Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education

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The ultimate value of an art curriculum manifests itself for students when they experience the results of a teacher’s complex engagement with that curriculum. This analysis examines the interaction between teaching and curriculum from three perspectives: (a) the wide range of competing and overlapping art curriculum theories that could guide teachers’ curriculum decisions; (b) available research that could help teachers make judgments about the effectiveness of art curricula or particular curriculum components, or strategies; and (c) many factors that affect an individual teachers’ decisions about selecting, developing, or adapting an art curriculum and then implementing it.

No handbook analysis can do justice to all the ideas and issues associated with the interaction of teaching and art curriculum. This analysis draws from art education books, journals, research reports, and conference proceedings, and focuses primarily on theory and research published from 1985 to 2001 in *Art Education, Studies in Art Education, Visual Arts Research*, and *The Journal of Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Research in Art Education*. These four journals are dedicated to art education, are refereed, and the last three are predominantly research oriented.

**CURRICULUM THEORY**

What Are Prominent Art Curriculum Theories With Which Teachers Can Interact?

The Historical Currents in Art Education section of the *Handbook* overviews 19th- and 20th-century curriculum rationales, many of which continue to influence teachers’ curriculum decision making in the 21st century. Scholars have analyzed many art education curriculum theories and proposed general groupings. Wolf (1996) described the history of arts curriculum in the United States as moving through four phases (common curriculum; psychological contributions; development: symbols and rules; and apprentice). Efland, Freedman, and Stuhr (1996)
ERICKSON outlined seven paradigm shifts in art education curriculum: academic, elements of design, creative self-expression, art in daily living, art as a discipline, and postmodern.

In a Handbook such as this, the full range of art curriculum visions set forth in the literature of art education in recent years can only be summarized, not analyzed in detail. Many diverse and overlapping theories emerge from humanities (Broudy, 1985; Levi & Smith, 1991; Smith, 1995): developmental (Erickson, 1995b; Housen, 1999) and cognitive (Dorn, 1999; Efland, 1995; Gardner, 1989; Gitomer, Scott, & Price, 1992; Magee & Price, 1992) foundations. Art educators also argue for inclusion of particular content within the larger art curriculum. Nadamer (1998) argued for continued importance of painting; Marschalek (1989, 1995), for design education and environmental design; and Lampela (1996), for gay and lesbian content, just to name a few. The literature of art education is replete with examples of curriculum reports that address particular concerns and outline approaches such as art created by artists from minority backgrounds within a nation’s art curriculum (Wolcott & Macaskill, 1997), folk traditions (Congdon, Delgado-Trunk, & López, 1999), inquiry (Delacruz, 1997; Erickson, 2001), multiple artworlds (Erickson & Young, 2002), gender content (Collins & Sandell, 1996), and a socially defined studio curriculum (Anderson, 1985). Since the 1980s, ethnic and cultural issues have been a major focus of art curriculum theory and advocacy (Billings, 1995; Chalmers, 1996; Katter, 1987; Sahasrabudhe, 1992; Stuhr, 1994; Stuhr, Petrovich-Mwaniki, & Wasson, 1992; Young, 1990).

Discipline-Based Art Education Curriculum

During the 1980s and 1990s, advocacy and curriculum-reform efforts by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts (later the Getty Institute for Education in the Arts) focused a great deal of attention on an approach to art education called discipline-based art education (DBAE). A discipline-based approach can be seen as having evolved from an earlier apprentice, or at least role-model, approach (DiBlasio, 1985). An earlier version of DBAE, sometimes called discipline-centered art education, grew from Bruner’s model of the spiral curriculum, which represents to young people the leading discipline ideas from the adult world in developmentally appropriate ways (Efland, 1995). Though DBAE students are not apprenticing to artists, art historians, art critics, and aestheticians, a DBAE curriculum draws its curriculum content from professional practice in the four disciplines of art making, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics.

The basic curriculum tenets of the Getty-advocated DBAE approach appear in several Getty publications and/or commissioned reports (Clark, 1991; Clark, Day, & Greer, 1987; Dobbs, 1998; Wilson, 1997). The most extensive presentation of the Getty position appears as a special issue (Vol. 21, No. 2) of the Journal of Aesthetic Education in 1987 (also published in book form, Smith, 1987). Within the last 2 decades many articles and at least two book series (Addiss & Erickson, 1993; Brown, & Korzenik, 1993; Cromer, 1990; Fitzpatrick, 1992; Lankford, 1992; Parsons & Blocker, 1993; Wolff & Geahigan, 1997; Zurmuehlen, 1990) have presented arguments and guidelines for building and implementing curricula that draw content from art making, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics.

Art education is a field rich with proposals for curriculum reform, but generally poor in sustained, critical dialog. A marked exception is the mass of literature advocating, analyzing, extending, and criticizing DBAE (Burton, Lederman, & London, 1988; Calvert, 1988; Clark, 1997; Collins & Sandell, 1988; DiBlasio, 1987, 1997; Fleming, 1988; Greer, 1984, 1997; Hamblen, 1988, 1997; Johnson, 1988; Jones, 1988; Lovano-Kerr, 1990; Manley-Delacruz, 1990; Smith & Pusch, 1990; Villeneuve, 1997; Wilson & Rubin, 1997). Smith (2000) assembled an extensive anthology of readings in DBAE, which should prove useful in continuing the dialog. Stankiewicz (2000) reflected on the future of the art disciplines in art curriculum and proposed that “the future of art education depends on recognizing that knowledge and processes of inquiry are socially constructed, situated in sociopolitical contexts, and subject to change in
response to intellectual climate” (p. 30). Time will reveal the extent to which DBAE will have lasting impact on teachers’ interactions with art curriculum.

