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Art and Integrated Curriculum

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A RENEWED INTEREST IN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

We are currently witnessing a renewed interest in integrated curriculum in both art education and in education in general. Integrated curriculum, not always with that name, has been a recurrent interest in American education since the late 19th century, though the circumstances in which it arises are each time different (Kliebard, 1995). One thread in what follows is that society has changed in such a way as to make integrated curriculum again a concern today. Simultaneously, I believe that the artworld and our general modes of communication have also changed in such a way as to make art potentially more central to the curriculum. In this chapter, I will review the literature on integrated curriculum in art education, seeking to articulate the vision that lies behind it. I hope the review suggests two things: for art educators, that an integrated approach might enhance the teaching of art; and for educators, in general, that art has a significant role to play in integrated curricula.

The reasons for the revival of interest are several. Most important may be the sense that our society and the kinds of problems we face are changing rapidly. Our problems are becoming more complex, have a faster turnover rate, and require more information from more different sources. This is true at work, at home, and in our social and political life. A socially relevant education would prepare students by focusing the curriculum on such problems. In addition, students need a more integrated personality, greater awareness of self, and more understanding and tolerance of others, goals with which our present system does poorly. For art educators, there is a third kind of reason, having to do with changes in the contemporary artworld and concern over the enormous growth of visual communications in our society.

The current interest has not yet produced a consensus on the theory or practice of integrated curriculum, much less an articulated and organized movement (Ulbricht, 1998). The literature

in art education is scattered and the practices are undertheorized.[1] The result is that many different practices go by the name of integrated curriculum and there are many names for similar practices (The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 2002). There is considerable variation in the scope of intentions involved. At its least ambitious, the interest is in connecting together the various school subjects to make them more meaningful to students. At its most ambitious, the interest is in the promotion of democratic schooling, via student choice, self-reflection, and active inquiry; and of democratic society, via the investigation of social problems and their solutions. Alternative names include interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or cross-disciplinary curriculum, the experience curriculum, activity-centered curriculum, and project method.

In the introduction to his recent book, one of the rare sustained current attempts to deal with curriculum integration in a theoretical way, James Beane complains that the conservativism of our times has reduced discussions of integrated curriculum to questions about how to connect the content of the different school subjects (Beane, 1997). He says:

> It is possible that someone might come to this book expecting to learn about the overlaps or connections among school subjects and how to create thematic units out of them. This would not be surprising, since the term *integrated curriculum* has too often been used to describe arrangements that amount to little more than rearranging existing lesson plans. (Beane, 1997, p. x)

Beane urges the importance of the connections with democratic schooling, the whole child, social problem solving, and learning through inquiry that were so prominent in the progressive era. Discussions of integrated curriculum, he complains, have tended to lose connection with these bigger issues and to become discussions of efficient curriculum structure. I do not believe this charge is always true of the literature in art education. Although this literature is not voluminous, the more interesting parts often connect curriculum with bigger issues. I hope this review will suggest that art educators who adopt an integrated approach are both responding to contemporary changes and also making connection with traditional concerns of the field from times prior to the current disciplinary movement.

It is necessary at the outset to make it clear that integrated curriculum is not primarily an issue of how to schedule the school day, not primarily about "the egg-box curriculum." It is about meaning and understanding. Integration occurs when students make sense for themselves of their varied learning and experiences, when they pull these together to make one view of their world and of their place in it. It takes place in their minds or not at all. Advocates of integrated curriculum are fundamentally concerned to make learning meaningful to students. They stress the importance of understanding as the primary goal of education and often contrast it with "lower level" goals such as learning facts and routine skills. This contrast is traditional in educational discussions, of course, and many educators who support the traditional curriculum also emphasize understanding. The difference is that a good traditional curriculum aims at an understanding of disciplines, whereas a good integrated curriculum aims at an understanding of the lifeworld (Habermas, 1981). Does the school curriculum help students connect academic learning with their personal experience? Does it deal with their real-life issues, that is, with issues that they are already aware of as important in their life? Are their emotions, attitudes, and values related to what they learn in school? Does their learning enable them to make sense

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[1] I mean by this that there are more attempts by art teachers to integrate their curriculum in practice than there is public discussion of underlying goals and principles. This may be a hopeful situation, because it suggests that many teachers are seeking change in their practice. Of the books and articles that have been published, there are many more descriptive accounts than there are reflective ones. It is impossible to mention all of the descriptive material in this chapter, and I shall not try to do so.

of their place in the world? Are they helped to understand social problems and to be better citizens of our complex, diverse democracy? These are the kind of questions we should ask of an integrated curriculum.

It is worth emphasizing that an integrated curriculum is inherently concerned with ideas. It is necessarily a curriculum that encourages students to think about important ideas, to interpret them and relate them to themselves, their own time and context. It is above all a thoughtful curriculum, full of ideas rather than of activities (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001). This is because only with ideas can students integrate their world, combine its various aspects in one stable understanding. And the key claim is that the kinds of ideas that enable them to do this usually transcend the disciplines. They are more general and multifaceted than the ideas central to academic disciplines and, not coincidentally, they are the kinds of ideas often dealt with in art. On the other hand, they can be looked at from the perspective of several individual disciplines, and an integrated curriculum does not reject disciplinary perspectives. Rather it uses them when they are helpful and helps students to integrate them into a larger picture.

There is massive resistance, of course. Most efforts at school improvement tend to favor further emphasis on school subjects, especially on reading, writing, science, mathematics, and technology. They often stress teacher expertise in the disciplines and call for more rigor in their teaching. Some authors favor teaching for understanding within disciplines; others emphasize basic skills and the ubiquitous standardized achievement tests. In art education, there is a continuing tradition that promotes the autonomy and independence of art as a discipline or set of disciplines. In short, many educators want more, not less, emphasis on teaching separate school subjects.

ATTITUDES TOWARD DISCIPLINES

I have so far spoken of both "school subjects" and "academic disciplines." It is important to see that the relationship between the two is not a simple one. One might say that a "school subject" is an adaptation of an academic discipline in light of educational considerations, primarily students' learning abilities and social needs. This was Bruner's notion, for example, and it was much discussed by the progressives before him (Bruner, 1960; Dewey, 1990). But the desirable scope and character of this adaptation are complex questions and they lie at the heart of all curriculum issues, including the calls for an integrated curriculum. In spite of this, some of the current literature for and against integrated curriculum tends to speak of academic disciplines and school subjects as if they were identical.

