notebooks. I wanted to use them as private communication between each student and myself. I hoped the notebooks would allow students the privacy of saying things they would not say in front of the other students. The notebooks proved extremely successful in helping connect with students who were reluctant to open up and share themselves prior to the use of the notebooks.

I continued using these notebooks to write reassuring and encouraging notes to individual students about their progress, ideas, and contributions on a regular basis. Students looked forward to the fluorescent sticky notes they discovered in their notebooks, often writing back to me. Several students have commented, "I really like getting these notes." Others even asked, "Will you write me another note?" It takes time to respond to each student in a meaningful way, but the communication is necessary and important to me. The notebooks provided a venue to continue building a trusting relationship with each student.

With a trusting relationship building, the seceding art problems grew slightly more challenging and personal. The art problems began empowering students by causing them to self-reflect more on who they were, who they are, and who they want to be. As Peter London suggested, the problems make students "Dismantle their past, add themselves, and reassemble their future." One such problem required them to create a sculpture paying homage to someone they knew and respected highly.

Even with guiding questions to encourage brainstorming ideas of who they would choose and why, one student could not identify anyone she highly respected. She said, "No one respects me and

I don't respect no one." After reassuring her I respected her, I tried to help her by questioning her about family members, friends, school staff, and community members. With no success and with her permission, I opened our private conversation to the class asking for their advice and suggestions. A student, who she did not get along with at all, suggested she make the sculpture about a boy she liked who recently left the school. The class conversation took off with ideas of how she could represent him and what positive attributes he had that she could focus on portraying in her sculpture.

My non-competitive and non-comparative approach to teaching began to change the way students responded to each other. The previous example was a transforming moment for that class. Girls who never got along began talking and even encouraging each other. Another example was a class of sixth grade boys who stopped making fun of and laughing at each other's work. One day I was about to tell a small group of boys to stop talking, sit down and get to work. But when I approached them, I realized three of the boys were giving the other boy advice on what to do with his artwork. This moment made me notice how many students were now asking for other's opinions and advice without fear of being judged. The transformation of the classroom atmosphere was evident and had completely changed from one with fear of rejection and failure, to one of sharing ideas and gaining confidence.

Another art problem began by asking students to describe a negative choice they had made in their life and the negative results that occurred. Through written or verbal communication (students' choice), many of them recalled the negative choice in behavior that sent them to this alternative school. Not one student had difficulty identifying a negative choice they had made and many shared numerous poor decisions.

I then challenged students to identify something positive that resulted from their negative choice. I discovered the students struggled significantly finding any kind of positive outcomes. A class discussion about how you can take negative aspects in life and turn them into something positive made students realize that they could change things in their lives. Students commented, "If you don't do anything about the negative things, they won't change." Others said, "You have a choice to always look at the negatives or the positives in your life. It's up to you." The students were then introduced to the problem of combining the negative and positive in a drawing that tells the story of that event in their life.

One student responded with a drawing that told about her continued negative choice to fight in school and how it got her expelled and sent to this alternative school. She drew her school and her home with people yelling "GET OUT!" on one side of the page. On the other side she drew the alternative school with a picture of me saying "WELCOME, WE'RE GLAD YOU ARE HERE." She told me that she felt that this school was giving her the second chance others were no longer willing to give her.

Peter London suggested that lack of invitation prevents us from being who we are. I feel that by using various holistic approaches in teaching art, I invited my students to be themselves and to say what they needed to say without being judged. I listened and respected their voices and who they were as individuals. By focusing on students, mind, body, and spirit, I had developed a trusting open relationship with my students and an atmosphere where they felt welcome to be who they were. My administrators, colleagues, the students themselves, and I all saw increased student participation, better effort, improved attitudes, and more successful, confident, and comfortable students.

A later sign encouraged students further. "Don't compare yourself. Share yourself." And my students seemed to transform themselves through self-reflection and self-expression, along with sharing themselves and their artwork. The atmosphere in my classroom became one that was non-comparative, non-judgmental, and completely empowering. The relationships I had with my students transformed from authority figure and rebellious students to a trusting and open relationship among us all.

These students had begun the year with questions and comments such as: “Why do we have to do this, it’s dumb!” and “ This sucks, and I hate art.” A couple months later the questions and comments changed. “Why does everything have to have meaning?” and “Why can’t we have art every day?” One student exchange is embedded in my memory and my heart. When praising a student’s work in front of the class, he asked if I was going to give him candy like other teachers do when he does something good. Before I could respond another student interjected, “Miss Wolf doesn’t give candy. She gives respect.” It was with this conversation that I really began noting the changes in my students’ views. Then I was asked questions like; “Why don’t all art teachers teach like you?”

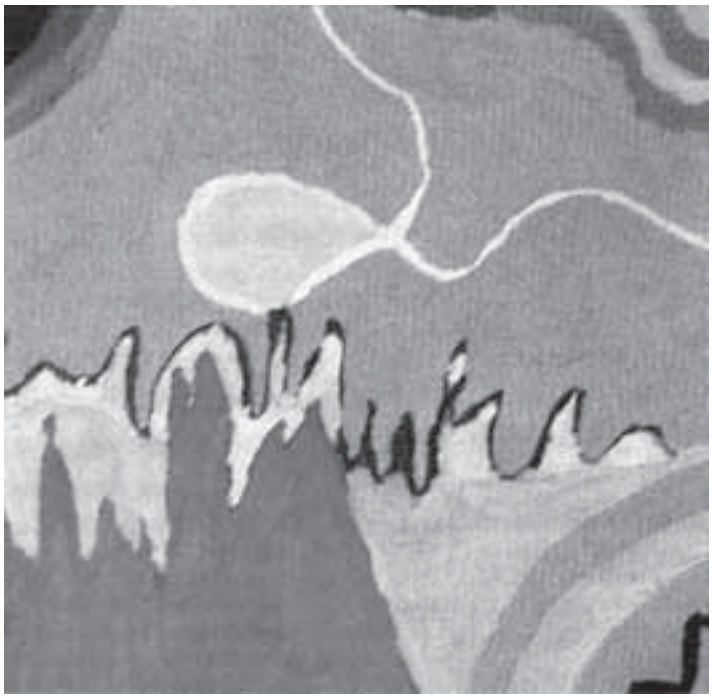
The holistic approaches I have discussed which created a safe environment, trusting and respecting relationships with my students, and a sense of community among all, have transformed my classroom, my students, and even myself. The transformation I witnessed convinces me of the rightness of a holistic approach to teaching art. This transformation also reminds me of our class motto, “I am not here to prove myself. I am here to improve myself.” Naturally, I had to prove myself to my students in order to gain their trust and respect and happily I sought to improve myself daily so that I could continue helping my students improve themselves—mind, body, and spirit.

Clay Relief Sculpture
When asked to respond to his relief sculpture, Omar responded with the following statement.

“My clay relief sculpture was the best creation I ever made to me because it brought out a side of me that I have never seen. I really didn’t mean for the sculpture to break but I look at it and it had looked more ancient and creative.”

Changing the Mood: How to add personal meaning to an ordinary design problem

Stacey McKenna



Emily Fong, *Patience*

How do you transform an ordinary design problem into one which contains personal meaning for each student? In other words, how can a teacher take a lesson that already has basically good aesthetic results and re-make it into a lesson that allows each student to express something authentic about him/herself? After a year of monthly discussions with members of the Study Group, and after creating several original holistic art problems for my students, I began to wonder how I could re-address my entire Art 1 curriculum, so that the students' minds, bodies, and spirits were engaged with each learning experience. I was, however, intimidated by the prospect of creating new lessons for an entire course. As I had a solid repertoire of lessons, I wondered if I could simply improve upon it by asking more thought-provoking questions and providing real experiences. The following is a look at my first attempt to do this.

A Mood Painting: The Original Lesson

As a new member of a high school art faculty, I inherited this design-based lesson from a senior faculty member. The objective for the lesson was to: *Create a painting for which the colors, lines, and shapes communicate a mood.* When I taught it, I followed his model. The lesson began by guiding the students through a series of analog line drawings made in response to words which describe states of mind, such as *joyful, peaceful, lonely, angry.* (A similar problem is discussed by Betty Edwards in her book, *Drawing on the Artist Within,* and had been a part of my graduate coursework in the Master-of-Arts in Teaching program at the Maryland Institute College of Art.) Afterwards, the students were shown how to select a composition based on one of the line drawings, trace it onto a 8 x 8-inch format, and create a pattern by tracing the square multiple times onto a larger board. I then introduced the color wheel and reviewed a

variety of standard color schemes: warm, cool, analogous, complementary, monochromatic, primary, secondary, tertiary. After a color mixing demonstration and several sketchbook practices, the students were asked to select a minimum of five colors that communicated the same mood as that of their chosen analog line pattern; the five colors also had to fit one of the color schemes. Using pastels, students created a color template for painting their mood design, and finally began to mix colors and to paint. As this was their first painting experience, I outlined objectives that I felt would provide them with the most challenging experience and most aesthetically pleasing results: no colors straight from the tube, at least one color must be a tint, tone or shade, the board must be completely covered (no white gaps between brushstrokes), colors in repeated shapes must match exactly, and the edges of shapes must be painted cleanly and crisply.

I taught the lesson in this way several times, and the students were always engaged in the painting process and consistently had great success in learning how to mix color and apply paint. Upon completion of the painting, the students titled their works *Joyful* or *Lonely*, or whatever the mood was that they had illustrated, and, as well, the students identified their chosen color scheme. We finished the lesson with a written reflection, for which the questions asked students to identify the elements of art and principles of design used, and to explain the process they went through in creating the painting, step-by-step.

A Mood Painting: The Holistic Lesson

Line Experience

The lesson began as before: a series of non-representational line drawings made in response to the adjectives describing moods. We compared the class results; discovering many similarities of form and interpretation. Our discovery led to a discussion of the possibility that line (or any art element) freed from representation might still communicate an idea that could be understood by others. This was an exciting surprise to many of the students.

Color Experience

For the next class, the students were instructed to follow me out of our room into the large carpeted auditorium foyer just down the hall. Here, the entire class of 34 students could comfortably spread out and sit in a large circle. I had brought with me a 150-sheet pack of Color-aid paper, each sheet 4 x 6-inches, and each a different hue. The students helped me place the sheets in the middle of our circle—carefully, so that there was some space between every sheet and all were visible. We then returned to our places in the circle and I began our “game”—a slight variation on one that I learned as a student in a workshop with Peter London.