**Two Recent Curriculum Challenges**

Efland (1995) described the current postmodern era as a time when “pluralistic notions of the nature of art abound” and proposes that the postmodern curriculum challenge confronted by teachers of art is “to prepare ourselves and our students to approach the world of art in all its complexity” (p. 152). He argued for replacing the earlier curricular models with a more complex and flexible model. He envisioned a curriculum that “will serve the whole human person as an economic, social, cultural, and spiritual being” (Efland, 1996, p. 55). Recently, postmodern concerns (Clark, 1996, 1998; Efland et al., 1996; Hutchens & Suggs, 1997; Milbrandt, 1998) have drawn increased attention from curriculum theorists, for example, social action (Gude, 2000; Klein, 1992/3), community-based (Keifer-Boyd, 2000), lifeworld (Räsänen, 1997), everyday aesthetic experience (Duncum, 1999), intercultural art education (Davenport, 2000), and so forth. Global art education initiatives are discussed in the chapter Context’s for Teaching Art of the Teacher and Teacher Education section of this Handbook.

A second challenge addressed by some contemporary art curriculum theorists is development of art curricula designed to enhance learning across the curriculum (Amdur, 1993; Bickley-Green, 1995; Efland, 2000; Hellwege, 1993; Kindler, 1987; Krug, 2000; Parsons, 1998). The fact that one of only six national visual arts standards addresses relationships among the arts is evidence of substantial and long-standing interest in integrated arts curriculum content. Interest has increased significantly in recent years in the direction of relationships between art learning and learning in other subject areas. Transfer theory has emerged as a vehicle for analyzing whether, and how, learning in art might transfer to other domains of achievement. Brown (2001) analyzed how different interpretations of evidence of transfer derive from assumed beliefs about the inherent or instrumental value of arts education. Erickson (2002a) proposed structuring an art curriculum in ways that use explicit teaching for transfer to promote cross-cultural understanding and higher order thinking. Koroscik (1996) described the crucial role that transfer plays in understanding artworks in the age of information.

**How Do Teachers Make Curriculum Choices?**

Different curriculum theories lead to quite different answers to key questions, such as: Why should art be taught? What should be the key/essential/central content of an art curriculum? How should instruction be designed/organized? How should an art curriculum function within the larger curriculum of the school? Research on the effectiveness of various curricula and curriculum components is one basis upon which teachers of art could inform their curriculum choices. Curriculum research is reviewed in the next section of this analysis. In addition, a great many other factors that also contribute to individual teacher choice are discussed. The third section of this analysis focuses on some of those other factors.

**CURRICULUM RESEARCH**

**What Does Research Reveal About the Effectiveness of Art Curriculum?**

Research in many fields of education has a bearing on research on art curricula. The Forms of Assessment in Art Education section of this Handbook offers guidance on the development of reliable and valid instruments and procedures for measuring and describing the effectiveness of the art curriculum. This analysis of curriculum research has two foci: (a) research into effects
on student art learning of entire art curricula or of particular curriculum components and also on effects of various instructional strategies on student art learning, and (b) research into the effects of art curricula on learning beyond art.

Few large-scale studies are available that report on the effectiveness of entire curricula. Wilson (1997), an evaluator of the Getty’s large-scale curriculum reform effort, reports on effects for teachers and schools, but not on the effects of DBAE curriculum on student learning. Tomhave (1999) compared the effectiveness of the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Programs to determine whether studio performance by high school students was diminished when more comprehensive content replaced some studio time within the curriculum. He analyzed the IB program and concluded that it aligns closely with the tenets of DBAE. AP Studio Art teachers were randomly selected to implement the IB program. Other AP Studio Art teachers taught the usual AP program. Educational Testing Service AP adjudicators assessed portfolios produced by students in both programs. There was "no significant difference in the quality or quantity between the experimental group [IB/DBAE] and the control group [AP]" (Tomhave, p. 126). As teachers consider how to allocate time to art making and to art understanding within their art curricula, Tomhave’s findings might lead them to rethink the assumption that more time devoted to art-making activities is the only way to improve artwork produced by students.

Effects of Art-Making Instruction

Several researchers have investigated the effectiveness of particular curriculum units on students’ drawing performances. Brewer (1998) compared thematic and observational drawings made by third- and seventh-grade students in schools that provide formal art instruction with drawings by third- and seventh-grade students in schools that do not provide formal art instruction. He did not find significant differences. Because he did not identify the curriculum used in the formal art instruction in his study, even if he had found a statistically significant positive correlation between drawing ability and formal art instruction, curriculum implications would be unclear. Dowell (1990) was quite explicit about the type of art instruction offered in a program and its effects, which he attempted to measure. He compared drawings made by 9- through 12-year-old students after having received drawing instruction accompanied by practice with live models, practice with photographs, or practice with master drawings. He found no significant differences among the drawings made by students who practiced drawing in these three different ways. Such studies suggest that curriculum planners should examine assumptions they may have about effective drawing instruction. In an experimental study, Richards (1988) examined the effectiveness of drawing interventions that involved contour drawing, continuous-line drawing, and other strategies, on the drawing abilities of adolescents in both Jamaica and the United States. He found that the still-life drawing performance of students from both cultures improved significantly, but found no significant improvement in ability to apply drawing experiences to human-figure drawing for students from either culture.

Brewer has been involved in studies that compare the effectiveness of different strategies of ceramics instruction. In a study that compared the effectiveness of child-centered instruction to that of a discipline-based ceramics instruction, he found no significant difference between the “self concept, attitude toward art, knowledge of art, or ceramic products” (Brewer, 1991, p. 204) of students who received these two different types of instruction. His study calls into question assumptions that some curriculum planners may have about child-centered and discipline-based approaches. In another study, Brewer and Colbert (1992) examined the effects of three strategies of ceramics instruction on seventh-grade students’ knowledge of ceramics vocabulary and production and on the quality of students’ ceramic productions. Students in the studio/technical group observed demonstrations of studio techniques and worked with
those techniques in clay. Students in the historical/cultural group received a lecture illustrated with ceramic vessel forms and did not work with clay. The teacher asked students in the questioning/discussion group about their own studio experiences and knowledge of ceramics. In their posttests, students in the first two groups scored significantly higher than did students in the third group. Teachers planning art activities may conclude from Brewer and Colbert’s study (and also from Tomhave’s IB/AP study 1999) that a balance of art-making and other art activities (in this case historical/cultural activities) is a sound curriculum choice.

