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Margaret Macintyre Latta
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

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Another Look at Holistic Art Education: Exploring the Legacy of Henry Schaefer-Simmern

Sally Armstrong Gradle
Southern Illinois University - Carbondale, USA

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Abstract

In his forward to *Curriculum in Abundance* (2006), curriculum theorist William Pinar suggests that education should offer opportunities for *self-formation* which include the cultivation of our capacity to surrender, begin again, and dwell in possibility. This paper examines the theory and art education practices of a forgotten and often undervalued art educator, Henry Schaefer-Simmern, whose methodology seems congruent with some of the goals of holistic education today. Substantial insights were gleaned through interviews with one of his former students, Professor Emeritus of Art Education, Roy Abrahamson. Dr. Abrahamson's collection of published and unpublished papers on Schaefer-Simmern, his art work done under Schaefer-Simmern's direction, and his collection of student work extended my understanding of an alternative, yet viable, holistic approach to teaching and learning. Another look at this kind of art instruction is valuable as a part of a contemporary holistic practice.

Introduction

Sixty years ago, Henry Schaefer-Simmern, an émigré artist, teacher, and scholar fled Nazi Germany and settled in New York. His art work became known through exhibits at Harvard, Columbia Teachers College, and the Museum of Modern Art. Through his connection with the Carnegie Association and Thomas Munro in Cleveland (Berta, 1994), Schaefer-Simmern began refining what would become his life's legacy: theories that explored *visual conceiving* and *the stages of artistic formation*. Though he verified through extensive research that his theories and methodologies worked with diverse populations, even today his research and teaching are not widely known or understood in art education. Schaefer-Simmern's ideas have enormous implications for holistic approaches to teaching art that 1) address the role of artistic behaviors in shaping the whole person, 2) show how the development of artistic thinking is closely linked to the ownership of the individual's creative process, and 3) encourage problem finding and problem solving skills through art that could have applications outside the domain.

For these reasons, I have elected to revisit Schaefer-Simmern's legacy so that an unexamined omission in our past will not obliterate a useful viewpoint on teaching and learning (Hamblen, 1993). I begin with an explanatory section about the methods I undertook to better understand his work. Next I briefly contextualize the unique climate of art education in the mid-century 'Lowenfeld' era in order to clarify the historical frame of reference. Building on this connection to the time period, I explore the theory of visual conceiving that Schaefer-Simmern developed. I do so in order to ground his teaching practice as evidence of a still meritorious, holistic approach to teaching art. My concluding thoughts connect his ideas to contemporary holistic art education in a manner that reintroduces an eclipsed approach in current practice.

The Research Methodology of the Study

This investigation of Henry Schaefer-Simmern's (1896-1978) teaching methods began conversationally with Professor Emeritus of Art Education, Roy Abrahamson, who was one of Schaefer-Simmern's students over fifty years ago. Throughout his career as an art educator and artist, Professor Abrahamson has championed and clarified Schaefer-Simmern's theories and holistic approach through his writing (Abrahamson, 1980a, 1980b) and lectures (Abrahamson, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1995). In fact, after Abrahamson (2006) enthusiastically lectured about Schaefer-Simmern to my students, I was intrigued about the application of his mentor's ideas. It became clear that Abrahamson had an important contribution to make as one of the few remaining students of Schaefer-Simmern. I also consulted Dr. Raymond Berta's (1994) thorough dissertation of Schaefer-Simmern in order to put Abrahamson's personal views into a larger historical perspective. Berta's exhaustive work includes correspondence and interviews with outstanding scholars in the field, including Diana Korsenik, Wayne Andersen,

Stanley Madeja, Seymour Sarason, and Rudolf Arnheim, among many others. I found the edification from these individuals convincing and compelling: the invisibility of Schaefer-Simmern's legacy, as Berta phrases it, warrants another look as we consider holistic art education practices.

In two interviews with Abrahamson (2007, 2008) and several additional communications, I sought to learn how he applied Schaefer-Simmern's methodology in his thirty years of instructing children and pre-service art teachers and what value this approach might hold for contemporary art education practice within the current climes of holistic teaching and learning. *How did Schaefer-Simmern's process of teaching art change lives? What did this professor do, say, and bring to life in students through his kind of art instruction?*

When Peter Smith (1982) examined the Germanic roots of art education in the United States, he acknowledged that Schaefer-Simmern had remarkable success with his art students and he considered why this was so. He wondered if it was Schaefer-Simmern's application of art theorist Gustaf Britsch's ideas that yielded such remarkable artistic growth with widely varied populations. Or were these successes simply characteristic of a "supportive, warm and magnetic person?" (p. 25). Smith contends that we may never fully know if Schaefer-Simmern applied Britsch's theories since they have remained largely untranslated. Regardless, it seemed possible to look through the window of Abrahamson's experiences with Schaefer-Simmern to consider what made this approach to art instruction work and, in so doing, better understand the underlying theory and the man himself.

