

Lesson Plan Using Artistic Ways of Thinking

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Today with teacher cutbacks looming, and more integration units, general teachers might be required to teach the visual arts. Therefore, teachers need a clear definition of the discipline of art and personal exposure to aesthetic experiences. Many references are made to classic art education research. When lesson plan formats are generic it trivializes the discipline's content and knowledge structure. Grounded theory research methods are used to develop an art lesson plan format. Using art making as the exemplar, a lesson plan expanding the art knowledge base thereby allowing children to think like artists is presented step-by-step – set the problem, design time, studio space, and display. Preservice teacher results are shared.

This paper seeks to address three of the effective curriculum characteristics for middle school education from the National Middle School Association's position paper, This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents (2010):

Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning. (Active Learning) Instructional practices place students at the center of the learning process. As they develop the ability to hypothesize, to organize information into useful and meaningful constructs, and to grasp long-term cause and effect relationships, students are ready and able to play a major role in their own learning and education.

Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant. (Challenging Curriculum) Curriculum embraces every planned aspect of a school's educational program. An effective middle level curriculum is distinguished by learning activities that appeal to young adolescents, is exploratory and challenging, and incorporates student-generated questions and concerns.

Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches. (Multiple Learning Approaches) Teaching and learning approaches should accommodate the diverse skills, abilities, and prior knowledge of young adolescents, cultivate multiple intelligences, draw upon students' individual learning styles, and utilize digital tools. When learning experiences capitalize on students' cultural, experiential, and personal backgrounds, new concepts are built on knowledge students already possess.

Art methods courses are currently being elevated in importance, as many education preservice teachers are worrying that they might be required to teach art in their future classrooms. Additionally, when education majors have explored literacy in the arts, the communication between arts teachers and classroom teachers deepens. Then significant collaborations will become more frequent in our schools, which thereby creates active student learning, challenging curriculum, and multiple learning approaches (NMSA, 2010). This paper claims it is important for teachers to personally experience the arts in order to be able to facilitate that experience for children.

In a college art methods course, students were turning in lesson plan assignments that were often copied and included rigid step-by-step pattern work. The old art education lesson plan format did not spell

out how to write or facilitate an open-ended lesson plan which allowed the students to “play a major role” (NMSA, 2010) in the process of making their own artwork. Revision of the arts based lesson plan format began by using grounded theory research methods to develop a new model. Literature review foundation began with philosophies of art education researchers working fifty years earlier.

Students had already acknowledged their lack of art experiences and the course curriculum had been adapted to build up their confidence working in the arts. But even with the modifications, the overall cognitive processes in the art discipline were still a mystery. The beginning research questions were: What caused many students to misunderstand the arts? Had the discipline of art been adequately described? Where had these bad lesson plans writing habits originated? Could there be a structural deficiency in the old lesson

plan format? The first investigation step was to conduct informal group interviews. After asking these questions to several groups of twenty students, preliminary results were 1) lesson plans in their other education classes used only one generic lesson plan format for every content area and 2) that students did not clearly understand the boundaries of the discipline of art. Thus two misunderstandings needed revisions in the course curriculum.

Clarifying the Discipline of Art

Each academic discipline has its own unique structure of knowledge and ways of learning (Mansilla & Gardner 2008). But in many colleges, generalized lesson plans that supposedly span all disciplines are taught to students hoping to become teachers. Mansilla and Gardner (2008) claim curriculums work best when situated deep in discipline specific knowledge bases using the discipline's retrieval strategies rather than generic thinking skills or learning styles:

“Disciplines are not the same as subject matters or Carnegie units...Whereas subject matters are seen as collections of contents that students need to learn, disciplines entail particular modes of thinking or interpreting the world that students need to develop. In disciplinary work, concepts or theories are not disembodied from the knowledge building process through which they emerge.” (Gardner and Mansilla, 1994)

Fourteen years later, discipline-based thinking is still predominate in Mansilla and Gardner's educational theory (2008). They observe that organizing content in disciplines allows the development of specific knowledge bases and specific retrieval strategies that demonstrate differences in thinking from one discipline to another.

