Exhibit Model: How we teach and What we teach  
(Performance Art Pedagogy & Visual Culture Education in Pre-service teaching)  
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1. Summary

Through the desire to compose a lecture-type presentation in my pre-service teaching that engages visual culture education and is — dynamic, richly complex, filled with curious juxtapositions evoking unconscious connections to subject matter, via multilayered text/images that simultaneously engage the viewer in an open-ended space for critical questioning of who creates and owns imagery and how this affects our perception and understanding of reality—I turned to performance art as a pedagogical model that can inform and embody ‘how we teach’ and ‘what we teach’ simultaneously.

My performative endeavors have lead me to consider a synthesis of theories: theories of play, the art of storytelling, and performance, and how they relate to and informs the field of art education. There is specific attention given to performance art pedagogy, the embodiment of theory into praxis, and how it informs curriculum design via interdisciplinary theories of knowing and art-making as research. This now includes the scholarship of teaching as an inventive thinking-action research model that resembles art-making as research in performative practice.

I turned to Jennifer Dowlin-Kelly SVA Studio instructor for an interview to know more about her history and perspective(s) of performance art and hear about how and what she is considering teaching Performance Art 413 in the fall 2004. She comes across as an up-beat gregarious instructor, who believes it is imperative, in a small art classroom, to get to know students one-on-one, generating personal connections so students can open-up and respond to assignments in much bigger way. The lineage of performance art pedagogy at PSU is through Charles Garioan, Director of SVA, as well as his text “Performance Art Pedagogy Towards an Art of Politics.” These text(s) provide access to thoughtful underlying questions that both prompted the idea for the exhibit and in weaving this presentation together with the content from the interview, course readings and extended readings.

The idea driving this exhibition is an opportunity to re-frame visual culture content in pre-service teaching, strengthen my ability to draw on other peoples methods of how we teach while deepening my talents and abilities to compose and construct a dynamic performative lecture that informs, challenges, surprises and motivates pre-service teachers to consider visual culture as a broad educative topic for deep critical discussion, examination and engagement. The main point is to see that the ‘how’ we teach and the ‘what’ we teach are interlocked in a time/space continuum of activity and experience, and like Dewey’s philosophy, aims to become a potentially educative moment manifesting as a collective memory and springboard to construction of new meaning(s). And that performance art can be an affective agent in presenting a topic on the scholarship of teaching.
2. Form of Presentation and opportunities for interaction
I will be showing a Powerpoint presentation that includes text and images that connect with and expand upon the —personal, social or political —connections beyond our particular body of texts. Selected quotes or excerpts of texts will strand together to build a complex intertextual web of information that is interdependent upon the physical embodiment of layers of meaning through performance of various personas in relation to the topic. There are two important links to the www.pbs.org in the ART:21 series which exemplify my theoretical connections to Laurie Anderson and Eleanor Antin. The Media Education Foundation’s challenging media video series (http://www.mediaed.org) based in Northampton, MA, is a source of critical analysis in the visual culture education and curricula in AED 303. Questions and pauses during performance and homework assignment for web search on contemporary artists.

3. Evidence of connection to our theme ‘How We Teach, connects with What We Teach
According to McKeachie, “Effective lecturers combine the talents of a scholar, writer, producer, comedian, entertainer, and teacher in ways that contribute to student learning.” (p. 54) Jennifer Dowlin-Kelly is a performance artist and visual arts instructor who connects with many of the complex intersections of learning issues we are exploring: creating community in classrooms (she mentions bell hooks), as well as creating open-spaces(s) for content to become culturally relevant to students in a way that allows them to explore sociopolitical content that is not easy territory to enter into.

Even our last case study, Sharon McDade— where the interactive discussion deadlocks in polarization, Dowlin-Kelly sees performance art as affording teachers and students, greater access to the stuff of everyday life or lived experiences shaping our life as much as the pedagogical content of readings and re-presentations assembled by a professor. I see the performative lecture as a stimulus to dialogue and discussion.

Feminist threads from Nessbaum on inviting alternative perspective and ways of knowing to enter the classroom environment as well as Dewey in creating various pathways or trajectories for learning prompted me to attempt to bring to our classroom practices. Performance Art appears to be a radical, beyond the box, outside the pale of traditional teaching and is so readily seen as doable. However I would like to suggest differently. Paul Duncum, Brent Wilson, Wanda Knight, and Irit Rigoff provide global perspectives on how learning intersects and address issues of diversity, postmodern fragmentation and the deep interest in interdisciplinary teaching of art education based subject matter.

There following two quotes summarize many of the dynamics I am attempting to thread together. They point towards my desire to know and understand the world and reality in which I find myself — teaching a body knowledge, communicating with a student body and attempting to interrupt or disrupt [our] perceptions long enough that new thoughts, ideas and questions can enter the classroom and be critiqued, discussed and reflected upon.

“Visual culture thus opens up an entire world of intertextuality in which images, sounds, and spatial delineations are read onto and through one another, lending ever-accruing layers of meanings and subjective responses to each encounter we might have with film, television, advertising, buildings or urban environments.” —Rogoff, 2002
“Images are not merely the object of study but also the medium of thought, action and communication.”—Taylor & Saarinen, 1993