With Abrahamson's consent, I explored his published and unpublished writings on Schaefer-Simmern and those theorists who preceded his mentor (1980a, 1980b, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, and 1995). I also examined his collection of adult and child art, his catalogued compilation of his own work, and two recent retrospective exhibits (2007, 2008). These works, along with our conversations, reveal a story of teaching and learning that illustrate an interesting alternative to much of the art education that is practiced today. As Abrahamson clarified in conversation with me, Schaefer-Simmern's teaching approach can best be delineated by someone who has observed his process of teaching, taken notes, and maintained regular correspondence with his mentor. Abrahamson did just that, and he has worked for several decades to make Schaefer-Simmern's ideas more accessible and understandable. This included the arduous compilation and eventual publication of a posthumous volume, *Consciousness of Artistic Form* by Schaefer-Simmern (2003), which was a joint effort by Gertrude Schaefer-Simmern, Abrahamson, and artist Sylvia Fein

The Context for Schaefer-Simmern's Work

Germany's Third Reich forced the exodus of many artists and intellectuals from Europe in the nineteen thirties; and America became the fortunate recipient of several new and fruitful

directions in art and education in art. Viktor Lowenfeld, who immigrated to the United States in the same year (1937) as Schaefer-Simmern, captivated educators with his belief that self-expression was essential for the healthy psychological growth of the child. Edwin Ziegfeld, through his Owatonna Project in Minnesota, demonstrated the necessity of art as a daily, useful function in life. Rudolf Arnheim explored the cognitive aspects of artistic processes and the formalist components that comprise a gestalt structure in artworks. Henry Schaefer-Simmern, already well known in European circles for his educational theories and as an artist, arrived in a country that was open to new research on artistic process. His first encounter with Thomas Munro at the Cleveland Museum of Art ushered Schaefer-Simmern into research in the arts with a Carnegie Grant (Berta, 1994). Later, the Russell Sage Foundation financed his experiments which were intended to demonstrate, via case studies, the creative potential inherent in diverse populations (lay people, professionals, orphans, delinquents, and mentally disabled individuals at Southbury Training School) all of whom were non-artists. The research culminated in a book, *The Unfolding of Artistic Activity* (1948), and included accolades from John Dewey. In the foreword—which is the only foreword Dewey wrote for an art education book (Berta, 1994)—he credits Schaefer-Simmern for recognizing “the wholeness of artistic activity” (1948, p. x); that is, not the unique attribute of a few, but the human inheritance of all. Schaefer-Simmern’s research was received positively by other scholars in the arts: Victor D’Amico, Viktor Lowenfeld, Rudolf Arnheim, and Sir Herbert Read (Abrahamson, 1980b). Art educator Kenneth Beittel (1973) wrote that Schaefer-Simmern’s research, as did Lowenfeld’s work, both made important contributions to research in art education.

Nevertheless, as Schaefer-Simmern candidly acknowledged in the 1961 Addendum to his book, his point of view would not be shared by those educators who advocated art as “creative self-expression;” nor those who gravitated toward a view of art as a cognitive discipline that employed only rational, mental operations. Art education literature of the past fifty years bears witness to Schaefer-Simmern’s observation that his approach to art education ran counter to the prevailing theories of instruction in his time. While his theories have not been readily embraced in art education over the last half century, I will argue that another look at his *method of teaching* contributes much to a holistic learning process in art, and that this in turn strengthens all education-for-life endeavors.

The Theory: Schaefer-Simmern’s *Visual Conceiving*

Schaefer-Simmern’s theory of visual conceiving was at least partially based on the ideas of Gustaf Britsch and through him, art philosopher Conrad Fiedler’s thoughts on artistic formation. In Schaefer-Simmern’s distillation of these views, he postulated that visual thinking must occur in addition to intellectual inquiry if the artmaker is going to form an artistic vision that results in a visual work. Schaefer-Simmern hypothesized that visual conceiving encompassed the following ideas, although this is not to suggest linearity in a lock step stage-age progression, but a more natural unfolding of development that occurs only as

an integration of visual structures also occurs. He believed that this was universally the case in all humankind.

