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The Effects of the Corporate, Private and Government Sectors on the History of Art Education in American Schools

Nancy Vanderboom Lausch

Fall 1993

MASTERS THESIS

Submitted to the graduate faculty at

Grand Valley State University
in partial fulfillment of the Masters of Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	•	•	•	•	•	•	4
Chapter One							
The Problem.		•	•	٥	•	•	5
Importance and	Ration	ale of	Study				5
The Value of the Arts to Society							5
The Value of th							6
Background of	Study				•		9
Definition of Te		•	•		•	•	9
Transmitting Ci		on .	•	•	•	•	10
The Purpose of			•	•	•	•	12
Chapter Two							
The History of	Art Edu	<i>ication</i>	in Ame	erica	•		13
The Emergence	of the	Corpo	rate, Pr	rivate	and		
Government S		•	•	•			13
The Need for a	Nationa	al Ager	nda.	•	•	•	14
Introduction of Art in the Curriculum.							17
The 1870 Massa	chusett	s Free	Instru	iction			
in Drawing Ac	et .	•	•	•	•		17
The Oswego Ex		t 1861	-1903				20
Art Becomes Uk				•	•		22
From The New 1				ciety			
The Role of G	overnm	ent	•	•	•	•	24
A Review .	•	•	•	•	•	•	28
Chapter Three							
The Vision Past	Prese	nt and	Future				30
Where We Have							30
New World - No		vit.v R	eauired		•		31
Practical Neces					-s	•	
A Conflict of			-				32
The Quest for a			Aestheti	c .	•	•	34
The Interdiscip					•	•	•
Philosophic V	-	weage	and or				37
Each Partakes		Othar	•	•	•	•	38
My Vision .	OT CITE	Coner	•	•	•	•	41
In Conclusion	•	•	•	•	•	•	42
in conclusion	•	•	•	•	•	•	-12
References							4

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of corporate America on the presentation of art education throughout the history of American public education. The needs of Industrial America forced the entry of art into the curriculum in 1870. Over the years art has been justified and offered to serve numerous ends. Art education has prepared draftsmen for industry and crafts, trained a moral citizenry, promoted creativity and self-expression and provided aesthetic understanding of the nature of beauty. As these needs evolve to the philosophic end of the spectrum the arts are perceived as less functional to the students and less able to service the needs of corporate America, therefore less valuable as a required course.

THE PROBLEM

Educational reform in America only happens when three forces come together at the same time; the corporate sector, private sector and government. However, history has demonstrated that it is only when corporate America perceives the arts as necessary to their survival that the arts become a priority in the curriculum. Over the past ten years the arts have again been shifted to the "softer" side of education, "nice" but not "necessary". Corporations have called for greater technological skills while the demand from the private sector has been a return to the basics. Couple that with the recent federal argument over reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts and the result is the arts have lost their priority in the curriculum.

IMPORTANCE AND RATIONALE OF STUDY

The Value of the Arts to Society

Throughout the ages the arts have been central to civilization. The arts have played a significant role in the framework and communication of religions, celebrations of passage, adornment of clothing and structures, and production of tools and utensils (Anderson, 1990). The arts have played a constant role in the progression of time, from the early cave paintings of Lascaux and Altamira dated (15,000-10,000 B.C.) to the more recent environmental

and cross cultural statements by Christo of umbrellas dotting the landscapes of Japan and California (1991). All cultures rely on the arts to transmit joy or sorrow, to reflect on the times, or to record the success of the hunt. "Since all human societies, past and present, so far as we know, make and respond to art, it must contribute something essential to human life" (Dissanayake, 1987, p. x). The arts define our culture, stimulate our awareness, and challenge our senses.

Through the arts we gain a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. We begin to form a basis upon which we make aesthetic choices. Through the arts we learn life skills. We learn rules of order, analytical proficiency, critical thinking skills and precise observation. Through the arts we can learn math, history, language and the sciences. We gain insight into non-western cultures and a better understanding of multi-cultural issues. But more than that the arts provide us with the store of images to build our world tomorrow: The ideas that will create new jobs, new markets, new futures, discover new cures and solve old problems. The arts foster our creativity, carry our culture, nurture our souls. The arts are an essential learning medium (Broudy, 1987; Boyer & Eisner, 1985).

The Value of the Arts to Education

As a student, parent and educator I have often wondered what

the role of education K-12 is: Is it to prepare students to become wage earners, or prepare them for more schooling, or provide them with opportunities to explore new worlds? Perhaps the best definition of education I have come across thus far is a quote from Will and Ariel Durant, "education is the transmission of civilization". Civilization as defined by American Heritage Dictionary is "Any human society having an advanced stage of development in the arts and sciences and social, political, and cultural complexity." If education is to transmit all those components of civilization then it must include the arts as well as the sciences.

Perhaps the most critical challenges facing education today are to prepare students for the unknown, prepare them to make choices and adapt to change. These challenges are often cited as the most valuable characteristics corporate America is looking for in its work force. These same characteristics are among the outcomes of the arts. Yet neither corporate American nor the private sector seem to be aware of this.

