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Imitative, Complementary, and Expansive: Three Roles of Visual Arts Curricula

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Based on a three-year ethnographic study in three elementary schools (Stake, Bresler, and Mabry, 1991), this paper identifies three distinct orientations in visual arts curricula: the rote, teacher-centered orientation; the open-ended student-centered orientation; and the higher-order cognitive orientation. Each of these orientations implies different assumptions about the nature of art and arts education. Each shares different views of teaching and learning, implying its own set of goals, contents, pedagogies, and evaluation practices. The first orientation is imitative, perpetuating the general academic curriculum in its goals and structures; the second is complementary, trying to compensate for teachers’ perceptions of an imbalanced academic curriculum; the third is expansive, aiming to enhance the curriculum in ways that are advocated in the scholarly literature, and incorporate into it a variety of intelligences and modes of thinking.

This section reviews relevant literature and presents the settings and the methods of the study. The following section is a description and interpretation of the different orientations. I compare these orientations in terms of their underlying assumptions, goals, and practices, trace them to different aesthetic and curricular theories, and point to the dynamics between curricular orientations and school realities.

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1The project in which this study was conducted was funded by the National Endowment of the Arts under the auspices of the National Arts Education Research Center (Stake, Bresler and Mabry, 1991).
Interpretation of the concept curriculum has ramifications for what we study and how. Walker (1988) summarizes several definitions of “curriculum” used in professional writing: curriculum as subjects—the set of courses offered by a school; curriculum as activities—the sequence of activities designed to bring about learning; curriculum as intention—objectives and intended learning outcomes; and curriculum as experience which takes the students’ experiences to be the essence of the curriculum. The last two definitions assume a variety of perspectives and emphasize curriculum as a dynamic entity, interpreted by different individuals involved in the process, including teachers, students, administrators, and researchers. This notion is relatively new in the scholarly research. Thinking about curriculum was revolutionized in the 1960s by scholars drawing attention not only to explicit statements and goals, but to those parts which are not intended, the hidden (Jackson, 1968; Vallance, 1991), and the implicit, and the null curriculum (Eisner, 1979). These new terms reflect a shift from outcomes to process. Concern about student achievement yielded to interest in what students were actually doing in school. The descriptions of school as a system of discipline with underlying ideological assumptions (Dreeben, 1968; Foucault, 1977; Henry, 1966; Jackson, 1968), and a means of perpetuating social classes (Anyon, 1980; Bowles and Gintis, 1976) called for a critical reflection about the aims and functions of schools. The belief that the views of those in power are most worth examining was seriously questioned and criticized. Curriculum studies turned to populations that were not previously included in talk about the curriculum, for example, students and teachers; minorities instead of only the dominant population.

This focus on process, multiple perspectives, and values promoted the development of new paradigms and methods attentive to the process rather than the product of teaching and was capable of capturing the voices of school practitioners, teachers, and students. Indeed, in the last twenty years different interpretive methodologies including case-study, action research, and phenomenology (Bresler and Stake, 1992; Erickson, 1986; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Van Manen, 1990) have been useful for achieving these goals. Some researchers used these methodologies in visual arts education inquiry (Bresler, 1993; May, 1993; Thompson, 1985; Treacher, 1989).

This study set out to explore the learning opportunities in the arts provided in elementary schools as they are reflected in the operational curriculum (Goodlad, Klein, & Tye, 1979). One of the motivations for the study was a noted discrepancy between aesthetic theories discussing goals of arts education (e.g., Broduy, 1972; Ecker, 1963; Gardner, 1983; Lanier, 1986; Read, 1945; Smith, 1987a) and what actually happens in art education programs (see, for example, Leonhard, 1991; Toward Civilization, 1988). Using a qualitative, case-study methodology, this study examines art teaching and learning in elementary schools in terms of contents, pedagogies, and evaluation practices. It explores implicit as well as explicit assumptions about art and learning communicated.

