
mentor's introduction

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During the past decade a minor revolution has begun to emerge not only in the field of education but in the social sciences. Influenced mainly by behavioristic and positivistic orientations to the study and management of human behavior, scholars have been reexamining the ways in which humans function. The old dichotomies developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and perhaps most acutely exemplified by Descartes, have begun to give way to a more unified conception of mind and body. Jonathan Matthews' work explores the unity between psyche and soma. He asks what it is that the body helps us understand. What function do the senses perform in knowing and what role should the body play in conceptualizing not only cognition, but the means and ends of education?

For those in art education such questions are of fundamental importance. A limited or narrow conception of cognition is likely to marginalize the arts and diminish their potential contributions to the young. With a fuller, more generous conception of the varieties of ways in which human understanding is enlarged, a broader and more firm foundation can be built for art education in our schools and through it the enhancement of human potential. Jonathan Matthews' dissertation is likely to make a contribution to that important goal.