When the National Art Education Association was formed in 1958, researchers worked on defining the discipline of the arts (See Barkan, 1957; Beittel, 1957; Feldman, 1978; Kaufman, 1963; and Lanier, 1955, 1975). Later researchers focused on developing the discipline (See Clark & Zimmerman, 1978; Efland, 1988). Barkan's early research work laid a foundation for others to build on in the 1980s and 1990s, but since there is little that has been written on the

discipline of art. Contemporary textbooks for art appreciation (Prebles, 2008) touch on aspects of the discipline, as well as the art education textbooks for college methods courses (Hobbs & Rush, 2006), but these summaries are often shallow and do not resonate with education students like the old definitionsⁱ.

Having an aesthetic experience is difficult to guarantee happening in a classroom, much like it is difficult to guarantee that all children in a room will understand any concept in the same exact timeframe. Perhaps from this aspect of not being able to claim that real art happened, a problem in defining art education sometimes occurs. Kaufman (1963) suspected some classroom practices produced weak art experiences, “...it seems to me that many of the activities that are generic to the current art education philosophy are less than art and different from it” (p. 22). Keel (1956) observed similar problems in public school art lessons; therefore, he suggested one of Sir Herbert Read's solutions: “The ideal may be manifested only imperfectly and intermittently, but nevertheless the only rational activity in which we can engage, and which can justify our existence, is to strive daily to make the ideal an actuality” (5). Almost fifty years later, art educators occasionally observe these same inadequate practices in the public schools. Therefore art cannot always be orchestrated in the classroom, but Keel argued that is not a reason to use rote procedures that will never be an aesthetic experience. Barkanⁱⁱ (1957), clarified this issue:

Research in art education stems from the assumption that problems in teaching for involvement in an aesthetic experience might be better understood to the degree that a clearer analysis could be achieved....This is particularly true about research in art education both because of the very nature of the aesthetic experience, and because of the complexities in the process of teaching art. Teaching others to become involved in aesthetic experience encompasses innumerable phenomena. Research into any of these must be guided by knowledge, sensitivity, humility, patience, and creative ingenuity (pp. 10-11).

Even with awareness of the difficulty of writing an arts lesson plan detailing the creative process, early

researchers sometimes missed the mark. For example, Barkan's original title of his second book was *Teaching children to create*. An anonymous reviewer corrected him: "The title, as it now stands, implies that being creative is a skill, i.e., such as you teach children to jump, to sing, etc. Creative action is believed to be a process experience" (Zahner, 2004, p. 121). He changed the title to *Through art to creativity: Art in the elementary school program*. Thus the major goal of implementing a visual art lesson plan is that the environment is constructed to allow the possibility of children creating art or having an aesthetic experience. Which is why when ART happens it has been discussed as a magical experience (Author, 2008; Feldman, 1978).

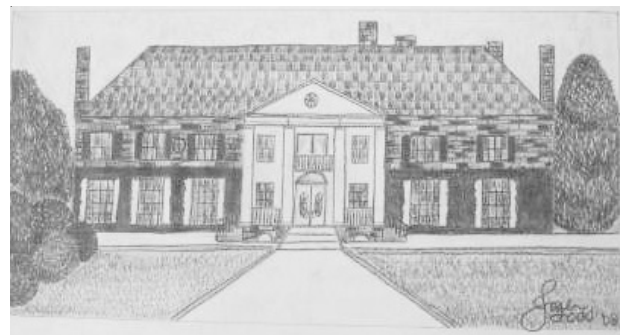
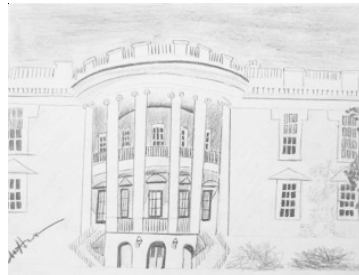
Art is Teachable

Another underlying reason for general misunderstanding about disciplines is that many people still think that they cannot be educated within an unfamiliar discipline; similar to an old learning myth that a person is only "born" into a way of thinking, such as being "born an artist". If this were true, then no one could be trained to become an artist. But art is teachable. For example, the following observation is from an art major wrote about an elementary education major at semester's end:

On the first day of class [the professor] had asked, "Who in the class considered themselves an artist?" I had proudly raised my hand along with a small number of students who consider themselves artists as well. I looked around the class and saw a very few amount of students raising their hands as well. When she said that the rest of the class would be artists come the end of the semester - I doubted her. I thought that it was either you have the skills or you don't. I soon realized that was not true, as long as the student is willing to consider him or herself "an artist" and that they take the time to do the work that it entails. (Student, an art major 2008)

The art major had watched the education students develop thinking within the discipline of the arts, even though she thought it was not possible for them to achieve that understanding. Eisner (2008) confirms the possibility, "To help students treat

their work as a work of art is no small achievement. In the process people become artists." For example after a few warm up exercises, some of those students created the following drawingsⁱⁱⁱ:



These are samples of their final drawing assignment to both experience and demonstrate that they know how to draw. Both of these students had never drawn before this course. These drawings make their learning or "thinking visible"^{iv} (Giudici, Rinaldi, & Krechevsky, 2001).

