A Proposed Teaching Module Incorporating Art Appreciation Focused At Visual Communication In Tertiary Education

M. Subramaniam\textsuperscript{a,}\textsuperscript{*}, S.M. Kahn\textsuperscript{b}, J. Hanafi\textsuperscript{b} R.Ghazali\textsuperscript{a}, R.H. Wardi\textsuperscript{a}, M.F. Ali\textsuperscript{c}

\textsuperscript{a} Visual Arts Department, Cultural Centre, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

\textsuperscript{b} Sosial Budaya dan Kesenian Melayu, Akademi Pengajian Melayu, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

\textsuperscript{c} Department of Multimedia Design & Animation Faculty of Creative Industries University of Tunku Abdul Rahman 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

\textsuperscript{*}corresponding author: maithreyi@gmail.com

Abstract— The key purpose of this study was to build and examine a new proposed teaching module for art appreciation to contrary student concept, appropriateness, execution and presentation on studio productions. An attempt was made to measure changes in students’ achievement to the art forms where these students’ achievement were regarded as indicants of perception, understanding and value which then leads to appreciation. The context for the study was a unit in graphic design and multimedia programme: Visual Communication offered as an integral part of a course in art for tertiary education students.

Author Keywords: Teaching Module; Art Appreciation; Visual Communication; Tertiary Education

1. INTRODUCTION

For many years, art appreciation has always been the life goal of art education. However, when questioned the art educators, they would possibly say that the teaching of visual arts encompassed instruction of making art, art history, and the appreciation of art. Nevertheless, in practice, those same art educators have intended to stress the making of art as the important component of the subject.

According to Lanier (1968):

Art appreciation has been neglected and unsuccessful part of curriculum—designed primarily to promote among young people a love of what their elders deem to be the “finer things of life” art appreciation courses have been condemned for failure to do that job, or for that matter, any substantial job at all, with any degree of effectiveness (p.32).
Zimmerman (1985) argued most art education programs achieve only the first goal by giving importance for art production art rather than art appreciation. Though well known but imbalanced, it has not been given thoughtful consideration by art educators until today.

The writer states:

If art classes teach only the knowledge and skills necessary for self-expression and do not prepare the student for reflection on and discussion about art, they do nothing more than teach a trade. By itself, the artist model cannot lead a student to an appreciation of art. In other words, art appreciation does not always occur with art production. (Zimmerman, 1985, p.31)

Similarly, Osborne (1971) writes:

It has frequently been remarked of recent years that the analytical habits of mind and the practical outlook fostered by our technological culture run counter to modes of awareness and attitudes of attention which are essential to successful appreciative commerce with the arts. This appears to be one reason why some of the most intelligent and highly educated persons today find themselves in adult life obtuse to the arts and without the aptitude to appreciate them. (p. 4)

Such criticisms have brought art educators’ responsiveness in resolving the problem of improving and refining the teaching of art appreciation by offering an appropriate curriculum. A preparation of an art curriculum for general education and aesthetic education needs to incorporate several elements such as:

i. The abilities of observing the aesthetic properties of a work of art;
ii. The abilities of making an art object which includes aesthetic properties;
iii. Information and knowledge about the work of art in terms of its history, philosophy, classics, prominent figures; and lastly
iv. Understanding of principles of art criticism.

The lack of appropriate resource materials has been a distress for many educators in the art field. Amongst this group of art educators is Collins who condemns the absence of resource in the art programme.
According to Collins (1971):

The identification and utilization of informational resources which will provide expanded insights and a stimulus to respond in a creative, aesthetic manner to a given situation is extremely important. Most art programs are almost completely devoid of printed and audiovisual resource materials. Community resources such as museums, guest speakers, demonstrators, and the like are seldom utilized. The developments of perceptual and aesthetic sensitivity is a goal of art education, and yet most of the art activities which emphasizes sensory perception are based upon internalized experiences or, more than likely, verbalization. In order to expand the student’s aesthetic awareness and knowledge of critical issues it is essential that a vast array of resources be identified and acquired. (p. 11)

The present curriculum at the researcher’s university is prepared for the visual communication emphasises too much on the studio production rather than the appreciative quality. Visual communication is a major/core subject in the graphic design and multimedia course and all students compulsory to take this subject leading to a design arts major with the visual communication program indicated on the student's transcript. This subject is connected with other major subjects like drawing, colour studies, computer graphic, creative communication design, typography studies, illustration and history of art and design. In the studio art production, students are given three projects that cover pictograms (15%), expressive typography (15%) informational graphics (30%) and quiz (10%) that contributes 70% of the coursework marks meanwhile examination contributes 30%.