I asked the students to imagine that they each had been selected for a new episode of *Survivor Island*. We would be leaving on a boat to get to the island, and as there were so many of us, space was limited. Therefore, the only parcels permitted for each person were the three most essential qualities of their character or personality. After allowing the students a few moments to silently consider what their three qualities might be, I asked them to look over the Color-aid papers spread before us in the circle, and to identify three colors that might communicate each of their three chosen qualities. Students then—quietly but with sureness of purpose—gathered up their three chosen colored papers, and returned to their seats in the circle. (I selected my three as well, as I have found that my participation in a new class experience can set an example of openness, risk-taking and

enthusiasm.) Using only orientation, proximity and overlapping, the students were asked to arrange their colored papers on the floor, in such a way as to best convey the relationship of these three qualities as they believed them to exist in their personalities. This took several minutes, as students were deeply engaged in the importance of creating this metaphor for the construction of who they were. Many students arranged and re-arranged, altering their compositions by mere centimeters.

After the floor-compositions were complete, I announced that our little boat was being tossed in a very bad storm, and the only way to prevent sinking was to lighten our load. Each person would have to give up one of their three qualities—the one they could most easily do without. After a minute or two of careful consideration, each student returned one colored sheet to the center, and then, at my instruction, rearranged the two remaining colored papers to best represent themselves without that third quality.

Once these new compositions were completed, I told the students that we were now on the actual island, but food was in low supply and everyone was hot and tired. The only way we would all make it was if each of us sacrificed one of the two remaining qualities, keeping only the one that would most benefit the group as we worked together to survive. The students had become so attached to these simple color sheet compositions, that this last sacrifice was met with resistance. Amidst much groaning, moaning, and dramatic eye-rolling, the students reluctantly parted with a second quality, leaving only one. To complete our experience, I asked each student to share with the class which qualities they gave up, and which one they had decided to keep. I began with mine. As we went around the circle, students identified qualities in themselves such as crazy, optimistic, friendly, angry, lonely, creative, intelligent, motivated, thoughtful, generous, passionate, gentle, strong, and resourceful. After sharing our color metaphors, we returned to the classroom.

The Design

I changed the design portion of the lesson radically. My revised objective was stated thus: *Create a non-objective design using line, shape and color to metaphorically represent the essential aspect(s) of you/your personality.* In their sketchbooks, inside an 8 x 8-inch format, students made a non-objective line design that represented the most essential aspects of their personalities. I suggested a few ways students might develop this line design: tracing an analog drawing they had made earlier, combining two or more analog drawings, or creating a new analog line design to represent one or more of their three essential personality traits (represented by the three colored papers). The only requirement for the final line design was that the finished work contain at least eight different shapes (so that students would be able to mix and paint up to eight different colors). I eliminated the requirement to create a pattern, as the regularity of a symmetrical design might not best express every student's personality. Instead, we talked about the difference between pattern and repetition, and included them as options for creating the designs.

When it came time to choose colors for the design, I told students that they must include the final "most essential" color from the *Survivor* game, and that they must have a minimum of five different mixed colors in their finished work. Just as in the original lesson, I reviewed the color wheel, color schemes, and color mixing in great detail. This time, however, the students were required to take careful notes, document mixing experiments in their sketchbooks, and then were asked to use this information on an as-needed-basis. In this new version of the lesson, students did not have to adhere to a specific color scheme, they simply had to make the best possible representation of their personality characteristics.

The Painting Process

When it came time to paint, I again made alterations to the original lesson. As students were seriously and successfully engaged in the artistic problem of representing themselves with color, shape, and line arrangements, I thought that they might be ready for even more sophisticated artistic choices. I demonstrated painting techniques just as before, but this time, instead of limiting the students to crisp edges and smoothly applied paint, I also demonstrated how to paint soft edges, to blend edges, to paint thick and thin, and to layer and scumble. We looked at the aesthetic qualities of smooth and rough brushstrokes, and large and small brushstrokes. I asked the students how they might know which technique to use, and students made suggestions such as "You might want to use a rough and thick strokes to express a very emotional state of mind." I told the class that artists do what "feels right" for what they want to communicate. In other words, what is important is not *style*, but rather *personal meaning*.

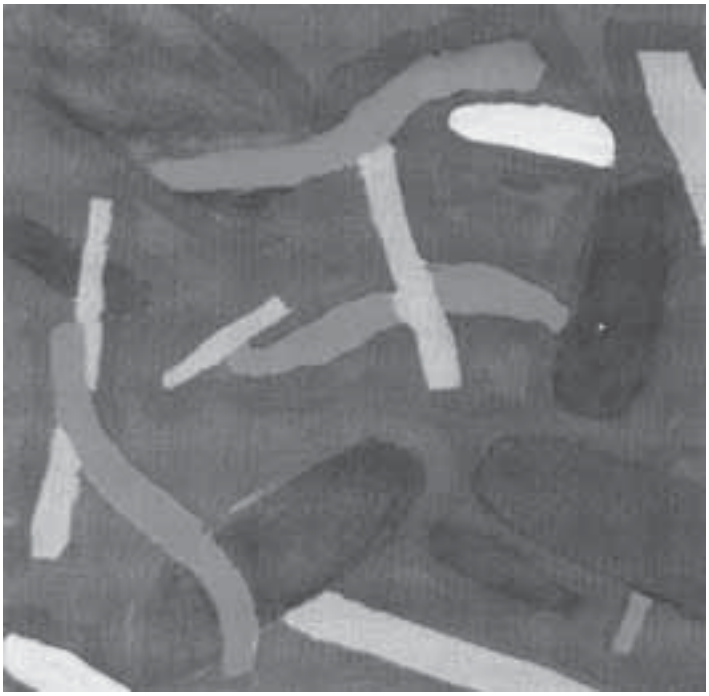
The Finished Paintings

As I watched the works come into being, I was amazed by the variety of solutions. In the original lesson the student works had very closely resembled one another; the results from this new version, however, were very individualized. Where before the class had made paintings based on a *general idea of a mood* that they may or may not have experienced intensely in their own lives, now they were basing their work on an personal idea for which they were the only experts: *their own personality characteristics.*

Student Response to the Lesson: What I Am to Me

I was very curious about how the students were interpreting these unique visions of themselves. So, when the paintings were complete, instead of passing out a reflection sheet (identifying the elements and principles, and explaining the process) as I had done before, I asked them to title their work, and then to write a short paragraph in response to the following question: "In what ways do the choices you made for this work represent you? You might want to consider some or all of the following: line, shape, color, composition, brushstroke, paint quality." Below are some of the results by students at various grade levels:

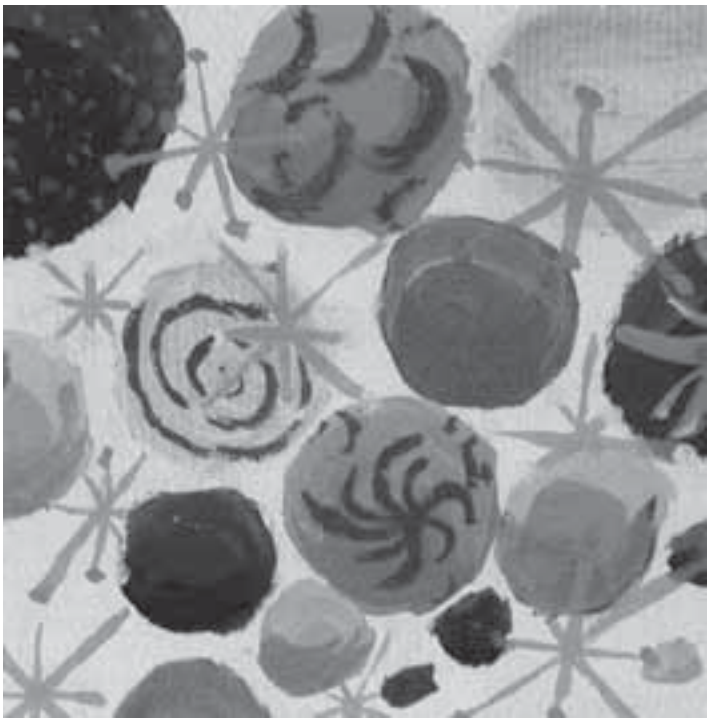
Excited
By Phil Brew
Grade 9
In this painting excited is represented in many ways. One way is that it is full of bright colors and a few dark colors. When the two types of colors are next to each other they seem to contrast with one another. Also the colors fade to white which shows how the colors are smeared because they were going fast and going fast makes me excited.



Swirly
By Daniel Hammond
Grade 10
My picture describes my mellowness. The lines that I used were rounded and wavy. This was so they seemed flowing and in motion. Some of the shapes are overlapping because everything normally comes together when you're mellow. The main color that I used was blue because it is a calm color. The other colors contrast with it so that's why I chose them. I chose these shapes so that they appear to be floating on the "mellow" blue.

Student Response to the Lesson: Considering the work of others

We closed the lesson by putting the work on the critique wall with labels identifying each work's title. Students were invited to share how they had used the elements of art and principles of design to communicate their idea (essentially, to share what they had written in their reflection). Some shared, but most were understandably reticent as the metaphors were often very personal. So I then asked students to choose a peer's painting that they wanted to talk about, and after careful looking and selecting, each student shared with the class what they found intriguing about a particular work: what techniques had been used and how that artist seemed to be using the elements and principles to communicate the idea (indicated by the title). In this way, I was able to check for learning and students were given an opportunity to share ideas and to appreciate one-another's work.



Optimism
By Laura Magers
Grade 12
This work represents the optimistic side of my complex personality. In my mind, I equate circles with happiness, so there are a lot of circles in *Optimism.* The jax-like shapes are like exuberance or spontaneity, which come with optimism. The main color is orange, as seen in the jax-shapes, some circles, and the background. The designs on some of the circles are mainly circular or curved, which represent easy-goingness. All in all, this is a very optimistic piece.