The organization of the curriculum into school subjects has characterized American public schooling since it began. But as long ago as 1918 it was officially agreed that the disciplines are to be regarded as tools to be used for an understanding of life and the solution of life's problems (U.S. Bureau of Education, 1918). In other words, they are not to be taught primarily as ends in themselves, and the traditional organization is not self-justifying. Yet there is little agreement on what this means in practice. One disagreement is about sequence. Should knowledge of disciplinary content be considered prerequisite for problem solving or an outcome of it? Do students need to learn the tools first, before being able to use them, or should they address problems first and learn to use the tools as they need them?

The most common answer is that disciplines are very complex and difficult to master, and they require separate study before they can be used (e.g., Broudy, Smith, & Burnett, 1964). This follows a long-standing tendency among educators to break learning down into its constituent parts and to teach the simpler elements before the complex wholes. In this case, the disciplines are simpler and are to be taught before the problems. The notion is that this sequence of simple to complex, part to whole, is required by logic, and it is usually associated

with claims of efficiency. It underlies traditional practice, except that too often the problems are not addressed at all.

The contrary view comes from the greater concern for meaning. Meaning lies in the whole, it is argued, and the parts should be learned after their place in the whole is grasped. Tools have meaning only when their usefulness is understood; indeed their meaning lies in what they can be used to do. This means that students should grapple with the problems first and learn to use the tools as they find them helpful. Dewey notably championed this view (Dewey, 1990). However, he regarded an understanding of the disciplinary character of knowledge as *one* of the desirable goals of education. This is in line with his general view that an important mechanism of learning is the transformation of means into ends. The disciplines represent, he said, "the possibilities of development inherent in the child's immediate crude experience" (Dewey, 1990, p. 190). This means that students should eventually come to understand the different kinds of knowledge, and their value, as a consequence of a long period of using them to solve problems that they care about. Disciplines, on this view, serve teachers as guides to clarify the direction that student learning should take. In other words, disciplines retain a significant educational role in an integrated curriculum, even though they do not constitute the primary educational goals. They are tools for problem solving and guides for teachers.

As I have already argued, the scheduling of school subjects in the school day is a relatively minor question and does not lie at the heart of issues about integrated curriculum. In actual practice, there are many ways to schedule the school day in an integrated curriculum. One can maintain the traditional pattern of school subjects with specialist teachers for the whole day or for part of the day, or one can abandon it. The key questions are the content and manner of the students' learning.

ART, CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, AND INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

It is common to analyze curriculum discussions in terms of three kinds of issues (Kliebard, 1995). One is social, having to do with the needs and character of contemporary society, to which education must in some way respond. Another is psychological, having to do with the way students learn and organize their knowledge, their abilities, and their interests. And the third is epistemological, having to do with the nature of knowledge. This includes issues about disciplines, their nature, origins, functions, and so on. These categories are admittedly very general, but I will use them in my discussion.

I begin with a review of the arguments having to do with the character of society. The basic argument here is simple. Our society has become increasingly complex and is in constant change, and students should study these changes, and their attendant problems, to prepare them to participate well in society. A socially relevant democratic education, it is argued, must engage students in this way. This requires integrated studies, because the issues involved transcend disciplinary boundaries.

Versions of this argument appear in discussions of both work and public life. The discussion of work is not much found in the art education literature today (an exception is Boston, 1996) but I think it is influential with many teachers. It says that workers today will likely encounter complexities on the job, have to deal with ambiguity and change, evaluate their own performance, and in general solve problems that go beyond individual disciplines. They will also need to be able to work well with others, take multiple points of view, and be tolerant of diversity of all kinds. In art education the same points are more often made about social problems. Most of our social problems exceed the limits of single disciplines and require a matching range of capacities of citizens. Problems that are often cited include poverty, violence,

environmental deterioration, the development of technology, gender differences. For example, the new national curriculum in Taiwan requires 20% of school time to be spent on integrated curriculum and specifies six topics for study: the environment, the community, identity, gender, human values, and home economics (Huang, 1999). In the art education literature, there is often a social reconstructionist tone that says that students should go beyond the study of social problems and do something that promotes their solution (Freedman & Stuhr, 2001). This educational activism is mirrored by the rise of social activism in the artworld. A number of contemporary artists intend their art not only to raise awareness of social problems but also to make the world better by modeling solutions (Gablik, 1991; Spaid, 2002).

A topic[2] commonly suggested for integrated study is the local community. Many school reformers favor this because it can bring school and community closer together. For instance, it encourages local people to come into the school and students to go out into the community. There are many ways one can study the community. Depending on teacher and student interests, one could study, for example, its garbage, ethnic diversity (Stuhr, 1994), food, government, entertainments, architecture, monuments. In one case, some teachers in a Cleveland elementary school chose to study local bridges (Wiseman, 1999). The children talked with a local engineer about the different structures and designs of bridges. They went to study particular bridges in the neighborhood. Because there are many bridges in Cleveland, the topic led to a study of traffic patterns, the history of transport and industry in Cleveland, and inquiry about the history of specific bridges. The students took photographs, made drawings, created model bridges, looked at paintings of bridges, and wrote essays and letters about bridges. Local history and the local built environment are in general rich topics for cultural, historical, social, and architectural inquiry in an integrated curriculum (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001; Guilfoil, 2000; Marche, 1998; Thurber, 1997).

Such topics have a long history in American education (Cremin, 1961). What is new today, because of changes in the contemporary artworld, is a greater possibility of making art central to their study. Contemporary art is frequently about the sort of topics just mentioned, including at least the first five of the six topics in the new Taiwanese curriculum. It is particularly easy to find artworks in and about local communities. There have always been murals, statues, and monuments; and since the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts, there has been an important expansion and development of public art (Lacy, 1995; Raven, 1993). The commissioning of artworks by communities has become a regular feature of the artworld. An artist commissioned to make a public work today is usually expected to research the local history, character, people, occupations, architecture, and to make a work that is about some aspect of the community that commissioned it. This happens at many levels. Prominent examples at the national level might be the Vietnam Wall and the current discussions of what is to be built on Ground Zero in New York City. These both offer opportunities for the study in school of significant historical events and national attitudes. There are many examples at the level of the local community, especially because today artworks are often required in new public buildings and renovations. An interesting case is the program of public art in the village of Dublin, Ohio, which for 12 years has biennially commissioned a public work to celebrate the identity of the village (Dublin Arts Council, 2002). The program has been very successful and has become a kind of model for other communities. In short, both the making and the study of public art in a community are also necessarily the study of aspects of the community.