When the class began to understand that they could learn to be artists, major changes could then be affected within the lesson planning process. But this was still hard to grasp. This is especially apparent when assigned their first arts-based lesson plan assignment, instead of following class guidelines for developing their own ideas for teaching, many turned to a familiar, easy path involving "rote art curriculum" (Bresler, 1994). Bresler had observed similar issues and described art lessons that only used patterns, which required all the fourth graders to cut out the same exact parts of a penguin for a classroom display of identical birds (p. 93). Colleagues from a university art department would declare "that is not art!" but why do education majors think it is good lesson planning? There had been modeled many open-ended art lessons, but students still wondered how to write the lesson plan's details; such as, for the clay whistles

lesson which resulted in each student's project being completely different from the person's next to them. In that lesson's example, everyone made a working ceramic whistle but one student made a pig with gold polka dots, another made a fun multicolored fish and another made an elaborate octopus, see below (Students, 2008):



Introduced was a singular art-making process (they all whistled) but different student interpretations were encouraged.^v This demonstrates in a concrete way educators use multiple ways of thinking in a classroom.

Students coming back from schools reported that classroom cooperating teachers were not using different lesson plan formats for various disciplines. While there are some basic components of lesson plans are the same across all disciplines (such as the title, objectives, standards, formative and summative assessment) the procedures in each discipline need to be approached in a different manner. No wonder the arts are trivialized into pattern work and mindless bulletin board decorations! If some simple changes would be used in the preparation and planning of an arts lesson, more children in school could possibly experience real art. Then the value of the arts could truly enrich education today.

Model of Arts-Based Lesson Plan

This arts-based lesson plan begins with preservice teachers researching a topic and making their own

art. The second part uses the teacher's reflection on artmaking to write the children's lesson plan. Therefore, the teacher's preparation is in two phases: preparing the teacher's knowledge base in art and then translating their personal art experience into a similar classroom timeline.

Preservice teachers do not always realize the importance of personally experiencing what they are teaching. They understand they need to know the math concept of two plus two equals four before they teach it, but do not translate the importance of that prior personal knowledge to their visual arts lesson plan. Art teaching is about knowing what the lesson's process is in order to create meaning in art production. The teacher is the "prism" between the child and the procedure or art making time (Kaufman, 1966, p. 5).

The idea of knowing your subject well before teaching traces back to programs like Pratt Institute's training program for kindergarten teachers at the turn of the 1900s.^{vi} The preservice teachers took extensive courses in art and horticultural before teaching the concepts to the young children. Driscoll (2007) used photographic evidence from Pratt's archives showing the preservice teachers working in the garden followed by a photograph of the young children working in the same garden. The overall program was very successful partly because the teacher's experiences were effectively related into lessons for children. This same model had already been developed independently for this study, but the validation from the past is gratifying.

Early art educator Kaufman (1966) describes this personalization when he states the purpose of his book: "A book about art and the teaching of the art skirts pretentiousness for, in a very basic sense, art communicates on its own level while the successful teaching of art remains a very personal affair" (p. vii). He took the argument of "experiencing art before teaching" to the next level by claiming successful teachers can only reflect on either their own research and/or art making experiences when motivating students. It is very possible that this personal "excitement" is the spark that creates a fire for the children's artmaking and

learning. Therefore, research is the important first step in developing an exciting arts lesson plan.

Teacher Preparations: Building a Personal Arts Knowledge Base

The lesson plan model begins with the teacher picking a research topic that they are passionate about outside of school. Their topic choices have been wide ranging from dogs to beach life to recycling to cupcakes to the Chanel fashion house. Next they conducted a classic search with a librarian constructing an annotated bibliography to outline the topic knowledge base. The research process is enjoyable because they chose their content topic. The second process step is choosing a media for their artwork and completing a sample artwork. Any art media or process can be demonstrated as their art discipline skill. Several medias had been sampled in the course, but students sometimes pick a new media like paper mache. At the end of the semester, students acknowledge the wonder of actually beginning to think like an artist. While working on the artwork, they are keeping notes on places in the process that their students might have trouble with construction details. Therefore being dually minded, thinking like both an artist and a teacher, helps to successfully project their experience into a lesson plan.

