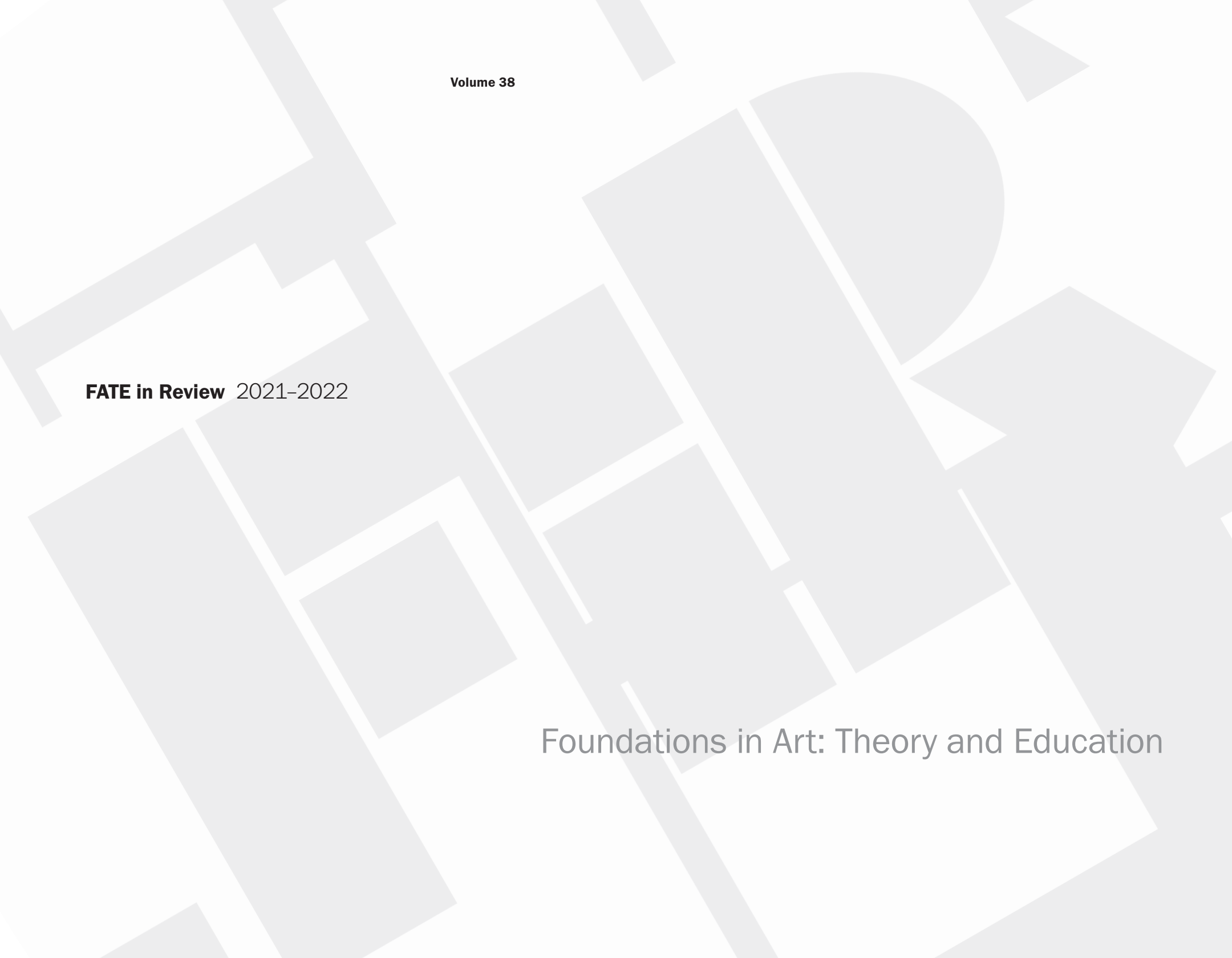


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Foundations in Art: Theory and Education



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Foundations in Art: Theory and Education

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Teaching MFA Students to Teach

*When students can articulate their own questions,
they can begin to take charge of their own learning.*

— Dr. Mary Erickson, *Professor of Art Education*
Arizona State University

Dan Collins, MFA, PhD

School of Art, Arizona State University
Foundations Coordinator

The Challenge

*How do we prepare our MFA students for
their first teaching experience?*

At Arizona State University (ASU), like many large public universities, most of our Foundations classes are taught by current MFA candidates in studio art. While these graduate students are emerging professionals in their chosen studio disciplines, the majority have little or no background in teaching. In addition, they are often tasked with a broadly-defined job outside of their specialized training. Further, the expanded scope of our first-year curriculum (*artCORE*)—with its emphasis on thematic inquiry and problem-solving—goes well beyond the experience of most graduate-level studio practitioners.

To address these issues, we have instituted a number of key experiences for our TAs. These include a week-long “*artCORE* Bootcamp,” a 15-week seminar called “Studio Art Pedagogy,” and the opportunity to either “shadow” or “co-teach” with full-time faculty members before becoming an “instructor of record.” The *artCORE* Bootcamp focuses on the nuts and bolts of preparing for (and surviving) one’s first teaching experience. Topics include an overview of the *artCORE* curriculum (see page 4), a deep dive into the Learning Management System adopted by ASU (viz., Canvas), alternative approaches for conducting critiques, an introduction to the School of Art facilities and equipment check-out procedures, and

a module on University policies and procedures including the roles and responsibilities of Teaching Assistants.

The Studio Art Pedagogy seminar goes well beyond the mechanics of teaching. Students explore educational philosophy and the history of art education to develop a personal “teaching statement” that reflects how they self-identify as artists and educators. The class provides an historical context, a solid overview of different pedagogical orientations, an introduction to thematic inquiry and novel problem-solving stratagems, and, most importantly, a context for developing a “teaching portfolio” that serves each student beyond their MFA experience.

In certain studio areas, we have new grads shadow a studio faculty member for a semester. This provides the student with direct experience in how to organize and implement a class without the added pressure of

being in charge. In other areas, we help prepare first-time teachers by pairing them with a faculty member in a co-teaching arrangement. While the student receives guidance and support from the faculty member, they also receive compensation as the primary instructor. The faculty member is compensated through their service obligation.

What's Your Teaching Philosophy?

I start a conversation with new GTAs on the first day of the Studio Art Pedagogy seminar by drawing a triangle on the whiteboard (Fig. 1). I label each vertex with one of the following words: Student (*learner*), Art (*subject*), and World (*society*). I then invite each student to write their initials on the triangle at a point that best captures the area they would like to focus on with their students. They are asked to briefly discuss their choice.

If the students are seriously invested in the discipline of fine art, and

they want to convey the depth of their engagement with art, they generally write their initials towards the lower right-hand vertex (“Art”). If they see their primary responsibility as the well-being and self-actualization of the undergraduates in their charge, they naturally gravitate towards the upper vertex (“Student”). And if they see the role of art as more instrumental and serving larger societal goals and perhaps even global transformation, they tag the triangle towards the lower-left vertex (“World”).

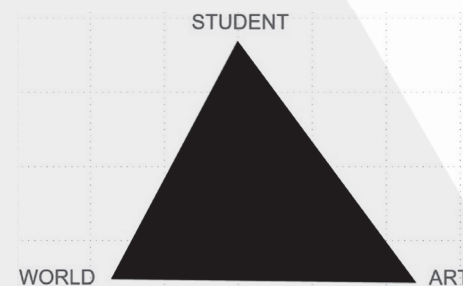


Fig. 1. *Eisner's Triangle*. [original illustration by the author].

It quickly becomes apparent to everyone in the room that no single, narrowly-focused orientation to art teaching is completely adequate to the task at hand. Most of us would not sacrifice a student's desire to find their “voice” or a sense of personal agency to the demands of a revolutionary art. Nor can we guarantee competency with the discipline of art if we are only preoccupied with students' opportunities for self-expression. Further, we believe it is critical to provide students

with the experiences and analytical tools they need to engage contemporary society and the world.

The figure (with the slightly different labels of “learner-subject-society”) appears in Elliot Eisner's 1972 book, *Educating Artistic Vision*.¹ Art educator and historian Mary Ann Stankiewicz traces the triad back to Ralph Tyler, the influential mid-twentieth century theorist of educational assessment and curriculum design. Tyler argued that all educational theories and programs must address three components of the educational process: the learner, subject matter, and society.²

Eisner claimed that most art programs and art educational theories emphasize one point of the triangle over the other two. Rather than viewing the learner, subject matter, and the social context as three competing orientations to art teaching and learning, most theorists agree that all three elements are necessary for a balanced curriculum.

Boiled down to its essence, the tripartite model addresses three different questions vital to art educators.

- Who do we teach?
- What do we teach?
- Why do we teach?

Building on this list at ASU, we feel that it is critical that all three aspects of Eisner's triangle are addressed in our teaching. We certainly need to know who our students are and help them reach their full potential—both as artists, invested in exploring their

We see the graduate student teachers as essential front-line workers in introducing the *artCORE* curriculum to our 100- level students. So part of their preparation involves an introduction to the curriculum as a whole.

own subjective experience, and as contributing members of society. We need to investigate the discipline of art—its formal language, its technical nuances, its historical precedents, and its cultural breadth. And we need to acknowledge that our practice as artists does not exist in a vacuum. We must understand what our roles and responsibilities are as artists and how we can contribute to the slow but inexorable progress of society.

Interestingly, the students refer back to the triangle throughout their tenure as teachers in *artCORE*. Many remark in retrospect on the fact that their “position” in the triangle shifted over the course of their teaching. TAs who began as flag-waving supporters of the discipline of art find themselves focusing

on the needs of individual students. Conversely, some who thought they would be student-centered in their teaching wind up promoting an “art for art’s sake” approach. Others, troubled by the insular character of the art world, find themselves taking up activist roles at the service of broader themes. Committed studio artists are pulled towards creative ways to connect their convictions with action, using art in an instrumental way to effect change.

The *artCORE* Curriculum

To appreciate the underlying philosophy of our teacher preparation program at ASU, it is important to understand the scope of the curriculum we have created for our first-year undergraduates. We see the graduate student teachers as essential front-line workers in introducing the *artCORE* curriculum to our 100- level students. So part of their preparation involves an introduction to the curriculum as a whole.

Let’s start with the three primary goals upon which *artCORE* is built. We aim to develop competencies in the following areas:

- studio skills (technique / formal principles)
- themes (conceptual drivers)
- strategies (heuristics)

Every project assigned to our undergraduates identifies at least two objectives: generally a “studio fundamental” and a “theme.” Where

appropriate, we also zero in on an alternative strategy. Each of these objectives is discussed in the following sections.

I. Studio Skills

Starting with hands-on experiences, we begin with the fundamentals and work toward a range of professional studio orientations. The *artCORE* program is the only time that many students are exposed to a real variety of materials, the physical experience of making something, and techniques in their university experience.

The ability to engage tangible, body-centered processes is essential to the full appreciation of art-making, regardless of media. Emphasizing direct experiences, the *artCORE* program fosters basic studio techniques, the ability to organize visual elements, and an introduction to a range of professional studio orientations. Each class serves to hone students’ powers of observation and basic drawing, engages a broad variety of art materials and digital media, serves as an introduction to the elements and principles of design, and gives way to the control and self-confidence that comes with practice.

In concert with this hands-on approach, students are assigned readings that reflect the studio fundamentals explored across a sequence of units. For example, in a project introducing figure-ground relationships, students read a chapter that discusses basic definitions, the history of

Gestalt Theory, technical approaches to creating figure-ground compositions, and major figures from the history of art who have used these techniques in their own work (e.g., Georges Seurat, Kara Walker).

Once the groundwork is established, students investigate one of several possibilities for creating their own figure-ground compositions—such as lino-cuts, portrait silhouettes, or digital compositions.

Key questions relative to studio-based objectives that could be used either to catalyze a preparatory discussion or provide hand-holds for student self-assessment include:

1. What range of visual qualities can you produce in this medium? With this tool?
2. Will a traditional or non-traditional use of the medium best achieve your goals?
3. What visual phenomena might you carefully observe to prepare yourself and check yourself as you work?
4. Would drawing be a useful method to assist your observation or help you plan?
5. What principle/s of design will best reinforce the goal of your work?
6. What element/s of design will best reinforce the goal of your work?
7. How has your control and confidence improved as you work in this medium? Where could you improve?
8. If you have worked in a similar medium in the past, what does that experience tell you about possibilities afforded in this medium?

II. Thematic Inquiry

The thematic inquiry approach embraced by the *artCORE* curriculum provides content and focus to the sequence of units found in each of the studios. Every theme page in the *artCORE* website includes a relevant quotation, a discussion that develops the ideas of the theme, a series of inquiry questions, related *artCORE* projects, a list of relevant artists and cultural works, and recommended reading.

There is an array of key themes explored in the *artCORE* program (the themes remain the same across the five studio areas). These include the Body, Identity, Protest and Persuasion, Art and Technology, Border Crossing, Art for Hire, Fantasy, The Natural World, Spirit Worlds, Signs and History, Place and Community, and Health and Wellness. Each theme is explored through lectures and dialogue with the instructor and in small discussion groups. In addition, a short text (available online) explores aspects of the various themes from the perspectives of the individual, of society, and the artist.

A typical introduction of a theme unfolds as follows: after an instructor-led introduction, students break into small groups or pair up with a partner to discuss the significance of the theme in the context of key inquiry questions. The process encourages students to arrive at their own answers via a dialogical process with their

peers. Here, for example, are the inquiry questions for the theme of *Identity*:

1. Who are you? How do you self-identify (asked only if students have indicated that they are comfortable with the query or they bring up the topic themselves)?
2. How does your partner or other members of your group identify themselves?
3. How does society at large identify you?
4. How can we move beyond stereotypes or profiling?
5. How do other societies, cultures, groups identify their members... or outsiders?
6. What graphic elements can artists use to express their own identity in a work of art?
7. How can you use, replicate, combine, or transform these elements in your own artwork to generate meaningful visual statements?
More specifically:
 - a. What do I want to say or do with this artwork?
 - b. How can I draw upon my own life experiences or gain insights from the world around me to inform my art-making?
 - c. How might other artists' work stimulate or inspire my art-making?
 - d. How can I select and organize visual qualities to make my art more effective?

Having formulated some initial ideas about the role *identity* plays in works of art, students are ready to begin their personal research. Generally, this research involves using the library, the Internet, or conducting interviews with artists and scholars and compiling a list of resources that deepen their understanding of the theme. While they are provided with well-known examples as a starting point, they are encouraged to explore on their own and find resources that go well beyond—or challenge—the canon.

Depending on a given instructor's choices, the same unit project may emphasize different themes in different classes. For example, in the 3D Matrix (the palette of projects focused on three-dimensional studio objectives) instructors may address the studio objectives around use of space, variously, projects that focus on the theme of Border Crossing (project: *Empathy Pavilion*), the Natural World (project: *Linear Locomotion*), and Spirit Worlds (project: *Kite Runner*).

According to Dr. Mary Erickson, Professor of Art Education at Arizona State University, themes help learners to integrate their understanding by:

- connecting a learner's prior experience with new ideas and experiences.
- connecting art-making and art history lessons.
- connecting artworks from very different cultures.
- connecting ideas in art with ideas in other areas of the curriculum.

Key to fully tapping the potential of each theme is the idea of inquiry-based teaching, a method that, in the words of Dr. Erickson, “puts control and direction in the hands of the learner.” While the inquiry prompts provided by the instructor may catalyze discussion, ultimately students themselves are in charge of formulating their own questions regarding themes of their own choosing. This ownership is critical because “when students can articulate their own questions, they can begin to take charge of their own learning.”³

III. Problem-Solving Strategies: Heuristics for Artists

In the artCORE program, we emphasize problem-solving and exploration. Strategies for creative problem solving—like visual thinking, chance operations, slow-looking⁴, and brainstorming—are highlighted in lectures and class discussions, then subsequently applied by students. These strategies focus students on the deeper heuristics—that is, methods for problem-solving and exploration that inform or guide a creative process.

Heuristics are simply tools for problem-solving. We all know the old saying, credited to Abraham Maslow in 1966, “if the only tool you have is a hammer, you treat everything as if it were a nail.” The Law of the Instrument, otherwise known as Maslow's Hammer, is a cognitive bias that involves an over-reliance on a familiar

tool. Clearly, a hammer is not the most appropriate tool for every purpose... or a good choice if you want to break away from routine patterns. At the other end of the “tool” spectrum, one could place an atomic linear accelerator. Physicists love smashing atoms into one another in their search for smaller and smaller fundamental building blocks. However, like Maslow's Hammer, there seems to be a limit. German physicist Werner Heisenberg observed in 1927 that at the scale of atomic matter, the process of observation itself may skew the experimental result. This has become known as the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle.

The point is that every “tool” has an effect on a material or an idea—with sometimes unpredictable results. Some tools are made in ways that generate characteristic marks, like the textured scallops left in a block of wood by a wood carving chisel or the subtle tonal gradations achieved by shaking rosin onto an etching plate. Some artists and artisans spend a lifetime perfecting their technique with a specific set of tools. Other artists embrace a variety of tools—some physical, some conceptual—to test the world. Physical tools are seductive. Almost every artist I know secretly longs to collect tools and explore their effects with different materials. Other artists embrace conceptual tools—heuristics—to frame, shape, deconstruct, or reconfigure an idea.

In the context of other disciplines, a “heuristic could refer to any device used in problem-solving, be it a program, a data structure, a proverb, a strategy, or a piece of knowledge.”⁵ Consider, for example, how the heuristic of “chance operations” can be used to bypass conventional thinking processes and generate unexpected or unpredictable outcomes. Chance operations are methods of generating artworks independent of the author’s will or conscious decision-making process. A chance operation can be based on almost anything—from throwing darts or rolling dice, to sequences of random numbers, to the ancient Chinese divination method known as the I-Ching. Artworks created by chance operations may use some original text as their source, be it the newspaper, an encyclopedia, or a famous work of literature. Other works depend on the unpredictability of materials or the deliberate undermining of technique. The found objects of Marcel Duchamp, are a great example of this, as is the automatic writing of the Surrealists, the chance compositions of the composer John Cage, and the choreography of Merce Cunningham or Yvonne Rainer. The purpose of such practices is to play against the artist’s conscious intentions and ego while introducing unexpected elements and unpredictable relationships. As the key to these works can be shared, the resulting artworks allow the reader/

viewer to take part in producing meaning from the work.

In recent history, twenty-first century technology has provided new impetus for chance operations in the intersecting areas of digital video, live human movement, social interaction, cell phone divination, live capture video looping, and other innovative permutations of human-technological chance encounters. What are some other “heuristics” that could be employed as tools for enabling understanding or problem-solving?

Mind Mapping is one particular strategy* that has proved effective in engaging students. Creating a mind map or concept map can be done at home, or it could be a collaborative exercise conducted in class. A mind map is a visual way to break down, organize, and learn information. According to Dr. Jane Genovese, mind maps can help one break down complex information, memorize information, and see the connections between different ideas.⁶ In the example (Fig. 2), the complexity of global warming is broken down into multiple branches that are clearly articulated and manageable. Any strand of the map—travel for example—could be used as the basis for a graphic image that is specific and details a course of action. By utilizing

*Additional examples of heuristic strategies that could be effective in a foundation art program include improvisation and framing, reflective journaling, thinking-backward, pattern-seeking, cooperative learning, and constrained writing (e.g., Haiku or Oulipo).