The researcher reviewed the existing curriculum for visual communication, and identified some weaknesses/disadvantages listed below:

i. It does not offer enough detailed information;
ii. It offers too much unrelated information;
iii. It uses language or vocabulary that is too technical;
iv. It concerns only the studio art production and its concept, appropriateness, execution and presentation used in the preparation of rubrics;
v. It does not assist the art educator in incorporating visual communication, art history and art appreciation with the making of art;
vi. The criterions for performance are normally prepared beforehand by the art educators; and
vii. The accepted work tended to be tidy and well ordered.

Based on the list of reviews above, it shows that the development has been time-consuming, and it seems to remain as it’s pace till particular obstacles have been detached.

2. **AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH**

The aims of the experiments are in three-fold a) to investigate the place of art appreciation within visual communication subject; b) to measure student’s achievement
by using the new teaching module; and c) to verify students in active investigations and cue searches concerning art questions intended for improving art appreciation.

The objectives of this study are i) To design a new teaching module that incorporates art appreciation and visual communication, ii) To analyze the scores concerning of students' achievement levels in visual communication subject, iii) To identify the degree of understanding of art appreciation within visual communication subject; and iv) To support the effectiveness of the proposed new teaching module in the curriculum planning for visual communication subject.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The primordial significance of this study is to provide the students with a complete and balanced art education and to develop their understanding and perception of art appreciation through visual communication subject by using the new proposed teaching module. The new teaching module should: i) offer significant examples of art by important artists; ii) present information about the artist and his work; iii) illustrate the four aesthetic dimensions of the work of art; iv) identify and describe the concepts to be developed through the particular works, indicating the appropriate grade level for each; v) suggest art activities related for each exemplar; vi) include the above items in one volume and lastly vii) offer large reproductions of artworks for use in the classroom. This study is an attempt to develop a new teaching module showing how needs might be met.

This study also will serve as the basis for future plans of the graphic design programs by the faculty with regard to the necessary actions to develop and increase appreciation towards art by the students. Among the persons who will be directly or indirectly involved are the following:

a) Benefit the art educators and the students, as it will create a milieu of awareness about art appreciation to our culture and traditions.

b) The art educators and students will have a better understanding of the limitation; knowledge of appreciation achievement will enable them to know the area of difficulty and strength thereby guiding them in reconstructing their programs to suit their needs.

c) This study will serve as a theoretical sources and methodological for future studies of the same nature if ever the existing problem has penetrated in this study will exist in the future. Future researchers will benefit from this study, and it will provide them the facts needed to compare their study during their respective time and usability.

4. SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is confined to students enrolled the first year of graphic design in trimester one Faculty of Creative Industries, at a private university, Petaling Jaya Campus. The total number of students used in this study is 35. This study focused mainly on visual communication subject, which is the core subject within the graphic design and multimedia programme.
5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Background of the theory

Basically, the whole guideline reflects several art appreciation theories was applied to create a new teaching model in teaching art appreciation to students. The ability to experience aesthetically or respond to art is viewed by many writers as an affective condition necessary for entering into the appreciative realm. In addition numerous writers state that cognitive components and activities, that tend to fall outside of the aesthetic experience, nevertheless contribute to appreciation. Feldman (1967), Broudy (1972) and Mittler (1986/2005) theories have been referred that these method are able to provide valuable experiences exploring the meanings of art. Edmund Feldman (1967) offered a different method for critical response or inquiry to art appreciation formats. The educator pointed out the need for critical response:

Formal education at all levels fails to devote much time to the establishment of a systematic foundation for critical judgment. Hence, even well-educated persons find themselves delivering the authoritative opinions of others, or offering their won views about art without really knowing how they arrived at them. (as cited in MacGregor, 1971, p.29)

Feldman claimed that the model is appropriate to be used in the art education programmes because art educators basically involved in art criticism in the teaching of art appreciation and in studio instruction. The educators are engaged in the critical talk; therefore they must have some of the skills as art critics. During the process of instruction an art educator describes, analyzes, interprets and makes judgment about the art objects in the classroom (MacGregor, 1971).

