Reform of Art Education in the Schools and Its Implications for Art Teacher Preparation Programs

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During the last decade, there has been considerable debate concerning ways to increase the quality of art education in the schools. Advocacy and ideas for reform have come from several educational agencies and organizations including the United States Department of Education (Bennett, 1987); National Endowment for the Arts (Hodsell, 1988); College Entrance Examination Board (cited in Stastny, 1988); Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (Lehman, 1988); National Education Association (Futrell, 1988); National Art Education Association (Qualley, 1986); and the Getty Center for Education in the Arts (Greer, 1984). Many art educators, including Clark & Zimmerman (1981), Eisner (1986), Greer & Silverman (1987/1988), Hatfield (1986), and Qualley (1986) also advocate substantive changes in school art programs to include the study of aesthetics, art criticism, and art history in addition to the making of visual images (art production).

If improvements in school art programs are to occur, change will be necessary in university art teacher preparation programs. Future art teachers will need to be adequately prepared to meet the challenges of the advocated curricular changes. Teacher preparation programs have traditionally placed more emphasis on learning studio skills and less emphasis upon the study of art history (Hastie, 1984) and even less on the study of aesthetics and art criticism (Miller, 1983).

Wide-spread change in school art programs will not occur until changes in art teacher preparation programs are in place. If art teachers lack sufficient instructional confidence to follow a multi-content approach to art education, the discrepancy between public school practice and theory will remain.

For a curriculum reform to succeed, the necessary curriculum changes either have to be mandated by some authority or be established through the teacher training process (Kern, 1984). Since teachers tend to teach the way they were taught, revisions of current curricular practices are necessary.

Of the art education surveys found in the literature review concerning art teacher preparation, only two (Arnold, 1976; Sevigny, 1987) sought information about the program content and teaching methodology of aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production. The samples in both studies were quite small, 17 and 14, respectively and chosen from a selective

population. Two surveys (Rogers & Brogdon, 1990; and Eads, 1980) were limited to the number of required and/or offered hours in the studio (production) component and the art history component which included, rather than separated, aesthetics and art criticism.

While experts, educational organizations, agencies and many art educators agree on the importance of the content of the four components in art education, there is a lack of current information about what is being done in university art teacher preparation programs. Studies of art teacher preparation programs described in the literature review did not provide information as representative as that to be obtained in this study; they utilized small, selective samples, and/or were completed five to fifteen years ago.

To the best of this author's knowledge, there has not been a representative survey of university art teacher preparation programs concerning the current status of the four content areas: aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production; nor the gathering of information concerning methodologies of teaching those four components.

The purpose of the study is to examine the requirements and content of current art teacher preparation programs in a representative sample of colleges and universities across the nation. The findings of the study will provide the field with information concerning the requirements and content of current art teacher preparation programs, and the extent to which the methodology of teaching the four components is being addressed. The study will also provide some insights concerning the attitudes of the respondents toward the advocated art education reforms and their perceptions of necessary components for quality art teacher preparation programs.

A questionnaire is the research instrument for this study. The questionnaire is divided into five parts. Part I requests demographic information about the institution and the art teacher preparation program. Part II requests information about the number of credit hours required of art education majors in studio (art production) courses, art history courses, and courses in aesthetics and art criticism. Part III includes questions about course content in the methodologies of teaching aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production. Part IV requests the respondents' views of the reforms advocated for art education as well as their own perceptions of the necessary components for a quality art teacher preparation program. Part V seeks information about the direction of each institution's art education program.

The population from which the sample was drawn is the 749 institutions that have state approved art teacher preparation programs as identified in the Price-Richard study (1989). Thirty percent, or 225, of the 749 state approved programs were randomly selected as described below.

The undergraduate enrollment including full and part time students of each identified institution was determined by data found in **Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges** (1991), **GIS Guide to Four-Year Colleges** (1990), **The College Handbook** (1991), or the **College Blue Book: Tabular Data** (1989). Enrollments ranged from 233 to 40,122 students.

The population was divided into five strata based on size of undergraduate enrollment, with 20% of the institutions in each stratum. Proportional sampling was utilized and 20% of the sample was selected from each stratum. Identification numbers were assigned to cases in each stratum. Using a table of random numbers, 45 universities, or approximately 30% of the population of a stratum, were selected from each stratum.

A questionnaire, letter of introduction, and a stamped, addressed envelope were sent to the director of art education at each of the colleges and universities included in the sample of 225 institutions. A follow-up letter was sent to nonrespondents three weeks after the initial packet was mailed. The incentive of receiving a summary of the results of the study was offered to all respondents.

Six weeks after the first mailing, 76 (33.78%) of the questionnaires were returned. In an effort to obtain a greater rate of return, an attempt was made to contact by phone 30% of the institutions within each stratum not responding to the initial request. Nonrespondents within each stratum were assigned identification numbers and 30% of those were randomly selected.

After contacting the art department at each selected institution and obtaining the name of the person(s) responsible for the art teacher preparation program, an effort was made to talk with the identified art educator to request completion of the questionnaire. A personalized letter of introduction, a questionnaire, and a return postage-paid envelope were sent to each identified art educator.

Difficulty was experienced in contacting individuals from institutions in strata one and two. If there was no answer in the art department or if a recorded message was reached, two additional attempts to contact that institution's art department were made at different times of the day and on different days of the week. If no contact was made after three attempts, a replacement was randomly selected from remaining nonrespondents.

At the end of twelve weeks, one hundred eight questionnaires or 48% were returned. Ninety-seven or 43.1% are useable. Although proportional sampling procedures were carried out, 55.7% of the useable responses fell in strata four and five, with 44.3% distributed among the other three strata.

The study is currently at the data analysis stage. In addition to analyses of total responses, the data will be examined for differences and similarities among universities that vary in undergraduate enrollment, the size

of the art education faculty, and attitudinal orientation of the respondents. Differences and similarities of responses within and between the strata will also be examined.

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