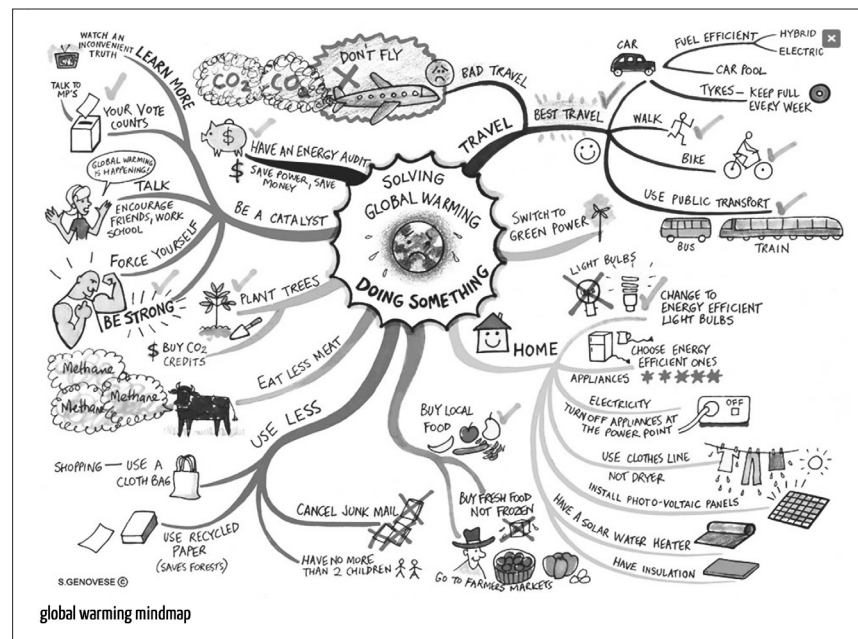


Fig. 2. A “mind map” generating potential solutions for global warming. [Image credit: Dr. Jane Genovese].

the strategy of mind mapping, essential information is distilled from the larger overwhelming issue of solving global warming. A pattern of possible actions emerges.

An example of another strategy or heuristic—one that is more difficult to convey to skeptical students—is the notion of “radical juxtaposition.” Susan Sontag wrote the following passage in 1966, several decades after the articulation of the technique by André Breton, Louis Aragon, and Philippe Soupault in 1920s Paris:

The Surrealist tradition...is united by the idea of destroying conventional meanings, and creating new meanings or counter-meanings through *radical juxtaposition* (the ‘collage principle’). Beauty, in the words of Lautréamont, is ‘the fortuitous encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table.’...The Surrealist sensibility aims to shock, through its techniques of *radical juxtaposition*.⁷

According to art historian Amy Lyford, the dissecting table at the center of the passage and at the center of Man Ray's representation of this passage symbolizes bodily death and destruction. The Man Ray drawing referring to the *beau comme* passage in *Les Chants de Maldoror* by Comte de Lautréamont, in *Minotaure* 3–4 (1933), 101, appears on page 20 of Lyford's *Surrealist Masculinities: Gender Anxiety and the Aesthetics of Post–World War I Reconstruction in France*. Note: *Enquête* can be translated from the French as “investigation.” The drawing can be viewed here: <https://content.ucpress.edu/chapters/10357.ch01.pdf>

She writes:

As a site of posthumous surgery and evisceration, the dissecting table promotes an association with the scientific analysis of death. The placement of the umbrella and sewing machine on top of a table designed for efficient bloodletting—a process finely detailed in the drainage structures in Man Ray's drawing—establishes morbid continuity between the site of the image and the objects that clash within it...The passage's radical juxtaposition of the three elements generates a new way of seeing the world. Moreover, those elements define the surrealist image as an unstable mixture of objects with myriad cultural associations that themselves connect to assumptions about war, productivity, and gender identity.⁸

The Surrealists remind us that the stuff of fine art is acutely resistant to easy analysis. While surrealist methods such as chance operations, radical juxtaposition, the exquisite corpse, and automatic writing seem, on the surface, to lack rigor or purpose, some of the most penetrating and insightful works created in the last century have emerged from processes where logic and conscious choice have been suspended.

We do our students no favors by providing easy formulas for art production. Indeed, our responsibility as educators is better met by sharing frameworks and tools that can help

students enter difficult territory on their own. The challenge for educators is to provide the magic combination of structure, open-ended problems, and motivation for students to begin asking questions of their own making with confidence and a sense of purpose.

Key questions regarding the choice of a Problem-Solving Strategy for students include:

1. Which strategy or “heuristic” did you use in your process?
2. Given the quality of your final work, how would you rate the success of your strategy?
3. Do you think you will use this strategy again?
4. Did you follow one strategy fairly consistently? Change strategies? Modify your original strategy? Reject a strategy?
5. What aspect of your strategy was most valuable? Enriching? Predictable? Stimulating? Practical? Informative? Adventurous?
6. What aspect of your strategy was least valuable? Inefficient? Fruitless? Time-wasting? Frustrating?
7. What is the most important insight you gained through your process?

Becoming conscious of how cognitive structures and various heuristic strategies impact and even shift meaning is essential for artists in the twenty-first century. An introduction and application of various strategic methodologies provide students with the tools needed to interrogate and test received definitions of art.

Scaffolding

If the ultimate goal is for students to ask their own questions and direct their own learning, it is important to consider whether one's curriculum—however well-intentioned—is too

structured or overdetermined and is therefore undermining student agency. One guard against this dilemma is the use of a well-known pedagogical strategy called “scaffolding.”

Scaffolding refers to a method in which teachers offer support to students as they learn and develop a new concept or skill. In the scaffolding model, a teacher may share new information or demonstrate how to solve a problem, then gradually step back and let students practice on their own. The word itself is generally associated with the construction trades and refers to the temporary framework that is set up for builders to use while they construct new walls and floors or paint or repair existing structures. The key-word here is “temporary”—i.e., by the time the building is complete, the scaffold has completely disappeared.

Scaffolding has its roots in the work of the psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who is well-known for several important contributions to educational theory. While Vygotsky never used the term, he did originate a theory of learning called “zone of proximal development,” which provides a rationale for the concept of scaffolding. A student’s zone of proximal development is based on the gap between their *current* developmental level and *potential* developmental level. To help a student learn a new task or concept, a teacher starts with what the student can do, at the student’s current developmental level, and provides support

that eventually tapers off as the student’s understanding and independence grows.⁹

This method underscores that the process of teaching and learning is “much more than face-to-face interaction or the simple transmission of prescribed knowledge and skills;”¹⁰ it depends upon a dialogical approach and the co-construction of knowledge.¹¹ The task of teaching is seen as conditioned by, and embedded in, its social and cultural context. A central goal of teaching is understood as “the transformation of socially constructed knowledge into that which is individually owned by the learner.”¹²

In the context of the artCORE program, scaffolding is used to provide temporary support—like the proverbial training wheels that may be temporarily used when learning to ride a bike. The goal is to gradually remove the scaffolded prompts and resources in a way that increases student agency and autonomy. While the first half of a given semester may involve students addressing relatively structured projects with pre-determined learning outcomes, by the end of the semester, the scaffolding has been removed and students are challenged to select their own materials, concepts, and problem-solving methods.

Recent studies in language acquisition in particular point to potential problems with “designed-in scaffolding” where students passively receive guidance and support and are not truly engaged in the “construction” of

their own learning. A corrective to this situation is what is termed “contingent scaffolding” in which more careful consideration is given to the timing and means of the scaffolded prompt. The aim for seasoned educators is for them to reexamine their own interactive practices and research with their students and shift from *designed-in scaffolding* to *contingent scaffolding*.¹³

Imagine a student choosing to use a particular prompt or a teacher removing one or more prompts from a given lesson. What would this look like in action in your studio/classroom?

Putting It All Together

Let’s now return to how these three objectives inform the process undertaken by our first-year students in each of their projects. As mentioned above, most artCORE projects build studio skills, encourage thematic inquiry, and introduce strategies for creative problem-solving. By utilizing problem-solving strategies (such as visual thinking, slow looking, or chance operations), students are less likely to become stuck in their creative process or generate images that simply recycle the clichés of media culture. They uncover their own thinking processes and develop a conceptual framework and perspective that is uniquely their own.

How does this play out in the studio classroom?

The sample “Figure-Ground” Project below illustrates several important considerations. First of all, the image



Fig. 4. José Posada, *Zapatistas Calvera*, 1913, etching, 14.6 x 11.8 in. University of Michigan Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, 1958/1.123]

at the top of the lesson (Fig. 4)—a woodcut by the revolutionary Mexican artist José Posada—is not among the litany of examples often used to illustrate basic design principles. Embracing works outside the canon signals that the curriculum welcomes diversity and is inclusive in its scope. Second, the project takes beginning students into a process, linocut, that is technically challenging and requires considerable effort, discipline, and commitment to be successful. This reflects our intention of defining the studio-classroom as a professional lab that demands professional behaviors and results. Third, the theme of the project, *Protest and Persuasion*,¹⁴ is stated clearly as an important conceptual objective. While we value the

formal vocabulary of the elements and principles, we emphasize that art often addresses concepts that transcend formal investigations. Finally, a recommended strategy, in this case, *Visual Thinking*, is highlighted as a way to give students the tools they need to manage their own idea generation

It is important to acknowledge that a project such as the one outlined above is quite structured and targets specific learning outcomes. However, at a given point during a given semester, the instructor is encouraged to consider if any or all of the objectives as listed are essential to the project of developing student agency and

autonomy (our ultimate goal). Generally, this particular project (viz., “Signs of Resistance”) is presented relatively early in a beginning student’s first semester of 2D Design. If a similar project were offered later in the semester, one could imagine the students themselves selecting the studio methods/materials and coming up with their own concept/theme or problem-solving strategy. For example, an instructor might present the challenge to make an artwork that is inspired by a current event or issue. In this case, the scaffolding has been almost completely removed and the students are on their own. Hopefully,

Sample Project:

2D Studio - UNIT IV - Figure / Ground *Signs of Resistance*

OVERVIEW

Your challenge is to plan and execute a relief print that aims to PROTEST OR PERSUADE, focusing on a subject about which you are passionate. Pay attention to the effective definition of shape, use of symbols, figure/ground relationships, and impact on your intended viewers. Look at historical examples of protest art, propaganda, and advertising to see what techniques have been used to make the figure (and the idea!) stand out to the intended audience.

OBJECTIVES

- **Studio Skills:** To explore printmaking methods for creating strong **figure/ground relationships** on a two-dimensional surface.
- **Theme:** To research and create visual images and symbols that could be used to **protest or persuade**.
- **Strategy:** To employ **visual thinking** methods (e.g., brainstorming, mind mapping, etc.) to generate ideas for thematic inquiry.

through the experience of engaging a full array of studio skills, using thematic inquiry as a way to frame concepts, and exploring an array of problem-solving strategies, students will be prepared to follow their own creative pathways.

Looking to the Future

In order to effectively communicate and convey the scope of our curricular vision, we need instructors in the classroom who are prepared to go well beyond the frameworks provided by their particular studio competencies.

With the help of motivated beginning instructors, we believe that it is possible to provide a solid grounding in the basics while exploring content, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and respecting and exploring diverse perspectives.

Our approach provides a well-thought out and time-tested curriculum for our undergraduates in which the learner, subject matter, and social context are addressed equally. It also provides emerging educators with the tools they need to build their classes in ways that serve their own goals as artist teachers.

Endnotes

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Geoethics in Art: Theory and Education

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Against the backdrop of a deteriorating global environmental and social justice crisis, this paper seeks to introduce the concept of Geoethics and its viability as a comprehensive theme in art. This paper presupposes that contemporary art making may serve as an agent for social transformation and discusses how geoethics may serve as a framework in contemporary art practices, as well as in art education, providing meaningful topics in studio art exercises at all levels.

According to the International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG), “Geoethics consists of the research and reflection on those values upon which to base appropriate behaviors and practices where human activities intersect the Geosphere. Geoethics addresses the ethical, social, and cultural implications of Earth Sciences research and practice, providing a point of intersection for Geosciences, Sociology, and Philosophy.”¹ The etymology of the word geoethics is unambiguous: the prefix *geo* means “the earth” and the word *ethics* is derived from the Ancient Greeks word *êthos* meaning “character, moral nature.” Geoethics, thus, denotes the required moral attitudes and responsibility toward the earth and its inhabitants. For the International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG), geoethics provides professional standards for geoscientists to consider when interacting with Earth systems.² The IAPG also proposes that the geoethical philosophy be expanded to all communities to develop consolidated global ethics that promotes awareness and a sense of duty to maintain and respect our geo-ecosystems.³

The IAPG has recommended Geoethics as a global concept to introduce to all communities. In this paper, I will introduce the term Geoethics as defined by the IAPG, and expand on their recommendations with my own propositions for using Geoethics as a larger theme in art making. To emphasize my position, I will introduce my personal

journey with art practices and teaching, as well as put forward and connect the related concepts which include: systems thinking; the environmental crisis; a history of environmental ethics; truth and critical thinking; and the integration of form and content. I will conclude that geoethics can be adopted in the contemporary roles of artists and art educators.

Sustainability Across the Curriculum

For four decades, I have approached art practice and teaching with a holistic understanding of all relevant subject matter. My work is inspired by environmental issues with subjects that range from the degradation of nature to urban and industrial development. However, there was a turning point that helped connect my work to other disciplines: in 2009, when I responded to our Provost's new initiative and applied for a faculty development

grant on "Sustainability Across the Curriculum." "Sustainability Across the Curriculum" is a concept of the Association of the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)⁴ based on the idea that the content of sustainability can be and should be taught in every subject. Inspired by the Piedmont/Ponderosa model,⁵ the longest-running curricular development program in sustainability, this grant included a series of workshops which gave me the chance to interact with faculty from various departments such as biology, ecology, geography, sociology, political science, history, anthropology, engineering, medicine, and law. This collaboration with colleagues from other departments afforded me the opportunity to gain insight from the scientific, sociological, and philosophical perspectives. Recipients of this grant also become members of a cohort known as the "GreenThreads," which is a resource and support group on sustainability at the university. Subsequently, I was able to develop two new special topic courses: "Media, Issues, and Sustainability" and "Art, Thinking, and Social Change." Since then, I began to integrate more environmental art and social justice content into other courses including the foundations courses that I teach.

One of the long-lasting benefits of this grant is the opportunity to meet and discuss environmental and social justice issues with my colleagues in the other disciplines, whom I now communicate with regularly.

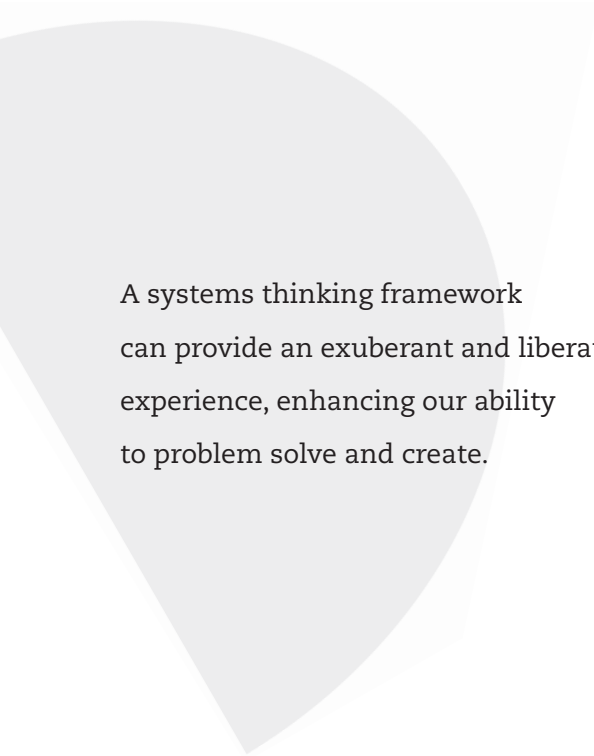
We discuss relevant and critical issues, meet at lectures and conferences, and serve on one another's department's thesis and dissertation committees. I have invited many colleagues to lecture in my classes, expanding the students' understanding of art in the context of other disciplines. I had the privilege to serve as affiliate faculty of the Social Change program, the Ann Braden Institute for Social Justice Research, and the Sustainability Education and Research Committee. Each of these service experiences continue to be extremely meaningful and inspiring. My colleagues from the other departments are passionate and knowledgeable, and our interactions provide unique and fresh perspectives on the various related subjects. Therefore, this experience has made the idea of sustainability in any discipline more accessible. Environmental-oriented mentalities can guide the curriculum choices of any and every classroom.

Systems Thinking and Border Crossing

The Sustainability Across Curriculum project has demonstrated that it is possible to think about and discuss teaching across disciplines. Systems thinking provides skills and a vision that allows us to connect seemingly unrelated conditions, conflicting beliefs and isolated events, and to evaluate the issues critically, contextually, and globally. This method encourages us to work across boundaries and

cultivate an appreciation of diversity and multiplicity in cultures and worldviews. Such a holistic perspective allows us to see the deeply underlying phenomena and detect a broader pattern in the world in solving problems and generating new ideas.

Systems thinking can also be an important tool to understand the relationship between ethics and aesthetics. Traditionally, ethics and aesthetics have been considered two separate traditional models to achieve an economy of scale.⁶ Systems thinking is a tool to resist this hyperspecialization, and offers a framework for navigating the dynamic, interconnected, and complex systems of the world. The physicist and theorist, Fritjof Capra, explained "All natural systems are wholes whose specific structures arise from the interactions and interdependence of their parts. Systemic properties are destroyed when a system is dissected, either physically or theoretically, into isolated elements." He reasoned that the whole is always different from the sum of its parts.⁷ Building from this, the American systems scientist Peter Senge resolved that humans are born with an Innate Systems Intelligence, the natural ability to perceive the world as a whole. Unfortunately, this ability is lost during early education when knowledge is divided into disparate subjects. Senge suggests that we have to recover this innate intelligence to develop compassion and connection, so we can fall in love with the world again.⁸



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A systems thinking framework can provide an exuberant and liberating experience, enhancing our ability to problem solve and create. As such society can accomplish much more by seeking commonality, rather than clashing over our differences. Therefore, we must not separate aesthetics and ethics, and we must not separate sciences, life, and society from art.

The Anthropocene and the Great Acceleration

To further understand geoethics, we must understand the urgency of our environmental crises. On December 7, 1972, the crew of the Apollo 17 spacecraft took a snapshot of the Earth from a distance of 29,000 kilometers. This photograph is a transformative image showcasing a

breathtaking blue planet of oceans and continents partially covered by white clouds. This image is known famously as “The Blue Marble,” and has become an iconic symbol of the environmental movement. In 1990, another photograph of the Earth was taken by the Voyager 1 space probe from a record distance of six billion kilometers. Carl Sagan entitled this 0.12-pixel picture of the Earth “The Pale Blue Dot.” He famously stated, “Look again at that dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us.”⁹ “To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.”¹⁰

Both images remind us of our privilege to live on such a generous and beautiful planet. These images also impel us to protect our planet against the effects of human greed, exploitation and negligence. In *Pale Blue Dot*, Carl Sagan declared global warming and atmospheric pollution as potential environmental catastrophes and alerted us to the conditions of our two neighboring planets, Venus and Mars. Venus has an atmospheric temperature of nine-hundred degrees Fahrenheit due to its massive greenhouse effect and Mars has no living organisms on the surface of the planet due to an ozone hole of planetary scale. Sagan brought attention to these environmental problems and urged us to

act.¹¹ Since the industrial revolution, the condition of the Earth has progressively declined with the onset of climate change, air pollution, plastic waste, chemical and nuclear contamination, deforestation, mass extinction, and the loss of biodiversity.