Assignment: Make Art, Make Friends

Stacey McKenna

Hommage to Katie Mitchem, by Allysa Baker, *papier maché*

How many times have parents and teachers lamented the failure of our teenagers to reach outside their small circle of friends, and get to know other students? How many misunderstandings, conflicts, lonely moments and violent acts could be avoided by simply making an effort to learn a little about others in our community? As a high school art teacher in a prosperous suburb, I know that even the brightest, most talented, and financially comfortable teenagers feel *un*comfortable most of the time—and so I endeavor to create a relaxed, safe classroom environment in the belief that a more relaxed student will be more likely to take creative risks. To that end, I facilitate frequent group discussions and class critiques, encourage students to move freely around the studio, talk informally to individual students on a daily basis, and sponsor art activities after school. In spite of these efforts, it came to my attention recently that, though respectful of one another and familiar with one another's work, some students in my Advanced Art class did not even know the other members of the class by name. Upon closer scrutiny, I noticed that the student groups at the four separate studio work tables rarely interacted with one another. My goal became to create an artistic problem which would challenge the students creatively while at the same time provoking more interpersonal interaction. We had just completed a large self-portrait painting lesson and I thought further study of the human form in three-dimensions would strengthen their perceptual skills while possibly also stimulating some informal conversation, so I built my lesson around this concept.

The Lesson, Part I: Interpersonal Interaction

The lesson began by gathering everyone together, as we often do when looking at art or discussing ideas. I invited the students to ask me any question they wished—personal or professional. As an incentive, and to get things started, I brought in candy, and rated each question as worthy of one, two, or three candy treats—the most thought-provoking

earning the most candy. After the first half-dozen questions, the students forgot about the candy; they simply asked questions—such as "When did you first start making art?" "When you go somewhere new, are you most interested in the food, the people, the landscape or the culture?" "Do you want to have children?" "Do you and your family members share common interests—in art for example?" And "do you think your becoming an artist was mostly genetic or mostly environmental?" I answered each question honestly, and that led to more questions and open discussion.

After a half hour question-and-answer session, I introduced the assignment, which began with each student being paired with another whom they did not know well. (I had already carefully planned the pairings based on proclivities I had observed.) These pairs, or "artist-partners," would then interview each other and document the interview with sketches and notes. Several students asked what we were going to make after the interviews—but I refrained from revealing the planned *Hommage Sculpture* lesson. I wanted them to focus on the encounters with one another, and not on what would follow.

The Lesson, Part II: Artistic Response

The next day we gathered together again. We viewed and discussed realistic and expressive figurative sculptures by nineteenth- and twentieth-century master artists, noting their various properties. We identified the materials the artists had used: primarily clay or *papier maché*. We defined the word *hommage:* to pay respect to by external action. The assignment was simple and brief: *Create a three-dimensional tribute to your new friend, using the sculpture material of your choice. Any forms that you choose to include in your sculpture must be based on observation. Be sure to consider size and weight. Think of your work as a gift to this person—one that they would be proud to display in their home.*

Students set to work in their sketchbooks, brainstorming ideas for their sculptures. As it was the first time for many of the students to work in clay or *papier maché*, I showed figures I had sculpted and I demonstrated basic construction techniques for both materials. Students selected their material, refined their ideas for the planned *Hommage,* and then worked for seven class periods on their sculptures. No seating arrangement was suggested by me; students oriented themselves in the room in a way that made sense to them as individual artists. Some artist-partners elected to sit together while working, others sat farther apart and took turns posing. I assisted students when they encountered technical challenges, and occasionally evaluated progress. I observed artist-partners frequently asking one another for feedback. Additionally, students asked other students at their table—both old friends and new acquaintances—for critiques of the work-in-progress. In the past, this type of informal dialogue had occurred frequently between friends, but before this time I had never noticed it taking place between students who were not already friends.

Student Response to the Lesson: Sense of Self & Sense of Others

When the sculptures were complete, I passed out a reflection sheet with specific questions intended to assess each student's perceptions of the process. I assured them that the responses would be confidential and asked them to be as honest as possible. According to their responses, 95% of the students did not know their assigned artist-partner "at all" before this art problem, and therefore felt "indifferent" toward them. During their interviews, 75% of the students felt they had

learned “a lot more,” while 20% learned “a bit more,” about their artist-partner. 60% felt “very awkward” interviewing, but 50% were able to overcome the uncomfortable feelings for an overall positive experience. 65% enjoyed being interviewed, one young man adding, “I liked it because I could have a reason to tell her (my partner) things that I wouldn’t just come out and tell people.” A female student said of her artist-partner: “We had a lot in common. I didn’t think we would have. We didn’t *look* like we would have.” Wrote one male student, “[The interviewing] was the best part of this assignment because it was a great chance for the students to socialize . . . everyone at my table talked and smiled much more than usual.” After the interviews and the construction of the sculptures, 95% of the students stated that they “liked” their artist-partner.

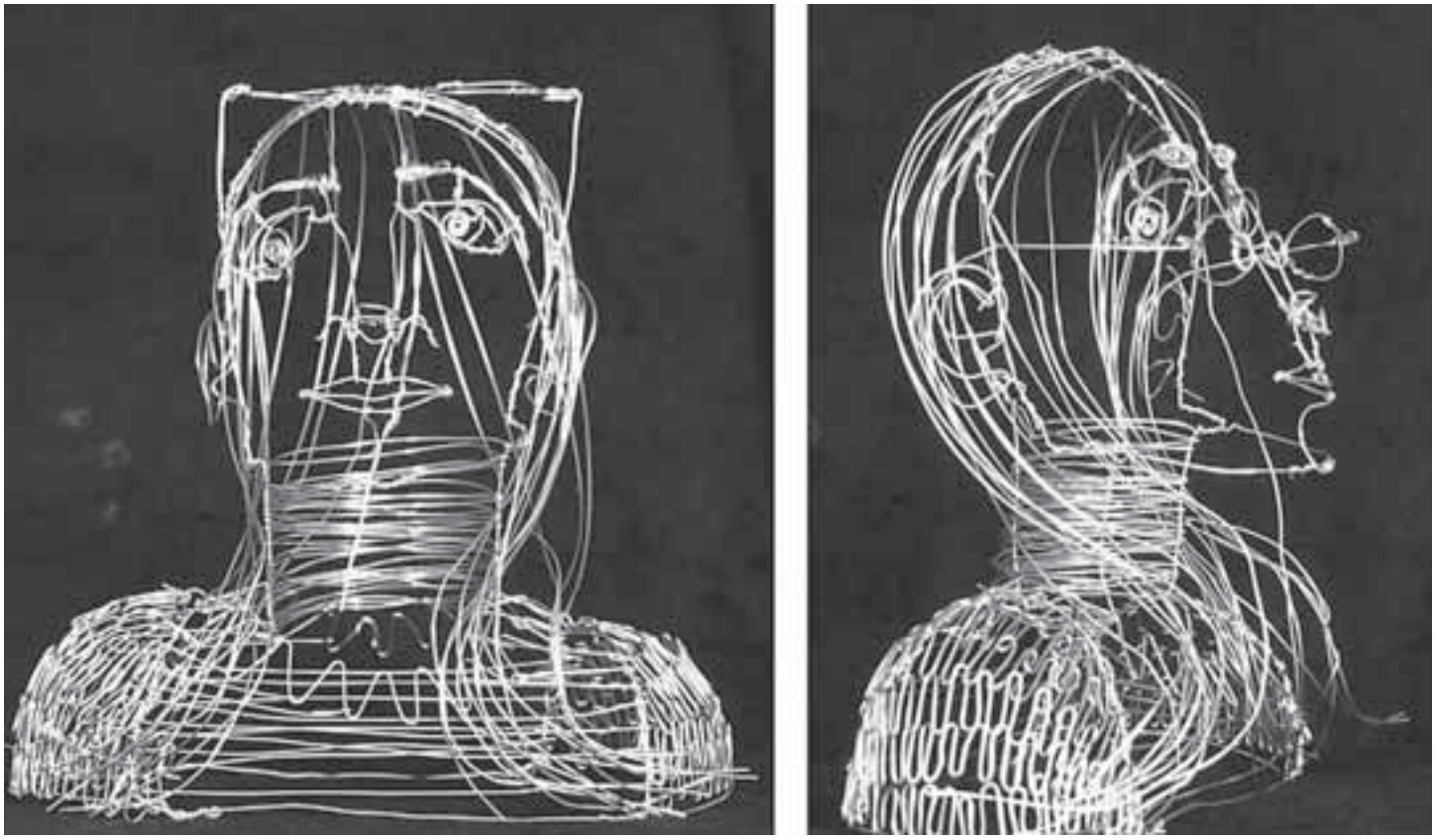
Everyone, without exception, used positive adjectives—such as “friendly,” “focused,” “lively,” “unified”, and “light-hearted”—to describe the atmosphere of the classroom while the sculptures were in progress. “The atmosphere,” said a female student, “was really . . . pumped. Everyone was interacting with one another. No one was left out or alone. The room was just vibrating cuz of the talking and getting along. It was a great vibe!” Several students sensed a noticeable shift in the classroom dynamics: “During the interviews, the atmosphere was really quiet because no one really wanted to talk to the person to which they were assigned. When we started working, the atmosphere changed immensely because even the different tables started to talk to each other, which previously had never happened.”

Student Response to the Lesson: Aesthetic Merits

In addition to assessing the interpersonal interaction on the reflection sheet, students assessed the artistic merits of their work. 12 out of 14 students were happy with the results of their sculpture, though most noted areas for improvement as well. The aesthetic concerns most frequently mentioned by the students included: selecting a personal style, improving perceptual skills, and learning new sculptural techniques. One young woman commented, “I like it (my sculpture of Ryan) pretty well. The face and posture are how I wanted, they look Ryan-ish.”

The artist, Amy Roberts, mimicks her model’s “thoughtful pose,” for this photograph with her *papier maché* sculpture, entitled *Hommage to Ryan Underwood.*

Said another, “Making the sculpture was fun because I had been wanting to do *papier maché* and it was a challenge to get the correct form.” And, finally, one student had a “great idea” for doing her sculpture in a different material: “At first I wanted to do a *papier maché* relief of (my partner) and use pencil marks to make it seem like the sculpture was a drawing come to life. Then I remembered



Hommage to Sasha Minsky-Ellis and Her Wire-rimmed Glasses by Emily Jaques, Wire

saw wire used to make sculpture and I thought I could make it seem like the bits of wire were pencil strokes . . . I am very pleased with the outcome and can't wait to do another."