According to a 1986 Gallup poll, Americans generally view job preparation as the principal reason for schooling, and knowledge not obviously related to job skills as relatively unimportant. Our preoccupation with the practical has made education focus on limited basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic, and now computer literacy) while neglecting education in what those skills

are used for. Americans generally confuse the arts with entertainment which can be enjoyed without understanding. Some go so far as to think of the arts as potentially threatening or even blasphemous. (National Endowment for the Arts, 1988, p. 19)

A more recent survey taken by the National Cultural Alliance (NCA) released in February of 1993 reveals two dichotomies in regard to American attitudes about the value, importance and availability of the arts and humanities. The first focuses on the societal and personal difference of opinion on the need for the arts. The NCA survey shows a wide majority (81%) of adult Americans polled say that the arts and humanities are essential to a healthy American society. While the American public seems to believe in the importance of the arts and humanities to society as a whole nearly 1/2 (46%) of those polled say that "compared to other concerns in today's society the arts and humanities have a low priority for me".

The second dichotomy focuses on the need for education in the arts. Virtually every respondent considered the need to expose children to the arts and humanities important. The benefits cited include:

"Provide children with a means of self-expression" (95%)

[&]quot;Provide a sense of accomplishment" (92%)

[&]quot;Help in overall intellectual development" (92%) (NCA Survey)

Yet only 10% of those polled felt that elementary and high schools do an excellent job of promoting the arts and humanities and even less felt that corporations (4%) and government (3%) do well.

In the minds of these Americans it would seem the arts are viewed as essential to our society and our children. Why do the arts continue to be viewed as the least valued subject in the curriculum?

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Definition of Terms

To this point I have referenced both the arts and humanities which can be considered to include visual arts, such as painting and sculpture; literature; the performing arts of theatre, dance and music; and philosophy, history, and languages. For the purposes of this discussion I am specifically concerned with addressing the visual arts in education which include applied arts, the design or decoration of functional objects; fine arts, which covers painting, drawing, sculpture, and architecture; graphic arts, including all aspects of printmaking; and the decorative arts, objects made purely for decoration. In addition I will be looking at the disciplines involved in teaching these arts which consist of aesthetics, history, criticism and the making of art. That is not to say I do not recognize nor support teaching the other subjects in

the arts and humanities. I fully support their presence in the curriculum. However, my primary focus here is the visual arts.

Further definitions are required for the corporate, private and government sectors. Again, for the function of this work I am referencing three segments of the population in America. The corporate sector refers to those persons organized for reasons of commerce. The private sector refers to those individuals representing personal, individual, family or community interests. The government sector refers to those agencies representing local, state and federal interests.

Transmitting Civilization

"With few exceptions art is either taken for granted as having begun with Paleolithic cave paintings and decorated stone tools...or it is extended to a broad and ultimately vague creative, expressive, or communicative disposition observable in all life or all experience" (Dissanayake, 1990, p. x). In either case art is the means by which we transmit our civilization. The notion that art has contributed richly to world history is generally understood and accepted. The idea that art is a necessary subject to be included in the core curriculum of the nation's public schools is quite another concept.

Historically the visual arts have played a varied role in the education of American students. From the 1600's to the mid 1700's schooling was largely viewed as a means to educate the people

toward the ways of God. It was viewed as the responsibility of the church. Spiritual, physical, economic and social survival became the primary goal of the colonists. Their austere Puritan ethic allowed little room for such luxuries as the fine arts, especially in education (Polus, 1983).

One of the earliest mention of the arts in American education is found in Benjamin Franklin's Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in [Pensilvania] dated 1749. Although ultimately defeated, Franklin sought to offer a "vocational training and practical preparation for a life of usefulness in society, government, occupation, and professional service" (Butts & Cremin, 1953, p. 78). Franklin's curriculum which was all encompassing and a departure from the classical and religious offering of the time included English, mathematics, social studies, sciences, agriculture, manners and the history of technology in addition to elementary art in drawing and perspective. In justifying art in the curriculum Franklin quoted John Locke (1632-1704) an English philosopher who spoke of "the usefulness to gentlemen of drawing as a means of communication and expression of ideas". Franklin added that "it was no less useful to a mechanic who can improve the design of his work in carpentry, ship building, engraving, painting, cabinet making, carving, and gardening and thus impress his employer" (Butts & Cremin, 1953, p. 78).

Franklin further defined his position on art when he wrote a letter to Charles Wilson Peale in the mid 1700's. He wrote, "the invention of a machine or the improvement of an implement is of more importance than a masterpiece of Raphael... nothing is good or beautiful but in the measure that it is useful..." (Pulos, 1983, p. 7). This functional view point begins the pattern of art and art education in American education.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of corporate America on the presentation of art education throughout the history of American education. The needs of industrial America forced the entry of art into the curriculum in 1870. Over the years art has been justified and offered to serve numerous ends. Art education has prepared draftsmen for industry and crafts, trained a moral citizenry, promoted creativity and self-expression and provided aesthetic understanding of the nature of beauty. As these needs evolve to the philosophic end of the spectrum the arts are perceived as less functional to the students and less able to service the needs of corporate America, therefore less valuable as a required course.

THE HISTORY OF ART EDUCATION IN AMERICA

The Emergence of the Corporate,

Private and Government Sectors

American education has been subject to various outside influences from its outset. Originally, education reflected and was controlled by the desires of the earliest settlers, the Puritans.

Schooling was directed by the church solely for teaching the ways of God. The strength of this religious influence dominated American education from 1600 through the establishment of the New Republic in 1776. The rejection of Franklin's proposal of 1749 is a clear example of this power. Even though Franklin's plan for a universal curriculum drew the approval of middle class merchants, Anglican scholars, and aristocratic public officials, his tenet of usefulness was defeated in favor of the status quo. There being no universal system of education in place at the time, the religious faction and classical traditionalists who ruled higher education brought their combined political strength together to defeat Franklin's practical proposal (Cremin, 1982).

