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A STUDY OF ART CRITICISM INSTRUCTION:
ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, THEORETICAL RATIONALE AND CONTENT
FOR ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

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Chen Tsz-bu Tseng

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**A STUDY OF ART CRITICISM INSTRUCTION:
ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, THEORETICAL RATIONALE AND CONTENT
FOR ELEMENTARY CHILDREN**

By

Chen Tsz-bu Tseng

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF ART CRITICISM INSTRUCTION: ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, THEORETICAL RATIONALE AND CONTENT FOR ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

By

Chen Tsz-bu Tseng

This study examines the status of art criticism instruction for elementary children; it provides elementary teachers with references for appropriate instruction in art criticism. It includes a content analysis of the literature from 1895 to 1989 which relates to children's abilities to respond to art and art educators' opinions about the theoretical rationale and content of art criticism instruction for elementary children.

The major findings of this study indicate that art criticism should not be taught to children before the fourth grade, while fifth and sixth graders are developmentally ready to discover the content of an art object to some degree through an exploratory process. A four-step process which consists of sensuousness, observation, meaning, and self-discovery was suggested. However, the process should be initiated in close relation to ongoing studio projects and the materials provided for discussion should include art objects of various types and from different cultures.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The purpose and the content of art education has been an ongoing topic of concern for art educators. Based on different philosophical foundations and psychological orientations, various theories have been supported. For example, from the 1930's through the 1950's, the child-centered, creative self-expression approach to art education was the mainstream. In this theory, art was seen as an instrument for developing each child's inherent creativity, expressive ability and complete personality. Making art was the main classroom activity. In recent years, emphasis on curriculum discussion has shifted to Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE). This approach proposes that art instruction should encompass four areas: aesthetics, art criticism, art history and studio production. Art educators who support this approach consider the development of self-expression not to be the primary goal for art education. They think that art should be taught as a subject with content that emphasizes a greater cognitive understanding of art as well as an experiential one.

In this discussion of approaches to art education, the issue of instruction in art criticism for elementary children has also been raised by art educators. Unfortunately, not every art educator has used the term "art criticism", when researching this topic. Terms like "picture study", "art appreciation" or "talk about art" have been used. For this reason, art criticism instruction seemed not to be an

important topic before DBAE formally proposed it as part of art instruction for elementary children. Despite this ambiguity, the questions of concern are: Does art criticism instruction really suit elementary children? Is there any philosophical rationale to support this idea? What should the appropriate content be? What is its historical background? Has this type of study been done before? If so, what knowledge has been gathered as a meaningful reference for future development?

Although the issue of art criticism instruction for elementary children has been investigated by art educators, the information has been scattered and not studied in a systematic way. Obviously, the task of gathering, organizing and analyzing information concerning art criticism instruction for elementary children may provide those who are interested in this topic with a clear and up-to-date reference for practical teaching or further research.

Based on the factors considered above, the purposes of this study are as follows:

- 1) to study the development of children's responsive abilities to art in order to examine the suitability of art criticism instruction for elementary children.
- 2) to survey the historical background concerning the theoretical rationale and the content of art criticism instruction for elementary children.
- 3) to analyze and to synthesize scholarly opinions concerning the theoretical rationale and the content of art criticism instruction for elementary children.
- 4) to propose a future direction for art criticism instruction of

elementary children.

Statement of Problem

This study is designed to resolve two problems. First, a systematic investigation of the status of art criticism instruction for elementary children is needed. Second, elementary teachers need a reliable reference for providing appropriate instruction in art criticism. In order to examine these problems clearly, the following questions must be raised and answered:

- 1) Should children be taught art criticism?
 - a) How do children's abilities in responding to art develop?
 - What is the content of aesthetic development of elementary children?
 - What is the content of intellectual development of elementary children?
 - What is the content of visual development of elementary children?
 - b) What are art educators' opinions about these questions?
- 2) What is the historical background concerning art criticism instruction for elementary children?
 - a) What major events related to art criticism instruction for elementary children have occurred?
 - b) What is the theoretical rationale held by different art educators regarding the instruction of art criticism for elementary children ?
 - c) What is the content of art criticism instruction for

elementary children proposed by various art educators?

3) What is the future direction of art criticism instruction for elementary children?

- a) What basic ideas are developed from the study of the historical background concerning art criticism instruction for elementary children?
- b) What is the theoretical rationale for this direction?
- c) If there is appropriate content of art criticism instruction for elementary children, how is it described?

Procedure of the Study

This study investigates the historical development of art criticism instruction for elementary children and proposes a direction for the future. It is a content analysis of the literature concerning children's abilities to respond to art and art educators' opinions about art criticism instruction for elementary children. This study systematically investigates this data, forms conclusions and makes recommendations based on the purpose of this study. Generally, the following stages were adopted.

Data collection and compilation: articles from periodicals, research papers and books related to this study were collected, organized and compiled based on the proposed problems.

Data analysis: by discriminating, comparing and synthesizing the data, findings were reached and categorized.

Limitations of the Study

The information sought and the findings developed apply only to normal children, from first grade through sixth grade. This study does not address the needs of special children, kindergarteners, secondary or college students. The information collected is limited to the United States. It does not include research findings from other countries. Also, this study only deals with the general concepts regarding art criticism instruction. Specific curricula which usually consist of practically designed lesson plans for different grade levels are not considered.

Definition of Terms

Art Criticism	Knowledgeable and organized information, written or spoken about art work.
Aesthetics	A field of knowledge about, or philosophy of art. It concerns the problems arising out of reflection upon art, such as the definition of art, the function of art, and the criteria for critical evaluation of art.
Art appreciation	A sensitive awareness, understanding, enjoyment and evaluation of art. The impact on the viewers is the focus.
Instruction	The action of imparting knowledge, information or teaching skills in a particular subject.
Theoretical rationale	The fundamental reasons or principles for supporting certain ideas or concepts.
Content	A set of ideas and concepts and their relationships as bases for inquiry.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

This chapter reviews the literature and theories that are most pertinent to the focus of this research. Section I will discuss children's development in responding to art. Section II will survey the development of the theoretical rationale and the content of art criticism instruction for elementary children in a chronological order.

Children's Development in Responding to Art

As children change, so do their responses to art. In Michael Parsons' book, How We Understand Art-A Cognitive Developmental Account of Aesthetic Experience (1987), he wrote,

Young children start with much the same basic understanding of what paintings are about, and they restructure that understanding in much the same ways as they grow older. They do this to make better sense of the works of art they encounter. The result is a common sequence of development built on a series of insights into the possibilities of art. Each step is an advance on the previous one because it makes possible a more adequate understanding of art (p.5).

D'Onofrio and Nodine's study (1981) affirmed that a statistically significant relationship is observed between a child's chronological age and his/her level of aesthetic development (p.18). Since the

process of art criticism instruction is based on children's responses to art, the knowledge of children's aesthetic development becomes a reference for this study. But, before examining the developmental stages in more detail, it is important for us to know that "although separate stages can be identified, actually the stages fuse into one another, as children reorganize their thinking abilities and begin to form new relationships with their environment" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 42).