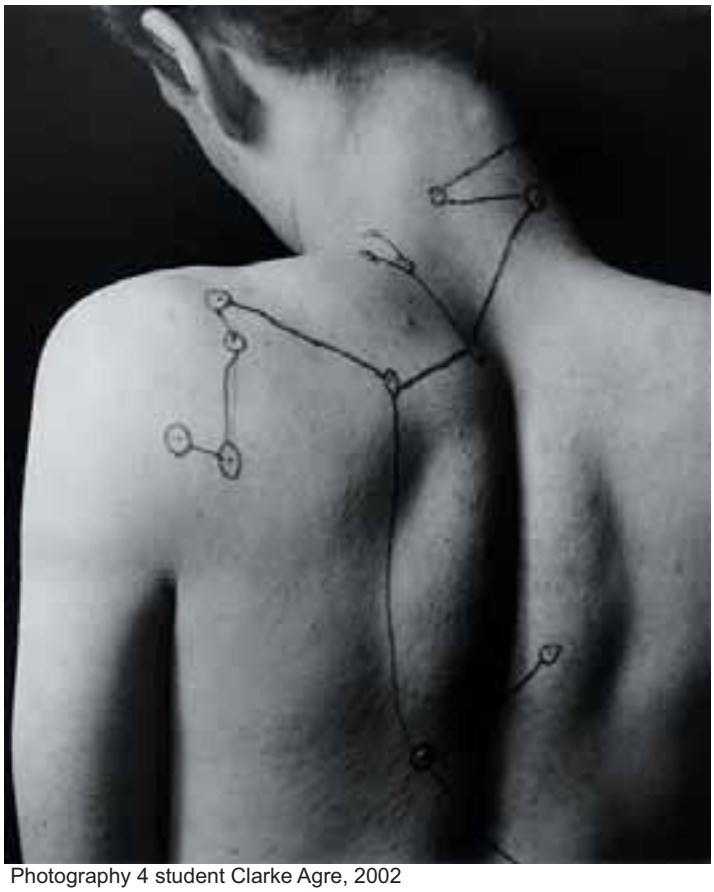
Authentic Response and Mind, Body, and Spirit

The range of styles and approaches in the finished works suggest that each was an authentic response, each the product of a personal vision. I believe that this art problem's success lay in the two key components to the lesson: offering an interpersonal experience that challenged students' social assumptions, and providing time and space in which to create an artistic response to that experience. In fact, as the results of this problem suggest, when students are emotionally stimulated, their desire for technical success and aesthetic refinement is greater because they each have something that they consider important to communicate.

Perhaps it is not unusual for us as art teachers to become focused on technical and aesthetic issues to such an extent that we neglect to nurture interpersonal, human ones. However, in a world that so often ignores the daily emotional or spiritual needs of the individual, I believe, we, in the art classroom have an opportunity to serve our students — and therefore, our world community — better by not only teaching aesthetic concerns and providing experiences for the making of art, but by cultivating the development of the emotional life of the student as well.

Responding to Existential Questions: A Holistic Approach to Teaching Photography

Juan Carlos Castro



Photography 4 student Clarke Agre, 2002
From the series: *Constellations*
In this series, Clarke set out to discover the interconnecting patterns of the macro universe in the micro universe. Here he was making connections between constellations and patterns on the body.

Meeting individually with my advanced photography students, I was struck by the articulation of their ideas, diversity of content, variety of compositional and stylistic approaches, and the overall high level of craft. Students were using photography to address their concerns. Among them, our culture's dependence on drugs, the macro universe contained in the micro, the human brain's need to create meaning, pollution in suburbia, and teenage body anxieties. An advanced photography class at an art college? No. These were concepts and images conceived and developed in a comprehensive high school setting.

How does one cultivate the growth of mature artistic behaviors both in the classroom and the community of the school? In Dr. London's Holistic Study Group, we began asking these and other questions in an effort to incorporate more holistic approaches into our teaching. I teach photography at an academically driven, comprehensive high school. Typically, Photography is approached from a technical point of view. I wanted to find out how to make instruction this medium, from the very beginning, one that would enable students to create eloquent and authentic work.

A Community of Artists

What does is take to create a community of students who behave artistically, who create works that are full of power, have an authentic voice, and inspire each other? A community of artists who respect, encourage, and support one another, where everyone values each other's ideas as well as their own.

In such an environment, students have a sense that everything they say and do in respect to making art is valuable. They also need an instructor who acts as a facilitator and a guide, someone with technical expertise and experience to help them think as artists. The teacher needs to be reflective, taking into account not only of how they teach but what they teach. "Does this problem that I am giving students, reflect what artists and creative thinkers struggle with? Is what I am asking them to think about relevant to their lives and the lives of others?"

I find the more I make art myself, the more I understand the struggles my students go through. Often we don't give our students enough credit for the depth of thought that they are capable of or their

Photography I, Response to 1st Question: "*If you were struck blind tomorrow…"* by Stephanie Hurd, 2002

Existential Questions

Existential questions are the foundation for my program from the first day in Photography I all the way through to AP Photography V final portfolios. An existential question is a self-referential question, one that can only be answered by each student's personal experience.

The key is not teaching how to make something but how to think about something. Questions that challenge students to ask themselves such as "what is this to me?" In answering the question, they find the motivation to master the techniques they need. If the question stirs student artists to a response that

Photography I, Response to 1st Question: "*If you were struck blind tomorrow…"* by Nick Demetrick, 2002

ability to voice it with maturity and grace. Knowing the craft well has helped me assist students as they encounter problems representing ideas or need resources to find solutions to specific problems. In being a practicing artist, I understand the journey my students are undertaking to make art that is authentic.

Photography II, Response to Question: "*What would a self-portrait of you look like if were not depicted in it?"* by Toby Fitzick, 2002

has utmost importance to their lives, they cannot but help strive to work towards a solution that is powerful, eloquent and authentic.

This contrasts to a technique-based approach where students may strive to differentiate themselves by being "original". A student whose first introduction to photography was more technique driven made this observation after working with existential questions as a prompt for her work:

I began to play with the techniques and tools of photography, but I was always concerned with taking original pictures. I was always seeking the approval of my peers and teacher and I eventually neglected the real purpose of photography: to create something that pleases yourself."

When you ask students why they made certain choices and they find it hard to answer, they usually say because it is what you (the teacher) wanted.

However, when an existential question is posed and various or specific technique(s) are presented, students have to look within themselves for the answer. This is when the work becomes truly original and authentic; it is based on their personal life experiences. While authentic work happens in many art classes, it is less common in photography assignments or projects where emphasis is placed on step-by-step solutions rather than thinking as an artist.

Questions at Work

When I hand students a 35mm camera, I give them a 45min description of all of the features the camera and then send them out to answer their first question:

If you were to be struck blind tomorrow, what pictures would you take today to share with us how you see the world?

A daunting question yet it causes students to stop and think as they frame an image in the viewfinder. How do I see the world? I've discovered that they make sure they get their exposures correct, compose it in a way that reflects how they see, develop the film correctly, and make a full tonal print.

Photography I, Response to 1st Question: "*If you were struck blind tomorrow…"* by Madeline Poole, 2003

Photography II, Response to Question: "*What would it look like when you would see what you fear and love…"* by Christina Wirth, 2002

Other existential questions call up different responses. For example, “What is your strongest memory?” was used for an introduction to the darkroom and the process of making photograms (camera-less images). “If you had to make a portrait of your self, what would it look like if the camera was unable to take a picture of you?” inspired creative use of toning, solarization, handmade negatives, and Kodalith film by giving them an array of tools from which to chose. “If your mind was a room, what would it look like? Construct the room and then photograph it.” This problem introduced studio lighting and flash photography. Questions such as these develop independent thinking, artistic decision-making, and authentic responses.

By the time students reach their third year in photography, they are responsible for asking their own questions. At this they understand the technical possibilities of photography. Now they can learn to use that knowledge to solve their own problems in ways that are authentic.

Reflection on the Answer

Throughout this whole process it is important for the student and teacher to reflect on their growth, thinking, and choices. Students are asked to keep a journal to document their thinking and record their use of the materials. Usually there is a formal reflection at the end of each problem and there is ongoing reflection ether between the student and teacher or in their journals. Final reflections include activities such as writing a poem or song in response to the image or conducting an interview with the person portrayed in the image to draw information from it. Such reflective exercises generate artistic responses from both the artists and their peers. In a way that encourages, I ask students to question each decision that they have made, asking whether or not it holds true to their intentions. Why did you choose that angle? Why did you tone your photograph that color? Why did you choose to print your photograph this size? While this probing can slow the process down, the resulting work is well worth the wait.

A holistic approach invites students to risk looking inside themselves in ways they haven’t usually been asked to before. Such an approach is also risky for the teacher in that results are oftentimes

Photography I, Response to 1st Question: *“If you were struck blind tomorrow…”* by Jessica Firey, 2002

unpredictable and unknown. Yet, risk taking is characteristic of creative artists. Having an existential question to drive the making of the art, a question which comes in contact with all that is important to students, causes them to find their own voice and to speak eloquently.

Janine D’Agati, Journal, 2002, AP Photography V

Journals form a log for thinking and provide students with a place to document ideas and their development. Here, they are able to explore technical and aesthetic possibilities and reflect either in written and/or visual form.

A Developmental Sequence of Existential Questions

Course	Types of Questions	Techniques
Photography I (One Semester)	Questions are mostly centered around challenges them to become aware of their unique way of seeing.	Basic black and white darkroom, pinhole cameras, 35mm cameras, film development, traditional methods of presentation
Photography II (One Semester)	Questions are focused on developing an awareness of self and how to articulate their voice visually.	Alternative methods of printing, toning, sculptural methods of presentation, multiple negative printing, orthographic film, studio lighting, working in series
Photography III & IV (One Semester Each)	Questions ask students to look outside themselves to the world around them.	Digital photography, color photography, flash photography, mural printing, medium and large format camera, alternative 19th century processes
AP Photography V (Two Semesters)	Students generate their own questions that are elaborated and refined into a major body of work.	As determined by the student

Janine D'Agait, *Dyptich Series,* 2002, AP Photography V

In this series, Janine investigates humankind's need to create narrative and meaning out of visual form. Her final body of work juxtaposed disparate images to test that theory. In part this work earned her recognition as a Presidential Scholar in the Arts.

