

Mentor's Introduction

Ronald Neperud

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RONALD NEPERUD
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Perhaps, one might be puzzled by the diverse approaches represented in the studies of Kerry Freedman and Arlene Renken coming as they do from the same institution. Arlene's work is set within the broad traditions of value transmission from an anthropological perspective in which ethnic art functions to preserve cultural values. Kerry's work, on the other hand, is sharply focused towards the perception of art from an information theoretic position. Both approaches are valid and important in extending the literature contributing to understanding aesthetic behavior. While my own work is more closely associated with one of these approaches, I firmly believe that the investigations of mature graduate students cannot be forced into one mold. Students at doctoral level studies bring with them a set of beliefs, values, and experiences that provide a foundation for extending inquiries into aesthetic behavior from several perspectives. It is extremely important, however, that appropriate resources be available if an advisor is not working in one of the selected research directions. If quality research is to be done, that which extends the aesthetic literature, the students must be aware of the state-of-the art methodology in whatever the area. Although Arlene and Kerry are working within differing disciplines, their work, each in its own way, profits from the application of contemporary methodology. In effect, the qualitative dimension in graduate art education research represents a level of conceptualization and execution that contributes to the field as opposed to defining qualitative solely by the focus of study.