In addition to a child's aesthetic development, his intellectual and visual development are significantly related to his ability to respond to art. Karen Hamblen (1986) pointed out, "Formalized talk about art, in addition to indicating what is perceived, requires such conceptual skills as ordering, sequencing, and differentiating, as well as the possession of language skills that allows for the written or verbal expression of those concepts" (p.166). Victor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain also wrote, "There is no reason to believe that the development of discrimination in paintings should be different from the discrimination of objects or thoughts in other areas of cognitive processes" (1982, p. 113).

Based on the notions above, three phases of the children's development will be examined. They are: aesthetic development, intellectual development and visual development.

Aesthetic Development

Michael Parsons' theory of aesthetic development (1977) implied that the arguments used by children when they evaluate paintings actually reflect their respective level or mode of aesthetic

appreciation. This theory "underscores the radical contribution of cognitive development of children's emerging abilities to discriminate between personal preferences and critical evaluations of paintings" (D' Onofrio & Nodine, 1981, p. 14). He described the four levels of children's aesthetic responses in Table 1 (D' Onofrio & Nodine, 1981, p. 19).

A study conducted by Parsons, Johnson and Dufham (1979) also showed that older children respond to paintings in a relevant way. They increasingly use the artist's point of view as the basis for criticism. Moreover, older children demonstrate the relevance of their responses to works of art in ways marked by increased subtlety and complexity. Their judgments of the worth of a painting consider how convincingly the artist has conveyed his point of view from several levels of expression--including form, subject matter, skill, color, and emotional response (D' Onofrio & Nodine, 1981, p. 14).

Parsons' model of aesthetic development received empirical support in D' Onofrio and Nodine's study (1981). They found that "not only did the children use increasingly abstract justifications for their preferences in painting as they got older, but their abilities to take the point of view of the artist also increased The median ages associated with levels 1 through 4 of Parsons' model of aesthetic development were 5, 9, 9, and 11 respectively" (p. 18). However, they noted that "not all children reach Level 3 in the course of their aesthetic growth. Many adults have obviously not attained Level 3 or 4" (p. 22).

Table 1 Parsons' model of children's aesthetic responses

Level	Title	Descriptive Criteria
1	Aesthetic Idiosyncrasy	The children's responses were characterized by personal associations drawn between what were depicted and personal experiences, or private opinion. Children rarely felt constrained to support an opinion or refer to objectifiable features of a painting to justify their response.
2	Aesthetic Realism	The children based their responses on how well the artist conformed to conventional representations of people and objects. At this stage, they reasoned like objectivists. Evaluations depended upon faithful renderings of distinctive features in the real world.
3	Aesthetic Fallacy	The children committed the "intentionalist fallacy" because their criteria for evaluating paintings were relative. Children often argued that the artist was himself idiosyncratic and concerned with being different and original. Children believed that the artist's intentions were sufficient criteria for judging a painting. They did not consider that artists also strive to be intelligible.
4	Aesthetic Perspective	Children relied on what was observable in a painting to verify a notion about the significance of the work. The child also considered that an artist might choose a particular expression or make formal decisions which make the artist's point of view intelligible.

In Parsons' recent study (1987), five stages of aesthetic development were identified. From stage one to five, the latter one is an advance of the previous one. Also each stage is shaped by a central new insight. "Briefly, the ideas of subject matter dominate stage two, expression stage three, medium, form, and style stage four, and judgment stage five" (p. 16). The first stage which is less complex than others is "thought of as a kind of theoretical zero point" (p. 21).

The characteristics of the five stages of aesthetic development will be described as follows:

1) Stage one: "The primary characteristics of stage one are an intuitive delight in most paintings. Strong attraction to color, and a freewheeling associative response to subject matter." This is the stage where "liking a painting is identical with judging it, and it is hard to imagine a bad one. There are no distinctions of relevance nor questions about objectivity" (p. 22).

2) Stage two: The dominant idea of stage two is that of the subject. It reaches "a clear understanding that paintings picture things. If we can't . . . understand what the subject [of a painting] is . . . our response is scattered." Little attention is paid "to the medium - the lines, texture, form - and a lot to the subject." Stage two is organized around the idea of representation. "A painting is best if it is about beautiful things and if it pictures them realistically" (p. 39). "Emotion is something to be represented, as in a smile or a gesture; and style is appreciated only as realism Beauty, realism, and skill are objective ground for judgments" (p. 22). Stage two "implicitly acknowledges the view point of other people." It is also aesthetically advanced "because it enables the viewer to distinguish some aspects of experience as aesthetically relevant . . . from some that are not" (p. 23).

3) Stage three: The central idea of stage three has to do with expressiveness. "The beauty of subject matter becomes secondary to what is expressed Similarly realism of style and skill are not ends in themselves but means to expressing something Creativity, originality, depth of feeling, are newly appreciated. There is a

skepticism about the value of talking about painting, and about the possibility of objective judgments, because the important criterion remains the quality of some individually felt experience." Stage three "rests on a new awareness of the interiority of the experience of others, and a new ability to grasp their particular thoughts and feelings" (p. 23).

4) Stage four: "The new insight here is that the significance of a painting is a social rather than an individual achievement. It exists within a tradition, which is composed by a number of people looking over time at a number of works and talking about them." "It places the emphasis on the way the medium itself is handled, on the texture, color, form, space, because these are what are publicly there to see; and on style and stylistic relations, because these are how a work relates to the tradition" (p. 24). "It enables one to find art criticism useful as a guide to perception and to see aesthetic judgment as reasonable and capable of objectivity" (p. 25).

5) Stage five: "The central insight here is that the individual must judge the concepts and values with which the tradition constructs the meanings of works of art" (p. 25). "Art is valued as a way of raising questions rather than as transmitting truths. Judgment is seen as capable of reasonable argument, and at the same time as dependent on personal affirmation." "It requires one to transcend the point of view of the culture." Also, "it enables one to be aware that traditional expectations may be misleading" (p. 26).

Parsons found the level of elementary school children's aesthetic responses is at stage two. The dominant idea of this stage is subject matter. A painting is considered better if the subject is attractive

and if the representation is realistic (p. 39).

Holland's study (1955) found that "developmental progression in the responses of children to some plates, glasses, wallpaper, and so forth; in grade one, many responses referred to the self, whereas responses relating to color, design, and shape showed a great increase from grade one to grade eight" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, pp. 111-112).

The information above gives us a general concept of children's aesthetic development. The following results of other research might offer us a more specific idea of children's aesthetic development according to their age levels.

Lowenfeld And Brittain pointed out that "when a picture is showed to a first grader, he is able to identify things he recognizes but not the mood or atmosphere, nor is he able to discuss the message that a particular painting might have" (1982, p. 110). In their point of view, it would not be until ages eleven or twelve that the aesthetic qualities could be evaluated aside from the concrete qualities of an object (p. 112). Vernon (1965) found that children can not interpret what is happening in a picture, what the people are doing, and so forth, until they are ten or eleven years old (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 110). Gardner (1970) indicated from his research that first, third, and sixth grade children are generally insensitive to the painting styles of various artists (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 111). In a further study (Gardner, 1972), he set out to train children to sort paintings by style. Gardner showed that, with this little training, children at ten-year-old could successfully sort paintings by stylistic clues. Therefore, he concluded: young children can be trained to notice

aspects of medium and form that they do not normally notice (Parsons, 1987, p. 107).