First, Schaefer-Simmern believed that the majority of people (regardless of age, mental capacity, gender, location, or socio-economic factors) have the innate ability to visually express their perceptions of experiences. Given the tools and materials, expression has found artistic form in the work of all humankind throughout history, whether one calls it art, or something else (Dissanayake, 2000). One need look no further than the remarkable account of Schaefer-Simmern's (1948) case study of Selma, the mentally challenged young woman in the Southbury art room who persisted until she solved a problem in design, was applauded by her peers for her resolution, and went on to create a visually unified work. This joy, which she found in having purposeful, self-developed problems to resolve, was a sharp contrast to the passivity of the same young woman and her peers in the occupational therapy room where the projects and materials were prescriptive. In his discussion of this instance, Berta (1994) reveals:

Most appalling, they were given no fundamental choice about participating in the activity itself because fabricating pot-holders typified the mindless occupational labor deemed appropriate for mentally retarded people incapable of doing anything else. From radically different humanistic perspectives and epistemological considerations, when these same people drew in HSS's [Henry Schaefer-Simmern's] studio, their drawing facilitated problem solving at levels appropriate to their own developmental stages. Significantly, when HSS challenged Selma and others to solve their artist problems, he also affirmed their personalities and their cognition. (p. 179)

In my discussions with Abrahamson, his recollections supported similar observations of students who were clearly changed due to the ownership of their artistic process and the agency that Schaefer-Simmern encouraged. Abrahamson observed a change in the appearance and behavior of one of Schaefer-Simmern's students in San Francisco who was encouraged to revise her work as a result of Schaefer-Simmern's thoughtful questioning. Abrahamson recalls that Schaefer-Simmern was never surprised at the transformations that occurred in individuals as they mastered their own challenges in visually conceiving and portraying forms. He often succinctly remarked that 'Form forms.' It mattered little to Schaefer-Simmern whether the artists were students, professionals, young children, or those challenged with any kind of disability—he anticipated an outcome in keeping with the learner's artistic development and persistence in solving a problem of choice. The medium of expression was likewise inconsequential to his thoughts on artistic formation. This leads to the second and third closely intertwined hypotheses in his theory.

As the artistic forms develop with further experience, reflection, and artmaking, the visual ideas become clarified and transformed into whole structures (also called *gestalts*). Space, shape, color, and line become more clearly delineated. Important in the *gestalt* development are the relationships between figure ground, how each separate part relates to the whole, and how meaning is established based on the formal relationships. Even though Schaefer-Simmern's theory of visual conceiving acknowledges that factors such as physical ability, social and cultural environments, and immediate experiences contribute to artistic formation, it is the formalist viewpoint of the consciousness of the form that enables all of the physical, social, and cultural components to merge as a unified visual outcome.

Schaefer-Simmern's theory, therefore, was anti-mimetic; in other words, he would not advocate the practice of copying models or imitating natural scenes to develop artistic growth. The artistic form could not emerge mindlessly from eye to hand; it had to be a process of "drawing out from eye *through mind* to hand" (Berta, p. 116). Visual conceiving was not only in opposition to imitation, then, but also unsupportive of any sort of improvisational pedagogy that that ignored the deep connection with thoughtful inquiry. Schaefer-Simmern, again according to Berta, believed that such a practice would not generate *gestalt* formations. Schaefer-Simmern's engagement with art was both formal and pragmatic. Art served a useful function to humanize existence, provide practical creative opportunities that qualitatively affected lives. In the conclusion of his book, Schaefer-Simmern (1948) noted the pragmatic, yet visionary purpose he saw:

Art education that recognizes artistic activity as a general attribute of human nature and that aims at the unfolding and developing of man's latent creative abilities will then contribute its share to the great task which faces all of us, the resurrection of a humanized world. (p. 201)

And yet, he also clarified, as did Arnheim, that to bring an art work into being involved artistic cognition that came from solving problems, organizing structures into wholes, establishing a figure ground relationship, and therein creating unity. As Abrahamson recalls Schaefer-Simmern discussing his theory, "The Professor always said, 'Don't take my word for it. Don't believe me unless I can prove it to you.'" And this was demonstrated, through the implementation of his theory in the students' own experience with their art.

Third, as visual conceptions become unified, the process of visually organizing the work results in the simultaneous transformation of the artist who gives the form visibility (i.e., Selma and others). The consciousness of artistic forms that Schaefer-Simmern investigated was apparent to him in children, the mentally disabled, laypeople, and any artist who was willing to openly consider how their art work could become a clearer expression of their visual conception. Schaefer-Simmern, along with his lifelong friend, Rudolf Arnheim

(Arnheim, 1997), expressed the belief that these conceptions unfolded or progressed with greater complexity as an orderly, unified perceptual process. This foreshadows what I believe to be the crowning achievement that is apparent in his methodology: the wholeness in the image is mirrored as a transformational sense of wholeness in the artist.

