

International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

Tom Barone

Arizona State University, U.S.A

Liora Bresler

University of Illinois at Urbana—Champaign, U.S.A.

<http://ijea.asu.edu>

ISBN 1529-8094

Volume 6 Number 17

December 24, 2005

Remaking *The Educational Imagination*

Nicholas Paley

Julie Crawford

Kristen Kinney

Dresden Koons

Jung-A Seo

George Washington University

Citation: Paley, N., Crawford, J., Kinney, K., Koons, D., & Seo, J. (2005, December 24). Remaking *The Educational Imagination*. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 6(17). Retrieved [date] from <http://ijea.asu.edu/v6n17/>.

Abstract

We document a set of artistic reconstructions of Elliot Eisner's *The Educational Imagination* which took place during a graduate seminar in contemporary curriculum discourses. In this project, students and their instructor collaboratively explored *The Educational Imagination* as a site for an arts-based examination of knowing, identity, and textual authority. Participants created sculptural representations of the text. The sculptures functioned alternately as artworks and experimental places of learning, thus suggesting alternative practices by which the educational experience might be reimagined. In producing these textual/artistic reconstructions, participants created an intersubjective/interpersonal dialogue as they analyzed the educational, aesthetic, and ideological factors which shaped their thinking about curriculum as remade from Eisner's text.

“The questions of pedagogy, therefore, are not ‘What knowledge is of most worth?’ or ‘Whose knowledge should be taught?’ or ‘Which practices will be the most efficient in teaching these knowledges?’ Rather, the question of pedagogy is the question of how to use what has already been thought as a provocation and a call to invention” (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 165).

Introduction

“Remaking *The Educational Imagination*” emerged during a graduate seminar designed to examine the ideas of a select number of individuals who have contributed to the development of contemporary thinking about curriculum. Offered primarily for first-year doctoral students in Curriculum & Instruction at George Washington University’s Graduate School of Education, the seminar is the second course in a year-long, two seminar sequence designed to explore historical and contemporary curriculum discourses. The readings in this second seminar include many of the works that have influenced thinking about curriculum during the past several decades (See Appendix, for this semester’s readings). During the first part of the seminar, readings are selected by the instructor; during the second part of the course, readings are determined by student choice. This two-part structure is deliberate: the goal is to construct a socially-negotiated curriculum of study that reflects diversified reader positions in order to enact a democracy of readers and readings (Pradl, 1996). We use *Understanding Curriculum* (Pinar, et al., 1995) as a concordance for our seminar, finding its categorizations helpful to situate and guide our thinking as we analyze the specific texts we have selected for study.

Additionally, our study is supported throughout the semester by the production of various response papers or projects to each of the specific readings. Diversified in design and reflecting multiple analytic genres (critical, autobiographical, narrative, artistic, etc.), these papers/projects serve two functions. First, they provide an analytic space for us to respond to the text, helping each of us “formulate language to describe and understand that situation more carefully, more precisely, more fully” (Pinar, et al., 1995, p. 9). Second, they create a “launch pad” from which to explore different, unique ways of curriculum study — ways that might make visible other traditions and experiences the authority of the text might otherwise hide, that the discursiveness of the text might otherwise obscure.

Much of our seminar work owes its theoretical impulse to the dialogical, imaginative literacy practices of Paulo Freire (see: 1970, 1973, 1998) and Maxine Greene (see: 1978, 1988, 1995) who repeatedly encourage the construction of an open, interpretive space for textual analysis — a space where readers might give “creative wings to their imaginations” as they struggle “to *invent the meaning* of a text” (Freire, 1998, pp. 51, 30 original italics) — rather than just to consume it. So in our seminar, we frequently made art in its many forms — probing, provoking, inventing, rejecting as we read — “working to aggressively tear knowing out of the past” (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 164) in order to make it pertinent and concrete for us today.

It is within this context that we approached our study of Elliot Eisner’s (1994) *The Educational Imagination* in mid-February, 2004. Acknowledged as one of the most influential books on contemporary education and also recognized as central to the formation of contemporary curriculum studies, Eisner’s text is a crucial source for understanding many of the possibilities — and predicaments — of learning and pedagogy in schools at all levels. We focused our attention specifically on Chapters 3 and 4, where Eisner offers a synoptic overview of curriculum ideologies and the kinds of curricula all schools teach, and on

Chapters 10 and 11, where Eisner elaborates his ideas regarding the forms and functions of educational connoisseurship and educational criticism. In studying these chapters, we decided it might be challenging to experiment with an analytic methodology reflecting the inventive, arts-based approaches to inquiring about educational worlds that the text announced (especially Chapters 10 and 11). And, in order to contextualize our inquiries within the broader range of our overall seminar study, we considered it important to reference other curriculum scholars whom we had previously read, so as to develop our analysis in a connective, relational way — a thinking we felt Eisner would appreciate.

As part of our study, each of us constructed a sculptural, three-dimensional response to *The Educational Imagination*. Expectations regarding the structure, materials, and form were open-ended, but the sculpture was to include the following components: evidence of the book itself (story of the text), evidence of reader personal history (story of the reader), and evidence of process or project construction (story of the making itself). Students were to present their project to the class referencing each of the three perspectives identified above, and about how (or if) this experience helped them more fully reflect on specific curricular issues as articulated by Eisner. The class session during which the sculptures were presented and discussed was videotaped and made available for further analysis.

