

5

Teaching

Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit. *Aristotle*

Teaching: The Camel in the Tent

Teaching begins with seeing. When I stepped into my current teaching assignment, there was nothing distinguishing the school from any other institution and no signs of existence of an art department. The school had been in existence for nearly one hundred and fifty years and it was visually impossible to tell that anyone had actually passed through the institution. When I met the exiting art instructor, she advised me to lower performance and production expectations to accommodate students with limited experience and knowledge of visual art. Her advice was contrary to the practice and purpose of teaching and the reason why art is not considered a part of the valued scholastic curriculum.

The part time art program in place at the time consisted of a mandatory Basic Art class for all 9th graders that met two days out of a six-day rotation, an elective Studio Art class for juniors and seniors, and an ineffectual and unproductive Art Club that met once a month. This was the art department I had inherited when I agreed to teach at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula in the Bronx.

With the exception of art magnet schools, art education is generally viewed as an auxiliary and expendable part of the scholastic curriculum, largely because most administrative and faculty members are unaware of the art programs' potential to become a significant part of the school's identity. Administrators and Educational Leadership programs must emphasize the need for a productive art program that can change the sterile working environment of an institutional building while reinforcing and building the school's unique individual identity.

My first goal was to define and construct what an art program within a learning institution should be. The program must be an integral part of and not separate from the identity of the institution. Upon walking through the school's front doors, there should be an immediate identification and acknowledgement of the role of the arts in the institution. One does not accomplish this by confining art production within the walls of the art classroom, or by producing individual make-it/ take-it projects. The acceptance and integration of art programming begins with the acknowledgement and understanding that the arts are a part of a scholastic community, which requires service to that community. The arts will not be seen as an integral part of a scholastic institution until art departments do something worth seeing, and only then will the administrative and professional staff realize what had been missing from their institution and accept the arts as a valued contributor to the scholastic curriculum.

The successful integration of an art program into an educational institution is dependent upon the training and skills possessed by the art instructor, as outlined in Chapter 4. My initial inventory of the art room quickly confirmed what I had suspected when I first entered the building for an interview. A large percentage of the art supplies were in fact craft supplies, such as looms, yarn, simple bead

construction, jewelry supplies, mosaic trivet kits, glue sticks, and simplified art materials such as scratchboards and easy-cut foam printing plates. These supplies are commodities designed for lower-thinking skill production such as decorative product activities with little to no skill and discipline knowledge gained. These products are made specifically for hobbyists and school programs and require little production skill, which makes instruction simple and easy for teachers. I am not anti-crafts in the classroom. I am currently working with mosaics, and have worked with stained glass, fused glass, glass casting, and fiber arts. When working in these mediums I avoid prefabricated outcomes of the simplified craft kits and work with traditional materials to achieve a flexible outcome responsive to the materials being used. There are quality and progressive art programs that offer degrees in Fiber, Textile and Weaving Arts, and Ceramics that continue to be active participants of the contemporary art dialogue. The prefabricated crafts kit activities previously offered in the AMSU art program had built-in limitations that often prove to be prohibitive for the development of thinking and production skill development.

The next discovery in the inventory was forgotten drawings, and a photograph of a display of student art work. The teacher's drawings were high-school level drawings, and the student art display consisted of upper-elementary level landscape paintings. What I concluded was that the two previous certified art teachers were not qualified to teach art at the secondary level of education. I am sure they could write subjective lesson plans with attainable objectives camouflaged as learning, but it is rare to find an instructor who can teach and elevate a student's abilities above their own production and thinking limitations.

I have Art Academy students who enter the program with typical junior high school level drawing ability and leave the program with a technical drawing ability that far exceeds that of the past two instructors. Art teachers cannot teach what they do not know, which is why some art teachers rely on simple production kits and modified techniques disguised as learning activities. The problem with this fabricated art education is that it is too sedentary. These are individual activities of low production and learning value contained within the classroom that is disconnected from the rest of the scholastic community. There is no sustained learning because students jump from one production activity to the next; they are often not interrelated and require no skill transfer from project to project. This type of learning and production environment reinforces the view that art is a recreational activity and not a valid academic learning course of study belonging in a scholastic institution. These types of production practices and choices are one of the reasons why art programs are being reduced or eliminated from many school curriculums.