\footnote{Goodlad, et al. discussed five perspectives from which curriculum can be conceptualized: ideal, formal, perceived, operationalized, and experienced: the ideal curriculum refers to visions of what curriculum ought to be; the formal curriculum refers to books and curricular materials; the operational curriculum refers to what actually occurs in the classroom; the perceived curriculum refers to teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum; and the experienced curriculum pertains to students’ experiences of the curriculum.}
through the choice of content, teaching styles, modes of treatment, (that is, imitative, conventional, expressive), of a subject matter, and the affective and cognitive tone of the class.

The study of the arts in the schools has a particular significance for a number of reasons. Although advocacies for the arts abound, school arts practice receives little attention. The notion that school has an "art style" of its own was introduced by Wilson (1974), and elaborated on by Efland (1976), who referred to it as one distinct style. The formal curriculum had been examined by May (1990), who analyzed contents, activities, and values as they were reflected in art textbooks. The operational curriculum of exemplary arts programs was initiated by the Getty Center (see, for example, Eisner, Berta, Bresler, Catford, Katz, & Phillips, 1984; Stake, McTaggart, & Munski, 1984).

The scarcity of literature on the operational visual arts curriculum in ordinary schools is all the more intriguing in view of how little can be known about arts practice in the schools without actively exploring it. Factors contributing to this inaccessibility include nonstandardized curricula; the lack of formal requirements and materials (for example, textbooks); the vast diversity of potential arts activities; and the absence of testing. These factors are interrelated. Because arts curricula typically are not subject to either local or national testing and comparison, they are less likely to be of parents' and administrators' concern. Consequently, there are few national, state, and district-level prescriptions which leave more room for diversity and open-endedness. Furthermore, arts in the school embody certain contradictions. In the philosophical literature, the arts are characterized by their nonpracticality, their distance from everyday objects and activities; yet schools are environments that prepare students for practical life. The arts are noted for being expressive, yet schools are disciplinary systems. Arts defy a-priori, rigid criteria, yet schools center on accurate evaluation mechanisms. How do these apparent contradictions resolve themselves in reality? This study set out to provide such a description.

The roles that art serves within the school provided a useful lens for interpretation. In order to understand those roles, one needs to examine the larger academic curriculum which, in turn, is embedded within the goals and ideology of the school. Another useful interpretive lens is the theoretical context of aesthetic and curriculum theories.

Data reported in this paper are based on two case-studies (Bresler, 1988; 1989). Data sources included: intensive observations of visual arts instruction in grades K-8 in three elementary schools; in-depth, semi-structured interviews with teachers, artists in residence, students, principals, and parents; and review of written materials (for example, textbooks and source books for art), student artwork, and other formal writings. I observed 22 classrooms one to four times and conducted interviews with 39 classroom teachers, including the 22 teachers I had observed, as well as two artists in residence. The observations encompassed different levels of ability from the gifted through the average to the lowest tracks, including English as a Second Language (ESL) and special education classes.

The selected sites, Armstrong School in Chicago and Washington and Prairie Schools in Danville, Illinois, were ordinary schools.3 They were selected to

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3Though, as case-studies go, there is no claim of representativeness. For a discussion on this issue, see, for example, Bresler, 1992a.
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touch a variety of demographics in a big city and a small, blue-collar town. Armstrong, located in the north part of Chicago, housed 780 students in grades K-8 and 37 certified faculty. Minority students comprised 74% of the school population (40% African-American, 20% Hispanic, and 13% East Indian). Fifty percent of the students were entitled to free or reduced cost lunches.

In Danville, Washington School housed 820 students in grades 2-5 as well as most of the special programs in the Danville district and 60 certified faculty. Prairie, a K-1 school, housed 440 students and 20 certified faculty. Minority students in both schools comprised 42% of the school population (28% African-American, 10% Hispanic, and 3% Asian), and 60-65% of the students were entitled to free lunches. Neither school had visual arts specialists, although both hosted artists-in-residence. The curriculum orientations can be viewed in the following examples drawn from the study: a vignette, a teacher's own account of her experience, and my recorded observations of one teaching session.