This process of commission, research, and making can also be adapted in schools. Students can be "commissioned" to design artworks for a particular space and asked to think about some aspect of their community and to submit designs to a committee composed of either

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[2]The use of the term *topic* is questioned by some authors. They may prefer *issues, themes, problems,* or *ideas.* I see little value in arguing such distinctions and hope to convey my meanings sufficiently through the use of examples.

local people or other students. This would require study both of the local community and of other public artworks. A further step would be actually to make and install the work.

There is often an activist aspect to this topic. Public art is often intended somehow to affect the community by drawing attention to some aspect of it. Increasingly it is used in efforts to improve deteriorating neighborhoods. The idea is to make artworks that celebrate or improve local features, histories, facilities, often in conjunction with other efforts at renovation. An example is the 8-year-old "Art in the Market" program to restore the old Findlay market in Cincinnati. This old, still substantial marketplace is in an impoverished neighborhood called *Over-the-Rhine*. The program seeks to help the neighborhood recognize and use its own resources. Teenagers from the area are encouraged in a school program to create artworks around the marketplace in response to their study of the market and the people using it (Russell & Russell, 2001). Another example is the creation of a playground for children in an inner-city neighborhood. In this case, local parents came together to renovate a small delapidated park for the safe use of their children and to enhance community identity. With the help of a small grant, they engaged local artists to create artworks in the park that the children can play with, each with an African American theme. For example, one is a steel sculpture of a baobob tree that the children can climb on or gather round. Another is an African story board that encourages children to tell stories about selected visual prompts. The Kwanzaa Playground in Columbus has been a great success (Chanda & Daniel, 2000; Daniel, 2001). Cases like this may seem ambitious for an individual school, but there are many smaller opportunities. There are always local histories, buildings, events, people to inquire into; and walls, vacant spaces, and walkways that could support an artwork. The educational opportunities in the study of communities are many.

Another well-developed topic that calls for art in an integrated curriculum is the natural environment. Again, there is plenty of precedent in the contemporary artworld. Many artists have taken the natural environment as their theme, including increasingly artists who attempt to improve the environment through their work (Spaid, 2002). Students can approach the natural environment through studies of particular aspects of it, such as a stream, the needs of local wildlife, the quality of the air, making a garden. In one well-documented case, elementary school students studied a local wetlands park, together with a visiting environmentalist and children's author. They examined the plants and animals, wrote and drew about them, followed the seasons, and created a large ceramic mural installed in the park. The next year, influenced by the artwork of Lynne Hull, they created their own wetlands on the school grounds, made habitats for particular species of wildlife, and studied the gradual development of the wetlands (Birt, Krug, & Sheridan, 1997). In another example, Taylor used the model of Mazeud's well-known river-cleaning work in service-learning activities in a teacher education program (Gablik, 1991; Taylor, 2002, pp. 119–122). The work of Don Krug provides many more illustrations of these possibilities (Krug, 1997). These examples all involve ideas from biology, chemistry, economics, history, math, and literature, and they use art as a central activity that enables students to make sense of them.

I have mentioned some developments in the contemporary artworld that lie behind these examples and enable art to be central to the integrated curriculum. But perhaps the most fundamental change in this respect is the huge increase in our use of visual images for communication of all kinds—in advertising, magazines, on the Internet, through videos, and so on. This is a very large change in our society, and it has been much commented on. Mitchell, for example, speaks of our time as having taken a "visual turn" that has profoundly changed its character (Mitchell, 1994). The development of visual communication has blurred the distinction between fine art and popular culture so far that it is often not clear which parts of it should be considered part of the contemporary artworld. Are advertisements art, for example? Perhaps only some of them? Are videos, comic strips, fashion designs art? There is no definitive answer, of course, and

it is often proposed that therefore aspects of visual communication should be studied in art education (Duncum, 2001; Freedman, 2000). There are endless possibilities here. How is war portrayed, for example, on TV, in the movies, in the newspapers, in videogames? We know that the *image* of war is important psychologically, politically, perhaps even militarily. How are other cultures, or racial or national differences, represented? What are the popular images of children, teenagers, schooling? What kinds of people become celebrities on television? What kinds of images are presented of film stars, sports players, politicians, businessmen? How are cigarettes and alcohol advertised? There is an endless series of questions that would require a study of both visual images and of the realities that lie behind the images. Taylor, for example, gives an example where high school students studied a video of Madonna's and made conceptual webs of the many connections they saw between its details and their own lifeworld (Taylor, 2000). One advantage of such approaches is that they present art as part of students' life, something not to be found only in museums and galleries.

More radically, it is sometimes suggested that the whole of art education should become the study of visual culture. A separate chapter of this volume is devoted to this movement, so I will not dwell on it here, nor detail its bibliography. But clearly the study of visual culture, as a part or the whole of art education, is a natural ally of integrated curriculum. One can advocate an integrated curriculum without also advocating the study of visual culture, but the reverse is implausible. One cannot seriously study visual communications without also thinking about their content and function, about the representations made in them, and about the corresponding realities in one's own experience, without, in short, an integrated approach to the curriculum.

A topic often associated with the study of visual communications is gender. Many contemporary artists have made art about gender; Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger are well-known examples. But the images that most influence young people come from the popular media, especially commercial advertising and entertainment. Many people feel that this influence is unhealthy, especially for girls and young women, and that a number of personal and social problems flow from it (Shandler, 1999). Consequently, it is often suggested that we should study in art education the way girls and boys and men and women are represented in popular images, especially in advertising and movies (Freedman, 1994).