I teach in a Catholic school conducted in the Ursuline tradition where social and community service is required of all students. A teacher is an example of what one wishes the community to be whether it is a community of artists in a classroom or a body of students within a school. This means I am contracted to serve my art students and the school community. This begins by serving myself first. If I am not properly trained, knowledgeable, and practiced in my production and thinking skills, then I am of limited use to the community I am expected to serve.

The next step is to see how my skills can best be put into service that is beneficial to the program and school community's needs. Professional quality must always be maintained and I don't hesitate to employ my skills over student's skills in high-visibility projects connected to the school's identity. Generally, schools are designed for inexpensive function and administrators often lack an aesthetic sensibility and foresight to imagine the appearance of their building as something more than a mental

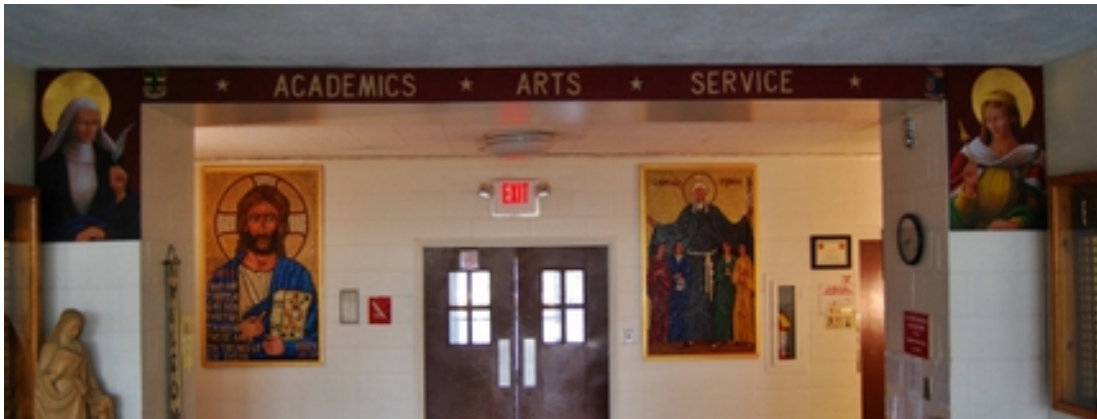
institution. In the article *The Beauty/Happiness Connection* Cody C. Delistraty asserts that an aesthetical environment increases the contentment or happiness of individuals living or working within an aesthetically enhanced and improved environment. The actions necessary for the artist-teacher is to take the initiative and show the administration and staff what is missing and needed to change an institutional building into an aesthetically enhanced building that has a specific identity, function, and community.

I have never requested permission to do any of the projects designed for the school. I would complete the projects and show the administrators the work and where it should go. The projects have always been accepted. I have also rejected poor quality projects proposed by administrative staff members and counter proposed higher-aesthetic, quality solutions. If one enters a school and sees poor quality work on display as part of the school's identity, then one would automatically question the school's quality of education based on the school's visual presentation to the public. By my own practice of working and producing projects for the school, I am acting as a model for my students who will also be expected to serve the school with their skill and artwork. However, my art students must be protected from low quality, non-learning, time consuming, nuisance tasks that will detract from their academic art studies.

Below is a painting I completed and installed in one of the main entrances of the school. The painting welcomes our students and visitors to a clearly identified Ursuline school with images of the patron Saints St. Angela and St. Ursula.