The Rote Art Curriculum

On a freezing winter day, Michelle Little's fourth graders are cutting paper penguins and colorful scarves, hats, pants, and boots. Little gives detailed instructions on cutting. "If you keep your eyes on me, you can cut this." Four children help distribute materials: paper, crayons, and glue. With classroom arrangement in the usual rows, Little assures that everybody is on task. She lingers a bit with the less accomplished pupils. Some of the scissors are in bad shape. David's are barely functional. Little asks David why he did not get a new pair of scissors. David, sullen, mutters that his mother did not have time to buy them.

Some penguins are more accurately cut than others. The pace of working is different from child to child. Some are already gluing boots, others still struggle with the outline. Ms. Little takes her shoes off and steps on the table to hang the "exemplary penguins" she had prepared on the window. Down again, she notices that Mary uses a different color from the prespecified ones for a scarf and redirects her.

What they don't finish now they will finish on Monday, she reassures them. With five minutes before the end of the lesson, some children have already finished and are sitting quietly, math books open. Most of the penguins, though, remain at least partially unclothed when the math lesson starts. But by the following Monday the penguins are lined up on the window, entitling their creators to a prize of five dollars, and a title of the "best classroom in the fourth graders' pod."

This vignette is characteristic of many other rote art lessons in that activities, aimed at imitating a "model," were fully prescribed by the teacher. Teaching typically consisted of presenting instructions and informal evaluation ("I like this," "Nice coloring"). Expectations involved dexterity and fine motor skills, neatness, memorization, and following of directions. Themes often revolved around holidays and seasons: a colored turkey, a Christmas decoration, valentine heart, Easter bunnies, or roses for Mother's Day. Occasionally, arts activities were integrated into the academic curriculum, featuring collages for social science activities, geometric designs to illustrate mathematics concepts, and drawings to brighten book reports. Skills typically consisted of coloring, cutting and pasting, but sometimes included memorizing of factual information. The tasks, often on the lower level of cognition (Bloom, 1956), were not devised to develop an aesthetic awareness, critical viewing skills, or specific artistic skills.
(for example, drawing, focusing on perception). These art sessions provided few invitations for students’ input, imagination, or creativity, leaving little space for experimentation with ideas or materials. The rote orientation permeated the curriculum across all grade and ability levels. More often than not classroom teachers with limited arts background practiced it.\textsuperscript{4}

In order to place the arts curricula within its academic context, I observed different subject matters, including reading, math, and social studies. The more I observed these nonart, academic classes, the more it became evident that the rote art orientation imitated the practice of many of these academic subjects in terms of structures and teaching style. Art activities in rote orientation resembled worksheets emphasizing low-level literacy and numeracy skills based on rules, memorization, and right answers. It emphasized didactics (Rosenshine, 1987), that is, the imparting and reinforcing of specific skills and knowledge (Broudy, 1976). Instruction followed the model of direct or explicit teaching prevalent in the teaching of arithmetic, computational science, facts, grammatical rules, and decoding. It consisted first of giving an overview of fully specified behavioral objectives, and second, of presenting material in small steps. In both these arts and academic sessions, students seldom confronted challenging problems and were rarely expected to think about ideas. Activities were procedure-oriented rather than intellectually or emotionally stimulating. Not surprisingly, student artwork, much like the products of mathematics and spelling, tended to be uniform, differing only in marginal details (choice of colors, precision with which different students could carry out the assignment).

Sometimes art sessions were integrated into other subject matters like social studies, reading, or math. The subservient role of art to academics was manifested clearly in these integrated lessons: Lesson goals and assignments revolved around the understanding of nonart concepts to the exclusion of art-based knowledge and skills.

**Open-Ended, Student-Centered Art Curriculum**

Stepping into an ESL classroom, I am impressed by a colorful, textured group of doll sculptures that children recently finished. As I ask the ESL teacher, Deborah Plotkin, about this project, she tells me about its origin and procedures:

> We read a story about a sculpture. It turned out the kids had no idea what a sculpture was. We looked at a couple of sculptures in the building. They wanted to know if they could make a sculpture. I said, “That’s terrific. But I’m no artist. I don’t have the faintest idea what kind of sculpture would be good for you to make.” So I talked to a couple of teachers, Mrs. King and Mrs. Hirsch, both very artistic. They suggested junk sculptures. The children brought paper rolls, empty cans, pieces of string, paper, yarn, and doll clothes. I told them that this had to be their thing. (I brought scotch tape; that was my contribution.) For a while my room looked like a junk heap. My roommates [the two other bilingual teachers] commented about it. After the children designed the sculptures they wrote stories about the characters. This took a long time. It wasn’t just a one- or two-day project. Then they were exhibited in the District 2 Multicultural Art Fair.

