

ART EDUCATION
ONE QUESTION: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT
May 8, 2006
Submitted by Marcia Taylor

QUESTION:

Will students have an understanding of child development through art and the role of art education in the K-12 curriculum?

This question was chosen because the topic is at the core of art education. Child development in art and learning in the visual arts are major themes in a recent book published as a project of the National Art Education Association. Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education (2004) is edited by Elliot W. Eisner and Michael D. Day. Contributions by various experts in the field cover topics in policy perspectives impacting the teaching of art, teacher education, forms of assessment in art education and emerging visions of the field.

In her chapter, *Introduction: Development and Learning in Art*, Anna M. Kindler states: "Questions about the origins and nature of pictorial behavior and attempts to describe a developmental journey that may lead from first acts of representation to artistic accomplishment recognized by and acclaimed within the art world have long been of interest to art education." She continues, "...these questions remain significant to art education as the field continues its struggle to design curricula and implement pedagogy that would allow children and adolescents to meet their artistic potential." (pg. 227 -228)

EXPECTED OR HOPED FOR ANSWER (HYPOTHESIS):

The One Question Program Assessment reviewed several aspects of the Art Education program using the premise from the above mentioned text that child development is a key component of art education. It is expected that the Art Education Majors will be able to describe characteristics of child development in art and define the role of Art Education as observed in K-12 art classes. Further, they will be able to articulate the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards and the National Art Education Standards in their critiques of observed lessons. This will take place during the first three Professional Art Education Courses: AAE 273 – Sophomore Professional Experience; AAE 373 – Elementary Methods; and AAE 374 – Secondary Methods. As they continue in the advanced courses they will be able to utilize the Core Curriculum Standards in developing art lessons that they will teach during: AAE 375 – Principles/Practices/Materials in Art Education (a course often referred to as JPE) and during their Student Teaching Semester. The Orientation to Art Therapy course (AAE 350) is a required course that presents an overview of special populations that benefit from art activities. This course includes topics such as: normal development in art, art in special education settings and adapting art materials/supplies for special populations, to name a few.

On occasion, students complete part of their JPE and/or Student Teaching in Pennsylvania Schools and to that end students will be expected to use the

Pennsylvania Core Curriculum Standards as a guide in designing and presenting age appropriate art lessons in Pennsylvania Schools.

PLAN OR METHODS:

Various types of information were collected and reviewed throughout this academic year (2005-2006). This included:

- 1-Students' written reflections of observed lessons being taught in area schools;**
- 2-Students' researched, designed and written age appropriate lesson plans and units;**
- 3-Students' presentation of well researched and organized age appropriate lesson plans and units of study during JPE and Student Teaching experiences;**
- 4-Written evaluations and critiques by co-operating Art Educators in field placements and college supervisors;**
- 5-Students' performance in Art Education Methods courses demonstrating their knowledge from Art Studio and Art History courses as applied to planning lessons for children in K-12 art classes;**
- 6-Discussions with co-operating teachers, classroom teachers and principals in schools that host JPE and/or Student Teachers.**
- 7-Surveying Art Education Majors about their teaching philosophy, overall teaching effectiveness and general ideas about their own creative development.**

EXAMPLES FROM COURSES:

- 1-As part of the Sophomore Professional Class students observed a minimum of 7 Art Educators in various classroom environments and wrote critiques of the observed lessons. In addition, they wrote lesson plans based on the observed lessons. Students are encouraged to discuss how they might change the lesson for students in grades higher and lower than the observed grade to examine the adaptability of the lessons. For example, if they observed a 4th grade art lesson they are asked to discuss the same lesson if presented to a 1st or 2nd grade class as well as a middle school class.**
- 2-The focus of the Elementary Methods class is writing lesson plans using the Core Standards and presenting an art lesson to the class in 'real time' of 40 or 45 minutes.**
- 3-The focus of the Secondary Methods class involves using the learned lesson plan format to create units of study. Students also 'teach' an art lesson to their peers in the class.**
- 4-JPE builds on the previous 3 courses by taking students through cycles of observations in elementary and secondary placements and teaching a minimum of 3 classes in an actual art classroom. Students are observed and evaluated in their field placement by the JPE faculty teaching the course.**
- 5-Student Teaching involves an entire semester of teaching in both elementary and secondary placements. Lesson plans are presented prior to teaching the lesson to the co-operating teacher and the college supervisor. Written evaluations are completed: after each visit by the college supervisor; mid-way and final evaluations of both**

placements by each of the 2 cooperating teachers; and final summative evaluation by the college supervisor.

EXAMPLES FROM DISCUSSIONS, EVALUATIONS AND SURVEYS:

1-In general, the TCNJ adjunct faculty in the art education courses and supervisors in student teaching placements evaluate the students as highly motivated, articulate, well-prepared and excellent in overall performance.

The strengths include professional attitude, willingness and ability to take suggestions to improve performance, and general preparation in studio areas.

Areas to be worked on include classroom management skills especially at the early stages of their classroom experiences and how to achieve these skills with specific age groups, time management skills and utilizing a variety of age appropriate art techniques.

2-Discussions with classroom teachers and principals, in general, seem to have similar findings. That is, their observed strengths include the ability and willingness to ‘jump right in’ and engage the children in exciting art lessons, ability to relate well with staff, teachers and children alike, and their full participation in their respective school’s activities.

On several occasions classroom teachers and principals volunteered how impressed they are with the performance of TCNJ student teachers.

3-Co-operating teachers in the elementary and secondary school placements generally concur with the positive evaluations of the student teachers. Their observations are based on more intense day-to-day contact with the student teachers. Their comments are valuable in assessing the components of the professional course of study and providing ideas for changes and ways to enhance our students’ preparation in the art education courses and supporting art courses. The Art Education student teaching semester includes two placements, half semester each in elementary and secondary (middle or high school) placements. Some students begin in elementary while others begin in secondary and this is determined by placements selected through the STEP Office. In the first placement the new student teacher begins with less experience and this is often reflected in less refined classroom management skills.