Inspired by Lather's (1991) research challenge "to generate a polyvalent data base that is used to *vivify* interpretation as opposed to 'support' or 'prove'" anything, (p. 91, original italics), we decided to structure our individual research as a kind of parallel conversation, finding a strong and powerful borrowing in the work of other scholars who have variously experimented with this format in representing their inquiry (see Blumenfeld-Jones & Barone, 1997; Duplessis, 1990; Jipson, 2000; Kristeva, 1986). Our adaptation of this format is specifically intended as a kind of dialogical dance — an interpersonal inquiry that illustrates some of the complex individual, political, and ideological value issues at stake in the production of curricular knowledge today. What follows is an account of our experiences by several of us who continued to be interested in, and whose schedules allowed for, further project discussion after the seminar itself ended. The conversation below is a mutual reconstruction of the dialogical interactions and visual documentations that took place individually and among members during the months that followed the course project. It is an edited version of members' extended print and voice-based analysis and commentary designed specifically for presentation in this format. "Remaking *The Educational Imagination*" is planned to be displayed as part of a proposed exhibition in late fall, 2005, "Is it Art? Is it Research?" at the Graduate School of Education at The George Washington University.

Remaking *The Educational Imagination*

NP: Third Monday of February, 2004. We aren't even mid-way into the spring semester, but it already seems like one of those terms that will never end. Around campus, every surface seems null and cold, coated with a dirty patina of urban grit and snow. Walking to class this evening, I wonder how students will respond to the way I asked them to analyze Eisner for this week's session. There are eight of us in

DK: Funding for the arts in American schools has diminished dramatically in recent decades. This is largely the result of an increased focus on technology and a rise in curricular conservatism beginning in the latter half of the 20th century. According to Elliot Eisner (1994) a direct consequence is that "the school creates an environment that does not put much premium on imagination,

this seminar designed to explore contemporary curriculum discourses. Most of the students who are taking the course have also taken the course that precedes this one, so they're familiar with how we experiment with entering a text from multiple directions — primarily via graphic response and collage — but some students in this class are not, so they may have reservations about this assignment. Most of the students, moreover, are in the initial semesters of their C&I doctoral coursework in teacher education, but there's one who's a bit further along; and there's also one student pursuing a master's in mathematics education as well. I get off the elevator on the sixth floor and walk down the hall toward class. I don't have any idea of what to expect.

Many years ago, I remember being in a similar seminar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Its focus was different — on ideology and curriculum —but the reading load and expectations for engagement were pretty much the same — a book each week and critical response. That long-ago semester we read Mannheim (1959), Ellul (1964), Berger and Luckmann (1967), Kuhn (1970), Williams (1961) — I don't remember any others. But I very clearly do recall that our professor generously provided the opportunities (as well as the resources) for us to experiment with multiple ways that analytic responses might be produced, including artistic practice. Most of us chose the discursive route and wrote brief papers, but a few took chances and explored other visions — responses such as multi-genre notebooks, filmmaking, even activist theater.

Although I didn't recognize it then, those analyses in Madison anticipated some kinds of teaching to come, projects that had something of the future in them.

on personal spirit, or on creative thinking. It emphasizes a form of rationality that seeks convergence on the known rather than exploration of the unknown" (p. 55). With President George W. Bush's recent No Child Left Behind educational reform, which apotheosizes "the known," the situation is unlikely to improve in the near future. NCLB is focused solely on the "core" courses, failing to mention the arts in most of its pages. A lack of monetary support for the arts both in NCLB and beyond has not only affected art classrooms, but also has negatively impacted the aesthetic dimensions of curriculum across disciplines and across educational levels. The aesthetic is often all but absent from graduate classrooms, too, as a devaluation of the arts affects not only how elementary and secondary students learn, but also how educators themselves are taught. This is not an innocent omission, but a conscious and even political absence highlighting the relationship between power, the aesthetic, and the curricular in the 21st century classroom. School organization today, as Eisner asserts, "reinforces the idea that knowledge is fixed and tidy, that smart people possess it, that textbooks contain it, and that the aim of schooling is its orderly transmission" (Jackson, in Eisner, 1994, p. 55).

I had already planned a trip to my parent's house in Florida for that weekend, so I left hoping that my mom could help me unpack the assignment and imagine some responses to it. Yes, I'd taken the course that precedes this one — *Foundations of Curriculum Development* — where we experimented with primarily graphic responses as part of our analyses of several curricular texts, but this was different. It was, perhaps, the first time I'd been asked to respond to a text sculpturally, and certainly the first time I can remember asking a parent for help with my schoolwork since fourth grade.

Partly because of this history of intellectual experimentation, partly because of my long-standing interest in exploring aesthetic ways of analyzing of educational phenomena, and largely because of the group's outward openness for different ways of studying that extend their horizon of textual analysis beyond the conventional "read and synthesize" formats, we're entering this book in a 3-dimensional way. Part of this is all new to me, too, as I've never experimented with sculpture as response to text before in a course, and I'm very much interested in what will go down – and how. I'm especially interested in how students will explore the book as matter — and as spirit — making connections between Eisner's thinking and that of other scholars of curriculum we've previously read/studied.

The objective description of all of this is very important to me, even though I am not interested in objectivity. Decisions about how to respond to a text — critical, autobiographical, artistic, conceptual — aren't an issue, since these are all forms of the objective anyway.

Later, a colleague who hears about our project tells me that what I'm really doing is teaching students about triangulation, actually demonstrating a methodology of how anyone can "truly" know something. I say, "Well, OK, maybe, let me think about that."