As the new Republic took shape no theme was more widely echoed than the need of a self-governing people for a universal system of education. The quest for freedom of religion grew stronger, the middle class as a capitalistic economic force emerged, and self-governance prospered. This empowerment brought with it

three new political forces that would eventually sway the direction of education in America; the corporate sector, seeking economic growth; the private sector, seeking individual and religious freedom; and a burgeoning democratic government. The debate over what education in America should be like took on new proportions. How should it be organized, what and who should be taught, and who should control it was argued into the 19th century (Cremin, 1982).

The Need For A National Agenda

Political figures of the time did not share a common vision for a universal public education system. There is evidence that George Washington's views were focused on a national university as opposed to an elementary system. John Adams continued to believe in the role of the churches in nurturing the public instruction needed for managing the new Republic: While Jefferson and Madison led the campaign for disestablishment in Virginia that resulted in the 1786 Statute for Religious Freedom (Cremin, 1982). The general citizenry generated even more disagreement. Where once the focus of schooling was on religious goals the emphasis now was educating the citizenry to the ways of democracy. In spite of this there seemed to be some consensus that learning should entail; popular schooling, with a common core of knowledge, morality, and patriotism; a free press, to give voice to multiple views on important

public issues; and a host of voluntary associations, ranging from civic organizations to political parties (Cremin, 1982).

In response to these goals Thomas Jefferson spelled out in his 1779 Bill for The More General Diffusion of Knowledge what he thought educational institutions should be, what should be taught and who was to be educated. The elementary curriculum he proposed was academic in the purest sense; reading, writing, arithmetic, mensuration, geography, and history. His intention was to focus the nations attention on the need to provide education for all the people; rich, poor, French, German, Protestant and Catholic. All, that is, except for the Black and Indian and only minimally for women. Jefferson's definition of the new Republic was free white males. His views on educating women were tempered only by his own daughters, for even though he cared genuinely about educating them, he wrote to Nathaniel Burwell in 1818 that he had never thought systematically about the education of females and remarked on the advantages of teaching them dancing, drawing, music, household economy, and French literature and alerting them to the dangers of novels (Cremin, 1982). Apparently subjects not deemed essential for all the people.

After ten years of debate Jefferson's bill was passed by
Legislature in 1789 with a provision that empowered the county
courts to determine whether and when to institute the elementary

program. This watered down bill led to all manner of interpretations of the General Diffusion of Knowledge. State constitutions would declare principles while legislatures would interpret or ignore them (Cremin, 1982).

The next 100 years saw the formal movement toward a universal system of learning marked by the political agendas of regional circumstances. The growing number of newspapers fed public opinion. By the middle of the 1800's the general format of institutions had evolved from a class line delineation to a more democratic structure which eventually paved the way for the American invention of the single-track or ladder system of education we have today (Butts & Cremin, 1953).

With the Civil war in 1861 came the ravaging of the south and the beginning of an evolution from a once agrarian society to an urban centered industrial nation. The cities grew with the influx of the unskilled labor of immigrants from Europe; over one million patents were issued between 1860 and 1910; transportation and communication supported industrial growth and "American businessmen controlled the national government in their own interest during the decades following 1860" (Butts & Cremin, 1953, p. 300). All of these factors had an enormous impact on education in America.

INTRODUCTION OF ART IN THE CURRICULUM

The traditional subject centered curriculum was now being challenged by two major factors. The first was the demand for a more knowledgeable work force to support the manufacturing requirements of a growing nation and the second was the "child centered thought" of European philosophers put forward by the academic world. Both recognized the value of the arts and although they had entirely different motives, they both championed art in education. In the end the business factor proved a stronger lobby than that of higher education yet neither could survive without the other.

The 1870 Massachusetts

Free Instruction in Drawing Act

On May 16, 1870 the demand for a more knowledgeable work force was formally addressed. On that date Massachusetts became the first state to legislate drawing as a required subject in the public school system. The Massachusetts Free Instruction in Drawing Act was the result of a strong lobby of wealthy and powerful members of the textile industry. "With their signatures on a legislative petition, particularly one involving Massachusetts manufacturing interests legislative approval was a foregone conclusion" (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985, p. 103). Faced with increasing competition from imports in the textile industry these manufacturers

felt ill equipped to compete. They were compelled to hire foreign labor to design goods and equipment. Identifying the deficiency of design knowledge on the part of American workers as a lack of art education in the school system, they sought government action to legislate the teaching of drawing. Thirteen textile industrialists and one railroad baron drafted a petition which notes that every manufacturer engaged in Massachusetts requires some sort of drawing or knowledge of design. "Presently no provision is made for instruction of drawing in public schools." It also compares the offerings of art in England and notes that "every boy and girl by the time they are sixteen acquire great proficiency in mechanical drawing and in other arts of design". It goes on to mention that "men and women who have been long engaged in the processes of manufacture, learn readily and with pleasure, enough of the arts of design to assist them materially in their work" (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985, Though there may have been some concern for the greater good of the nations aesthetic sensibilities it would seem this was purely a business decision on the part of these industrialists. "It was for this reason that the training of artisans and designers was seen to be an urgent need and, thus, the requirement for the teaching of drawing in the public schools was established" (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985, p. 40).

