

Art Education Curriculum Praxis: a Time for Collaboration

Neil Morven Brown

This paper maps out a model for collaboration in art education. It tentatively suggests that collaboration as modelled is coextensive with the notion of curriculum innovation .

Collaboration falls within the category of ethics. When people collaborate they are motivated for various reasons to unite in some action. The purposes which people cite as the reason for taking cooperative action also stand as the ethical basis for their collaboration. Collaboration is different from other forms of professional and political relationship because of the way in which its purposes are directed towards a goal. Collaborative action is unified by the commitment each of the cooperating parties have to a common goal. Once the goal is removed either through its achievement, redefinition, or its loss in some way, then collaboration usually ceases.

The grounds for commitment to cooperative action ranges from coercion at one end to indifference at the other. However, at these extremes there is insufficient exercise of free will to sustain the practical meaning of collaboration. For example, in war time collaborators were usually not identified amongst those forced to comply with the enemy; or amongst citizens of neutral countries. The idea of being forced to engage in an activity to which you are indifferent makes little sense in terms of collaboration. In addition to issues of authority and autonomy the nature of collaboration is bound up with the reasons why a person or group might elect to commit themselves to a collaborative effort.

Collaboration entails some degree of trust in those with whom you cooperate. People qualify as trustworthy to the extent that they are able to reassure you of their commitment to a shared goal. Commitment is determined partly by the collaborator's qualifications for bringing about the goal effectively, and partly by the significance of the goal within the collaborators agenda (they must believe in the goals). Trust within collaboration does not depend necessarily upon idealised notions of cooperative spirit such as friendship, or upon common beliefs. Two groups antagonistic to each other on personal grounds may still be able to collaborate effectively if appropriately "committed" to the same enterprise. Trust also suggests that collaborators can expect to extract from each other a degree of equality at least relative to the significance of their particular contributions.

It is possible to identify a model of collaborative trust which is directed toward three types of collaborative end in view or goals. Trust can be expressed as the bond of commitment which unifies and motivates action in each of the three types of collaborative goal: (1) an action which is unified in empowerment, ie., collaboration in critical redefinition of the goal: (2) an action which is unified in curiosity, ie., collaboration in the factual redefinition of a goal: (3) an action which is unified in doing what is right, ie., a collaborative proposal for achieving the goal.

A Model for Collaboration

No.	TYPE	CONTEXT	IDENTITY	PRAXIS
1	Dialectical		Critical imbalance	Political in nature
Defining		"what is wrong".		To change the problem
2.	Autonomous		Missing facts	Investigatory in
Defining the facts		"what is"	nature	explanations.
3.	Consultative		Need for particular	Creative in nature;
ends	Proposes	ends	advice	To design: "what ought to be"

1 Dialectical Collaboration

In the first type of collaborative action a dialectic occurs amongst people who for various reasons are dissatisfied with some state of affairs. A dialectic is a kind of debate between two points of view in which one point of view is represented by those seeking to maintain their position and the other by those wishing to challenge it. In other words, people institute criticism of some state of affairs by drawing attention within it to problems related to injustice, sectional disadvantage, ignorance of new facts, complacency, negligence, concentration of power, intransigence and so on which they believe need redressing. The group nature, challenge to existing authority, and commitment to change of a dialectic, make its processes inherently political. The dialectic fosters an ideological relationship among groups. The need for dialectical forms of collaboration, especially in the formation of western liberal institutions like education and curriculum, is delightfully explained by Bowles and Gintis as the disjunction between "learning and choosing". Bowles and Gintis argue that learning is a socially passive role in the liberal democratic community which, since the seventeenth and eighteenth century, has come under institutional patriarchy. Learning is equated with those in the community such as children, students, women, the "insane", prisoners, servants, the "uncivilised", and all others whose actions, following John Stuart Mill, are deemed to be irrational; those who are, in this sense, in the process of "socially becoming". "Learning" is represented by a stage in a person's formation or by a class of people who, by their work or status, are engaged in formation and are thereby technically conceived of as learners. Learners are made up, in other words, of those who need to be told what they should and ought to do. For this reason its members are rendered ineligible to participate amongst the "choosers", those entitled to engage in the self determination of ends. It is the inability to reconcile the learners and the choosers within the extension of liberalism that Bowles and Gintis believe constitutes the paradox of liberalism in western democracies. To enlighten the paradox Bowles and Gintis go on to critique the

instrumentalism of Mill by Marx's conception "of the formative power of action".