It would have also been interesting to have introduced students to Eisner (and Barone's) seven "aesthetic qualities and design elements" (1997, p. 73) to perhaps help them determine the aesthetic fruitfulness of their three dimensional constructions as arts-based research. Personally, as much as I admire Eisner and Barone's important contributions to arts-based work and educational criticism, I've always been somewhat uncomfortable

While perusing Eisner's text, I kept imagining the school metaphorically as a canvas that contains a myriad of colors, shapes, and patterns, serving as a symbolic compass directing the school into the future. This image served as the basis for my imagining, as the literal base for my artistic rendering. The foundation for the entire piece is creative imagining — the compass that directs our thinking, research, and practice.



I purposefully chose a circular rather than a square canvas to challenge traditional power dynamics both in the individual classroom and the larger institution. This is further reinforced by the fact that the desks, arranged in a circle, alternately face both inward and outward, as knowledge is both constructed around a central space and projected outward, beyond the walls of the school. As essential as the desks are a number of nontraditional classroom artifacts, from a piano to a basketball, that symbolize the centrality of music, sports, visual arts etc. to intellectual growth and discovery.

As an English teacher, I carpeted my classroom in books because they are foundational; we build from, with, and through them. I also included a ribbon depicting flags from around the world to recognize not just an American-centered curriculum but, more importantly, the globe as a myriad of learning spaces and curriculum opportunities. A bridge hovers over my canvas, connecting one side to the

with registers designed to qualify experience — aesthetic or otherwise — so I choose not to reference these in this class to guide our thinking. But maybe I should think more about this in the future — if for no other reason than to generate another layer of research experience for student response and analysis. Or to create opportunities for a more complex conversation about the multiple research and curricular issues at stake in what the educator/artist Tim Rollins calls “making and breaking, learning and burning” (Rollins, 1995, p. 4).

1. The creation of a virtual reality
 2. The presence of ambiguity
 3. The use of expressive language
 4. The use of contextualized and vernacular language
 5. The promotion of empathy
 6. The personal signature of the researcher/writer
 7. The presence of aesthetic form.
- (Barone & Eisner, 1997, pp. 73-78)

I rather admire instead the painter Gerhard Richter’s “qualifications” of his artistic practice:

No style.

No composition.

No judgment. (Richter, 2004)

I participate in this making, too — and immediately begin to struggle with the entire assignment. What I imagined would be a fairly straightforward process became

other. It is constructed out of the words of Eisner’s text and comes together in my necessarily shifting identities as teacher, student, and researcher.



The space between the bridge and the classroom is the intangible place where learning happens and cannot (and should not) be contained.

By working through such visions, this work embodies reconceptualism, the fifth curriculum ideology that Elliot Eisner describes in *The Educational Imagination*. Reconceptualists, beginning in the early 1970s, argue that “what is missing from American schools ... is a deep respect for personal purpose, lived experience, for the life of imagination, and for those forms of understanding that resist dissection and measurement” (p. 77). Eisner continues, “To provide children with a decent educational environment requires a reconceptualization of how we think about educational programs, who develops them, and what they are for” (p. 78). This study asserts that art provides a means by which both students and teachers can begin to reconceptualize curriculum. Through exploring curriculum aesthetically in a doctoral-level seminar, both students and teacher attempted to practice collaboration and equity. Doing so allowed them to recognize their unique positions inter-textually such that, as educators, they could begin to work towards social change through critical, artistic engagement.



both conceptually and technically complex. Everything about the project was much more difficult, much messier than I thought it would be. So, one of the lessons I instantly learned was a kind of humility in this kind of exploration. It's so easy to ask students to produce a critical response from a different perspective, go about my business for a week, then sit back and evaluate the results from the security of the teacher's position – Cruiser Pedagogy.

The idea itself was inspired partly by a wonderfully complex piece a former student, Sarah Schul, had made years ago addressing the limitations of formal assessments through non-discursive representation. But the idea was also a kind of parallel offshoot of a chapter called "Six Recurring Curricula" that I wrote for a book edited by Ardra Cole and Gary Knowles, called *The Art of Visual Inquiry*. Each of the six curricula in this chapter consisted of a narrative with an accompanying illustration — one of which was entitled "Inside This." The overall chapter was a conceptual response to Eisner's essay, "The Three Curricula All Schools Teach." But the project was also connected to some sculptures I was working on for an unauthorized non-session called "Outsider Research" that I and my colleague, Jan Jipson, were planning to install "outside" the official roundtable session, "A Gallery of Aesthetic Research Practices" at AERA in San Diego last April. So the in-class Eisner piece for

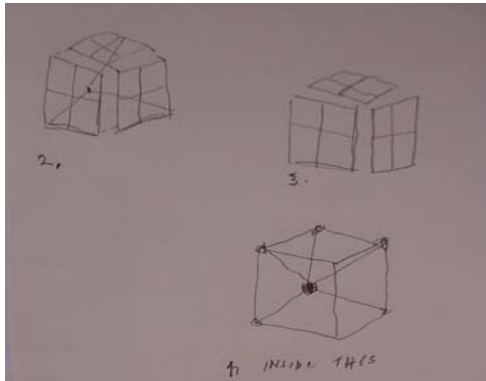
As many educational theorists and practitioners have argued, encounters with the arts can "open spaces which require reflection and reformulation. The arts, and curriculum experienced aesthetically, provoke questioning that supports sense-making and the understanding of what it is to exist in the world" (Pinar, 1995, p. 605). Recognizing, questioning, and understanding the necessary connection between art and curriculum could counter the limiting definitions of pedagogy and curriculum that policies such as NCLB mandate. In its place, teachers and students might become empowered to recognize their own agency in the construction of meaning and the acquisition of knowledge, making possible, in the words of Maxine Greene, "a pluralism of visions, a multiplicity of realities. We may enable those we teach to rebel" (1978, p. 182).