Walter Smith, considered the originator of art education in

America, was hired as director of drawing for the Boston Public Smith was a normal school art-master from England, trained in the South Kensington Art School which ran the British government's art education program (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985). He was charged with instituting the drawing act in the Boston schools. Smith's program began in elementary school in 1871 and added a grade each year until 1879. The strength of the program included an inservice for classroom teachers for it was felt that they were readily qualified to teach the beginning lessons of drawing (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985). In 1881, under pressure from a new administration brought in to combat the perceived view of the general public that the Massachusetts school system was too expensive, ineffective, and produced illiterate, uneducated individuals ill prepared for life, Smith was relieved of his post (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985). In part, the controversy hinged on the question of what is education for; to prepare students for the university or prepare them for manual occupations? Smith's program, although it incorporated both mechanical and free hand drawing, was viewed primarily as manual training. Beyond that the interpretation of imagination and expression entered the debate. On one side of the argument the manual training of mechanical drawing was considered a waste of time for those preparing for higher education. On the other side, the free hand drawing which nurtured the aesthetic perception

(imagination and expression) of a student was considered illegitimate in school training by the school board (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985).

Although the private sector, in the form of the general public, was successful in removing Smith from his post, drawing in the curriculum remained in the Massachusetts school systems and spread to other states. Curriculum documentation shows drawing as a course of study continued to advance well into the twentieth century (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985).

The Oswego Experiment 1861-1903

In 1859 while visiting a museum during a school observation tour of Toronto, Ontario, Edward Austin Sheldon, Secretary of the Oswego, N.Y. Board of Education, discovered visual teaching aids. They included; groups of pictures, color charts, forms, reading charts and books for teachers. These teaching aids had been used to train teachers in the child centered method of Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827), a Swiss philosopher who believed the foundation of knowledge was through the senses. Upon his return to Oswego, Sheldon initiated a child centered curriculum where the teacher was to bring into the classroom "all of the objects of nature and art necessary for the child to continue his active investigations into the world about him" (Butts & Cremin, 1953, p. 382). The traditional subject centered curriculum was replaced with object lessons in numbers, magnitude, form, drawing, color, weight, sounds, places,

animals, plants, minerals, and liquids. "Natural history emerged as an area for emphasis; drawing seems to have been used more and more as a means of expression and illustration in the study of objects" (Hoffa, & Wilson, 1985, p. 138).

In 1861 Sheldon founded the Oswego Normal and Training School and is recognized as the founder of the "Oswego Movement", a process that was sometimes referred to as the 3-H philosophy; head, heart and hand. Oswego, known for its ventures in experimentation, also included the theories of the following philosophers: Johann Herbart (1776-1841) moral character and lesson planning; Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) introduction of kindergarten; Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) sense realism, rature and individualism; and Della Vos manual training.

In the mid 1890's Sheldon incorporated the Swedish Sloyd philosophy, a method that was both visionary and divisive at the same time. The Scandinavian Sloyd system of manual training was based on the "Froebelian idea of the harmonious development of all the powers of the child" (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985, p. 143). Sloyd, a process that develops the motor skills required in manual training, nurtured eye hand coordination with an emphasis on simplicity of form. The Sloyd method was not only applicable in mechanical drawing, it was also used in fine art drawing, penmanship and painting. However, it set the stage for the fundamental split in

drawing between manual training (mechanical, industrial, and architectural) and fine arts drawing (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985).

The Oswego Movement established the distinction between drawing for development of manual skills and drawing for development of expressive skills. Manual skills being more readily understood by the general public and in keeping with the industrial growth of the nation at the time was therefore more readily accepted. Incorporating the Sloyd method began the eventual return from subject integration to a subject centered curriculum at Oswego. The value of the Oswego Movement to art education is two fold: first, its presentation of art as a significant learning discipline and second, the use of art in subject integration. The Oswego Movement schooled many teachers who went on to apply their knowledge in classrooms all over the nation. Some were employed at other Normal schools based on the same philosophies as Oswego. Thus the influence of the Oswego Movement in art education was felt long after the original movement waned in 1903.

Art Becomes Ubiquitous

In the early part of the 20th century the character of the nation's work force again began to evolve. In 1909 the plastic age began with the commercial manufacturing of Bakelite, in 1910 the "week-end" became popular, and in 1913 Henry Ford developed new

assembly line techniques.

If one half of industrialization comprised industry itself, the appropriate machinery, and the transportation system needed to move raw materials and finished products, the other half was business, including the promotion and sale of the products and the management of the enterprise. Managers emerged as a distinct occupational class... Management found its place not at the factories... but rather in efficient and economical office buildings located in urban centers. (Pulos, 1983, p. 180)

Industry's need for good design was challenged by industry's need for economic and management skills. With these changes the intentions of art education came into question again. Although numerous states continued to reference drawing as a means of employment, art as a means of everything else surfaced. For example: aesthetic understanding, moral training, expression, subject integration, character building, neatness, good taste and dexterity, accuracy, self control and precision, democratic behavior, social adjustment, emotional growth, stimulation of imagination and skills in reading and math were all listed in curriculum documents as justification for art or drawing from 1900 to 1930. Although present in many schools, the arts seemed to have lost the voice of industry. In addition, the perceived need to embellish a once simple design solution opened the door for more debate.

As the 1920's opened, there was still a polarization between those who believed that the Americans either could not hope to develop their own design capabilities in the decorative and industrial arts and those who were convinced that the American must be awakened to the necessity of adding aesthetic value to their products if they were to meet worldwide competition. (Pulos, 1983, p. 270)

The issue of aesthetics in education further confused the role of art in the curriculum.