There is some negative reaction to these proposals on the grounds that art education might disappear. To discuss, for example, popular visual representations of gender would probably also require discussing the nature of advertising and fashion and perhaps that of our commercial and entertainment systems as a whole. The discussion could easily move to the power relations obtaining in those systems and the many connections with other aspects of social structure, such as poverty and inequality. At this point, one begins to hear objections that the art has been lost from art education; that art education has become something else. Art, it is said, first becomes visual imagery in general, and then visual imagery becomes politics. These objections will no doubt be discussed in the chapter on visual culture. My reason for mentioning them here is that the fear of losing what is important about art haunts all discussions of integrated curriculum. It arises particularly in connection with issues of visual culture, but it is more general than that. If we integrate the study of art with other subject matters, will we lose our focus on the nature of the images themselves? Will art become only the "handmaiden" of other concerns? I will return to this fear in a later section.

Many other topics deriving from the character of our society could be mentioned in this section. They conform with what was suggested earlier: They target important social problems; they are complex and transcend the limits of individual disciplines; they are ambiguous and need to be understood from several points of view. The connection of integrated curriculum with such topics is very strong in the art education literature, and it suggests that, although at the level of practice the field may be more conservative, Beane's charge of conservatism does not easily apply to the literature in our field.

Art, the Student, and the Integrated Curriculum

In general, art educators interested in integrated curriculum have done much less with psychological issues of learning than they have with the social ones just reviewed. This is perhaps surprising, because the integration of the whole child was a major theme of the expressive movement of earlier decades. Viktor Lowenfeld, emblematic of that movement, wrote memorably about the importance of "self-identification" in the early pages of *Creative and Mental Growth* (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). He spoke of the need for children to be able to express their ideas and feelings, to learn through their bodily senses, and to relate what they learn in school with their own experience. The major goal of the movement Lowenfeld represented was the psychological integration of the child in lived context through the expression and interconnection of mental contents. After the "cognitive revolution" (Davis & Gardner, 1992), Lowenfeld's reputation suffered because he did not speak in cognitive terms, nor talk much about self-awareness, nor at all about the social construction of the mind. But his theme—the personal integration of students' thoughts, feelings, attitudes—remains fundamentally important. To see this, one has only to think of the many current school problems with drugs and alcohol, ethnic intolerance, obesity, depression, bulimia, and violence. Schooling today is stressful for many students and sometimes disorienting, moreso perhaps than it was in Lowenfeld's time. Personal wholeness has long been linked with art education (Burton, 2002) and is the fundamental goal of curriculum integration. It can be achieved only by students relating together their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes in a more comprehensive understanding. The goal is for students through their learning to construct a consistent picture of their world and their place in it, especially by making sense of their own experience and life-world. The reason for the study of social problems, reviewed earlier, can not be really (in my judgment) to solve the problems but to provide a meaningful context for this integrated understanding.

Integrated curriculum is usually associated with a constructivist psychology. The student is thought of as actively constructing the meanings of what is learned, inquiring into topics of interest, relating what is learned with what is already known. This view of the learner as an active meaning-maker is virtually required, because it is the students, not the teacher, who integrate what is learned in their own understanding. Constructivist views are frequently referenced in the art education literature, especially the visual culture literature. A related issue, often mentioned, is the relation of teachers and students (The Ohio State University TETAC Mentors, 2002). Constructivist psychology suggests that teachers and students become more like research collaborators than is usual, with the students helping to determine topics, research activities, constructive projects, and criteria for assessment.

The relative lack of attention in art education to the psychological aspects of integrated curriculum does not occur in education at large. Much of the general literature on integrated curriculum is concerned with student learning and personality. Clincy, for example, says:

> ... the world of the 21st century (calls) for a profoundly different, deeply democratic system of public schooling based on constant attention to the lives of individual children and to the familial and community worlds from which those children come. It is a system of schooling whose most important aim is the creation of decent, compassionate, human individuals who are, in Anita Teeter's words, "caring adults, builders of communities, sharers of learning, lovers of the printed word, citizens of the world, nurturers of nature." (Clincy, 1997, pp. 8–9)

There is also an important concern in education for developmentally appropriate practices, matching curriculum demands with the abilities and needs of students (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Charbonneau & Reider, 1995; Hart, Burts, & Charlesworth, 1997). This concern, too, is

found much less often in the art education literature. Charlesworth, speaking of early childhood, makes clear the connection of developmentally appropriate practice with integrated curriculum. She says:

> The primary criteria of developmental appropriateness are age appropriateness, individual appropriateness and cultural appropriateness. DAP is defined as including integrated curriculum based on children's natural interests, allowing for construction of concepts through exploration of concrete materials, and adjusting to the diversity in our society... (Charlesworth, 1997, p. 51)

The discussion of developmental appropriateness and personal integration occurs in connection with all levels of schooling but is probably most vigorous in preschool and middle school. In preschool, there is emphasis on "the whole child," and the project method is very popular. The name "project method" was first coined by Kilpatrick and it covers a wide variety of practices (Kilpatrick, 1936). One well-known set of examples is provided by the schools of Reggio Emilia (Katz, 1998; Spaggiari, 1987). The project method encourages young children to investigate topics of their own choice, such as where shadows come from, how to organize a long-jump competition, or how to make an amusement park for birds.[3] It is a response to the ways young children explore the world and at the same time develop ways to express their thoughts "in a hundred languages." Many of these languages, of course, belong to the visual arts and are frequently central to the projects in this method (Rabitti, 1994; Ranklin, 1998)). Pitri discusses an American project that combined archeological inquiries with art (Pitri, 2002). Other examples of the role of art in developmentally appropriate early childhood programs have been discussed by Colbert and Taunton (Colbert, 1997; Colbert & Taunton, 1992).