Machotka (1966) indicated that "children like pictures of increasingly clear and realistic representation until about age eleven. Although younger children would establish an emotional relationship with a painting, it was usually in terms of a personal relationship It was not until the age of twelve that an emotional relationship was established with a picture that was outside the youngster himself, that is, with the atmosphere or character of the picture as a whole" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 113). Taunton's study (1980) found that subject matter of a painting is most important for all children up to twelve years old. Another study by Hardiman & Zernich (1977) showed that representational paintings are preferred up to eighth grade (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 114).

Intellectual Development

The intellectual development of children is usually defined as the growth of an "ability to think in rational ways, to deal effectively with one's environment, and to learn the kinds of things expected in school" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, pp. 56-57). Specifically, it indicates children's responses "to particular verbal, spatial, memory, and problem-solving tasks" (p.57).

Some studies showed that the relationship between art critical levels and cognitive stages is obvious. "Kordich (1982) tested the cognitive levels of children and found that achievement in art critical levels was commensurate with the attainment of parallel cognitive levels" (Hamblen, 1986, p. 166). Hamblen also wrote,

The art critical levels of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment are often considered to be developmental; paralleling, for example, the cognitive stages of Piaget (Kordich, 1982) . . . and the hierarchical categories of learning models such as those of Bloom and Gagne (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1977; Hamblen, 1984). These developmental and hierarchical models have in common the movement from lower levels of undifferentiated, spontaneous, and concrete ways of responding toward higher levels of differentiated, abstract, and internally constructed interpretations of reality (p.166).

According to Piaget's theory, from age six to age twelve, the child develops the ability to use inductive logic. "He can go from his own experience to a general principle Elementary school children are pretty good observational scientists and will enjoy cataloging, counting species of trees or birds What they are not yet good at is going from a general principle to some anticipated experience (like going from a theory to a hypothesis), a process that requires deductive logic. This is harder than inductive logic because it requires imagining things that you may never have experienced We do not see deductive reasoning until the period of formal operation in junior or high school" (Bee, 1985, pp. 244-245). In other words, "Piaget and Inhelder (1971) believe the continual assimilation of external factors is necessary for the development and modification of concepts. Learning, growing intellectually, depends upon the ability to take into the system new information, which can be combined and integrated with the concepts we already hold. This new information is gradually internalized and, once assimilated, provides new concepts and altered schema" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 261).

In order to consider children's levels of readiness to receive art criticism instruction, an understanding of children's intellectual developments according to their age levels is necessary. In Manuel Barkan's point of view (1960), "the intellectual development of first- and second- grade children reveals insatiable curiosity for explanations about virtually all things in their environment These children are growing better able to think about and to discuss complicated ideas. Their intellectual development, coupled with their social growth, enables them to begin to think together" (p. 147).

During the middle elementary grade period, children arrive at a readiness to pay some conscious attention to the improvement of their work. Barkan stated,

Third- and fourth- grade children are eager for information; they seek answers to many and varied questions This is a period in which children begin to make important strides in developing a variety of skills and understandings. They are able to criticize themselves; they show a tendency to utilize sincere and helpful criticism (1960, pp. 241-242).

Their awareness of the many things in the world in which they live leads to more discriminating perceptions of the relationships among movements, positions, sizes, and colors of objects and people (p. 242).

Lowenfeld and Brittain (1962) indicated that during ages seven through nine, "one of the indications of the child's growing intellect is his understanding of the world that surrounds him" (p. 260).

From nine to twelve years old, "a child begins to develop a greater awareness of and sensibility to his environment. He has come to wonder why things work the way they do and about his own being.

He may now question about areas that not very long ago he felt were unquestionable. The child is becoming increasingly critical of others and of himself. . . . Some of the concepts children develop by this time continue with them through adult life. . . . This is also a period when children are beginning to develop a self-concept, an understanding of themselves as independent individuals" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 293). Moreover, Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) wrote, "During this stage, nine to twelve, the child is gradually moving away from his dependency on the concrete; he is now beginning to deal with abstract concepts. . . . Art rather is the reaction to and expression of concepts of those objects" (p.287).

According to Barkan, "the intellectual development of fifth- and sixth- grade children is marked by an increased level of analytical clarity and maturity in ideas and interests. They are able to search for information, generalize from their findings, and organize ideas from what they have learned. Their grasp of time and space relationships indicates an ability to discriminate the meanings of comparative similarities and differences" (p.329). He went on to state,

Their expanding ability to perceive relationships is accompanied by a more critical awareness and the development of an analytical attitude. Whereas the development of children in the early elementary grades proceeded from a fragmentary conception of parts of ideas toward a more unified grasp of totality in ideas, children in the upper elementary grades develop from a unified grasp toward analytical separation into parts (pp. 329-330).

Since language skill plays an essential role in the instruction of art criticism, the development of children's language is of concern to art educators.

"By age 5 or 6, a child's language is remarkably like that of an adult. She can construct most kinds of complex sentences and can understand most" (Bee, 1985, p. 283). However, "language development does not end in first grade. Vocabulary continues to increase, and more complex sentence forms are learned later" (p. 284).

Concerning the development of word meaning in children, Helen Bee stated, "Nearly all words describe or represent classes of things, so when we ask about children's word meanings, we are asking something about the kinds of classes they create" (p. 284). In other words, children "appear to have concepts or categories before they have words for them. When they begin to use words, they also 'overextend' their usage" (p. 301).

A study by Winner, Rosenstiel, and Gardner (1976) indicates that linguistic metaphors are developed along an age-based progression from the spontaneous generation of metaphors to an ability to explain metaphoric meanings. This progression also exhibits an initial dependence on visual similarities and later an ability to form more abstract relationships The use of metaphors at . . . early ages appears to be limited to functional and perceptual similarities. Not until the ages of 8 to 10 are linguistic metaphors understood to describe psychological states, i.e., an unkind person as being icy, or used in a cross-sensory manner, i.e., loud color. Significant to educators in the visual arts is the finding that when presented in the context of a picture depicting the linguistic metaphor, early primary children are able to make correct selections Not until the

middle years of childhood, however, do children spontaneously notice expressive properties in works of art, and they do not talk about such characteristics without prompting until early adolescence (Hamblen, 1986, pp. 164-165).

However, "the implementation of art criticism instruction should not be [totally] dependent upon the existence of a linguistic developmental model" (Hamblen, 1986, pp. 165-166). "Just as a child's graphic expression is often not congruent with what a child knows or is able to see, it is important to keep in mind that what a child verbalizes in regard to art may lag far behind what is actually perceived and conceptually understood" (p.166).

Visual Development

Since discussion of an art work requires visual examination, the development of awareness of visual shapes and forms is of prime importance. How a child's visual perception develops is another concern to art educators.

A basic question is how well or how clearly the children can see something. The word "visual acuity" will be used to refer to this physical ability to see. "The usual standard for visual acuity in adult is "20/20" vision. This means that you can see and identify properly something that is 20 feet away that the average person can also see at 20 feet In other words, the higher the second number, the poorer the person's visual acuity" (Bee, 1985, p. 155). Most 6 to 9 year-olds have acuity ranging between 20/30 and 20/25, with most children reaching 20/20 by about age 10 or 11 (p. 156).