From The New Deal to The Great Society The Role of Government

The 1930's brought the Great Depression and a new voice for art education. Thus far I have identified the impact of two of the three sectors influencing art education, the corporate sector and the private sector. Though it is difficult to discuss any one of the forces independent of the other, each has championed their own cause at one time or another. In the 1930's the federal government began to play a new, albeit inconsistent, role in art education. With the understanding that art education goes beyond the classroom just as all learning does, the WPA (Works Progress Administration) FAP (Federal Art Program) initiated in 1934 had a vital impact on art education. As part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal a work relief program was designed to give jobs to those in need of

public assistance. The program was an effort to dignify both the job and the individual's professional skills. Federal funds were provided to artists because they were victims of unemployment just as millions of other Americans were at the time. Of the 15 million unemployed, ten thousand were artists (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985, P. 341).

Roosevelt's New Deal actually included three art patronage programs. The first of which was the Public Works Art Project (PWAP) which lasted less than one year. Nevertheless, it employed 3,749 artists and produced 15,633 works of art ranging from murals to ceramics for the government. The program was intended only to provide support through the first hard winter months of the depression. It resulted in two other programs which ran concurrently from 1935 into the first year of WWII. They were the WPA-FAP (Federal Art Project) and the Section on Painting and Sculpture in the Treasury Department commonly referred to as The Treasury Section. It is interesting to note that the philosophic differences of the two programs continues to be played out even today. Holger Cahill the director of the WPA, believed that government should work with the artist to nurture their skills no matter what the aesthetic result. In a speech Cahill gave at John Dewey's eightieth birthday, he noted that the arts should be central in any education, not to be relegated to the frills and extras. Edward Bruce, who ran The Treasury Section, viewed the

government as a patron and felt that the artist should work for the government with an imposed academic discipline (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985, p. 342). Cahill's WPA was a multifaceted program centered in branch offices across the country. Bruce's Treasury Section was centered in Washington D.C. generating paintings and sculptures for federal buildings and are the products of which are generally attributed to the WPA. Both programs employed many of the giants of the 1950's and 1960's New York Art world for what was called "plumber's wages" (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985; Pulos, 1983).

The public's interest in design was stimulated by a WPA project initiated by Ruth Reeves, a textile designer and painter. Reeves became the director of the Index of American Design, a program which also lasted from 1935 to the beginning of WWII. It achieved its primary goal by providing employment for commercial artists during the Depression. In the end the Index proved to be an invaluable historic survey of illustrations of American decorative and industrial arts as well as vernacular products of the colonies through the end of the nineteenth century. The collection is housed in the National Gallery and serves as an educational tool for all to study.

For a brief period in 1935 the WPA expanded its mandate to involve art education. A grant was provided to establish the New York Design Laboratory for students who could not afford private

schools for training in design and fine arts. The curriculum was based on the Bauhaus in Germany with modifications to include training in aesthetics and product design, machine fabrication and merchandising and was directed by Gilbert Rohde. Unfortunately a cut in WPA funds forced the school to close within a year. Although the WPA did not directly involve art education in the schools, its impact was widely felt. The national attention placed on the arts by the Federal Government coupled with the influence of the Bauhaus opened the nation's consciousness to art and design. It forced a change in foundation courses in higher education and a move toward creativity and expression in the k-12 setting (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985; Pulos, 1983).

Even though government involvement in the arts dwindled during the 1940's and 1950's the international events of 1952 caused a trickle down effect on art education. The Soviet's launching of Sputnik resulted in the President's Science Advisory Committee which initiated innovations in science education. In 1963 Jerrold Zacharias, the MIT physicist who chaired the committee on science began to apply the same innovations with art education. The concept was to retrain art teachers to think like artists. This was happening at about the same time that Johnson's Great Society was instituting the National Arts and Humanities Act in 1965. After numerous years of national debate it was finally agreed that the

arts served the national interest. For the first time Federal dollars became available for arts education grants (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985; Pulos, 1983).

The WPA and the Kennedy and Johnson administrations provided national leadership in the arts for significantly different reasons. Whereas the WPA-FAP goal was to provide employment for those Americans working in the arts as a form of work relief, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations goals were to provide support for the arts because the arts themselves were considered important.

A Review

I began this chapter with a discussion on the origins of education in America and the three political forces that affected it since its inception; the corporate sector, the private sector and government. The make up and strength of those forces evolved as the nation matured. Thomas Jefferson's Bill for the General Diffusion of Knowledge passed into legislation with a watered down provision allowing local governments to implement the curriculum as they saw fit. Right or wrong, so goes the history of education in America. That provision allowed Massachusetts to enact the Free Instruction in Drawing Act, a movement driven by the business sector and resulting in the beginning of art education in American public schools. At the same time an experimental Normal School in Oswego New York was exploring an integrated curriculum using art

as a means of expression. If the pressures of industry forced the entry of art into the curriculum it was the Oswego Movement that began the debate over what art education was for.

In 1965 at the signing of the Arts and Humanities Bill President Lyndon B. Johnson remarked "Art is a nation's most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves, and to others, the inner vision which guides us as a Nation. And where there is no vision, the people perish" (National Endowment for the Arts, 1988, p. 129). In chapter 3 I will explore the vision.

