
Mentor's Introduction

BRENT WILSON

The Pennsylvania State University

Discipline and disciple are words with a common ancestor, and in the world of scholarship they are almost as parent and child. A disciple is usually an individual who has chosen to follow an adherent of a discipline in order to obtain the esoteric lore they carry—to learn the bodies of facts within and among the academic disciplines; to gain a sense of which theories are aging and tired, which theories are comfortable and middle-aged, and most importantly, which of the infant theories, in time, will demand to be reckoned with; to have eyes directed to insiders' insights; to gain a sense of what to read and who to read; to hear criticized those scholars judged brilliant or tarnished; to observe inquiry modes, methods and methodologies and to try them for one's self; to gain a new way of life, to enter a new world, and finally to feel one's self a member of that new disciplined-world. And if the disciple is adept, then before long the roles might be reversed and the disciple becomes the teacher of the teacher. The once-disciple becomes the specialist who enters realms the teacher has not entered, perhaps could not enter.

When I first met Jennifer Pazienza she was a competent elementary art teacher, eager to learn even after meeting those hundreds of students each week. She wanted to teach art history to her students, and I said, "Well, if we are to follow Bruner's dictum 'the child is an inquirer' then we will need to see how art historians do their historical research so that we can teach kids to inquire as they do." And now Jennifer is digesting treatises on philosophies of history and expositions on art historical methodology. Jennifer the "disciplined" scholar is now saying to me "have you read. . . ?" "did you know that. . . ?" —taking her teacher for a ride—an exciting ride.