After we know the level of a child's visual acuity, we become

concerned with the issue of "what children look at" or "what the attention in children is". Although few studies have been done on this topic, the following four major principles on which attentional patterns change from infancy through childhood and adolescent are suggested by Gibson (1969) (Bee, 1985, pp. 158-160).

1) From capture to activity. There is a general shift from "automatic pilot" rules to intentional activity in the infant and older child. As children get older, the built-in rules become less dominant, and their own interests and intentions become the more potent forces in determining attention.

2) From unsystematic to systematic search. As children get older, the system they use in examining things visually gets more and more complete and systematic. For example, older children are better at recognizing things they have seen before, presumably because they examined the object more completely the first time.

3) From broad to selective pickup of information. Older children get better and better at focusing their attention on a single aspect of a complex situation.

4) Ignoring irrelevant information. It means "nondistractibility". As we know a child will do better at a task if he can concentrate so fully on one set of information that he literally does not see or hear anything else. Although young children may show this sort of nondistractible focus of attention during some activities, the ability to do so voluntarily develops gradually up to and through adolescence.

Several studies have prompted theories on the various aspects of children's visual development. In their study, "Birch and Lefford (1967) conclude that between five and eight years appeared to be the

period of most rapid improvement in perceptual analytic ability. It would seem therefore that these years are the ones in which to develop the ability to look, examine, and take pleasure in a visual awareness of things in the environment" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, P. 223). Barken (1960) found that "second- grade children are growing more discriminatingly aware of characteristic details, like spots on a flower or buds on a tree" (p.148). He assumed that although the early-elementary grade children are still strongly guided by the direct emotional and kinesthetic experiences, they are developing the early awareness of some of the object relationships in the visual world (p.147). Some studies showed that for seven year-old children, the visual impression they receive of an object plays a more minor role than their concept of the object. But, for most 8 and 9 year olds, the visual impression becomes important (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, pp. 264-265).

For 9 to 12 year olds, there is a visual awareness of overlappings and of differences in color (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 299). However, Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) noted, "The child has not yet become aware . . . of the meaning of the horizon. He has not yet developed conscious visual perception of distance, although he has taken the first steps toward such an awareness" (p. 289). Besides, Carothers and Gardner (1979) found that "most children, up through sixth grade, are insensitive to line variation or shading in drawings " (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 111).

Upper elementary school children's visual growth, however, is obvious to Hooper (1977), who" asked second, fourth, and sixth graders to sit at a table which had been arranged with dishes and flatware. It

was only in the sixth grade that most of the children could successfully select from several the picture that correctly showed how the table would look from different positions" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1962, P. 291).

Summary of Children's Development in Responding to Art

In order to consider children's levels of readiness to receive art criticism instruction, an understanding of children's development in responding to art is necessary. Therefore, the previous examination will provide important information for determining a future direction for art criticism instruction of elementary children.

In summary, a child's ability to respond to art is significantly related to his aesthetic, intellectual and visual development. Studies show that when children grow older, these developmental models have in common the movement from lower levels of spontaneous and concrete ways of responding toward higher levels of differentiated and abstract ways.

In aesthetic development, elementary children generally like pictures of clear and realistic representation and they are insensitive to formal elements and expressive qualities in works of art. In addition, their responses to art works usually refer to personal relationships. However, for eleven or twelve year-old children, aesthetic qualities could gradually be evaluated aside from the concrete qualities of an object.

In intellectual development, children from age six to age twelve develop the ability to use inductive logic which is a thought process involving movement from personal experiences to general principles.

The early primary child generally thinks in a spontaneous and indifferentiated way. When he grows older, he begins to develop greater awareness of and sensitivity to his environment. This leads to more discriminating perceptions of the relationships of objects and people. Studies show that intellectual development of fifth and sixth grade children are marked by an increased level of analytical clarity and maturity in ideas and interests.

In visual development, children cannot reach normal visual acuity until about age ten and eleven. However, between five and eight years appears to be the period of most rapid improvement in perceptual analytical ability. Besides, early elementary graders are still strongly guided by direct emotional experiences. The visual impression they receive of an object plays a more minor role than their concept of the object. But for older children, the visual impression becomes important.

An Historical Survey of the Theoretical Rationale and the Content of Art Criticism Instruction for Elementary Children

In order to arrive at our view of art criticism instruction for elementary children, the development of the theoretical rationale and the content of art criticism instruction for elementary children will be examined in this section.

Since 1870 continuous attention has been given to the making of art and to similar studio-related activities in the classroom. While the purposes for the study of art in the schools have changed over the years,

the attention to the making of art has not. With few exceptions, the curricular documents published by state department of education prior to the 1960s reflect this basic concern with the making of art (Kern, 1987, p. 37).

References concerning art criticism instruction rarely were encountered before the 1960s. In some instances it was found partly in art appreciation programs, in others as picture study revealing "a concern with such general education purposes as moral training, the development of taste, citizenship, or cultural indoctrination, rather than with the study of art for the purpose of understanding its nature and role in human affairs" (Kern, 1987, p. 37). However, these references are useful, because the process of educational change provides an opportunity to examine the future direction which will offer the best effort.

It is not easy to separate the history of art criticism from the development of art appreciation. Since the study is primarily concerned with art criticism, adjacent areas of art appreciation will be discussed as they relate to the subject under consideration.

For the purpose of clarity, this section will be divided into the following chronological periods: 1895-1909, 1910-1929, 1930-1949, 1950-1969, and 1970-1989. At last a summary of the historical development will be provided.

1895-1909

In 1895 the Education Department, State of Maine, published "A Course of Study for the Elementary Schools of Maine". In the section titled "Syllabus of Form, Drawing and Color Study", there was a brief

note: "If possible, have one or more really good pictures on the schoolroom walls. Encourage children to study good pictures, to discover what they represent, and to express reasons for liking them" (Kern, 1987, p. 55). In "Course of Study for the Elementary Schools" which was published in 1900 by the Vermont Department of Education, the description and analysis of works of art were found.

An entire section of this book was devoted to the teaching of drawing. Among the suggestions made were the following: "At the close of each lesson place some of the best drawings where all can see. Ask the children to point out in what respect each drawing is successful. Let the children describe the models and objects drawn from memory after a moment's display of the model" (p.40) (Kern, 1987, p. 39).

In 1905 a Teacher's Manual was published by the Washington Department of Public Instruction. It also encouraged children to study good pictures and to state reasons for liking them (Kern, 1987). Thus, "a pattern for the critical study of works of art was beginning to emerge. In later years this will be seen to take a form of instruction called picture study" (Kern, 1987, p. 39).

1910-1929

During the 1910s, art appreciation is most closely identified with what was formerly called "Picture Study". "The Picture Study approach dwelt on such factors as the moral tone of a work. A premium was placed on beauty, patriotism, religious values (both overt and covert), and other such sentiments" (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, P. 21). An outline for typical objects in Picture Study was found

in the St. Louis, Missouri, guide:

Picture study is to be pursued in all grades The object of picture study is to bring the pupils in contact with some of the great works of art, and to arouse in them a love and appreciation of what is beautiful. With this thought in mind, the pictures chosen are such as time has tested. Another object in view has been to create a standard by which the pupils may judge the worth of new works of art as they meet them. When studying pictures the teacher should meet the pupil's love of the beautiful by giving him information and suggestions that will open before him the true meaning of the picture (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, p. 21).

