

Mentor's Introduction

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Mentor's Introduction

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Although a first glance at the titles of Kerry's and Connie's papers may suggest very different interests and research methodologies, an important underlying theme is apparent. Both are very much interested in art teachers, their perceptions and values. Connie is most interested in understanding the aesthetic bases of elementary teachers' talk about art, while Kerry is focusing, in part, on the perceptual dynamics of student teachers' viewing of paintings. Both studies will contribute to our growing understanding of the art teaching process. It is rewarding to me that these interests have arisen, not out of arbitrary direction, but from their genuine interest and expertise in teaching art.

Methodologically, these papers differ. These differences also underline both the growing diversity and sophistication of research methodologies that are being used in art education. This is good since it is a reflection of the trend that methodologies are being used that are appropriate to the research topics of interest, rather than methodologies directing what they will research. From my perspective as a graduate adviser it is also rewarding to see that, in spite of all the criticisms of what art education researchers ought or ought not be doing, we have come a long way from the early formal research attempts of the fifties and sixties. It is good to see that doctoral students are coming along who are extending that evolutionary process of improving art education research.

I am more and more impressed that we can apply the same kinds of qualitative criteria — cohesiveness, simplicity, and elegance — to the evaluation of both research and art; and in that criteria we have the potential for dissolving some of the false divisions that have too often divided the processes of researching and creating art.