THE VISION PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE

Where We Have Been

The history of art education in American schools reveals a meandering path, forged periodically by three forces; the corporate, private and government sectors. At one time business and industry perceived the arts as crucial to their survival and lobbied to include drawing in the curriculum. The private sector has held polar extreme views which have evolved from "the arts are blasphemous" to "the arts are necessary to support a 'child centered' curriculum". In 1965, after 189 years of independence, the United States Government came to recognize and support the arts for its value to a nation and ultimately to civilization by enacting the landmark Arts and Humanities Bill. Although the bill did not mandate art education, for the first time in history it made funding available for arts education.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the creator of the New Deal which included government support for artists said, "Every time an artist dies, part of the vision of mankind passes with him" (Peter, 1977, p. 25). Profound as it might be, what is the "vision"? To better understand the intention of the word vision I offer two definitions from The American Heritage Dictionary: 1) intelligent foresight and 2) a mental image produced by the imagination. I believe the two definitions go hand in hand, intelligent foresight must contain

imagination if mankind (humanity) is to move forward. But, what is the content of the vision? The answer is rooted in the attitudes of the past.

New World - No Creativity Required

The earliest settlers may have had intelligent foresight but imagination was not required. In colonial America a negative aesthetic attitude prevailed over development of the fine arts. Although an occasional unnamed limner from Europe painted portraits of wealthier families, painting was a forbidden art. "Puritan leaders had condemned painting; in 1701, the popular Samuel Willard had called it a violation of the Second Commandment, forbidding graven images" (Randel, 1978, p. 61). The first colonists fostered a Puritan ethic centered on industry, thrift and spiritual salvation. Originality and creativity were not desirable traits. Ironically, this austere lifestyle and lack of creativity was often contradicted by highly placed Puritans who were allowed to acquire goods and finery. For, in some cases wealth was regarded as a mark of being chosen by God. Thus the wealthy upper class became the arbiters of taste. As much as these first settlers were anxious to establish their own culture the aristocratic design influence of Europe was still preferred. Ornate patterns in silver and furniture dominated over local simpler crafts (Pulos, 1983; Randel, 1978).

As the New Republic was established the leaders of the post

Revolutionary period took a pious attitude toward the luxuries of Europe and the fine arts. The economy was poor. The future of a young independent nation was at stake. Benjamin Franklin asked the new leaders of the country to discard whatever affection they may have had for England. Thomas Jefferson warned against sending the youth abroad for study as they might nurture an affection for European luxury and aristocracy, and develop a contempt for the simpler American life. George Washington, a southern gentleman fond of the comforts, clothes and luxuries of European tastes, took a public stand against them. At his second annual message to Congress in 1790 Washington wore a suit of Connecticut broadcloth to champion the national cause.

Practical Necessities and Aesthetic Desires A Conflict of Visions

Proclaiming the arts suspect to the new Republic's vision of success was the method chosen to turn the attention of the citizens away from the luxuries of their former rulers (Pulos, 1983). For the most part the arts were considered self indulgent and not appropriate for the slow post-Revolutionary economy, they were equated with luxury and excess. The negative image of the arts cultivated by the nation's leaders was likely influenced by European philosophers "such as Rousseau, who wrote in <u>Emile</u> (1762) that luxury and bad taste were inseparable, and that styles were set by

the rich in order to show off their wealth and by the artists in order to take advantage of it" (Pulos, 1983, p. 53). However, the internal conflict over aesthetic development of a new culture remained in the minds of America's leaders. Thomas Jefferson while studying architecture in Europe lamented that the first principles of architecture were unknown in America. He wrote to James Madison that he was "not ashamed of his enthusiasm toward the arts as their object was to improve the taste of Americans and to increase their reputation and reconcile them the respect of the world" (Pulos, 1983, p. 53). John Adams prioritized his opinions in a letter written to Abigail while he was in Paris:

It is not, indeed, the fine arts which our country requires: the useful, the mechanic arts, are those which we have occasion for in a young country as yet simple and not far advanced in luxury, although perhaps much too far for her age and character. I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain. (Pulos, 1983, p. 53) John Adams shared the same practical attitude toward the arts as did many influential persons of both government and industry.

This vision of practical necessity is what ultimately buoyed the arts in education. Although embracing the arts beyond the practical realm seemed a long way off.

The Quest for an American Aesthetic

The arts were not completely abandoned during this period, just discouraged. "However much America's leaders disavowed in public the cultural diversions that preoccupied the patricians of the Old World, they realized in private that, until a native American culture emerged, Europe would remain the fountainhead of aesthetic expression" (Pulos, 1983, p. 53). To this point in American history the colonists did not want to appear bourgeois or lower class in their new land, so they refrained from practicing the primitive folk arts of their home lands. But with the attainment of independence the folk arts surfaced as acceptable practice because they required no formal training and allowed the ethnic traditions of European immigrants to blend with the burgeoning American life style. In addition, the new Republic fostered symbols of its success such as eagles and shields. Wealthier Americans were having portraits done for posterity. The demand for neoclassical portraiture, the style of art in Europe, was so high that America had a dearth of trained painters. Nonetheless, the value of painting in America was in historic content rather than aesthetic or artistic expression. John Singleton Copely (1738-1815) was considered the greatest American

painter of the 18th century. He was doing portraits in America until 1774 when he finally fled to Europe to escape the war. Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1827) a Colonel in the Revolutionary War and active in politics was another highly regarded portraitist of the time. Peale concentrated on revolutionary leaders and had a corner on the market until Gilbert Stuart (1785-1828) returned from Europe in 1792. With the sanction of the public to preserve the history of the time Stuart produced over one thousand portraits of statesmen. More than one hundred were of George Washington. By the late eighteenth century the favored painting style in America turned to great scenes in American history. John Trumbull (1756-1843) was particularly skilled at depicting the events and personalities of the revolutionary war. An aide-de-camp to George Washington, his career was devoted to recording history on canvas. When the capitol was being rebuilt, Trumbull proposed painting a series of twelve great events related to the nations founding. Congress commissioned four of the twelve, the most significant being The Signing of the Declaration of Independence (1786-87). Trumbull was not pleased with the small number commissioned but he was the only government supported artist until Roosevelt's New Deal in 1935 (Chilvers, Farr & Osborne, 1988; Randel, 1978).