Marx in *Capital*, stressed that Labor is "a process between man and nature, a process by which man...acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way simultaneously changes his own nature." Under these terms Bowles and Gintis go on to address the problem,

... by recognising that personal development is in general best served through an interaction of two strategies. They are exercising one's freedom to choose independently of collective sentiment, and entering into mutual, reciprocal, and participatory action with others to achieve commonly defined goals.

The liberal paradox where eligibility, versus the universal principle of the freedom of individual action, has been traditionally resolved in western democracies on the basis of a rationalist/competitive criterion by distributing the population into learners and choosers. In order to break the barrier imposed by the notion of eligibility, a notion which is inherent in the concepts of chooser and learner, Bowles and Gintis propose the replacement of "representation" in a popular democracy with "participation", and the concept of "exit" in a consumer based economic relationship with the concept of "voice".

For example, steadily growing criticism of the art education syllabus in NSW (see Occasional Seminars in Art Education Number 1) has unified in the belief that not enough attention is devoted to those elements of the art curriculum which are responsible for the fostering of artistic understanding. Not everyone agrees with this point of view. But because there is always some degree of conserving resistance to challenges of this sort a dialectic has emerged. A dialogue entered into usually results in at least some changes being made to the existing position. The syllabus dialectic in NSW is no exception.

Dialectic ventilates discontents. Sometimes these may be coherent enough to function as alternative solutions. Usually, however, discontents are more likely to serve as a focus on the problem. The process of critically

redescribing a vague discontent into a problem is not dependent upon the possession of solutions. There is no necessary connection between the processes of identifying a problem and the possession of solutions. It is the dialectic that crystallises the goal.

"Participation" and "voice" are typical of the critical portrayal of collaborative action. Its absence is especially poignant within settings of social formation such as art departments in NSW schools where representational forms of choice (eg., the Key Learning Areas) have laid down a sovereign authority depriving student and teacher of a rational level of critique. The liberal paradox is made vivid whenever informed discontent within the passive voice of the irrational learner (teacher/student within the system) is forced into conflict with the "rational" or eligible representative chooser. Thus the socially formative process of a liberal democracy denies, by paradox, the opportunity for

representative choosers to be briefed by the one section of their electorate who on most practical issues are often the most critically informed. Simply put, criticism of art syllabi, or national curricula for that matter, is automatically perceived to be out of order whenever it is made by teachers as "learners". Criticism presupposes a revolt against authority. Sheeting home the example Bowles and Gintis ask,

How do we deal, for example, with the case of the craft that considers not only what consumers want, but what will contribute to the development of consumers' capacities to appreciate? What about students who fully accept the notion of learning and perhaps even revere the superior wisdom of their teachers, but wish to participate in the making of educational policy?

Dialectical collaboration begins with the presupposition of participatory and vocal if not other forms of equality. It represents the basis within a sovereign setting (typified by state authorised syllabi) on which critical dialogue can be entered into. It legitimises change initiated from "learners" and enables them to graduate as "choosers".

Autonomous Collaboration

In the second type of collaboration people are motivated to cooperate in the discovery or justification of some entity or truth which is common to their concerns and to which they express a commitment. In contrast to the first type of collaboration the second is motivated by the need to satisfy factual goals. Although autonomous collaboration may be nested within the dialectical it remains autonomous because the collaborating parties are confined within their particular areas of competence. Autonomous collaborators may be committed to a goal but only to the extent that the goal lies within the methodological constraints of their expertise. Goals and problems tend to be formally represented by the discipline in which the expert is engaged. Thus autonomous collaboration is usually long term, addresses universal rather than particular issues related to a problem, deploys agreed upon rules of investigation, which normally recruit powerful explanatory models.