Learning about the Past: The Teaching Methodology of Schaefer-Simmern

My conversations with Professor Abrahamson had the winding flow of a river whose current carried us back to a time in his life when he was—like many aspiring art students returning from World War II—soaking up new ideas and grappling with how to develop teaching competence and personal artistic expression. The year was 1948. Abrahamson was a tall, serious student of art education at the University of Minnesota (*Figure 1*) where he studied forms, perspective, shading, and proportion in the Bauhaus-inspired foundation courses. He also studied the most contemporary art education work of the time, Viktor Lowenfeld's *Creative and Mental Growth* (1947). Abrahamson remembers this text was the 'bible' on how to teach art back then, and therefore, any alternative ideas which challenged Lowenfeld's (1947, 1939) views of the psychological necessity of creative self expression were of great interest to students. It was during a summer session at the university when Abrahamson learned that a visiting professor, Henry Schaefer-Simmern, had been invited to present his theory on visual conception.



Figure 1. Abrahamson, back row on left, with the summer classmates that took Schaefer-Simmern's course at the University of Minnesota. Schaefer-Simmern is the tall man in the front row in a suit and bow tie.

As Abrahamson explained it (1980b), this idea went beyond Arnheim's (1969; 1954) later ideas on visual thinking or Gardner's (1993) conception of an artistic mental process as a component of intelligence. Impressed with Schaefer-Simmern's ideas, Abrahamson decided to study with him at his newly opened Institute of Art Education in Berkeley, California immediately following his graduation. There, he observed Schaefer-Simmern as he taught a variety of layman classes for adults and children; he took theory courses with Schaefer-Simmern in the evenings; and attended sketching and paintings excursions in the Bay area as part of the studio course work under his direction.

While Schaefer-Simmern did not lecture or write about his methodology of teaching, he modeled for future teachers, artists, and students how they could begin asking questions in order to resolve their problems with images. In the following three sections, I will explore Schaefer-Simmern's essential teaching methodology through Abrahamson's observations, through Abrahamson's artmaking experiences, and through his application of these methods in his teaching career. These small methodological edifications will then culminate in the important considerations of an art education of visual conceiving for contemporary practice.

Indirect Teaching as Socratic Questioning

Educator Brent Davis (2004) defines Socratic Method as the questioning technique in which the instructor draws forth knowledge from the student. The premise underlying this method suggests that some knowledge is innate; it resides within the learner; and can be called forth as a readily available resource by the astute inquirer. In Abrahamson's (1980b) account of Schaefer-Simmern's teaching, he observed that his mentor would guide the student-artist through a series of questions designed "to challenge, lead, suggest, inform, and encourage discovery and self-evaluation" (p. 42). While some direct comments were made about the work of students, Abrahamson recalls that these were rare in his observation. More typically, Schaefer-Simmern would pose questions after a student had worked for awhile. For example, one student would put her work on an easel in the front of the room, take a seat beside it, and Schaefer-Simmern would begin asking questions such as: *What parts of your work do you like the best? What part bothers you? What could you make better?* Abrahamson, in all his observations and interactions with Schaefer-Simmern, noted that his mentor would never define what he meant by the term 'better.' It was up to the student to determine that and to undertake revisions or begin another version. This initiation into the process of self-discovery opened and empowered the student to recognize the generative rules of their own work were "closely related to an existential, experimental reciprocity between the poles of making and knowing," as art educator and scholar, Kenneth Beittel (1985, p.92) also observed.

Schaefer-Simmern was not after interpretive meaning 'behind' the work. Berta (1994) recounted an instance in which a young woman wanted to talk about the meaning that was

‘behind’ her image. Schaefer-Simmern picked up the canvas, looked on the back, and declared that he saw nothing ‘behind’ it. Students were not encouraged to add a psychological interpretation when they discussed their work, but to work with the images as a gestalt formation that would resolve a formal problem. As the student gained awareness of his or her vision for the work, Schaefer-Simmern would offer encouragement to try out another version, to refine what did not work from the student’s point of view, and to ‘stick with the image’ that needed further development. According to Abrahamson, Schaefer-Simmern did not dictate subject matter. Rather, he directed students to examine what they might see in their daily lives that had meaning to them. “The Professor never told them what to do,” Abrahamson explained. “One would be working with clay, another with tempera or drawing materials—all different subjects, too.”

