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ABSTRACT
        This paper proposes a collaborative processing model
for art education that draws upon the language and learning theories
of Lev S. Vygotsky. This model is a means by which students' natural
affinity for socialization and inclination to attend to their own
personal agendas may be used to increase learning motivation and
effectiveness. The model may be used to enhance collaboration skills
related to the processing of information and the construction of
knowledge. Although this strategy has been specifically developed to
augment information processing skills related to artistic creation
and critique, it was designed with full recognition that these
functions are subsumed under the rubric of general cognitive
construction. Additional (albeit incidental) advantages of the model
include development of socialization skills and cross-cultural
awareness and appreciation. A suggested outline for teaching from
this model is included, as is a 16-item bibliography. (Author/DB)

SOCIALIZATION, LEARNER INTENT, AND ENVIRONMENTAL

INTELLECTUALISM: A TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF ART EDUCATION

NEIL O. HOUSER

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A COLLABORATIVE PROCESSING MODEL FOR ART EDUCATION

In this paper I propose a collaborative processing model
for art education which draws upon the language and learning
notions of Lev S. Vygotsky. This model is a means by which
students' natural affinity for socialization and inclination
to attend to the personal agenda may be capitalized upon for
the purpose of learning. It may be used to enhance
collaboration skills related to the processing of
information and the construction of knowledge. Although
this strategy has been specifically developed to augment
information processing skills related to artistic creation
and critique, it was designed with full recognition that
these functions are subsumed under the rubric of general
cognitive construction. Additional (albeit incidental)
advantages include development of socialization skills and
cross-cultural awareness and appreciation.

SOCIALIZATION AND EDUCATION

That humans are social creatures goes almost without
saying. One needs only to look to the formation of personal
opinions and attitudes to recognize that how we think is
influenced by our relationships with those around us.
Noting this principle, Vygotsky has suggested that

learning, indeed *all* learning, is socially mediated. That
is, the process of making sense of the world is shaped
and molded by one's interactions with, and perceptions of,
one's environment. He argued that learning is initiated
through interaction with the environment, notably with par-
ents, siblings, peers, and teachers. Cultural tools (e.g.,
various forms of symbols -- written, spoken, drawn, sculpted
etc.) are used first to mediate our interactions with each
other and, later, with practice, to mediate interactions
within ourselves. As we internalize their use, these tools
help us to think. From a Vygotskian perspective, mastery of
the cultural tools (e.g., conscious awareness and
proficient manipulation of symbols) is fundamental to our
capacity for independent intellectual activity -- what
Vygotsky called "higher psychological functions."

If, as Vygotsky has suggested, all cognitive construction
is socially mediated, then it is clearly counterproductive
to insist that students engage in cognitive exercises which
have not been designed with respect to relative social and
personal context(s). Although art education remains at the
forefront of experientially based pedagogy, there is little
evidence to indicate that social mediation as a fundamental
component of the construction of meaning in art has received
specific attention. Yet, art provides an ideal opportunity
for the erudition of Vygotsky's " higher psychological

functions," or what Bloom (1956) might refer to as the
processes of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Elsewhere in the curriculum, cooperative learning models
developed by Slavin (1977a,b;1978), Johnson, Johnson, Holubec,
and Roy (1984), and others are widely practiced approaches
which systematically draw upon student socialization for
educative purposes. The objectives of these models are prim-
arily affective in nature, and, if exercised judiciously,
results can be significant. However, as Slavin (1988) has im-
plied, they are clearly not an educational catholicon. Indeed,
as an information processing device, existing cooperative
learning models are rather ineffectual. Popular designs have,
for the most part, failed to acknowledge the functions of
student interaction and intentionality as rudimentary compo-
nents in the constructi͡r of meaning. While cooperative
learning approaches seem to facilitate the development of
affective skills, few efforts have been made to take advantage
of their collaborative nature for the explicit purpose of
knowledge construction.

LEARNER INTENTIONALITY: THE TRUE MOTIVATOR

Another issue, that of learner intentionality, has been
inadequately addressed. The proponents of popular instructional

plans, including interactive models such as cooperative learn-
ing, typically fail to identify the learner's intent as the
impetus behind knowledge construction. This is evident by
the fact that it is still the *teacher* who typically determines
what is to be taught and decides, in advance, what shall be
learned. Moreover, we remain convinced that it is the
teacher, not the student, who decides when, to what extent,
and by what means knowledge will be acquired. Apparently,
long standing interactionist notions of the student as active
learner have not, within the paradigm, been applied to the
function of intentionality. The notion that motivation is
something which is done *to* learners, rather than *by* them,
seems archaic when considered within this context. Yet, such
notions persist. Educators continue to speak of ways in
which students can *be* motivated instead of ways in which
students *motivate themselves*.

