

STUDIES

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EDITORIAL

The Inevitability of Change

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As I sit to write my first editorial as Senior Editor of *Studies in Art Education*, the first of Maine's summer storms approaches. The sky is darkening, the trees move in disturbing ways, and the rain falls in sheets. But I know the storm won't last; the world is in a state of constant motion, always in the process of becoming. Maine's variable weather is one of the forces that challenge and invigorate those who live here. Whether it is the lush green beauty of summer or the stark cold of winter, the changing weather contextualizes much of what it means to live in Maine.

While it may be tempting at times to shun change and variability, they are, as Kristin Congdon has said, "inevitable and necessary" (2009, p. 3). When she took over as Senior Editor two years ago, she challenged art educators to see change as a constituent part of our field, especially in these times of social, political, and economic uncertainty and possibility. I too approach the field of art education with change and variability in mind. How will art education continue to change to incorporate growing concerns with the environment, issues of justice and diversity, and the nature of our students' experiences? How will art education change to better serve the needs of all students, especially those who continue to be underserved by current systems? How will declining economic resources affect art teachers in the schools? How can art education diversify its institutional base by developing greater opportunities in other venues such as museums, prisons, and retirement and community centers? What new strategies and techniques will we develop to work with emerging technologies and the students who use them as primary forms of communication and engagement? Change and variability are at the heart of art education research; promoting and articulating that research is at the heart of the mission of *Studies in Art Education*.

The articles included in this issue of *Studies in Art Education* reflect the authors' attempts to embrace the possibilities of change, to consider existing knowledge, raise new questions, and pose new ways of understanding the nature of our field. Shin discusses the role that informal or "unplanned,

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unsystematic, and unofficial” learning plays in our students’ ability to come to terms with and find reassurance in their own identities, as well as the cultural, ethnic, and racial identities of others. Wexler recounts the experiences of preservice teachers as they make art with children with developmental disabilities and learn how the embodied narratives of their students challenged their “assumptions not only about disability, but also the purpose and meaning of teaching art...” Through discussion of the experiences of student teachers, Powell and LaJevic analyze the importance of “emergent and responsive” curricula in teachers’ efforts to integrate “art, materiality, and place” in meaningful and organic ways. Schulte explores and expands upon the nature of drawing as a constructive force in the social and cognitive processes of children, highlighting the role of verbalization in a child’s capacity to “consume, interpret, accentuate, and produce visual/cultural forms and meanings.” And finally, describing the artwork of two of his students, Richardson and Walker use Deleuze and Guattari to understand artmaking as a “process-event” where the concept of *becoming* guides us to focus on “the things that [art]making affects, from what was learned to what is being learned.”

In many ways, the issues addressed by these authors reflect the *mélange* of concerns that constitute the ongoing and emerging spheres of art education today. They deal with issues of diversity and justice, with the nature of our lived experiences, with questions of how we learn and expand our understanding of the world, and the changing notions of art and, more specifically, art education.

Over the course of the next two years, *Studies* will seek to respond to some of these concerns. In the summer of 2012, a special issue of *Studies* will focus on the concept of sustainability and its implications for the arts and art education. As an interpretive lens for investigating educational and artistic practices, this special issue

will seek to encourage critical reflection on the ecological, economic, social, and ethical dimensions of sustainability, and how they relate to human engagement with the cultural and natural worlds: How should sustainability be interpreted for and embodied in art education practice? How might the arts—and specifically art education—contribute to the emergence of a sustainable society? What is cultural sustainability in the context of art education? How can cultural, economic, and /or ecological sustainability be interwoven through arts practice and art education?

And in the following year, *Studies* will publish a special issue on underserved populations. This issue will attempt to bring greater attention to those individuals and groups who do not receive equitable attention or services within our educational systems or within the research and practice of art education. As is the case in many disciplines, more scholarship is needed in art education to help us gain insight into the nature of the educational experiences faced by underserved populations: How should the concept of “the underserved” be interpreted and addressed in art education theory and practice? What issues of justice do we need to consider in our thinking about the education of underserved populations? How might or do the arts contribute to educational experiences of diverse underserved populations? How do members of underserved populations make use of the arts to find a place for themselves, or to understand their world? Although these special issues address concerns that are not new in art education, they need our focused and critical attention as we look to the unknowable future and the opportunities it brings.

As the incoming Senior Editor of *Studies*, I want to thank Kristin Congdon and Amy Barnickel for their significant contributions to our field these past two years. Through Kristin’s strong leadership and guidance, and Amy’s amazing capacity for organization, *Studies in Art*

Education continues to make critical research on art and education accessible to an ever-expanding audience. Further, as I start my tenure as Senior Editor, I want to acknowledge the people I will rely on closely as we continue down and extend the paths established by previous editors: Sydney Walker for taking on the enormous task of associate editor; Amy Barnickel and

Julie Voelker-Morris for agreeing to stay on as assistant editor and copyeditor, respectively; the NAEA Publications staff; and the journal's editorial board for their dedication to the journal and the field of art education. It is the work of these individuals that assures the continued evolution of *Studies* and by extension, the field of art education.

REFERENCE

Congdon, K. (2009). Editorial: Moving on. *Studies in Art Education*, 51(1), 3-5.