As the Picture Study Movement continued into the 1920s, Arthur Dow's compositional-analysis approach added a different effort to the movement. "Dow gave teachers a set of principles of composition (developed from his study of Japanese art) that provided a readily grasped vocabulary of form that could be applied to any picture and that could thus serve as the criterion for the success or failure of a work. His basic principles of picture structure were line; . . . value; and a regard for full spectrum color" (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, pp. 22-23).

"A significant change during the 1920s was the move away from sole emphasis on fine arts to a broader view of the subject matter of appreciation" (p.24). In 1925 and 1927, a course in art appreciation published by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction "was described as 'a course in Art Appreciation . . . leading to the establishment of sound aesthetic judgments and the understanding and appreciation of the best expression in Architecture,

Sculpture, Painting and Decoration, the Graphic Arts and all that is included in the practical or useful art' (p.34)" (Kern, 1987, pp. 41-42).

1930-1949

Art education during the 1930s and 1940s received significant support from the writings of John Dewey, Viktor Lowenfeld and Herbert Read. It was during these years that progressive education had the greatest impetus. A general climate for art education on the elementary level was closely related to the development of creativity and self-expression. The teaching of art had been concentrated on the production of the art object and the art experience. However, Thomas Munro's ideas about the role of analysis in appreciation could fit easily into the current thinking of art criticism instruction. He wrote,

Artistic power is, on the whole, increased by intelligent analysis and reflection properly directed. Therefore, art standards of taste should not be treated as matters of pure impulse and emotion, but discussed and analyzed to a considerable degree, that the problems may be intelligently dealt with and reasons for preference (for distaste and enjoyment) brought to conscious recognition. Pupils should be asked frequently to make their own choices and judgements of value clear, explicit, reasoned and supported by facts (Hurwitz & Madejo, 1977, p. 26).

Nevertheless, Munro (1956) indicated that highly developed powers of intellectual evaluation were not entirely necessary for children. Since power to grasp abstract elements and to be interested in them came rather late in the child's mental growth, the procedure of

presenting art in theoretical and synthetic order was too abstract and formal to fit in with the development of children. He appeared to be accepting as valid all statements by children without asking for ultimate judgment.

In addition, Munro pointed out that teachers of art excessively relied on a few concepts such as "art principles" that oversimplified the problem of aesthetic value. He wrote, "the main trouble with these so called "art principles" is not that they are definitely wrong or false, but that they are so vague and abstract as to mean very little in practice, or rather to mean whatever each individual . . . teacher wished them to mean" (pp. 46).

In 1938, M. D. Voss, who was interested in the capabilities of elementary children, "concluded that art appreciation- even on the primary level- could and should be taught in relation to the principles of art- that is, to the structure of art objects. This method, she felt, could wean children away from their dependence on subject matter and turn their perceptions toward the organization of the work" (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, p. 27).

During the years of World War II, "although the picture study movement was on the wane Several states, including Wyoming and Mississippi, still required that some attention be given to the subject. In Wyoming the purposes were to learn to 'appreciate the beauty of each [picture] and to interpret their meaning' (Wyoming, 1946, p.74). The Mississippi Department of Education, in a Handbook for Elementary Teachers published in 1947, noted . . . that 'in this stage of art development pupils are aware of certain art principles and are interested in how artists, both modern ones and the old masters, have

used these in expressing their thoughts and in producing certain effects' (p.235)" (Kern, 1987, p. 43).

Since the 1940s, Viktor Lowenfeld's impact on the field of art education has been and is still being felt. His approach to the problems of art appreciation for elementary children is a useful reference to be examined. He stated,

Standards of value should never come from the teacher Growth affects the products and also affects the aesthetic awareness of children; any standards outside the child himself are false (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 312).

He also conceived that if adults did not give children opportunities to face their own experiences but imposed inconceivable experiences upon them-like perspective-children would only feel frustrated and insecure (Lowenfeld, 1955). When he talked about the art education for the gang age, nine to twelve-year-old children, he said,

Developing awareness of pattern and decoration does not provide an excuse for the formal teaching of design. The formal elements of grammar are not taught to a two-year-old child who is discovering that he can make his needs known through speech, nor are the formal problems of balance, rhythm, or half-drop repeats taught to a child who is beginning to discover these patterns within his environment Learning the nature and behavior of materials is important not only educationally but also ethically, because it will promote a feeling for sincerity and truth in design (1982, pp. 292-293).

There is no place in the elementary school for the teaching of color theories by means of color wheels or

other such aids. Such teaching would only disturb the child's spontaneity and would make him insecure in his own developing sense of color relationship. A child can be made more color-conscious by emphasizing personal reactions to color and making meaningful the interaction between child and color. . . . Any discussion of color, therefore, should focus upon experience and not upon the "proper" use of color in a particular painting (p. 286).

In Lowenfeld's point of view, we should not force children to learn new things when they are not ready developmentally. Just as he noted, "There seems to be no reason why [the learning of stylistic differences in paintings] . . . cannot be postponed until the age of twelve or thirteen when such learning becomes easier" (p. 111). Furthermore, he emphasized, "Schools undoubtedly play an important part in developing aesthetic awareness, but it may not be as important to guide this development as it is to encourage it" (p. 114).

1950-1969

"The 1950s and 1960s were a period of transition for art education Art educators were beginning to consider the discipline of art as constituting a broader body of knowledge than just a body of art experience" (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, p. 32). This approach in art education at the elementary level "suggests processes whereby students may engage in both studio and perceptual activities, gaining relevant information while discussing works of art" (Gaitskell & Hurwitz, 1970, p. 421). "It was now being advocated that the art program in the school have three major outcomes: (1) making the art object . . . (2) knowing about art objects and events . . . and (3) [critically analyzing] . . . art objects" (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, p. 33).

In 1952, there "was a course of study titled Art for the Elementary Schools of Missouri, published by that state's Department of Education Among the suggested activities were to 'make comparisons of art products by different artists' and to 'make comparisons of the masterpieces of the past and the present in their use of subject matter, color, techniques' (p.46)" (Kern, 1987, p. 44).

In the 1960s, Manuel Barkan was one of many educators who anticipated a greater need for cognitive understanding of art to be included in art curricula. He "stated that the content for the teaching of art included 'the creative involvement of the learner in activities which interplay between the making of art, and the viewing, examination and analysis of qualities which appear in works by artists of today and from the historical traditions' " (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, p. 33). However, he also considered the importance of the child's development. He wrote, "The goals of good teaching in art are derived on the one hand from insights and knowledge about the nature of art, and on the other from the developmental achievements and needs of children" (Barkan, 1960, p. 348).

In Barkan's view, the goal of art teaching not only is to help children reveal their own feelings through their art activities, but also to help them be sensitive to the feelings expressed in the art works of other people. Art works produced by the children are considered the regular topics for discussion. The interpretations of ideas, and the talks about colors, rhythms, moods, and feelings are encouraged. But the teacher should not impose standards of judgment which are beyond the maturity level and comprehension of the children.

He thought that when children are in the middle elementary

grades, teachers should pay attention to helping their children to attend to some conscious ways of improving their art work. This is important for the developmental level and learning of these children. Some emphasis could be placed on the organization and use of space, size of the forms, and choices of colors. Direct attention also can be given to the textures and feelings of the art work. However, these points of emphasis should never be imposed through artificial exercises, divorced from the ideas and activities in which the children are involved.