Alternative views of the function of learner intent, based
on the works of Peirce (1929) and Vygotsky, have been posited
by Neisser (1976); Harste, Woodward, & Burke (1984); and Scibior
(1984), among others. Transactionalist theory contends that
learners most assuredly bring their own intentions and interests
to any learning situation. Of course, these intentions and
concerns have been, and continue to be, influenced by the
environment. From a functionalist perspective, learner intent

is pivotal in the process of defining one's world -- it is, in essence, the driving force.

The totality of any particular learner's intentions and concerns may be viewed as his/her personal agenda. Attending to this agenda is such a compelling drive that conflicts between it and the "school" agenda easily account for a majority of all student/teacher disputes. Failure of students to attend to the task at hand or to behave as instructed (e.g., to conform to the "school" agenda) is among the most often cited teacher complaints. It is my contention that the extent to which formal learning activities are embraced by students is the extent to which the teacher and students have managed to align their respective agendas. Conversely, the extent to which students resist or sabotage learning activities can be viewed as representative of the degree to which the school curriculum and student intentionality have failed to merge.

The relatively few models which simultaneously draw upon Vygotskian notions of socialization and the role of student intent in the construction of meaning are, understandably, language arts based. An example is Harste's (1988) Authoring Cycle, a reading-writing model which maximizes student intentionality and collaboration for educative purpose. Students emulate publishing authors in virtually every way after the Brunerian notion that " the

schoolboy learning physics *is* a physicist, and it is easier
for him to learn physics behaving like a physicist than do-
ing something else" (Bruner,1960). It is Harste's Author-
ing Cycle which has served as the basis for development of
the Collaborative Processing Cycle of Art Education.
Before turning to a discussion of the model, an important
prerequisite merits attention. Establishment of a safe
yet intellectually stimulating environment necessarily pre-
cludes implementation of any design to be based upon sincere
collaboration and student intentionality.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAFE YET INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING
ENVIRONMENT

Safety and Intellectual Stimulation

In the past, "safety" has been misconstrued to mean
acceptance, if not celebration adnausium, of whatever
utterance might be issued by a student. In truth, such
practices create anti-intellectual environments which lack
vigor and authenticity. They are not conducive to the kind
of vital intellectual jousting which maximizes cognitive
stimulation and psychological growth. Safety needn't be
synonymous with anti-intellectualism. Indeed, while such an
environment may seem immediately safe, there is nothing

advantageous about failing to learn to challenge and be challenged intellectually.

It is essential that teachers do not permit the notion of environmental safety to be regared as a panacea. Comfort without intellectual stimulation hardly serves educative purpose. Creation of a safe yet intellectually stimulating environment is a goal which is both essential and realistic. Moreover, it is entirely possible to maximize student socialization and intentionality toward the enhancement of learning within such an environment. However, this sort of undertaking requires at least three prerequisite conditions. A safe environment conducive to intellectual transaction must: (1) be student centered, i.e., elicit and support, respond to, and *genuinely base itself upon,* student intent, (2) foster norms of intellectualism and dynamic construction of meaning, and (3) be characterized by consistent non-abuse of traditionally sanctioned teacher-power status.

A logical first step toward establishing the desired environment is to actively identify and break down the dichotomy between students' agendas and the school agenda. Students are often unaware of the nature of the dichotomy. Having experienced it since their earliest encounters with formalized education, it is seldom given conscious consideration. Yet, awareness is a necessary first step toward resolution. Student awareness

can be promoted through candid discussion of obvious
differences.

While building awareness is a reasonably expedient
objective, breaking down the dichotomy is, at best, a mon-
umental task. The problem is fueled by long standing top-
down traditions of curriculum development and uni-
directional instructional delivery systems. Students
naturally come to school with a mind-set that
says, "This is school. In school, 'school stuff' is impor-
tant." Of course, once outside the classroom, children
quickly return to their own schedules. In truth, the per-
sonal agenda retains priority *throughout* the school day.
It is on those occasions when the programs somehow
merge (or at least overlap) that we feel we are "finally
reaching our class!"

Little progress will be made toward resolving the
problem until teachers and school officials come to
understand that *student* intentionality is the driving force
behind learning. *Students'* intentions and interests are the
logical point of origin for lesson planning and environment
construction. If a safe yet intellectually honest
environment is to maximize intentionality and socialization,
it is the teacher's task to facilitate erosion of the dichot-
omy. This is done first by building awareness of its existence
and then by establishing an arena in which students are en-

couraged and permitted to allow *personal* agendas to become their *school* agendas as well.