Portable Personal Sanctuaries

Michelle La Perriere

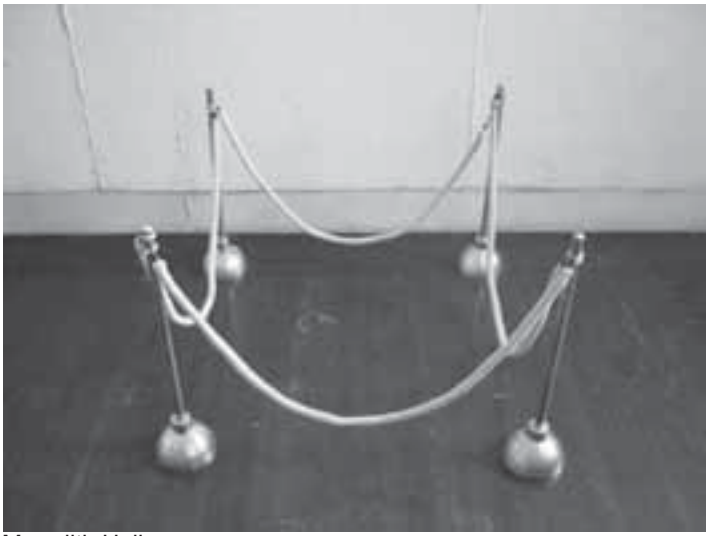
Gabriel Held

When I received this assignment I was immediately reminded of a Mexican good luck charm that I bought several yeas ago in preparation for a major audition. I began the assignment by examining the charm, which contained religious images and texts that were meant to protect its owner. I searched through my own archive of photographs for images of people who made me feel safe and grounded. Once I had chosen my images I digitally made a stamp of each one and then went on to make a composition from them. The composition included a piece of text which was an excerpt from a letter written to me by my father at a time when our relationship was changing dramatically due to the birth of his new children – it simply read "If I am part of you then so are you a part of me." I also included the symbol for infinity just to say that all the things I was trying to represent in this piece were eternal. Once the image was made it did not look like a complete piece. I played with the idea of repeating the image numerous times on patches of fabric and sewing them into a quilt, like a very personal security blanket. Due to time constraints I was unable to pursue that idea. Instead I chose to recreate the image in only one color and print it on gold paper, attaching six of the prints of braided lining fabric. The final product was modeled after Tibetan prayer flags, and I think was more successful than the quilt would have been. Because its form is less familiar to me, I am able to experience more freshly.

When I was a student at Parsons School of Design in the early 1980s, my favorite class was taught using an approach developed at the Bauhaus. My experience up to that time was rooted in perceptual drawing so the couse work was initally foreign to me. The predominantly non-objective assignments were intriguing to me as they opened a new way of seeing and thinking.

It followed naturally that when I began teaching at MICA, I used this course as my model for teaching in the Foundation Program. Yet, I also believe that assignments are ultimately more interesting if they present an opportunity for students to personalize their work. Rather than an "either/or" method, I often sometimes have students work with formal exercises. Outside of class, I have them solve problems that ask for more personal reflection, intuition, and investigation. The two experiences are designed to complement one another and, in a holistic way, deepen one's understanding of the issues presented.

I work with freshmen students who are predominantly 18 years old and right out of high school. Most of them have more independence than ever before as they are living away from home for the first time. It is therefore essential that they learn to take care of themselves and feel secure. In my Elements of Visual Thinking class, I use the initial assignment to prompt students to think about cultivating a sense of *balance* in their lives, something I believe begins in the body.



Meredith Hall

When I was little I had an unnatural fear of fires. I thought for sure our house would burn down some night and everything would be lost. There was actually a period when I kept all of my favorite toys packed in two tote bags by my bed so I could be ready to flee with them if need be. As I've grown up, my fondness and need for material goods has greatly dwindled. I've gone from wondering what I'd save in a fire or natural disaster to seriously contemplating owning little more than a toothbrush and some clothes. I love to pare down what I keep. I'm constantly purging gifts and jewelry collected, books, clothes, etc. I cut whatever accumulates. I believe that if push came to shove I could, without much thought, give up everything I own for a reason I deem worthy. Having nothing doesn't scare me. I'd be fine as long as I had a space for myself. This space could be an apartment, a room, an open invitation to a couch at a friend's house, a park bench where I could sit alone for an hour, safely sitting on the lawn, a walk. My space is something for myself. A place to check back in and regroup. Knowing that a physical place exists for me to go and knowing that I have the power to truly nurture and care for myself carry the same level of comfort. It really need not be physical, just moments of control for my own brain. A separate piece to make myself peaceful.

While researching shrines and sanctuaries I looked over things like Zen gardens, Buddhist altars, and also the Taj Mahal. Considering all these things I decided that it's not really the object or shrine that touches me. It's the place in which the shrine is kept, it's the idea of creating/cradling something sacred. I connect with the environment for the sense of the holy, the feelings surrounding it, not the relic itself. That's perhaps the point of many shrines, but a lot of people miss it.

Materials. The materials I used when it comes down to it are almost bit too crude for a something I hold in such high reverence. Four plungers, a great deal of rope, and some gold spray paint. I was trying to mimic the brass stands and velvet ropes that you see at banks, museums, movie premieres, concert halls, etc. There is something about those ropes that is burned into my brain, and probably the brains of others, that says, "Don't Cross." They protect and block paths and also guide the way to new ones. I suppose I made a poor man's version.

To that end, I designed a homework problem called "Portable Personal Sanctuary."

My written directions for the problem involve several steps. Part One is an exploration of commonalities and particularities. I suggest questions they can use for reflective writing in their journals. I ask them to visualize what their ultimate place or sanctuary will need to be portable. I have them consider a variety of ways for creating a solution, emphasizing the importance
of process as they develop sketches and play with materials. Dividing them up into small discussion groups, I provide guiding questions: "What do you need in order to feel safe and what does safe mean to you? What's the connection between safety and comfort? How do degrees of safety effect your ability to take risks?" From these conversations, they make up a list of universal or common issues separating out personal or unique concerns. These small group responses are then shared with the entire class.
In Part Two of the problem, I have the students perform research and begin work on their sanctuaries. Most alternate between intervals of working and investigation. Using the library, internet, and possibly family members or friends, the students research information about sanctuaries, shrines, and alters from at least three different cultures. Sketchbook/ journal notations are to include written information, thoughts, and drawings. These findings are then shared with the class.

I suggest students allow this research to inform their own ideas. I ask them: "What feels right to you?" and "What form might be most appropriate?" I encourage them to revise their original ideas if that seems right and to think inside and outside the box. After they have completed the work, they answer a series of reflective questions designed to reveal more of the investigation and thought that entered into their process.

While the students are delving into the sanctuary project, I use formal in-class exercizes to reinforce our inquiry. We work with black and white cut paper squares and rectangles to create the most unified and the most chaotic compositions. Unity will always bring about aspects of balance using various symmetries. Interestingly, characteristics of absence and presence, fundamental traits of meditation also appear. This brings us full circle to their experiences of working with the Portable Personal Sanctuary project.

When they bring in their Portable Personal Sanctuaries, we do not critique them.

As we look at each piece, the creator expresses her/his motivations with the group. This experience allows for meaningful and intimate sharing, enabling the classmates to feel connected to one another and to be more at ease as they express themselves openly and freely. Next, we discuss the ways in which the work makes us consider aspects of balance, how the santuaries are structured and placed, how the body feels in relationship to them physically, and how form of the sanctuary can enable them to feel more centered.

In making these Portable Sanctuaries, the problem always results in solutions involving bilateral symmetry. In experiencing this both intuitively and intellectually, the students develop a personal awareness of balance that is more meaningful to them than if we simply worked with a formal project.

In the final part of this sequence on balance and symmetry, I show slides of artists' work, including plans for cathedrals, masks, blankets, sculpture, architectural structures, and spaces affirming affinities for balance. Thus, students' sense of how the commonalities and particularities of balance play into a wide range of work is extended.

Examples from the most recent class help tell the story of how this combined approach, one that is intuitive and personal, and the other which is formal, causes students to invest themselves deeply in works that solve a personal problem and ultimately bring them together as a community.

Aemi Kato

I began with jotting down several ideas that made me feel good, that made me happy. I knew that if I had to carry this around with me, it had to be something that could bring my spirit up even if I couldn't do that myself. Then from there I went to research on different kind of sanctuaries such as Buddhist temples and Tibetan monasteries and then Greek sanctuaries. I took great interest in these backgrounds because these stem from my own personal religious and ethnic background. Then, looking back on what I collected in information, I realized that most of these sanctuaries had to do with being in a place where one would prepare to meet or greet God, or Gods (depending on your belief.) So I created a sort of cloak that took after the monk traditional clothing. This would not only show respect towards God, but also bring me to a state of focus and unity within myself. And the cloak would be carried in a box that I created out of things that empower my soul, such as the ocean and the sky and quotes that make me feel strong. I feel very connected to water and sky. I ALWAYS feel at peace when I'm with water. Whether it's the ocean, lake or pond or anything. Then I tied it all together with a ribbon. I still need to work on adjusting the box to fully embrace the cloak. But until then, I keep it close by.

Introducing Holistic Approaches to Pre-Service and Practicing Art Educators

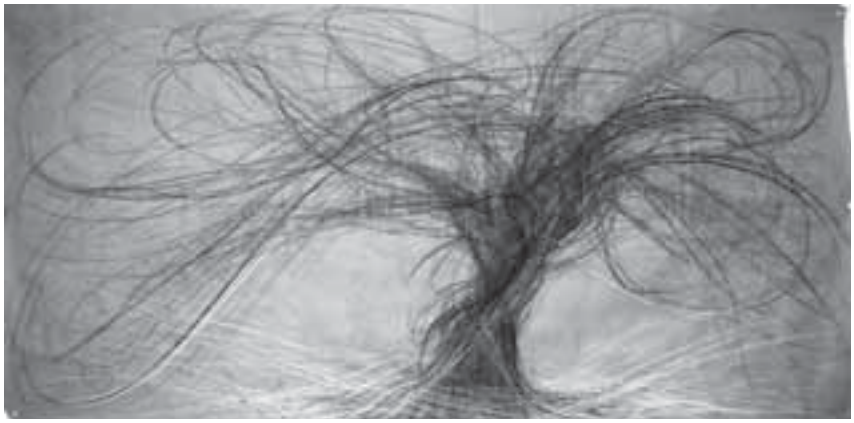


Illustration 1
Lisa Manasar, 2003, "The tree that has had a life parallel to mine." The drawing was described back to her by her peers having passion, energy, and a striving to reach into every corner. Lisa commented: "I was amazed to see some quickly drawn lines could begin to speak for me."