\textsuperscript{4}In a current ethnographic study I am conducting, this orientation appears to be practiced by art specialists in classrooms they perceived had discipline problems.
Typical for the open-ended orientation is a student-centered approach, in which teachers encouraged students to define their own projects and create their solutions. Students made decisions on design, materials to be used, techniques, and all aspects of the execution. Like the rote orientation, the themes for arts lessons were drawn from a variety of sources, including academic activities (the reading of a story), or an approaching holiday. Sometimes, however, there was no particular theme but just an invitation to create freely. Typically, teachers provided a variety of materials and asked students to bring anything they wanted to work with from home. Teachers offered little explicit instruction. They offered technical assistance when it was needed. They saw their role as creating a noncritical, supportive ambience which acknowledged students' creativity, and constantly encouraged students to follow their own ideas and inclinations. Evaluation was supportive and positive. Student artwork ranged from magnificent projects involving sophisticated skills and the use of unconventional materials to imitation of artwork in the likes of the rote orientation product. Interviews with students revealed that in the absence of specific guidance, some students chose to rely on familiar products and activities.

Teachers who adopted this orientation were mostly classroom or special education teachers, with little or no formal artistic background but a deep interest in the arts, (as reflected in their stated beliefs and activities in their private lives). In interviews, they often expressed their reluctance to be authority figures. They stressed that this was the students’ space to express themselves in modes other than the verbal and the numerical, a place to form their own decisions on what to do and how to do it, a place where they would not be criticized for not conforming but appreciated for their unique visions and capabilities.

The teacher's personal background and pedagogical style was one important factor in adopting this orientation. A relative freedom from the pressure for academics was another factor. As it did not require any specific knowledge, the orientation fit nicely within classroom teachers’ lack of art expertise. In my observations, the “open-ended” curriculum was not dominant in the school, but when it did dominate it was most prevalent in the primary grades or in special populations (like ESL, bilingual, and Trainable Mentally Handicapped). Typically, those classrooms had less formal structure. In Plotkin's class, for example, children covering a wide range of ages and abilities were taken out of regular classes rather than grouped as a homogeneous class. Here as in the K-2 grades the pressure for academic accountability was not as pervasive, and there were fewer testing requirements, factors which helped to promote art-related activities.

In Plotkin’s case, collegial support contributed not only at the initial stage — providing the ideas, tolerating the mess — but also in recognition of the final products. However, teachers who engaged in the open-ended orientation were often alone within the school and sometimes were criticized by colleagues for noisy and messy classrooms.

How did these arts activities fit with teachers’ larger goals? Plotkin’s goals — to instill in her students a sense of pride, competency, and ownership in what they were doing — represents the goals of other teachers. The arts fit well into these goals. Like other teachers who adopted the open-ended orientation, Plotkin showed great disdain for the rote curriculum and celebrated the independence and creativity that her students manifested in this project:
Sometimes teachers make things first, then show the students saying, “This is what I’d like you to do.” I could never have done something like [this sculpture project]. I was so proud because they did it all themselves. And they had so much fun doing it. That was the best part. It was something they wanted to do and they had fun doing it.

Whereas this orientation was marginal in the overall arts instruction it featured highly in teachers’ conversations about art and art education. Teachers often emphasized the creative aspects of art. They highlighted self-expression and the expression of feelings, and allowed students with different backgrounds and talents to succeed and communicate their unique selves (Bresler, 1992b). This view of the role of art as promoting self-expression assumed increased importance in the current climate which teachers perceived as becoming increasingly academic and overly structured with an imbalance on the basic skills of reading and mathematics. The conflict between preparing students for a competitive society, on the one hand, and allowing them to be who they really were, on the other, was a prevalent theme brought up by teachers. Julia Fernandez, a second grade bilingual teacher, expresses a dilemma represented by many others:

I try to incorporate some art, but feel pressured to keep the children advanced enough in their reading and mathematics. At the same time, they must meet their other needs—needs that they have to express themselves in other ways (than verbal and numerical).