In 1995, Brazee and Capelluti, arguing for integrated curriculum, said of the middle school curriculum:

> The middle level curriculum landscape has changed dramatically in the last five years. Beginning with the publication of James Beane's from *Rhetoric to Reality* in 1990, the curriculum conversation, as it has come to be called, has exploded.... Serious and reasoned consideration of what the middle school curriculum should be (and *how* it should be) is of utmost concern. (p. 15)

In the middle school literature, the dominant issue is identity (Middle Level Curriculum Project, 1993). Middle school students are increasingly aware of issues of self-presentation and social interaction, of the inwardness of feeling and the outwardness of appearance, of stereotyping and group membership, and of the differences among people. These developments are a central issue in middle schools and many believe that they call for an integrated curriculum (and we might add they also call for more work with art). *Self* and *identity* are the words we use for the integration of understanding into a coherent whole. Our identity, we can say, *is* the understanding we have of our self. Building that understanding is a continuous process, requiring middle school students to make sense of traditionally difficult antitheses, such as those between inner feeling and outward appearance, values and practice, among the different perspectives of people, between life in school and experience at home, and between mind and body. To relate these aspects of experience together in a satisfactory way is to construct a stable self and a meaningful identity.

Art has traditionally been associated with this construction. *Self* is a frequent topic in the art classroom. Art teachers commonly ask students to make works that represent some aspect of

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[3]The examples come from the exhibition of children's work in Reggio Emila schools, *The one hundred languages of children*, that toured the United States in the summer of 2002.

their self. They call for works about family, vacations, hobbies, ideals. Sometimes assignments move into students' feelings, fears, dreams, and social relations. The more ambitious projects encourage students to think of self as having a number of elements, through the use of collections of images brought together in collages, boxes, notebooks, portfolios. Of course, such projects do not automatically promote an *integration* of self. Everything depends on the details of the project. One can always ask questions about actual cases. For example, do the assignments promote reflection or self-stereotyping? Do they touch on issues of real concern to students? Do they suggest hard questions or easy answers? Do they promote inquiry? Are students encouraged to acknowledge different elements of self?

A contemporary view would rather speak of identity than of self, stressing the social and cultural influences on individuals. Today we prefer to speak of students' construction of identity from the materials offered by their culture rather than of their discovery of self. Given this view, the topic of *self* readily moves into the study of the cultural environment. Popular culture in particular provides many of the elements that students use to construct their identity. Wagner-Ott, for example, discusses a case where students studied the characteristics of popular dolls and action figures, with an emphasis on gender differences (Wagner-Ott, 2002). A common suggestion is to study popular stereotypes of the various groups—gender, race, nationality, and so on—to which students may belong. These stereotypes too easily become accepted as aspects of self unless they are examined critically. When students analyze the stereotypes, they analyze parts of their own identity, becoming aware of influences they can accept or reject. As already suggested, this kind of examination is a major motif of the visual culture movement. So far, however, the chief interest of that movement has been the analysis of the visual culture rather than that of students' own response to it. It has shown a stronger interest in the social issues than in the psychological ones. These latter include, for example, the kinds and degrees of awareness of or critical attitude toward stereotypes that students have. How do they use the arts to integrate their understandings of complex issues? What images do they use to integrate their bodily, emotional, and social experience? How far do they consider the point of view of others in their interpretations? How and when do they understand the images of popular culture, especially their commercial intent? Questions like these, about the uses of imagery and the development of self-awareness, are important to integrated learning and they are continuous with the traditional concerns of art educators. In short, the psychological issues of integrated curriculum have been important in art education, though the current literature has not much dwelt on them.

It may be worthwhile asking why this is so. Perhaps we could say that, in the same way that the visual culture movement now tends to underplay psychological interests in favor of social and political ones, the disciplinary movement of the last 30 years has also underplayed them in favor of disciplinary interests. Most of the attention of the disciplinary movement was on the structures, methods, content, of the arts disciplines and their translation into the school curriculum. Its interest in learning was oriented mostly to studies of learning to think in disciplinary ways. There were the many studies of the recognition of artistic styles, for instance (Gardner, 1990), of learning to think in the arts as separate languages (Goodman, 1978), and of visual thinking as opposed to verbal thinking (Arnheim, 1969). Their common idea was a separatist one: that thinking proceeds differently in different disciplines (or in different media, languages, or sensory organs), an idea that is not hospitable to curriculum integration (Parsons, 1998). The most influential outcome of this kind of theory is probably the idea of "multiple intelligences" (Gardner, 1983). This theory has provided important political and ideological support for teaching the arts in schools, but it does not easily support their integration with other subjects.

The work of Arthur Efland is an exception in that it does address the psychological interests of learning in an integrated curriculum (Efland, 2002a). Efland describes art as an

essentially "ill-structured" discipline in which there are many exceptions to general statements and procedures (Spiro, Coulson, Feltovich, & Anderson, 1988). It is an endeavor where ambiguity and intuition are as important as logic and where connections run in multiple directions. Efland argues that in consequence art is best taught through case studies. Major artworks can serve the cognitive function that significant landmarks and buildings do in cities (Efland, 2000). Landmarks orient people to the city, offer varied perspectives on its parts, and let people locate themselves. In the same way, artworks can be approached from many directions, can connect different areas of knowledge together, and let people know where they are. They can serve as organizers of an integrated understanding of complex situations.

Efland is influenced by current efforts in psychology to understand the mind as closely related to the body and its experience, in reaction to the cognitive science metaphor of the mind as a computer (Johnson, 1987; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991). A promising idea is that our important metaphors derive from bodily experience, as when we speak of an upright character, the grasp of meaning, or a burning passion (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). We elaborate meanings by elaborating metaphors. They are the source of new meanings as we move in the world from situation to situation, trying to find continuities among them. It is in the arts that we are most encouraged to work with metaphors—both to create and to reflect on them.

Arguments About the Nature of Art

There has been an important change in attitudes toward disciplines, especially in art. This can be seen in the metaphors commonly used to describe them. When the "new" disciplinary curricula of the 1960s were introduced, the disciplines were understood as conceptual structures, in which certain unique ideas lay at the heart of a discipline and gave it its character and power (Bruner, 1960). These ideas were linked to one another in particular ways, forming a characteristic "structure"; for example, the ideas of electron, nucleus, and atom are linked and form the structure of atomic physics. Such a distinctive set of fundamental ideas was thought to be the defining characteristic of every discipline, and much effort went into identifying them, especially in the case of the less "well-structured" disciplines of the arts and humanities. In schools, the educational goal was to be an understanding of these conceptual structures and their component key ideas, as contrasted with low-level learning such as remembering particular facts and practicing specific skills. The focus on conceptual structure, it was argued, would ensure that the curriculum is meaningful to students. This metaphor of ideas and structures was influential on the discipline-based approach to teaching art, which usually focused on teaching ideas that are uniquely important in art.