In summing up the general progression of Schaefer-Simmern’s teaching, Abrahamson clarified that Schaefer-Simmern meant to lead students toward unifying their visual gestalt formations—and this was a far cry from an immediate, one-shot attempt at ‘self expression.’ His indirect questioning was meant to challenge and lead; direct comments and suggestions were kept to a minimum, as were technical ‘how to’ demonstrations. The whole class was never forced to work with the one medium simultaneously. Comments were not generally invited from the group, according to Abrahamson, but were a dialogue between Schaefer-Simmern and the student. The goal was the greater independence of the artist in evaluating their own work, and not a class critique of the student’s work. Any comparisons to historical works were done after the student had achieved some degree of completion with an idea, so that insight could enrich, but not dictate these works. Finally, portfolios were greatly encouraged by Schaefer-Simmern. He wanted students to date their work on the back, and briefly describe what they were trying to accomplish, whether it worked (in their own evaluation), and what they would do next as a progression or solution.

In *Teaching by Heart* (2003), Sara Day Hatton compiled a list of characteristics of sound teaching practice which appear to share some of the energy, caring, and respect for the process that are also evident in Schaefer-Simmern’s work with students, exemplified in Abrahamson’s telling and in Schaefer-Simmern’s (1948) case studies as well. Among the core teaching practices that seem most essential to the teachers she interviewed and to Henry Schaefer-Simmern: encouraging learner choice and revision, active inquiry, connection with one’s surroundings/work, reflection, and new ideas which “spiral gracefully out of the old” (pp.140-141).

Abrahamson’s Artwork under Schaefer-Simmern’s Direction

Schaefer-Simmern taught his adult art education students like Abrahamson by using the same process that included indirect questioning, revisions, and portfolio notes on the student’s own progress. Abrahamson recalls feeling “a shift” in his thinking about his art as the sort of

“academic stuff” that he produced in his foundation courses at the University of Minnesota. He began to experience that there was something much more personal occurring which was dictated by the work itself. Under Schaefer-Simmern’s direction, Abrahamson observed that anatomical accuracy and perspective were “falling by the wayside,” as he became more aware of how each part of his painting related and contributed organically to the whole work. For the first time in his artmaking, Abrahamson no longer sought to adhere to rules of perspective, for the connection of one part to the whole work demanded that relationships supersede rules of form.

While Schaefer-Simmern would encourage divergent thinking as the student explored new media and alternative versions to the problem, he also championed *convergent thinking* (Abrahamson, 1980, p. 14), which Abrahamson described as the ability to understand one’s own artwork as a whole, and also perceive its relation to the larger body of art. I asked if Schaefer-Simmern ever showed historical works to him, when this would occur in the process, and what they were. Abrahamson replied that Schaefer-Simmern only showed historical works after his (Abrahamson’s) visual ideas were formed; and at one point, he recalled that Schaefer-Simmern noted some similarities of his art to Romanesque works because of the direct, bold lines, the strong emotional content, and the revelation of daily life experiences (*Figure 2*). This was surprising to Abrahamson, who in his fine arts training had never felt a particular resonance with Romanesque art.

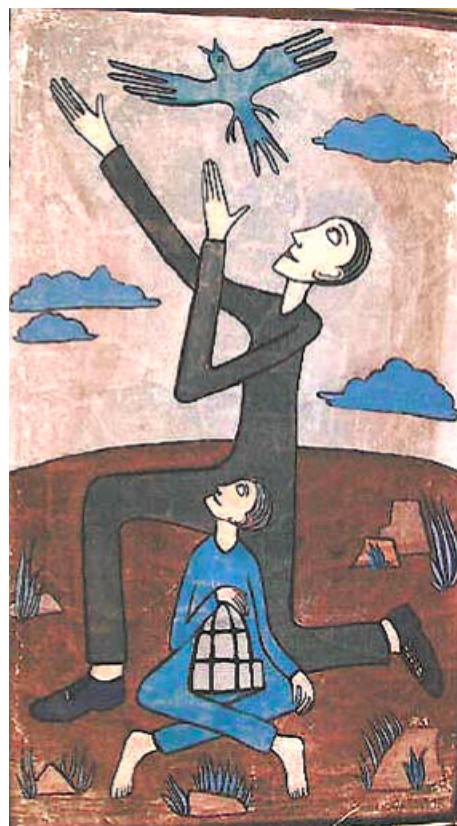


Figure 2. Father and Son free a Bird, tempera painting by Abrahamson, 1949.