After finishing the artwork sample, there is a transitional stage before writing the actual lesson plan. In a class working on this lesson plan models; a few students might need some guidance with the following topics:

Media translation into school materials. The first action is translating the art making to a developmentally appropriate level for the children in your classroom. Depending on the specifics of the teacher's school, the media used by the teacher or the professional artist may or may not be available to use in the classroom. For example, a teacher might like Degas' sculpture *The Little Dancer* but cannot do a bronze pouring for the class, so perhaps the children will make only the clay models or use paper mache.

"Big ideas" in the curriculum. In preparing a lesson plan, meaning making is a key concept for professional artists.⁷ Using "big ideas" in art lessons can be traced from Dewey's *Art as experience* (Author, 2008; Gardner

& Mansilla, 2008; Tomlinson, 1999). The general idea is that education should be about something important, helping children understand the world around them. This responsibility is incorporated into each unit as an underlying theme. It becomes an exciting aspect of teaching - learning from other humans (children) about their understanding of that big idea.

Organizing Class Time Teaching Steps

The second major part of the lesson plan is organizing the class time. They are accustomed to using only rigid "directions" for the typical "procedures" portion of a generic lesson plan, in spite of their art class experiences that had open-ended steps modeled in several studio-based projects. The "new" lesson plan concept focuses on the art process that is rigidly taught, combined with content that is open-ended, student choices. Expert art teachers sometimes encourage students to explore variations of the media skills as an additional lesson plan step.

In the classroom, thinking skills are taught within the lesson plan (Ritchart & Perkins, 2008). The overall lesson plan sections are the four step problem solving process used by math teachers based on steps first outlined by George Polya in 1945 (Billstein, Libeskind, & Lott, 1993). The four steps are 1) set up the problem, 2) design or planning time for children, 3) studio time, 4) finishing touches, and 5) public display and assessment. These five steps will inspire headings for the procedure portion of the arts lesson plan. Both formative and summative assessments are incorporated within these steps. This is the old one section procedures of the generic lesson plan. Following are the steps with the sub-headings first, followed by further definitions. As need demands, the headings can be correlated to a timeframe of one or more class periods. Much of the teacher's previous research and artwork preparation is the inspirational foundation within the following sections:

1) Artistic Challenge Or Set Up The Problem (Mostly Teacher-Centered). The key activity of this step is to help the children understand the perimeters of the general artistic challenge in terms of content and media. Many teachers begin to write the lesson plan with ideas that

engaged themselves when researching or making their artwork. This is also a good place for a teacher's beginning demonstration on the media available for the project. Inspiration from professional artists as exemplars is a good resource. The teacher can incorporate all of these suggestions or just focus on one depending on the arts assignment.

It is very important to present the art problem in the lesson plan as having open-ended content solutions. But the lesson's perimeters can be established rigidly in terms of media process or techniques learned. For example, a project might be making ceramic whistles while challenging each child to modify the basic design to be part of their content vision. But precise ceramic construction skills need to be followed in order for the whistle to make a sound.

Differentiated learning guidelines suggest using a formative assessment assignment to observe the various interpretations of what the children are thinking at an early stage of the process (Tomlinson 1999). Then the teacher can prepare for a variety of approaches or correct a problem early in the process. For example, a child might want to do a lengthy process, when there is only one more week in the course.

2) *Design Stage (Child-Centered)*. The teacher should provide time for each child to generate solutions to the problem. This is the step many teachers and internet lessons do not put into their lessons, but it is essential to the process of creating art like professionals. Duckworthy (2006) laments that there are classrooms that "discourage children from exploring their own ideas and to make them feel that they have no important ideas of their own, only silly or evil ones" (p. 6). She observes that children of all ages have really good ideas that can be used as part of their artwork. Even so, it is effective to have the teacher show examples from professional artists for further media or technique / skill inspiration. Of course, peer approval is usually important throughout the creating process and for the final display.