Karen Lee Carroll

This paper recounts efforts to introduce holistic theory and practice within two art education contexts. One is with pre-service students, the second with practicing teachers enrolled in a masters degree program. The setting for both is at MICA, a professional college of art where developing the artist in the teacher has a strong priority. The following is a descriptive account of these efforts told from the instructor's point of view. Evidence suggests that holistic methods were welcomed by both audiences for the manner in which they facilitated a sense of community and mutual support, high levels of personally meaningful engagement, and deeply satisfying processes and products. Concluding observations include thoughts on prospects for integrating holistic methods into the classroom as well as some ideas about how more holistic practices at the college level might facilitate the process of integration at the K-12 level.

Introducing A Holistic Approach to Pre-Service Art Education Students

Strategies for Making and Teaching Art is a K-12 methods course focused on translating studio expertise into teaching ideas. A holistic approach permeated the entire course with several specific goals in mind. Foremost was the desire to create a mutually supportive community among students in the class. A second goal was to engage students in reflective thinking. Third was to have students experience methods of instruction that could be unpacked to identify specific holistic strategies and theory. Lastly, there was a desire to have students identify ways to apply holistic practices within a unit of study.

Establishing a sense of a supportive community was an important element in the course. I wanted students to feel safe and comfortable in sharing their own development as young artists. If they could engage in reflective dialogue, they might better understand the nature of their expertise in art, reoccurring themes and metaphors and/or problems of interest, and possibilities for translating this into ideas for thematic units. Further, I recognized that many were in a transitional stage, moving from more teacher-directed investigations to finding their own direction. I hoped that they would also be supportive of each other, offering fresh perspectives, new

ideas, suggestions for artistic references, and more. To that end, I opened the course with individual presentations. I modeled for them a process for presenting their work by sharing my own studio work. Each student took a turn peer recording for another while that student presented. All conversations, throughout a series of working sessions, were guided in a positive and constructive direction.

Developing the capacity to be reflective was also seen as essential. Although a valuable behavior for teachers and artists alike, few students normally take time to be reflective. Here, reflection was used to help students understand how their interests in art and expertise in making art had developed over the years. They were asked to reflect on all the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that they used in the act of making art. To accomplish this, several reflective strategies involving writing were used. Students wrote artist's statements, used a theory of art to reflect on their own processes (Carroll, 1998), and made prototypes to test their problem and decode the process. At the end of the course, students used reflective questions to review and assess their growth and development.

As the task of designing a thematic or metaphoric unit progressed, students routinely unraveled aspects of their own processes. For example, some of the learned habits and instinctive behaviors they practiced had gone unnoticed, perhaps because they function at a natural or subliminal level. Yet, these specific strategies, once identified, helped them discover how they could help their own students solve representational problems, think creatively, and pursue ideas and feelings more deeply.

While many specific strategies for making and teaching art were reviewed throughout the course, an experiential encounter with holistic approaches was needed to demonstrate how they might be implemented and the ends they might serve. Selected from Peter London's (1989) repertoire was the encounter that invites reflection on one's life journey. The following describes the encounter:

Illustration 2
Sunny Gough's Tree expresses a sense of inner strength that she recognizes is very much a part of her.

Centering activities incorporating attention to breadth and movement were used to establish a climate of readiness. These opening exercises were intended to connect the mind with the body and spirit, preparing students to engage with a self-referential problem. An existential question was posed: Suppose that somewhere in the world, just at the moment of your birth, a tree sprouted – and this tree has lived a life parallel to yours. What would that tree look like? It was emphasized that each person knew the answer to that question and that all responses would be considered full and complete. Large kraft paper and common art supplies were made available along with the suggestion to pay attention to the sensuality of the materials. A generous amount of time was allotted. Some worked directly on the floor or out in the hallway; others sought tabletops or walls. A few chose to work three-dimensionally while the majority worked two-dimensionally. (For examples of student responses, see Illustrations 1 and 2.)

When the work was completed, parameters were set for a dialogue session. Rather than the normal critique focused on formal qualities and judgment of success, each work was regarded as full and complete as presented. Each student was then invited to request his or her preferred mode of response. Thus empowered to shape response rather than simply receive formal feedback, individuals could choose to tell their own story, ask for responses from the group, or simply request a moment of silence for looking. As each took a turn, personal experiences and feelings were openly shared. Responses ranged from applause and affirmations to tears and, where appropriate, laughter. To conclude the encounter, the process used to set conditions for the work was decoded to identify the methods and ways in which they functioned in creating an experience aimed at connecting mind, body and spirit.

The final task of the semester was to complete resources for a unit of study based on their expertise in studio and art. Guided in part by Sandra Kay's (1998) criteria for an elegant problem, students had developed problem statements that were sufficiently open-ended to allow for meaningful personal investigations and expression. Additionally, the units were to be flexible in that they could be adapted for different levels of learners. As well, they were to be designed to generate ideas, allow for choice-making, stimulate elaboration of ideas and form, and to spark original or innovative solutions. The invitation to incorporate some aspect of a holistic approach into their units resulted in a few identifying a role for centering activities. All developed, to varying degrees of success, an existential question that might be used to launch the elegant problem in the direction of deeper and more personal responses.

In the course of introducing holistic theory and practice within this context, I found that undergraduate students needed help in understanding the concept of metaphor and the notion of an existential or self-referential question. While some of their units might have benefited from a holistic approach, only some students were able to indicate, at this point, how such approaches might be incorporated. In checking with students, only a few could site studio courses in which something akin to a holistic approach had been used. Yet, the limited experience with one example of a holistic encounter had caught their attention and generated interest in exploring it further. For many, the invitation to engage in self-referential work within the context of a non-critical and supportive community was a new experience. Also new was having permission to shape peer and teacher response in relationship to the process and experience of making art.

Having made specific efforts over the last two years to infuse this entire methods course with a holistic approach, I can offer the following observations:

- First of all, I enjoyed a deep connection with all students and saw a strong sense of community develop. Conversations among and within the group indicated all knew each other better for having shared both the larger experience of the course as well as its specific methods.
- Students responded very positively to a selected holistic encounter, welcoming it, some clearly voicing their thanks. All appeared satisfied that the resulting work was coherent, full, and complete. They successfully unpacked general holistic strategies used in the course as well as specific ones modeled in the selected encounter to identify some of the underlying theory.
- Because these art education students have yet to master the basics of teaching, the application of holistic methods and theory to their efforts in teaching remains to be seen. Yet, it is possible that they are acquiring a taste for more holistic approaches.
- Certainly, there was evidence of a supportive sense of community, high levels of investment in the class and its various tasks, extraordinarily well-crafted work, and depth in reflective thinking.

All this suggests that they know at an experiential level how, if not quite yet why, holistic methods make learners feel when one is deeply engaged, mind, body and spirit.

Introducing Holistic Practices and Theory within the Context of a Professional Development Degree Program for Art Educators

In this setting, holistic encounters were engaged throughout an intensive two-week summer course. It was designed to explore narrative processes for making art and to prepare students for independent studio work. The class consisted of nine art teachers drawn from all over the country beginning their masters degree program together. "Journey" was offered as a metaphor and used as an underlying theme for all encounters. They were invited to consider journey as a metaphor for separating, getting lost, finding oneself, conquering a challenge, and returning home renewed. An existential prompt was used to initiate art-making. Students were encouraged to trust the validity of their response. Responses could vary in form and presentation. Again, a communal respect for sharing was established so that this group might reflect on important aspects of themselves with their peers.

One art-making encounter led to another, each a kind of stepping stone:

- An initial holistic encounter, based on the metaphor of journey, was used the first day. The purposes of journey and ways to facilitate growth were discussed and illustrated through written commentary and artists' sketchbooks. The prompt for this exercise was simply this: Make a "map" that reveals how it is that you arrived here at this moment in time. This encounter immediately worked to establish a safe, open, supportive community for entering into a journey together.
- Object studies from significant belongings became the basis of personal narratives.
- Interviews with peers became part of the process of developing three-dimensional self-portraits with contributions from group members.
- Journals began to fill with ideas for works that had their roots and inspiration in original encounters.

Illustration 3
Kelly Brahm, Initial drawing in response to the question: "How is it that you have arrived here?", 2002

- With ideas percolating, these students then transitioned into three weeks of independent studio practice under the mentorship of another faculty member. The studio work that emerged by the conclusion of the first summer program bore specific references to ideas experienced intuitively in one of the holistic encounters.
- At the program's conclusion in the second summer, students presented a body of studio work. It would appear that the initial encounter opened up an authentic and personally meaningful source for sustained attention and focus.

Student Reflections

Comments from one student suggest how holistic methods used in the first two weeks helped to "unlock the artist inside." Reflections on her return to studio work reveal the level of risk that entailed:

> Standing in a studio again, holding a stick of charcoal between my fingers as I stared up at a blank piece of drawing paper was a frightening experience. I had to unlock that part of me, unleashing what has been yearning to get out for so long. However, finding the key was problematic. How do I begin? Where do I begin? Focusing my mind and heart on what is important in my life was the missing key. Slowly, the artist in me re-surfaced. I lost track of my environment, the people and noises around me. Suddenly, I found my hand gracing the surface of the paper. (See illustration 3).

At the conclusion of the summer, the same student shared these reflections:

> The body of work I created this summer are metaphors that represent struggle and a fear of loss. These sensitive issues in my life are thematic in both my charcoal and pastel drawings. I feel that the experience and the process of creating these images has provided an opportunity for me to resolve some of the struggle and fear that I had been experiencing….My perception of myself as an artist has changed, as well as my abilities to view my work and look at the "whole picture," rather than focusing my attention on technical matters that are miniscule and irrelevant. Making art again was like walking into warm sunlight for the first time after being locked in cold darkness for so long. I feel re-connected with my talent and visions that I have as an artist, not just a teacher.

