

## ENACTING CHANGE SURVEY RESPONSE

For information on the Enacting Change Survey Project, facilitated by Joanna Rees, see the NAEA Women's Caucus website at <http://naeawc.net/activism.html>

**Cindy Maguire**

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Well, I've been in art education my entire life and advocating for the arts and students. I taught middle school and high school art while getting my Masters at California State University, Long Beach. Started teaching in mid-90's, MA in 2001, and PhD at New York University in 2008.

In Los Angeles I was a middle school and high school art teacher for nine years. At most of the schools I worked as Department Chair and took on the responsibility for building up the art program. Teaching was one the most significant experiences of my life. I was dropped into middle school with forty-two students and me. Learning how to teach the content in the face of all these kids who didn't necessarily want to do art work - I had to find ways to bridge my curriculum with their interests.

From this experience I began teaching/focusing on community and culture through the visual arts. Nonetheless, I was still viewed as a white woman and even though I come from a biracial family, I had to find ways of building trust between my students and myself. Over time the students taught me a lot about who they were and where they came from. We really connected and did great work together. This propelled me into my Doctoral program. We did a lot of community based work and it had a really strong impact on the kids and the schools where I taught.

I completed my Doctorate NYU Art Education when I was 46. It was a baptism by fire. Being a white woman looking at issues of social justice - it felt like I was being read like I

did not understand the context or content. I've experienced ageism and resistance because of my age and I had to maneuver to find a committee I could work with. I looked at teacher education in my dissertation with a social justice approach to how we train teachers. Not just the curriculum but pedagogy and how we interact with our students.

Several years ago I sat in on one meeting with Women's Caucus. Part of me felt it was reflective of a different time. That some things needed to change to make it more inclusive of contemporary feminist thought/ideas. This year I participated in the member artwork slide show. I liked the idea that we were practicing artists and encouraging it. That it provides multiple voices experiences and voices as women.

As a professor the students that I'm teaching have a difficult time understanding constructivist based classrooms. It is a leap to get people taking risks. They are trained by the school system to regurgitate data.

With regards to mentoring there is one student in particular that I taught in high school. She is twenty-four and I've known her since she was sixteen. I helped her get into an arts high school, her undergrad program, and now she just got into medical school. She grew up in Compton and East Los Angeles. She is such an outstanding human being. She came from a loving but complicated family background and disadvantaged economically. I feel that the mentoring provided her with the feedback and support missing in her daily life that was needed to get into college, etc.. It was only when I got my Doctoral degree that I worked as hard as her.

I don't want my work interfere with my marriage. The pressure to publish influences the product and can create superficial research. Using human subjects is very difficult because of paperwork. Human subjects/IRB requirements make it difficult to do research with children. One current research project concerns the missing voice of youth that needs to be reflected back into the school system. With the Systems of Arts Learning project, we are looking at the pathways that students engage with to access arts learning opportunities. We are exploring what the schools are providing and how these opportunities are being

navigated by the students. Art education can't just reside in the school it has to be connected with the community through collaboration between schools, communities, families.