Non-abuse of Teacher Power Norms

J.T. Dillon (1987) has described the classroom norm as one in which teachers exercise inordinate verbal autonomy and a mandate to control the agenda, the pace, and the selection of participants for classroom discussions. When considered in view of substantial evidence to suggest that the vast majority of teachers respond negatively to student comments which they perceive as either challenging their authority or "intellectual superiority," there seems to be little rhyme or reason for teachers to advocate normative reformation. However, in contrast to long-sanctioned practice, a safe environment which *also* maximizes intellectual transaction, student intent, and collaborative socialization for educative purpose, will require establishment of a norm which says to students that it is often *healthy* and *expected* for students and teachers to disagree.

We as teachers must convince first ourselves, and then our students, that we do not consider ourselves the "final authority." Students need to understand that it is okay to challenge the teacher's thoughts and notions and, indeed, to espouse thoughts and notions of their own. But, equally important is the establishment of a teacher norm which says,

"...although I'm certainly not the final word, I'll most assuredly voice my opinion as persuasively as possible because such expression is representative of reality. I expect *you* to do the same. I'll research to support my assertions. You'd better do the same, or you don't stand a chance. I'll teach you how to gather evidence to support your case ... that's my job as a teacher. *Your* job is to *have* an opinion, to develop it, to gather evidence to support, reject, or modify it. And who knows, you might affect my opinion, or I, yours; at the very least, we'll challenge each other intellectually. Through the transaction we will *both* benefit."

From a Vygotskian perspective, interactions with others are internalized and transformed (e.g., personalized). In addition to the academic curriculum, teacher and student attitudes and classroom participation structures also become part of the learner's schema. This applies not only to the content of the interaction, but to the essence of the transaction. It means that students not only internalize and transform for personal use the content, but the *means of guidance* as well. It follows that the degree to which students clearly understand that vigorous transaction with teachers and peers is not only accepted, but *expected*, determines in large part the degree to which optimum internalization will ultimately take place.

Clarity of expectations and consistency of
follow-through are also determinants of environmental
safety. Contrary to what appears to be popular belief,
safety does not mean that the teacher must smile and nod
approval for each student utterance no matter how inane.
Nor does safety require the teacher to tactfully ignore every
such statement. In truth, it is often the case that these
contributions *should* be challenged so that the student will
be compelled to rationally and systematically examine his/her
thought processes. Safety can occur under these conditions
when students are confident that such transactions are
truly reciprocal in nature. However, this means that students
must be absolutely convinced that long-sanctioned teacher
power norms will not be abused (e.g.,used) to subjugate
students to second-class status.

THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESSING CYCLE

Vygotsky wrote, "a central feature of the psychological
study of instruction is the potential the child has to raise
himself to a higher intellectual level of development
through collaboration" (1987). A basic premise is that
through the process of internalization of social
transactions, the learner will be able to independently do

today that which ne could only do with assistance yesterday. These principles, generic in nature, are readily applicable to specific academic disciplines.

In the visual arts, the process of creating, analyzing, and evaluating in collaboration with others stimulates development of higher psychological functions in the construction of related meaning. This is most evident, perhaps, during *critique*, a participation structure which engages students in dynamic analysis and evaluation of each other's art work -- both process and product. The effects of collaboration are no less profound during general awareness, focus, and synthesis efforts. Collaborative art involvement can also strengthen socialization skills, and, depending upon student grouping, may foster cross-cultural awareness and appreciation. Furthermore, it utilizes students' natural inclinations toward socialization and capitalizes on the motivating power of learner intent.

The collaborative processing cycle proposed here, based in part on Harste's language arts authoring cycle, is really quite simple (see figure 1). The first and perhaps most important step is creation of a safe, intellectually stimulating classroom environment as described above. Having accomplished this, the art instructor exposes his/her student artists to a variety of media, styles, and techniques. Initial exposures, acomplished by example and

demonstration, are immediately followed by highly experiential periods of "play." Here students are encouraged to manipulate and explore the media, styles, and techniques. A premium is placed on the *process* of art, while product is almost entirely de-emphasized. One way to establish this norm is to assure students that initial works are "practice" pieces which will be discarded upon completion (unless the artist should for some reason elect to do otherwise).

Following the period of play (anywhere from minutes to days, weeks, or longer), the teacher encourages students to draw upon their own life experiences to begin plans for the creation of a piece which will hold some *personal* significance. It is important for students to understand that *their* intentions and interests are *absolutely indispensible* in this process.