These teachers believed that self-expression in art required no teaching, and their own lack of schooling in art further motivated them to use the open-ended approach.

The Higher-Order Cognitive Orientation

Mary Ann Andrews, the artist-in-residence, entered the eighth grade classroom. The classroom teacher moved to the last row, from where she looked at Andrews with concentration. During the full session she was attentive and listening, providing a role model for her students.

Review: “Last time we talked about why people made art. Remember the cave paintings? Why did they decide to start doing it?” Students volunteer: “to communicate,” “to tell stories,” “to tell how life was,” “to educate.” Andrews listens to the different answers elaborating in a soft, pleasant voice (“Very good. It was a way of communicating because they didn’t have a sophisticated language.”), and presenting more ideas. (“They thought it was a ritual, that if you could draw the animals you could control them, and if you could control them you could hunt them better and have healthier and bigger men.”)

It is evaluation time for student work from last time. As students and teachers review the artwork, they deliberate whether it is imaginary or real (theme from last session). Students seem engaged as they discuss the pros and cons for each decision, articulating knowledge of colors and shapes, moods, and expressions. The issue of art as communication comes up several times.

Introduction: The main topic of the new lesson is organic and geometric lines. Andrews talks about different lines, illustrating them with appropriate strokes on the blackboard. She answers some questions. She then asks them to examine the outer line around the edges of their palms and tell her if their hand is an organic shape or a geometric shape. As students
scrutinize their hands she says:

"Some of you may think you have very straight lines, but if you look carefully you see that there are all kinds of bumps and little curves there. If you put a ruler up to that, you see that that is not a perfectly straight line. The word organic means that it comes from nature. We are not stamped out of a mold in a factory so we are part of nature. We people are organic shapes. Now, geometric lines and geometric shapes come from the world of mathematics, so a geometric line will make a geometric shape. Mathematics is human creation from very abstract thinking, a way of ordering reality in a very, very abstract, complicated system. It is something that animals do not do, and it's something that the human mind makes, like a formula. So geometric lines and shapes reflect the human-made world, not so much the natural organic world." Students and instructor look around to discover many geometric shapes and some organic ones.

**Application and Practice:** Andrews presents a short review of warm and cold colors and the way their expressivity are affected by the context in which they are presented, and then the class moves into their main assignment: to draw an alien, half of which is organic, the other half geometric. Andrews talks about the assignment, and illustrates some possibilities. For the next twenty minutes students are engaged in drawing different kinds of aliens, coming up with a variety of breathing devices, limbs, expressions, and designs. Andrews moves around, offering advice on technique, pointing at the choices they can make.

As I follow Andrews along the five classes she teaches, I sense the variations between these classes in terms of students' concentration and the detail and depth of their responses. Much of it is correlated with classroom teacher attentiveness to the art teacher. Other variations can be attributed to ability level, as well as to the ebbs and tides in the school day (more loud-speaker interruptions in the early mornings, more student distraction just before lunchtime). Similarities across Andrews' lessons are manifested as hands-on activity as a major component of the lesson (60%) as well as students' discussions of ideas throughout the lessons. All classes included references to art history, appreciation, and the connection of concepts and ideas to the production and evaluation of student artwork. Teaching involved the transmission of art-related knowledge and technique as well as conceptual evaluation and feedback, typically based on technical, formal, and expressive qualities.

