

Today and Yesterday: Present Trends and Historical Research Principles in Art Education

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Purpose of Presentation

- Overview of some current trends in North American art education
- Research strategies for generating insightful histories of art education

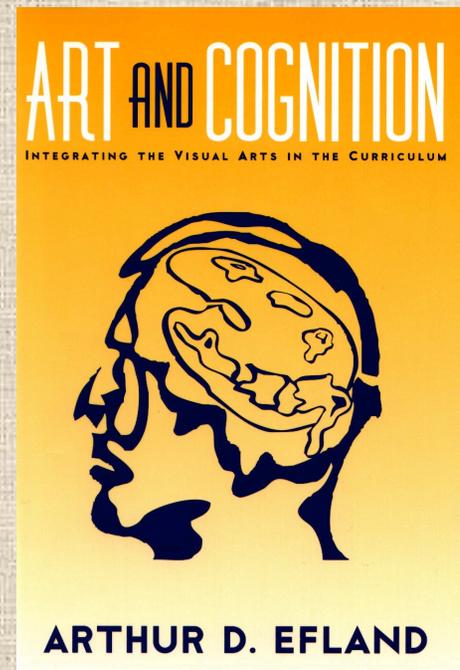
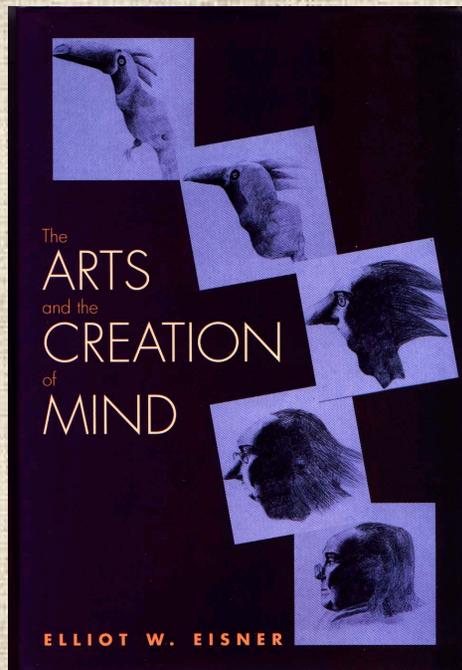


Selected Recent Trends



- Cognitive conception of art
- Big ideas and themes in art curricula
- Visual culture art education
- Uses of digital technologies
- Accountability for assessing learning
- Connecting art and life

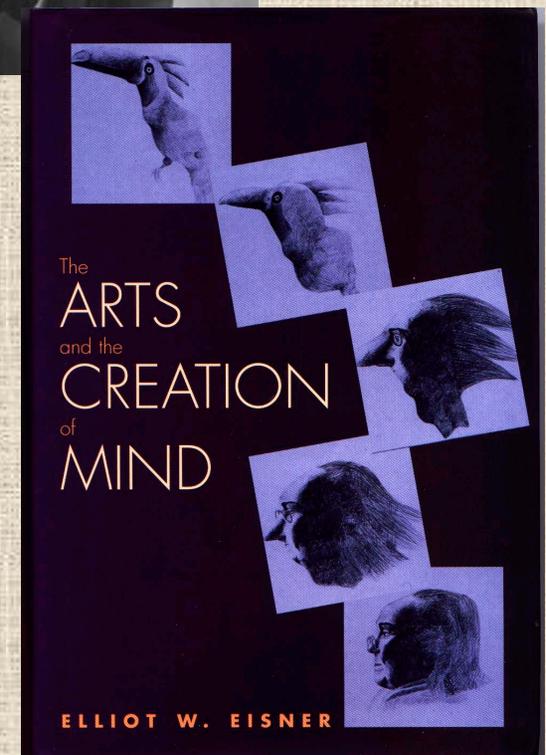
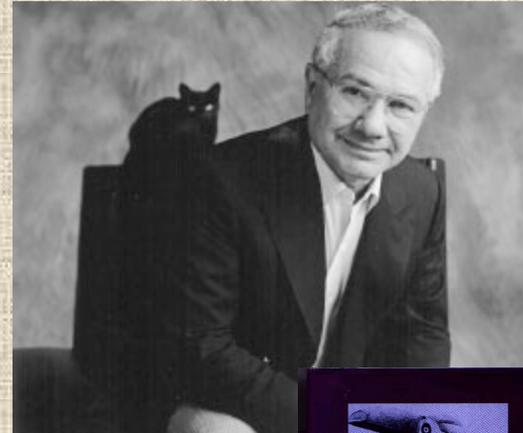
Cognitive Conceptions of Art