During the Planning and Creating phase, various forms of idea generation and organizational strategies may be employed as students draw upon their life experiences to begin the process of collaborative creation. Students should be encouraged to explore their personal intentions or objectives, to focus upon a theme or issue, to identify their audience, and to select media, styles, and techniques *based on each of these consider-ations*. Opportunities for uninterrupted personal engagement need to be provided. The amount of time required will, of course, vary considerably.

The next step in the cyclical process is Small Group or Partner Exchange of preliminary ideas. This is an opportunity for student artists to share initial thoughts with a select group of their peers. Observations and reactions to tentative plans are bandied about. Ample time should be provided immediately after the exchange for students to record their reactions to the feedback. Teachers can significantly affect the degree of heterogeneous and cross-cultural socialization by carefully attending to the formation of groups.

After Small Group/Partner Exchange, students are encouraged to reflect on the feedback. This process does not always occur spontaneously. Several days is not an unreasonable amount of time to allow for this portion of the cycle. Revisions may then be made in view of active reflection on peer feedback; however, any such modification is *strictly* voluntary. (It must be understood that art is a form of communication. Decisions are justifiably influenced by this principle. Care must be taken to emphasize that although we communicate *with* others, we do not necessarily create *for* others. While audience is certainly important, self is vital!)

At this point, the cycle either progresses to another Small Group/Partner Exchange or continues on to a Whole-Class Display and Critique. If small group exchange is selected, the teacher has several options. She may reunite the

original groups (a decision which instills a measure of continuity) or she may arrange for new groups to meet (a decision which encourages diversity). Another option is to invite students to engage collaborators of their own choosing, a measure which most closely approximates the actions of producing artists and one which enhances autonomy. There are clearly advantages to each.

If a decision is made to proceed to the Whole-Class Display and Critique, each artist selects a personal work for the entire class to observe. Ample opportunity is provided for the whole group to examine individual pieces at close range prior to the critique.

After observing the amassed works, *every* piece should be addressed. (This is a process which may continue several days. Better to take it in small chunks than to wear the experience to exhaustion.) Each critique should include an opportunity for the artist to evaluate himself orally. A list of topics to which he might attend (e.g., identify original intentions, audience, and media selection; discuss special challenges faced; describe ways in which collaboration influenced your decision making, etc.) can help ease initial discomfort associated with "not knowing what to say." Other students should be encouraged to analyze the work as well; to verbalize their reactions, concerns, and questions. The emphasis of the critique, as always, is the search for meaning through the

construction of knowledge. This is a shared prize of artist
and audience alike.

Teachers do well to model the kinds of questions which
lead to greater understanding. They may also render insight-
ful evaluative judgements. Remember, the teacher's opinions and
observations are entirely open for challenge or rebuttal. This
opportunity for reciprocity is an underlying principle of
fair play, and, subsequently, of environmental safety.

The cycle is completed with an Invitation to Further
Artistic Engagement. Students may be encouraged either to
continue the process or to renew it. New media, styles,
techniques, and opportunities for play are provided, and the
process begins anew.

It is highly recommended that students keep a journal, a
written record of their thoughts and actions, for each major
phase of the cycle. This gives them concrete reference to at
least a portion of the on-going activity and provides teachers
with a chronological record of their students' involvement in
the collaborative process of art education.
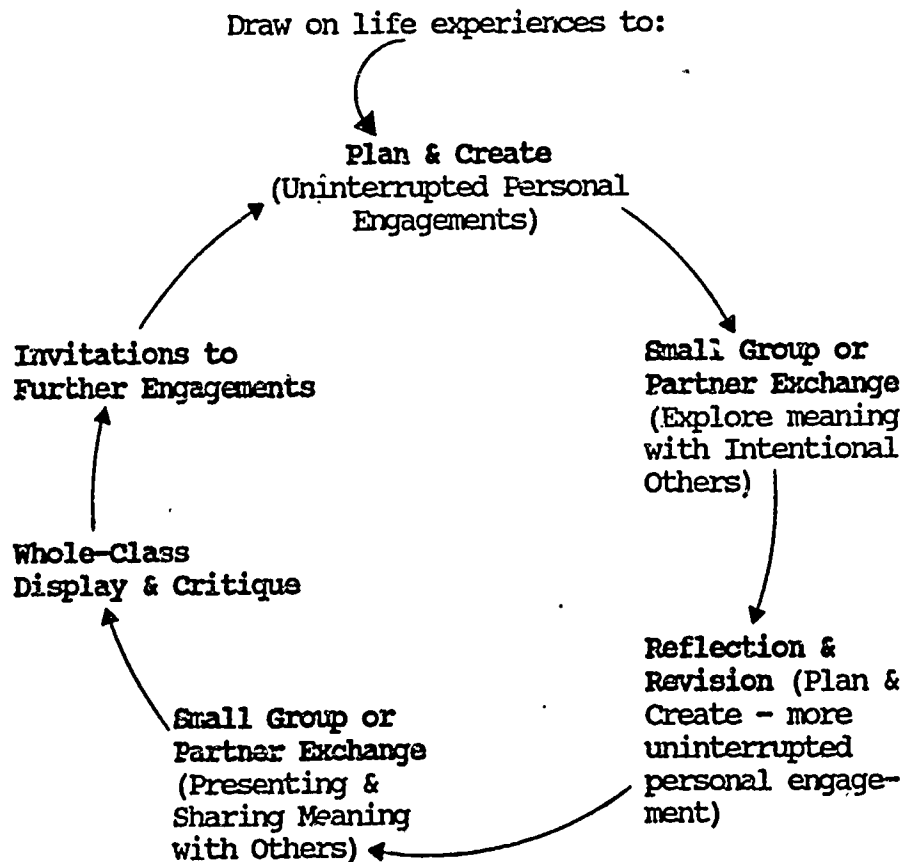