The benefits of Schaefer-Simmern’s approach in this manner appear to encourage greater integration of the whole both in the work and in the work’s relational quality to another, larger venue of art, which seems to suggest a visual correlative to the way that we recognize holistic integration in the human being as well (Simmons, 2006). Abrahamson commented that Schaefer-Simmern would frequently say to students, “As you form the work, the work forms you.”



Figure 3. One of Abrahamson's earlier depictions of a scene from a sketching trip in Marin County, tempera, 1950.

For example, Abrahamson recalled painting a series of scenes with the ocean or waterfalls, the surrounding hills in Marin County, and birds (*Figure 3*) during the frequent sketching trips that Schaefer-Simmern organized for his students. Applying the same teaching approach to

his reflections on his work, Abrahamson painted more than ten versions of this sort of scene, wrote his reflections about each, and discussed with Schaefer-Simmern what worked well in each version. Each time he considered what could be better, and then refined the image to his own satisfaction until all of the parts related and addressed the creation of a new whole. He described a feeling of elation when he completed the final, integrative piece in one sitting: “It took one try,” he marveled. “After all the other attempts to develop this same idea, this took one try!” He speculated that this resolved image (*Figure 4*) would not have occurred without the time spent developing several renditions which required him to think deeply about the nature of the parts that contributed to an organic whole, what qualities integrated the work, and what should be omitted.



Figure 4. “Ocean Waves,” tempera by Abrahamson, 1950.

Through Schaefer-Simmern’s guidance, he slowly began to observe that his artmaking was changing. Whereas before Abrahamson felt that his work was largely derived from academic training, by an educated mind that weighed the merits of perspective, proportion, or emphasis, now his decisions were made with insight, with reflection, and far more slowly. His artistic perception, or visual conception, appeared to have a connection to intuition, or insight. An acceptance of one’s intuitive awareness, according to Abrahamson, “can lead one to a view

outside one's self, where the main thing is to observe oneself as objectively as possible and then to change. To be completely honest....[T]he inter-relationships point to a much deeper understanding...and help bring organization into their wholeness" (personal communication, 2007). This observation of the potential for transformation in this teaching methodology is telling, for it remains the most important concern of holistic art education today: "To elevate behavior to the degree that the whole and integrated person appears as they address their work and their life work" (London, 2006, p. 8). Davis and Sumara (2006), who describe learning as something that *triggers*, rather than *causes* a transformation in the learner, note that the changes are both behavioral and physical, as Abrahamson clarified and Schaefer-Simmern's own case studies support. Transformative learning, as explained by educators Askew and Carnell (1998), means that one participates in the entire experience of learning, without emphasis on factual information and objective knowledge as a privileged component in curriculum. This is a paradigm shift in education to consider the learner as agent, the context in which they learn as contributory knowledge, and the active processes that make this possible essential to transformation. Schaefer-Simmern's approach most certainly fits within these definitive thoughts on transformation, and would appear to encourage a deep reflective learning process meant to transform the learner, as Abrahamson has noted throughout his many discussions.

Applying Schaefer-Simmern's Methodology with Students in the Art Room

As an application of Schaefer-Simmern's approach to teaching art, Abrahamson shared the successive renditions of a 5th grade student, Helen Edelheit, whose bird-in-the-landscape drawings were executed several times before the final work was complete. While he pointed out that not all students are capable or interested in going through extensive revisions, Helen



worked diligently: adding parts, erasing background material, until the fourth image had a unified look that pleased her. This is an example, according to Abrahamson, of the revisions in ideas that Schaefer-Simmern would have encouraged in order to produce a more complete visual rendition that was satisfactory to the student (Figures 5, 6, & 7).

Figure 5. 1st Drawing by Edelheit.



Figure 6. 2nd Drawing by Edelheit.