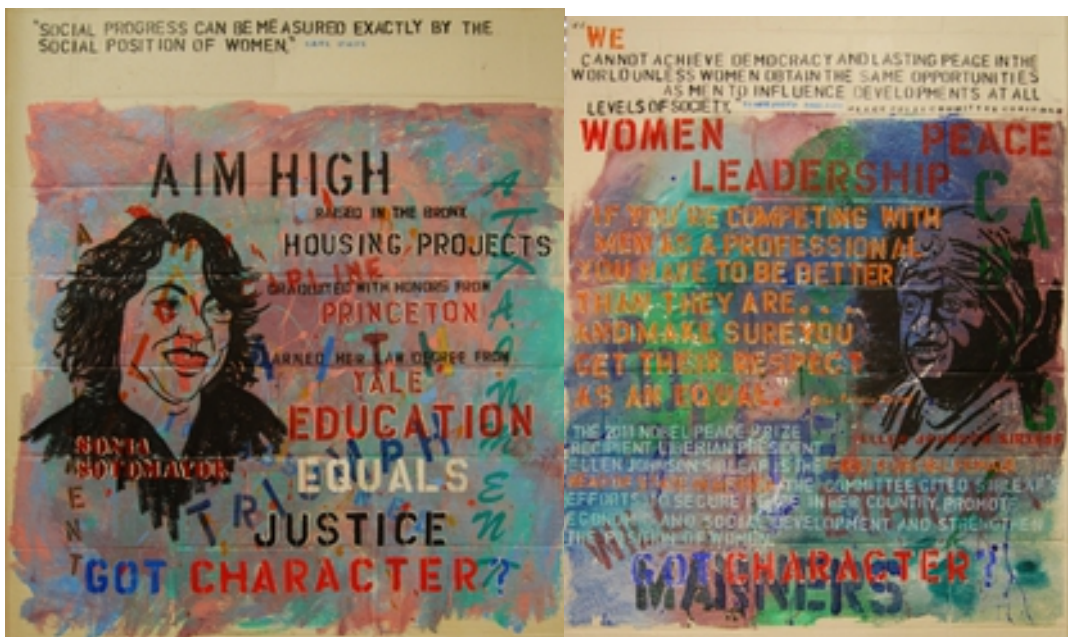


By the time I got around to creating the next painting for the school's other main entrance, the Arts had already been added to the school's "brand" identity, making the arts an integral part of the scholastic curriculum. Below is the second sign with the school's tag line of Academics, Arts, and Service. Included in the picture are mosaics of Jesus and St. Angela that were built and installed as school identity projects.



The above paintings and mosaics visually identified the school's religious and moral beliefs. The *Got Character* murals below were developed to provide visual support to the school's objective of inspiring our students to higher levels of achievement and leadership built upon a guiding moral code that serves both self and community.

The purpose of the murals was to put images of individuals of achievement that could be viewed as role models that had exhibited great personal strength and character who succeeded despite the odds against them. The Art Academy had seen a number of graffiti documentaries in their after-school film series, in addition to an article of Egyptian graffiti artists' expressions of political dissent during the Arab Spring uprising. We chose the urban graffiti layering style as the best means to get the attention of viewers and placed them above the drinking fountains where they would most likely be seen. Below are two of the murals featuring Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Serleaf.



All institutions covet name-recognition through achievement. Winning competitions as a result of quality programming is one of the ways a school can grow its name-recognition. Art students are individuals apprenticing to an instructor for individualized instruction forming a distinct art program with an identity that is representative of the school. An award received by an individual is attained through the instruction they received in their art programming. The award represents both individual and program achievement and should be displayed in the school, just as sports trophies are displayed to exhibit individual excellence and quality programming in athletics. The trophies we receive have the students' names engraved on the awards and are placed above the main art display near the main entrances of the school. Students and visitors are able to view the quality work on display while observing the number of awards the students and program have earned. Below is one of the main displays that exhibit art and awards.



The Art Academy is a four year academic art program with a requirement that all seniors produce a work of art depicting a Christian theme for the school's permanent collection. The works are properly framed with the students' names and year of graduation engraved on nameplates. The permanent collection is hung in a highly trafficked hallway from the main entrances to the school's auditorium. Below is a photograph of a section of the permanent collection.



There are a number of other student installations throughout the school; I have also created a number of artworks that are on loan and displayed in many of the school's offices that have contact with visitors to the school. Additionally, I have artwork that hangs in school hallways, a changing display of current work in the teacher's lounge, and a collection of works in the hallway outside of the art room. The advantage of having my work on display is that it demonstrates that I am a practicing, professional artist. It is not difficult to assert my authority and teaching methods in the classroom when everyone is aware of my abilities as an artist and teacher through the many displays throughout the school. I also use the art room as my painting studio and students have a learning opportunity to see how a painting progresses from beginning drawing to completed painting. The visibility of my work and the work of my Art Academy students makes students better listeners in the art classroom. A collection of my work can be viewed on my website gjustpaintings.com.

Teaching: Programming

The art program at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula was destined to fail by design. The program had a one-half credit mandatory basic art program followed by no art programming in the sophomore year and a possible elective course in grades 11 and 12, providing it fit into a student's schedule. For interested art students, this translated into having a limited and restricted freshman art course with the possibility they may again participate in an art program in their senior year. This was not a coherent program. It lacked the sequenced programming time necessary for learning to occur. All that could be offered in such a program was pockets of unrelated projects to students who wouldn't be able to develop the skills necessary for independent and knowledgeable art production. Every course in the scholastic curriculum except art is built upon sequenced learning that requires continuously programmed time. The lack of sustained programming reinforces the misconceptions of art being strictly a talent or a recreational break from the real business of education, the study of the "legitimate" academic core classes.