Andrews used aesthetic concepts (for example, form, color) to provide lenses and guidelines with which to conceptualize and construct. This attention to aesthetic qualities was manifested in the sensitivity to lines, form, shape, and balance. The artist's role was presented as central: learning to look and observe and the ability to transform visual awareness into forms. The power of creation was viewed as involving pre-meditation, reflection, and consideration of aesthetic qualities. Skills included observation and perception. Unlike the first two orientations, in the higher-order thinking orientation, seeing was neither automatic nor given. It was presented as requiring effort, concentration, awareness, and thought on the part of the student. Imaginative improvisation and personal ideas revolved around a problem solving approach in which the acquisition of skills was seen as a tool to convey aesthetic concepts. Teaching consisted of scaffolding (supportive assistance) (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992) — mostly the
use of modeling and procedural facilitators. More than any other orientation, it was designed to promote discoveries by the pupil. At times, however, it included didactic teaching in the initial stage of the project, dwelling with particular acquisition of knowledge rather than problem solving.

Not all higher-order cognitive lessons integrated art history and appreciation, (although most of the art history and appreciation lessons occurred within the higher-order orientation). The lessons to this orientation required sophisticated knowledge of art and were typically taught by teachers with professional art backgrounds, often artists-in-residence, sometimes classroom teachers who were practicing artists. This orientation appeared across all grade levels, but was most dominant in the upper ability tracks.

Discussion

The discussion of any categorization warrants caution. In this paper I present the orientations as theoretical constructs. Practice, however, rarely presents itself purely. Indeed, much of classroom practice in the arts is eclectic and can combine two, or even three of these orientations at various stages. A close look at Andrews’ teaching, for example, revealed parts that consisted of didactic, step-by-step procedures, as well as open-ended sections. However, these three orientations of the teacher-centered, student-centered, and high-order cognitive orientation, are relatively independent of each other. Teachers do not deliberately develop all three, indeed, they may become habituated into one of them and not pay much attention to the others.

A second qualification concerns the number three. These orientations are not comprehensive. One can easily conceive of other ways to conceptualize art instruction. I present these categories as useful lenses with which to view art instruction, reflecting some fundamental differences in assumptions about art and art instruction, educational goals, and the respective roles of the teacher and the learner.

Nonwithstanding, the three art curriculum orientations reflect three different kinds of curriculum models emphasizing different teaching strategies. These three orientations differ in major ways in their views on the role of the school, on the purpose of art instruction, and on the nature of teaching and learning. Each model implies different assumptions about how children develop and learn, different values concerning what is worthwhile and important for children to know in visual art, ideas on how best to organize learning resources and opportunities for children, and which pedagogies are the most suitable for these learning opportunities.

These assumptions, values, and goals can be traced to different ideologies reflected in historical trends (Efland, 1990; Wolf, 1992). The rote orientation can be interpreted to draw on the view of the school as a preparatory institution for industrial or clerical work and an instrument for social control. Educational goals highlighted good working habits and discipline, shunning elitist ideals and high culture. Art serves as an instrument to Americanize children by inculcating common symbols and a shared cultural base. This ideology prevailed in the 19th century in which public schools were conceived and designed as an orga-

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5Scaffolds specific to the strategy being taught, yet general enough to allow application to a variety of different contexts were observed.

6The goals are not restricted to the U.S. The use of art for the inculcation of national patriotic values is prevalent in other countries.
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nized effort to cope with oppressing social problems, and an ethnically and economically diverse population of unemployed (and potentially unemployable) youth. In this political and economical climate, the curriculum was envisioned as the chief tool for social control within schools, conveying not just job skills but also a form of social organization, work habits, and knowledge of rewards and penalties (Wolf, 1992). Recent clamors in the American educational scene reflect similar concerns over social issues and incompetency of the educational system, concerns which triggered a “back to basics” movement.

Wolf (1992) noted that, historically, the arts were admitted to the common curriculum so long as they served virtue, religion, citizenship, and industry. Without that transformation, says Wolf, they would not have survived in the curriculum. I offer a parallel argument. In our times of pressure for basic skills and accountability, art is often integrated into the curriculum only insofar as it imitates the academic subjects. Had it not imitated these larger school values and priorities, art would have been even more marginalized. Indeed, the rote orientation imitates the structure of the academic subjects. In addition to building discipline resembling academic subjects in form and contributing to academic contents, art was often placed in the service of school functions like multi-cultural and multi-ethnic celebrations, honor programs, and holiday decorations.