According to Barkan, teachers can talk with the fifth- and six-grade children about qualities in works of art and can bring them into contact with the works of great artists so that they can learn more about the language of art. These children also should be challenged to make their own judgments, while at the same time be helped to improve the quality of their judgements.

June McFee (1961) in her book, Preparation for Art, "stresses the sociological aspects of the subject. She thinks that teachers should 'expand children's understanding of the art symbols of western culture' (McFee, 1961, p. 89). The teacher's role is to help children 'look outside themselves, as well as inside, for ideas' (p. 203). 'Compare, relate, organize-in this way you can teach children to see richly and esthetically,' She advises teachers [to] 'help them see how lines, forms and colors make objects as well as paintings beautiful' (p. 215). ... She encourages teachers to have children compare their own work with that of famous painters (p. 230) as seen in print reproductions brought into classroom" (Kellogg, 1970, p. 150).

In the Guidelines for Art Instruction through Television for

Elementary Schools (1967), Manuel Barkan and Laura Chapman emphasized the reciprocity between the creative and critical processes in art instruction. They stated,

The most sensitive making of art cannot lead to rich comprehension if it is not accompanied by observation of works of art and reflective thought about them. Neither can observation and reflection alone call for the nuances of feeling nor develop the commitment that can result from personal involvement in making works of art. The reciprocal relationship between learning to make art and learning to recognize, attend to, and understand art should guide the planning of art instruction" (Goitskell & Hurwitz, 1970, p. 421).

1970-1989

During these years, a general and persistent concern was found in curriculum documents for extending the teaching of art beyond the discipline of the studio (Kern, 1987, p. 46). More art educators supported the idea that "special efforts should be made to make the children . . . so aware of critical processes that they can apply what they have learned when confronted with works of art" (Goitskell & Hurwitz, 1970, p. 417). "This approach requires the children to be thoroughly acquainted with the components of art works and the teacher to be sensitive to the children's perceptual and linguistic capabilities" (p. 419).

In 1970, the state of Ohio published Minimum Standards for Ohio Elementary Schools. It is clear from these standards that the discipline of art criticism is deemed important for all children. The document noted the need, "To sensitively and critically perceive the

visual environment with a desire to understand and improve its qualities . . . [and to expand] the use of language to talk about art objects" (Kern, 1987, p. 47).

Charles Gaitskell and Al Hurwitz (1970) defined art appreciation as "knowing and having information about art works and using such knowledge as a basis for discriminating, interpreting, and judging" (p. 415). They thought that "gaining skills for art appreciation-learning to observe, describe, and interpret-will help us to respond more fully to art . . . [because the] great barrier to appreciation is lack of familiarity and awareness Through the process of education, we move from ignorance to understanding and then possibly to enjoyment" (1982, p. 459).

They went on to explain, "To accept knowledge as a vital component of art appreciation is not to preclude those highly personal reactions to art that come so naturally to children. Each child is free to react spontaneously as he pleases to a given art work . . . however, . . . children should be made aware of what is involved in the creation of a work of art. This knowledge can cure the child of making 'snap' decisions about art, a process that so often reflects the limitations of his experience and knowledge" (1970, pp. 415-416).

Fry has pointed out the dangers inherent in the abuse of teaching such as the identification of characteristics that provide the structure of a unified work of art. He felt "that it can lead to a fragmenting of the total aesthetic experience" (p. 421). However, Gaitskell and Hurwitz stated that "the teacher who does not abuse recognition and identification of design elements will find that children respond most favorably to the challenge of being specific in

their discussion of paintings and sculpture" (p. 421). Also, they thought that "with increasing use of the critical process . . . the children can develop a way of organizing their perception that provides a more valid basis for judgment Verbal skills may also be developed since critical discussion focuses the attention of the pupil on concepts that can be mentioned, pointed to, and used in the student's own activities" (p.422).

Concerning the content of art criticism instruction, Gaitskell and Hurwitz asserted that it is based on four stages of discussion about an art work. They are: description, formal analysis, interpretation, and judgment or informed preference (1982, pp. 466-469). They will be described as follows:

1) Description. In this stage the child takes an initial inventory of what is seen. Description involves noting objects, shapes, colors and other items. Broadening the children's base of experience and exercising their abilities to use precise language are the teacher's tasks.

2) Formal Analysis. Formal analysis takes the descriptive stage a step further by requiring the child to analyze the makeup or composition of an art work. The teacher should broaden children's experience with light, mass, color, line, and other elements of form.

3) Interpretation. In this stage, the child is asked to think about the meaning of the art work. The child is required to establish some connection between the structure that can be discerned in a particular art work and the intent of the artist.

4) Informed Preference. This stage is related to a basic question: "What do you think of the work, and why?" Children are invited to

render their opinions regarding the worth of an art work. It requires that their opinions be based on what they have learned in the previous stages. The reason for using "informed preference" is that a conclusion regarding the success or failure of an art work and its ranking with other art works, a so called "judgment", is the province of professional critics and connoisseurs. It will not be discussed by children. In the mind of a child, judgment is synonymous with preference. However, children's defense of their own acceptance or rejection of an art work is perfectly possible. The "informed preference" stage then attempts to defer preference until the matter has been given thought.

Although critical process in teaching art criticism was increasingly supported, opposing opinions existed as well. According to Rhoda Kellogg (1970), "The inevitable consequence of adult assistance or criticism is . . . to divert the child from his self-education in art and toward an effort to please the teacher" (Ecker, 1973, p. 61). She believed that "the child's mind must develop through the impact of his own scribbings-not through the supervision of adults" (Kellogg, 1970, p. 143). Kellogg suggested that "teachers should accept everything made with good grace and should not try to evaluate its worth. No questions need even be asked and comments that teachers make can be restricted to such constructive ones as 'very interesting,' 'nice colors,' 'I like that,' 'good work,' No extended comment is usually required" (p. 156).

Conversely, Elliot Eisner(1972) considered that art criticism is significant in art education since it "can develop the abilities that enable the child to enjoy and experience these forms we call works of

art" (p.106). He wrote, "Our most customary form of perception is one that is instrumental in character. We usually look in order to recognize rather than to explore visually." Therefore, we "neglect vast arrays of visual information that are present in the world but that with our instrumental orientation we never see" (1987, p. 17). Obviously, "the perception of visual art forms makes special demands upon the viewer. . . . For those without well-developed skills, works that deviate from customary expectations for art often elicit little response" (1972, p. 106). "It is clear that without the appropriate set, cues, and experience, [the ability of perceiving visual form aesthetically] has a very low probability of development" (pp. 135-136). Such an ability needs to be learned. He stated, "even the first meager reaction to a work can function as a starting point for further analysis. We shall see that a dominant function of any work of art is to do something to our experience; to affect us. The more we bring to the work the more we are likely to construe meaning from it" (p. 107).

Furthermore, Eisner pointed out that art criticism can help children to develop the visual sensibility to see and the ability to describe qualities of both visual art and the visual environment in which they live. He noted,

By learning in the critical realm of the curriculum, two types of abilities are implied. First, it means that through programs in art education the visual sensibilities will be developed to the point where children are able to see qualities and their relations with respect to their aesthetic and expressive character. This means that children will be able to respond aesthetically to visual form — especially works of art — in ways that are aesthetically grounded. A second type

of ability that learning in the critical realm implies is the ability to describe appropriately the qualities that constitute visual form" (1972, p. 134).

