

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>

Anonymous **July 19, 2009**

4. *Could you describe your teaching pedagogy?*

It is probably very similar to my leadership style since teaching is a form of leadership. I like to have interesting questions, stimulate debate, and then summarize where we have gotten to through discussion and what other things can be looked into from the discussion.

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

I probably wasn't too active in the Women's Caucus. I joined for several years but never got any information from them. I assumed they were pretty disorganized from their inability to communicate with members. It was a pretty close nit group who focused on woman's studies as opposed to the real pressures facing women in our field. Many of them were tenured professors and had a long-term friendship.

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

I feel that I have grown immensely since retiring. I went back to making art and doing so has renewed my love of art. I think I was disillusioned by the politics and self-serving goals of those behind the visual culture movement. I was a member of the group where this idea was first being established. I went to the first NAEA meeting by mistake and didn't really understand the purpose of the group. I also went to the "research council" in Wisconsin that tried to encourage people to get on the band wagon for what has eventually become "visual culture". Basically, this research conference was strongly influenced by Kerry

Freedman, Patricia Stur, Kevin Tavin, Steve Carpenter, and a few others and their graduate students. Since then each of them have become journal editors and I find it significant that they tend to publish one another's articles. At the time of the conference, they were all untenured faculty with a social agenda.

I believe in good teaching and helping students to explore their own identities. While I believe that social agendas are a part of schooling, I am not sure that a political agenda belongs in schools. Kevin Tavin said in a talk he gave in Germany that American art education teachers have had a hard time "buying into visual culture" and he implied that experienced teachers just didn't "get it" and then their students followed their lead. I don't think that is the case. I think that university professors trying to say something new, in order to further their own career, have made art education an uncomfortable "fit" in schools.

In retirement, I have worked at the Department of Education and teachers and know that I am not wrong. University professors, on the whole, are more concerned with their own writing than teaching or making art.

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

I feel that I am blossoming outside of the field of academia. I came to academia late. I had taught, raised children, controlled finances, been in administrative positions and when I went back to grad school, I felt that students were not encouraged to think for themselves. It was more about having the "right" answer. Graduate discussions were rarely that. I enjoyed the reading and exposure to ideas with which I was not familiar, but I did less thinking on own and problem solving than I had done before. Today, I am back to inventing my own challenges. I miss the backing that being a part of the university gives to any project, but I don't miss the political atmosphere and the supposition that you are supposed to be all things to all people, teacher, writer, advisor, mentor, maid, evaluator, inventor. I always felt that you could do a 100 things right, but you were judges by the things that fell through the cracks. It is a relief not having that kind of pressure. As a

woman. I felt that this feeling was made worse by the fact that women had to work harder than men, and because we often taught women, the men had an advantage in that young women often saw the men as father figures. We had one man in our department. He had never taught, but he was considered the "wise old man " of the department. Women had to be more current in what they knew and they took on the jobs that required more student face time or supervision. It is my impression that women discriminate against their own sex because of cultural stereotypes, as much or more than men. It is to men's advantage to let women do the work--they still get the credit without doing anything.

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

Absolutely! As a grad student, sexual harassment was not the issue that it is today. Faculty dated students or made suggestions that were totally inappropriate. My advisor "retired early" when it was found out that he had a long career of harassing women. Both he and the department chair are still hated by some women in art education for the sexually harassing interviews they conducted with female job seekers when they were interviewed at one university. The chair was found in the faculty lounge with a student in a compromising position. All that happened was that the lounge was moved to a more public venue. These men should have been fired!

As grad students we found out about a lot of this from other women in the field. Even Tom Hatfield was accused of sexual harassment. He is now dead, and there is no proof, but the power given to men in our field is distorted and the men did, and probably still do, take advantage of it. I don't think women's liberation has come as far as the new generation thinks it has. As long as women put up with a double standard for men, it will continue. I also think that women are part of the problem in that they are inclined to think of men as leaders. It disturbs me that in a field where the majority of teachers are women, the administrative level is top-heavy with men. Women of today do not know what it is like to be told that her only credit comes from her husband--even though she has been paying the bills--or that she can't play sports, or even worse, that her role is to cheer on the men. It is

going to take a long time to break these dynamics and it worries me that young women today seem to be giving up more of their dignity to get the attention of a male.

I don't think gender discrimination will ever change until the subtle ways that women give up power or fail to stand up for their own gender are studied. I could have made life more easy for myself by giving in to the sexual harassment, because nothing was done to control it I harbor a lot of anger at the university and field of educators that knew about it and permitted it. Some of them were (and are) members of woman's caucus.

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

Yes, if you study the figures about tenured and untenured faculty, you will probably find that only half of the people who become assistant professors become tenured. Of those the majority are women. This does not account for the fact that the majority of tenured professors and administrators are men. These is changing, but it would be interesting to compare figures based on when they were tenured. I find it hard to believe that men are more qualified than women. I do believe that women may tend to have working habits (spending too much time on student issues, preparing for classes, or working on committees) that hurts their chances for tenure, but I think that men are better mentored than women. (This may also be because the motives of men who mentor women may be suspect).

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

I think sorting out some of the issues might help. There is certainly a disconnect between university professors and teachers in the schools. I think the emphasis on "visual culture" has increased this. I am not saying that visual culture is bad in itself--I don't believe that, but vc is only a part of art education and bring politics into the schools is a risky business. Poorly taught, it could be dangerous.

I think that revisiting some of the ideas from the past about art and creativity have merit. I think that there needs to be much more research about public perceptions about art. And I also think that the field of art education needs some indisputable and well done research about the benefit of the arts for the individual, for schools and for society. I don't mean the "soft" research done by educators with an agenda. I mean research that uses "real" methods and that isolates specifics and that can be replicated. Research like this is the only thing, which will give administrators and departments of education numbers that support the teaching of art education.