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The model of art education proposed here is based on
the conviction that the construction of meaning transcends

disciplinary boundaries. Social mediation and learner intent

are as critical to the vital processes in art and mathematics

as they are to reading and writing. Traditional norms of

teacher power and misconceptions of the concept of

environmental safety have mitigated against the

establishment of intellectually stimulating transactional

settings. This model rejects such norms and seeks to

clarify damaging misconceptions in an effort to redefine

optimum conditions for intellectual collaboration.

Eclectic in nature, the Collaborative Model of Art

Education is a synthesis of the principles of transactional

learning theory and the processes of making and critiquing

visual art.

COLLABORATIVE PROCESSING MODEL

1. Establish a safe yet intellectually stimulating environment

2. Expose to a variety of media, styles, techniques

3. Play (manipulate media, styles, techniques)

THE CYCLE

Draw on life experiences to:

Plan & Create
(Uninterrupted Personal Engagements)

Invitations to Further Engagements

Small Group or Partner Exchange
(Explore meaning with Intentional Others)

Whole-Class Display & Critique

Small Group or Partner Exchange
(Presenting & Sharing Meaning with Others)

Reflection & Revision (Plan & Create - more uninterrupted personal engagement)

COLLABORATIVE PROCESSING CYCLE

1. **Planning & Creating**

   a. Brainstorming, webbing, listing, sketching of <u>ideas, interests, and concerns</u>.

   b. Identify personal <u>intentions, objectives, purposes</u> for a particular project. (These may include persuasion, clarification to self or others, reinforcement, etc.)*

   c. Identify <u>topic (subject), theme, or issue</u> for the project.

   d. Identify <u>audience</u> for the project.**

   e. Select appropriate <u>media and style(s)</u> for the project (e.g., abstract/representational, figurative/nonfigurative, Appolinian/ Dionysian, etc.). Selection of media and style should be based upon each of the previous considerations.

2. **Small Group or Partner Exchange**

   a. Share #1, a-e, with intentional others.

   b. Observations & reactions of others and the student artist's initial reactions & responses to those observations.***

3. **Reflection and Revision**

   a. Reflect on #1, a-e in light of feedback from small group or partner exchange.

   b. Revise (if desired) in light of reflection.

4. **Small Group or Partner Exchange**

   a. Share revised #1, a-e with intentional others.

   b. Observations & reactions of others and the student artist's initial feelings & responses to those observations.***

5. **Whole-Class Display and Critique**

    a. Artist critiques self orally (explains original #1, a-e, revisions to #1, a-e, and special challenges faced).

    b. Students critique orally if they so choose. (Instructor may elicit oral critiques from students.)

    c. Teacher critique orally (based on #1, a-e).

6. **Invitations to Further Engagements**
(Encourage student artists to continue/renew the process.)

An ongoing journal/folder should include:

a. All original decisions and revisions regarding interests and concerns, intentions and purposes, topics and issues, audiences, and media and styles.

b. The reactions of others to the student artist's work (particularly in relation to #1, a-e).

c. The student artist's reactions to the work of others (particularly in relation to #1, a-e).

d. A summary of the student artist's progress (process) for each major piece.

* Emphasize the concept of art as a form of communication.

** Be careful of the audience concept. We communicate to others but don't necessarily create for others. We create for ourselves.

*** Provide time for immediate reflection and recording of thoughts.

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