**Effects on Art Understanding**

Short (1998) studied the effectiveness of a high school studio curriculum on improvements in their art understandings and appreciation not on improvements in the students’ art making. She found that “studio experiences alone do not enhance students’ ability to understand or appreciate well-known historical artworks” (Short, p. 46). She concluded that “to facilitate transfer of art understanding from one context to another, curricula on the high school level should include the critical activities of talking and writing about works of art” (Short, p. 62).

A number of researchers have attempted to determine the effects on the ability of students to understand about artworks through the curricula designed specifically to achieve that end. Johnston, Roybal, and Parsons (1988) studied the effects of instruction, “aimed at stimulating growth in both recognition and understanding of styles” (p. 61), on 6- to 8-year-olds and on 10- to 12-year-olds. They found that children of both ages increased their ability to recognize styles, but that neither group increased their ability to understand the expressiveness of style. In a small follow-up study, the majority of undergraduate students showed an ability to understand the expressiveness of style without instruction from the researchers. They concluded that curriculum planning should distinguish between style recognition and style understanding and that elementary children may not be developmentally prepared to understand the expressiveness of style.

Kakas (1995) observed young children experiencing developmental delays who participated in biweekly art criticism lessons. Her qualitative analysis of audiotapes, field notes, and discussions with the children’s teacher led her to conclude that, over a period of a year, these 6- and 7-year-old students’ art criticism skills improved in ways such as the abilities to label art forms; identify colors, shapes, and types of line; notice more in artworks; explain emotions in artworks; compare artworks; and understand the concept of portrait.

Erickson conducted several studies involving art history curriculum. She assessed students’ abilities to interpret an artwork by referring to the historical artist (as distinct from references to art making in general), to historical viewers (viewers of the time when the artwork was made), and to the historical culture (culture in which the artwork was made). In a study of a year-long, roughly chronological, thematically organized curriculum, she found sixth-grade students scored significantly higher in their ability to refer to historical artists, to historical viewers, and to historical cultures than did second-grade students. She (Erickson, 1995a) also found that both groups referred more often to historical artists, next most often to historical viewers, and least often to historical cultures in their attempts to interpret artworks contextually. In another study, Erickson (1998) examined the effects of art history instruction on fourth- and eighth-grade students’ attempts to interpret artworks contextually. She found that both groups of students improved in their use of references to the historical artist, but that only the eighth graders increased their use of references to historical viewers or historical culture. She suggests that planners of elementary art history curricula might consider students’ prior knowledge of art-making processes as an avenue through which to introduce historical contexts to young learners. In addition, a middle-school-level art curriculum might effectively include an introduction of historical viewers and cultures as avenues to broader art historical understanding.
ERICKSON and Basinger (2000) conducted an ethnographic study of third-grade children’s abilities to construct culturally relevant understandings of artworks made by Kuba artists in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their findings provide some reason to believe that students as young as third grade may be able to interpret artworks culturally if engaged in a curriculum that uses a constructivist inquiry approach.

Erickson (2002b) also studied the effectiveness of a curriculum unit built around the concept of artworlds on elementary and middle school students’ understanding of their own artworlds. Activities in the unit presented the concept of artworld as a subculture that is centered on art. Instruction focused students’ attention on people, places, activities, and ideas that are important in several different artworlds in North America (specifically in Mexican, Chicana/o, and African American artworlds). Teachers drew parallels to the students’ own art experience as a basis for introducing these multicultural artworlds. She found a significant improvement in both elementary school students’ and middle school students’ understanding of all four artworld characteristics (artworld people, artworld places, artworld activities, and artworld ideas) measured on the pretest and postest. Such studies may provide some guidance to teachers as they plan developmentally appropriate art curricula that present artworks within their specific cultural and artworld contexts.

Stone (1997) compared the effectiveness of two different art museum tours, on elementary majors’ learning both focusing on the same learning objectives. One tour took the form of a lecture; and the other, a format of a lecture/discussion. Stone reports that both tours were equally effective and that neither had strong long-term effects on the retention of information. Cason (1998) studied the effect of interactive multimedia on undergraduates’ art history understandings. She found that students who studied art history with interactive multimedia “accessed more dimensions, demonstrated more lower-order understandings, and had significantly more higher order understandings... than students who supplemented their studies with slides” (Cason, p. 346). The Cason study may be of particular interest to teachers who are considering including new media in their art curriculum.

Others have attempted to measure the effects of circumstances surrounding the viewing of artworks on undergraduates’ understanding. Seifert (1995) reported that the concurrent viewing of several artworks may affect students’ responses to particular artworks. Koroscik, Short, Stravropoulos, and Fortin (1992) described the effects on undergraduates of viewing and writing about a reproduction of an artwork presented to them in three different contexts: (a) the artwork shown together with three other artworks by the same artist; (b) the artwork shown together with artworks by other artists displaying the same theme; and (c) the artwork shown in conjunction with a poem, a lithograph, and a videotaped dance, all of which were influenced by that artwork. The researchers also measured the effect of two verbal cues on students’ writing: (a) initial prompts to look for common characteristics and (b) later, specification of the common characteristic (same artist, same, theme, or influence in other arts). They reported that contexts for viewing the artwork did, indeed, prompt students to view the artwork in different ways, and that the different contexts were most effective “when they were accompanied by explicit cues about the artworks’ shared characteristics” (Koroscik et al., p. 163). These studies suggest that many factors, including developmental appropriateness of content, instructional strategies, and viewing contexts combine to influence what students’ can learn as the result of curricula designed to increase art understandings.