Depending on the age of the children and the complexity of the problem, the teacher can help children be successful at this stage by identifying the

creation path or patterns evolved in the planning stages of the artist (child), for example: Artists sometimes use thumbnails (small, quick sketches) at this beginning stage of art creation. Some artists think of ideas by exploring the media. Often the second stage of creation is making a small sample(s) of the challenge's solution to further test out the possibilities. If teachers have specific steps as part of their summative assessment, introduce those sub sets at this stage of the lesson plan. For example, if learning weaving skills was a learning outcome, then using four different weaving patterns might be a learning outcome on the summative grade sheet and the children would need to know that at the design stage.

Selecting the best solution can be either teacher-oriented or peer-oriented. Either small group or whole class discussions about ideas that solve the problem in step one can be incorporated into the lesson plan. At beginning levels, teacher design approval should be required before starting art production. Yet in an advanced level, student artists are encouraged to develop self-generated problem analysis skills.

3) *Studio Time Or "Let's Make Art!"* The design plans take time to carry out. As children enter into the artistic thinking process, the room climate can transform into another dimension sometimes labeled the aesthetic experience.

4) *Finishing touches (formative assessment)* Schedule another formative assessment activity after children have been working for a while to check if students are having challenges that need reteaching or perhaps just some encouragement. Formative checklists could involve looking at the artwork after school or asking for a short narrative from each student or from a small group. Reteaching after reflection often results in a better final artwork from the children. This is an important phase of the arts lesson plan.

At all levels, time for final touches or a finishing technique will probably need to be scheduled near the end of the project. This can be as simple as asking, "if there is one more thing" that the children can add to their project or as complex as a glazing demonstration in the ceramic studio. For older students when they think they are finished, arts

teachers often schedule an in-progress critique to point out things that could be changed before final grades are given. The artist can then receive good feedback for possible solutions to finishing the project. As trust builds in the class, these in-progress critiques become more and more useful. Then informal critiques are sought between peers. The resulting artwork is usually very strong.

5) *Public Display, Artistic Reflection, And Summative Assessment*. Summative assessment is completed at this stage of the learning. The goals of the lesson will guide student learning and discovery throughout the project. Note that this lesson is designed for the single arts based lesson plan, but parts could be completed in other disciplines' allotted school time, especially the research phase.

Hall displays that involve education of art processes are very effective in a school setting, especially when a process was used that is not familiar to others. Good feedback for both the teacher and the students often follows. Of course, displays can just be within the classroom, too.

Documentation is important at all stages of the artistic process to make learning visible (Giudici, Rinaldi, & Krechevsky, 2001; Thompson & Tarr, 2008). Sometimes keeping documentation of the final project used as exemplars for another project is good inspiration for the young artists.

Research Methods

In grounded theory methodology, the literature review suggests a foundation for developing a theoretical model to be tested and verified in a pilot study. Therefore the new lesson plan format model based on the literature review was tested.

Located in a small liberal arts college within a growing university, the education majors' art methods course was used to collect data. The arts method course is located in the visual arts department. Students took the course anywhere from their sophomore year before admittance to their formal education program or the semester right before student teaching. The professor taught two of the three sections offered per semester. The courses met

either morning MWF for two hours or late afternoon MW for three hours. The student's final papers would be the primary data collection sources. The students were 90% female, elementary education majors. A few art majors and other majors occasionally took the course. There were no prerequisites for the course.

In the literature review above is a detailed description of the new lesson plan format used. In class this information was presented in a PowerPoint with a grade sheet that identified headings in the five steps in the new lesson plan format. Assignments will be shared to assess their understanding of the art making process.

Results

During the semester it became important to just talk about the discipline of art continuously. It was a concept that the education majors could easily understand, perhaps because they had a prior knowledge of other disciplines' structures. They seemed to naturally use the various kinds of aesthetic philosophies and the aesthetic experience as the key exemplars for the discipline of art. Interestingly Lanier (1975) built an argument around his (and now the preservice teachers') key element of art: "Thus the strong central concept presently needed by art education might be stated simply as: increasing the scope and quality of visual aesthetic experience" (p. 28).

The new art lesson plan format was taught for two semesters. Students followed the assignments requirements just like before, but the real test of their overall learning was found in a reflection of the course.^{vii} The students' final assignment is to write a paper applying the course to their future classrooms. These papers are good barometers of the overall learning in the semester. The first semester the new arts lesson plan format was used, only one art major mentioned the assignment:

I started this semester not really knowing what to expect. I just thought that I would return to school to get my teaching certificate so that I could teach photography. Freelancing was taking its toll on me; I was enticed by the steady income and benefits that a teaching job provided. Then came

your class. Your teaching method intrigued me. I found it spontaneous, but very purposeful. Until now, my educational experience has been about learning how to do something by memorizing it. Your class taught me how to make connections to the bigger picture. It's not just about knowing how to make something so that you can teach a child how to make it. It's about the process and the effect that the process will have on the child, what they will actually learn, not just make (Student, 2008).