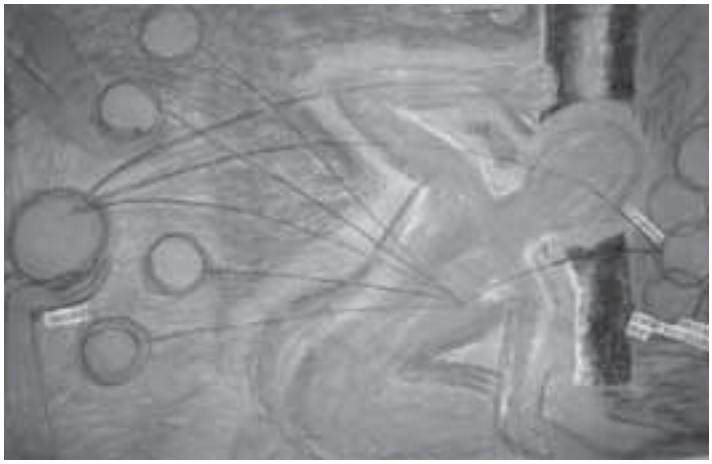


Illustration 4
Christina Hanawalt, Initial drawing in response to the question: "How is it that you have arrived here?" In sharing the image, the idea that others had helped her along the way emerged as one possible interpretation of this intuitive drawing, 2002

For several of these art teachers, the intuitive discoveries made through holistic encounters developed over the course of the summer into highly expressive and mature work. For example, Christina made an initial drawing of a female nude crouched in a space in which circular forms hovered around her (Illustration 4). Through conversations with the group, she began to realize that these circles represented important influences on her life, specifically members of her family. Her work developed into a book, handsomely illustrated, integrating images of herself, her mother, and the grandmother she had just lost. (See illustration 5 and 6.) Later, the body of work evolved to deal with the manner in which life threads might flow through her to forthcoming generations. (See illustration 7.)

Illustration 5
Christina Hanawalt, page from handmade book that portrays significant contributions to her life from family members, 2002

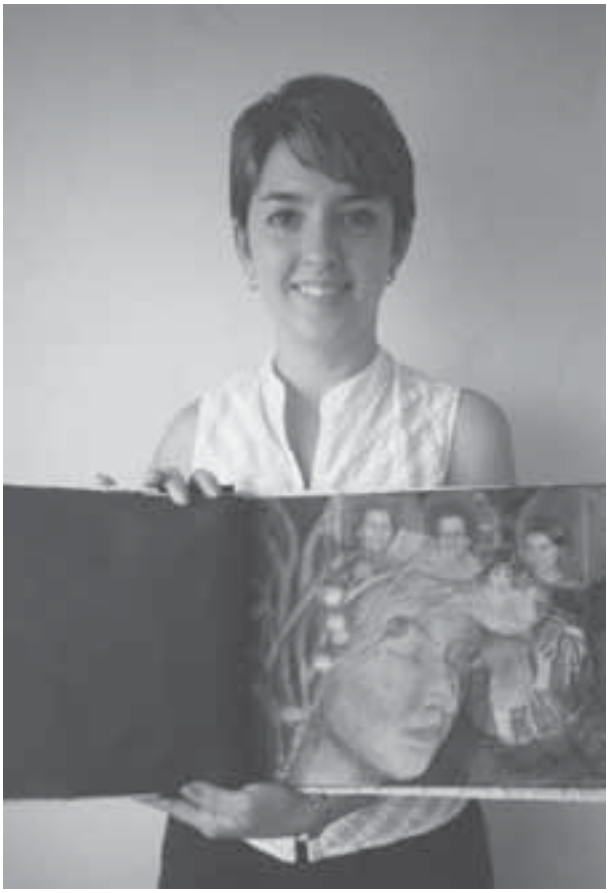


Illustration 6
Christina Hanawalt, page from her book, 2002

Illustration 7
Christina Hanawalt, Self-portrait, # 2, 2003. In her presentation she noted that a sense of "life flowing through her" had developed in the course of extending this body of work.

Deborah selected quotes that were inspirational to her during the summer. These included the following from Peter London's *No More Secondhand Art*.

- To draw from within is to draw upon a source of wisdom that no one else could possibly have; it is a step that places you in a quiet and exclusive domain. Here, there is no one else to turn to. No one, however loving or intelligent, can accompany you on this journey. And the very solitariness of the quest brings about a sense of your own self-sufficiency.
- To create art from within is to create a world of our own and also to uncover an all but forgotten original primal self.

For examples of her initial two works, see Illustrations 8 and 9.

Illustration 8 & 9
Deborah Comeau, 2002, with her two initial drawings in response to the question: "How is it that you have arrived here?"

Illustration 10

Illustration 11

Deborah Comeau, 2002, with Installation, View to Right (See accompanying artist's statement.)

Artist's Statement, Deborah Comeau, 2002

The deliberate marks that surge between foreground and background denote frenzy, exuberance, and determination. In the excitement of drawing holistically- with mind, body, and spirit- I am up on tiptoes and kneeling on the floor, emotionally and physically engaged in the process of creating. Only the physical interaction of large-scale drawings can express the energy I feel. Interacting with the final piece, I search the forms from beginning to end. I notice the overlapping textures and the richness of oils resisting ink. The size overwhelms me.

To maintain a balance between intuitive and rational processes, I began with internal focus and maintained physical motion. I concentrated only on internal emotional and intuition, blocking out outside stimuli. My first marks were large, quick, and intuitive- I drew them where I felt them. Using black oil bar, I created these lines as a structure for the rest of the forms. Next, I used white and silver oil bar for highlights and visual depth. In the next step, I focused on formal elements such as balance, form and space, adding washes and black acrylic paint for clarity and unity, and scratching into the paint for texture to achieve a frenzied quality. Periodically I viewed the work from a distance, taking in this solitary journey towards self, hearing my own voice, and listening.

Empowered by these initial encounters, she continued reading London's book and went on to create an installation in a small room that integrated quotes with her imagery. (See illustrations 10 and 11). For reflections on her process, see the artist's statement that accompanied her final installation.

The following summer Deborah returned to complete the installation with a life-size sewn and stuffed self-portrait. In presenting this work, she offered her her sense that the installation drawing was a way of thinking about the dynamics of different relationships that had shaped her life's journey and contributed to her development as an individual.

Instructor's Reflections

A sense of "grouponeheartedness" seemed to take hold early on. Conversations contained personal revelations and discoveries that were received with genuine regard. On an individual basis, and often in the presence of their peers, members of this group talked about the strong bond that had been created among them from the first day through holistic approaches. I, too, felt deeply engaged with the group, able to share personally important ideas, concerns, and feelings about making art, teaching, and my own professional journey.

The ability of these teachers to employ holistic strategies in their own teaching remains yet to be seen. There is a sense that additional reflection, further elaboration of theory, and additional modeling of practices may be necessary before any one of these teachers might claim to be using a holistic approach. Yet, as the Holistic Study Group has demonstrated, even the use of a single strategy can begin to make a difference in the kind of learning community and reflective stance engendered. For now, there appears to be clear evidence that a holistic approach provided a springboard for personal investigations that produced new and meaningful bodies of artwork and strong communal bonds.

Conclusions

The notion that pre-service and practicing art teachers have rarely encountered such holistic practices in their own studio preparation and general education seems to forestall the discovery that such methods may have value in their own teaching. Holistic theory is likely to remain an abstraction until more candidates for teaching have first hand experiences with holistic practices that probe the deeper purposes of art and inquiry. Yet, with the integration of holistic practices into the college teaching of art, more future teachers of art might experience less competitive and more supportive environments for learning while, at the same time, exploring more of the ways art can serve deep purposes. A shift from formal exercises and teacher-directed assignments towards more problem-based learning, with centering exercises and sensory-based motivations, existential questions, reflective writing, and non-critical guidelines for dialogue would signal such a development.

This account suggests that pre-service teachers, as learners and art-makers, welcome holistic methods. They respond to them well, making important discoveries and connections. Conversations gravitate towards deeper insights. The quality of their engagement and work appears to be of high quality. Concern over grades seems to disappear as the more satisfying aspects of learning and creating are pursued. Especially satisfying was the sense of achievement that the group shared, celebrating each and everyone's work at the conclusion of the course. There was the sense that the whole of the course constituted a "peak" experience.

For the masters students, holistic practices eased the re-entry into the studio and enabled primal sources for ideas and images to emerge intuitively. The extended studio time as well as the mentoring of a studio faculty member allowed these ideas to grow and develop into well-crafted bodies of work, motivated by deeply personal ideas, concerns and feelings. All saw their new work as authentic, important, personal, and visually rich.

In terms of applying such holistic methods to the daily practice of teaching, the masters students may be in a better position to implement them simply because they are at a level where they can focus on finessing their art of teaching. Further, the class for masters students provided more opportunities to experience a wider variety of holistic strategies and to consider how they might be applied in specific settings.

For pre-service teachers, it will take more time and possibly more first-hand experience with a variety of holistic methods for them to envision how they can shape their practice holistically.

Meanwhile, I can report the effort to incorporate increasingly more holistic practices into my own teaching was especially soulful and satisfying to me as an instructor. I felt as though I had stepped into

the stream with my students. While I anticipated a plan for each day, the direction of their journey told me where to guide them next. The bond created among all of us, the stories that unfolded, and the empowerment that seemed to come with speaking about deeply important things, all resonate well with me. Teaching felt like an art form—alive, spontaneous, fresh, and meaningful.

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Criteria for Developing a Holistic Art Education Within a Community-Based or Institutional-Based Setting

Bonnie Reynolds

The criteria for implementing a holistic art education within community-based programs differs from those considerations used to integrate this approach into public school systems. The following circumstances are based on a self-support program that is within the parameters of a major university, but they apply similarly to other community-based programs, since they all are financially independent structures that must consider how to implement this holistic approach while still maintaining a fiscally sound program.

Factors and procedures I've found that influence the successful implementation of a holistic art education within a community-based setting include the following:

Frequency of Classroom Sessions

The number of art sessions in a program greatly affects the success of the program; the more frequent the art experiences, the easier to implement a holistic approach into the classroom since the opportunity to build rapport between teacher and student is strengthened as the number of classroom experiences increase. Those programs that have fewer class sessions can suffer from repeated stops and starts and often fail to build the trust that naturally develops within longer sessions. An eight-week session in an art program usually will not generate the same comfort level and trust that is felt in a classroom that meets for sixteen weeks. However, this factor is usually compensated for by smaller class sizes, thereby expanding the degree of trust than what is experienced in larger, public school classes.