**Effectiveness Beyond the Art Curriculum**

As noted previously in the Curriculum Theory section, learning across the curriculum is an area of considerable recent attention. A number of researchers have carried out studies attempting to determine the extent to which learning in art transfers to other areas of achievement. Caldwell...
and Moore (1991) compared the effectiveness of drawing and discussion as planning activities on second- and third-grade students’ narrative writing. All students received instruction in such aspects of narrative writing as characterization, plot, and setting. The drawing group participated in follow-up drawing activities focused on those aspects of narrative writing. The control group participated in discussion of general language art content, such as oral language, listening, reading, and writing skills. Caldwell and Moore reported that the drawing group scored higher on a narrative rating scale than did the control group and that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant. Among the factors they cited to explain the effect of drawing on narrative writing are completeness of rehearsal, dual-code information processing, and increased student motivation.

Edens and Potter (2001) studied the effectiveness of drawing on fifth- and sixth-grade students’ conceptual understandings in science. All students read a narrative text that explained the law of conservation of energy using roller coasters as examples. One group wrote what they learned; the text of the second group was illustrated and students copied the pictorial representation; the third group’s narrative made their own pictorial representation. Students who had generated their own pictorial representations scored significantly higher on a posttest of conceptual understanding than did the students who wrote about what they learned. The scores of students who copied an illustration were not significantly higher than the scores of students who wrote in a science log. Edens and Potter also measured the effect of accuracy of drawing on posttest scores in science and found that students who created accurate drawings outperformed students who did not represent the concepts accurately. Edens and Potter (2001) concluded that “pictorial representation provides a viable way for students to learn scientific concepts” (p. 227). When teachers of art share the responsibility for learning in subjects outside their area of expertise, studies such as these may guide their collaborative planning with other teachers.

Other researchers have investigated how art instruction affects a wide range of non-art and sometimes art outcomes. Luftig (2000) studied the effects of an arts-infusion curriculum on creative thinking, academic achievement, affective functioning, and arts appreciation. The elementary arts-infusion program he studied was one that involved visual art, and also music, dance, and drama. “Classroom and arts teachers, arts specialists, artists employed for a residency, and the SPECTRA+ [infusion program] coordinator” (Luftig, 2000, p. 210) jointly planned activities in two schools. Luftig found significantly higher creative-thinking scores for students involved in the arts than for students in control groups. In one school, he found no difference in improvement in reading between arts-infusion students and control-group students. However, in the other school, arts-infusion students scored significantly higher than did control group students in reading. He found no significant difference in total and academic self esteem measures between arts-infusion and control-group students. “However, in the areas of social and parental self esteem decided advantages were found in the direction of the SPECTRA+ students” (Luftig, 2000, p. 224). There were no differences among student groups on locus-of-control scores. Arts-infusion students scored higher on arts appreciation and enjoyment than did students in control groups. Teachers concerned with curriculum may find Luftig’s results useful in arguing to increase arts activities in schools. However because he does not describe the type of arts instruction in his study, only the amount (an hour a week in art, music, dance, and drama/theater), his research does not provide insights to guide teachers in making particular choices in selecting, developing, or implementing a visual arts curriculum.

Other researchers have attempted to measure the effects of unspecified types of arts instruction. Burton, Horowitz, and Adeles (2000) selected 12 elementary and secondary schools in four states in order to include as much diversity in types of arts education programs as possible. They did not attempt to affect the teaching and learning processes; rather they attempted to study relationships between, on the one hand, high-arts-involvement and low-arts-involvement
students, and on the other hand, several variables such as creativity, self-concept, and personal traits as perceived by teachers. They found that high-arts-involved students scored higher for creativity. They found that teachers scored high-arts-involved students higher in “expression, risk-taking, and creativity-imagination dimensions, and lower in the cooperative learning dimensions” (Burton et al., p. 241). In addition, they reported “significant but weak correlations between academic self-concept scores and the arts teaching variables, and generally weak and not significant associations between non-academic self-concept and arts teaching variables” (Burton et al., p. 242). The researchers investigated learning in these 12 schools both quantitatively and qualitatively. They concluded that “transfer is probably only one of a complex of relationships interweaving arts learning with other domains” (Burton, Horowitz, & Adeles, 2000, p. 253). Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (2000) also looked for correlations between arts involvement and success in school. Theirs was a large, multiyear study of secondary students. They found significant associations between higher arts involvement (especially with music and drama) and academic successes. Because Burton et al.’s and Catterall et al.’s studies identified correlations between the various student outcomes and the amount of arts involvement, not correlations between those outcomes and any particular types of art instruction, direct implications for art curriculum development are unclear.

Haanstra (2000) analyzed effects of special, after-school arts programs in the Netherlands on the school achievement of 10- and 11-year-olds. Though the math scores of students in the arts program improved, the scores of students in the control group improved significantly more. Haanstra found no obvious effects of participation in after-school arts programs on students’ social and emotional development. He concluded that transfer from arts activity to school success is not automatic and that “teachers of extended school activities should more explicitly teach for transfer of general cognitive skills in different contexts” (Haanstra, p. 26). At the same time he acknowledged that arts programs with more obvious relationships to core subjects may be less attractive to students. Teachers may wish to refer to such studies to bolster support for arts activities in general; but they will not find guidance in selecting, planning, or implementing an art curriculum.

Winner and Cooper (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of studies claiming associations between arts education and academic achievement. Where correlations are found, they caution that even though studying arts may have been the cause, other explanations are also possible. They argue that “for transfer to occur, teachers must teach explicitly for transfer” (Winner & Cooper, p. 63) and that teaching directly for transfer was not found to be the case in any of the studies they analyzed. Eisner (1998), Catterall (1998), and Perkins (2001) are among scholars who have reached different conclusions about the meaning of recent studies claiming learning in the arts transfers to academic achievement. In1998, Eisner found “no good evidence that transfer occurs [between art education and academic achievement] if what we count as evidence is no more than anecdotal reports that are often designed for purposes of advocacy” (Eisner, p. 10). Catterall was more optimistic. He “suspects that a panel composed of math, science, history, foreign language and elementary teachers would judge unanimously that . . . dispositional outcomes of arts education would tend to boost academic achievement to some degree” (Catterall, 1998, p. 10) and concluded that new studies are needed. Perkins proposed that largely negative findings in a meta-analysis of arts education research “tell us not that the game is essentially over but that . . . the game is not very well played yet” (Perkins, p. 124). He proposed that “thoughtful interventions . . . offer reasonable prospects of transfer from visual arts to other academic areas” and argued that “learning in the arts needs to be designed with some finesse for effective indirect instruction, which generally it is not” (Perkins, p. 124).