Perhaps the big picture of this assignment is about showing the students how to write a lesson plan like the lessons modeled in the course. The students had experienced art in class and then wanted the same for their students. But this was the only paper that discussed the discipline of art in the first semester. The next semester many papers embedded the structure of the lesson plan into their own teaching philosophy. For example, this is the first paragraph of a student who missed too many classes:

In art education I have learned more than anything I ever thought would learn in an art class. This class not only opened my eyes to the different experiences that art brings, but allowed hand on activities. Art is more than I ever thought it was. It allows people to open their imaginations and do the impossible. It is like a secret life that people can enjoy by putting their unexplainable thoughts on paper (Student, 2008).

Another student's first paragraph shows the connection between deep art experiences for the teacher and how it relates to the children:

Before entering this class, I thought art education would be a difficult class because for one, drawing is definitely not my greatest talent and two, my knowledge is lacking in the art department. After the first few weeks of class, I was excited and enthusiastic to learn more about the fields of art and most importantly, how to interpret art into the classroom for my students, through either lessons or even activities (Student, 2008).

Finally a quiet student finished her paper with this:

As a teacher I will keep in mind the importance of enthusiasm for the subject. It is necessary to care about what is distinctive in the arts. That way

I will know what of the arts is worthy of teaching. I believe Elliot Eisner said it best when he said, "Art makes a great contribution to education" (Student, 2008).

Notice the references to the lesson plan format and how art will be a part of her classroom. The first semester it was just another assignment and was mentioned in only one final paper, but in the spring semester, almost one third of the students had integrated the structural philosophy into their own teaching plans.^{ix} Therefore a major teaching goal for the future will focus on steadily increasing the internalization of the lesson plan in more students.

A third semester the lesson plan was used again. The only thing changed was emphasizing the reflection of the college student's own artmaking experience before writing the children's lesson plan. This small adjustment yielded excellent results, such as the following reflections:

"I completely enjoyed creating my panda. Seeing the panda become more and more realistic was the best part for me. It actually began to look like a real panda, which was a surprise for me. Painting the panda was almost like a transformation point where I began to see the panda began to come to life. I feel as though I had an aesthetic experience....I became attached to my panda the more I worked on it."

"I have always lived 5 minutes from the beach, and I would stare at the waves for hours and hours. I never deconstructed a wave down to all of its colors and shapes being shown in a single shot. I felt like it was the first time I was looking at a wave and really seeing it for what it really is. I felt like drawing a wave breaks the object down to its purest form. The aesthetic experience was very calming considering how powerful the waves are. Most people are scared of waves, and I feel like I'm teaching the children to respect and love nature."

"This experience was aesthetic for me because when I am finished with eh final product, I am proud of what I had constructed. A piece like this hips me show what my interests are and how important they are in my life."

Additionally this adjustment carried over into writing the steps. For example:

“The students will be asked to ‘research’ some facts about cats using certain websites I’ve found and designated for students to use during this ‘Cat Quest’...”

“As students are creating their paper mache, walk around and make sure they are smoothing the newspaper and paper towels...”

The public displays were much more involved than other semesters integrating research from other disciplines into the displays.

Conclusions

A new lesson plan format for the arts was effective for the education majors, especially when the discipline of art was clarified. At the end of the semester, they had constructed their thinking in art using the lesson plan structure. Aesthetic experiences should be solidly situated within the art discipline (Barkan, 1957; Beittel, 1957; Lanier, 1975; Feldman, 1978). Begin the plan by deepening the teacher’s art discipline knowledge base through a strong arts making experience followed by valuing that experience enough to want to pass it on to children. When teachers write an arts-based lesson plan using open-ended content solutions to solve a general artistic problem, an excitement happens. Hopefully, this lesson plan outline will generate an excitement or “fire” (Author, 2008) in the classroom not experienced in other disciplines.