JC: Artistic, hands-on assignments are challenging for me, whereas I find comfort in words that flow easily off my tongue and fingers when I speak and write. In the majority of graduate classes I take, the guidelines are clearly delineated (read-synthesize-write); therefore, I don't wonder — and am perhaps less challenged. With this standard method of study, I'm always answering someone else's questions; I'm never asking or answering my own.

The Eisner project asked me to step back and reflect more thoroughly on my reading than traditional response papers because I can't use my words as a crutch — the pictures and objects must convey my meaning. Though I felt tested by a structure that wasn't the norm I was accustomed to, the project engaged me. Often, I'm bound by the prescribed instructions of a class. Eisner discusses the need for students to meet teachers' requirements in a prompt fashion. "One of the first things a student learns-and the lesson is taught throughout his or her school career – is to provide the

our seminar developed simultaneously from this tangled set of histories and influences and necessities.

The actual construction itself drew on a set of a set of preparatory sketches for the chapter and the sculptures, and helped clarify my thinking related to the three part nature of the assignment itself.



As for the sculpture itself, I intended the open cube to represent the curricular possibilities and democratic openness of Eisner's thought: "There are no recipes, no rules to follow, no formulas for writing [an educational] report . . ." (p. 252); and "Anyone — student, teacher, supervisor, school administrator, university professor, school board member — might provide educational criticism . . ." (p. 244). But the cube itself is also a box, reflecting the coded taxonomies of "connoisseurship" (pp. 215-219). Or, more specifically: What you need to know in order to make art. (More on this later.)

The materials I used were deliberately unfinished, raw, irregular. They're meant to echo my own inclinations regarding research and representation (ambivalence to the smooth and finished; preference for the unpolished and scribbly). And the weeds and grasses tied and knotted together, and suspended in inner space were meant to suggest a kind of snare: the snare of any process — art-making or

teacher with what the teacher wants or expects" (p.89).

When I reviewed the process I initially used to deconstruct the task, I brainstormed the factors that impact a classroom and curriculum. My thoughts and reflections focused on the unspoken school programs and outside influences that impede teaching and learning. Comparing my thoughts with Eisner's, I found there was common ground with respect to the issues of the null and hidden curriculum. In Eisner's words, "It is my thesis that what schools teach is as important as what they do not teach" (p. 97). For example, student expression through dress, or voice (spoken and written) is, in many ways, limited in schools today. Choices are restricted by the fear of the repercussions that may follow with the failure to conform. Teachers are not exempt from such constraints, either. High-stakes testing, accountability factors, and prepared curricula are other examples of the factors that limit a teacher's individualism and imagination. Eisner describes the effort and emphasis that must be given to provide opportunities for freedom in allowing students to fight outside forces and think in unconventional way. "The cultivation of imagination is not a utopian aspiration" (p. 100).

So, after being asked to create a three-dimensional model that expressed my reflections to Eisner's thinking, many thoughts were swimming around in my head. Classroom and curriculum— what are they? Ideally, a classroom is place where teachers and students feel comfortable to share ideas, where experiences blend, and where opportunities for learning are available. In contemplating the design of my model, I kept coming back to outside factors that impact the concept of a school. Pressure, safety, poverty. How could I convey — in a model — all of these challenges that students and teachers face on a daily basis?

otherwise — which might bind research practice to one or another exclusive analytic home. There are also some very literal, ironic issues of “structural corroboration” — or its illusion — at play here since, in the curriculum of this object’s making, the first efforts to construct it fell completely apart.

What happened in this whole process was this: Starting with Sarah’s construction as a prototype, I collected a handful of twigs one evening, laid them out on my kitchen counter, and initially tried to tie several twigs together using grass. This seemed like it should work OK, but in reality, it was completely hopeless. I needed something stronger to hold everything together. So I tried using Elmer’s glue. That didn’t work either, because the glue didn’t dry fast enough. Finally, feeling completely impatient and exasperated with the entire idea of analyzing Eisner’s text from an aesthetic perspective, I used gobs of super glue which ultimately worked, but I still have some tree bark stuck to my fingers as evidentiary data for my efforts.

Eventually the sculpture came together, but not in the way I expected. Accidental pressure at several locations in the model created unanticipated tensions at other points, and the object shivered on the verge of collapse in response. Eventually, it managed to hold together, but just barely. But, curiously, I found myself slowly coming to appreciate this uncertainty, this not knowing whether things might last, or what might occur next. The contingent quality of my construction made me think of the vicissitudes of classroom life, of the delicate dance of classroom inquiry’s give-and-take. And from a completely different perspective altogether, the construction also made me think (but from a far, far different scale) of some of the artist Richard Serra’s sculptures — outsize, tilted slabs of rolled, raw steel weighing several tons each, propped against each other at

Eisner writes that “[t]he experiences secured in the hallways and the playgrounds of the school [a]re also influential aspects of educational life and should not . . . be separated from the responsibility educators should assume for guiding the child’s experience in other aspects of school life” (p.26).

As a former special education teacher and now a coordinator of special education for Arlington, Virginia Public Schools, I see the impact of so-called, “environmental factors” have on a child’s life inside and outside of school. Eisner recognizes this as well when he discusses curriculum as “all the experiences the child has under the aegis of the school” (p.26). He offers a more holistic view of curriculum similar to that proposed by progressive educators such as Dewey and Counts 1920s and 30s.



This definition paralleled my beliefs, and so I began documenting some of the social issues that might influence the actual construction and delivery of curriculum. I tried to convey the messages of the “outside world” by wallpapering my classroom with newspaper articles dealing with school shootings, drugs in school, and peer pressure.