When teachers go to research they may do so in search of persuasive evidence to help justify the existence of any sort of art activities or more specifically for insights to guide their selection, adaptation, development, or implementation of art curricula. The next section of this
21. INTERACTION OF TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM

Analysis is a review of some of the complex factors that are likely to influence how teachers, to the extent that they are aware of art curriculum research, might interpret findings and use conclusions in their own curriculum decision making.

TEACHER INTERACTION

What Influences Teacher Interaction With the Art Curriculum?

How teaching interacts with curriculum depends to a great extent on the teacher who is doing the interacting. Characteristics of persons choosing careers as art teachers are important factors. The National Art Education Association’s recently commissioned national survey (Educational Research Service, 2001) provides some basic information about secondary art teachers. Of the 1,520 teachers who responded to the survey, 70.8% were women, 61% were over 45 years old, and 90.2% were White (1.6% African American/Black; 1.8% Hispanic/Latino; 0.9% Asian; 0.4% Native American, 1.0% biracial/multiracial; and 1.5% other). In addition, the survey revealed that the highest academic degree of 45% of secondary art teachers was a bachelor’s degree, and 55% of secondary art teachers had received a master’s degree.

Burton (1997) conducted a national survey of K-12 art teachers. He reported percentages of art teachers who claimed the following were major components in their art curricula: studio production (86.51), art history/art appreciation (79.76), art criticism (46.42), aesthetics (52.38), art exhibitions (61.90), computer technology (26.59), and interdisciplinary or multicultural concerns (59.52) (Burton, 1997). Although most art teachers follow a written curriculum, many do not. In a national survey, the Educational Research Service (2001) found that 75% of responding secondary art teachers reported that they had a written curriculum. In another national survey of secondary art teachers, Burton (2000) reported that “half of the respondents ‘infrequently’ and ‘rarely or never’ write detailed lesson plans.”

Influences on art teachers’ interactions with curriculum are wide-ranging. They include, among other factors, national, regional, state, and local traditions; preservice experiences; beliefs and practices of inservice teachers; practical realities; roles of governmental, professional, private, and other organizations; and processes involved in curriculum development and implementation.

Art Education Traditions

In various nations, teachers of art confront different challenges. Freedman and Hernandez (1998) collected a series of “international case studies of art education that illustrate the translation of cultural knowledge as part of a process of curriculum conceptualization, development, and implementation” (p. 3). In these case studies, art education in Japan, Australia, Canada, Spain, United States (New York), Sweden, Brazil, Morocco, Great Britain, Hungary, and Chile is reported. Within the United States, art teaching traditions differ considerably. In Eastern states there is a stronger tradition of elementary art teaching by certified art teachers. In Western states a great deal of the responsibility for elementary art teaching falls on general classroom teachers. In addition to traditional arts magnet schools, recently some states, such as Arizona, are chartering hundreds of schools, including schools centered on the arts.

Marché (1997) examined the effects of state mandates, preservice education, and local district administration on art program changes in one school district over a period of 68 years and found that “district administration decisions had the most visible and consistent effect on art programming” (Marché, 1997, p. 35). Marché (2000) cautioned that one must consider that factors influencing educational change are “situated within temporal, social, and geographic contexts” (p. 35). Congdon, Stewart, and White (2002) argued that “community influences
persist and typically go unrecognized in curriculum decision-making” (p. 109). They reported on a process they used with inservice art teachers to provide “a means to intentionally reconsider the social and cultural dimensions of our lives that we bring into classrooms” (Congdon et al., p. 117). Clark and Zimmerman (2000) studied the positive effects of community-based art education programs in four culturally different rural communities in the United States. Studies such as these indicate that researchers have become increasingly aware of the role played by culture and community on the curriculum decision making of art teachers.

**Preservice Experience**

Preservice art teachers begin to interact with curriculum as it is introduced to them in their teacher education programs. The chapter on teacher education in the Teaching and Teacher Education section of this *Handbook* introduces the variety of programs that prepare students to become certified art teachers. Zimmerman (1994) reviewed research on preservice art education and reported results of her own small-scale survey of university art educators and examined research in three areas: knowing about subject matter content, how subject matter is put into practice, and the impact of outside influences. She found “a paucity of research about preservice art specialist education” and proposed “a carefully constructed research agenda” (Zimmerman, p. 79).

Short (1995) postulated that “art teachers frequently have autonomy in areas of curriculum planning and implementation in their schools” (p. 158). She found that preservice art teachers in her study, exhibited “over-simplifying tendencies characteristic of reductive bias” (Short, p. 161). Of seven dimensions of art (formal, descriptive, interpretive, historical, cultural, aesthetic, and critical), she found teachers whose art understandings ranged from just one dimension to six dimensions. In addition, Short found that the depth of art understanding of preservice art teachers correlated with their lesson-planning abilities. Students whose responses included two to six dimensions, when provided with additional information, were able to incorporate this content into their lessons. However, students who included only one dimension could not incorporate new dimensions into their lessons, but instead replaced one dimension with another. Short concluded that “despite their advanced learning status and visual art specialization, the majority of pre-service teachers demonstrated overly simplistic thinking, shallow understandings, and superficial domain knowledge. Their instructional decision-making, as reflected in lesson plans, exhibited similar characteristics” (Short, p. 167). When art teachers build their curricula on their own knowledge and understandings, and do not depend on published curricula, the depth of that art knowledge and understanding is particularly important.