- Symbol processing approach
- Sociocultural orientation
- Integrated model

Symbol Processing Approach

- Exemplified by work of Eisner (2002)
- Mind exists in the head as symbol-creating and processing function that lets us know world outside
- Knowledge is created by individuals and then organized into domains by scholars



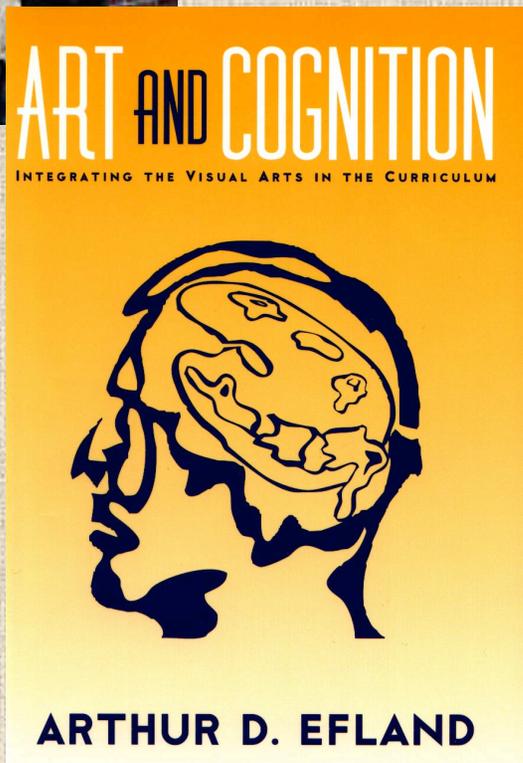
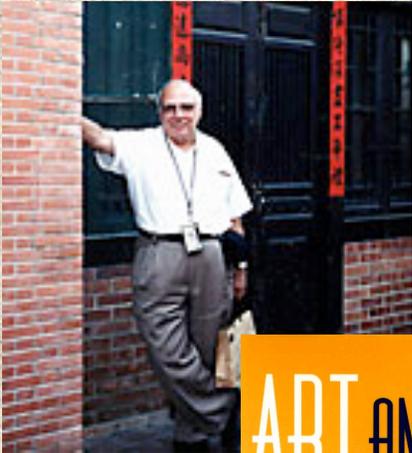
Sociocultural Orientation

- Mind emerges through acquisition of cultural tools and interactions in social world
- Knowledge is socially constructed and emerges in social interaction
- Learning organized for social needs

Related ideas

- *Situated cognition*
- *Scaffolding*
- *Zone of proximal development*
- *Socially shared cognition*
- *Reflective practice*