My plan had been to place student figures inside of the room. Ironically, when I finished papering the room with the articles, there was little room for anything else. Is this a “true” picture of student life? How can a

risky angles — objects of both conceptual power and literal peril. Anyway, I liked the “validity” of these connections to curriculum. The validity of contingency, of wonder and risk.

You just never know.

The whole thing about being different — not in the sense of creating “alternative realities”— as important as these are — but just choosing to take a different road altogether. Eisner: “What has changed . . . is not simply the introduction of methods that serve as alternatives to conventional, quantitatively oriented approaches to research, but the realization that humans represent experience through fundamentally different forms and that each of these forms can make a unique contribution to human understanding” (p 248).

Inquiry beyond ideology.

Julie’s assemblage of selected news articles related to forces outside the academy (lead-based school drinking water, the economies of gangs, prostitution, and drugs) as reported from just one day in *The Washington Post* suggests how powerfully these kinds of external dynamics structure many kids’ school lives. This certainly throws into abrupt relief much of the trite, official conceptualizations of curriculum today repackaged as so many policy mantras for public consumption. I also very much appreciate her construction as an art object in its own right. Its diminutive size (6X6X2 inches) and intimacy of scale call to (my) mind the tiny, carefully constructed, private worlds of Joseph Cornell — micro-theaters of provocation and power in which some of life’s most profound contradictions confront each other in haunting ways.

student be expected to learn and perform well on a test when even walking home is a dangerous act?

JS: 3D Project? What is 3D? That was my first reaction. How am I going to combine these three (evidence of content, personal experience, and the process of response construction)? That’s a difficult question. I am not an artistic person. My personal question is: What is the connection to the issue of curriculum? What is the definition of curriculum? I think I have my own concepts of curriculum, but how can I begin to describe it? How would I define it?

It is always difficult to write about something in English since I am not a native speaker of the language. That’s my constant concern and worry when I write. I am afraid that people might not understand the more complex meanings I try to express in my writing or speaking.

I think to become fully integrated into the mainstream curriculum, I must learn to adapt to the linguistic, socio-cultural, discursive and academic norms and practices in the school setting. Do I have a sufficient grasp of academic English to succeed in the program? I can’t help being nervous and apprehensive whenever I need to write or speak in English. However, it is even more difficult to create something that represents my thoughts, my interpretations, and my reflection of who I am. I found the personal history part especially hard to communicate. The question: how can I express who I am through the object I make?

I asked myself: who am I? This is my starting point. I am from Korea. I have been living in the U.S for about 10 years since I came here to pursue my graduate degree. Obviously, I am a minority student in this society, and I am the only one in the classroom who speaks another language (Korean). My Korean roots have had a major

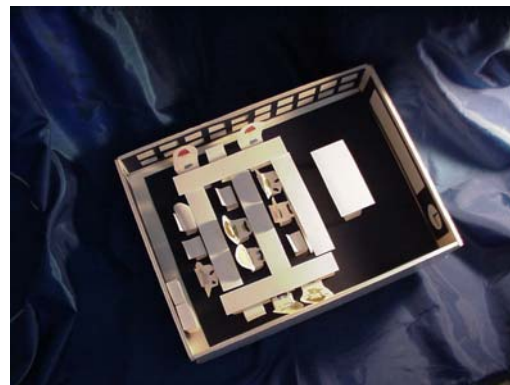
Eisner: “The history of the curriculum field has been dominated by the aspiration to technologize schooling and to reduce the need for artistry in teaching” (1994, p. 368). These words could have easily been written today.

Dresden’s observations about the current devaluation of the arts at all educational levels in the time of NCLB are a case in point and echo Eisner’s assessment. And — as both suggest, this story isn’t new. Apple (2000) and others have cogently pointed out that, since the early 1980s at least, the political right in this country has been gaining a stronghold in education through a complex system of top-down legislation that ignores the specificities of individual and community history through the merchandising of education as just another form of capital exchange, through the devaluing of teacher knowledge, and through the marketing of a standard-size, “common” knowledge for student consumption. These shifts in attitude and subsequent changes in policy have had a debilitating effect on the arts as integral to a democratic education. Instead, they reflect a post-twentieth century version of the objectification of students as economic entities — targets for merchandising as a part of the larger project of constructing the modern, corporate individual “educated” to compete in the global marketplace. No wonder that many contemporary educational texts, including those featured in our bookcase of faculty authors on the first floor of the Graduate School of Education, celebrate the virtues of time, work-discipline, and capital in an era of globalization and the so-called international market economy. But I suspect that this literal and symbolic mapping is not a unique phenomenon to George Washington and exists elsewhere, too.

Lather: The classroom as a kind of “Gramscian ‘historical laboratory’ for

impact on my life, including the usage of language as well as interaction with other people.

When someone asks me who I am and how I would explain my role in the U.S., I define myself as a student or observer instead of a teacher. I used to teach English when I was in Korea, but I no longer do so in a situation where I myself am still striving for greater fluency in the language. Instead, I am now working as a graduate assistant. My job allows me ample opportunities to interact with my professors and my colleagues, allowing me access to the mainstream culture. However, I still see myself as an outsider instead of an insider. It's almost like seeing a wall in front of me: a wall made up of the language barrier and my lack of knowledge about American culture. Also, I haven’t yet had the opportunity to work as a teacher in the U.S. Because I'm not currently involved in teaching, I can't help feeling that I'm out of the mainstream classroom. That is how I would define my struggle — and maybe my role.