As early as the nineteenth century, a new geologic epoch, Anthropocene, began to emerge. The concept of Anthropocene is now frequently used in the scientific community and in popular culture to denote the time when human activity began to dominate the earth. The International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS), the organization in charge of establishing the stratigraphic chart of geologic time, is working on the adoption of the Anthropocene as a new geologic epoch and proposed a starting date of July 16, 1945.¹² This is based on the vast acceleration of the degradation of the Earth’s geology and ecosystems, attributed both to the Industrial Revolution and the historical Alameda test explosion.¹³

We should all be alarmed that in just a few decades—a blink on the geologic timeline—we have created what scientists call “The Great Acceleration,” during which our magnificent planet has been depleted of its natural resources, pristine landscapes, and livable environments. Geoethics is not only a timely development of ethics, but an urgent call for us to embrace our Blue Marble while we still have the opportunity for change.

Environmental Ethics and Justice

To understand the current multifaceted nature of geoethics, it is important to understand the development and evolution of environmental ethics. In early environmental history, thinkers such as Henry David Thoreau and Aldo Leopold, inspired by the Romantics for the emotional experience of the sublime, admired the grandeur of wilderness and pleaded for the preservation of nature. In the 1960s, Rachel Carson, an American scientist and naturalist, devoted her life to fighting against harmful chemical applications and called for actions to save the future of the planet. Her book *Silent Spring* pioneered the modern environmental movement and continues to inspire today.

In the 1970s, Arne Næss suggested a deeper philosophical and spiritual approach to environmental issues. Næss adopted the ideas from the American transcendentalists who came before him and coined the term “deep ecology” to emphasize an ecocentric rather than anthropocentric worldview. Deep ecology contrasts the “shallow” anthropocentric worldview, which considers environmental issues only to the extent that it serves human interests.¹⁴

More recently, philosophers have realized we must further expand the outlook when analyzing environmental justice to include the realms of eco-feminism and environmental racism. Ecofeminism, a term first used by Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974,

analyzes the effects of the oppression of women to draw a connection between social domination and the domination of nature.¹⁵ Similarly, environmental racism examines the unequal distribution of environmental and social benefits and burdens. Often, the poor and persons of color are marginalized and blocked from access to resources. One such example of environmental racism is the “Cancer Alley” which is located in the southern Louisiana parishes along the lower Mississippi River. This corridor contains roughly one hundred and fifty oil refineries, plastic plants, and chemical facilities, and the residential community is primarily African American. U.N. human rights experts recently cited these petrochemical plants as an example of environmental racism that threatens the human rights of those who live there.¹⁶

We must recognize the unequal burdens faced by different countries, regions, communities, and individuals. Environmental ethics must integrate ethical thinking with social justice, and incorporate the positions of ecofeminism, environmental racism, and other ecological perspectives. Geoethics considers these threats of domination: both human domination of the planets and all other species, as well as human’s dominations of other humans.

Art for Social Change

To critique the injustice in our society, artists began to create social commentary works. Beginning in

seventeenth century Europe, artists such as William Hogarth, Jean-François Millet, and Käthe Kollwitz began to critique social and political conditions. During the turbulent period in the first half of the twentieth century, artwork by German Expressionists and Mexican muralists depicted the struggle of the oppressed people. In 1937, *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso became an iconic symbol to represent the destruction and suffering endured by innocent people of the Spanish town during the Spanish Civil War. During the Depression in the 1920s and 30s, many social realist artists were supported by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and narrated the harsh life of the miners, the factory workers, and the poor. Around the same time, African-American artists of the Jim Crow and Harlem Renaissance eras such as Elizabeth Catlett, Jacob Lawrence, and James Van Der Zee, powerfully portrayed an unjust and racially segregated society.

After the Second World War, the mainstream American art scene was dominated by formalism propounded by critic Clement Greenberg and his followers. In the 1960s, environmental art, political art, and feminist art emerged as a potent force of activism and protest. At the time this form of art was often dismissed as political propaganda and has been ostracized in the mainstream art world by museum curators as well as conservative politicians.

In the recent few decades, notable progress has been made within the

style of formalism as abstract expressionism and minimalism began to wane and ethically conscious art became more accepted. In the contemporary art scene, exhibitions in major museums and biennials feature an increasing number of environmental, political, and socially charged art. In addition, new art forms such as socially engaged art have emerged. Suzanne Lacy called this artform New Genre Public Art.¹⁷ Examples include the AIDS Memorial Quilt project,¹⁸ The Guerrilla Girls,¹⁹ the REDress Project,²⁰ The Jumpsuit Project,²¹ and most recently the Legacy Museum created by the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) founded by Bryan Stevenson.²² The United States has also seen a growing number of political and environmental artists such as Judy Chicago, Agnes Denes, Nancy Spero, Leon Golub, Elizabeth Catlett, Félix González-Torres, Barbara Kruger, Faith Ringgold, Mel Chin, Adrian Piper, Kara Walker, David Hammons, Theaster Gates, Kehinde Wiley, Kerry James Marshall, and JR.

The twentieth century witnessed a few progressive art schools, including early experiments with interdisciplinary or intermedia programs such as the Black Mountain College,²³ and the “Fresno Feminist Art Program” at the California State University at Fresno, developed by Judy Chicago in 1970.²⁴ More recently, a handful of progressive art schools began to offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs in interdisciplinary art or integrated studios. A few also offer

academic degrees with the focus of environmental issues and political activism such as the MFA program in Environmental Art and Social Practice and at UC Santa Cruz²⁵ or research initiatives such as the Art and Social Justice Initiative at Yale School of Art.²⁶ One recent experiment is the Social Practice Queens (SPQ) project which is an “educational platform that supports the integration of studio art with interdisciplinary research, community collaboration, environmental justice, and critical urbanism.” The SPQ project is an MFA program offered by the Queens College and the City University of New York (CUNY), and in partnership with the Queens Museum.²⁷

Geoethics and Compassion

Geoethics encompasses environmental ethics and social justice. The core idea of geoethics is the study of ethics, which is an understanding of morally right actions and our responsibility to others. Compassion, or the concerns for the sufferings of others, is an important virtue across many cultures and occupies an esteemed position in Eastern and Western religious traditions. Compassion is one of the noble virtues in the Buddhist and Confucian practices. The concepts of compassion and mercy are also strong elements in the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Compassion is also scientifically supported as a part of human nature. Darwinism is often misunderstood

and misused to explain the self-interested and competitive nature of human societies. In fact, the contrary is true. Charles Darwin recognized consciousness as the foundation to traditional virtues such as compassion, sympathy, and love, and considered these behaviors to be an integral part of human evolution.²⁸

Geoethics in Art

To introduce Geoethics in the classroom, we must remind our students of two important approaches: the search for truth with critical thinking, and the integration of form and content.

Truth is not always readily discernible and requires diligent and thoughtful reasoning to achieve. Appreciating and discerning factual accuracy becomes even more important in today’s culture, one that is facing an ever-increasing crisis of disinformation.²⁹ As citizens and teachers, we must consistently remind our students to seek truth by employing the critical thinking skills within the system’s thinking framework.

In his *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, the French philosopher Alain Badiou postulated that, “art itself is a truth procedure,” and “art is pedagogical for the simple reason that it produces truths.”³⁰ Badiou reiterated the four conditions for accessing truth: science, politics, love, and art. Geoethics is closely related and interlocking with each.

We have discussed many concepts and topics in promoting Geoethics in art as the viable unified vision to

connect all ethical issues and aesthetic topics. Geoethical art may appear as the traditional genres of still life, landscape, or everyday life. Geoethical art may represent our sense of wonder of the world as suggested by Rachel Carson,³¹ which contains beauty and sublime qualities. Geoethical art can also manifest in the form of biophilia attributing our love of living things, or the majestic landscapes of the geomorphological features, or the powerful forces of the storms and ocean waves within our earth systems, or the immense beauty and mystery of the universe observed by astronomy. This general appreciation of the Earth and love of all living things is embodied in the Buddhist idea of *Karunā*, roughly translated as compassion.

Geoethical art may also manifest as social and political activism, with genres such as environmental art, socially engaged art, or art for social change. Carol Becker charged artists to become public intellectuals toward an art practice of social concern and commitment.³² In his last book, *The Aesthetic Dimension*, Herbert Marcuse rightfully articulated that aesthetic form is essential to its social function, and only through the integration of form and function, can art retake possession of the agency for resistance, and offer hope for a brighter future.³³ Armed with the senses of ethics and truth, and buttressed with critical thinking, we will be able to create art that pushes boundaries and serves as an inspiration for social change.

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Designing to Convey Meaning in 2D Design Courses

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The year 1962 signaled a change in how Andy Warhol composed his images of Campbell's Soup cans. The year before, quirky line drawings of casual arrangements dominated. Drawings of feet propped up on a soup can, tipsy stacks of soup cans, soup cans lying on their sides, and so on, resembled the dynamic, largely asymmetric contour line drawings seen in any art school drawing class. It was during this year, however, that Warhol composed the soup cans upright in rows and flat to

the picture plane, resulting in architectonic, symmetric compositions. The former were everyday compositions of mundane subject matter, but the latter arrangements suggested a commentary on manufacturing and consumerism. They resembled soup cans on grocery store shelves or soup cans on production lines. Andy Warhol had said that he wanted to be a machine.¹ Rather than just cranking out work like a machine, he also made the artwork look like a machine had produced it.

If communication and interpretation are heavily dependent on design, then it is reasonable to make designing for meaning an integral part of a Foundations, two-dimensional design course. This emphasis would require moving away from a traditional focus on the elements of art – line, value, shape, color, texture, etc. – and moving toward a concentration on art principles that develop perception and explore the ways viewers interpret a composition. The elements are only the ingredients of art, much like the flour, salt, sugar, oil, and so forth in the pantry. Studying an element like “texture,” for example, by making realistic and illusionary textures is fun, but how does it align with learning objectives that emphasize design for meaning? The principles of art determine how the elements are combined for the final composition. Similarly, in the kitchen, baking, boiling, and frying different combinations of the same ingredients would yield significantly

different results (i.e., cookies, bagels, and doughnuts). Teaching 2D Design through a set of principles rather than elements provides a way to emphasize meaning and communication through form at the foundations level.

Using the “backward course design” framework to emphasize making meaning into the course design.

To mindfully prepare a syllabus for design coursework that emphasizes compositions with meaning, the “backward course design method” is helpful. Described by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in their book, *Understanding by Design*,² backward course design is a three-stage process in which the first stage establishes the major objectives of the course, the second stage determines how the coursework would be assessed, and the third stage is developing the actual assignment. The following examples

illustrate the backwards course design stages for this course:

Stage 1: Establish the major objectives of the course.

What will the students be able to do at the end of the course?

For this course consider these examples:

- Students will understand how their choices of media, techniques, and design of a composition are connected to its message and interpretation.
- Students will make strong compositions that are congruent with and complement the intention of the artwork.

Stage 2: Create a method to assess whether the objectives are being met.

How will you know that the students have achieved those objectives?

These examples would serve for this course:

- Rubrics will be established for each unit of study that will describe the features of each grade.
- Critiques will be held to assess the qualities of the projects and discuss interpretations of the compositions.

Stage 3: Design coursework that focuses on achieving the established learning objectives.

In this case, the course is divided into units of study that focus on a specific set of principles. Ideally, each principle and unit would build on those before it, thus providing a framework for repetition and raising the level of difficulty as the course progresses.

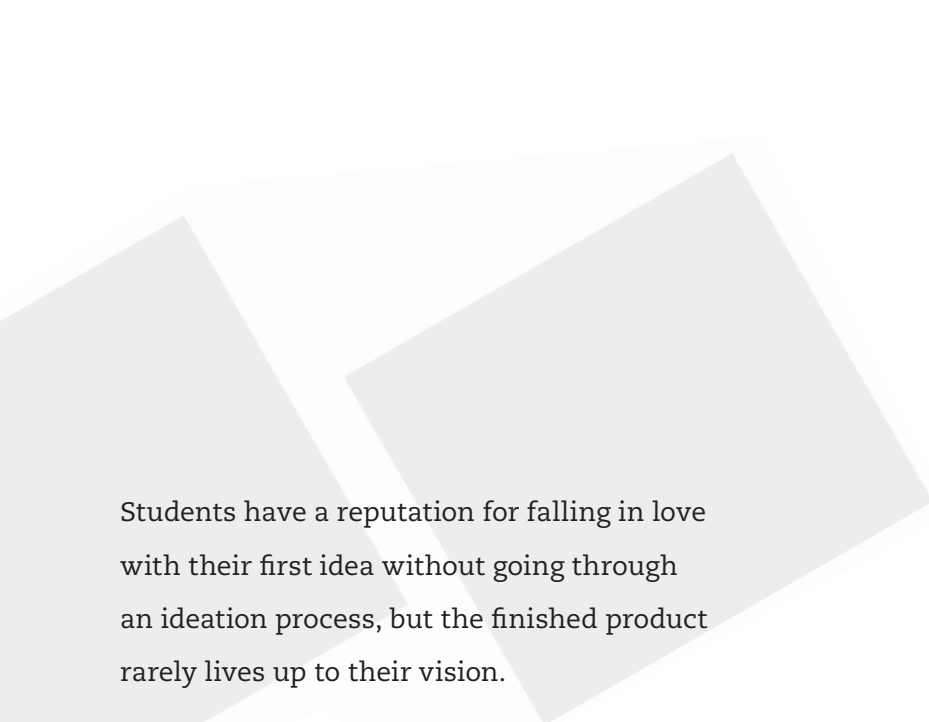
In each unit, the principle is the driving force and every decision considers how that choice affects the content of the artwork. Students do research and make preliminary exercises or preparatory sketches before tackling their creative project. Within those exercises and preparatory work, gestalt theories and other principles are introduced or reinforced. Only after they complete those tasks can they begin the creative project. At the end of each unit, the students will hand in a binder or sketchbook with the finished creative project.

Setting up methods for tackling the objectives

Guidelines helped set up this course design. They are not objectives but act as the beginning steps of Stage 3 in the course design, which asks the question, “How can the objectives be achieved?” Everyone has a different way of approaching their lesson plans, but the following ideas guided this course design:

1. Introduce gestalt concepts early and revisit them often. Make connections between gestalt placements and how an artist can manipulate them to complement and align with the intention and message of the artwork.

Gestalt principles outline how we perceive what we see and how those phenomena apply to design and composition.³ We apply what we know about the world to two-dimensional formats. In the common example of a ball placed high in a plane, the sense



Students have a reputation for falling in love with their first idea without going through an ideation process, but the finished product rarely lives up to their vision.

of falling creates tension while placing the ball low in the plane creates a sense of stability and calm because it appears immobile. However, if the object was a hot air balloon neither reaction would be likely. We expect the balloon to float. Being able to know when and how to use gestalt principles to create tension, staticity, or other effects in compositions is an important way of conveying meaning beyond relying merely on subject matter.

2. Make process a part of every unit of study. Students should make many compositions.

Students have a reputation for falling in love with their first idea without going through an ideation process, but the finished product rarely lives up

to their vision. The stages of the process in a project teach the student how to experiment with composition variations and how placement within the picture frame affects their goals for their work. For the instructor, it allows time to introduce concepts incrementally and as they are needed, so more course material is covered.

This is where “just-in-time” course design can be integrated into course activities.⁴ This method of teaching in increments and utilizing online learning methods like video demonstrations and PowerPoint lectures became a necessary part of teaching studio courses online during the pandemic shutdown. Some of us who wouldn't have touched online teaching methods before the pandemic have integrated some of them into our in-person studio courses. Breaking down the tasks and pairing them with their associated support materials, using a learning management system (LMS) like Canvas, makes navigation and reinforcement easier for the students

3. Every unit of study will include a creative, real-world application.

Students want their time and efforts to be meaningful, so giving them opportunities to do projects that have real-world applications early in their school career helps them feel like they are making progress toward their goals. More importantly, real-world applications provide better and more plentiful opportunities to connect content with form.

4. Integrate peer feedback often.

In addition to discussing their project ideas and receiving feedback about their compositions, students need to hear how their peers interpret them. What they intend to communicate may not be the same message that the viewer is receiving. Occasionally, it is the exact opposite. Setting aside time for small group discussions and encouraging the students to consult with each other benefits all students. The feedback students give each other under such circumstances is usually rich and thorough, if they are prepared for the activity. Giving students an outline for discussing each other's projects provides all the students with more consideration than they might get in a full class critique. This activity also creates a foundation for collaboration and helps them develop friendships and learn to support each other.

5. Students will be free to choose their reference material as long as that material adds to their visual vocabulary.

More than anything, being able to have some control over their imagery and to enjoy what they are doing helps the students stay engaged. The more engaged they are, the more deeply they learn. The main caveat to that practice is making sure that they continue to add to their visual vocabulary. Otherwise, they will continually regurgitate the same invented or copied material that they started in high school. Asking them to work with unfamiliar media, materials, forms, or colors, especially

from representational sources, would do far more to build their vocabulary than clip art, manga characters, and popular iconography produced by other artists.

The general course design.

This curricular approach is highly flexible. Faculty can select and exchange principles according to the needs of the school. For this example, the units of study are 1. Containment, 2. Positive/Negative Space, 3. Gestalt and Grid Theory, 4. Color Basics, and 5. Emphasis and Depth.

Unit 1: Containment focuses on picture frames and how they affect the content of a composition. The size and shape of a project are the first decisions we make about the physical form of a piece, yet in some ways, it is the least considered. Using Containment as the first principle provides an opportunity to talk about the parts of an image, its — picture plane, picture frame, positive/negative space, etc.—, and to introduce the process of composing images and how decision-making affects the message.

Unit 2: Positive/Negative Space considers figure/ground compositions and how they differ from the overall gestalt of patterns of dark and light. The students study how to integrate positive and negative spaces while maintaining emphasis in a composition, and they look at how their choice of value key contributes to the content of their art.

Unit 3: Gestalt and Grid Theory builds on prior discussions of Gestalt principles and draws the connection of the principles to everyday perception and experience. Grid theory assignments primarily focus on finding the right composition for the idea by experimenting with static and dynamic formats for the same idea.

Unit 4: Color Basics assignments develop color perception through physical and perceptual manipulation and look at the part color plays in composition and spatial development, including its implication for communication and symbolism in society.

Unit 5: Emphasis and Depth is similar to a capstone where all of the principles and ideas discussed in color and design come together under the umbrella of atmospheric perspective. The students create a set of compositions that express ideas about a topic the student feels strongly about.

Sample Unit

The other units of study are similarly structured to this unit, but each builds on material discussed in prior units and in complexity of composition, somewhat in order of the decisions made while making compositions.

Unit 1: Containment

The following is a detailed description of a sample first unit of study.

The end product of this unit is a set of five page designs with each page composed of three components: the same drawing of an object framed out a different way on each page, a



Flowers are not exempt from the circle of life. From a small seedling to a beautiful bud, flowers must face their inevitable end. The cut stem of the flower seems more obvious in this frame. It appears as if the flower is under a microscope or in a petri dish, its life and hard work being documented. A round frame does all of this and emphasizes the rounded head of the flower. What a magnificent flower that small seed grew to be.

Katie Baughman

Student example by Katie Baughman. Scanned image by author.

paragraph of five or so sentences discussing how that framing affects how the image is perceived, and the student's name. Each page is a new framed composition and must be designed differently from the other pages while maintaining continuity as a set. In essence, the students are designing pages similar to those of an illustrated book of poetry. The critique revolves around the quality of the framed images and page designs but centers particularly on how the framing of the image and the arrangements of the components within the composition can be analyzed and interpreted by the viewers.