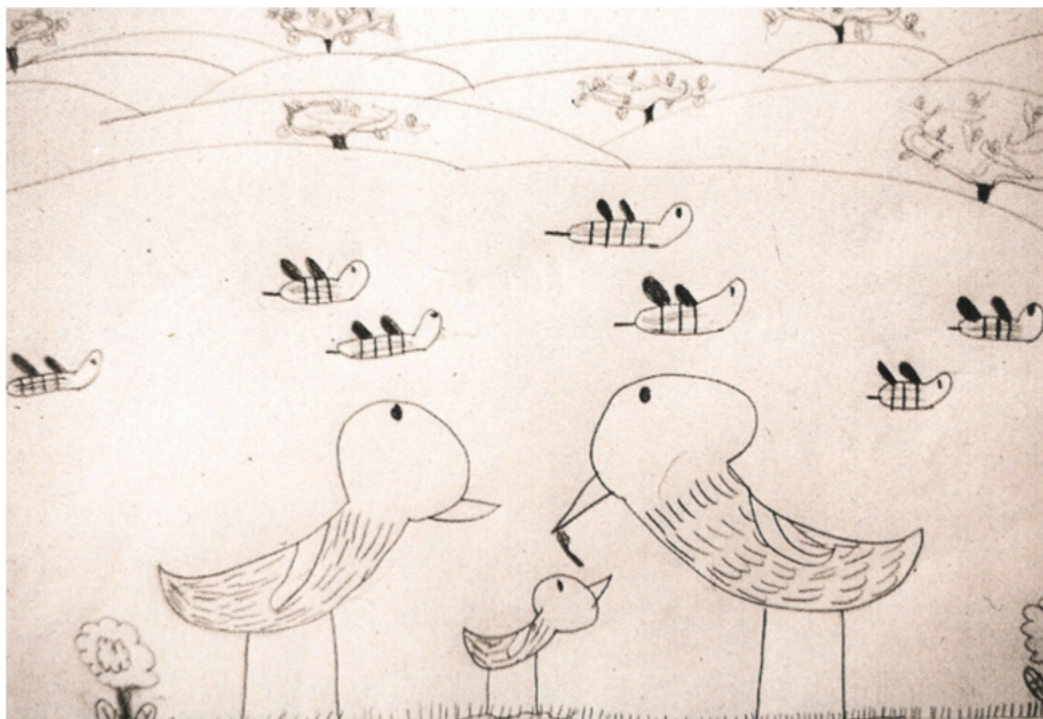


Figure 7. 3rd Drawing by Edelheit.

Abrahamson showed further examples of an art education student's self-imposed challenge to draw a cat. Her notations on the back of each drawing indicated her thinking. In her final note on the back of the sixth drawing, she wrote: "I have noticed my awareness of the environment has increased since I began this approach to drawing trees, sky, and the lightness and darkness of objects... I find myself trying to 'visualize' objects more—I have to 'see' specific details of time." It seems this student was on her way to recognizing, as David Jardine (2006) so aptly says it, "that the adventure of inquiry is a matter of rejoicing in the abundance and intricacy of the world, entering into its living questions" (p. 101).

Art educator Howard McConeghey (2003) writes that this kind of approach is a valuable way of ordering the self, and that "the process of artistic formation is where healing takes place" (2003, p. 31). In *Art and Soul*, McConeghey explains that the relationship between the parts of a work take place as an aesthetic, intuitive perception that is not consciously known to the artist. It is not a simple process of creating and therein completing the work, but something which emerges through dialogue and the re-visitation of ideas. McConeghey acknowledges that this approach does not always seem practical to implement in the limited time allocated for school art instruction. However, in a view that he shares with Schaefer-Simmern (1948) and Arnheim (1997), re-visitation of the artistic form leads to a deep understanding of an idea, rather than superficial engagement with media or tools. Such exploration awakens a spiritual, aesthetic perception that Schaefer-Simmern saw as arising out of a visual conception, one that is only partially informed by cognition. According to Schaefer-Simmern, "This activity is independent of conceptual intellectual calculation" (p. 8), or in Dewey's words in the foreword to the same text, there is "an undivided union of factors... called the physical, emotional, intellectual and practical" (1948, p. ix).

In Arnheim's (1997) reflections on the past century of growth in art and human experience, he credits Schaefer-Simmern's ideas as being foundational for his own theories. Even more compelling, he continues on the next page with two major set backs he sees in current instruction. First, rendering only what one sees, whether a natural scene or a social one, is still confused as being the purpose of art. A second misperception is the popularization of the idea that all of us, particularly the young, have short attention spans, "inducing teachers to prefer short lessons and confuse children with a bombardment of different techniques and assignments." The phenomena of fragmented attention is not only relegated to the schools, but is pervasive and widespread in society, so much so that Arnheim considers the social fabric torn and "a decline in artistic quality" (p. 14) predicated by these faulty theoretical assumptions.