Autonomous collaboration is not of a form normally associated with action research. While the goal of autonomous research may be coextensive with a number of practical problems, autonomous collaboration does not commit the error of imagining that practical problems, particularly those in the human sciences, are in some way made more tractable through scientific rigour. Rather, autonomous collaboration arises from the recognition that a particular goal depends upon certain theoretical explanations for its understanding and for which currently a precise account is either lacking or due for renovation. It was suggested by Stenhouse, for example, that teaching itself was a kind of research. Stenhouse argued that expert knowledge in education is at best provisional and invariably open to review. The authority of the expert was constantly in need of challenge. Stenhouse believed that curriculum research provided teachers with the assurance to make autonomous judgements within their particular educational settings and thus meet that challenge. But as Carr and Kemis have shown Stenhouse's error was to collapse ethical goals into science. In other words there are forms of collaborative research in art education other than action research. Autonomy in this second form refers to contributions in

which collaborators seek to retain their collaborative identity rather than bend the collaborative agenda to justify the taking of a particular

educational action.

The eclecticism of art education as a field threatens its autonomy. Whenever faculties are called upon to cite the most significant references in the art educational field it is not surprising to find many of those cited originating in external disciplines. In art education we trawl through a diversity of literature in which the challenge is not so much to the veracity of the sources, as to the opportunities they afford and to the suitability of their application. The autonomy we seek in art education is often sought not so much in the emancipatory sense as in the identity sense? In autonomous forms of collaboration the human affairs of the practical arts, typified by art curriculum, are not so much strengthened by knowledge which has been shaped within action research for any particular case. Rather it is the capacity of art education to acknowledge the relevance and significance of a coherent and justified explanation, say for example in developmental psychology, and then to identify the formal basis on which the goals it addresses can be of significance to the art educational field. The notion of autonomous collaboration keeps the issue of science and ethical affairs distinct in a way that scientific problem solving in the particularity of human affairs does not.

Perhaps the notion of autonomous collaboration is closely paralleled by the interactive team perspective found in the work of Griffin, Lieberman, and Jaculloo-Noto under the auspices of the Interactive Research and Development Study of Schooling. In this model teams are made up of university faculty, district teachers, administrators, educational laboratory research and development personnel, and representatives of funding bodies. However, despite the unique body of skills contributed to the solution of curriculum problems by such a purpose built "team" the notion of autonomy which flows from a secure sense of the authority of one's discipline is lost.

The purported neglect of 'artistic understanding' in the NSW art syllabus, cited above as an example, can be interpreted as a goal of dialectical as well as autonomous collaboration. However, unlike the dialectical, autonomous collaboration is ongoing. Autonomous collaboration into the investigation of artistic understanding is formalised into the discourses of cognitive psychology and philosophy of art education and is usually addressed at the level of professional research. It is a kind of research which is rare in art education. It is often argued that unless this kind of research can be dialectically unpacked in terms of its practical relevance, that is as a collaborative event directed towards some particular goal, then it is liable to be misunderstood or dismissed by teachers. But the plain fact is that the opportunity for art educators to collaborate autonomously with developmental psychologists on matters related to artistic understanding is limited. Autonomy can spring just as effectively from a confident discursive voice amongst disciplines as it can from the emancipation of practical action from such discourses at the level of art teaching .

Both the first and second types of collaborative action are implicated in common goals even though the dialectical finds its basis in the schools and the autonomous in the universities. The example drawn from the NSW art syllabus unites the two in relation to the question of artistic understanding. Teacher and researcher can serve each other collaboratively if they are unified by their common goals.

3. Consultative Collaboration

The third type of collaboration is the consultative. It is the type most widely recognised as collaboration. Where as in the former two kinds of collaboration solutions were either part of the dialectic or sought universal explanations, in the third type the problem seeks a particular solution. For example, when a syllabus of some kind needs help in solving problems emergent within its design, it is often necessary to seek technical, practical or theoretical expertise . Nested within the realm of the “designer” of a new curriculum may be another collaborative group who share responsibility. However, because of the theoretical, technical, and practical bases on which participants stand to make choices about ends in view, their relationship is consultative . Consultative collaborators need to trust each others’ judgement for, as normative artefacts, curricula cannot be predicted by rules. In all art syllabi there are unique

constraints represented by things such as the examinability of art, local knowledge, community profile, historical precedent, entrenched beliefs, time and space constraints (timetabling), sovereign limitations (the key learning areas) and the climate of economic opinion (creating its own dialectical agenda). Solutions require unique resolutions to collaborative goals which would be alternatively expressed in the first type as broad dissatisfactions., or in the second as formalised generalisations . The first and second types of collaboration are unlikely to provide any necessary implications for the solution to design problems characteristically addressed by the third.