The students begin by making a pen and ink drawing of a representational object of their choice with the only parameters being that it is self-contained, or whole, and interesting. They are discouraged from using objects that are strong, linear rectangles because they don't shape the negative space well, which limits the variation and number of interesting framings. They may trace photographs, draw from life, or otherwise produce the drawing any way that is comfortable for them, as long as it can be reproduced as a photocopy or print. This drawing serves as a master to be scanned or photocopied so that different shapes and sizes of frames can be tried with it.

In preparation for framing their drawings, the students watch a PowerPoint lecture about containment, placements within a frame, implied weight, and proximity. The students look at how the scale of a piece affects how it is perceived, as well as the implications of the scale of a subject within a frame. Even the effect of different point sizes of the lines making up the frame is discussed. A 1-point line, for example, is too light to contain the image area most of the time while an 8-point line may overwhelm the subject.

The students are also shown well-known paintings that are cropped from the artists' original compositions. How the new orientation and frame affect the interpretation of the image is noted. For example, David's *Death of Marat* is a vertical painting, however the subject, Marat lying dead in his bathtub, is horizontal. The entire upper half of the painting is dark and devoid of activity. After the historical background of the picture is related, the students consider and discuss what the vertical format and inactive area add to the image.

The students are now free to create frames for their drawings. Ten potential images are needed for the next stage. Two compositions may be cropped outside the frame, while the rest must rely on the placement of the drawing within the frames. The students can make fast, easy changes in image and frame size in an application like Illustrator, which allows them to try many frames. The students

can also complete them by hand on photocopies of their drawings with an ultra-fine point marker. Where the images sit on the page is irrelevant at this point, but they need a total of ten hard copies to present for discussion.

The students discuss their images in small groups. The primary purpose of this meeting is to get peer feedback and to understand that people perceive what they see differently. An artist may intend that a design be read one way but find that people read it differently. Before beginning their discussions, students are taught the difference between analyzing and interpreting images, and they are encouraged to employ design vocabulary to analyze their projects. The students help each other choose five compositions to use in the next level, keeping in mind that variety is a necessary goal. Students take notes about the compositions as well. While the experience is fresh, they break from their groups to write a paragraph about each chosen composition.

Once they have written their paragraphs, they are ready to compose their finished pages. This time, they are moving from framing one object with any shape or size frame to compose three shapes – image, text, and name – within a fixed frame, an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper. A different set of parameters is required for the pages:

1. Each composition must maintain this hierarchy: 1. Image. 2. Text. 3. Name.

2. The pages must all be oriented in the same direction, horizontally or vertically.
3. All pages must utilize the same appropriate font and point size.
4. Each idea for a page composition must be different from the others.
5. The set of pages must have continuity; no page should look so different from the rest that it distracts from the group.

Hierarchy is a particularly important parameter for this stage of the assignment. This hierarchy emphasizes the image, but in visual communication design, other hierarchies can be contingent on purpose and audience. For example, in book cover design, the same three components are in play: image, title (text), and author (name). To design a cover for a popular writer like Stephen King, the author's name may be first in the hierarchy to entice a reader. The image may be first in the hierarchy for a romance novel, while the title may be first for an unknown mystery writer.

Another set of principles is discussed before the students compose their pages:

Similarity versus Variety and Continuity

The parameters of the assignment build in enough similarity to guarantee continuity, so the onus is on the students to create variety by finding a different compositional idea for each arrangement without breaking up the continuity established in the parameters.

Proximity relates not only to good design but also to the perceived hierarchy of the parts. None of the parts should be placed so close that they appear to bond, nor so far away from each other that there is no tension. Students are also discouraged from positioning parts of the subject matter too close to the edges of the paper or corners. A name placed close to the bottom edge or in the top left corner does appear last in the hierarchy but so far last that the name is insignificant. Likewise, a name placed too close to the text block bonds with it and renders the name insignificant as well.

Scale is probably most connected to hierarchy. For example, the hierarchy for the cover of a book by a famous author is the opposite of the hierarchy for the pages the students are designing. Audience and reading distance must be considered. For example, the Steven King novel on the bookstore shelf needs to attract attention from a distance, so the cover screams the author's name. For the students' pages, the reading distance is from a hand-held point of view, but if the type is too big, the pages can look like a first-grade reader, which would be inconsistent with the intended audience. As a practical matter, the students are also discouraged from making their images too large because the less white space there is on the page, the fewer options are available for composing.

Simple typography is a necessary discussion. The students are asked to choose either a neutral font or a font that relates well with the image but is very readable. Title fonts are usually inappropriate for body text. Invariably, the topic of Comic Sans enters the discussion, which is a fine opportunity to talk about the connection between font choice and content. For example, a widely known bank once sent this author's daughter a letter listing all the documents needed for processing a mortgage, with a serious warning that the mortgage would not proceed if all the documents weren't provided. The font? Comic Sans.

Students receive basic instruction about constructing clean text boxes, and for this assignment, are discouraged from using long lines of text that

The students look at how the scale of a piece affects how it is perceived, as well as the implications of the scale of a subject within a frame.

Students may not see problem areas until they are identified. Teaching them to compose for intention, such as hierarchy, also requires individual attention.

resemble research papers. They are also discouraged from creating ragged edges on their text blocks, “rivers” of white lines through their text blocks, and “widows” at the ends of their paragraphs. They are allowed to do wraps providing that the wrapped text is placed far enough away from the image to avoid bonding.

This approach requires significant interaction with each student to ensure that they see the results of their composing. Students may not see problem areas until they are identified. Teaching them to compose for intention, such as hierarchy, also requires individual attention. They progress rapidly as a rule, however, which makes the effort very satisfying.

In class, the project gets a thorough critique that particularly

addresses how the form relates to the content. The students also receive written feedback. Because this is the first assignment of the semester, the process is weighted as the primary consideration for evaluation, but all areas receive feedback. The following is an example of a critique sheet outline that can be used for feedback.

Conclusion

Communicating content through design is the next step in the evolution of Foundations 2D Design. This emphasis

will require moving away from a traditional focus on the elements of art to a concentration on principles and how they can be used to convey content to the viewer. Teaching design through art principles prioritizes mindful composing that connects more consciously with the viewer and considers perception more sensitively. This curricular approach is global in its application making it ideal for preparing students to move into both design and fine art areas of study.

Critical Feedback Outline

In this outline, a course objective is worded as an assessment, and the subheadings describe how the students progressed toward achieving the objective in this particular assignment.

- I. The work exhibits engagement and progress in achieving course objectives.
 1. Overall engagement in the project, including craft.
 2. Practice in the manipulation of the components of a composition.
 3. Seeing and understanding the overall gestalt of a composition.
 4. The ability to see and correct problems in the composition.
- II. The work shows evidence of the ability to use gestalt theories and other concepts to analyze and identify problems in a composition.

In this project:

1. Work shows an understanding of the concept of containment and the function of the picture frame as a design decision.
2. Work shows an understanding of the magnetic nature of the picture frame.
3. Components are not placed too close to the frame.
4. Proximities of components are neither too close nor too far away from each other.

IV. The work exhibits an understanding of the various rational and intuitive approaches to making compositions and how the resulting images are perceived in tone and mood.

In this project:

1. Consciously injected variety into the compositions (both image and page)
2. Reflected well about the effects of each arrangement on the subject matter in both writing and verbal participation in critique.

IV. The work exhibits an understanding of the function of weight and how it affects balance in a composition.

In this project:

Considers implied weight and the implications of positioning components higher or lower in the composition.

V. The work exhibits an understanding of the various functions of space in a composition: positive/negative space as well as the range of devices that are used to communicate depth and understanding of and practicing concepts of unity versus variety.

In this project:

1. Are all of the negative spaces activated or are there areas that feel like they need something?
2. What are the implications of the quantity of white space and their abstract shapes for interpreting the designs?

VI. The work exhibits the ability to see how value functions as a major component of design in a composition.

In this project:

1. Value is considered as the overall value pattern of the image.
2. The line weight of the frame is an appropriate weight for the image.
3. The weight of the text block is appropriate for the page, not too heavy or too light.
4. Does the design consider reading distance?

Endnotes

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Deliberate Drawing: Teaching “Practice” to First Year Students

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Drawing practice emphasizes the incremental improvement of a drawing skill through repeated exercises over a period of time. In Foundations drawing studios, students typically watch demonstrations to learn strategies for drafting compositions, recording visual information, and capturing a variety of illusions. They repeat these strategies regularly until they can perform them proficiently and without assistance. During in-class studio time, they practice with faculty

guidance; outside of class, they practice independently. All this practice and growth culminates in projects throughout the semester for which faculty ask students to apply their skills in finished drawings. Improvement is typically assessed at the end of projects and accounts for a portion of the grade.

Given that most students focus primarily on meeting project requirements and earning a favorable letter grade, in what ways may they value the practice leading up to finished drawings? And how might they react to (or perform on) a project where the assigned requirement did not necessarily involve a finished drawing but rather a collection of evidence demonstrating measured improvement?

Deliberate Practice

I considered these questions while reading the book *Grit* by Angela Duckworth.¹ Her chapter, “Practice,” referenced the research of cognitive psychologist Anders Ericsson.² He dedicated his career to studying how experts practice. He learned that experts practice differently, in that they have a carefully-planned approach to improving their skills.³ According to Ericsson’s work, deliberate practice is intentional practice with a clear goal and structure.⁴ I began to imagine how Foundations students might respond to similar experiences shaped by a list of requirements based on Ericsson’s description.

*Deliberate Drawing Practice Requirements:*⁵

- Focuses on a drawing skill that one genuinely wants to improve and holds one’s interest;
- Requires full concentration and effort, trying one’s absolute hardest;
- Should last no longer than 20-30 mins in one sitting
- Needs informative feedback from a professor

As I imagined the experience/project that would soon become the basis for a two-semester investigation, I revisited my initial thoughts and developed a list of questions around Foundations students and practice: 1) how will students experience the process of *Deliberate Drawing Practice*? 2) how might they value the process, and 3) in what ways might they improve? To answer these questions, I used my *Deliberate Drawing Practice* list to develop and pilot a semester-long project for Advanced Drawing (a Foundations course) at Moore College of Art and Design. I ran the pilot for two semesters with different cohorts; then, I collected and interpreted my initial findings.

The Participants:

Advanced Drawing Population

Moore College of Art & Design, like many BFA programs, offers incoming students the opportunity to place out of introductory courses including Drawing I. To place into Advanced Drawing a student must demonstrate a high level of incoming skill in perceptual drawing either through a portfolio or by earning a four or five on the AP Drawing exam.⁶ At Moore, about 12 percent⁷ of students fit the criteria and are placed into Advanced Drawing, a three-credit course scheduled in the fall semester which fulfills the Foundations Drawing Requirements of Drawing I and Drawing II.

Given that I have taught this course for several years, I have found that students accepted into Advanced Drawing tend to be good students with a high regard for drawing. Typically, these students pursue a drawing-related major such as Illustration or Animation. They prefer drawing slowly and mostly work in graphite.⁸ In a survey I conducted, I found that 28 percent of students in the Advanced Drawing population agreed that “drawing talent is something that you are born having. Anyone can improve from practice, but no one can really change their gift for drawing.”⁹

I decided to study this population of students because of these qualities, and more specifically for a significant portion of students believe that practice cannot change a person’s talent for drawing.

The Project:

Deliberate Drawing Practice

During the first two weeks of Advanced Drawing class, I introduced students to the semester-long *Deliberate Drawing Practice* requirement. I began with a presentation that shared the research of Anders Ericsson addressing the underlying qualifier of how “experts” practice. I showed them line graphs from Duckworth’s research to demonstrate the value of this structured approach to practice.¹⁰

I defined and described deliberate practice using the list of *Deliberate Drawing Practice Requirements* (referenced previously). Then, I reviewed in depth each of the four characteristics. Students began with work that “focused on a skill they genuinely wanted to improve.” I provided students with a list of sample skills they could develop, and I underscored there was no right or wrong skill to pursue. This list included examples such as (in order of popularity): faces,

I explained to students what it feels like
and looks like to engage with full concentration
while working your hardest.

figures, hands/feet, accurate lighting in a tonal drawing, and people/faces from memory. I explained to students what it feels like and looks like to engage with full concentration while working your hardest. I shared Ericsson's research about time limits that most experts work,¹¹ and I capped their time at 20-30 minutes.

To support this lesson, I met with each student weekly to discuss their progress, and to provide feedback and customized plans for further practice of their chosen skill. Lastly, I shared the assessment rubric; the rubric emphasized and reinforced that effort and improvement are the most important requirements for success.

During the subsequent twelve weeks, I required students to spend 20-30 minutes weekly working on

Deliberate Drawing Practice in a sketchbook. I set aside class time to meet with each student individually to review their weekly progress, and to provide constructive feedback as well as next steps. Feedback focused on strengths and opportunities and concluded with a prescribed focus for the next week's practice. Most assignments required a student to keep working while paying extra attention to one or two formal qualities of their work. If a student struggled with multiple areas, I often provided a narrower exercise. For example, I once recommended that a student, struggling with facial proportions, shading, and tonal range, remove the challenge of drawing the human face for a time in favor of a simpler subject such as an egg. While this project was not their goal, drawing an egg under a direct light source helped focus their attention on fewer formal skills: shading and tonal range. Once the student could proficiently and independently capture the egg, I recommended they apply the new skills to their chosen subject of portraiture.

I assessed the work at midterm, and at the end of the semester, using the same rubric I shared with students at the start of the project. As part of this study, I also administered an anonymous survey at the end of the term, and I required students to write a personal experience about their journey.

Process Observations

Deliberate Drawing Practice was an imperfect experience, but one that yielded fruitful ideas, possible directions for further research, and alternative formats for teaching "practice" in the studio classroom.

Individual Meetings for Feedback

One challenge I struggled to address was the weekly time commitment of one-on-one student meetings. My intent was to provide each student with a weekly list of two to three skills to further develop. According to Ericsson, the purpose of the professional was to provide the student with an assessment of the student's performance and to provide tailored exercises for continued improvement.¹² Experience tells us that this approach would not have a positive outcome for most of our students—rarely can we launch into a list of errors without first celebrating the growth and achievements of the student. The celebration is equally important to the learning, as most first year students cannot accurately point out what specifically makes a drawing strong or weak.

Psychologist Carol Dweck recommends that faculty provide feedback about process and growth to reinforce the growth mindset that "practice, study, persistence, and good strategies" lead students to accomplishment.¹³ Given the students' need for a careful and thorough assessment of strengths and opportunities for improvement, one-on-one feedback could

take as long as fifteen minutes per student with most of the conversation focused on the student's experience and acknowledging past achievements. Note that this project was a fraction of the Advanced Drawing course-work. Most of the class time needed to be divided between new concepts/techniques, demonstrations, guided in-class practice, homework explanations, critiques, etc. Given that I had little class time to devote to *Deliberate Drawing Practice* feedback, I often checked-in with students during the work week via email or DISCORD threads¹⁴ (freeware social media application typically used by gamers) which afforded me more class time for the rest of the curriculum, but also created additional time commitments for me outside of class.

Despite this challenge, a benefit of the individual meetings was the opportunity to learn more about my students and their unique learning styles. As a result of these meetings, I was able to learn about their drawing interests and values, and how they responded to different teaching methods. I applied this knowledge to in-class teaching and learning to great effect. For example, while teaching a student linear perspective, I struggled to help her see how to correctly place eye-level in her drawings. This was because she could not understand the physical connection between her eye height and the space she was trying to draw. I had to physically move with her

in the space before she could find a strategy to line up her eye-level with another landmark in the space. This kinesthetic approach to her learning, which I discovered during an individual meeting about *Deliberate Drawing Practice*, made me a more effective teacher.

Having in-depth knowledge of a student's particular drawing experience allowed me to facilitate peer-to-peer learning. For example, when we began tonal drawing, I asked students practicing this topic to offer advice to their peers on strategies and solutions they found helpful. This strategy had the bonus of further validating the benefits of deliberate practice.

New Teaching Strategies

As part of my feedback, I often gave specific assignments to address weaknesses in a student's work or to push a student's skill to a new level.¹⁵ This process required me to consider skill acquisition in a new way; I needed to take what already seemed like a narrow skill (such as drawing hands using contour line) and divide that skill into smaller goals that could be focused on one-by-one. One week I asked a student to focus on varying line weight. Another week, I suggested increasing their speed by timing their drawings or by changing their drawing material. With each week, my goal was to target an area for growth, and to strategize an exercise that supported development in that area.

Supporting skill acquisition in this way also required me to adjust a particular exercise for different learners. For example, many students wish to address figure proportions. When teaching students how to simplify the human body, some individuals learned best by drawing over photographs while others found success through drawing from a wooden mannequin. Ultimately, these customized and student-centered solutions offered me multiple instructional approaches to support an increasingly diverse group of student learners.

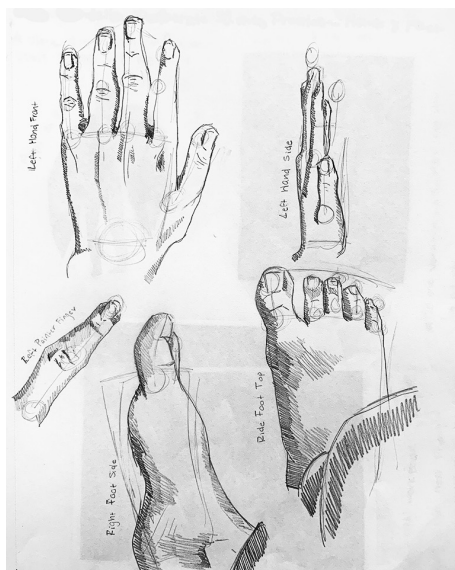
Deliberate Drawing Practice Findings

My findings showed that students generally fell into one of two camps: A) students who reported boredom and stagnated growth at or before midterm and B) students who reported immediate results and exponential growth at or before midterm.¹⁶

Approximately 40 Percent of Students Stagnated and Reported Boredom

Approximately 40 percent of students reported boredom at midterm and were unable to substantially renew, redirect, or increase their engagement by the end of the term. Not surprisingly, work from these students showed regression and/or stagnated improvement over the second half of the term.

Below are drawings from and feedback for a student from this population. This student chose to focus on hands and feet for the full term. When given the opportunity to switch her



Figures 1 and 2

practice focus for midterm, she chose to delve more deeply into drawing hands. She incorporated faces and bodies so that she could practice capturing accurate proportions of hands in relation to the rest of the figure. In her first set of drawings, selected from the beginning of the semester, she demonstrated careful line work in contour and shading as well as attention to plane shifts.

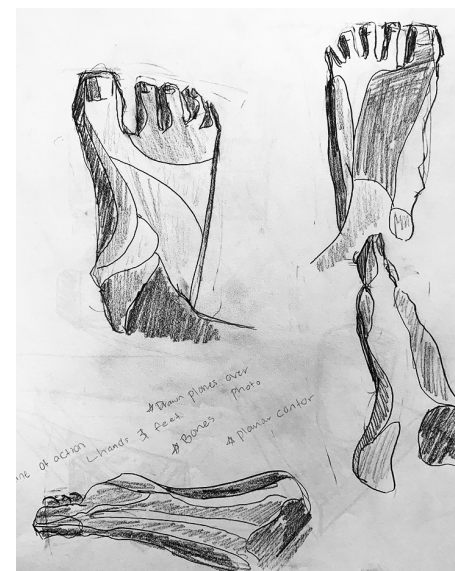


During one-on-one critiques, I celebrated her success by pointing out her careful attention to detail and her desire to incorporate plane shifts. I gave the following critical feedback for continued growth:

“Use the shapes of light and shadow to show the planes of the hands and feet. Look for more interior lines (lines that enter the form of the hand or foot

as opposed to the outer contour) and practice shifting line weight to help show the differences between bone, tendon, skin folds, veins, and muscle.”