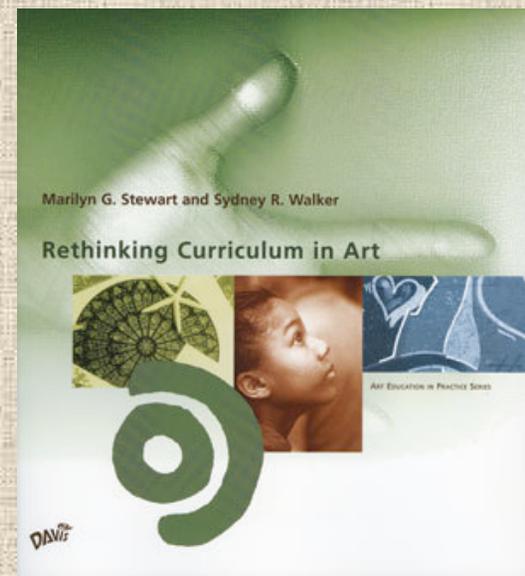
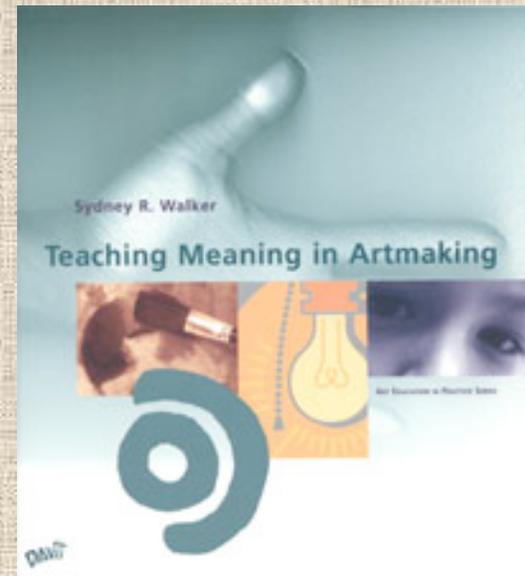
Integrated Model of Mind



- Mind is a symbolic function where meaning is made real through use of cultural tools like language, numbers, and artworks
- Learners construct knowledge in a cultural context using cultural tools to attain personal and social ends

Big Ideas and Themes in Art Curricula

- Art curriculum uses “understanding goals” that integrate symbol-processing and situated cognition models
- Student learning should be used in life
 - Learners demonstrate or perform their understandings in resolving genuine problems or constructing actual products or authentic performances



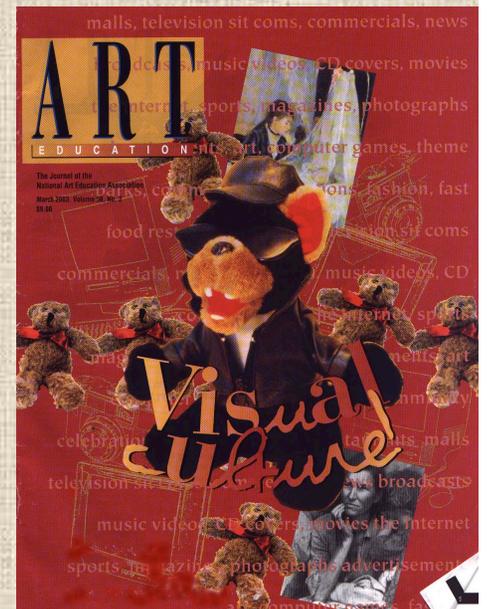
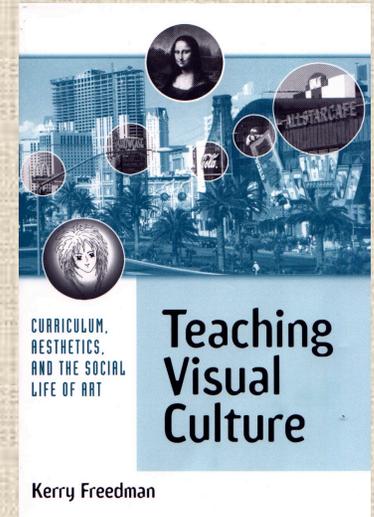
Teaching for Understanding Framework

- Generative topics
 - Community themes, big ideas such as identity, survival, power, conflict, and interdependence
- Understanding goals
 - Focus teaching and learning through essential questions
- Performances of understanding
 - Students perform understandings in a variety of appropriately challenging ways
- Ongoing assessment
 - Ongoing assessments embed formative evaluations of what students are coming to know and be able to do within authentic tasks and understanding performances

(Source for T4U Framework: Blythe *et al.*, 1998, p. 19)

