

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>

Marjorie Cohee Manifold

August 24, 2009

1. What is your educational background and where did you complete your Ph.D.? If you have not completed your Ph.D. please provide information on your highest level of education.

I received an undergraduate degree in Fine Art (Design) from Indiana University, Bloomington and worked as a 'production artist' at the Children's Museum of Art in Indianapolis with an internship at the Milwaukee Museum of Natural History, before deciding to teach art. I returned to Indiana University to become certified as an art teacher while also working on a Master's Degree in Folklore.

My K-12 teaching experiences were in both rural and inner-city urban environments, during which time I completed a Master's in Art Education at Herron School of Art in Indianapolis. In 1999 I received a Ph.D. in Art Education from Indiana University Bloomington.

2. What are your current research interests and contributions to art education?

Three strands of interest feed into one deeper undercurrent of concern. My early research examined the reasons why ordinary people create works of art, the purposes these creations fulfill, and the attitudes of others about 'art' within rather isolated cultural/geographic (albeit contemporary) communities. This led to explorations of art making by adolescents and young adults who are 'fans' of particular narratives or phenomenon of popular culture and participate (online or in real life) in fandom communities. I am intrigued by the role deeply emotional responses to phenomena and experiences (i. e. 'aesthetic experiences' of both a tragic and exhilarating nature) play in the development of self-identity, learning and social-aesthetic growth. Most recently, I have studied strategies of art learning in the social contexts of cyberspaces and online environments.

These three strands arose from an interest in why and how creative urges arise from the liminal ground of consciousness, interface with culture,

society, and educative processes to result in creative action. Findings of these inquiries inform praxis in middle and secondary school settings. I am currently (1) piloting an online art-studio courses for non-art savvy young adults, that draws from models of teaching and learning occurring in the situated environments of participatory interest group communities, and (2) working with art teachers to explore ways that art programs might integrate engaging 'international' components as curricular content, delivery of instruction, and student interaction and learning.

3. Could you describe your leadership style?

I believe everyone has some specific area in which he or she desires to experience competence. The secret to 'leading' others is to respect their natural interests, expertise, and knowledge and provide opportunities for them to practice and demonstrate competence. Many people may be hesitant to contribute to service because they lack confidence in their own voices and visions. Personally inviting, encouraging, and supporting these individuals to take leadership roles within their arenas of interest, may awaken them to their own powerful voices.

4. Could you describe your teaching pedagogy?

In most respects, my pedagogical style is similar to my leadership style. If domains of knowledge are seen as separate and disconnected from one another, only a few students will ever be interested in any given subject at any given time. It is important that students recognize disparate bits of information as situated within larger narratives. This gives permission to students, who have diverse interests, to engage with a singular topic from these differing perspectives. By latching onto an element of profound interest and following it, each student may be led to explore - otherwise unfamiliar albeit - related elements. Thus, students come to master new knowledge and skills by perceiving connections and relevance to the familiar.

I encourage students to share their knowledge and learning with others within the educational community. Each 'student' becomes a teacher to others of the group and learns from others in the group. Knowledge within the learning community, in this way, is built through participation.

5. What are your contributions to Women's Caucus and women's issues in art education?

This is a new area of involvement for me. I am eager to become more engaged in the Caucus and women's issues in art education.

6. Could you describe your current identity as a woman and art educator?

I have come to feel comfortable in many, many contexts and can slip from one contextual environment to another without feeling any sense of disparity or incongruity. For example, I can participate with young fans at a

science fiction convention in the morning, be grandmother to my grandchildren in the afternoon, then in the evening join my academic colleagues in a deeply philosophical discussion. For the most part, I no longer feel the need to 'be' a certain person or act in a specific way to be acknowledged or accepted for who I am. I believe that all the experiences and interactions of my life inform who I am and support what I believe to be important about the role of art in the lives of all people. This translates into what I teach others about and through art.

Nevertheless, I am not always comfortable in the academic environment. I am still conscious that I am being held to a different standard than my male counterparts and some female counterparts – not so much in terms of my research, teaching, or service per se, but in terms of my interactions with others and how this negatively affects others' perceptions of my research, teaching, and service.

7. How has this identity changed and grown over time?

I was really slow to become aware of myself as an empowered woman. I grew up during a time and within a social structure that inculcated me to believe that women were naturally the 'weaker sex' physically, intellectually and emotionally, and their proper role in society was to serve and be subservient to men. When I dared to show an interest in pursuing intellectual/academic independence or speak out publicly in ways that demonstrated confident conviction (i. e. as a leader) of a differing opinion, I was censored by others of my community and made to feel guilty for somehow 'lacking proper femininity'.