This type of programming is not unique to AMSU and is consistent with many other art programs I have experienced in my teaching career. I believe the reasons these program structures exist is because art teachers, myself included, accept them without challenging the viability of these limited learning structures that seemingly place art as an afterthought in the scholastic curriculum.

I remember my own high school art classes as being activity and project-based, void of any sustained practiced learning. As a student teacher, I observed experienced, certified instructors and presented

lessons to their students. The activity or project selection was not based on a linear course of study, but on an activity or project of my choosing. This reinforced early in my teaching career the idea of art as activity-based projects, where learning takes place through production experiences rather than through sustained, progressive, linear, programmed learning.

Other examples of activity-based learning were my experiences as an artist in residence for various state art councils and museum classes I have taught. The residencies were designed to be supplemental, activity-based learning, which provided the classroom art teacher and students with skills, knowledge, and materials beyond the expertise of the classroom art instructor. The same could be said for the museum classes where activities were based either on the museum's collection, special exhibits or just for the sake of having educational studio programming. In both cases, learning is experiential rather than a sustained course of learning, and these types of activities reinforce the idea of art education as a conglomerate of independent experiences and activities. This is not the way we learn language, math, or science, yet it is the way artists are expected to learn art.

I enjoyed being an artist in residence because I could just be an artist and teach without the chores of classroom management. Equally I enjoyed my experiences teaching in museum studio art classes, most notably the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the summer TAG program, the New York State Summer School for the Arts. Eventually I stopped teaching for these institutions when I realized I was accomplishing very little other than collecting a mercenary salary in a no-growth potential learning and teaching situation. These are good programs in excellent institutions, but it was neither the classroom environment nor the teaching experience I was looking for anymore. I had become completely saturated and filled with the one-and-done arts activity method learning of the institutionally compacted studio art experience.

What I wanted was to build a sustained academic learning program that would involve working with students for four years rather than the sporadic availability of the AMSU programming or the casual student drop-in classes of the museums. What I also needed was control over who would participate in the classes. The academic learning-based Art Academy is reserved for those students with high visual intelligence, while students of high interest but lower visual intelligence are encouraged to participate in a project-based studio course. It is important to realize that art at the higher levels of learning is not for everyone and students lacking the necessary visual intelligence interfere with and take instruction time away from qualified, advanced art students. I have worked in schools where students were assigned to take art, regardless of interest, and often because they were a discipline problem and the administrators felt there was no place else to put them. Little can be accomplished in this kind of non-learning environment.

Non-artists produce very poor quality art at an upper elementary developmental level, which translates into an art course of failsafe recreational project activities as the only possible and viable outcome. What is being produced in this forced style of programming is the perpetuation of the commonly held view that art is little more than a recreational activity which lacks the learning accountability of the core academic scholastic courses. This type of programming is in part responsible for the design of failed art programs, which make it easier for administrators to diminish or eliminate the role of the arts in scholastic institutions. Academic success is based on a stratified merit selection enrollment system and the same system must be afforded to the arts to insure the same equality of success provided to the

other academic courses of study. This is the only possible procedural means in which art can become a respected academic course of study in a scholastic institution.

The program I wanted was not possible within the school's scheduling structure, which meant I needed to take the initiative to develop a program that would exist outside of the school's operating schedule. This meant dropping the ineffective art club and replacing it with a credited four year academic art course.

The art club was a non-productive social club with an aversion to disciplined learning that was largely comprised of drop-in participants. The club occupied space and time that I needed to form an academic art class for disciplined, structured learning.

The Art Academy program needed the operating structure of a formal class that could only be provided by a fully credited class. The accrediting of the class meant that the classes were formally recognized by the school and participation in the classes meant the extension of the school day for students enrolled in the Art Academy.

Students entered the program knowing that they were expected to participate the entire four years of the program, provided they had the requisite skills and visual intelligence to meet learning expectations. Only students with qualifying skills could enter the program, which kept the class sizes small to allow for more individualized instruction and for the management of a multi-level class.