Visual Culture Art Education

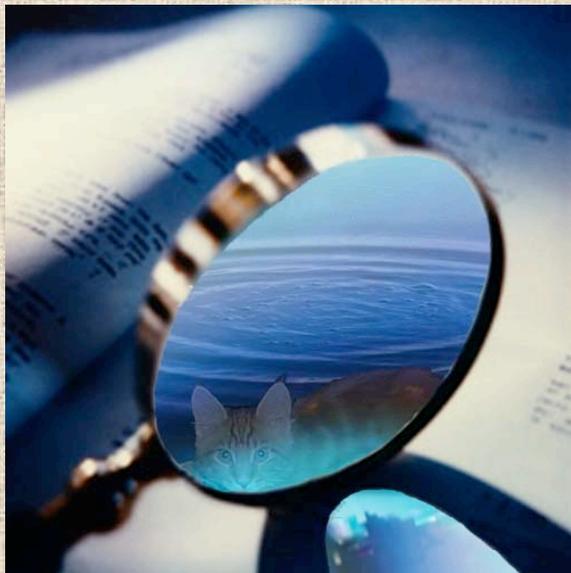
- Broadens content beyond traditional fine art forms
 - Opening up discipline of art history
 - Making distinctions between high and low arts irrelevant
- Grows from postmodern understandings
 - Notions of art are fluid, changing
 - Interdisciplinary explorations offer complex answers to questions about images and their roles in society
 - Visual images shape culture as much as cultures mold images, if not more.



Uses of Digital Technologies



- Daily we encounter still and moving images that raise questions about representation, reality, and role for the visual in our lives
- Digital images are a vital contemporary site for exploring big ideas and enduring questions
 - Fascinate students and teachers
 - Potential use in curriculum and assessment
 - Opportunities for making and responding



Accountability for Assessing Learning

- The arts are not subject to regular testing in the U.S.
 - Current technologies for mass evaluation of student learning do not support understandings and abilities central to the arts and cultural studies
 - On the other hand, what can be tested gets taught, and lack of large-scale summative assessments for art education contributes to its marginalization.

Accountability refers to measurable proof of what students know and can do

Table 2.—Visual Arts Assessment Framework	
Processes	
Creating	Responding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students generate subjects, themes, problems, and ideas for works of art and design in ways that reflect knowledge and understanding of values (personal, social, cultural, historical), aesthetics, and context. • Students invent and use ways of generating visual, spatial, and temporal concepts in planning works of art and design. • Students select and use form, media, techniques, and processes to achieve goodness of fit with the intended meaning or function of works of art and design. • Students experiment with ideas (sketches, models, etc.) before final execution as a method of evaluation. • Students create a product that reflects ongoing thoughts, actions, and new directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reflect upon and evaluate their own works of art and design. • Students describe works of art and design in ways that show knowledge of form, aesthetics, and context (personal, social, cultural, historical). • Students analyze and interpret works of art and design for relationships between form and context, form and meaning or function, and the work of critics, historians, aestheticians, and artists/designers. • Students articulate judgments about works of art and design that reflect attitudes and prior knowledge (description, analysis, interpretation). • Students apply judgments about works of art and design to decisions made in daily life, developing a personal belief system and world view that is informed by the arts.
Content	
Knowledge	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of context (personal, social, cultural, and historical) • Aesthetics • Form and Structure • Technical Processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptual • Technical • Expressive • Intellectual/reflective
SOURCE: 1997 NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework, National Assessment Governing Board	

Connecting Art and Life



- Social responsibility as goal for students
 - Contemporary artists critically examine social issues such as violence, environmental change, attitudes toward the body, cultural identity, and more
 - Social issues become big ideas around which essential questions can be asked
- Economic justifications for art teaching and learning

If trends and tensions shaping North American art education were to frame new research in history of art education, how might these contemporary perspectives color interpretations of the past?

What should historical researchers consider as they begin the detective work necessary for writing historical narratives?

Effective Historical Research

- Reflective
- Readable
- Relevant
- Resourceful
- Reputable
- Responsible