Curriculum can take on many meanings; however, in my mind it has become associated with “school” and, more narrowly, the “classroom setting”. This is the reason I decided to build a miniature classroom as my 3-D project. First, I constructed a square box with an open top. I chose this approach to express my feeling of being an outsider – looking in at the classroom with curiosity since I have never

developing an oppositional theory and practice" (1991, p. 146).

Dewey: The classroom as an experimental place, "a laboratory of applied psychology" (Dewey, 1900/1956, p.96), a workshop "for the study of mind" (p. 96) where thinking is literally organized and re-organized and then re-created again and again through "the constructive impulse" — the artistry of making thought (p. 44).

If I were to ask more of this project, or if I were to do it again, I'd definitely want to change several things immediately. For example, I could've been more clear in asking us to think about and articulate, in more specific detail, some of the actual concepts brought to light using the plastic arts as an approach to thinking about curriculum. Several colleagues and readers familiar with what we've been doing these past two semesters have helped me think through these issues in several valuable ways. In particular, I might have asked students to more specifically consider how the process of object-making itself revealed contradictions — or subtleties — that might have been unconscious in (or peripheral to, or repressed by) discursive modes of analysis. Or, how the object-making itself helped them/us create links, or embody meanings about curriculum different from uniquely print-based inquiry.

It would certainly have been relevant, too, to ask students to discuss how some of their previous artistic responses to thinkers like John Dewey and Jerome Bruner last semester informed their art-making/responses to thinkers like Eisner this time around — especially as related to differences between 2- and 3-dimensional inquiry. (A colleague, Sheri Leafgren, was especially helpful on bringing this insight to my attention.) We didn't really address this in our analysis here, but it would have

been inside an actual classroom in the U.S. The only classrooms I saw were in the movies, and it stuck me immediately that the location of the desks and chairs was interesting.

When I attended school in Korea, my class was almost the same size. However, all of the desks and chairs faced the teacher. Behind the teacher's desk there was a huge blackboard; there was also a podium at which the teacher stood in front of the students to lecture. In addition, the teacher stood on a platform, raised to make him or her appear tall and authoritative to the students. In contrast, the American classroom was designed more flexibly, so that some of the students sat in positions where they could see one another instead of focusing only on the teacher. I also noticed several bookshelves filled with books. Although I didn't know what kinds of books are available to the class, it reminded me of my classrooms in Korea. When I was in high school, we didn't have bookshelves in the classroom, not because we couldn't afford to provide an assortment of books, but because we focused entirely on the curriculum related to the university entrance exam. Students were expected to read only the textbooks, without being distracted by other books. The national exam dictated what students need to know, and what teachers need to teach. There was no breathing room in the curriculum itself. I also placed the clock on the front wall of the classroom, and I set it at recess time. Why? Because when I think about students' feelings about the school, class, or curriculum, I wonder whether they enjoy being in the classroom learning or if they are simply in the class because they have to there, and they can hardly wait until the school day ends.

This 3D assignment allowed me to look critically at the world. Eisner (1994) allowed me to take a broad perspective on educational inquiry and research. If the

been interesting to trace any developmental processes at work from such perspectives, perhaps looking for patterns and similarities, as they enriched the capacities of students' own educational imaginations. Some relevant questions that might push us in this direction are: Is artistic response in 2 dimensions — say, drawing and collage (like we did in response to Dewey, Bruner) — fundamentally more similar to written text? Is 3-dimensional response, more complex, more abstract? Or is this distinction itself suggestive of still another set of hierarchies that need to be analyzed? In the artworlds I'm familiar with, the status relations between the graphic and the plastic are just the opposite.

Another set of questions might deal with the ideology of representation itself: Do image-based artistic forms of representation, for example, stabilize analytic thought? In what ways? Others (see: Becker, 1994; Benjamin, 1969; Levin, 1993) have probed this question from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, analyzing the hegemonic impulses of the visual in cultural production and identifying the predicaments associated with image-based forms of thinking and knowing. These issues seem central to our work, too, and could benefit from more penetrating analysis in class.

And still another question associated with all this is: What do individuals need to know in order to make art? A number of well-known educators working in collaboration with the Discipline Based Art Education project have advanced an interlocking meta-system of training that includes protocols of historical, studio, critical, and aesthetic study to school individuals in the development of "artistry" in educational (and other) practice. But it might be fruitful for us to also

ultimate aim in applied educational research is the improvement of schools and educational practices, then it is necessary to expand the ways in which we think about inquiry in education and to broaden our views about what it means to "know." This does not mean we should exclude quantitative, aggregate studies as means of inquiry. Rather, it mandates going beyond the traditional viewpoint that these large-scale studies are the most meaningful (if not the only acceptable) approaches to gathering information, and instead consider them as one of several means of conducting inquiry into a given educational topic. Educational inquiry will become more rich and informative as we increase the range of approaching, describing, interpreting and evaluating the educational world.

