2019 USSEA Edwin Zeigfeld Award
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Thank you for this award. It is a great honor. I particularly appreciate it because I have long had an interest in Edwin Zeigfeld's work, which I studied in my early years as a professor.

David Thistlewood, who was President of the British National Society of Education through Art and Design (NSEAD) at the time, gave me access to the Bretton Hall papers as the hall was being built. Bretton Hall is an art education archive in England, which houses important historical documents related to our field. The building has high security and the people who work there take great care of the documents. It is a great historical resource for our field.

However, at the time I first had access to the papers, they were housed in an attic in a building close to the construction site. I happened to be visiting David in England at the time and asked, assuming the answer would be "no," if would it be possible for me to just have a quick look at some of the documents. Surprisingly, David said that he would take me there.

The materials housed in the attic included boxes of the Progressive Educator Franz Cizek's famous exhibition of original Austrian children's art, which was shown in major art museums in England, the U.S., and Canada in the 1920s. And, remarkably, the papers included several dozens letters between Edwin Ziegfeld and Herbert Read, including communications between them about the beginning of NSEAD, InSEA, and NAEA. Herbert Read was the first president of NSEAD and Zeigfeld looked for his guidance when starting INSEA and NAEA. Zeigfeld became the first president of both organizations.

It was a privilege to read their correspondence. If you ever have a chance to visit Bretton Hall, I recommend that you look at them and the other amazing papers and art housed there. When I read them, I was sitting on the floor of a dim attic, shuffling through dusty cardboard boxes, and trying very carefully to put things back where I found them. Now, you will get to sit on a chair, in a nice air conditioned room, and have documents delivered to you.

I felt as though I came to know Professor Ziegfeld that day in a somewhat intimate way because I was handling the paper he had touched. We rarely have that opportunity of collecting hand written letters now. In his letters to Herbert Read, Ziegfeld revealed plans for the organizations, asked Read's advice, discussed conferences they had both attended, described his family vacations and other non-work activities, discussed mutual colleagues, talked politics, and became a friend of Read's over the years they corresponded. He was a great leader in the field and I am truly grateful to receive the award that carries his name.

Usually, in these types of talks, I understand that the awardee tends to discuss their past research. I have had the great honor to win several major awards in the field, and have talked about my past research. So, I decided to focus today on a current project.

Technology has been a long term interest of mine. I taught computer graphics for about ten years at the University of Minnesota in the 80s and 90s. Of course, that technology is no longer used. The first university computer art class I took focused on programming in hexadecimal. This course was offered before drawing or painting software existed for desktops. We actually had to program in hexadecimal in order to get a colored square on the screen.

I am still interested in technology, although I no longer teach courses on the topic. I am interested in it now as a visual culture form, or rather for its many forms as visual culture.

The project I am currently working on is titled, “Digital Visual Culture and Visual Commentary.” It is about the multiple ways students can engage with digital visual culture in secondary schools, and particularly focuses on the possibilities of student-made digital visual culture in the creation of visual narratives and social commentaries.

In the past, offering students opportunities for art experiences was enough for an assessment of teaching being judged as high quality. However, in schools today, an assessment of quality art education depends on our ability to demonstrate student learning. Student experience in art is simply not good enough. So, the things we have done in the past, such as assigning students to make a socially relevant work of art, is no longer adequate. It is likely that students will learn from such an assignment. However, without an adequate understanding of the tacit knowledge that accrues as a result of such art projects so that we can generate appropriate criteria for judgments of quality, how do we know such learning has accrued and how do we articulate it?

Learning about social issues is difficult to demonstrate, but it can be revealed through the visual arts. That is the focus on my research project. By the time it is finished, it will have taken place in three states: Illinois, Maine, and Florida. I chose those three states in part because they have different general political affiliations: Illinois is a blue state, Florida is largely a red state, and Maine is considered an independent state. I will get three snapshots of the ways I which national politics influence secondary students and reveal that through their creation of digital visual commentaries.

Studying the learning that accrues when secondary students make connections between digital visual culture and political commentary among secondary students is a complex goal. Pervasive digital visual culture offers new and renewing opportunities to make and learn about art forms and practices. Further,

the increasing emphasis on issues of social justice in schools calls for a high level of teacher and student civic engagement, including demonstrations of civic knowledge. These can be brought together in art curriculum to promote student learning and help students make a mark on the world. So, one of the arguments I started with in developing this project was that a complex understanding of student visual commentary could help us demonstrate student learning in and through arts.