In a future set of drawings from the second half of the term, this student’s work showed some regression.

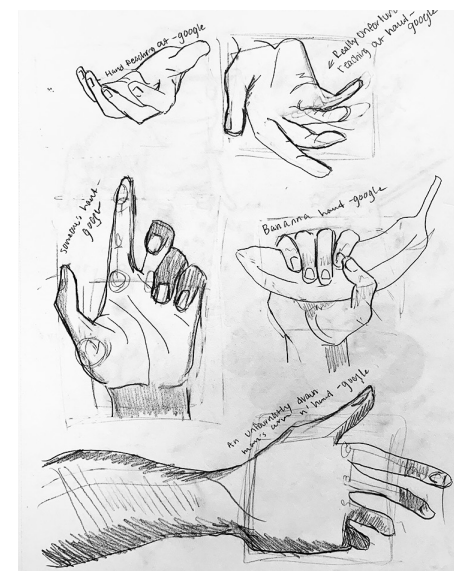


Figures 3 and 4

While the poses she chose were more challenging and included foreshortening, the execution was quicker and less attentive to the goals from previous weeks. While she still included plane shifts, they were generalized to only two or three planes per drawing. The reflection statement read:

“My concentration was drawing hands and feet. I found being able to practice and get feedback on my works on how to improve was helpful. I think it was also good to get drawing each

week to help block out art blocks. What bothered me was that there wasn’t really a break from it, I feel like maybe getting more suggestions for creative liberty would help or having one week where you do one thing differently so you don’t burn out quickly might have helped. After a while I got bored of hands and feet.”



These observations were common in the group of students reporting and showing plateaued growth. These students showed initial interest and motivation in their *Deliberate Drawing Practice*, but after only two to three weeks, they reported boredom. Generally, by week four or five, these students hit their first plateau and were unable to substantially renew, redirect, or increase their engagement by the end of the term.

Approximately 60% of Students Demonstrated Significant Growth

Approximately 60% of students reported and maintained a high level of interest in their *Deliberate Drawing Practice* throughout the semester. They were also able to substantially renew, redirect, or increase their engagement by the end of the term. Below are drawings from, and feedback for, a student from this population. This student chose to focus on tonal portrait drawing. In her first set of drawings, she demonstrated an emerging ability to draw naturalistic tonal portraits from photographic references.



Figures 5 and 6

During our one-on-one critique, she was eager for constructive feedback and could easily assess areas of weakness and deficit in her skills. I provided

the following critical feedback for continued growth:

“Make sure to work from good reference images which are high resolution and have a wide range of value. You want to find photographs that have value variations in the deep shadows and in the brightest highlights. If your main goal is to improve on tonal face rendering, consider using an aid to transfer the outlines of the face structure and features onto the drawing surface.”¹⁷



In her second set of drawings, she demonstrated a broader tonal range (five to seven distinct values) and increased control over the drawing medium.



Figures 7 and 8

Her drawings showed variation in texture and mark-making as well as her ability to use uniform blending. For these drawings, she chose to revisit the same drawing over multiple weekly sessions, improving and revising her drawings weekly. The reflection statement read:

“My concentration was faces, specifically accurate value structure. It was pretty much the first time in any of my classes that I received in-depth critiques, so it taught me what to expect and what was expected of me each week. Having weekly check-ins made me consistently look more closely at my work and see mistakes, rather than being stuck knowing something was off but not knowing why. I saw almost immediate improvement!”

It helped bolster my confidence as a (first year student).”

This growth and experience were typical of students reporting interest and maintaining a high level of effort during the term. Not surprisingly, outcomes showed attention to feedback and significant improvement throughout the term.

Interpretations for the Field: A Cyclical Relationship Between Motivation/Effort and Growth

In Carol Dweck's book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* she discussed the relationship students have between effort and talent.¹⁸ In her research, she showed that students who believe that talent is a fixed trait do not value

Students who see talent as a skill
that can be grown and developed believe
that effort is a characteristic of talent.

effort and believe that true talent is effortless. Students who see talent as a skill that can be grown and developed believe that effort is a characteristic of talent. Dweck's research also shows a cyclical relationship between effort and growth. Students with a fixed mindset invest less effort and see less results thereby reinforcing their belief that talent cannot be grown through effort. Students with a growth mindset invest tremendous effort and see convincing results which reinforces the importance of effort from growth.¹⁹

I recognized a connection between my data and Dweck's research. For students who expressed boredom, anecdotal evidence pointed to boredom overpowering the drive to improve. A student reflection statement read:

"...the only downside was that after a while I started to feel burned out and tired of doing the same thing...I just feel that I didn't have as good of a focus...also...the later in the semester, the more work I got, the more I started to lose motivation and drive."

These students invested less effort and were less attentive to critical feedback when they lost their initial motivation to improve. As a result, they saw less growth which led to a greater decrease in motivation.

Conversely, students who maintained focus and addressed critical feedback (following Ericsson's guide for deliberate practice) saw inspiring growth early on. As such, this belief increased their motivation to invest more effort, and to seek increasingly critical feedback. As a result, this population saw substantial improvement. In a conversation with a student (figures 5-8), she shared that *Deliberate Drawing Practice* reminded her a lot of "Growth Mindset Theory" a program her high school piloted for students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses. I found it encouraging (and impressive) that a student could see the connection between Growth Mindset Theory and deliberate practice.

A Valuable Experience, Perhaps With a Different Format

Survey data collected from both semesters provided nearly identical results in two noteworthy questions.

When asked: "what if *Deliberate Drawing Practice* was your only homework but it was twenty minutes daily, five times a week?" Sixty percent of students expressed interest, with 80 percent of those students stating that they would be "very interested." This data likely came from the students who saw significant improvement and suggested that deliberate practice offered something valuable to this population.

In a second question: "As a result of *Deliberate Drawing Practice*, how much improvement did you notice in your work?" Eighty percent of students noted improvement with 40 percent of all students reporting significant growth.²⁰ Since this data represents a larger portion of the class, it offers more convincing evidence that students value (at least in part) deliberate practice. The challenge is finding a way to get this result without such a divided experience in terms of student motivation and interest.

Conclusion

According to Duckworth's interviews with experts, deliberate practice can feel very effortful.²¹ Working at the far edge of our skills with complete concentration can be exhausting and may not be enjoyable. This knowledge helps me reframe the experience of the students reporting boredom and showing stagnated growth. While Advanced Drawing students may have more incoming skill than most first year students, they are not experts and

may not value expert-level practice. In requiring students to adopt *Deliberate Drawing Practice*, I am requesting that they follow a process without question. Typically, when I teach first year students, I explain that there is rarely a one-size-fits-all strategy for doing anything. As such, I invite students to reflect on the pros and cons of a strategy, and whether it meets their educational needs. I also encourage them to share when a strategy is not working for them so that we can adapt

it or find an alternative to support improved learning. Going forward, I will adapt this experience to better match my teaching style (as described above). I will also provide students with a broader definition and description of structured practice before delving deeper into the rationale for deliberate practice. Allowing for a gradual introduction and on-going discussion of deliberate practice may increase student motivation. Minimally, these adjustments will give me new insight

into the obstacles students face while trying to maintain motivation during structured practice.

After two semesters of requiring *Deliberate Drawing Practice*, I have a clearer picture of how students experience, value, and improve using this structured approach. Moving forward, I plan to adjust how I teach and facilitate “practice” with Advanced Drawing students. I hope to adopt a scaled-back and more flexible model to use for the full Foundations cohort.

Endnotes

1. Angela Duckworth, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, (New York: Scribner, 2016) 117-142.
2. K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf T. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Römer, “The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance,” *Psychological Review* 100, no. 3 (1993): 367-368
3. K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf T. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Römer, “The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance,” *Psychological Review* 100, no. 3 (1993): 367-368.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. AP Central “AP Central: College Board.” AP Central, <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/> (accessed November 23, 2021).
7. This data is an average percentage of students taken from five years of internal data.
8. This information comes from survey data I collected over two years using Moodle, an online classroom management system.
9. A survey I created based on the website: Train Ugly, “Growth Mindset Hub,” Train Ugly, <https://trainugly.com/growth-mindset-hub/> (accessed November 23, 2021).
10. Angela Duckworth, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, (New York: Scribner, 2016), 119.
11. K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf T. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Römer, “The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance,” *Psychological Review* 100, no. 3 (1993): 367-369.
12. K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf T. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Römer, “The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance,” *Psychological Review* 100, no. 3 (1993): 367-368.
13. Carol Dweck, *Mindset The New Psychology of Success*, (London: Robinson, 2017), 177.
14. Discord, “Your Place to Talk and Hang Out,” Discord, <https://discord.com/> (accessed November 23, 2021).
15. K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf T. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Römer, “The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance,” *Psychological Review* 100, no. 3 (1993): 367-368.
16. Data I compiled from assessment rubrics and students’ written reflections.
17. Some of the suggestions I provide in a practice context are counter to what I would normally suggest to a student i.e. “why not try tracing” but I found that the most efficient way to target specific skills was to separate them from other skills before combining them later on.
18. Carol Dweck, *Mindset The New Psychology of Success*, (London: Robinson, 2017).
19. Carol Dweck, *Mindset The New Psychology of Success*, (London: Robinson, 2017).
20. Data I compiled from end-of-term survey data administered through Moodle.
21. Angela Duckworth, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, (New York: Scribner, 2016), 119.

Classrooms Structured in Dominance

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In this paper, I identify and explore two primary determining forces of the university classroom: the structure of the debt relation and ideology of “official antiracisms.”¹ Acquiring debt for university education necessarily disciplines students in relationship to capital. Official antiracisms are institutionalized discourses designed to obfuscate violent material relations that disproportionately affect racialized communities. This structural relation and liberal ideology

contribute to the reproduction of white supremacist social organization. Together, they crowd out possibilities for critique to act as a compass toward a liberatory education. I have found that many conversations within our field, both in Foundations and university art programs more generally, require a greater consideration of these barriers to a critical pedagogy.

Methodologically, I am indebted to the 1980 essay by Stuart Hall entitled “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance.” At its root, Hall clarifies a structuralist method sensitive to the nuances of a given social context that emerges within capitalism.² He finds guidance for this project through a careful analysis of Marx’s method, which contains two essential premises: the materialist and the historical. The *materialist premise* suggests economic relations determine social relations in the last instance, while the *historical premise* insists there are infinite variations to economic formation with consideration to the environment, race relations, patterns of migration, etc.³ Ultimately, Hall outlines a method of analysis that avoids intellectual simplicity and economic reductionism in order to comprehend the complexities in a given historical context.

I embrace this methodology to interrogate how the university classroom is structured by debt relation and the embrace of institutionalized liberal racial discourse. While these are certainly not the only ideologies one must consider, these two forces will articulate themselves as *always already*⁴ instrumental to the university classroom.⁵

Workers or Students? Indebted Subjects and the Reproduction of Capital

The neoliberal turn and the extraordinary accumulation of debt is but a new chapter in an old book. Wages for

Students, a Marxist student collective active in the 1970s, laid the critical groundwork for understanding the university as a capitalist labor factory almost 50 years ago in a pamphlet entitled “Wages for Students.”⁶ In this 1975 pamphlet, the collective not only recognized that the university serves as training for the reproduction of labor and thus demanded a wage for that work (hence, wages for students), but it also recognized that liberation cannot come through the university. Almost forty years later, one of the pamphlet’s co-writers, scholar George Caffentzis, reflected on the original project:

I had a critique of the Left at the time, which viewed universities as a vehicle by which liberation can occur. They posed the university factory as a place of liberation, whereas we were arguing that it was time to detach ourselves from these factories and begin to say “no” to them.⁷

What is striking about Caffentzis’ reflection and critique of the Left is its remarkable similarity to how the contemporary progressive university fashions itself, promoting itself as essential to the poor and working class with an uptick in job training degrees, entrepreneurial programs, or the expansion of online courses. They model themselves as champions of diversity through an increase in international students (charging them exorbitant out-of-state tuition), establishing underfunded Multicultural or Women and Gender Centers, and most recently issuing rushed diversity statements

after another uprising following yet another murder by police. As instructors and presumed advocates of university education, we often reproduce similar liberal discourse, clinging to the hopeful idea that the education we provide is the common sense⁸ gate through which society must pass to remedy the world’s socio-political naivete or willful ignorance.

However, this common sense vision of the university must be problematized by considering how the university acts in concert with racial capitalism.⁹ In a contemporary context, university education is a jobs-training commodity in which one must invest

(i.e., take out student loans on credit) for the promise of future returns. Italian Marxist Maurizio Lazzarato describes credit as one of the most effective technologies of capitalism because of its extraordinary ability to expropriate the labor, time, and wealth of others.¹⁰ Capturing surplus value through the creation of credit becomes an instrument for macroeconomic financial management in addition to the plundering of the poor and working class’s money by financial elites.¹¹ As of 2021, the student debt economy in the U.S. has usurped over \$1.7 trillion from 45 million

Employability is paramount in university education, much to the chagrin of many arts educators.

indebted subjects.¹² This expropriation of people's money is worse for racialized communities,¹³ who on average are forced to borrow at higher rates than white borrowers and are subject to greater long-term interest accrual, further exacerbating racial inequality.¹⁴

The debt economy creates a "morality" that molds the subjectivity of the indebted. The "promise" made by the debtor in taking on debt becomes a moral obligation to repay. This promise turns the future itself into a commodity as it ensures the reproduction of the creditor-debtor relation.¹⁵ This temporal component of the debt relation is a formidable instrument for controlling possibilities

for activism as well as creative and artistic practices. As Lazzarato writes:

The question of time, of duration, is at the heart of debt. Not only labor time or "life time," but also time as possibility, as future. Debt bridges the present and the future, it anticipates and preempts the future. The debtor mortgages at once their behavior, wages, and future income.¹⁶

Following Lazzarato, we can say that the student is interpellated as a (future) worker. The fact that the majority of our students are interested in majors offering "employable skills"—graphic design, art education, photography—is demonstrative not of some kind of pure student desire or interest, but rather how desire is structured by economic relations and its threat of violence (poverty). Academics are subject to the same mediation and its subsequent disciplining. Like students, professors are incentivized to create marketable work¹⁷ and behave as subservient university employees to maintain the ability to repay our debts and stave off poverty. Adjuncts, who shoulder significant weight in most Foundations programs, discipline and professionalize themselves in hopes that one day they might be able to start repaying debts through attainment of that coveted tenure-track position.

Employability is paramount in university education, much to the chagrin of many arts educators. We see this in the requisite professional practices courses and/or generalized limiting of critical inquiry and experimentation in

favor of preparation for employability or professional self-management. Less obviously, we also see it in the intense disciplining of academically-inclined students in preparation for graduate studies where, despite a likely increase in critical inquiry, professionalization is merely more specialized for academia.

When and where professionalization is not a priority or perhaps even dismissed, it is often lamented by students and faculty alike as a site of contention, criticized for its failure to set students up to succeed as capitalist subjects—as indebted workers. It is no surprise that students treat college as the commodity that it is and, upon entering the university, immediately begin to consider managing their identities as capitalist subjects,¹⁸ evidenced by the clamoring for design degree-paths with marketing minors and a cultivation of themselves as a marketable commodity.¹⁹ Many have already begun this marketing of the self on Instagram: *DM for commission; DM for rates; Collab?*

To call attention to this structuring of the university as a jobs-training institution is to upend the common sense understanding of liberation as the ascendancy to the middle class that is attained through the instrumentalization of the self as a commodity. It is not to absolve instructors from the burden of responsibility to students that enter the university at great financial cost, but to stage the problem of liberatory education as a struggle against a capitalist ideology of self-realization through the commodification of the self.

Antiracism or “Antiracism”?

The Ascendancy of White Supremacy

The transformative and adaptable logic of white supremacy, which recuperates liberal “antiracist” initiatives, has a long history.²⁰ This counterinsurgent strategy of state-sponsored anti-racism is best theorized by critic Jodi Melamed, who identifies three overlapping paradigms of state-sponsored “official antiracisms” since the mid-1940s: 1) *racial liberalism*, forming in the mid-1940s to the 1960s; 2) *liberal multiculturalism*, forming in the 1980s to 1990s; and 3) *neoliberal multiculturalism*, forming in the 2000s.²¹ As we will see, these “official antiracisms” profoundly influence how the universities respond to the crises brought about by respective liberation struggles, both past and present.

Melamed argues contemporary U.S. racial politics can be traced back to a post-WWII U.S. that was

transitioning from a state policy of white supremacy—articulated first through the institution of slavery and then through Jim Crow—to Racial Liberalism, a doctrine of freedom meant to absolve the U.S. of its racist sins. With internal pressure from a bubbling Black insurgency in the South, external pressure from the Cold War, and various decolonization struggles problematizing white supremacy as an official state policy, it became important for the U.S. to resolve its “Negro Problem” (as Du Bois would say)²² in order to ascend as a global power. In order to do this, Racial Liberalism would need to write racial domination not as *constitutive*, as it had been during slavery and Jim Crow, but in *contradiction* to modernity.²³

Racial Liberalism resolved this racial crisis by unlinking race from political, economic, and ideological formations and instead tethered racism to psychology or morality, making it easier to absorb token minority individuals into the fold. In the same effort, Racial Liberalism linked the price of admission into citizenry with ways of living that supported capitalist economic progress and the status quo: voting over direct action; individual rights over collective rights; and an individualist bootstrap mentality over socialist tendencies. Inversely, racialized concepts of exclusion—the criminal, the queer, the destitute, the Black nationalist, the communist, etc.—emerged along with new carceral discourses to police the boundaries

between inclusion and exclusion. This delinking of race from material considerations and relinking it with notions of bourgeois rationalism was an important and lasting move in the state’s discursive struggle against revolutionary antiracist movements throughout the twentieth century.

By the late ’60s and ’70s, the revolutionary movements and urban uprisings would push postwar Racial Liberalism to its breaking point, birthing a new paradigm Melamed refers to as Liberal Multiculturalism. University student struggles played a part in this, as the convergence of a groundswell of social movements intersected with masses of soldiers using their GI bills to enter the university. It is important to note that the progressive or radical wings of the university—affirmative action in admissions processes, ethnic studies, women’s studies—were often direct concessions won by revolutionary and anti-imperialist student movements.

To recall one example, in 1968 student militants led a five-month long strike at San Francisco State College (now SFSU) to demand admittance of more students of color to the university and the development of an Ethnic Studies department. The strike was led by The Black Student Union (BSU) and the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)—a coalition of Black, Asian-American, Latinx, and Filipinx-American students. The strike cascaded across the Bay to UC Berkeley, and would result in the creation

A pedagogy of solidarity would insist on creative practice's social possibilities beyond that of a capitalist subject-in-the-making and contextualize the conditions of one's production.

of a College of Ethnic Studies at SFSC and Department of Ethnic Studies at Berkeley and increased admission of students of color.²⁴ The Black Student Union and Third World Liberation Front were both guided by the politics of self-determination and revolutionary anti-imperialism, and in turn, insisted on control of the department and its resources in their strike demands. Of course, the University did not oblige and maintained administrative control.²⁵ The strike at SFSC is a microcosm of the shift in attitude from segregation and repression of oppressed populations to conditional inclusion as a strategy of *managing* difference.