KK: In *Art as Experience* John Dewey suggests how art is indispensable to curriculum, forming the foundation through which it is imaginatively expressed. According to Dewey, both artist and audience must be active participants in the construction of aesthetic meaning. The value of art lies in its conception, creation, and reception, and not in its product. He therefore distinguishes between that product and "the actual work of art [which] is what the product does with and in experience" (Dewey, 1934/1958, p. 3). Thus art becomes both engaged and engaging, illuminating its transformative potential. Building on Deweyian philosophy, Maxine Greene is disturbed by "the sense that the self as participant, as inquirer, as creator of meanings, has been obliterated by a mystification that negates authenticity" (Greene, 1978, p. 12). To combat this dislocation, Greene privileges art, illuminating its power "to move people to critical awareness, to a sense of moral agency, and to a conscious engagement with the world" (p. 162). Art encourages a multiplicity of interpretations, challenging binaries privileging either/or assumptions.

read/consider other perspectives related to this question as well. Here, I'm specifically thinking of Rajchman's (2000) notions of creativity and human intelligence: "[Thought] is free in its creations not when everyone agrees or plays by the rules, but on the contrary, when what the rules and who the players are is not given in advance, but instead emerges along with the new concepts created and the new problems posed" (p.38). Such "unschooled" perspectives flip coded systems of what you need to know about art in order to make art upside-down — especially those which contend that meaningful "art" (or creative thought) happens only or fully as a consequence of a meta-systemic pedagogy/process (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 29). And perhaps this perspective might help us better consider some of the internal contradictions the ideology of *The Educational Imagination* represses even as it argues its own existence. So obviously, there's still much more to ask, much more to reach out for with all of this.



I really admire the beautiful, minimalist object created by Chaska Mendoza, who is a master's student in mathematics education. For me, its conic, classic shape suggests the purities of "structural corroboration" and "referential adequacy" while simultaneously representing the need to rescue meaning-making from the status of such "classic" terminologies.

For this reason she asserts that art should be central to curriculum echoing Michael Apple's (2000) assertion that "alternative and oppositional readings are possible" (p. 104).

Ahh. Freedom yet again from the "read and respond" routine of graduate school. For my three-dimensional response to Elliot Eisner's *The Educational Imagination*, I chose to construct an abstract mini-sculpture using primary-level manipulatives. As a former primary school teacher now working as a reading specialist for a private curriculum publishing company, choosing the "basics" as the foundation for my sculpture was an easy choice. Using four letter tiles, two color tiles, two blank tiles, super glue, and permanent markers, I created a sculpture that's intended to embody not only the ideas of Eisner, but also of myself as a reading specialist, learner, and novice researcher.

It's ironic though, my being a "novice researcher" when, in reality, I've spent my entire lifetime learning, discovering, questioning — researching, in fact — creating a foundation on which I am now building.



Eisner writes "metaphoric precision is the central vehicle for revealing the qualitative aspects of life" (p. 200). This sculpture is a metaphor for many things; while the basic building blocks of education are represented in the letter tiles, it became quite obvious to me that one of the tiles would need to serve as a base on which everything else could rest. "Obvious" and appropriate; it is my firm

(Unfortunately, because of her work/study schedule during past several semesters, Chaska was unable to participate in our research meetings with the group during the summer and fall.) I review my notes of her class presentation and find Chaska describing how her object reflected her take about Eisner's idea of arts-based curricular work as that of balance, precision, measure, and control. Actually, the image here is all that survives of a far more complex construction. As a result of a series of moves from building to building during the summer, the sculpture's top beam with balance scales at the tips is missing. Still, despite its lost appendage, its current form suggests the hypnotic power of a certain virtue — like some kind of iconic curricular Venus de Milo.

There are no ideas but in things (Williams, 1951).

belief that letter and sound knowledge (necessities for becoming a reader) serve as the basic building blocks of education. The color tiles are often used in the classroom to represent sounds. The letter tiles were included not just to represent letters, but also to symbolize the normative nature of multiple-choice tests.

When I initially designed the sculpture, I intended it to represent the unending-ness, the questioning, and the building of knowledge. As I write now, so many months later, I find myself thinking back, building on, and re-creating what was constructed that semester, that summer, wondering why I chose to assemble tiles as I did. Should I have mingled the letters and symbols, or is the isolation of them, as they appear here, each to a side of its own, what I was trying to convey? In *The School and Society* Dewey (1900/1956) wrote of how all waste in education is due to isolation — separating, turning knowing into a set of discrete tasks or independent skills that needed to be taught. Was this what I was trying to represent?

Or Should I have aimed for something else? Something, some representation more like my classmates? Not to be pejorative of their constructions — but I just wonder if my sculpture was “right.” As a student, I've been conditioned to expect “right” or “wrong” as a response to my work. If I'd just been assigned to read Eisner's book and write a paper, I could have expected a simple yes/no, right/wrong judgment of my work. My classmates might have done and expected the same. However, I wouldn't have learned so much about them, or about my professor, or about the impact this curricular experience has had on each of us. Eisner makes a good point when he writes that, as educators, we question and we search and eventually “we find what we look for” (p. 173).

Additional Notes

“Remaking *The Educational Imagination*” was presented (by the same authors) in somewhat different format still as “The Curricular Aesthetic and The Educational Imagination: A Graduate Seminar Study” at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Montreal, April 11-15, 2005.

All photographs by Nicholas Paley.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Linda Hanrahan, Jason Helfer, Janice Jipson, Sheri Leafgren, and Anne Sullivan for critique; Paul Taylor for help with stage set construction; and Shani James for formatting assistance.