Circumstances in my personal life, which required that I take paternal-like responsibility in caring and providing for family members, led me to a new understanding of 'natural order'. I came to question others' interpretations of who I was, what I might accomplish, and the effects this could have upon my profession and the context of my everyday life. Revelatory awakening became complete when, as a graduate student, I took a course, "Gender Issues in Art Education" with Dr. Enid Zimmerman. I was inspired to see myself as having the RIGHT to express a personal voice and the RESPONSIBILITY to serve as leader of others.

This has not always been easy. I am continually learning to walk the boundaries between what others expect of a 'professional' woman and what I dare to be – both as a woman and as a professional; but, I am now quite comfortable in taking risks and dealing with ambiguities. I am not so concerned with what others deem to be appropriately feminine or traditionally academic. I am confident about pursuing what interests me in terms of research, developing mentoring and teaching strategies, and contributing to the field through service. I am guided by an inner sense of what is ethical, appropriate, compassionate, effective, usefully worthwhile, and meaningful.

8. Have you ever felt held back or discriminated against because of your gender?

Yes of course. Discrimination was more 'obvious' when I was younger. I came of age during the 1970s. Although it was a time of great social change, opportunities for women did not improve overnight. I had aspirations to become either an art historian, an archeologist, and/or be recognized as a 'great artist'. During that period, however, I was strongly discouraged from considering a career in a 'masculine' field such as either art history or science. The number of women who were taken seriously as artists was minuscule. I recall taking my art portfolio of book illustrations from one art firm to another – only to be turned away at the door without any art director (all men) so much as looking at it – because of my gender. Not only were options regarding the careers I could realistically pursue limited, but possibilities of receiving equal pay for equal work in ANY field were improbable.

More recently, discrimination has become subtle, less obvious, but no less insidious. Also, it seems as likely – if not more likely – to come from other women within the profession than from male professionals or those outside the field. Particularly, I have found that by assuming a dominant position intellectually, expressing an opposing or independent opinion, or in other ways behaving in an 'unladylike' fashion I invite harsh judgment, condemnation, even abuse in the form of attacks against one's integrity and professional reputation in the form of academic mobbing. Whereas, a man may be seen as acting entirely with his proper authority for speaking out forcefully on a topic about which he is confidently knowledgeable or may express anger about a professional situation that is overtly unethical or unjust - a woman who speaks out in the same manner and with the same sense of confidence and authority, will be castigated as "egregiously rude", a "bully", or a "b####". Furthermore, when a woman who is being targeted for academic abuse by other women goes to a male administrator with complaint of the situation – male administrators are less likely to take action to remedy the situation, because it is seen as fight between women rather than as a serious matter of *professional* abuse. Thus, while incidents of academic bullying and mobbing are rampant in universities across the nation, research indicates the majority of those targeted for mobbing are women – and unfortunately – the majority of perpetrators also are women. The feminist model of leadership, in these instances, is turned upside down!

Of course, the scenario described is only one contemporary example of subtle or underhanded discrimination. Discriminatory behaviors continue to be seen at all levels of social interaction and order. It continues to be evidenced, for example, in derogatory portrayals of teachers and teaching in mass media and other public venues – and in political initiatives to cut educational spending or permit less qualified people to teach, etc. These situations suggest the profession of teaching, which is commonly perceived to be feminine career, as of lesser value than male dominated professions such as medicine or law.

9. Have you seen other professionals in the field discriminated against in educational workplaces?

YES! I have seen both men and women be targeted by academic bullying and mobbing, I have observed that retired women academics are more likely to be academically disrespected than retired male academics; also I have seen people, who are ethically or culturally different, or who have other distinguishing personal traits and characteristics that set them apart, be disrespected. I see an endemic and pervasive demeaning and belittling of teaching – and especially art teaching- as ‘woman’s work.

Overall, I am concerned that young women professionals (and young women in general) are increasingly naïve an assuming that the playing field has been leveled for men and women – when in fact this is NOT the case. But discrimination has become less overt – and therefore more difficult to root out and defeat.

10. What changes would you like to enact in art education?

Hmmmm, still working on this one. I’m still a work in progress, but:

I am interested in making changes in the ways the arts are understood globally as arising from and evidence of positive creative energy. I’d like to explore methods and modes of educating young people to understand that they are not merely products of their local/global culture, or unsuspecting audiences of mass-media conveyed popular culture, but they are CREATORS of culture. I’d like to inspire students to become empowered to act in ways that bring about mutual respect and harmonious interactions among diverse peoples and the Earth as our common environment. Lofty huh? Well . . . my grandmother used to say “Hitch your wagon to a star. If you fall . . . might be on top a mountain!”