Grauer (1998) argued that beliefs about art and art education are especially important factors influencing what and how teachers of art teach. She claimed that “unlike other subjects that are often driven by covering content in prescribed textbooks and by attempting to cover the content of government exams, decisions about the content and evaluation of art are very much in the hands of the classroom teacher” (Grauer, p. 362). In her study she examined the extent to which preservice teachers of art (both generalists and art specialists) changed their beliefs about art education within their teacher-preparation program. Grauer maintained that “there is a prevailing assumption that preservice teachers’ prior beliefs are fixed and immutable” (1998, p. 266). Contrary to this assumption, she found that students’ beliefs evolved in the direction of their art education courses and practical experiences. In her study, this evolution was away from a child-centered approach and toward a subject-centered approach.

A great deal of responsibility for implementing art curriculum in some school districts falls to elementary classroom teachers. Kowalchuk and Stone (2000) studied preservice elementary teachers’ and inservice elementary teachers’ attitudes toward art education. They found that both preservice and inservice elementary teachers’ “attitudes about art and how it should be
taught were often contradictory” (Kowalchuck & Stone, p. 29). Consistent with Grauer (1998), they found some evidence that preservice teachers moderated their values after participating in just one teacher-preparation course. To the extent that art curricula continue largely to be determined by art teachers, preservice education of art teachers becomes crucial. The art knowledge and beliefs about art and art education developed in preservice programs are the foundations upon which at least beginning teachers build their art curricula.

**Beliefs and Practices of Inservice Teachers**

Teachers of art, whether educated as certified art teachers or as general classroom teachers, whether certified to teach or serving as artists-in-the-schools, bring their own beliefs to their interactions with curricula and respond in various ways to professional development education. McSorley (1996) examined primary classroom teachers’ conceptions of art criticism and found them wanting. She also found that the teachers’ “choice of artworks was often guided by social studies” (McSorley, p. 169). She found no concern for multiculturalism or gender equity, nor any “philosophical or theoretical base from which art criticism is being taught” (McSorley, p. 167). The teachers in McSorley’s study indicated no conception of art criticism as helping students create and derive meaning from visual art, but only a concern for fostering art appreciation. Anglin (1993) investigated the art curricula of 40 middle schools and reported that “participating teachers viewed art curriculum in three ways: what was written in the curriculum documents, what they taught, and what students learned” (Anglin, p. 61). These middle school teachers “emphasized media and production... and shared their frustration about including history, criticism, and aesthetics” (p. 63).

Bresler’s (1994) ethnographic study of art curriculum in three elementary schools focused on the “curriculum as a dynamic entity by different individuals involved in the process” (Bresler, p. 91). She described a rote, teacher-centered orientation “more often than not [practiced] by classroom teachers with limited art background” (Bresler, p. 94). Classroom teachers and also special education teachers with little art background also practiced an open-ended, student-centered approach in which they invited students to create freely with little instruction, sometimes drawing ideas for art making from academic activities or holiday celebrations. Bresler found a third, higher order cognitive orientation “typically taught by teachers with professional art backgrounds, often artists-in-the-schools, sometimes classroom teachers who were practicing artists” (Bresler, p. 98). Teachers using this orientation transmitted “art-related knowledge and techniques as well as conceptual evaluation and feedback” (Bresler, p. 97). Although she made no observations of curriculum as practiced by professionally trained art teachers, Bresler’s findings suggest significant differences of interactions of teachers and curricula related to whether those teachers had professional art backgrounds.

In some schools, parts of the art curriculum are delivered not by art teachers or classroom teachers but by artists. Zimmerman (1992) studied how two artists (who as faculty were experienced in teaching painting at the university level) adapted to the challenge of teaching talented adolescents between the ages of 13 and 16. She concluded that “preparation of professional artists before they enter a secondary level classroom is of paramount importance” (Zimmerman, p. 184). She proposed that such preparation include becoming aware of the particular needs and understandings of talented adolescents and experiences in organizing art classes for precollege students.

Bullock and Galbraith’s (1992) case study of two secondary art teachers with quite different backgrounds, beliefs, and teaching practices revealed that dissonance was generated for both as they attempted “to confront recent paradigmatic shifts within art education curricula” (p. 96). Dissonance developed between, on the one hand, the teachers’ backgrounds and experiences and, on the other hand, “school policy, ongoing external teaching debates, opinions about art
education curricula, students’ cultural heritages, and the lack of students’ art background and readiness” (Bullock & Galbraith, p. 94).

Armstrong (1993) reported on the success of her effort to train six inservice elementary and secondary art teachers to incorporate an inquiry method into their studio art teaching. She concluded that “most teachers can change a teaching approach and students can respond to a new teaching method for a particular lesson very quickly” (Armstrong, p. 220). As teachers gain experience and success with various instructional strategies, their interest in reflecting on and improving their own art curricula may increase. The number of factors that art teachers and classroom teachers are responsible for and balance in their interactions with art curricula are indeed many and varied.

Practical Realities

Practical realities of art teaching also impact teachers’ curriculum choices. The Contexts chapter of the Teacher and Teacher Education section of this handbook introduces a wide range of contexts in which art teachers function. May (1989) described details of an art teacher’s workplace. She argues that curriculum reform is not likely to be effective “if it does not address the low status, morale, and recognition of teachers in general and the fringe status of art teachers in particular” (May, 1989, p. 146).

Mims and Lankford (1995) reported that time and money are two practical restrictions that can impinge greatly on elementary art teachers’ curricula choices. They sent questionnaires to a sample of elementary art teachers and reported results of 332 returned questionnaires. They found that in a year teachers had an average of 29 contact hr per class. According to the Educational Research Service (2001) time restrictions are not as serious a constraint for secondary art teachers. They report that the median secondary art class is 55 min long, and that “about 75% of the [responding secondary] art teachers felt that their instructional time with students was adequate” (Educational Research Service, p. v).