The Art Academy will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8, but it has taken a number of years to develop it to its current state. Most of my focus has been centered on building a functioning curriculum for the Art Academy while I have just been catering to the fluctuating needs of the Basic and Studio Art courses.

Now that the Art Academy course is firmly structured, I can start to project how the Basic and Studio Art courses can be structured into a coherent and unified program. The restructuring begins by changing mandatory classes to class options for fulfilling the State's one credit hour of arts instruction requirement. In our school, Basic Art programming would consist of ½ credit classes of visual art, music, media arts, and drama. Individuals that are offered choices are more invested in the form of learning they have selected. If freshmen and sophomores were to elect which art courses best serve their interests it would make for more productive classes and stronger visual and performing art departments. In the visual arts the elective process would stretch the basic program to Basic Art I and II which would bridge the current gap between the basic and studio art courses making visual art available as a continuous course of study for all four years of a student's enrollment. If a student is successful in Basic Art I they would be more likely to continue in Basic Art II where they would be surrounded by students who have had equal success and are interested in learning and can be offered more advanced techniques. Success is addictive, and if the learning experiences of the program are positive and rewarding, then more students will continue their art study in the Studio Art programs. I have often had students who could not participate in before and after school programming, and in this proposed scenario, a student would have access to a structured learning class environment from their freshman year continuously through their senior year within the programmed structure of the school day. I am hopeful that knowledge can inform and change arbitrary and uninformed curricular decisions that are unbeneficial to students' learning needs and wasteful of their scholastic time. Mass productions may

work well for building cars, but they work poorly for building students whose individualism and needs are defined by the genetic predisposition of their learning intelligence.

Teaching: Class Procedure

In the 19th Century, Nietzsche perceived that an unstated goal of the Industrial Age educational system was to indoctrinate individuals into the existing social model. The Industrial society is now in rapid transition to a new paradigm, but education is still operating within the old 19th and 20th century industrial age hierarchal system. In the school system, large masses of individuals are taught to submit to authority and conform to the hierarchal demands of the government and the production industry. The educational system mirrors the production models into which individuals are expected to assimilate to become productive members of a society. The requirements of a production society is that individuals must learn to act collectively to fulfill specific needs and functions necessary for the maintenance of their society.

The Nietzschean view of the Industrial Age educational system is still an accurate assessment of today's system and makes the practice of teaching more palatable for my conscience. What is required for learning to occur in a mass compulsory system is conformity and uniformity. Ken Robinson and Isaac Asimov predict a future system of education that is more individualistic and that will meet the demands of a rapidly changing society approaching the point of singularity where creative production of individuals will replace the slow and outmoded institutions of the industrial revolution. We are already starting to see the classroom change from brick and mortar single-source learning environment to online classes with expanded learning tools and resources. I currently operate an online summer course for the advanced Art Academy students and can easily foresee the possibilities of operating an online tutorial program once I am no longer engaged in classroom teaching.

From birth, children are taught to submit to authority, which begins with parental authority and is transferred to adult authority, teacher authority, government official authority, and so on. It is the unfortunate means by which our current society functions and is a system that can undermine individual strengths and abilities. The system assumes that one is incapable of acting beyond one's own self-needs, which often is the case. Hierarchies are only beneficial for those at the top, and what is needed is a self-authoritarian model to replace the existing authoritarian matrix. Howard Gardner recommends an antidote in his book *5 Minds for the Future*. He identifies two of the five minds as being a respectful and an ethical mind; however, neither is fully attainable without first having the disciplined mind. Gardner defines the disciplined mind as having "mastered at least one way of thinking—a distinctive mode of cognition that characterizes a specific scholarly discipline, craft, or profession." Gardner also forewarns that without mastering a discipline the individual is destined to being subservient.

The mastery of a discipline domain places an individual in a respected position of society, which requires the civic need of the respectful and ethical mind. The respectful mind is welcoming of human differences and is opposed to intolerance and disrespectful behavior. The ethical mind is one that serves purposes beyond self-interest for the betterment of all individuals.