Nowadays, another metaphor is more common. Disciplines are more often thought of as "fields" or "domains," as having boundaries in the way that kingdoms and other domains do, boundaries that are historically arrived at, are somewhat arbitrary and reveal the exercise of power. We are more aware that academic disciplines are the constructions of self-promoting and powerful elites that require varied acts of exclusion for their maintenance. And, in a further step, boundaries like this are likely to be impediments to knowledge, just as boundaries to real domains are obstacles to travel. Meaning, the metaphor suggests, is as likely to be found in crossing borders as in remaining in the center.

This shift of metaphors is due, no doubt, in part to the fact that the dreams about meaning of the "new" disciplinary curricula were overtaken by subsequent pressures toward social efficiency, including the behavioral objectives movement, the cognitive science movement, and the current emphasis on high-stakes achievement tests. But it also reflects postmodern doubts about disciplines. We now have a greater recognition of their historical character and an increased suspicion of their relations to power. The traditional art disciplines in particular are sometimes seen as elitist repositories of politically correct knowledge and as undemocratically

excluding the works and judgments of common people, folk art, the art of some other traditions, and visual culture in general.

Perhaps most importantly for art educators, there is no agreement that its most important ideas are unique to art. We have had more than 30 years of an emphasis on the arts disciplines, but there is no agreement about the conceptual structures or the central ideas of any of them, including art making, art history, art criticism, or the philosophy of art. It is also doubtful that they have unique methods of working or research paradigms. We can no longer identify them in terms of a single identifying method or logic. The idea of *art* itself has become so loose that, given the flood of visual images in our society, it is impossible to sort the art images from the non-art ones.[4] The ideas sometimes called the *elements and principles of design* (such as line, shape, color, and balance, contrast, focus) may be unique to art but they are no longer thought to be the most important. The idea of the *aesthetic* is often suggested both as the most fundamental idea in art and as unique to it, providing the purpose of art education and giving it coherence (Eisner, 2001; Smith, 1995). Artworks have aesthetic qualities, it is said, and the purpose of art education is help students to grasp those qualities. If we do not attend to the aesthetic qualities of images, their study becomes something other than art education: cultural anthropology, perhaps, or media studies. The fear is that we will lose the aesthetic qualities of images and the art in art education.

In my opinion, a better response is to accept the account of the "ill-structured" character of art and its disciplines and to continue to use them nevertheless. Instead of looking for essential ideas, we can teach the disciplines through a study of cases, extracting from them characteristic and useful, but not essential, ideas and ways of proceeding (Barrett, 1994, 1996; Harris, 2001; Walker, 2001). In practice, artists, art critics, art historians, and others have many ways of making and arguing, and practitioners use whatever makes most sense of the situation. When we look at their practice, we can identify a number of ideas and ways of proceeding and we can teach others to use them. These are tools worth learning, though they are context dependent, hard to generalize, and subject to dispute; they are useful, though their use requires judgment and sensitivity to context. And they are often variously connected with real-world issues and so are hospitable to integrated approaches to curriculum. I believe that this response, which accepts the multiplicity of art forms, procedures, and qualities rather than looking for an essential common element, reflects the character of contemporary art.

One can make the same point via the notion of the "artworld." The artworld is a social institution, a recognizable and important part of our society, with particular practices, ideas, institutions, narratives, and histories (Efland, 2002b). It is both more comprehensive and more indeterminate than the different art disciplines but can be substituted for them as the focus of study in art education. The key point is then that the artworld is to be understood as much in social as in intellectual terms and to understand it requires more than a knowledge of the art disciplines.

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[4]These kinds of doubts are often used to support the movement to expand the idea of art to include all of visual culture. It is the first argument, for example, in the recent summary of the case in an *Advisory* of the NAEA. This document is significant because it was written by a group of 12 prominent scholars in the field. The summary says, in part:

> Conceptions of art are changing and expanding. The boundaries that inform our understanding of art institutions, forms, practices, and values, are in flux. Recent theoretical and philosophical shifts have emerged in and across various domains of knowledge. . . .New self-conscious trans-disciplinary fields of study have emerged to challenge conceptual dichotomies, such as fine/popular arts. As a result of these changes, it has become necessary to expand the concept and practice of art education to the realm of visual culture. (NAEA, 2002, p. 1)

The *Advisory* adds a second argument, which I have already discussed in the context of the psychological interests of integrated curriculum: that the visual images that we meet in everyday life greatly influence our students' beliefs, feelings, and values.

I have already abundantly traded on an assumption about art that is related to these issues and is fundamental in thinking about art in an integrated curriculum. It is that artworks are always *about* something; they have meanings to understand, as well as qualities to grasp, and these meanings are central to their character as artworks. Especially they can be about social or personal issues, sometimes deep and abiding ones. This point would not always have been accepted in the Modernist period, but it has been reiterated in many ways since Arthur Danto argued it (Danto, 1981). The assumption enables us to say that, although artworks certainly have characteristic ideas, media, techniques, principles, and histories, what is most important about them are their meanings (Parsons, 2002). The thought leads directly to an integrated curriculum. If students are to study art, they must think about meanings. If they are to understand a work by someone else, they need to inquire into its topic; and conversely, if they are to study a topic, they can explore and express their thoughts by making works about it. Art in this light is already an integrated subject. It is a medium for the exploration and expression of views about topics, in which an understanding of a topic cannot easily be divorced from its expression. In this way, it is like language, though in other ways very different. Students can neither understand nor write a good essay about a topic they do not understand; nor can they understand or make an interesting artwork about it. In practice, students in school might study a topic and make both verbal and visual works about it (essays, videos, digital presentations, artworks). The use of a combination of media leads to further conceptual and experiential integration and is often more motivating.

In principle, then, students must think about two kinds of things when studying art. One is the substantive topic, which may involve social studies, science, or math; and the other has to do with ideas and techniques of expression, which is the traditional content of art class. When these two elements are taken seriously and coordinated into one enterprise, the curriculum is integrated. For example, if the topic for study is a local stretch of river, the substantive element consists of the biological (or chemical, economic, social, political) character of the river. The artistic element consists of finding ways to represent the river that convey the students' evolving understandings and attitudes toward it. This may of course require looking at other works about rivers by other artists and the practice of relevant techniques; but it also requires the study of some aspect of the river itself.