References

- Apple, M. (2000). *Official knowledge: Democratic education in a conservative age*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Barone, T., & Eisner, E. (1997). Arts-based educational research. In R.M. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary methods for research in education* (pp. 73-103). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Becker, C. (1994). *The subversive imagination: Artists, society, and social responsibility*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Benjamin, W. (1969). The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. In H. Arendt (Ed.), *Illuminations* (pp. 217-251). New York, NY: Schocken Books.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York, NY: Anchor.
- Blumenfeld-Jones, D., & Barone, T. (1997). Interrupting the sign: The aesthetics of research texts. In N. Paley, & J. Jipson (Eds.), *Daredevil research: Re-creating analytic practice* (pp. 83-107). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Dewey, J. (1934/1958). *Art as experience*. New York, NY: Capricorn Books.
- Dewey, J. (1900/1956). *The child and curriculum & The school and society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- Duplessis, R. (1990). *The pink guitar: Writing as feminist practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Eisner, E. (1994). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Ellsworth, E. (2004). *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ellul, J. (1964). *The technological society*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Herder and Herder.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York, NY: Seabury Press.
- Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of learning*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, M. (1988). *Dialectic of freedom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Jackson, P. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. New York, NY: Rinehart and Winston.
- Jipson, J. (2000). Better days: The discourse of work in the lives of rural academic women. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 16 (2), 37-48.
- Kristeva, J. (1986). *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*. Paris, FR: Gallimard.
- Kuhn, T. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Levin, H. (1993). *Modernity and the hegemony of vision*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Mannheim, K. (1959). *Ideology and utopia: An introduction to the sociology of knowledge*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Pinar, W., Reynolds, W., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Pradl, G. (1996). *Literature for democracy: Reading as a social act*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- Rajchman, J. (2000). *The Deleuze connections*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Richter, G. (2004). Reconstructed wording from personal notes taken from documentation related to several paintings by Gerhard Richter exhibited at the Tate Modern Museum of Art, London, September 22, 2004.
- Rollins, T. (1995). Positionings. In N. Paley (Ed.), *Finding art's place: Experiments in contemporary education and culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Williams, R. (1961). *The long revolution*. London, England: Chatto & Windus.
- Williams, W.C. (1951). *Paterson*. New York, NY: New Directions.

About the Authors

Nicholas Paley teaches courses in curriculum and educational foundations in the Graduate School of Education at George Washington University. Much of his current work collaboratively explores the intersections of the arts and fundamental educational issues. His most recent book (with Tadashi Kawamata and Takaaki Kumakura) is *The Period of Self Education Through the Arts: Projects, Essays, Interviews*. He is also the co-author and co-producer (with Janice Jipson) of the one act-play, *No Teacher Left Standing*, recently performed (with doctoral students Melissa Buelow, Chaska Medoza, Rob Ochsendorf, and Dannee Zeedick) at the Lisner Theater in Washington, DC.

Julie Crawford is a doctoral student in Transition Special Education in the Graduate School of Education at George Washington University. She is also a special education coordinator in the Arlington, Virginia public school system. Her research interests include special education and mathematics.

Kristen Kinney is a doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction in the Graduate School of Education at George Washington University. She also works as a reading specialist for a private curriculum company. Her research interests involve critical literacy, teacher education, and primary reading instruction.

Dresden Koons is a doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction at the Graduate School of Education at George Washington University. She also teaches secondary English at St. Andrews Episcopal School in Potomac, Maryland. Her research interests include feminist

pedagogy, critical literacy, and the intersections between whiteness studies and critical multiculturalism.

Jung-A Seo is a doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction, a graduate assistant, and a Holmes Scholar at George Washington University. Her research interests include literacy, as well as language learning, ESL, and educational policy.

Appendix

Works studied in TRED 325: Curriculum Theory (Spring, 2004) in order of reading, with *Understanding Curriculum* read passim throughout the entire course, as pertinent.)

- Pinar, W., Schubert, W., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Apple, M. (2000). *Official knowledge: Democratic education in a conservative age*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Grumet, M. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research with/in the postmodern*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Miller, J. (1990). *Creating spaces and finding voices: Teachers collaborating for empowerment*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Eisner, E. (1994). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Reynolds, N. (2004). *New media in old buildings: A critical ethnography of urban secondary students' interaction with computers and internet access*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, George Washington University, Washington, DC.
- Giroux, H. (1997). *Pedagogy and the politics of hope: Theory, culture, and schooling*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Neumann, A., & Peterson, P. (1997). *Learning from our lives: Women, research, and autobiography in education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Johnson, D., & Johnson, B. (2002). *High stakes: Children, testing and failure in American schools*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Nasaw, D. (1981). *New studies for new students. Schooled to order*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kliebard, H. (1986). *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893-1958*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schmidt, W. (2004). A vision for mathematics. *Educational Leadership* 61(5), 6 – 11.
- King, J. (1995). Race and education. In what ways does race affect the educational process? In J. Kincheloe & S. Steinberg (Eds.), *Thirteen Questions* (pp. 157-179). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Lopez, N. (2002). Latinas and latinos in high school: Rewriting race and gender lessons in the classroom. *Teachers College Record* 104(6), 1187-1203.
- Tatum, B.D. (1997). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Kellogg, R. (1970). *The psychology of children's art*. New York, NY: CRM-Random House.

International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

Tom Barone

Arizona State University, U.S.A

Liora Bresler

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.

Executive Editor

Gene V Glass

Arizona State University, U.S.A.

Associate Editors

Laurel Campbell

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.

Jason Helfer

Millikin University, U.S.A.

Regina Murphy (2002-2004)

St. Patrick's College, Dublin City University, Ireland

Tracie Costantino (2000-2004)

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.

Alyson Whyte (2002-2004)

Auburn University, U.S.A.

Editorial Board

Peter F. Abbs	University of Sussex, U.K.
Eunice Boardman	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.
Norman Denzin	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.
Kieran Egan	Simon Fraser University, Canada
Elliot Eisner	Stanford University, U.S.A.
Magne Espeland	Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway
Gary McPherson	University of New South Wales, Australia
Robert Stake	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.
Susan Stinson	University of North Carolina—Greensboro, U.S.A.
Christine Thompson	Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.
Peter Webster	Northwestern University, U.S.A.