Feldman’s model of art criticism is incorporated in studio production and art history instruction. Feldman has four aspects in performing criticism: i) describing a work of art by naming things seen and how the artwork seems to have been formed; ii) formal analysis that includes explanation of qualities like shape, colour, texture and line; iii) interpreting the meaning of the artwork; and iv) judgment, Feldman’s method means evaluating by making comparison, or talking about the originality and craftsmanship. In the process of learning, the purpose of art talk and student experience would be influenced by the art educator’s objective; which is, whether the instruction is intended at assisting the students to become only art producers for their artwork or to assist them to be more sensitive in their responses to art (MacGregor, 1971).

Broudy’s (1972) four-part perceptual method discovered extensive use in art education programmes, the most prominent being that of the Getty Education Institutes (Greer & Rush, 1985) (as cited in Hamblen, 1985, p.23). Occasionally also called aesthetic scanning, Broudy’s structure consists of exploring sensory qualities, formal relationships, expressive meanings and technical properties. Although judgment is not included, according to Madeja (1979), Broudy’s work appears to place upon it. For Broudy, the emphasis is on perceiving aesthetically, i.e., those qualities particular to the art object itself (as cited in Hamblen, 1985, p.23).
According to Silverman (1972):

Many critics, aestheticians, and educators have written about constituents of informed aesthetic response. A variety of conceptual schemes have been proposed which are designed to enhance interactions with aesthetic stimuli… Broudy has over a period of some fifteen years reviewed such as schemes and has digested and extracted the essence of many of them in his recent essay Enlightened Cherishing. (as cited in Borgmann, 1981, p. 6)

Furthermore, Carole Holden (1977), an art teacher, used Broudy’s theory and established a method in preparing aesthetic education curriculum commented Broudy’s effort:

There is a framework for teaching and learning in aesthetic education that has been tried and found successful and satisfying for both students and teachers… This is the perceptual approach to aesthetic education based primarily on the work of Harry Broudy and others who tried the approach in many settings at many levels. (as cited in Borgmann, 1981, p.6)

By expanding aesthetic experience requires expansion of aesthetic sensitivity for works of art. Aesthetic sensitivity can be systematically developed. Be sensitivity the educator meant greater awareness of: sensory differences, formal properties, technical features and the expressiveness in works of art (Broudy, 1970, p.286). Broudy’s model identifies these four levels of aesthetic scanning involves what the art educator referred to as the informed aesthetic response.

On the other hand, Mittler (1980) proposed an art appreciation program incorporating a sequence of art criticism and art history operations. The educator proposed four stages; i) premature decision-making that is a crude scanning operation which often terminates in premature decision-making based upon an incomplete analysis of available cues in a perceived object; ii) searching for internal cues that leads to more discriminate decision-making; iii) searching for external cues to check out and confirm decisions; and iv) final decision-making to take consideration of both internal and external cues. The educator described, “Using these four stages as a guide, it is possible to identify and sequence the criticism and history operations felt to be essential to an art appreciation program…” (Mittler, 1980, p.19). Through this process students are able to make and defend “personal, discriminate decisions with regard to a wide range of visual art forms” (Mittler, 1980, p.19).

The central idea for both Fry and Bell is aesthetically, only “significant form” should be considered the “essence” of art (Braembussche, 2009, p.61). The assessment of art comes down to significant form because it can explain the very peculiar nature of aesthetic experience. It embodies the autonomy of the artwork (Braembussche, 2009, p.61). Braembussche (2009) emphazised that , “Bell and Fry’s theory of significant form is akin to the modern view that art is about the purely artistic, which, moreover, is quite
of then associated with the formal, technical or stylistic properties of an artwork” (p.75). Bell (1914) and Fry (1920) believed that the lines, shapes and colours determine formal qualities of a work of art.

Formal properties are the ways in which the sensory properties are organized are sometimes referred to as design. Among the more familiar categories are theme and variation, repetition, balance, different types of rhythm, dominance, and crowing them all-unity in variety. The researcher has narrowed down the research and has chosen the formal properties (Broudy, 1970) which the researcher incorporated formalism in the development of the conceptual framework. Formalism is predominantly an examination about what it takes to determine the aesthetic characteristics or features or properties of things that incorporates the elements and principles of art. “Aesthetic” is an approach to give a sense of features that are aesthetic like: beauty, ugliness, daintiness, dumpiness, elegance, and etc.

According to Braembussche (2009):

[Kant] held that free beauty could only attributed to an object according to its formal properties, without considering its function and purpose. Moreover formalism in Kant is linked to the aesthetic experience as such: the sense of beauty of objects or natural phenomena also belongs to this experience. (p.62)

Bell (1914) explained that, “To appreciate a work of art...we need to bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions… for a moment we are shut off from human interests” (as cited in McLaughlin, 1977, p.434).