In addition Mims and Lankford (1995) reported that the annual per student elementary art budget ranges from 20 cents to $20 with an average of $3.33 per student per year. In a national survey of art teachers, Burton (1997) found that high school teachers reported having more responsibility for the art budget than did elementary art teachers. Jeffers’ (1996) survey of Kansas art teachers revealed that “beginning, mid-career, and veteran art teachers... have said quite clearly and unanimously that a lack of funding for low status of art programs, which in turn, threatened the viability of these programs, are major issues confronting them” (p. 111).

Jeffers and Fong (2000) investigated the impact of budgetary issues in Southern California schools and focused their attention on schools where art is taught by general classroom teachers. They compared the impact of funding in a poorer and a wealthier school district and found that “when support drops below [a] critical level, a downward spiral is likely to develop, such that teachers, even those who are very experienced and well-trained, begin to shut down and thus, shut off students’ media usage” (p. 38). They argued that curriculum development should not ignore the “dynamic and complex relationship among media usage, funding support, and perceived performance” (Jeffers & Fong, p. 39).

Of course, in addition to time and money, many other day-to-day realities can affect teachers’ interactions with curricula. Burton (1997) provided basic information about such practical realities that included assignment to a specialized art room; average classes taught per day; frequency of meeting times with students; block scheduling; class time; and resources.

Organizations and Institutions

The Policy Perspectives Impacting the Teaching of Art section of this Handbook outlines positions taken by professional organizations, government, private foundations, and commercial
interests, that filter into teachers’ thinking as they interact with art curriculum. Many organizations and institutions outside individual schools seek to affect art teachers and their curricula. Mims and Lankford (1995) reported that districtwide curriculum guides were not particularly influential on elementary art teachers’ art programs.

State and national development and implementation of visual art curriculum standards and achievement tests are among the more recent ways that government has interacted with art teachers and their curricula. Since the publication of the National Visual Arts Standards in 1994, many art teachers have used those standards in curriculum planning. The Educational Research Service (2001, p. 17) reported that 86% of secondary art teachers agree that their curricula align with the national standards. Sobol (1998) analyzed state visual arts achievement tests and found inconsistency between the test items and the predominant content of most art programs. Thirty-seven percent of items tested vocabulary or concepts knowledge; 31%, art criticism; 5%, art history; 3%, aesthetics; and only 6% addressed production knowledge and skills. The number of production-related items was very disproportionate to the amount of curriculum content devoted to production.

Private foundations have also sought to influence art education programs. Freedman (1989) provided an historical perspective in her analysis of the complexity of missions of a Depression-era philanthropic art education program: the Owatonna Project in Minnesota supported by the Carnegie Foundation. Wilson (1997) evaluated the impact of the J. Paul Getty Trusts’ Regional Institute Project. He reported that after 7 years and the creation of an entirely new role for the art specialist, “the challenge of developing a comprehensive DBAE curriculum with a sequence of art-based instructional units [still] looms large” (Wilson, p. 20). He found that middleschool and junior high school art specialists were “more eager to accept the ideas of a comprehensive approach to art education” (Wilson, p. 21) than were high school art teachers. Yet, he concluded also that at the secondary level “much work remains . . . to build comprehensive DBAE curriculum” (Wilson, p. 20).

Wilson (1997) described differences in approaches taken by elementary classroom teachers and specialist art teachers within the context of a major curriculum reform program and argued for joint curriculum planning by elementary school classroom teachers and art specialists. He reported that after years of participation in the reform project, in the 235 schools he evaluated, “fully articulated exemplary units of instruction developed by classroom teachers and art specialists who take their cues from the themes, topics, and content of works of art are still somewhat rare” (Wilson, p. 151). Three years later, after the Getty Regional Institutes Program was completed, Eisner (2000), a long-time advisor to the Getty Education Institute, identified the absence of curriculum materials to be one of the problems with Getty’s attempt to assume a leadership role in art education. He concluded that the approach advocated by Getty (discipline-based art education) “is an extremely demanding approach . . . for any teacher, even one well-trained in art. It is especially daunting for elementary school teachers, who often have little or no background in art” (Eisner, p. 131).

Many art museums have made efforts to become integrated into school art curricula. Stone’s (1993) survey found that “secondary art specialists see the art museum as important for supplementing classroom instruction in studio art and in art history” (pp. 52–53). She recommended that preservice education be changed to help art teachers better integrate art museums into their programs.

Housen and Duke (1998) outlined a 3-year curriculum-development project initiated at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, which used research findings from each preceding year to guide the evolution of a visual literacy curriculum into a visual thinking strategies (VTS) curriculum. Middle school and high school teachers and their students participated in the first-year study. The researchers found that “many teachers were . . . at the same stages as their students and a stage or more away from museum staff and experts” (Housen & Duke, p. 94).
and that teachers with poor comprehension of information transmitted that information to their students in a distorted way. The basic aim of the revised second-year VTS curriculum “was to create teaching strategies that might help a teacher who is at the same aesthetic stage as his/her students to provide interesting and stage-appropriate challenges to those students” (Housen & Duke, p. 95). Also in the second year, one group of teachers received more education and took more responsibility for teaching with museum educators serving as mentors. Housen and Duke reported that the participants’ learning of the art content was not strong, but that students, especially students in the group taught by mentored classroom teachers, showed significant growth in aesthetic stages of development, that is, in the ability to operate at more advanced aesthetic development stages. In preparation for the third year, the researchers provided “a structured way of introducing students to art which was simpler for teachers, and which used their skills and strengths” (Housen & Duke, p. 97). Housen and Duke report that “the revised curriculum changed the program’s emphasis from helping participants become visually literate, analytical, and informed viewers to aiding their aesthetic developmental growth” (Housen & Duke, p. 98).