When the arts are involved in the curriculum, the results are challenging. Eisner (2008) argued that when children are literate in the arts, their self-expression is enhanced both in school and beyond:

We ought to be helping our students discover new seas upon which to sail rather than old ports at which to dock. We need schools whose tasks are sufficiently open-ended to allow students to place their thumbprint upon their work without a sense of redundancy. It’s an ambitious aim that I am after, but one that I think is critical in the long run for the well-being of the planet.

Using this lesson plan format, teachers have a tool to accomplish Eisner’s goal. When teachers used only a generic plan, real art rarely happened in those classrooms. Often activities were mislabeled as art but no aesthetic experiences had been reported. This lesson plan format can invite art to happen in any classrooms.

Once a deep understanding of the visual arts discipline is established in terms of both knowledge base and retrieval, then the “big ideas” can set the stage for connections to other discipline’s interpretations thus giving the students multilayered insights to the world they live in (Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulu, Purcell, Leppien, & Burns, 2002). Significant integration between disciplines can only occur at the deepest levels. Therefore children could have an aesthetic experience in the arts and at the same time, learn about another discipline. Preservice teachers have written lessons to integrate art with the other arts (music, theatre or dance) or with the core subjects. The magic of the arts could be strong enough to deepen the other learning, too.

Perhaps a potential elementary classroom teacher or art specialist does want children to experience the arts fully, but has rejected this extensive lesson plan because the local schools only allow thirty minutes per week for art in the room. Successful integration with other subjects can be built around an underlying concept development or “Big Idea”. It could be introduced in various ways; such as, using art works as media exemplars or being inspired by skill improvement explorations (Author, 2008). This additional underlying foundational content element is very important for one lesson but also for setting a bridge to other disciplines’ content.

When art happens, Beittel (1957) describes the process, “As artists, our sympathy may be with Aristotle when he says, “poetic creation is more true than the methodical exploration of what exists”(p. 6). By using this lesson plan format more teachers can test this claim for themselves in all kinds of settings.

Endnotes

ⁱ I realize that a few of my early childhood colleagues use Reggio Emilia lesson plan formats, but that practice is unfortunately not common in art education today. Therefore I would recommend that avenue for further investigation. Certainly it has been a significant influence on my work both in the classroom and in research.

ⁱⁱ This article was Barkan's last article in *Art Education* before the new research journal, *Studies in Art Education* appeared in 1958.

ⁱⁱⁱ I was pleased when the drawing professor asked for copies of my elementary education major's perspective drawings to show her art majors. She hoped the "competition" would spark good work in her beginning class, too.

^{iv} In 2001 Harvard's Project Zero and Reggio Children published a joint book about "making learning visible". It was the first time Reggio Children had published with another major research institution. The book is one of the key references on educative documentation, explaining both theory and providing photographic evidence. Thus what is visible would be learning or thinking.

^v The intent here is not to debate the values of various visual art curricula, but rather to offer a practical and concrete way to construct an art lesson plan for the "open-ended, student-centered art curriculum" (Bresler, 1994, p. 94).

^{vi} Froebel's curriculum was Pratt's official model (Driscoll, 2007). But the emphasis on the preservice teachers gaining knowledge of the arts and personal experiences must have been from Dewey's influence on the director who had worked in Chicago (perhaps influenced by Dewey?) for twenty before going to Pratt (p. 62). More research could be done beginning from Driscoll's (2007) thesis work. A brief reading of the 1901 course of study for teachers of first graders used Froebel, Pestalozzi, and Comenius as the philosophical base (Payne & Allen, 1901). This might make an interesting study.

^{vii} This topic has been written about extensively and for each writer the concept is given a different name: Gardner and Mansilla (2008) use "big ideas" traced from Dewey, (1934); Richart and Perkins (2008) use "generative ideas", Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) use "meaning making" ideas, and Stewart and Katner (2001, 2007) use "enduring ideas", Author (2008) identifies the concept of "ignite the art making process", naming that as "It".

^{viii} I looked at the mean grade scores for the lesson plan assignment. The means were 126.49 out of 140 the first semester and 123.68 the second. It was not a significant difference like in the final papers.

^{ix} It was not until writing the last section that I realized that lesson plan format was essential to my teaching and me. I had modeled excellent teaching for the students, but when it came time for them to figure out how to teach like me, they were lost until I developed a new approach.

^x Tomlinson and others (2002) argue that if integrating two disciplines, both need to be equally deep for the significant learning to occur with this process. Often the author has seen the arts only as curiosities to engage in lessons primarily in only the other discipline. Full discussion of those situations is not addressed here.

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