To formalists, only internal, intrinsic criteria are significant (Braembussche, 2009). As well as, Braembussche (2009) asserted, “This means the critics are only concerned about the form of the artwork and not the content or substance. This view implies that the art critic is entitled to judge artworks exclusively on their formal properties and merits” (p.62). The importance of intrinsic value, Parker (1920/2003) writes:

Our definition of art can be complete only if it enables us to understand the value of art. The reader may well ask what possible value expression can have when it becomes an end in itself. “I can understand,” he may say, “the value of expression for the sake of communication and influence, but what value can it have of itself?” At this point, moreover, we are concerned with the intrinsic value immediately realized in the experience of art, not with further values that may result from it. (p.13)

A well-defined explanation given by Parker showed one can achieve the intrinsic value of by experiencing a work of art and not its value, pointed out that, “…we are concerned with the intrinsic value immediately realized in the experience of art” (Parker, 1920/2003, p.13). The writer further explained that, “... often called “hedonistic,” that the value of art
consists in the satisfactions of sense which the media of aesthetic expression afford—the
delight in color and sound and rhythmical movement of line and form (Parker,

Under intrinsic value two important components of formalism theory that are elements of
design (line, colour, shape, form, value, texture and space) and principles of design
(harmony, balance, rhythm, pattern, emphasis, movement, variety, economy and
proportion which later contributes to unity). These two components are the building
blocks used to create a work of art. Braembussche asserted that, “Formalism accepts
nothing but purely artistic standards for assessing works of art, which it considers to be
independent, irreducible, autonomous phenomena to be judged on their own merits, i.e.
their intrinsic value” (p.61). Such explanation by the writer concluded that to formalists,
the intrinsic value is relevant in a work of art.

In terms of analysis of the aesthetic experience, Parker proposed elements of
experience in the process of learning. The writer asserted, “…to form a concrete idea of
the experience of art, and to place it in its relations to other facts...We want to pick out
the elements of mind entering into the experience of art and exhibit their characteristic
relations” (p.20). Parker (1920/2003) described the first element; each and every
experience contains sensations of the media of expression example a painting that has
colour. Vague feelings, is the characteristic of aesthetic expressions which the media
used represented an expressive of moods. Meanwhile the third element that is
considered is sense elements, which possess a function to represent a thing. The last
element included is images of various sense—sight, hearing, taste, smell, temperature,
movement which arise in connection with the ideas or meanings, making them concrete
and full.

5.2 Conceptual framework for the study
For this conceptual framework, related theories were used in this study. Art criticism or
inquiry to art appreciation theories, Feldman (1967), Broudy (1972) and Mittler
(1986/2005) were used as departure point; incorporating formalism theory, (Bell, 1914;
Fry, 1920); and also elements of experience (Parker, 1920/2003). Following of this
section is a detail explanation of the conceptual framework.

Below is the conceptual framework (Figure 1) proposed for this study. This section will
focus on applying the concepts to a teaching model for art appreciation, which can be
used generally in visual arts or applied arts. The researcher has generated two
propositions which were included into two respond modes: i) intrinsic value covers the
aspects of elements and principles of art and ii) elements of experience covers the
aspects of media of expressions, aesthetic expression, sense elements and images of
various sense. These levels are sequentially arranged and are as seen as progressive
achieving art appreciation.
This study conducted to look into students’ achievement in their art appreciation through art making in visual communication subject. Students were given exercises/ tasks/ assignments every week to show their art appreciation in art production and assessing their artworks using the proposed new teaching module. At the end of each activity, the researcher examined the student’s studio art production based on four components namely media of expression, aesthetic expression, sense elements and images of various sense to assess students’ appreciation towards a work of art and meanwhile to examine their art making was based on four components namely source work and research, concept development, design/composition and craft/execution. Upon completion of the developed proposed new teaching model, based on the selected theories, the researcher examined on the students. The researcher used the proposed new teaching module to conduct in the classroom. Then, the researcher collected all the students’ studio production and a set of test to be given to the five assessors to assess their scores.

*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework. This figure illustrates the framework of the proposed new teaching module.
5. CONCLUSION

The nature of current practices at tertiary level art curriculum is characterized too much as studio-oriented. The major emphasis of the studio art production is the contents, specify goals, and describe activities. As a result, appreciations about a work of art do significantly contribute to the education of students in art education programmes. Based on the review of current curricular practices and problems studies about art appreciation in art education, it maybe inferred that art appreciation, as a source for curriculum development needs additional inquiry.

REFERENCES