Thus consultative collaboration tends to be goal free despite its often oppressive constraints.

In type three sorts of collaboration not all collaborators may share a designer’s depth of commitment to the problem. Designers’ commitment to the problem stems from their final responsibility for its solution. However, collaborators do make a heavy investment (questions of intellectual capital often create moral dilemmas for consultants). Consultation requires emersion in the peculiarities of the solution and fosters a kind of clinical relationship with the designers. The enthusiastic consultant is always in danger of recommending narrow technical ends. Designers are equally in danger of being intimidated by the authority of the consultant’s expertise and of defensively retreating behind their own rhetoric. But, providing that consultants meet the commitment condition of trust sketched out above it is incumbent upon designers to acknowledge a consultant’s advice.

Consultancy resembles lobbying in its urgency. There are always agenda. Some line needing to be taken will inevitably exclude another. Since consultative choices are mediated by judgements rather than by the

retrospective dissatisfactions of the dialectical type, or by the discursive 'principle' of autonomous types of collaboration, consultative collaboration is inherently political. The smoke screen of "research" suggested in a quasi scientific construct of 'action research' obscures the fact that existential dilemmas laid down between the good and the popular as a result of contextual research in art education cannot provide the basis for their own resolution. For example, just what does the fact that there are four hundred art teachers unemployed in NSW imply? When it is directed toward the fashioning of ethical artefacts such as curricula, consultative collaboration assumes an inescapably political character. The point is not lost on social theorists like Stephen Kemmis or Anthony Giddens. Both harbour a belief in what Giddens generally refers to as the effects of "structuration". Structuration ensues as a result of gainsaying effects upon the subsequent actions of people that is brought about by an understanding of the conditions under which their actions are constrained. It holds that people, if asked, possess a fairly clear idea of the orthodoxies which support the reasons why they act as they do. This tendency suggests at least the potential for a high degree of overdetermination in human action. As a presupposition it emphasises the political rather than the structural background of understanding to factors which condition human action, including the collaborative choices underlying curriculum design.

Collaboration in art education is not confined to the relation between theory and practice. The papers delivered at this symposium cannot be neatly classified into one or another of the three categories represented in the model outlined above. Rather, the model interprets the papers. Thus a curriculum designer/user, whether teacher or departmental authority, can seek collaboration for the same project in the three aforementioned ways. A paper, for example, might engender a dialectical belief that Australian art education is too easily seduced by the rhetoric of discipline based art education in the USA. Or the same paper might be cited as a model for the critical application of discipline based art education in Australia. On the other hand the author might be invited by some department of education to help design outcomes for a year 12 syllabus based on the artist/critic. Hardly a detailed heuristic for collaborative action. However, the model tries to go beyond establishing a synonymy between 'collaboration' and 'action research'.

Curriculum is so deeply praxiological in its ends that a systematic (in

contrast to a hierarchical) notion of collaboration such as the one advanced here, appears almost coextensive with the broad processes involved in curriculum innovation. Thus there is a sense in which a model for collaboration could be deliberately applied as a model of curriculum innovation. I will take the opportunity to recount an innovation in the NSW art syllabus which I put forward as a real world representation of the three types of collaboration.

The "Frames" as a Collaborative Innovation in the Art Syllabus
Type 1. The "frames" began as a dialectic which was motivated by dissatisfaction with the content of the current NSW art syllabus. It was

argued that despite the development of the four focus areas of the current senior syllabus the precept of solipsism (self reference) had triumphed over the precept of understanding. When combined with the demise of art history the art syllabus appeared to have been stripped of interpretive and explanatory content. Students appeared to be electing art because it represented an alternative to knowing. The frames are an admission that concealed or underdetermining conceptions of artistic belief such as structural and solipsistic ontologies assumed within art syllabi on behalf of high school art students, denied students as "learners" the chance to graduate into "choosers".