On the elementary level it has been observed that our student teachers begin their teaching with limited experience in classroom management skills but quickly learn through experience the ‘classroom voice, behavioral skills and structure’ needed for good classroom management. This has been compared to driving a car – it is one thing to read the driving manual and know what should happen and it is another thing to put the key in the ignition and put one’s foot on the gas pedal! In the same way, our student teachers learn quickly how to use their own personality to develop classroom skills through actual classroom experience and supervision.

On the secondary level students are better able to address the classroom structure because, in part, the secondary art students are usually highly motivated and are taking the art classes because they intend to pursue art in college or as a preferred elective class. Usually high school classes are smaller in size than elementary classes. The comments from secondary co-operating teachers usually focus on the studio

needs of the TCNJ student teachers. Our student teachers research and explore art techniques and materials outside their college art studios and classes to develop the studio requirements needed in high school settings. For example, recent comments state that our students should know various printmaking techniques (silk screening, woodcutting, etc.), architectural and environmental skills, drawing perspective and some craft techniques, to name a few; and then, how to teach these appropriately to high school students.

4-Based on some of the above comments and observations from faculty, supervisors and other teaching professionals in the field, Art Education students were surveyed and asked to respond to several questions. Listed below are the questions and examples of the answers:

Describe your teaching philosophy.

1-I believe that every child is an artist at heart. Some may need more encouragement. Each child that enters my room will feel at ease and motivated to create masterpieces. My classroom will transform students into art appreciators and advocates.

2-I believe that my students will be motivated if I take the time to learn what motivates them.

3-My teaching philosophy encompasses the technical and conceptual relations of art historical and contemporary issues, students' diverse needs, contributions and developmental stages, classroom ethics and teacher responsibility.

4-I want my students to be able to apply the principles of art to their projects and style. I want every student to be comfortable with their level of talent.

5-I would like my classroom, no matter what the grade level, to be treated like a studio.

6-I believe that art techniques and art history are important for all students to learn about. My classroom will be a suitable learning environment and all students are welcome regardless of skill levels.

If the curriculum requires you to teach something you are not familiar with how will you learn what you need to know?

1-I would either enroll in a college course to learn or find someone to give me personal instruction.

2-I would use my network of people if they know of a good course, can give me personal advice or I would enroll in a local art center.

3-There are numerous ways to remedy the situation. First, I'd research the material using books and the internet. Then, depending on the subject matter and its complexity I would look into taking a course. I would practice on my own.

4-As a teacher, I believe that we are students for life. There is no limit to the number of things that are just waiting for us to learn about! If I encountered a curriculum that I was not familiar with I would immediately make use of my available resources: fellow faculty members, library, books, internet, community college courses as well as local art classes.

5-I would see if any of my fellow art teachers know about it and could help explain it to me. I would enroll in an art course in my local community college.

6-I would look for a program, seminar, class, or even a person that teaches the subject. If none of these were available, I would research the subject myself and gather all the materials I could and be sure to practice and become comfortable with the technique before I taught it to the class.

After you teach your classes and you ask the children, “What did you learn in art today?” what do you expect them to say in response?

1-I would expect them to be able to tell me something new about either an aspect of art history or a new technique/style they learned that day.

2-I expect my students to get very excited and to talk about the artist and style they learned and also I want them to proudly show off their artwork and discuss how their artwork was like the style we learned.

3-I would expect my students to be able to talk thoughtfully about the matters of art history and culture we discussed. I would also expect them to be able to discuss the methods and techniques that we employed for the project.

4-I would expect them to say they learned how to create something new by using skills they have acquired throughout the school year.

How do you know what you're doing is effective?

1-I believe I am effective if my students are learning the material, are responsible about their artwork and class time, and are self-confident and unafraid to ask questions.

2-Children, especially in elementary school are very honest. They do not hold back. If the kids do not like the project it will be apparent right away, and vice versa. The response and attention that each child gives to the project will determine if it is successful. The less involved a student is, the more free time they have and the more likely they are to act up and disrupt others.

3-If the children retain information given in the lessons and can relate it to previous lessons or other artists we have discussed, then my teaching is valuable to them. But it is effective if they learn all of this, and can still be excited about art and art making and leave with a smile and sense of accomplishment.

4-This applies to every age level: the students are excited to come to art class and are successful at every skill level.

So, to summarize, this information seems to indicate that our Art Education Majors are on the right track. In the professional art education courses they learn about development in art and creating lesson plans and units that address the age group they are teaching. They are required to incorporate the Core Curriculum Standards in all their lesson plans. Their success is observed by their TCNJ faculty in classes and their co-operating teachers and supervisors in JPE and student teaching placements.

There are also suggestions that are obvious from this exercise:

1-The New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and National Art Education Core Curriculum Standards must be an important aspect of each professional art education class.

2-Courses should continue to include readings, discussions and written assignments that focus on child development. This should include assigned readings of timely and up-to-date research from the National Art Education Association.

3-A copy of these Standards will be given to the TCNJ Art faculty to inform them of what our student teachers are expected to know when they create lesson plans. And also to introduce our studio faculty to the Core Standards our students are supposed to be learning in their school experiences before coming to TCNJ.

4-Samples of lesson plans written by the Art Education Majors will be shared with the Art faculty to give them an overview of how the student teachers are incorporating studio and history components into the lessons they teach.

**Reference: Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education. Edited by Elliot W. Eisner and Michael D. Day, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers 2004
(A Project of the National Art Education Association)**