

mentor's introduction

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What can one say about a qualitative/ethnographic investigation in progress other than to affirm its intent and direction? In recent years, I have been particularly impressed by the need for empirical information that casts a brighter light upon the phenomena of culture and aesthetics as being of utmost importance to art education. Qualitative insights of an evolving and changing process such as middle school youth's engagement with popular culture and construction of their own will provide much needed information. This is not to say that generalizations will result that need merely be applied to other circumstances, but clues will develop on how students create their own meaning from the images which bombard them. These, in turn, sensitize us to questions that we need to ask in confronting how other particular groups engage with their environments.

The deconstruction of cultural myths and beliefs has served the necessary function of providing, if not a fresher slate upon which to view contemporary culture, at least a recognition of historical circumstance ever present. It seems though that there comes a time when attention needs to be focused upon the present with a certain degree of optimism enabling us to push beyond a prevailing pessimism. Monica is asking the right kinds of questions to provide insights into a very crucial period in youth's formation and interpretation of their cultural practices. She has asked questions sufficient for a life's work on unraveling the complexities of cultural constructions.