One of the justifications I use for being a teacher is that those who harvest my labor are the individuals I am directly serving in my classroom, rather than laboring for the profit of a controlling individual or

institution. The respectful and ethical mind is a utopian ideal, requiring everyone's participation, which is why we have our current hierarchal systems and structure. How much longer the world can survive such self-serving structures is now being tested in the overpopulated, world of limited resources in which we live. It is unfortunate that the world community doesn't have an overabundance of exemplary individual and community models that live and share the qualities of the ethical and respectful mind. American Indian activist John Trudell makes a poignant speech in the film documentary *Reel Injun* that asks everyone to step outside of the limitations of their own single-minded cultural view and into a respectful and ethical mind capable of abandoning ethnic and social labels, replacing them with a single vision that all individuals are, first and foremost, human beings living in a world community where all must be respected equally.

In translation, these ideas and concepts mean that as a teacher I am not allowed to make judgments about student's abilities and intelligences in my classroom. My limited professional interests and limited student contact means I can assess what is transpiring in the classroom but cannot carry that assessment outside of the classroom because I don't know the individual. I only know a very narrow scope of the individual and I am unable to measure and understand how they are intelligent. Today I am a disciplined artist, but I must continually remind myself that when in school I was an undisciplined student that understood the value judgment imposed by the school caste system. Ultimately, the flaw in the system was that it was incapable of measuring "my" intelligence and the education value system became irrelevant to "my" achievement within "my" profession. As a teacher, I encounter what I see as undisciplined students, but I must assume that those who fail my class and other classes have an intelligence that is not being measured either by me or by the educational system. We have the unfortunate obligation to measure them scholastically, but not the right to think of them as unintelligent when we don't know or understand how they are intelligent. It is important to understand that school is not a choice, and what defines an individual is their choices and the ability to accept the consequences and learn from their choices.

Teaching: Creating a Learning Environment

Before learning in the classroom can occur, coherence must be attained. In Lynne McTaggart's book *The Field*, it is suggested that the brain operates on a modulating frequency similar to a radio. Individuals operate with different frequencies, but when in a group, the frequency at which their brain operates modulates to the strongest frequency, creating a coherent group of individuals operating on the same frequency. This can explain class management or mismanagement. The dominant mind controls the classroom, whether it is a teacher or a student. It is up to the teacher to be dominant in the classroom and to create the coherence necessary for the unified activity of learning. Music can also modulate the frequency of the mind, and is one of the focusing tools I use in the classroom.

No matter which level I teach, beginner or advanced, I inform the students that I am instructing them on how one must work and learn within the discipline domain of visual art. This requires learning a symbol and notation system radically different from the symbol systems of language. In the old, over-simplified model of right/left brain thinking, it would mean that the linguistic left hemisphere or the centers of the brain that process speech would need to be shut down to allow the right pictorial/spatial hemisphere to operate. There have been many studies that indicate that language usage takes priority in brain function and language usage interferes with and prohibits other cognitive functions. Language brain dominance is the reason why there are laws against cell phone use while driving. The priority of the

driver's mind is on having a conversation and is distracted from the spatial right-brain hemisphere task of driving. The same is true in the classroom. A student having a conversation with another student is not thinking or working on the assigned task. When I allowed students to talk in class, what I found was they did more talking than working and what work was being done was of poor quality because they weren't thinking or focused on their work. I challenge the students by having them consider whether they read and have a conversation at the same time or do a complex math problem while having a discussion with the person next to them. The unfortunate misconception students have about art is they feel it is a recreational activity that can be casually done in a conversational, fun atmosphere. The opposite is true.

The principles of classroom management are consistent in each of my classes, with one exception. In the mandatory classes I am a teacher, and in the advanced classes students' interest in art allows me to be an artist. I consider mandatory classes as hostage classes in the same manner as any core academic course. Someone of administrative authority had determined that art was either necessary or good for someone else without consideration as to whether that individual has either the interest or visual intelligence required to be successful in art. Usually when art is treated as a forced, participatory class, the idea of a domain discipline and visual intelligence are not perceived by the assigning administrative individual. Most will assume that art is an experiential, non-learning activity in which anyone can participate and succeed. Often the question I hear parents ask of their underperforming child at parent-teacher conference night is "How do you fail art"? The question is a transparent declaration that art is little more than an elementary recess. The decision-making of forced participation in an art class is equally a declaration of the visual illiteracy of those who have little understanding of the complexity of the symbol and notation system used in visual art. The mandatory class decree may put students in an uncomfortable situation of having adult visual perception with elementary production skill. It also places some students needlessly in a situation where they may fail. Usually the students doing poorly in art are also struggling in all curriculum course work and art ends up taking time away from their true learning needs.