The theoretical construct on which the project is based, which is that tacit student art learning can be demonstrated through visual culture (including digital visual culture) forms generally considered popular, is something I have been working on for at least two decades. In this case, I am using the concept of civic engagement as illustrated through social commentary, because this has changed in the light of participatory culture. Participatory culture is a mix of experts and novices interacting through the use of digital visual culture. One of the ways this works is through online sites where artists of any age locate their work and receive critical comments on it. Students and adults often do not know who is commenting on their art, but the critical feedback can be useful and cause artists to change their work. Generally, educators know very little about the student interaction and critical learning that occurs as a result of these online sites, and few researchers have attempted to study what people learn in those types of online contexts.

However, I have done quite a bit of research on autodidactic learning and peer mentoring. For example, five years ago I finished directing a large-scale, international project, that focused on visual culture learning communities. Our research group published two articles about that project and gave several national and international presentations about it. Nine visual culture learning communities, which were self-formed by high school and undergraduate students, participated in six countries. Each group emerged around a particular form of visual culture such as manga, street art, conceptual art, graffiti and so on. We focused on group teaching and learning processes, autodidacticism, peer interactions, the kinds of artwork the groups produced, how and where the artwork was exhibited, and what they reported as learning from their membership in the group. Some work was legal; other work was not. Some work was made for sale to enable group members to be able to buy art supplies.

A range of peer interactions occurred within these groups. One thing we learned during that study was that a large amount of autodidactic art learning occurred outside the classroom resulting from peer teaching in these groups. Further, the students often wanted to bring that learning into art classrooms, which was met with varying degrees of acceptance by teachers.

The groups had different rules and organizational structures. For example, a graffiti group in the Netherlands banished one of its members because he had been arrested and told the police about the group. He was not only excluded

from that group, but was excluded from every graffiti group in the Netherlands. The graffiti groups in the Netherlands have a network dependent, in part, on online communication, which includes viewing other people's work and making critical comments on it.

The first presentation we gave on that project was at an InSEA conference. Interestingly, several teachers in that audience did not seem to believe our data. Six of us collected the data, did many cross checks of them, and most of the researchers in the group presented in that session, so we knew we were presenting it accurately. So, we were surprised at that response. However, we have come to expect it to a greater or lesser extent whenever we talk about that data, because as it turn out, a surprising number of art teachers know little about the artwork students make outside of class, although that art reflects both learning from their in-school art teacher, peers, and curriculum.

The foundation for doing any project like this is the history of curriculum. Those of us who teach in a system that originated in Europe, have a history of curriculum that dates back to the Middle Ages. The idea of teaching using a linear curriculum has a long history, as does the building block model of curriculum. Then, around 1960, during the Sputnik era, the concept of a spiral curriculum developed, the curriculum on which most U.S. school and university programs are based today.

Now, a new form of curriculum has emerged, which educators in may fields refer to as postmodern. It has several metaphorical names as the field of education has not seemed to settle on one yet. Arthur Efland, Patricia Stuhr and I called it the lattice curriculum in our 1996 book, *Postmodern Art Education: An Approach to Curriculum*.

Further, the meta-curriculum of ethical behavior that educators across the school subjects teach helps students to become good people. Through the meta-curriculum, educators generally teach students to be diligent, trustworthy, fair, generous, and so on. The meta-curriculum in the U.S. involves the promotion of civic engagement in a democratic society.

So, ground in my commitment to contemporary curriculum, and the results of my recent research, four outcomes for civic engagement in art education have surfaced with regards to the current study. The first outcome is digital visual literacy. This does not refer to merely using a word processor. It means being able to articulate the tacit knowledge that accrues through the use and creation of digital visual culture. Digital visual literacy is visual knowledge that not only involves digital skills, but also related concepts.

The second outcome is autodidactic learning; that is, learning that students teach themselves. Art educators have done little research on autodidactic learning, and yet much of the learning that accrues inside and outside art classrooms is

autodidactic. Autodidactic learning is critical to art education and yet, it seems to be taken-for-granted.

The third outcome is community building. Student interests and participation in art are not based on standards. Our work is based on standards, but they create art based on their own interests and the interests of their communities. Community building is important to secondary students and digital visual culture is an important vehicle for building the communities they wish to join.

The fourth outcome is audience awareness. Audience processes have changed, in part, as a result of participatory culture. Also, audiences have become larger and more diverse. Secondary students are already using contemporary audience processes. So, it is time for them to be taught about the subtle promises and pitfalls of becoming part of these newer, greatly extended art audiences.

The digital visual culture project is continuing and results will be forthcoming. Thank you again, for granting me this honor. Although Edwin Zeigfeld wrote his letters on paper, he always looked to the future, so I hope he would approve.