Role of the Director

Establishing a holistic art education program within a community-based setting can be more challenging than implementing this concept in a public classroom situation. This challenge is heightened in proportion to the levels of separation between the students and the person implementing this holistic approach. The director of any program has less immediate influence on students than do the individual teachers. Therefore, it is a primary responsibility of the director to select teachers who appreciate and can implement a holistic approach to art education.

Selection of the Teachers

Instructors who teach in an art program over a prolonged period of time develop a different relationship with their students and the director than those who teach for only one session in a program. Teachers who feel a personal commitment toward their classes and the entire program create trust within the classroom and develop a rapport with their students. This trust strengthens the sense of safety created within the classroom and creates a ripe environment in which to introduce a holistic approach to the art experience. Moreover, a teacher who establishes a close rapport with the students will often develop a following of students, thus adding to the feeling of safety and familiarity, providing a greater climate for holistic art experiences over an extended period of time. A sense of trust and a respect for one another in the classroom are significant requirements in implementing a holistic approach in the class.

Those instructors who teach only one or two sessions, however, have less of a commitment toward the program and their students than do those who continue teaching on an ongoing basis. Implementing a holistic approach to art education can only come when trust has been developed between the teacher and students. The key factor in establishing this trust relies upon the director's choice of teachers and hiring those who will become a committed and vital component of the program.

Training of the Teachers

There are philosophical and pedagogical differences between instructors who are trained to be art teachers and instructors who consider themselves artists who teach. Those who have been trained as art teachers usually have a more structured approach to the content of their material and the methods by which they teach their classes. These instructors typically have well defined lesson plans and carefully prepared visuals to support the art content, but may not necessarily be trained to follow a holistic approach to art education. These teachers, however, may be willing to redirect their lessons towards a more holistic approach to art education, if the director requests and is able to provide guidance in implementing this approach. This necessitates the director's commitment towards and understanding of a holistic art program and requires the director's capacity to influence teachers in that direction.

On the other hand, instructors who first consider themselves artists often have the capacity to approach teaching in a more holistic manner. The vision and energy of the art experience itself is as significant as the structure of the lesson plan. Art making is a means of expression and exploration that naturally integrates the ideas of mind, body and spirit. These instructors intuitively recognize that the importance of making art is one that is more about the individual's expressive process and a state of being than about following plans which create predetermined products. These artist/teachers inspire and motivate their students to draw from their own intuitive resources and discover that sense of authenticity about who they are and how they relate to their world. For teachers who innately follow a holistic approach to art education, it is the director's responsibility to foster support and enthusiasm with suggestions of ways to reach this goal.

When working with either group of teachers, however, it is critical that the director is committed to a holistic art program. To achieve this goal, the director must select teachers who also have the capacity to appreciate and adapt to a holistic approach to art education.

Financial Structure of the Art Program

The challenge lies in understanding how to realistically integrate a holistic approach to art education in a cost-effective manner. Fee-based, self-supporting programs face requirements that are far different than those programs which are public or grant-funded. In most situations, classroom space is at a premium. It is imperative that classes generate the necessary enrollment and funds to support the program. There is little room, both physically and financially, for experimentation to see if a new class will meet the necessary enrollment to run the class. The risk in offering any experimental class, including one that is holistic in scope, is heightened when the program is entirely self-supporting through its tuition fees and is not public or grant funded.

One way to attract the necessary enrollment for a class is to word the title and course description in such a way that the class will appeal to a greater number of participants. No matter how innovative and worthwhile, if a class fails to attract a sufficient number of students, it will not be financially feasible to run or maintain a sound program. Occasionally, reserves or grants may be used to initially support a new class or offset one that has low enrollment. Ultimately, however, the class must financially support itself, if the entire program is to be sustained.

Parents' Expectations

The capacity of a program to support new classes is further complicated by the fact that parents are usually more willing to invest their money and enroll their children in technique and media-focused classes. They want their children to specifically learn how to draw or work with clay or learn basic concepts of art. No doubt, these classes can still provide creative opportunities that will allow children to express themselves and explore a world

of art to which they may have previously been unexposed. Still, parents tend to be conservative in the programs they encourage their children to take and are usually more supportive of traditional classes that teach definite skills and encourage "product" over "process." While these classes may also be holistic in scope, it is the parents' perceptions and expectations that often determine the viability of the class and program. Therefore, it is critical that course descriptions and titles describe classes in such a way as to appeal to students while educating parents to the validity and meaning of the art experience.

Education of Parents and Teachers

The solution to implementing a holistic art education into the program is twofold. Teachers must be educated as to how to integrate this process into the classroom and parents must be educated in how they perceive the purpose of the art experience. This may require a change in expectation and approach by both. First, teachers must re-evaluate their perception and purpose of the art experience. A nurturing environment needs to be created which will encourage the authenticity and mission of the holistic experience and, in turn, lead to the respect of all students. Secondly, a learning process may need to take place that will alter the parents' expectations of the art experience. Educating the parents is vital in drawing participants into the program. Parents need to become better acquainted with concepts that are more process oriented, rather than those that are product oriented.

However, there is no conflict between a holistic and a methods and materials approach to art education, when it comes to a well-made expression. Both desire that goal equally, but for different reasons. Holism desires a full and well-expressed effort because it maximizes meaning, while a methods approach desires a well-made object more for its pretty face, rather than for its creative mind. By stressing the importance of process over product, the authenticity and respect of each student will be validated. Respecting every student and the visual manifestations of that student is the crux of a holistic art education.

Creation of Holistic Training

The way to integrate holistic approaches to art education into community-based programs is, therefore, to educate the trainers and directors to encourage this philosophical concept, which respects the entire student in mind, body and spirit. Encourage those who are learning to be art educators to embrace a holistic approach in their teaching, knowing that this direction will create safe environments for students that will promote authentic endeavors. By encouraging new generations of art teachers to expand their expectations of the art experience, we are supporting the wellbeing of the whole student—mind, body and spirit.

Reflections

The Effectiveness of Holistic Approaches to Art Education: Substantial Evidence from the MICA Research Group

Peter London
June 2003

The insights into holistic approaches to teaching art produced during two years of research at MICA were exciting and rewarding to witness, and these powerful ideas merit the attention of the profession at large. The evidence in support of the benefits of a holistic approach to arts education were clear and unequivocal, stunning confirmations subject to a variety of settings, taught by a number of different teachers employing a wide variety of media and techniques, to a broad spectrum of ages and types of learners. Evidence of the benefits of holistic approaches was to be found in three forms:

- the art work created by students,

- the shift in general and artistic behavior of the students,

- and the shift in joy and effectiveness in teaching reported by the teachers.

The first evidence of the positive rewards of a holistic approach is to be found in the art work of the students involved. What we wanted to see here was evidence that, at the very least, well considered and well crafted art work consistent with what might be expected of any student of that age and circumstance competently taught via any methodology. The examined art work, we believe, demonstrated ample evidence of this, and qualitatively more. As expressed through a variety of art forms such as sculpture, photography, drawing, painting, collage, and artists' journals, the students' work showed clear signs of greater complexity, idiosyncratic imagery, less stereotypical schema, more vigorously executed application of materials, more completely realized themes as expressed in compositional devices, more developed personal imagery with associated symbolic meanings, more revealing personal stories and points of view, more age-appropriate types of imagery

(compared to adult imposed conventions), more coherent and complex yet satisfying color harmonies, broader choice and inclusion of media, and more deliberation and confidence.

It is an uncomfortable truth that humans are so adaptable that anyone determined to do so, and appropriately equipped, can get just about anyone to make good looking art work. One could, for instance, exhibit a particularly compelling piece of art work, demonstrate the steps necessary to replicate it, and then, hand-in-hand, guide the student to perform just what is required. Voila! The stuff looks great. And in a society much like our own that is all about appearances with little interest in substance, this sort of thing satisfies our criteria of "looking good." Therefore, evidence for the particular positive consequences of the applications of holistic principles to art teaching evidenced by students' art work, must be corroborated by the teachers' assessment of students' general artistic behaviors, as well as the teacher's self assessments of the quality of their own teaching experience. We believe there was ample corroborating evidence from both sources.

What corroborating evidence was there from the observations of students' general artistic behaviors, thereby distinguishing this work from inauthentic artistic-like products? Lots. The teachers involved in the research group observed the following behavioral characteristics in their students' behaviors: students who were previously apathetic were now more enthusiastic about their work, more self persisting, more eager to begin and continue, more trustful of the teacher, less troublesome in class to peers and to teacher, more cooperative with one another, more serious in their reflections about their work and the work of their peers, less casual and more committed in their conversation and working procedures, staying longer after class to complete work, seeking more time in the art room, more ambitious undertakings, more "pleasant surprises" in the student's reception of their own work and that of their peers, more searching and less illustrative of what is already known. In short, more students evinced dramatic signs of artistic behaviors that resemble the behaviors of professional artists.

The last piece of evidence of the positive effects of employing a holistic approach was found in our research group's own assessment of how they experienced the act of teaching. There was strong evidence from each participant that they too were experiencing a paradigm shift in the kind and quality of their teaching. The following characteristics were reported by participants: Teaching became more improvisational, less a monologue and more dialogic, the general atmosphere within the classroom was experienced as more full of pleasant surprises, more exhilarating and less draining, and more collaborative. More exuberance from the students created the reciprocal experience for the teacher. There was more drama in the classroom, teaching felt lighter, less difficult; in short, the act of teaching became both a more serious, elevated enterprise as well as more rewarding and more joyful.

The sum of evidence provided unequivocal affirmation of the general theory of holistic education. That is, when the irreducible prime elements of the human condition—our mind and body and spirit—are called forth, cultivated and aligned, there is an automatic elevation in the quality of performance across all of these elements; effort becomes synchronized, empowered, deeper, lighter, quietly and inwardly joyful.

I cannot remember a more emphatic demonstration of the proof of an educational theory than this in my forty-year career as an educator, art or otherwise. Review again, the articles in this journal by art teachers addressing a variety of students, in different schools, at different developmental stages of their personal and artistic expressions—and see if you do not conclude likewise.

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