Conclusion: Shaping of Awareness as Holistic Art Education

In each of our discussions, Abrahamson was quick to clarify that the remarkable transformations which occurred to Schaefer-Simmern's students as they worked through their visual conceptions were never the result of "free exploration of materials and tools in which students were encouraged to 'be creative' without direction" (personal communication, 2007). In Schaefer-Simmern's methodology, there seems to be a greater good than the simple pleasure of non-reflective making and doing. The greater good that I speak of, and outlined in the first section of this paper, is the kind of learning outcome that affects the whole person. In holistic art education, this means providing learners with support, respect, and encouragement for deep engagement in their process of working. As Karen Lee Carroll (2006) suggests when she considers the fit of art education and holistic practice, we can only clarify the purpose of art education as we also consider the necessity to accommodate great diversity of practices and content that includes the whole learner. If, as I believe, Schaefer-Simmern's ideas contribute to this diversity of practices in teaching that could lead to wholeness, what are these practices and how do we best apply them?

To ground these questions and relate theory to practice, I turned to feminist writers (MacDermi, Jurich, & Myers-Walls, 1992) who have explored wholeness by challenging themselves to answer: "What is an effective education?" These authors have carefully considered that learners must make a transition from *learning to know* to *learning to live*. Without this transition, education is not effective. Schaefer-Simmern's questioning technique (*What part of your work do you like? What can you make better? What do you need to do in order to make it better?*) respects, invites, and empowers learners. They must find their own way back to the image, and then revise, begin again, and reflect on their growth. This is a first step in the ownership of a process that continually transforms toward wholeness.

Abrahamson's student who wrote after several reflections on her work that she had greater "awareness of the environment...and the lightness and darkness of objects" and that she often found herself wanting to see "the details of time" and visualize objects more completely, was taking ownership of her artistic process. When learners are encouraged to act through questions that require a personal solution, their artistic behaviors are far more likely to shape the whole person. We saw evidence of this in Berta's (1994) re-visitation of Selma's solution to her drawing problem in Schaefer-Simmern's case study. Abrahamson also recounted his personal observations of how artistic formation frequently shaped the behavior, personality, and even dress of individuals in Schaefer-Simmern's classes. There have been many art educators who have supported student growth through problem solving and advocated a thoughtful way of working that starts with a complete respect for what is occurring (e.g., Carroll, 2006; McConeghey, 2003; McKenna, 2006; Rollins, 2005). These individuals have seen that artistic formation shapes personal formation. If we consider holistic teaching practices are of great benefit, then the second question generates itself: how can we make

better use of this kind of art instruction? What stands in the way of pursuing a theory and practice of a holistic type of educational endeavor as explored by Schaefer-Simmern and his students such as Abrahamson?

The answer for many, I am guessing, would be an echo of Arnheim's pronouncement quoted earlier. We often believe that learners, school administrators, and our colleagues will not support in-depth artistic problem solving that takes months to complete, rather than minutes. We believe no one will understand the connection between slowing down, reflecting each step of the way, and returning to the same work with artistic responses that will mature our vision. We sometimes do not even believe that there is a greater purpose to art making, one that Schaefer-Simmern believed humanized existence; one that Dewey recognized as "the wholeness of artistic activity" that was intrinsically related to being "fully alive" (1948, p. x).

To persevere in such doubt requires the keen mind of the reflexive observer-teacher, or the artist who intuits, as Abrahamson noted earlier, one who is able to explore how the parts inter-relate in a work of art, or in human relationships. The evidence of how to proceed is all around us. It is in the inquiry that engages the student in order to discover a deeper cohesion in their own art. It is in the mind of the teacher who leads the student to the form that is calling for expression. It is in the action that surfaces as surely as the questions arise seeking more answers. Schaefer-Simmern's legacy is one of willing participation, documentation, and continual research—this much is verified. To continually conceive of art education as a visual form, a gestalt that arises from our own intuitive teaching is the omission from this discussion that must be addressed by each holistic art educator everywhere.

This is a kind of educative process that champions what we have forgotten that we own as educators in art: the opportunity to develop unity in a relational world through artistic inquiry. Written succinctly by poet and artist Rabindranath Tagore (1922):

The joy of unity within ourselves, seeking expression, becomes creative...What is the truth of this world? It is not in the masses of substance, not in the number of things, but in their relatedness, which neither can be counted, nor measured, nor abstracted. It is not in the materials which are many, but in the expression which is one. (p.5)

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Although I do not know Dr. Raymond Berta, his dissertation on Henry Schaefer-Simmern deserves praise as the most thoroughly researched and organized source on the life, theories, and historical information about Henry Schaefer-Simmern.

Author Biography:

Sally Armstrong Gradle is the Program Coordinator and an assistant professor of art education at Southern Illinois University Carbondale where she teaches pre-service art education students. Her research interests include contemplative practice in education, holistic teaching and learning, performance and ritual studies in art education and reflective teacher practice.

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