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Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education
ISSN: 2326-7070 (Print)
ISSN: 2326-7062 (Online)

Volume 6 | Issue 1 (1987) pps. 50-50

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Recommended Citation
Eisner, Elliot W. "Mentor's Introduction." *Marilyn Zurmuehlin Working Papers in Art Education* 6, 50-50 (1987).

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Mentor's Introduction

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Two developments have recently appeared in the field of art education that have considerable potential for enhancing the educational experience of children and adolescents. One of these is the introduction of the microcomputer as a potential instructional tool, not only in mathematics and the sciences in education but also in the arts. The second is the more focused attention of art educators on helping youngsters become sensitive to the visual qualities that constitute art and the world at large. Kenneth Sakatani's research is an effort to utilize the microcomputer to help youngsters learn to perceive visual qualities that have become a central concern of art educators. Working with an experimental model he has tried to assess the efficacy of two experimental treatments emanating from two computer programs for the teaching of art. These programs make use of different models of thinking and instruction, one reflective and the other reflexive.

Like many experimental research efforts, Sakatani's work locates effects in some, but not all of the variables that were measured. His work provides a lead through which the possibilities of the microcomputer can be further explored. Perhaps what is most important is his examination not only of the potential of the computer as such, but the differences that might result from the utilization of different kinds of programs. Clearly, there is a great deal to do in learning about the strengths and limitations of the microcomputer in the field of art education. Sakatani's research contributes to the work that has already begun and provides some new leads for further exploration.

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