In the mandatory classes I teach, 80% of the students felt art should be an elective, with some questioning the use of scholastic time for art. One must acknowledge the students' opinions and reservations over taking an art course; however, it is essential to point out that it is a set requirement with which both students and teacher must comply. The class becomes the honoring of the commitments both teacher and students have agreed upon to participate in the school's learning environment.

I explain to the students that art cannot be taught to individuals who don't practice daily. I usually give the piano analogy. One can't play the piano unless one takes structured lessons with daily practice. What can be taught is the basic elements of art through the working methods of the visual artist. The methods of the artist require self-discipline, focus, and repetitive practice. Wassily Kandinsky, in his book *Point to Plane*, defines line drawing as a point that moves. The moving point means all literate students learned to draw through repetitive practice when learning how to draw the letters of the alphabet. Writing is drawing and pictorial drawing is the same process.

I have a writing exercise based on Leonardo's writing in his journals. Leonardo would write in a reversed manner that could be read when held up to a mirror. In the assignment I ask the students to write their names backwards in a mirrored image with letters reversed and they always find it awkward and nearly

impossible, even though they are drawing their name - something they have done hundreds of thousands of times. They find it difficult because they haven't practiced writing their name in the reversed mirrored image. Drawing is practicing, and they will also learn that drawing is measuring. Learning drill practice requires intense focus and students must maintain their attention on their visual work. Students are often uncomfortable with their skill level and make unconstructive comments about their work or the works of others. Whatever the intent, their conversations are distractions and, contrary to the myth of multi-tasking, the conscious mind is not proficient at doing two things at once; rather it is doing two things poorly at once.

Being fully aware of the compliance directive of education, I enforce no talking during production time. Class coherence is reinforced through classical instrumental music playing quietly, which helps the students settle into their focused drawing activity. When all students are actively participating in the day's assignment, coherence is achieved, which I presume means all minds are operating on the same frequency. Regardless, when all are focused and intently working, the quality of work greatly improves; conversely, when chatting occurs, quality of work drastically diminishes for those engaging in conversations. Learning is an active, participatory process, and talking becomes the avoidance of learning in practice drills, which is essential in skill and concept development.

Another learning inhibitor is the student's own preconceptions. When students believe they can't perform an assigned task, they don't try. The words "I can't" are indicators of preconceptions and the words "I can't draw" must be eliminated from usage in the classroom. The refusal to compromise expectations in art class projects forces students to work to the best of their abilities and results in most students successfully working through their preconceived limitations. In order for students to learn, the words "I can't" must be forgotten and replaced with new knowledge. Often times the definition of "I can't" is "I don't want to," which in some instances becomes an impenetrable barrier to learning. This is not only true in art but in every curricular course.

The benefit of having a mandatory foundational art course is that I can assess each student's interest and ability in visual art. How well students perform in the foundational class determines their eligibility for the advanced art courses. The limited availability of art programming makes the basic course a critical component of the art program in teaching basic concepts to those students with an interest in art. The Basic Art program does not create artists; instead, it identifies them. I have had students with a high interest in art who lacked the visual intelligence to be an artist. I have also discovered a few highly visually intelligent individuals who had no interest in art. One student did exceptional work and her skills were equal to some of the Art Academy seniors. I invited her to join the Art Academy, but she declined because her interests were in music and the time required to become a competent visual artist would encroach upon the practice time necessary to become an accomplished musician. In recognizing that she was not a visual artist, I could appreciate her discipline and dedication to her musical art form and acknowledge how fortunate the music department was to have her as a student.

The Basic Art program is essential to those who have an interest in art; however, it cannot create an interest where one does not exist. Once uninterested students are no longer in an art course, their skill will quickly erode to the elementary level. Their foray into the visual arts represents a misuse of instructional time wherein interested students' progress is greatly impeded by the majority of disinterested students. For example, schools rarely schedule their top performing English Language Arts (ELA) students into classes where they are surrounded by the school's lowest performing ELA students.

The advanced students' learning potential would be diminished in that type of indiscriminant learning environment. The same is true for visual learners who are thoughtlessly placed in a high and low interest learning environment of a mandatory class. Forced participation will never develop art appreciation and may very well have the opposite effect. The suggestion that an art history or art appreciation course would be a more suitable course of basic art study would devalue the skills possessed by the visual learners and would further diminish their much needed learning opportunities.