As the west was settled the American landscape school of painting was established as desireable art. Artists painted not only

to capture the grandeur but to sell their work as well. "The repudiation of static neoclassicism was a turning point in the nation's history, one of immense importance to the people's culture and to their standards of taste" (Randel, 1978, p. 91). In 1857 Nathaniel Currier formed a partnership with James Merritt Ives to introduce art for the masses. The romantic images of Currier and Ives were embraced by Americans as a symbol of conquering new lands. They typified the period by their individualistic, dynamic and truly American reflections.

Dramatic awe-inspiring scenes of majestic mountains and running streams were painted by the romantic American landscape artists which had a lasting effect on the nation. One result was the creation of wilderness areas in urban settings. New York's Central Park was the first to create a scenic park environment with Chicago and Washington to follow. During this time art lovers became more sophisticated in their tastes. American art collectors sent buyers overseas to buy art for them (Randel, 1978). The real significance of this movement is that it established the American aesthetic (Briere, 1988). The vision of fine art in America no longer relied on the practical necessities and attitudes of its leaders, but was now found in the works of its people.

The Interdisciplinary Wedge and the Philosophic View

The emergence of the American aesthetic sprang from images that were truly American such as; Merced River, Yosemite Valley (1866) by Bierstadt and Fur Traders Descending the Missouri (1845) by Bingham. The romantic reality of a nation conquering its land was the unique presentation of American painting. But a nation's vision of the arts can not rely solely on the aesthetics of painting. From the practical necessities sprang the inventiveness of the industrial arts. From the folk arts of the early colonists emerged the heart of the people. Together with the works of American painters an aesthetic that was intrinsic to America surfaced (Pulos, 1983, Randel, 1978).

The irony here is that out of this democratic nation's struggle to find a vision for the arts an interdisciplinary conflict ensued: The fine arts, considered to be the higher aesthetic of the two was beginning to find a place in school curriculums over the applied arts (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985; Pulos, 1983, Smith, 1989). Once again the economic interests of the business community prompted action in art education. With the coming of the machine age the propensity to teach design in schools had lessened and the caliber of American production was in question. In response to this a number of applied arts organizations were established to improve the aesthetic

quality of products. In turn, the National Board of Education reacted by establishing a committee in 1900 to develop a proposal for a more comprehensive program of industrial arts in the schools. "This effort was motivated not so much by a desire to elevate public taste as by the belief that an increase in the artistic quality of manufactured products would be of economic benefit to their makers as well as to the national economy" (Pulos, 1983, p. 243). A three volume report by the committee was widely distributed to the nations schools but no action was taken. In fact curriculum documents demonstrate that states were moving even more toward the creative realm in arts education (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985, Smith 1989).

Each Partakes of the Other

In this instance the issue of fine arts over the applied arts is important because it contributed to art education becoming too narrowly focused. During this period art education had been either a means to solve an economic problem or an end in itself. Rarely was art taught as a way to understand the past, present and future of civilization.

The philosophers of the time addressed the issues of aesthetics in regard to all the arts. In 1905 George Santayana (1863-1952) an American philosopher wrote, "It remains merely to note that all industry contains an element of fine art and all fine art an element

of industry... A certain amount of technical and instrumental [labour] is thus involved in every work of genius, and a certain genius in every technical success" (Santayana, 1982, p. 33). The German philosopher Johann Herder (1744-1803) writing one hundred years earlier proposed that the fine arts must spring by purification from the popular arts (Pulos, 1983). A perfect example of Herder's statement is found in the fine arts movement of 1908 known as the Ash-can school. The school consisted of eight artists, four of which were artist-reporters on the Philadelphia Press. Their jobs of making rapid sketches on the spot demanded a quick eye and exact memory for detail, and encouraged their interest in scenes of everyday life. The movement was so named because the artists concentrated on scenes of slum life and outcasts. Even though the actual interest of the painters was the aesthetic content of the subject rather than the social issues they raised, their work was offensive to the masses (Jansen, 1986; Randel, 1978). If the American public could not justify the applied artists working in fine arts, neither could they accept their creative ideas in manufacturing. Louis Tiffany was most vocal about this and again, a number of coalitions were formed to put pressure on the government to support design in education. In 1920 a grant totaling \$120,000 from the General Education Board of the federal government and the University of the State of New York was given

to the National Society of Vocational Education. The objective was to conduct a study of American industry to determine if they would benefit from American design education. The recommendation of the study was: "to attract promising young people to design rather than to the fine arts" (Pulos, 1983). It read in part:

We are only slowly coming to recognize the true meaning of the applied arts in our national life. We are only gradually coming to recognize that art is fine not because of a particular medium, but when the expression of line, mass and color is fine and beautiful, whether this be in a painting or a rug, and that art is not fine when this expression is poor and commonplace, whether the medium be sculptured bronze or a piece of furniture. (Pulos, 1983, p. 271)

