

Feminist Art Educator Wikipedia Activism

Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia source that comes toward the top in a Google search when students, administrators, policy makers, and others want to learn about art education. Many will not know to look at the mission of the NAEA or its issue groups. Have you looked at how art education is defined at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_education? Take a look. Look at the “article” on art education, the “discussion” that debates how art education is defined, and the “history” of changes in defining art education. Is this how you define art education?

As an NAEA Women’s Caucus activism project, we encourage WC members to redefine art education from a Women’s Caucus/feminist perspective with all the variations that this means to you. Our goal is not to come to consensus in redefining art education but rather to bring to the Wikipedia encyclopedia definition of art education a perspective that shows that art education is not one singular concept, and that it has different histories and definitions, and to convey the mission of art education includes the perspective of the [NAEA Women’s Caucus mission](#) for art education, artists, and art educators.

To edit Wikipedia go to the “[edit this page link](#),” at the top of any Wikipedia page, and simply type in your change. However, if you do not create an account, or are not logged in, your revision will be identified with your computer’s IP address and this then becomes public. To avoid hacking of your computer, it is best to not publicly share your computer’s IP address, and so it is a good idea to “[create account](#),” and always log in, which conceals your computer’s identity as well as your own identity.

Below are strategies for this activism of (re)defining our field by Women’s Caucus members that will prevent the closely monitored collective online encyclopedia “article” on art education from being locked down or deleted, or from the banning of an individual from further entries due to inadvertently violating Wikipedia’s policies of collective knowledge construction. Below are suggestions for how to enact change in redefining art education on Wikipedia:

- 1. GRADUALLY REVISE:** Before making a change look at the “history” of revisions. If Wikipedia monitors see too many entries by several within a short time they may lock down the page to prevent further revisions and ask that the discussion page is used instead to work out differences. This happened to art educator Melanie Buffington in working with students in creating a page on the art education program at her university’s Wikipedia entry (see her article in the Journal of Social Theory in Art Education, volume 28/29, about this experience). If there has been a revision within the past 24 hours, or each day all week, wait until it is less active to make your change so it does not seem like a surge, which can happen when a class of students or an organization all make changes at Wikipedia within a few hours. However, you might want to make it a class project to involve students, especially in a history of art education course, where students can develop entries for different eras. The developing Women’s Caucus history timeline at <http://naeawc.net/activism.html> can provide material for students to develop

Wikipedia entries that include the Women's Caucus—just plan a slow roll-out strategy with your students too.

2. **AVOID PERCEPTION OF SELF-PROMOTION:** Contribute with revisions from your own expertise, but do not cite yourself. If you feel you have authored a resource that would be good to reference, post this suggestion on the Women's Caucus Wikipedia discussion forum at <http://naeawc.net/activism.html> and another can cite you or your work, and this is acceptable Wikipedia policy. Use citations whenever possible with your entries. For more on how to make revisions and on Wikipedia policy go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_policies
3. **ENCYCLOPEDIA VOICE:** Use an encyclopedia voice. See the [policy on content](#) for how to write with an encyclopedia voice. While feminists do not believe there is such a thing as neutrality, this is a guiding principle for what is considered acceptable entries on Wikipedia. The way to work with the Wikipedia concept of neutrality, and feminist notions that everything is political, is to construct entries so they appear as fact using the citation practice (whether as hyperlinks or texts of scholarly sources) to support the “truth” of the statement.
4. **LINK ARTICLES OUTSIDE ART EDUCATION TO THE ART EDUCATION ARTICLE:** Link Wikipedia articles to the Women's Caucus website, or to the Wikipedia art education article. For example, art educator, Melanie Buffington linked visual culture to art education in Wikipedia. How about linking the Wikipedia articles on [Gender](#), or [Women](#), or [NAEA](#), or [Education](#) to the Wikipedia art education article, especially after developing the art education article.
5. **NAEA WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE MISSING INFORMATION ON THE WC:** Develop the NAEA Wikipedia article to include the Women's Caucus members' perspectives and organization, which is missing as of August 14, 2009, from the NAEA Wikipedia page.
6. **CREATE AN NAEA WC WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE:** You can also create a new article on Wikipedia, and it is sorely missing a NAEA Women's Caucus entry. For a model of how to write this see the Wikipedia entry for the [National Political Women's Caucus](#), although this entry is designated as a “stub,” which means it is marked as too short and needs further development.