In the advanced classes I employ the same class management procedures. In the larger Basic Art courses teaching involves much more class management, or what I refer to as crowd control. In the advanced classes the students have an interest in art and are in my classroom understanding the potential knowledge gain of the artist and student participatory learning dialogue. Class management is not necessary because they are self-disciplined by their self-interests. Since I don't have to act as a "teacher," I can assume my truer artistic identity engaged in working with student apprentices.

In the Basic Art class I am always directing the production process of the assignment. The advanced classes require less direction and more interaction. If I over-direct, the outcome is too predictable, contrived, and devoid of individual characteristics. Over-directing may cause students to become lost in the production process, making students too dependent on teacher directives. I have to be patient to allow students to develop a pattern more characteristic to their individual skill, which will lead the assignment to an unforeseeable conclusion. If an instructor is poorly trained or lacking in visual intelligence, then a visual dialogue and adequate student assistance is not possible. Objectives and goals must be viewed as merely suggestions and not limitations to the open, creative, and interactive process of idea production. The students are in equal partnership with the materials being used and the interaction with the instructor. This process demands a more active teacher participation with greater reactive thinking to process and flexibility to outcome. If learning is to occur then the teacher must be an active participant and must learn what students' needs are through a visual dialogue.

Teaching: Objective/Subjective

All one must do is compare De Kooning's *Woman 1* painting with Manet's *Olympia* painting to figure out that art is subjective. The works are radically different, yet both are valued by Western culture, and within our culture, everyone values the two works differently. The question in art education is how to objectify what is subjective expression. Without formal knowledge of the elements of art, it is impossible either to understand a work of art or to adequately and intelligently express ideas in a visual format. Try imagining *Moby Dick* written with a third grade vocabulary, replete with misspellings, and you would have something akin to the untrained artist's visual expressions.

One of the problems I perceive in teaching art is the emphasis so many programs place on creativity. Art is a field of study where one is expected to be creative and inventive without formal knowledge. The high school music student is not encouraged to make indiscriminate noises with their instruments or to compose their own music but rather learn to play their instruments and notes correctly and by playing the music of great composers and musicians. I model my advanced art programs after instrumental music programs, insisting on daily practice and acquisition of formal knowledge through lessons and

learning from the works of established artists. The primary focus of my teaching is on that which can be objectified and measured, which is the formal knowledge of the elements of art. Even in this endeavor there is insufficient time to teach adequately and to cover effectively what must be taught to attain student production skill proficiency, let alone time to employ the learned skills and knowledge subjectively.

Teaching Summary: When in Rome do as the Romans do

I am a disciplined artist and prefer to think and act like an artist. An artist's behavior is contrary to the classroom management demands of a teacher. Managing student behavior does not optimize learning in the visual arts. The requirement for learning is an apprenticing relationship between interested visually intelligent art students and a knowledgeable instructing artist. A scholastic institution is an artificial system designed to meet the broader social demands and needs of the sponsoring society. The understanding of institutional objectives makes class and student management palatable. For a mass system to work, authority and compliance are required, and become the platform for learning. When this alignment occurs, coherence is attained and learning is achieved. While I don't necessarily think that this is the best learning system, but I do understand when I must operate within the guidelines of the system. I can design the content of my courses for maximum learning based on the operating needs of the mass structure or the apprenticing relationship of individuals.

It is also important to maintain a high visibility of quality age-appropriate student work on display within the school. The arts will never be respected as a legitimate course of scholastic study until skill and knowledge can be demonstrated in student work. Strong productive courses are vital to a school's identity and reputation and they are seldom if ever reduced or cut from the school's programming. The goal of the artist teacher is to operate a strong, quality program that can create an identity separate from other learning institutions and visually project quality of instruction and learning to the visiting and participating community. This requires a well-trained artist instructor in a sustained linear learning program with control of participants and access to qualified art students.

Visual art is essentially a foreign language for most individuals, and there is a high degree of visual illiteracy even among art students. What is necessary is to develop a language that will translate and assist individuals in understanding the visual notation system that can translate the visual world we see into the visual art symbol system of the artist. The artist should be recognized as a visual language arts instructor with the primary function of building students' visual vocabulary for the eventual knowledgeable and intelligent expression of the artist. The primary way to goal achievement is to have the same linear learning system and student access afforded all other academic curricula. Success and failure is by design and the design of arts programs are determined by the program opportunities allotted to the arts department by the scholastic institution.