The second open-ended, student-centered orientation reflects 19th century romantic notions of the nature and creation of art, on the one hand, and child development based on progressive education and the child study movement on the other hand (Efland, 1990; Smith, 1982; Spodek and Brown, 1993; Wolf, 1992). The arts are seen to provide relief from special pressure and a safeguard against the routine and the uniform by promoting creativity, self-discovery, self-expression, and the healthy channeling of feelings. Early childhood educators like Franz Cizek (1912) and Friedrich Froebel (1904) had a major role in this orientation. They regarded development as a process of unfolding, where education should follow each child’s nature in order to attain the beauty of the individual’s mature power. The orientation was promoted in the field of art education by Lowenfeld (1947) who regarded nonintervention and the freedom to explore as necessary conditions for the development of creative capacities and artistic expression. A third source of this orientation is the mental health view of art education which reflects the influence of the psychoanalytic theory at the end of the 19th century. In this view, making an artwork becomes a form of expression, emphasizing individuality and emotional health rather than social and cognitive values.

The third orientation, the higher-order orientation, can be traced to the cognitive revolution (Davis and Gardner, 1993) carried out largely since the early 1960s. This revolution turned attention to perception, conceptualization, complex problem solving, and language acquisition. A core assumption is that human cognitive activity must be described in terms of symbols, schemas, images, ideas, and other forms of mental representation. Representation can be understood as what the cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner has called “objective” representation, which is the mental machinery that constitutes “knowledge that—declarative knowledge” which corresponds to knowledge of arts production as well as “knowledge how—procedural knowledge” which corresponds to propositional knowledge about art production, history, and appreciation (Davis and Gardner, 1993). For art, this view provided a picture of
how art involves more than the expression of interest or talent. The association of art with pure affect (Tolstoy, 1898/1969) as reflected in the second orientation has been criticized by contemporary arts educators and traced to the romantic misconception of arts (for example, Eisner, 1982; Gruber, 1978; Perkins, 1979). The view of art as a spontaneous and immediate activity is replaced by a view of a deliberate, complex activity employing different symbol systems (Goodman, 1968). Art is seen to consist of thinking in a variety of modes of representation (Ecker, 1963; Gardner, 1983; Gombrich, 1972; Langer, 1957). Work in the arts is believed to demand higher-order thinking: analysis, inference, problem finding, and problem solving (Davis and Gardner, 1993; Resnick, 1987; Wolf, 1992). Making art is regarded as the children's articulation of experience via symbol system by using the rules, conventions, and value systems their culture offers. The affective and cognitive aspects involved in the production and consumption of art have been discussed by different scholars (Beardsley, 1979; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1982; Langer, 1957; Scheffler, 1985). Accordingly, the teacher's role is to provide the students with cultural symbols and specific knowledge to facilitate students' problem solving and encourage the investment of cognitive and affective faculties in the creation of artwork which requires guidance, but not prescription. Rather than diluting the curriculum, this view asserts that children should engage in activities similar to those of grown-ups, activities which involve observation, perception, discussion, and the active making of meaning. The emphasis on "knowledge about" as well as "knowledge that" resulted in advocacies of integration of art history and appreciation with art production.

Teaching style is central in the three orientations. Broudy (1976) discusses three teaching styles: didactic, heuristic, and philetic. Didactic consists of an orderly, step-by-step presentation of materials, concerned with the imparting and reinforcing of skills and knowledge. According to Broudy, the didactic includes all learning that can be made explicit and the criteria for which they are explicit. Heuristic involves students in thinking for themselves: discovering the solution to a problem, achieving an insight into a situation, or doing something creative. The active role of the teacher is illustrated in the example of Socrates which provides continuous guidance, but requires the student to do the actual discovery. Dewey's teaching, focusing on problem-solving, is another example for heuristic. The third type of teaching is philetic, which is concerned with the pupils' development both intellectually and emotionally, assuming that motivation and mastery will take care of themselves. The rote orientation is characterized by a didactic teaching style, the student-centered by a philetic, and the higher-order skills by heuristic. The dominance of didactics in formal schooling at the end of the 19th century is a fact pointed out by Broudy (1976) which "is proven by the frantic efforts of educational reformers to get away from it." Heuristics were unnecessary, because "there was little for the student to discover or to figure out for himself, and philetics was unnecessary because nobody was under the illusion that happiness was the normal state for anybody, and least of all for school children" (Broudy, 1976, p. 9).