One might ask why children should develop the ability to describe appropriately the qualities that constitute visual form. According to Eisner, "The ability to see the qualities that constitute the work, to appreciate its expressive character and then to 'render' these qualities and expression into discursive forms that reflect back into the work, is an art form itself. [Because it] deals with the ability to use language artfully, poetically, and suggestively . . . as a vehicle for entry into the work" (p. 136).

In Eisner's view, children should develop "both the attitudes and the skills required to experience, analyze, interpret, and describe the expressive qualities of visual form, qualities found not only in works of art, but also in the forms we encounter in the environment at large" (1987, p. 17).

Edmund Feldman (1973) defined "art criticism" as "more or less informed, and more or less organized, talk about art" (p. 50). He wrote, "The result of this informed and organized talk about art is what might be called the sharing of discoveries, not only about art, but also about the human condition" (p. 50). He supported it based on the fact that "telling others what we have found out or what we prefer seems to be a virtually universal impulse" (p. 52). He thought that children enjoy talking, arguing, and venturing opinions about art even if their opinions may be somewhat uninformed. Therefore he stated, "[This fact] establishes one of the grounds for art criticism in public schools-learning in a social setting" (p. 52).

In Feldman's view, children benefit from art criticism instruction. Their learning is extended beyond "what they make" and they are taught how to cope with their visual environment. Feldman stated that "communication today occurs increasingly through visual images and somewhat less through spoken and written language" (p. 52). He thought that art criticism should "be undertaken in the schools as a means of exercising the skills needed to choose among values," (p.53) because "much of our environment constitutes a sort of fraud. It is an endeavor to limit our options, to program us into an unfree pattern of existence" (p. 52). He went on to point out, "We know that when Jefferson advocated something like the public school system, he based his advocacy on the fact that a democratic state requires a literate citizenry. A citizenry that is visually illiterate will not be capable of participating intelligently in the decisions that political democracy requires [Therefore], literacy needs to be visual as well as verbal" (p. 55).

The second justification for benefit to the practice of art criticism is that children's verbal skills may also be developed. Feldman found that "in working with youngsters from deprived areas that art criticism is a way of building vocabulary," because discussions about works of art often promote the discoveries such as names of things that interest these children (p. 51). Another benefit of children's learning in art criticism is that they "learn many facts — ordinary information about man, about history, geography, economics, and social relations — from the examination of art objects" (p. 54).

In addition, art criticism can help students to gain critical insight into their own art work. Feldman felt that "we have, in effect,

a distorted idea about what creativity is. We tend to define creativity in practical terms as the manipulation of art materials, but not as the manipulation of ideas" (p. 54). Therefore, "many of us have encountered youngsters . . . who have extraordinary technical abilities but who seem not to know when they have succeeded in effectively communicating an idea and when they have failed" (pp. 54-55). What they need is the critical insight into their own art works. According to these values of art criticism, Feldman suggested that art criticism instruction should start at an early age.

According to Feldman, "the study of art criticism is designed to make students reflective and systematic about the way they analyze, explain, and judge man-made phenomena in the visual environment" (1973, p. 55). He thought that youngsters should be taught to speak coherently about art works, using description or identification, analysis, interpretation and judgment. However, Feldman wrote, "A judgment or preference about a work of art is only the last, and from an educational standpoint, perhaps the least important, aspect of criticism" (p. 51). He assumed that to develop skills in gathering visual facts is more important, because it can strengthen students' interpretation, which is the culminating phase of the critical process.

He went on to explicate, "In looking at art objects with the marks that man has left on them, we try to draw inferences about why he made them, what purposes they served, why he chose certain materials, why he created certain effects, and why the objects have certain effects on us. In trying to answer these questions we become deeply involved in important humanistic concerns" (p. 57). According to Feldman, the ultimate objective of criticism in art instruction

is to teach students "to know what men are capable of feeling and doing and knowing and expressing" (p. 57).

R. A. Smith (1973) divided the concept of criticism into two basic sets of activities — exploratory aesthetic criticism and argumentative aesthetic criticism. He wrote, "By exploratory criticism . . . we shall mean those techniques and procedures that are helpful in realizing the aesthetic values of works of art. Such endeavor does not necessarily imply strong evaluative judgment. Rather, the central task is to ascertain an object's aesthetic aspects as completely as possible As an aid . . . [it] can be divided into the overlapping phases of description, in the sense of [a] relatively straightforward noting of the more literal aspects of objects; analysis, which attends carefully to the interrelations of sensuous elements noted in description; characterization, which marks the peculiar nature of a work's aesthetic qualities; and interpretation, an effort to construe overall meaning" (pp. 39-40).

On the other hand, aesthetic argument "may be called critical communication carried on in behalf of a given critique; that is, having both aesthetically experienced a work of art and provided an estimate of its goodness (or poorness), we communicate our account and defend it if challenged to do so" (p. 39).

However, Smith considered neither of these two kinds of criticism instruction is appropriate for elementary children. He thought that creative activities should play the major role in developing young children's critical capacities. Since "no one is likely to be able to realize the aesthetic value of works of art if he himself hasn't had a fling at some making and doing" (p. 48). He stated,

The early years and elementary grades are the time, I think, to get this kind of feeling for shape, sound, and touch of things, along with, to be sure, some "nips of information." What we are learning about the intellectual development of the child seems to accord with this suggestion. It is during the early years that he is forging those cognitive powers and concepts that in later years he will refine and come to understand more formally. The secondary grades (7-12) and the years afterward are the ideal time for the kind of aesthetic education I have discussed in this paper. Perhaps we may call the early years of infant, primary, and elementary schooling the stage of tacit learning, and later years the stages of reflective understanding and self-cultivation (p.48).

In David Ecker's point of view (1973), "we must accomplish [the shift from biological to cultural orientation in art activities in the public school] without consciously working against the best information we have about the innate capacities of youngsters and with an understanding of how artists, critics, and other professionals in the arts actually perform their creative and critical functions" (p. 62). He thought that a professional critic can provide the model of excellence for the older child to emulate. He especially made an effort to teach the concept of aesthetic judgment which, he assumed, can be divided into two parts: a raw affective "psychological report" and a "value judgment" which is a response supported by arguments or evidence. He believes that teaching aesthetic judgment can enhance students' abilities to justify the merit of art objects, whether they like or dislike them (Ecker, 1967).

Moreover, Ecker (1973) found that when children's power of imagination and curiosity are unrestrained, five levels of aesthetic inquiry can be identified: 1) creating and appreciating art, 2)

criticizing art, 3) challenging or supporting the judgments of adults or children, 4) theorizing about the nature of art and criticism, and 5) analyzing theories and arguments. On this basis, Ecker thought that it is inappropriate to lay out categories to guide teachers and their students in critical performance as Edmund Feldman and Ralph Smith did. He stated, "To commit ourselves to categories appropriate for understanding or guiding performance at only a single level of aesthetic inquiry is to risk not recognizing talk operating at other levels. We may thereby unintentionally suppress . . . the fullest development of creative potential through art." He went on to suggest, "Perhaps students, teachers, and researchers alike should be prepared--indeed, encouraged--to reflect upon the adequacy of any set of categories to do the job assigned to it, which is to say, to work at the theoretical and metatheoretical levels as well as at the critical and metacritical levels of aesthetic inquiry" (p. 72).