In the practice of integrated curriculum, there can be great differences in the balance between these two elements, the substantive and the artistic. In some cases the substantive element almost disappears. The art teacher may assume that students already know enough about the river and should concentrate on how to represent it. This tends to reduce art to matters of technique, sometimes to the techniques of capturing the appearances of things. This is not good integrated curriculum because the students are not inquiring into any substantial ideas, and it also may not be good art education.

In other cases, the art element almost disappears. This is often because the teachers have a number of expectations to meet and art is not prominent among them. It may also be that they have relatively little training in art, as is often true. Teachers are often encouraged to integrate art into their curriculum and they may wind up using artworks only as illustrations of nonart topics. For example, they may show paintings to illustrate historical events, or get students to make drawings to illustrate them. In such cases, there are no ideas or procedures deriving from the artworld, no discussion of the character of the images as images or attention to the subtleties of their possible meanings. The spread of such teaching practices is a major fear of opponents of integrated curriculum (Eisner, 1986). This fear is associated with another: that integrating the curriculum will be an excuse in elementary schools for not employing specialist art teachers. Whether these fears are realistic depends on circumstances, mostly on how educators, including art teachers, understand both art and integrated curriculum. They may also depend on budgets. It must be said that a good integrated curriculum is more, and

not less, demanding of teachers than one oriented toward disciplines. Cremin reached this conclusion in his history of progressive education, suggesting that a reason for the persistence of the traditional organization is that it is easier for teachers to teach it and cheaper to prepare them to do it (Cremin, 1961). Advocacy of integrated curricula does not imply that teachers do not need to understand one or more disciplines. Quite the reverse. And it is always desirable to have art specialist teachers in schools, even in preschools, where students are clearly not expected to think about the disciplines. The Reggio Emilia preschools, for example, usually have an art specialist on their staff (Rabitti, 1994). This follows from the Deweyan thought suggested earlier: that in an integrated curriculum, a knowledge of disciplines serves as a guide to teachers about where the students' learning can go.

Other practices sometimes occur in the name of integration that give it a bad image among art educators. Especially there are projects in which teachers engage students in a variety of activities but engage them with no significant ideas. Wiggins and McTighe (1998, p.1), for example, cite a unit of activities about apples. Another example is the practice in elementary schools of choosing a geographical continent each year and devising activities related to it. Where these curricula are not guided by significant ideas it is unreasonable to call them integrated. Curricular activities can only be integrated by promoting thought about a common idea.

An Example of Integrated Curriculum

I will close this chapter by presenting an example with which I am personally acquainted. A number of faculty and students at The Ohio State University recently worked together on a 5-year grant[5] to help some local schools integrate their curriculum through a focus on the arts (The Ohio State University TETAC Mentors, 2002). The example comes from this work and was the result of the efforts of several groups of faculty, teachers, and students working together. At the same time, the reflections on it that follow are mine and may not be shared by all.

We adopted two ways of talking about ideas and their role in integrated curriculum: *Key ideas* and *essential questions* (Jacobs, 1989). Without these, we found curriculum projects tended to disintegrate into a set of parallel activities that had little more in common than the use of the same name. *Key ideas* can be thought of at two levels of generality. At the more general level, they are very similar to what I called topics previously; for example, community, environment, identity, violence, gender. A key idea is very general and names a kind of important contemporary problem. It does not belong to the artworld, though it is something that artists have made works about. It suggests many questions, is full of complexities, has many instantiations, and encourages different points of view. Teachers especially may find key ideas provocative. For instance, in one school a small group of teachers met to discuss the natural environment as a topic for their integrated curriculum. They spent an hour debating whether they should say, in their assignments to students, *the* environment, *our* environment, or *my* environment. The discussion reached no consensus but was full of new insights.

To make key ideas more easily understood and more manageable for inquiry, however, we found it useful to formulate them at a less general level. For example, community can be studied by investigating the local shopping mall, the garbage system, or the local bridges. These all reflect the community in some way and provide a suitable target for investigation. The environment topic can become the study of a wetland, a garden, or a stretch of road.

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[5]The grant was part of the national Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge and was funded jointly by the Getty Center for Arts in Education and the Annenberg Challenge (The National Arts Education Consortium, 2002).

Similarly, students can think about identity more easily by focusing on clothing styles, images of gender, or racial stereotypes. The point is that a key idea needs to be couched at a level that engages its audience. For students, one usually needs a more specific formulation to guide inquiry and to take advantage of local resources and interests. It may be generalized later but needs an initial more particular focus. Among other things, the desirability of beginning with local issues means that an integrated curriculum at the school level can be planned at a national level only in very general terms (Burns, 1995).

Essential questions turn the idea into questions that can be pursued by students. They are articulations of some of the ambiguities and depths of the idea, questions that resist easy answers, call for sustained inquiry, and lead on to further questions. For example, about the environment we might ask: How is the (local) environment changing? What causes the changes? Or: What is garbage? What does our garbage tell us about us? Can we imagine a community without garbage? Questions like these give direction to student thought, calling for both data collection and inquiry into further issues.

An example comes from a rural high school where a number of teachers worked together to integrate part of their curriculum. Here I need to say that the account that follows does not conform to the actual case closely. I have extended and idealized it somewhat for the sake of clarity. The reality of this curriculum of course encountered a number of difficulties, having mostly to do with time constraints, scheduling problems, and competing priorities. Nevertheless, it is clearly recognizable in this account.

One year, wanting particularly to raise value issues for the students, the group of teachers (about six of them, teaching a variety of different subjects) chose the key idea of *heroes.* In terms of the previous discussion, this is a particular case of *identity*, because of course to study one's heroes is also to study oneself. The teachers agreed to have their students pursue the following essential questions wherever possible throughout their first year of high school:

What are our heroes like?
How are heroes represented in art, literature, and the popular media?
Why do people have heroes?
How do heroes reflect different societies?
What do our heroes tell about us?