Fast forward to the canon wars of the 1980s–90s within English departments to see this point clearly. Melamed charts two primary orientations, one conservative and one liberal, that operate from the same paradigm of pluralism. A conservative *assimilative* pluralism represents Western tradition as one of common culture of the nation, while a *positive* pluralism views American culture as uniquely multicultural.²⁶ On both accounts, materialism is substituted with a politics of representation.²⁷ With the emphasis on representation, multiculturalism became ripe for commodification—books became a stand-in for people and white students were interpellated as multicultural subjects with a desire to express their antiracism through consumption. Importantly, white students who had minimal contact with people of color could obtain knowledge of racialized communities and presume their managerial-class position in the new antiracist order. Dovetailing with an analysis of the debt relation and the consumption of university education as a jobs-training commodity, we might see this consumption of multiculturalism as part of the paradigm of post-secondary liberal arts education in a neoliberal context. The consumption of multiculturalism is also a consumption of an aestheticized version of material conflict that allowed for a neoliberal economy to flourish by masking growing inequalities. Additionally, for white liberals,

this environment made possible an antiracism that removed accountability to material conditions.²⁸

A similar dynamic is at play in institutional efforts for “diversity, equity, and inclusion,” the most common recent iteration of official antiracism. To cite just one example, in the wave of requisite 2020 solidarity statements that followed Derek Chauvin’s murder of George Floyd, my institution vowed to hire a “Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement,” an upper administrative position that would pay over \$200k/year if consistent with the other comparable positions on our campus. To my knowledge, this is the only financial commitment the university has made since their widely publicized “stand against racism.”²⁹ This is evidence of what Melamed calls Neoliberal Multiculturalism, a paradigm that prioritizes particular global identities while others are stigmatized: multicultural over monocultural, reasonable over irrational, law-abiding over criminal, etc.³⁰ As Melamed writes: “Governments protect those who are valuable to capital, whether formally citizens or not, and devalue and render vulnerable those not valuable within the circuits of capital, whether formally citizens or not.”³¹ The university responds to a generalized demand for racial and economic justice with the professionalization of “diversity and engagement,” repackaging it as a market demand for representation. The university is further embedded in

a racial capitalist context by diverting millions of dollars over a period of years into a salary of an administrative position that is beholden to the Chancellor's office.

To cite an example from the visual arts, consider the fact that 39 of 75 artists invited to participate in the 2019 Whitney Biennial were from New York City. About 70 of 75 invited were from major U.S. cities. So while the 2019 biennial was the most “diverse” in its history with more than half being women and artists of color, this diversity can be interpreted as an extension of neoliberal multiculturalism's embrace of the cosmopolitanism required to participate in matters of culture valuable to capital.³² When W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy), following the lead of activist collective Decolonize This Place, called for artists to boycott the biennial in an effort to force Warren Kanders off of the board, only one artist—Michael Rakowitz—refused to participate³³ (this number would eventually swell to eight with continued pressure from activists).³⁴ Kanders is the owner of Safariland, a company that provides gear to law enforcement agencies, including tear gas that was used in Ferguson and on the U.S.-Mexican border.³⁵ Most of the participating artists are graduates of U.S. BFA and MFA programs, and many are professors, thus I want to implicate our pedagogical efforts and institutional pressures as having real political consequences. Here capitalist

pressure is marked by the opportunity to exhibit at the career-making show at the Whitney, which was implicitly deemed too important to boycott by the artists despite supposed political affinities between “the most diverse biennial in history” and the struggles in Ferguson and at the border.

We should also recall Lazzarato's important insight on the debt relation: “The question of time, of duration, is at the heart of debt. Not only labor time or ‘life time,’ but also time as possibility, as future.”³⁶ In this instance, the boycott of the Whitney Biennial is a foreclosed possibility. Indeed, a defense of why artists could not boycott was summarized simply as: “artists must eat.”³⁷ The authors of the statement “The Tear Gas Biennial,” published in *Artforum*, summarize why political foreclosure is significant. The statement is worth quoting at length:

*A boycott would boost the force of every one of these statements and actions [protesting Kanders]. But the art world imagines itself as a limited sphere of intellectual and aesthetic inquiry, where what matters, first and foremost, are inclusion, representation, and discussion. This ignores art's ongoing transformation into yet another arm of the culture industry, for which, as in other industries, the matters of chief importance are production and circulation. The Biennial is a major site of this activity—and thus a choke point, where the withdrawal of work has potentially powerful economic as well as symbolic effects. More than just a gesture of solidarity with victims of state repression, withdrawal of work from the gallery disrupts the actual circuits of valorization—not only of the work and its display in the prestigious museum, but of the museum and its stated interest in progressivism and socially committed art. There are moments when the disembodied, declarative politics of art are forced into an encounter with real politics, i.e. with violence.*³⁸

Not a Conclusion: An Encounter and Foundations

Melamed's analysis of neoliberal multiculturalism and Lazzarato's analysis of the debt relation illustrate the difficulty—and necessity—of creating pedagogies that might make possibilities possible. In considering possibility, one might begin by recontextualizing regimes of representations as entangled with racial capitalism. As “The Tear Gas Biennial” makes clear, the “declarative politics of art are forced into an encounter with real politics.” What I have argued is that this encounter comes to bear in the classrooms, clouded by the liberal ideology that the university is inherently liberatory.

These encounters will continue to play out long after graduation. Embracing this encounter may inaugurate an opening up of possibility, a *pedagogy of solidarity* that would relink struggles of representation with material struggles.

A pedagogy of solidarity would insist on creative practice's social possibilities beyond that of a capitalist subject-in-the-making and contextualize the conditions of one's production.³⁹ This contextualization, something I have tried to outline in this paper, is an encounter with real politics and is *foundational* to a contemporary university arts education. While I offer no new universal program for Foundations—I presume no position to do so nor have the desire to impose a singular vision—I am working to destabilize the implicit consensus of what is foundational knowledge for art students and challenging instructors to interrogate accepted pedagogical priorities. Whatever changes might be made, I have no doubt there is not an easy way out, but perhaps there is a way (or ways) through with some intentional pedagogical and political responsiveness.

Endnotes

1. An early version of this paper was first presented at the FATE 2021 Conference.
2. Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance" [1980] in *Essential Essays: Volume I* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 173–74.
3. Hall, "Societies Structured in Dominance," 193–94.
4. Louis Althusser writes that individuals are "*always already* subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition [...]," an observation that leads him to his famous formulation that ideology *interpellates* the subject "which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police hailing: 'Hey, you there!'" This evocation of the police encounter is no coincidence, for what Althusser points out is that to be *always already* a subject is to be abstracted to a categorical role within a capitalist social form—we are all subjects to the police, just as we are always subjects to ideologies of capitalism. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation)" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 170–77.
5. Hall notes that "determination in the last instance by the economic" is what distinguishes Marxism from other social sciences. Hall, building on Louis Althusser, complicates what is often interpreted as economic reductionism, which he argues is a misinterpretation of Marx's method. Hall (with Althusser) redefines the problem through consideration of how different social and economic formations result in a particular "articulated combination." He writes: "Particular social formations, especially periods of 'transition,' may themselves be 'articulated combinations' of different modes with specified, shifting terms of hierarchical ordering between them" (198). For Hall, a scientific analysis of social formation requires understanding these principles of articulation that must be considered both synchronically and diachronically. With respect to articulation/articulated combination, Althusser uses psychoanalytic terms like 'displacement,' 'dislocation,' and 'condensation' to demonstrate the "unity of varied social relations are not univocal but misled through 'over-determination.'" For Althusser, overdetermination is an answer to the problem of 'mere juxtaposition' and clarifies that relations are expressed hierarchically as well as laterally—as relations of dominance and subordination. Hall, "Societies Structured in Dominance," 198–201.
6. Jakob Jakobsen, María Berríos, and Malav Kanuga, eds., *Wages for Students* (Brooklyn: Common Notions, 2016). "Wages for Students" [1975] was reprinted alongside commentary from its authors and contemporary activists in this edited text.
7. George Caffentzis, "Introduction to the Present Edition," in *Wages for Students*, 38–39.
8. For Hall, "common sense" are ideologies ultimately meant to help reproduce the economic relations of capitalism. These ideologies are a result of previous resolutions to class struggle; however, they remain an active site of interrogation because their demystification would allow for a more conscious struggle and access point to intervention in the historical process. Hall, "Societies Structured in Dominance," 208.
9. Racial capitalism is a term first developed by Cedric Robinson, who writes: "The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force ... racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term 'racial capitalism' to refer...to the subsequent structure as a historical agency." Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2. See also Jodi Melamed, "Racial Capitalism," in *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2015), 76–85.
10. Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man* (Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2012), 20–21.
11. Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, 71.
12. Zach Friedman, "Student Loan Debt Statistics in 2021: A Record \$1.7 Trillion," *Forbes*, February 20, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/zackfriedman/2021/02/20/student-loan-debt-statistics-in-2021-a-record-17-trillion>.
13. I use 'racialized communities' as opposed to 'people of color' to emphasize the process of racialization as central to the (re)production of race in a capitalist context. Jodi Melamed defines racialization as a "process that constitutes differential relations of human value and valuelessness according to specific material circumstances and geopolitical conditions while appearing to be (and being) a rationally inevitable normative system that merely sorts human beings into categories of difference." These categorizations thus become world-ordering systems of difference that, through rationalization or normalization, conceal the process by which racialization works. Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2011), 2, 11–13.
14. Keri Murakami, "Would Canceling Student Debt Promote Racial Equity?," *Inside Higher Ed*, February 23, 2021, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/02/23/some-say-debt-forgiveness-would-lessen-racial-wealth-gap-others-say-it-would-make-it>.
15. Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, 34–35.
16. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Governing By Debt* (Pasadena, Semiotext(e), 2015), 70.

17. Here I include work that might bring success in the overwhelmingly competitive “market” of academia that some might consider outside the commercial market. Consider, for example, the competitiveness of exhibiting at non-commercial art spaces like university galleries, museums, or respected artist-run spaces. In each instance “respected” spaces are implicitly governed by their fidelity to academically/market-produced aesthetic and political values, which is in turn produced by fundamentally conservative aesthetic and political values dedicated to its own reproduction. In other words, it is cyclical; academia produces those who will be “successful” by establishing artistic discourse and culture that will ultimately serve in the reproduction of class (that elite private schools such as Yale, Columbia, SAIC, or RISD are the top-rated MFA programs are no coincidence). Non-commercial spaces do their part by exhibiting and reproducing these aesthetic and political norms, helping create a disciplining relation to academic discourse. Radical artistic and cultural practices that resist this disciplining and challenges the aesthetic paradigms of the market (i.e., capitalism) will either be subsumed by academic discourse or wither due to marginalization and lack of financial resources.
18. Lazzarato, *Governing By Debt*, 69.
19. See Brian Holmes, “The Flexible Personality,” *Hieroglyphs to the Future: Art & Politics in a Networked Era* (Zagreb: Arkzin. 2002).
20. Dylan Rodríguez, *White Reconstruction: Domestic Warfare and the Logics of Genocide* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020), 1–34.
21. Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2011).
22. Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, ix-x.
23. Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 9.
24. See San Francisco State College Strike Collection at Leonard Library, archived at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150224071740/http://www.library.sfsu.edu/about/collections/strike/essay.html> (accessed July 23, 2021).
25. Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 76.
26. Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 109.
27. Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 113–14.
28. Ibid., 115–16.
29. Steve Angle, “UTC Stands Against Racism,” From the Desk of the Chancellor UTC Blog, June 15, 2020, <https://blog.utc.edu/chancellor/newsletters/utc-stands-against-racism/>.
30. Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 150–52.
31. Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 40.
32. Scott Reinhard, Derek Watkins, Alicia DeSantis, Rumsey Taylor, and Siddhartha Mitters, “Mapping the Whitney Biennial,” *New York Times*, July 5, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/07/05/arts/design/whitney-biennial-maps.html>.
33. Jasmine Weber, “Whitney Museum Announces 2019 Biennial Participants, But One Artist Withdraws,” *Hyperallergic*, February 25, 2019, <https://hyperallergic.com/486562/whitney-museum-announces-2019-biennial-participants-but-one-artist-withdraws>.
34. Zachary Small, “Eight Artists Withdraw Their Work From 2019 Whitney Biennial [UPDATED],” *Hyperallergic*, July 20, 2019, <https://hyperallergic.com/510167/artists-withdraw-work-from-2019-whitney-biennial>.
35. Jasmine Weber, “W.A.G.E. Asks Artists to Demand Payment and Withhold Content from 2019 Whitney Biennial,” *Hyperallergic*, January 23, 2019, <https://hyperallergic.com/481246/w-a-g-e-asks-artists-to-demand-payment-and-withhold-content-from-2019-whitney-biennial>.
36. Lazzarato, *Governing By Debt*, 70.
37. Hannah Black, Ciarán Finlayson, and Tobi Haslett, “The Tear Gas Biennial,” *Artforum*, July 17, 2019, <https://www.artforum.com/slant/a-statement-from-hannah-black-ciaran-finlayson-and-tobi-haslett-on-warren-kanders-and-the-2019-whitney-biennial-80328>.
38. Black, Finlayson, and Haslett, “The Tear Gas Biennial.”
39. Marina Vishmidt, “What Do We Mean by ‘Autonomy’ and ‘Reproduction’,” in Kerstin Stakemeier and Marina Vishmidt *Reproducing Autonomy: Work, Money, Crisis & Contemporary Art* (London: Mute Publishing, 2016), 46–48.

Issues Affecting the Dissemination of Design Principles in Art and Design Education

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California State University Northridge

Design Principles — sometimes referred to as Coordinating Principles of Design — have considerable impact upon the compositional integrity or structure of art and design work, and are strongly felt across the breadth of these practices. Relative to this point, the following two questions are presented to the reader — questions which also fuel the dialectic purpose behind this paper: (1) Are Design Principles effectively woven into programming that supports scaffolding in art and design education?

(2) Should the use of Design Principles be systematically reinforced within a program, and if so, how? (*Scaffolding* in this writing is used to identify the activity of effective transitioning from a fundamental platform — such as Beginning Two-Dimensional Design — to a slightly more advanced or transitional platform — such as Introduction to Graphic Design — in which the foundational notions gained in the former become more fully realized and applicable in the latter.)

For many Foundations programs in the United States, this discussion may be far from ever becoming an issue. For other programs however, the issue may have already evolved into a tangle of conflicting notions. Scattered in between these two extremes might exist the balance of Foundational programming.

Design Principles, among those who regularly utilize or refer to them, are generally understood as the underlying relationships that coordinate the tangible components of the visual world or design elements (generally understood to be dots, lines, shapes, textures, colors, volume, and space) with one another.

It is important that the language of visual relationships or Design Principles be shaped into a coherent and accessible platform for effective downstream educational scaffolding to occur. A beginning two-dimensional design class with little emphasis on rhythm, for example, may reveal itself as delivering diminished value depending on how downstream coursework and instructors explore and support rhythm. How diverse or how confluent should notions of Design Principles be relative to educational scaffolding?

Design Principles:

A Landscape of Near-Agreements

A Google search conducted with the phrase *Design Principles* produced a bevy of search results (about 690,000, 000 in December 2017) reflecting various listings and even utilitarian forms

of Design Principles (such as in electronic circuitry). In some cases relative to aesthetics, Design Principles were confused with Design Elements and vice versa. A simple search produced a somewhat chaotic landscape of information and opinions. It also triggered a related question: How diverse and how confluent were notions of Design Principles within art education?

The net result of that consideration was the creation of a formalized, online survey model in early January 2018 intended for distribution among several southern and northern California universities and community college art and design programs.

Department chairs were contacted and asked if they would be willing to distribute the survey among faculty. It was described as a brief and informal “snapshot” into how Design Principles factored into each instructor’s discipline and teaching style. The individual respondents and their institutions would remain anonymous in the conducting of the survey and dissemination of results, as well as in the analysis phase—going far to neutralize any concerns that the results would be used to compare institutions or instructors. The results would be made freely available to the participating institutions for distribution among faculty (Figure 1).

The inquiry’s purpose was to ascertain what Design Principles were being shared in the process of teaching, what principles were utilized as per each individualized discipline,

VISUAL COMMUNICATION/GRAPHIC DESIGN <i>composition, rhythm and balance, etc</i> 21+ years <i>Movement, rhythm, balance, repetition, emphasis, unity</i> 21+ years <i>Hierarchy, focal point, balance</i> 11-20 years <i>Unity-Variety, rhythm-repetition, focal point, balance, figure-ground relationships, scale-proportions, movement-directional forces</i> 21+ years <i>hierarchy, point, line, plain, size, shape, space, contrast, color, proportion, grid, pattern, figure ground, motion...</i> 5-10 years <i>Proximity, Alignment, Repetition, Contrast</i> 5-10 years <i>unity</i> 21+ years <i>contrast, balance, symmetry, proportion, unity</i> 11-20 years <i>contrast, space, alignment</i> 1-5 years <i>Gestalt Principles, Design Thinking</i> 12+ years	PHOTOGRAPHY <i>rule of thirds</i> 11-20 years <i>Full tonal range foreground, middle, and background any change of plane should have a change of value</i> 21+ years <i>Rule of Thirds, Leading Lines, Implied Lines</i> 21+ years
FOUNDATION <i>Unity, variety, balance</i> 1-5 years <i>Composition, light, value, color, shape</i> 5-10 years	ANIMATION <i>Rather than using the fundamental principles, I use words like “silhouette”, “variation” and “staging” (which are concepts that encompass design principles.)</i> 11-20 years <i>composition, timing, Contrast and affinity, rule of thirds, tangents. Twinning, symmetry/asymmetry, framing, directing the eye</i> 11-20 years <i>Composition. Primary, secondary & tertiary reads. Value structure. Line quality. Depth clues. Line implication. Shape, scale, proportional relationships. Hue & Saturation. Positive & negative space.</i> 11-20 years 1. Work ethics 2. your work is only as good as your reference material. 3. Study the best. 4. Think out side the box. 1-5 years <i>composition, color, line weight</i> 1-5 years
DRAWING/PAINTING/PRINTMAKING <i>line shape color space contrast balance movement</i> 5-10 years <i>Balance, Space, Contrast</i> 5-10 years <i>Figure ground, color theory</i> 11-20 years	ART EDUCATION <i>Balance; unity/variety; pattern/repetition/rhythm; emphasis; scale; proportion; contrast</i> 11-20 years <i>color, line, pattern, scale, cost, materials, composition</i> 5-10 years <i>composition defined as controlled space. positive/negative space, unity/variety</i> 21+ years <i>Balance, emphasis and composition</i> 5-10 years
TEXTILES <i>balance, rhythm, unity</i> 21+ years	PRIMARY AREA UNSPECIFIED <i>Form and Function</i> 1-5 years

Fig. 1: Faculty survey results, *Design Principles That I Use*

If reinforcement remains one of the key factors towards effective Design Principles cognition and usage, what assurances exist that reinforcement can effectively occur?

and if the length of teaching experience had any relationship to the other two issues. The participants would be free to formulate their own conclusions, observations, and create new discussions on a variety of perhaps new topics. How they chose to use the responses in this fairly informal survey was entirely up to them. Three prompts were developed: (1) *List the design principles you most regularly discuss or refer to in your art or design classes:* (An open-ended question and entry field); (2) *What is your primary area of concentration?* (Choices: Animation, Art Education, Foundations, Photography, Drawing/Painting/Printmaking, Visual Communication/Graphic Design, Ceramics/Sculpture, Video/Digital Art, Textiles, Apparel,

Interactive, and Illustration); (3) *How many years have you been teaching art or design?* (Choices: 1-5, 5-10, 11-20 and 21+ years.) Twenty-nine responses were received. (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-PDQSSYMB8/>)

This brief and exploratory survey might suggest that inconsistencies could be lurking beneath the surface of an otherwise important aspect of Foundations programming. Beyond any implications of this survey and its results, a larger question emerges: Do the variety of Design Principles expressed in this survey hinder or support the reader's assuredness in regards to the effectiveness of downstream educational scaffolding?