Commercial businesses have also had a role to play in influencing how art teachers interact with curriculum. Katter’s (1985) historical analysis of hands-on instructional resources documented the evolving production of commercial materials for art teaching through the 20th century. The Educational Research Service (2001) reported that only 30.8% of secondary art teachers use textbooks or curriculum packages. Chapman (1985) outlined the process she used to develop an elementary art textbook series. She proposes that, because teachers are among those who produce most state, district, and local curriculum, her “analysis of such guides was viewed as a form of consultation with art educators [including teachers of art]” (Chapman, p. 207). Chapman developed and revised a detailed outline, which she sent along with a questionnaire to 410 individuals, including both art teachers and classroom teachers. In addition to promoting instructional materials and curriculum packages, and lobbying for textbook adoption, another major way that private business can influence art teachers’ interaction with curricula is through their promotions of school art supplies, an issue not yet surfacing in art education research.

Curriculum Development and Implementation

As noted previously, teachers of art carry a great deal of responsibility not only for the implementation of curriculum but also for its development. In many instances, practicing art teachers collaborate with other educators as they develop, adapt, or select curricula. Dunn (1995) offered a structure that teachers of art might use to develop their own art curricula. Clover (2002) described how a group of art teachers adapted an online curriculum unit for implementation in several schools at both elementary- and secondary-grade levels. Irwin (1992) described the role of an art supervisor in the curriculum-development process. She concluded that “supervisors in many cases act in dialectical relationship between teachers and administrators and, as such, fulfill a unique interface role within a school district” (Irwin, p. 118).

Bergman and Fiering (1997) analyzed the evolution of a long-term curriculum-research collaboration among art teachers, an art supervisor, and a university researcher. They reported on the benefits derived from the struggle to reach common goals, which led the team “to shift from a totally researcher-driven model towards a co-investigational one” (Bergman & Fiering, p. 55) in which teachers and researcher negotiated goals, instruction, and procedures for assessing learning. Goldsmith-Conley and Bales (1994) reported on joint curriculum development by an art specialist and classroom teacher. Erickson and Stein (1993) outlined a 5-year team effort that involved 10 art teachers, a social studies teacher, and 3 university professors.

Art educators have attempted to describe the interaction of teachers and curricula through metaphor and key ideas. Ettinger and Hoffman (1990) used the metaphor of quilt making.
Erickson and Stein (1993) compared the process to baseball and dubbed it the curriculum negotiation game. MacGregor (1988) characterized it as reconceptualization. Sullivan (1989) described it as inevitably uncertain. The interaction of teachers and curriculum is elusive, complex, and continuously evolving.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers of art who are interested in scholarly writing about art curriculum will find a tremendous range of curriculum visions from which to draw inspiration and help them develop their own visions. They will also discover that they can find sustained critical dialog regarding at least two of those visions: DBAE and correlations between arts education, or sometimes just arts involvement, and learning beyond the arts. Teachers of art also will benefit from collaborations between curriculum theorists and empirical researchers that result in evidence of effective implementation of particular theoretical curriculum proposals. They also can conduct their own action research investigations that have potential for developing new curriculum projects that can aid students’ art learning.

Whatever art curriculum teachers ultimately implement in their classrooms, they must be attentive to how that curriculum is perceived by students, parents, school colleagues, and other policymakers and stakeholders. Unlike math teachers, science teachers, social studies teachers, and language arts teachers, teachers of art are often challenged to justify their curriculum to colleagues, stakeholders, and policymakers who themselves may lack any formal art instruction. When teachers learn of research results through sometimes oversimplified translations or within a politically charged context, critical reflection as a basis for their curriculum decision-making becomes increasingly difficult. Research designed to produce useful findings for art (or arts) education advocacy may not, at the same time, yield the kind of focused findings that can guide teachers in making specific curriculum decisions. Teachers who implement any of a variety of art curricula based on studies of undifferentiated art programs that “promise” particular outcomes may find that the desired outcomes are not forthcoming. The more researchers are able to specify the particular content, approach, or strategies of art curricula that they find to be effective, the better prepared teachers will be to make well-informed curriculum choices and decisions.

If teachers look to research to shed light on their selection, development, adaptation, or implementation of an art curriculum, they will find some evidence of the effectiveness of some curricula, curriculum components, and instructional strategies. However, research reports may be difficult for teachers to read and interpret. A study conducted in one context may have little or no generalizability or applicability in another. To help teachers understand the relevance of particular research findings to their own school situations, researchers should take special care to identify their basic assumptions about implementation. For example, did teachers implementing the curriculum have substantial or minimal art knowledge and skills? Was the study designed to produce evidence that will be useful to inservice teachers or to university art educators who have the responsibility of preparing new art teachers? Was the study carried out with minimal or optimal classroom time and instructional supply budget? Was the curriculum implemented in the lower grades, where most states mandate art instruction for all students, or in the higher grades, where the viability to a substantial portion of the art program may depend on its popularity with students who are free to elect, or more often not elect, to enroll in art classes?

Two general directions for future research emerge from this analysis of interaction between teaching and curriculum: One area focuses on effective curriculum; the other, on teachers. Researchers might design studies that manipulate key variables in order to develop and confirm various curriculum theories. Sequencing of art-making and art-viewing activities and also the
use of verbal and visual cues to affect transfer are among variables researchers might manipulate to help determine the effectiveness of art curriculum on student learning. Compared with teachers of other subjects, many teachers of art have a great deal of autonomy in their art curriculum choices, especially in schools without visual arts supervisors and any standardized state art achievement tests. Researchers might design studies to describe the consequences of this situation as persons responsible for art teaching vary. That is, how do art curricula vary when art teachers, classroom teachers, artists in schools, art museum educators, volunteer parents, and others share all or part of the responsibility for a school’s art curriculum?

How can researchers plan studies that teachers can understand and use? How can teachers free themselves from the many factors (personal, community, political, economic, and other) that impinge on their decision making, long enough to reflect on assumptions that may, consciously or unconsciously, override their curriculum decision making? Long-term collaborations among teachers, researchers, and others may be one way to listen, learn, and plan studies that can make a difference for teachers faced with the responsibility of selecting, adapting, developing, and implementing art curricula in their schools.

REFERENCES


21. INTERACTION OF TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM


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