The report clearly unites the applied arts and the fine arts through the basic elements of design. Yet, the recommendation was to encourage the division amongst the arts. In 1934 John Dewey was able to define the split further. He wrote:

Modern industry and commerce have an international scope. The contents of galleries and museums testify to the growth of economic cosmopolitanism. The mobility of trade and of populations, due to the economic system, has weakened or destroyed the connection between works of art the genius loci of which they were once the natural expression. As works of art

have lost their indigenous status, they have acquired a new one—that of being specimens of fine art and nothing else. (Dewey, 1980 p. 9)

Dewey's philosophy of art as experience contends that works of art set apart in a museum are less a work of art than is the everyday experience of life, in that each experience emotes an aesthetic response. Dewey's philosophy explores art in all walks of life and in the end he comments on art and civilization:

There are transient and there are enduring elements in a civilization. The enduring forces are not separate; they are functions of a multitude of passing incidents as the latter are organized into the meanings that form minds. Art is the great force in effecting this consolidation. (Dewey, 1980, p. 326)

Dewey had a lasting impact on education, unfortunately art education could not sustain the momentum provided by Dewey in the 1930's.

My Vision

To this day art education in American schools is in question and the tension between the fine arts and applied arts remains. The arts are not mandated and seem to be in and out of state and national curricula on a yearly basis (Hoffa & Wilson, 1985).

Numerous state and national arts organizations exist to lobby for the survival of art in the curriculum. Historically lobbying has

proven to be a constant need. I cannot project it being otherwise in the future. I would suggest, however, that the visual arts take a broader view of themselves and begin to promote art education in the elementary school system as a basis for all possible end results.

Art is as essential to the learning process and the training of young minds as is any other subject. Art is basic to education and belongs in every child's core curriculum. It should be taught sequentially and thoroughly. A well developed visual art program should consistently include more than the making of art. It should also include the history of art (what we learn from art), the aesthetics of art (how to see), and the critical analysis of art (how to judge). Not only does art enhance our lives, it forms the very foundation of our lives. What we miss in the absence of art is a vital connection; the multicolored thread that forms the infrastructure of our culture. The visual arts weave their way through our daily lives, forming the patterns that we call celebrations, family, and survival. Without a basic education in the visual arts we risk loosing the ties to our past. We risk capturing the present and surely we risk building the future. In the end we will have lost the fabric of our culture. Art is the means through which we transmit civilization.

In Conclusion

I have examined the effects of three major forces on art education in American schools, the corporate, business and private sectors. Their lobbying has been responsible for the presence of art in the curriculum. It is my contention that educational reform does not happen unless these three forces come together at the same time. The same forces are required for the survival of art in education. Further throughout our history it is the business community that has repeatedly championed the cause of the arts in American education for economic gain: In 1870 the textile industry successfully lobbied for art education in the schools; In 1900 a perceived lack of artistic quality of American manufactured goods caused a call for more comprehensive industrial arts programming; And again in 1920 the government provided a grant to industry to study the benefit of more American design education. It is my belief that without this leading support, art education will continue to flounder. History has demonstrated that the general acceptance of the arts in education is tenuous at best.

I have pointed out the division or compartmentalization within the arts that developed over time. I believe that it is imperative to put that kind of divisiveness aside as future civilizations will foster all manner of new avenues to explore, whether in the arts, sciences, or education. It is archaic for our present educational system to teach only the specialties of today. We must provide our students with the knowledge of the past, the skills of today and the basics for the future.

My premise is that art education will not survive without the support of business. In the past business has viewed the arts as essential to their survival from a design and manufacturing point of view. I believe that art is essential to business today from a holistic point of view. A foundation in the arts is vital to every worker because the arts develop life long learning skills: A basic elementary art education provides decision making and problem solving skills in addition to precise observation. The arts prepare individuals to make choices and adapt to change. Both business and government are moving toward a learning organization philosophy (Senge, 1990). A philosophy that centers on self discovery, precisely the method of the arts. It is our responsibility to inform the business, private and government sectors of the need for and benefits of art education to gain their support.

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GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY ED 695 DATA FORM

NAME: NANCY VANDERBOOM LAUSCH SEM/YR COMPLETED FALL 1993
TITLE OF PAPER: The EFFECTS of the Corporate, Private
and Government Sectors on the History of ART Education in American Schools. PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1)
Project Thesis
SUPERVISOR: DR. DOROTHY ARMSTRONG
MAJOR: (Choose only 1)
Ed Tech Ed Leadership Sec/Adult G/T Ed Early Child Elem LD SpEd Admin Read/Lang Arts SpEd PPI Elem Ed Sec LD
Using the ERIC thesaurus, choose as many descriptors (3-5 minimum) as needed to describe the contents of your master's paper.
1. ART EDUCATION 6.
2. EDUCATIONAL HISTORY 7.
3. POLITICS OF EDUCATION 8.
4. ROLE OF EDUCATION 9.
5. EDUCATION WORK RELATIONSHIP.
ABSTRACT: 2 - 3 sentences that describe the contents of your paper (50 words or less).

A study determining the influence of the corporate, private and government sectors on the presentation of art education in American schools. Industrial America's need for design forced art into the curriculum. As those needs changed art education evolved from functional to philosophic and was perceived as less valuable to education.

^{*} Note: This page must be included as the last page in your master's paper.