If the faculty survey in *Figure 1* provides nothing more than an alert regarding the relevance of alignment, then this paper could possibly have performed a service.

A Shifting Landscape of Language

The late 19th and early 20th century narrative of visual form and composition developed by art historian, painter, and Pratt Institute/Columbia University Art Professor Arthur Wesley Dow has gone through numerous generations of expansions, contractions, and reformulations, resulting in a multitude of related, beginning two-dimensional design courses. Georgia O'Keeffe, Charles Sheeler, Charles Burchfield, and Max Weber were amongst Professor Dow's most notable students.

An examination of the main sections and subsections from Professor Dow's 1899 book, *Composition*¹ is worth the look. Annotations following the page numbers briefly explain the essence of each topic or subtopic.

Three Elements (page 67; Line, Notan, Color)

Line Drawing (page 73-75; materials and brush practice; learning from the masters/nature)

Principles of Composition: Harmony (page 79), Opposition (page 79; contrasting directions); Transition (page 80; a unifying, softening of contrasts), Subordination (page 81; contrast by relative diminution), Repetition (page 82; patterns lead to rhythm), Symmetry (page 86; balance, proportion through "good" spacing)

Line (pages 93-107; in compositional use: squares, circles, rectangles, landscape, and representational)

Notan (page 67; 113-159; Japanese term; rough translation is "light/dark" involving shape and pattern; author's note: also, a precursor to positive/negative, figure/ground, form/space)

Color (pages 161-171; color theory, color derived from Notan)

Composition (pages 173-176; in design and painting)

Professor Dow's system reveals a decided influence of Japanese culture and the late 19th century, while also providing a glimpse into narratives regarding structure relative to Western aesthetics. Texts from subsequent time periods indicate how the language of

Design Principles and Elements may have later been reassessed.

The 20th and 21st century language of visual relationships reveal agreements and disagreements within the discussion of the finer details, but two components generally define the contemporary playing field: Design Elements and Design Principles. *Launching the Imagination; a Comprehensive Guide to Basic Design*² is a widely used Foundations art and design textbook. Professor Stewart subdivides the book's first section into four chapters, of which two, "Basic Elements" and "Principles of Two-Dimensional Design", reflect a traditional bifurcation towards two-dimensional design pedagogy. A third chapter, "The Element of Color",—traditionally a component of basic design elements—takes a deeper dive into one specific element.

*Design Principles & Problems*³ by Zelanski and Fisher, was published prior to Stewart's first edition, and presents a generally similar type of separation between elements and principles. In the Zelanski and Fisher's text, chapter two—"Unifying Principles of Design"—is followed by five individual chapters on traditional design elements (Line; Shape and Form; Space; Texture; Value) and one entitled "Color".

In both Stewart's and Zelanski/Fisher's writings, Design Elements and Design Principles are well-explored despite differing structures between the two authoring teams. These two authors however share a common

sensibility, that Design Elements and Design Principles are interdependent.

The Department of Art at California State University Northridge began beta testing an internally-developed textbook in the months leading up to 2020 in order to more effectively support the program's Beginning Two-Dimensional Design course and Foundations program. The most current version of this text—*Photo+Graphic*⁴ by Ron Saito presents a broad and dynamic immersion into Beginning Two-Dimensional Design through a unique hybrid of elements, principles, and exercises, as well as dynamics of expression. There was no apparent need to individually discuss or feature Design Principles per se, as exhibited in this richly-crafted document. Instead, a more holistic approach appears to have been taken in which Design Principles as a whole are not specifically introduced or featured but rather woven into the broader topic-at-hand or into exercise discussions. Though technically still in beta as of this writing, the current net effect is that of a less traditional, less formalized examination of Design Principles within the aesthetics narrative or landscape.

Following a review of all of the above texts, one issue that remains largely unresolved across these writings is how best to align a Foundation program's learning outcome priorities—including those informed by Design Principles—with those embraced by downstream instructors

who in turn represent a variety of backgrounds and creative values or priorities. Can a variety of faculty and Foundations resources, each representing a unique palette of elements, principles, conceptual and expressive modalities, effectively serve downstream educational scaffolding without the addition of supplemental materials, training, or administrative initiatives?

The Feasibility of a More Consistent Design Principles Platform

An informal "pop" quiz was conducted in this author's Advanced Typography class (42% juniors, 50% seniors; Fall 2018). The results indicated that despite having fulfilled a two-dimensional design class prerequisite (frequently fulfilled at community college level), only eleven out of the seventeen students present could identify at least one design principle when shown an image featuring numerous examples (Figure 2).

Despite the possibly narrow and impromptu nature of the quiz, a new question began to emerge: If reinforcement remains one of the key factors towards effective Design Principles cognition and usage, what assurances exist that reinforcement can effectively occur? Potential variations among scaffolding model(s) represented by transferred students and a potential potpourri of Foundations instructor-driven preferences could potentially complicate an already robust and well-articulated program.

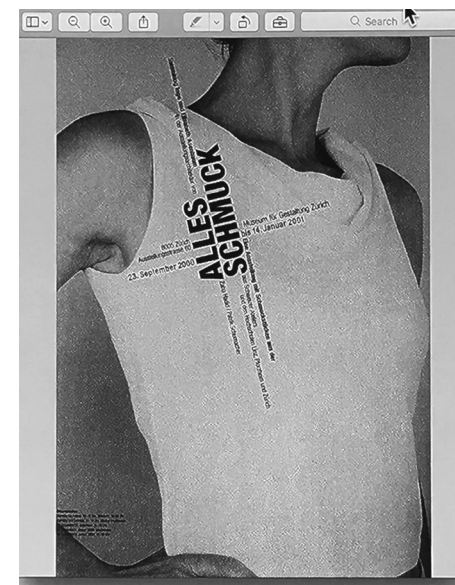


Fig. 2: Image used to survey junior and senior level students as to their Design Principles recall or awareness. Screen capture by the author.

If each *Figure 1* surveyed instructor's unique sense for what constitutes a Design Principles platform is correct and students may benefit through that instructor's perspective, what assurances exist that downstream instructors will reinforce, explore, expand, ignore, or act independently of the principles espoused by a varied body of upstream Foundation educators?

An idealized, integrated system of learning outcomes, platforms, and relevant scaffolding may also usher in a unique set of management issues, especially in the public education sector. Even if it were possible to adopt an agreed-to Design Principles narrative, how long would it take before its implementation would dissolve due to instructors being human, driven, individual and migratory?

One possible answer to creating a more effective change might be to initiate a more ambient or supplemental learning approach in addition to the more direct measures addressed in the *Recommendations* section of this paper. One longer-term goal for consideration could be an improved awareness towards Design Principles through everyday language in downstream course development instead of attempting wholesale program realignment.

Design Principles:

A Genealogy of Retelling

Design Principles and the backstory of how they may have evolved is a story comprised of individual instructor preferences but may also include a form of transformation. *Narrative retelling* involves a story or idea that is passed along and retold from individual to individual and from generation to generation. The original narrative becomes reshaped in part or in whole. The reshaped narrative gets passed along for subsequent, additional layers of reshaping. Narrative retelling represents a model of communication that is distinct from stylistic canons or immutable templates. What might have begun as a story about a talking cat becomes a story about a dog that gambles.

Though brief, the sampling of surveyed art and design faculty (*Figure 1*) revealed a rather broad diversity of approaches on the topic of Design Principles. It also engendered a few questions: What source or origin have these principles evolved out of? How have they been handed along, and should they attract formal codification?

Design Principle narratives may have continued in an altered form, reflecting the unique approach of each instructor as part of a broader narrative retelling chain. A broader question might be: How has narrative retelling impacted the conveyance of Design Principles?

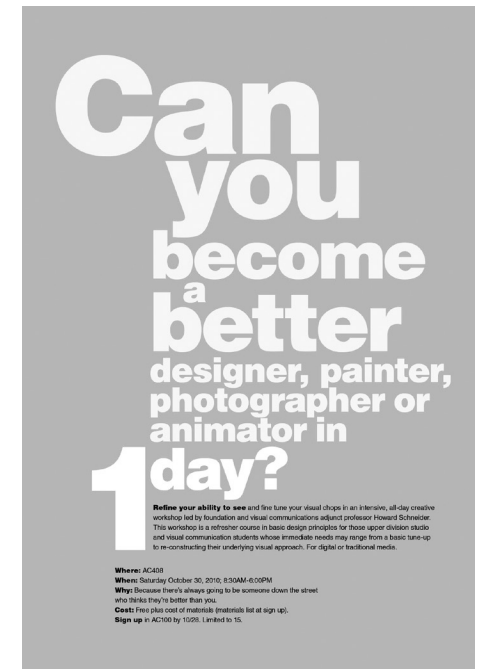


Fig. 3: November 2010 workshop announcement; *Can You Become a Better Designer in 1 Day?* © Copyright 2010 Howard Schneider

Design Principles Workshops: In Search of a Learning Platform

The retelling of a Design Principles narrative was the underlying intention behind a bright green poster (*Figure 3*) distributed within the Art and Design Department at **California State University Northridge** (CSUN). “Can you become a better designer, painter, photographer or animator in 1 day?”, became an unavoidably bold question with an equally bold challenge. The workshop was rescheduled for November 20, 2010, with eight people in total attending “a refresher course in basic design principles”.

The Design Principles that were discussed included: *proportion* (subsets: *contrast*, *balance* and *hierarchy*); *repetition*; *variation*; *direction/movement*; *positive/negative*; *continuity/alignment*; *dominant/subordinate*; *active/passive*; *advancing/receding*; *transition*; and *unity*. It was pointed out that repetition and variation frequently combine to create *rhythm*.

All students were asked to upload examples of their work before and after the workshop. Seven sets of student work were received. In five sets, the differences were quite apparent to the point of having little resemblance to their work before. (Figures 4–15)

The only unique trait shared among all eight students was having taken a traditional, semester-long,

beginning two-dimensional design class no sooner than one year prior to the workshop. Dedicated lectures, exercises, group and individual feedback – as well as repeating design principle terms and concepts multiple times throughout the day – seemed to have a notable impact, at least judged by their pre- and post-workshop work.



Fig. 4, 5, 6 and 7: Laura Tellier: before and after CSUN November 2010 workshop



Fig. 8 and 9: Laura Catudan: before and after CSUN November 2010 workshop

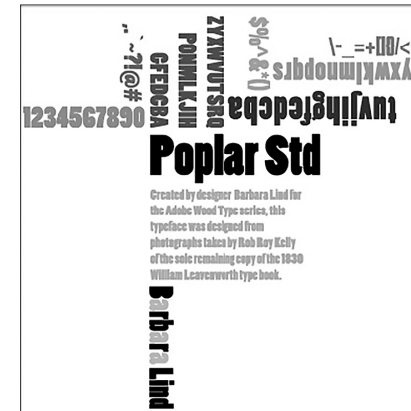
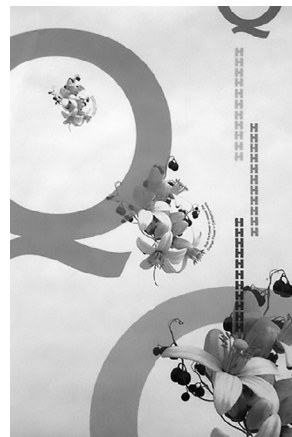


Fig. 10 and 11: Danny Tirado: before and after CSUN November 2010 workshop



Fig. 12 and 13: Haeyeon Gu: before and after CSUN November 2010 workshop

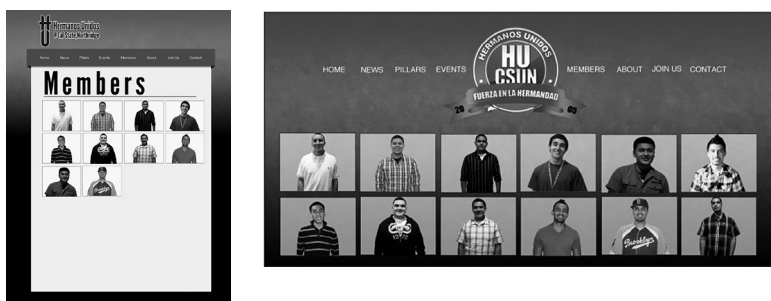


Fig. 14 and 15: Eddie Cobian: Before and after CSUN November 2010 workshop

At the workshop's conclusion, one student stated that the day was a good reintroduction to some principles they had disregarded, forgotten or did not give enough attention to in the past. During the concluding exercise, another student made an unsolicited comment to the effect that they never knew that basic design could be so much about "structure." A recalled experience from their beginning two-dimensional design

class (the institution was never mentioned) was that it was more of an "arts and crafts" class that "didn't mean much" after the class had concluded. "This (workshop) was an 'eye opener'."

Any given art or design class will reflect the experience, preferences, and backgrounds of the instructors, but let's consider the possibility that Design Principles are largely intangible, abstract sensibilities. Younger minds might not take quickly to abstract sensibilities unless extra care is taken to demonstrate how these sensibilities apply, not just in their own work, but to that of the myriad artists and designers who experience Design Principles on their own terms.

The November 2010 workshop launched an over 10-year involvement towards developing and refining a learning platform in a form that could be adopted by art and design programs in general, and for individuals who, for any number of reasons, may not be engaged with an institution or program. Eleven workshops were conducted onsite or online between 2010 and 2014. Though each new workshop would be an evolved form of a previous workshop, the final, culminating, workshop exercise would remain the same. The culminating exercise involved a given set of low-resolution digital images becoming the only materials that students were allowed to use.

The onsite workshops had an apparent advantage when time constraints were involved. Time restrictions helped to inhibit the temptation to fully develop concepts or towering narratives and instead seemed to help favor employing structural sensibilities. Introductory Photoshop skills were the only other requirement. Ironically, some of the resulting compositions resulted in a more nuanced form of narrative than the students reported achieving in their prior, more traditional narratively- or conceptually driven efforts.

One workshop was conducted as a videoconference; three workshops were conducted as video-exchanges to simulate asynchronous distance learning, with the remaining workshops conducted onsite at various Los Angeles-area based university and college art departments including CSUN (two workshops), Cerritos College, Long Beach College, Santa Ana College (three workshops), and UCLA Extension.

Overall results indicated that if early cognition of a few Design Principles had previously occurred, a concentrated reintroduction of those principles at a later time could produce tangible improvements in compositional thinking.

The **CSUN** and **Long Beach City College** (LBCC) workshops provided feedback that informed and helped drive this research towards a more engaging mix of topics and exercises. Nearly one-third of

the twenty-three students (their ages were observed as early and mid-to-late twenties) attending the initial **Santa Ana College** (SAC) workshop had not taken an art class in years, if at all.

UCLA Extension is one of the largest and most successful continuing education programs in the United States. Students in their *Design Communication Arts* program were invited to participate in a one-day workshop. This group differed from the previous community college groups due to the fact that the group was entirely comprised of advanced design students at the mid-point in their program studies.

Attendees remarked that the course provided “a great refresher on (design) principles”; “Once I was warmed up I was better able to complete later exercises with a higher degree of complexity”; and “a stronger sense of composition” were typical of the comments made about the workshop’s benefits. In this version of the workshop, in-depth discussions on *rhythm* were now being introduced in a more deliberate manner. Several students requested that the workshop idea be expanded to include a weekend and perhaps even an entire course. The successful implementation of Design Principles was evident. (Figures 23–29)

Santa Ana College workshop examples:

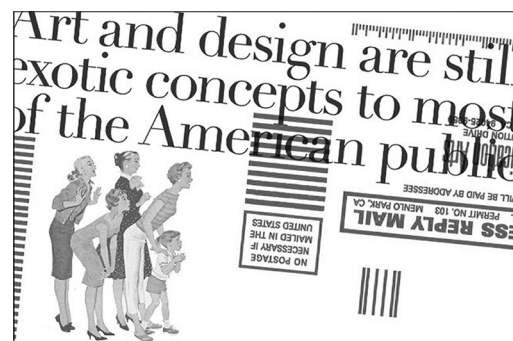


Fig. 16: Ben Popceanca



Fig. 18: David Lozano

Long Beach College workshop examples:

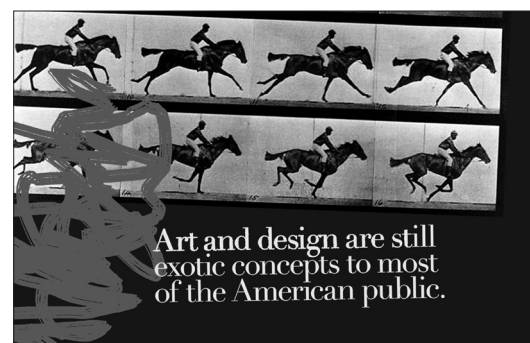


Fig. 20: Mary Dang



Fig. 17: Claudia Hernandez



Fig. 19: Christina Nguyen

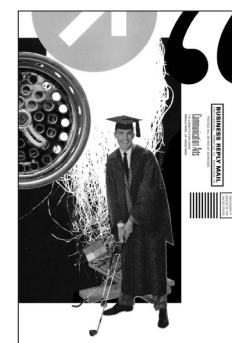


Fig. 21: Mary Dang

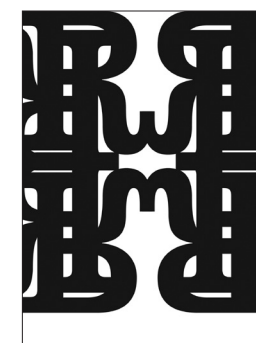


Fig. 22: Carmen Sosa

Design Principles in Foundational Coursework

Fall semester 2019's *Beginning Two-Dimensional Design* class at **California State University Northridge** would serve as the platform for classroom application of the previous, cross-institutionally conducted workshops. A presentation on the topic of rhythm, followed by exercises, began the term.

Emphasis was placed on gaining familiarity with rhythm and the properties of rhythm as opposed to rote retention of data. In short, rhythm was explained as being about repetition and variation and may involve sequence, interruption, alteration, progression, symmetry, asymmetry, or any combination of the above.

The final, culminating assignment, shown below, became an opportunity to apply the sensibilities gained throughout the term regarding rhythm, unity, and the other Design Principles.

Why launch a beginning two-dimensional design course with an introduction into rhythm? There are two reasons: (1) rhythm ubiquitously occupies the human experience, no matter the space, no matter the scale; and (2) an introduction into rhythm could provide an accessible, demystifying introduction into the intangible, abstract world of visual relationships.

UCLA Extension workshop examples:

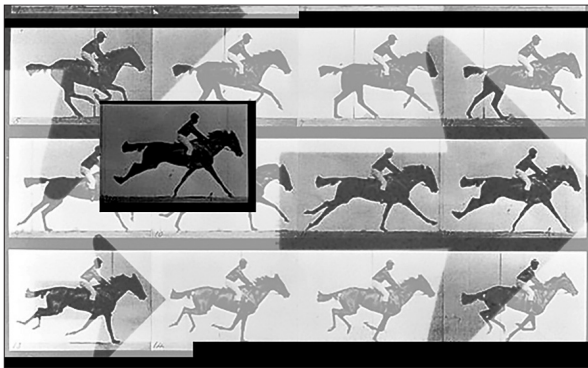


Fig. 23: Kristina Vargas

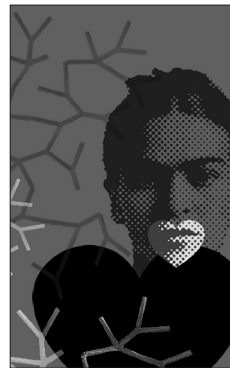


Fig. 24: Kristina Vargas

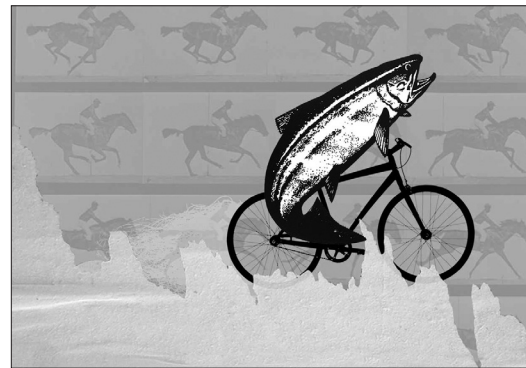


Fig. 25: Jared Millar



Fig. 26: Cindy Hammond



Fig. 27: Jennifer Lee



Fig. 28: Cindy Hammond



Fig. 29: Kristina Vargas

Eleven Workshops – A Summary and Implications for Foundational Coursework

Attendees to the eleven workshops who were either new to art and design or were engaging digital tools largely from a technical perspective, generally experienced mixed results. If a student's two-dimensional design course had just concluded, workshop reinforcement would be based on very little applied experience. If the workshop was attended approximately a year or more after the initial two-dimensional design course, the student by that time could have been exposed to various learning opportunities in which to implement unity and rhythm into their work. This type of workshop was apparently most helpful for those whose creative sensibilities remained pliant.