The teachers kept returning in class to these questions at different times during the whole year and they met frequently to discuss progress and coordinate topics. During the year, the students engaged in many sorts of activities in their classes, as appropriate to the different school subjects. In art and language arts classes, they identified and discussed their own heroes; their choices initially were dominantly sports or entertainment stars and other figures from popular culture. They collected stories and images of them from popular media and other sources, wrote biographies, and made portraits of them. They also looked at representations of heroes in the history of art and literature. An extended example in literature was the figure of Odysseus from the Odyssey. In art they spent some time looking at Warhol and making Warholesque portraits of their heroes. This exercise led to extended discussions of the difference between celebrities and heroes, a distinction that was full of insight for many and that caused some to change their choice of hero. It led also to discussion of the ambiguities of Warhol's own attitudes toward celebrities: admiring, descriptive, or critical? They also spent time with Rauschenberg's collage portraits of the Kennedys, again making their own collage portraits of their heroes. This led to discussion about the relation of heroes to the time and culture that makes them heroes, a step toward the essential question: *What do our heroes tell about us*?

In history class, they studied American presidents and the ways they have been represented. In one case, they focused on the photographs and other representations of Franklin Delano

Roosevelt over the years, because it was during that year (1999) that a public artwork—the new statue in Washington, D.C.—revealed openly the presence of the wheelchair to which he was bound. They also did a survey of the heroes of the adults in their community and collected photographs of the local statues and memorials. This project connected local with national history and also gave them a sense of changes in local tastes and values. In social studies, they looked at heroes in different cultures around the world, which led to further discussions of the relations between societies and the people they choose as heroes. Throughout all of this, there was attention to the way in which heroes are represented in both language and visual imagery and how those representations guide attitudes.

In these activities as described, art stands beside the other school subjects as one of several disciplinary approaches to the essential questions, which themselves overflow disciplinary distinctions. The curriculum could very well have stopped with that design. In this example, however, art was also used in a further and somewhat more ambitious way: as a medium for an exercise in the comprehensive integration of the students' discoveries about their heroes.

For the end of the year, the students were asked to design an outdoor sculpture about their heroes. They were commissioned by the group of teachers to design a work that expressed their understandings and feelings about their heroes. The students were to work in small groups to create the designs, one of which was to be chosen for actual installation in a space at the rear of the school. The process was adapted from the commissioning process mentioned earlier in the discussion of contemporary community public art and in itself taught the students something about how the contemporary artworld works. First they were to design a work that expressed their understanding of and attitudes toward their heroes. The design was to be drawn on paper and discussed in an artists' statement. It was then to be presented formally to the rest of the students acting as a selection jury. The criteria for selection were announced beforehand. They were three: the degree to which the design reflected learning from the year's work; interest and expressiveness, including appropriateness to the particular heroe(s); and issues of practicality, including the relation of the design to the space. There were questions and answers at the end of each presentation, and then the students voted to select the best five designs. This presentation and selection process required special scheduling for 3 consecutive school afternoons and the collaboration of the teachers of the various disciplines, including math and science.

Subsequently, the five successful teams were given time to improve their design and to make three-dimensional models or computer simulations. They also revised their presentations, having learned considerably from the first round of presentations. They were then asked to make their presentations again in the evening before a jury of local adults, including the principal, a local politician, and an artist, and in front of an audience of parents and students. At the end of the evening the jury chose one design for actual construction and implementation. Teachers and students, together with a local engineer, labored for several weeks in the evenings to install it. This has now resulted in the beginning of an "art park" at the rear of the school, where a new work, on a different topic, is to be added each year.

This process was a practical and highly motivating experience of art criticism and discussion, one that engaged many students and teachers and a number of other local adults. Most importantly, it offered the students a way to digest and express their thoughts on a complex topic they had studied for the whole year. They used visual media to integrate their understanding, trying to create a work that expressed the complexities and points of view they had reached. They could of course have written essays or narratives that tried to do the same thing but there are advantages to using visual media for this purpose. One is, simply, motivational. So much of school is already verbal that the challenge to work with visual media was energizing for many students. Another is the mixture of media, visual and verbal, which is inherently stimulating intellectually: They had to discuss what they were doing with each other, explain

it to audiences, and to write an artists' statement. A third is the communication and publicity value, through the involvement of local adults and the permanent presence of the piece on the school grounds.

CONCLUSION

In this review, I have tried to articulate a vision that I think lies within the current interest in integrated curriculum in art education. It is a vision that harks back to the progressive era and at the same time responds to contemporary developments in the artworld and in society in general. It connects integrated curriculum with a focus on significant ideas, an interest in social problems, and a concern for students' struggle for a stable and healthy identity. It focuses on students' understanding of important topics and on their ability to connect school learning with their real daily world. With respect to the arts, it sees significantly greater opportunities for their role in the curriculum because of current changes in the artworld and in our modes of communication.

I have argued that integrated curriculum need not deny the value of the academic disciplines when they are understood as tools for problem solving. Indeed, an integrated curriculum calls for more highly trained teachers than does a disciplinary one. Both need an understanding of their discipline; the teacher in the integrated curriculum needs to know a discipline well in order to judge how it can be useful as a tool for the students. In addition the teacher in the integrated curriculum needs to understand the social developments and attendant problems that are to be studied and also have an understanding of the lifeworld and developmental needs of the students. A good teacher in an integrated curriculum must herself be able to integrate these three different kinds of things in her classroom. In addition, there must be a supportive school culture for integrated approaches to teaching (a topic I have not touched in this paper, though it is important). The vision is therefore a demanding one. It is a question whether we have a sufficiently supportive school culture or a sufficiently well-educated teaching force to carry it off in the majority of our public schools and whether, in a conservative time, we are willing to supply the resources required. We should not forget that the progressive education movement had many successes but ultimately foundered on these rocks.

At the same time, there are many benefits for teachers, as well as for students. Teaching an integrated curriculum in small groups can be an engaging and powerful form of professional development, as well as a source of insights into social and personal problems. There are many excellent teachers and schools at all levels where integrated curricula are practiced, where students work together to identify important problems and inquire into ideas for their solution, and where students can develop a consistent understanding of self and others in their world. In addition, in some of these schools, the arts are valued as modes for the exploration and integration of thought. I hope that the current wave of interest will swell their number.

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