Type 2. The "frames" have emerged in the general history of contemporary ideas. The frames represent an interpretive context which is inseparable from an understanding of developments in contemporary culture. The visual arts have evolved within the context of philosophical precepts of this sort only one of which, "the subject", resembles the solipsism which overwhelms the current NSW senior syllabus. The frames stand as an antidote to meaningless pluralism. The frames are a methodological form of content in art. They are not simply contemporary subjects but ways, or "methods" which can be brought to bear by students on the interpretation and explanation of art works from any historical period. The frames are an explanatory set of beliefs which have been autonomously identified with visual art content by reference to parallel work in literary criticism.

Type 3. The "frames" have been integrated with constructs in the existing NSW art syllabus through consultation held between the executive members of the art syllabus committee and the School of Art Education, COFA. Consultation has been fitful as is to be expected in a goal ambiguous, agenda ridden, critically motivated project. The frames are themselves a model of collaboration, integrated as they are within existing structures of visual art content, yet recruited from the realm of literary criticism and culture theory.

The Function of the Frames in the Art Syllabus

1.0 Rationale

The frames are an acknowledgment that the practice of making and appreciating the visual arts is supported by a body of understanding. Understanding in the visual arts is conditioned by broad assumptions which effect the way objects are identified, valued, interpreted, created, and made use of, as art. The body of understanding represented by the frames is sampled from twentieth century western discourse about art.

The notion of a discourse about art is consistent with the idea that a field of study and practice such as the visual arts is held together by a more or less coherent set of beliefs. Through the process of constant dialogue among people involved in the field, these beliefs are debated, codified, exchanged, challenged, and renovated.

People involved in the field of the visual arts are often referred to as the artworld. The artworld is represented by people with varying degrees of authority and influence. Artists, art teachers, art critics, art

historians, even school students studying art, all provide examples of people with degrees of authority and influence in the visual arts and thus qualify as members of the artworld.

The four frames have emerged within twentieth century western discourse about art and represent various attempts to lay the basis for artistic belief. Although representative of western artworld dialogue, many of the most influential assumptions underlying the frames do not originate in the artworld but have been taken from their broader setting within the history of ideas. The reason for choosing "Culture, Structure, Subject, and Postmodern" as the four frames for the visual arts syllabus, is explained in terms of their historical significance to the artworld during the twentieth century. Hardly exhaustive of the broad beliefs underlying the field of the visual arts, their selection can be defended as being both contemporary and influential.

2.0 The Role of the Frames

The role of the "frames" in the visual arts syllabus is threefold:

2.1 They provide a basis of understanding which articulates the content of the visual arts.

2.2 As a basis for understanding they set the grounds on which a notion of sequencing from K-12 can be represented in the visual arts curriculum.

2.3. They constitute a body of knowledge in themselves.

2.1 The Frames as a Basis for Understanding the Visual Arts.

- The frames represent different sets of basic assumptions about art. They provide the grounds upon which questions related to artistic value and meaning can be referred. Answers to questions of value and meaning in the visual arts are addressed differently within the assumptions of each frame. Some artworks made sense of within one framework of beliefs, may not be so easily valued or understood within another. While the protagonists of each frame argue its particular supremacy, there are many advantages gained from adopting each different perspective.
- The frames provide a basis for practical choice. In locating the source of value and meaning in different settings of belief, the frames provide alternative ways of locating and interrogating the world of content, the world which constitutes for students the object of artistic representation. In other words, the frames provide a heuristic base, that is, an alternative grounds for thinking up creative ideas in art. The frames make explicit what traditionally has been assumed on children's behalf as a presupposition of the art curriculum.
- The frames provide the basis for the mediation of beliefs about art.

They lay common grounds between students and teachers for the discursive transaction of meanings, values, feelings, attitudes, and truths in the visual arts. As discursive frameworks they enable art teachers and students to be reflective. That is, they provide a context for the representation of artistic beliefs from another person's point of view. The notion of "frame" is consistent with the metarepresentational construct that enables a child to lend human intentionality to art and thus invest artworks with the imaginative properties they could not otherwise possess.