CSUN Beginning Two-Dimensional Design; Fall semester 2019
examples, culminating project:

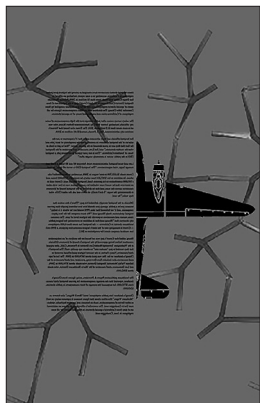


Fig. 30: Jefferson Navarrete



Fig. 31: Kiera Carney



Fig. 32: Cesar Cruz



Fig. 33: Anna Sharfman



Fig. 34: Kimberly Anderson



Fig. 35: Gianna Gonzales



Fig. 36: Jefferson Navarrete



Fig 37: Kimberly Anderson

Each of the eleven workshops revealed a common fault line: Those students for whom a remedial or supplemental program in Design Principles could potentially prove beneficial, appeared to have little or no access to such a course, institutionally.

Several attendees expressed a desire to extend the workshop into a multi-day program or an entire course. For many, the workshop either became a reminder, an awakening or reawakening of Design Principles.

The greatest potential outreach appears to exist through the inherently larger scales of higher-learning, public institutions. However, the ability of downstream courses and instructors to reliably provide reinforcement is subject to potential inconsistencies



Design Principle narratives should be embraced, expressed, and reinforced.

due to the varied nature of institutions and instructors.

Introducing Design Principles—especially rhythm—as early as possible within a beginning two-dimensional design class could help towards establishing a foundational basis from which reinforcements can be more effectively made at virtually any point downstream. One worst case scenario would be if reinforcement of a structural notion is given somewhere downstream by an instructor, but the basis upon which the reinforcement is relevant to the student was never successfully established.

Recommendations

Foundations classes, of which two-dimensional design is the traditional gateway course, are expected to fulfill a function that includes frequently introducing students to, ideally, every manifestation of two-dimensional design, including design elements, design principles, color theory, problem solving, concept development, dynamics of expression, and critical analysis. An instructor designs and manages the exposure to knowledge and, as such, determines which knowledge sets receive emphasis that the instructor feels are of particular importance and relevance. This choice of emphasis is unique to each instructor's background, interests and style of approach. Some instructors may discuss *positive/negative space* a total of thirty minutes during an entire course, whereas others may never leave it alone. Some instructors may elect to embrace only one aspect of Design Principles but may also demonstrate mastery of that aspect with remarkable depth and breadth. Thus, an instructor's prerogative, in the form of academic freedom, is simply the nature of the playing field and should likely remain an accepted given. But how overriding should prerogatives be if narratives on unity, rhythm, and structure are found to have been de-emphasized within the learning landscape of a two-dimensional design course, and especially from tangential downstream programming?

The following eight recommendations are directed at developing proactive strategies for promoting and assessing Design Principles awareness:

(1) A core set of suggested Design Principles could be developed within each department and later evolve as situations dictate with effective downstream scaffolding being the ultimate goal. Despite the preference among some educators for universal consistencies, Design Principles appear to be shaped by regional influences, cultures, and time periods. Nonetheless, they do exist though perhaps through different nomenclatures and approaches.

(2) Conduct an initial survey of students at the start of selected post-Foundations courses to determine the degree of awareness regarding Design Principles. This practice could allow the instructor to factor in any necessary adjustments relative to that course's enrollees.

(3) Downstream individual instructors could reinforce their own Design Principles by pointing them out during any critique on an individual work, and also pointing them out in at least two other examples outside of the work being discussed. Begin to reinforce this aspect of the language of design judiciously but assertively as each instructor understands it.

(4) Conduct onsite or online workshops in Design Principles. Onsite and online workshops might be conducted twice a year and cover two consecutive days or weekends. Reinforcement is essential.

(5) Intermediate or Applied Design Principles could be presented as its own course with a balanced approach that reflects how these principles manifest themselves across various media, disciplines, and within the areas of art history, and across various cultures.

(6) Student contests or team play-offs for prizes and tangible bragging rights for the best use of Design Principles, for example, creating a series of personalized Zoom backgrounds.

(7) Conduct a faculty survey by contacting college and university art departments within your geographic locale. The faculty survey should be broadened in terms of respondents. Discretely maintain all communications, including distribution of the results, through the department chairs. Respondent names and institutions should remain anonymous to all viewers, as per how the reader sets up the survey parameters.

(8) Share the results of any individually led research (including surveys) by creating a new dialogue or joining existing ones within the various communities that support art and design education.

Conclusion

Design Principle narratives should be embraced, expressed, and reinforced. Their downstream reinforcement is of considerable importance and should be a strategically integrated part of department programming, both formally and informally. The relative value behind emphasizing or de-emphasizing as well as the expanding or narrowing of Design Principle narratives needs to be addressed within each department. How are concerns within departmental areas nourished and encouraged or repressed and redirected when it comes to assimilating Design Principles narratives at the Foundational level?

Design Principles work well as a continuing thread early on and ideally begin a gradual release from orthodoxy as creative situations require more conceptually nuanced and refined approaches or expressions.

Endnotes

1. *Composition; a Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers* by Arthur Wesley Dow (13th edition, University of California Press, 1997)
2. *Launching the Imagination; a Comprehensive Guide to Basic Design* by Mary Stewart (5th edition, McGraw Hill, 2015)
3. *Design Principles & Problems* by Paul Zelanski and Mary Pat Fisher (2nd edition, Cengage Learning, 1995)
4. *Photo+Graphic* by Ron Saito (beta as of Fall 2021)

Andrea Kantrowitz

State University of New York at New Paltz

Book Review

A Cornucopia of Ideas and Arguments for Teaching Drawing in the Digital Age

Seymour Simmons' wide-ranging book, *The Value of Drawing Instruction in the Visual Arts and Across Curricula* overflows with historical, philosophic, scientific, and cultural resources related to the teaching and practice of drawing. The book provides a cornucopia of richly illustrated conceptual frameworks and practical applications to advocate for drawing instruction in K-16 education, within and beyond art and design domains.

Keywords: drawing, design, interdisciplinarity, art education, educational philosophy

The images in Seymour Simmons' ambitious book, *The Value of Drawing Instruction in the Visual Arts and Across Curricula*, range from 32,000 year old cave paintings to computer-generated video installations from the author's own childhood drawing to Indian women's traditional "mandanas," (temporary rice flour designs on the ground in front of their homes)—and that's only in the first thirty pages. The book's subtitle, *Historical and philosophical arguments for drawing in the digital age*, is a clue to the encyclopedic array of theoretical frameworks and conceptual approaches Simmons calls into service, from John Locke's Enlightenment era empiricism, the semiotics of Charles Pierce, to Howard Gardener's theory of multiple intelligences. His purpose in invoking these diverse sources is no less broad: to advocate for the robust inclusion and central positioning of drawing instruction in PK-16 education within and beyond art and design domains.

Throughout the book, Simmons shares personal reflections and experiences from his rich, lifelong engagement with the philosophical investigation

and activity of drawing, in his multiple roles as an educator, scholar, and artist. His interest in the philosophical underpinnings of drawing instruction have their roots in his doctoral work with educational philosopher Israel Scheffler at Harvard, to whom he dedicates this book. He proposes drawing as not an end in and of itself, but as an all-purpose and multi-terrain vehicle for the development of “cognition, creativity, and communication” across grade levels and disciplines.

Seymour Simmons and I first crossed paths at Harvard around 1980, when he was William Reiman’s teaching assistant in a drawing course and I was an undergraduate. Thirty years later, drawing brought our paths together again. Simmons spent a sabbatical semester at Columbia University Teachers College while I was an doctoral student and participated in the first *Thinking Through Drawing* (TTD) symposium I co-organized with the UK-based artist and scholars Angela Brew and Michelle Fava. He attended many of the subsequent (TTD) symposia and workshops in London and New York City, and in the book, references the work of many of the TTD participants and colleagues.

The heart of the book centers on four categories of drawing instruction grounded in professional practices in art, design, and scientific disciplines. In the chapter, “Drawing by Design,” he connects mathematical and logical thinking processes with diagrammatic, geometric, and “planful thinking” through drawing (p. 88). The work of Zaha Hadid is referenced as an example of how architects use drawing to ideate at the beginning of the design process and communicate their plans to others. Simmons describes the current debate in architecture education surrounding the importance of drawing, and what might be lost when the initial, loose sketching phase is skipped in favor of more rigid computer-aided drawing processes: ready-made templates may replace fresh ideas.

Observational drawing in art and science is explored in the chapter, “Drawing as Seeing.” The educational value of direct experience and the “innocent eye,” is based in the pedagogical theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Ruskin. The professional application of empirically-based drawing is exemplified by the use of drawing historically in medical training and contemporary practice. In 2012 and 2013, Seymour Simmons and I collaborated on National Art Education Foundation funded research investigating drawing across the curriculum in K-12 education. This study included an exemplary, second grade interdisciplinary unit on snakes in which drawing in the form of field observations and illustrations played a central role at the Conservatory Lab Charter School in Boston (p. 151). Simmons uses this example of how drawing from observation can play an important role in education beyond art and design, even when no dedicated art specialist is present.

In “Drawing as Experience and Experiment,” Simmons connects the pragmatist philosophy of Charles Pierce, William James, and John Dewey, each of whom either drew themselves or were

interested in drawing. In this chapter, drawing as a process of action and reflection, or as Dewey wrote, “doing and undergoing,” is emphasized (p. 179). The fourth drawing category Simmons discusses is “Drawing as Expression” which investigates how drawing has been used as a medium to explore personal, political, and other social issues, by children, artists, and others. The professional contexts referenced range from formal art education and art therapy to popular culture.

In this book, Simmons urges readers to consider the contemporary relevance of drawing, and to advocate for drawing instruction across developmental stages and domains in the digital age. Simmons quotes cognitive psychologist Barbara Tversky, whose research on the cognitive processes underlying sketching for discovery (Simmons, 2021, p. 261) describes how drawing is used, not simply to render on paper what already exists in the world or in the mind, but to help the drawer see or imagine something new (Tversky, 2019).

The copious references and interdisciplinary connections Simmons introduces invite diverse readers to explore further, according to their individual pedagogical contexts and interests. He makes the case that drawing is “an idea whose time has come” (p. 344). As a set of practices that is never fully mastered, drawing always leaves room for improvement and growth.

References

- S. Simmons, *The Value of Drawing Instruction in the Visual Arts and Across Curricula*. (New York: Routledge, 2021).
- B. Tversky, *Mind in Motion: How Action Shapes Thought*. (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

Raymond Gaddy

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Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art

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The State of FATE

Message from the President

Introduction:

I've spent a lot of time reflecting on my classroom experiences over the past few years.

I've asked myself a lot of questions, doubted myself and hunted for silver linings. One thing I knew through it all was that I could count on my FATE community for help and support.

Whether it was through project share via social media, conversations with good friends

met at a FATE conference or chats with my fellow board members, the FATE community was there. As we move, hopefully, into easier times, it seems a good time to reflect on what FATE has done over the past year and what it plans to do moving forward.

National Conference: Serious Play

It's been a long four years since we have all met in person for the biennial conference. The 2021 virtual conference hosted by University of North Carolina, Charlotte was a resounding success thanks in no small part to the Herculean efforts and leadership of Conference Chair, and current V.P. of Regional Events, J.B. Burke, her team, and past FATE President Casey McGuire. The virtual nature of the conference will, I believe, have long lasting ramifications for future conferences.

We now turn our attention to Denver, Colorado and conference host Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design (RMCAD). Planning for the 19th Biennial Conference: Serious Play is well underway. Serious Play is a balancing act, bridging the mischievous nature of creative exploration, the measurable necessities of education, and the high stakes of what lies ahead. The 2023 FATE conference is focused on exploring these tensions by sharing the lessons we have learned and the innovative pedagogical approaches developed during this time. The efforts of the team at RMCAD, led by Vice President for the Biennial Conference Jaime Carrejo, will bring

together professionals from across the country and internationally. Come to Denver April 13-15, 2023 and join FATE for some Serious Play.

FATE Finance:

Vice President of Finance, Shannon Lindsey has been a strong and tireless voice for FATE's continued fiscal responsibility to our membership. She has worked diligently to expand FATE's record keeping and transparency. Shannon recently reviewed all memberships dating back to 2018 to better align them with both tax year and membership period. With this information we now have a clear idea of the kind of budget we can expect for a non-conference year versus a conference year. Additionally, plans are in place to upgrade the FATE website software which will allow for streamlining the accounting of membership related finances. Finally, better than expected attendance at the virtual conference hosted by the University of North Carolina, Charlotte has left FATE in the strongest financial position in its history.

The best part of FATE is its community. I am constantly amazed at the diversity of opinion and passion of every member of FATE that I meet. It is this diversity that is FATE's greatest strength.

The virtual nature of the 2021 conference limited the participation of the usual host of corporate sponsors and vendors at the conference. Kariann, who has taken over duties as the Vice President of Development, is working diligently to bring those vendors back to the vendor hall in Denver.

With FATE's fiscal strength, your continued support, the support of our institutional members, conference corporate supporters and vendors, FATE will expand on the existing support and awards offered to our adjunct and graduate members. There are plans to initiate new programs of member support for those that serve on FATE committees and host regional events.

FATE Communication:

You hold in your hands the efforts of the Editor of FATE in Review, Michael Kellner, and his team of writers and editors. FATE in Review is a vital part of FATE's outreach. In a good year, FATE in Review is a massive undertaking of the organization of many

people of various talents. This year's edition also included dealing with supply chain issues, paper shortages and shipping delays. FATE in Review was hard earned this year and I offer a heartfelt thank you to Michael and each person involved in its production.

You've seen FATE's Vice President of Communications, Libby McFalls work every time you receive a newsletter or log onto the FATE website. Libby is constantly retooling the website to reflect the ever-growing FATE community and our initiatives. A new Social Media Coordinator position was recently created to assist the board in communication through all the various social media outlets. This position is held by Elizabeth Folk. Make sure you follow FATE on Facebook and Instagram @foundationsinart.

The FATE Community:

The best part of FATE is its community. I am constantly amazed at the diversity of opinion and passion of every member of FATE that I meet. It is this diversity that is FATE's greatest strength. There have recently been several initiatives that have taken advantage of the range of interests of FATE membership.

Several years ago, an initiative was made to update the FATE Guidelines for Foundations. A committee of FATE members, co-chaired by Kariann Fuqua, Katie Hargrave and Lauren Kalman, reviewed the previous version and sought input from FATE members and member institutions from across the United States for suggestions and additions. This past October, the Board voted to approve the new version of the Guidelines for Foundations. This new and expanded document provides guidance on numerous aspects of foundations programs from curriculum, assessment and pedagogy to mentorship and diversity and equity. It is the intention that this be a living document to be reviewed and updated more regularly than it has in the past. Thank you to the

committee chairs and members for their hard work and diligence in the development and organization of this important document. The FATE Guidelines for Foundations can be reviewed on the FATE website.

The past year, the mandate for the Diversity and Equity Taskforce (DEI) has been expanded and that expansion has resulted in a growth in the size of the taskforce. Led by Adam Farcus, who also serves as the SECAC representative for FATE, the DEI Taskforce has created DEI guidelines for the Bi-Annual Conference. This document was first used when reviewing locations for the 2023 conference. The DEI Taskforce also held a highly informative listening session resulting in several suggestions that have been taken to heart by the FATE Board. One Taskforce recommendation was that the Board receive DEI training. The entire Board and all members of the taskforce are currently scheduled to receive diversity, equity and inclusion training before the end of the summer.

FATE retains its affiliation with other organizations. While SECAC was canceled this past year, CAA held its conference virtually. The FATE affiliate panel: Strategies for Inclusive Studio Art Pedagogy and the FATE business meeting were hosted by CAA Representative Heidi Hogden.

An unfortunate but necessary outcome of COVID related restrictions was the suspension of FATE Regionals. As we move away from these restrictions the FATE Board intends to revive the FATE Regional program. If you are interested in hosting a regional event please reach out to J.B. Burke, the Vice President of FATE Regionals.

FATE's Future:

The FATE Board is committed to FATE members first. We want to make your experience as a FATE member the richest experience that it can be. With that in mind the board has begun reviewing all aspects of what it means to be a member of FATE. There are

several initiatives that we hope to implement in the coming months. Of primary interest is moving to an annual membership cycle. The immediate result of this move will be an increase in efficiency of book keeping and clarity in membership. With this change the board acknowledges the need to create new opportunities for membership to support your creative and professional interests beyond the conference. These changes will result in a review of every position on the Board. Having worked with the current team for over a year now, I can assure you that all ideas and concerns will be addressed. It's a big job that will affect all positions on the board, but I am confident that this team can implement a solid outcome. We welcome your input and suggestions as we move forward with these opportunities.

Thank You:

The current, largely new, board took over at the close of the 2021 Biennial Conference: Infrastructure. The energy of this board is focused on strengthening the infrastructure of FATE as an organization. A strong organization will create opportunities for the Board to redefine and improve what it means to be a member of FATE. I am thankful to the board for all their hard work done over the past year and believe they are the right team to lead the transformation of FATE.

The only constant of the past few years has been change. I want to thank you for being the bearers of the stresses and pressure of this constant change in your classrooms and studios. Thank you for all you do for your students, for foundations studies and for the FATE community.

— Raymond Gaddy

About FATE

Foundations in Art: Theory and Education, FATE, is a national, non-profit 501(C)(3) organization dedicated to the promotion of excellence in the development and teaching of college-level foundations courses in both studio and art history. Founded in 1977 as an affiliate society of the College Art Association (CAA), members include approximately 400 studio and art history faculty and administrators, and over 30 sponsoring institutions. The organization sponsors a national conference bi-annually, regional conferences in interim years, panel sessions at CAA and regional associations, and publishes a professional journal (FATE in Review) and a newsletter. For more information, please see the website at <https://www.foundationsart.org>.



FATE logo

Philip B. Meggs (1942-2002)

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FATE Membership Information**Individual:**

Tenured/Tenure Track faculty dues
\$65.00 for 2 years.

Non-Tenure Track faculty dues
\$50.00 for 2 years.

Retiree faculty dues
\$45.00 for 2 years.

Graduate student dues
\$35.00 for 2 years.

Institutional:

Regular sponsorships
\$150.00 for 2 years.

Membership information can
be found online at
<https://wwwFOUNDATIONSart.org>

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