This philosophical classification can be approached through the lens of instructional theory. As I noted earlier, the procedures of the rote orientation are essentially explicit teaching (Rosenshine, 1987), which includes the presentation of material in small steps and the active and successful participation in identical activities of all students. Rosenshine notes that the notion of explicit
teaching came primarily from research in reading and mathematics instruction in elementary and junior high schools, but its results are applicable to any explicit or "well-structured" body of knowledge whose objective is to teach mastery of a body of knowledge such as reading, decoding, mathematical procedures, science facts, grammatical concepts, and rules. The open-ended orientation requires no instruction except the supply and organization of materials, classroom supervision, occasional technical help, and emotional support. The higher-order thinking orientation requires teaching higher-level cognitive strategies (Rosenshine and Meister, 1992). A strategy is not a direct procedure; it is not an algorithm but a heuristic that supports or facilitates students as they learn to perform the higher-level operation. Thus, the cognitive strategies are suggestive rather than step-by-step directives. As Palinscar and Brown (1984) and Rosenshine and Meister (1992) note, scaffolds are only useful within the student's "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978). Teaching for higher-order skills includes modeling, feedback, and student responsibility (Rosenshine and Meister, 1992). The finished art work is a shared product of the student and the scaffolder.

As we compare the view of art in each of these orientations, we notice striking differences among them. The rote orientation adopts an industrial, factory model for art where the act of creation is a mechanical one of reproduction. The self-expression orientation, in contrast, emphasizes artfulness as the unique expression of the individual and highlights exploration, originality, and imagination in the process of creation. The cognitive orientation emphasizes artistic activity as creation and interpretation within a cultural context drawing on its values and accumulated body of disciplined knowledge. Accordingly, the first orientation regards teaching as presenting a model to be imitated, a set of skills to be mastered; the second as enabling the child's natural potential to unfold; and the third orientation as a complex procedure drawing on the communication of sophisticated adult knowledge while respecting the child's current experiences and interpretations. If the rote orientation is concerned mostly with sociological functions of arts education and the self-expression orientation highlights the clinical role of arts education, the cognitive orientation promotes the cognitive and cultural aspects of aesthetic learning.

Each of these orientations fulfills a different function within the school. The first orientation reiterates the values of accountability, social control, and inculcation of popular cultural symbols. The second orientation attempts to balance a highly structured and preordained curriculum and restore to the curriculum creative and expressive elements which are perceived to be missing in the curriculum. The third orientation fits the goals of higher-order thinking, interpretation, synthesizing of knowledge, and engagement in critical thinking. Of the three orientations, the third is the most demanding of teachers in terms of requiring sophisticated knowledge and expertise. A possible difficulty for arts teachers is the view of art as a sophisticated cognitive activity, a view which differs from the prevalent view held by classroom teachers (Bresler, 1992b) of art as spontaneous and affective. Even though this orientation is the most compatible with scholarly advocates, its implementation requires substantive effort in that it involves change of attitudes as well as the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

The fit between each of these orientations and scholarly advocacies on the one hand, and school realities on the other, seems to manifest interesting
relationships. The first orientation, rote, corresponds perfectly with the schools’ emphasis on discipline, predictability, simple answers, and visible products. At the same time it is the one most removed from scholarly (as well as popular) images of art: it resembles technical exercises rather than an engaged artistic involvement. The second orientation provides alternative goals highlighting children’s self-expression and meaningful experiences. It corresponds to teachers’ caring for children, and at the same time, entails minimal responsibility of teachers for guiding arts learning. However, it clashes with current aesthetic and psychological theories of learning as well as with the general expectations of schooling. The third orientation draws on the more sophisticated goals for cognitive and affective development, but is also the most removed from the reality of schools’ goals and values.

References


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