- The frames foreshadow the possibility of aesthetic explanation, one which goes beyond the level of descriptive report. Each frame sets the entities of art into a context of relations. In this context of relations each frame extends to students and teachers different but general ways of reasoning which explain why things about art, for example certain paint qualities in a particular work, carry the significance that they do.

2.1.1 A Character Sketch of the Four Frames

Culture: In this frame art is valued aesthetically as a way of defining and building social identity. The meaning of art is understood in relation to the social perspective of the community out of which it grows. These communities can respect ideological as well as deeply embedded notions of cultural identity. They include class, race, gender and so on. Concepts of “superstructure”, “base”, and “overdetermination” are commensurate with a subtle appreciation of culture.

Structure: In this frame art is valued aesthetically as a medium of knowledge. Art is conceived as a system of communication through which particular aesthetic or “dense” forms of information are transmitted. Art is valued as an instrument for knowing about the world. The meaning of art is understood in relation to the system by which the symbols of art refer to the world. Art is a visual, non-notational language opaque to those unable to read it. Thus meaning in art is accessible to those who are visually literate.

Subject: Art is valued aesthetically as an immediate kind of experience. Art is valued at a sensed, perceptual or felt level of belief. The meaning of art is understood in relation to the kind of experience that it affords the introspective subject or self. The meaning of art thus inheres in the apprehended character of entities, their aesthetic qualities, immediately recognised. Art romantically interrogates the imagination as the source of its motives and understandings. Art preserves its universality through the immediacy of its apprehension and through the way it is able to expressively recreate human experience.

Postmodern: Art is valued as “art”. This frame rejects the notion of subject entirely and denies the concept of an “idea”, or an “imagination”. Art is valued for the extent of the role that it plays in recontextualising other art. Understanding in art is portrayed as comprehension of the ironic return ie, . of quotation by one artwork, of earlier works. The stylistic dominance of an artistic oeuvre is explained in terms of its authority. The meaning of art is thus attained through its critique, that is, by revealing the incoherencies or ironies in its “text” and thus by exposing the pattern of authority by which it is sustained.

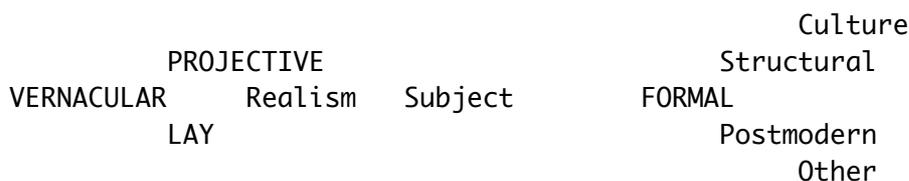
2.2 The Frames as a Basis for Sequencing in the Visual Arts Curriculum

In articulating the grounds of understanding in the visual arts, the frames, are useful indicators for the sequencing of knowing in art from K-12. The sequencing of artistic understanding is a contentious issue, however, as contentious as the notion of art itself. The general movement from K-12 can be represented informatively within the following schema:

K

EXPLICITNESS

REFLECTIVE



AUTHORITATIVE

Autonomy

The Collaboration of the Frames in Art Curriculum Content

In the schema above the various categories can be interpreted as follows:

1. The Visual Arts identifies the field of content for art education.

1.1 The categories Art History, Art Practice, Art Criticism identify the different "artworlds" that discipline the content of art education as a field.

1.2 The categories Artist, Beholder, Work, World represent the entities of art which populate the three "artworlds". Each artworld represents a different set of conventional ways for interacting with the four entities of art. An artworld can be identified in terms of the pattern of relationships it sets up amongst the four entities of art, and by the different ways in which each entity is described.

2. The frames as outlined above identify different ways of understanding the content of the visual arts. The frames are not so much content in themselves but represent alternative approaches to the description and explanation of the visual arts. Although frameworks of belief originating in the twentieth century they constitute powerful models applicable to the analysis of artworks from any period.

2.1 The frames selected are not exhaustive. They could be replaced by others.

Summary

It has often been argued that art education is a deeply eclectic field. If this means that in the projection of its goals the field of art education is dynamically dependent upon various forms of collaboration then the argument is acceptable.

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H., (1987) *Democracy and Capitalism*, New York: Basic Books.

Ibid. p.126.

Ibid. p.127.

Ibid. p.127-130. "Exit" applies to the rationalist's market place belief that the producer and the consumer exercise influence in relation to each other through the power (or threat), versus the option, of the consumer to 'go elsewhere'. "Voice" applies to a non-market place strategy in which withdrawal of patronage is replaced by a critical say in what ought to be produced. This is particularly apposite when what is being produced is people themselves a situation which Marx maintains is inherent in all productive settings. Schools and their curricula are agencies of social reproduction in which both students and teachers are often classed as "learners" especially in settings such as those entertained by the National Curriculum where people with the imprimatur of "rational choice" are made increasingly remote from the setting in which the educational actions such as teaching are to be performed.

Ibid., p.126

Stenhouse, L., (1975) *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann.

Carr, W., & Kemmis, S., (1986) *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge, and action research*. London: Falmer Press.

Oakes, J, Hare, S. E., & Sirotnik, K. A., (1986) Collaborative inquiry: A congenial paradigm in a cantankerous world. *Teachers College Record*, 87, 4, 545-561. The authors make the point that collaborative efforts serve to inform theory as well as practice. "The complexity of real school settings and the multiplicity of Perspectives of practitioners and students can be neither ignored nor analysed simplistically when they

are part of the theory making process." p.546.

One of the motives of the discipline based art education movement was to rescue the identity of art education from the instrumentalism of creativist and therapeutic forms of rationalisation. If the cold hand of economic rationalism is held out to art education at the level of autonomous collaboration we can accept the invitation as equal partners only if we have the formal identity to construe art educational goals in economic terms true of our field. The capitulation of art education to economic agenda is due not only to a political but also to a conceptual immaturity, that is, an inability to compete on autonomously collaborative terms. See, for example, D., Boughton & J., Aland (1989) *Advocacy: Art, design and the world of work*. *Australian Art Education*, 13 (2), p.43.

Mc Kernan, J., (1988) *The countenance of curriculum action research:*

Traditional, collaborative, and emancipatory-critical conceptions.
Journal of Curriculum and Supervision. 3, 3, 173-200.

Parsons, M., (1987) *How we understand art*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Brown N.M., and Freeman, N.H., (1992 in preparation) *The emergence of a theory of pictorial art*. In this collaboration Brown worked on the basis for an ontologically neutral and universal notion of art as real entities and Freeman modelled the neutral entities into a concept map of artistic understanding. An honours student D. Sangar piloted the study. This collaboration brings together the philosophy of art education with the psychology of representation. The autonomy of the collaboration stems from the discourses in which the study is invested.

*. Technical expertise is not confined to art educational research. It can originate in schools, students, other subject and discipline areas.

Scriven, M., (1972) *Objectivity and subjectivity in educational research*. In I.G., Thomas (Ed.) *Philosophical redirection of educational research*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*. Habermas, J., (1971) notion of emancipation warns of the dangers to human problems of their easy domination and enslavement by technical solutions. See *Knowledge and human interests*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Foucault argues the Heideggerian line on human action in which any attempt at making the grounds for action too explicit is in danger of breaching its contract with the "unthought", ie., the explication providing new grounds of and in itself for the adoption of an alternative course of action. An infinite regress ensues. See Rabinow, P., & Dreyfus, H.L., (1982) *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp.40-60.

Michael Parson's (op cit) investigation into children's' and adults' artistic understanding tells us what they say about art but provides teachers with few guides as to what, developmentally, and liberally they ought to say. I am of the opinion that none of what he reports people say about art is what I would want them to say art educationally. Even if Parsons was right, which he isn't, I wouldn't be led by what his respondents had to report.

Kemmis, S., (1982) *The action research reader*, Geelong Vic.: Deakin University Press; and Giddens, A., (1982) *Profiles and critiques in social theory*. University of California Press.

Occasional Seminar # 1 (1989) College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales.

*. Lentricchia, F., (1980). *After the new criticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Danto, A., (1964) *The artworld*. *Journal of philosophy*. 6, 571-584.

Freeman, N.H., & Sangar, D., (1992) *Language and belief in critical thinking: Emerging explanations of pictures* (in press).

N.M. Brown College of Fine Arts 1992