In 1977, Oregon published *Elementary Art Education: A Handbook for Oregon Teachers*, "in which six goals for art education were identified, the fourth of which was 'critical skills' [It stated], 'The student is able to critically analyze forms using his/her own interpretations of contemporary and historical aesthetic theory' (p.3)" (Kern, 1987, p. 49). Arizona's guide for art curriculum development (1979, p. 14) "identified [one of] the purposes of . . . elementary . . . art programs as: seeing and feeling visual relationships . . . and the critical evaluation of art" (Kern, 1987, p. 50).

Many studies concerning art criticism instruction for elementary children were done during these years. Douglas and Schwartz (1976) found that guided discussions about ceramic objects focused on

aesthetic qualities and the artists' ideas and intentions can lead to greater interest and success in ceramic experiences of young children (Taunton, 1983).

Similarly, Gene Mittler (1976) supported the approach to the study of art modelled upon organized art criticism instruction. He noted that it "encourages children to become more actively involved in examinations of art works . . . and provides ample opportunity for students to deliberately analyze, reflect upon, judge, and substantiate judgments about art" (p. 17).

Mittler stated, "In order to secure increased student involvement in . . . response, learning experiences in art should be designed and presented in a manner that will permit children to develop and exercise decision-making skills" (p. 13). Basically, he embraced Feldman's approach to art criticism which involves four operations: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment (p. 17).

Mittler particularly emphasized the operation of analysis. In his opinion, a child should be taught to "1) identify certain combinations of elements and principles and find that [these combinations complement] . . . his personal objectives during the making of an art object, and 2) determine for himself how others have combined certain elements and principles and how their choices contribute to the overall effect observed in their work" (p. 17). He assumed that individual decision-making and discovery occur in these two instances. Also, "the student utilizes his knowledge of art fundamentals in a way that enables him to go beyond this knowledge to new insights regarding his own art work and the art works created by others" (p. 17).

Al Hurwitz and Stanley Madeja (1977), in their book, The Joyous Vision: A Source Book for Elementary Art Appreciation, wrote, "It is evident that a total art education program should contain activities that not only engage the student in producing art object. Art education should [also] give students the competence to make informed judgments about the aesthetic merit of works of art" (pp. 1-2).

In their point of view, a multisensory approach based on perceiving the art work as a source of a variety of sensory reactions is probably more appropriate for elementary school children. They thought that children's vocabulary level may not allow for an effective descriptive/analytic method. In other words, the "phenomenological approach" which emphasizes a critical process based upon description, analysis and interpretation of an art work had better be introduced later (p. 15).

Laura Chapman (1978) was another art educator who supported the idea that art criticism instruction should be offered in the elementary-school classroom. She stated, "The ability to respond to works of art and to the visual environment is not simply a matter of decoding symbols and of noting the observable properties of things. It is a predisposition, cultivated by instruction, to search for expressive meaning in visual forms " (p.64). She noted that this ability is an active creative process in its own right and is worthy of the same attention and educational time which, in the past, have been reserved for creating art. Furthermore, she wrote,

It is important for children to understand both the process of arriving at a critical judgment and the role of criteria within the process. When children become aware of criteria by which art can be judged, they are, at the same time, learning about some of the qualities that

many people appreciate in art. We cannot teach children to appreciate art; we can teach them a critical process through which they can develop, test, and refine their own artistic judgment (p. 80).

In Chapman's point of view, three phases of critical process should be taught to children in order to enhance the range and depth of their responses to art. They are: perceiving obvious and subtle qualities, interpreting perceived qualities as sources of feeling and meaning, and judging the significance of the experience (pp. 67-79).

Perceiving obvious and subtle qualities. In this phase four approaches to sharpen perception will be examined: discriminating basic properties of things, building multisensory associations, exploring symbolism and connotations, and becoming aware of contexts.

Interpreting perceived qualities as sources of feeling and meaning. In this phase, our effort to interpret experience is aided by an adequate vocabulary to describe our perceptions, a balance between objectivity and subjectivity, a willingness to speculate on alternative meanings, and an attempt to synthesize our impressions.

Judging the significance of perceptual experience. This phase examines the difference between personal preference and critical judgment and reviews broad patterns of thought about criteria for judging art.

Earl Linderman and Donald Herberholz (1979) believed that it is necessary to add a new dimension to art education — that of children as art critics. They stated that "the development of art in American

schools began under the influence of industry and has always been more concerned with the production of products than with a regard for why the product was made. This does not imply that the evaluation of products produced in arts classes was not considered, but the main emphasis was on the making of art works. Concern for the critical and aesthetic judgment of art works was cursory or nonexistent" (p. 131). Another reason for reinforcing the role of children as art critics is that "making aesthetic judgments is a function we all perform daily. We perform as art critics at a certain level when we select the clothes we are to wear each day. It is the same aesthetic judgment we make when we look at work of art, only at a different level. We can increase our functional level of aesthetics by being more aware of the art principles that we use. Art should function as a part of life and not something to use on rare occasions" (p. 133).

Linderman and Herberholz believed that children should be taught how to make aesthetic judgments through a critical process. And it should consist of five operations: 1) describe the subject matter, 2) describe the art elements, 3) analyze the elements and principles of art, 4) interpret the art work, and 5) make the aesthetic judgment (p. 132). They noted, "Reinforcing intuitive responses to art works by helping children to understand and articulate their feelings can heighten their aesthetic awareness. Learning to make aesthetic judgments increases one's ability to perceive natural and man-made objects, and increases one's ability to judge his own art works as well as historical works [Also], Children will discover new depths of meaning in art when they have learned to look carefully before making aesthetic judgments" (p. 132). In addition, Linderman and Herberholz

supported the idea that teachers should make a specific effort to relate judgment not only to fine arts but to the daily lives.

Since Discipline-Based Art Education has been strongly promoted during the 1980s, the increased emphasis on the discipline of art criticism can be found in objectives and goals of curriculum guides published by different states (Kern, 1987, p. 50). In 1982, Georgia published Visual Arts Education Guidelines, K-12; it stated, "1. Develop perceptual awareness 5. Make and justify judgments concerning aesthetic quality and merit of works of art" (Kern, 1987, p. 51).

More and more art educators offered their opinions concerning art criticism instruction for elementary children during these years. George Szekely (1982) asserted the importance of discussions about art works with children. He believed that "if children are old enough to perform creatively, they are old enough to talk about the experience of that performance"(p. 16). He had several reasons for supporting discussions about art with children. First, "the art class is the logical place for such talk Being in class implies a relationship with others as artists and as audiences, others with similar joys and problems. It implies learning not only from our own work and from the instruction of the teacher but also from others — including professional artists." Second, if there is a "discussion after the work . . . those with common problems can help us, just as we can help them, to evaluate what has been accomplished and what still must be done in further efforts [Third], verbalization helps us to put our thoughts into more concrete form so that they can be recalled and used later." Fourth, "the more children understand the work habits, techniques, and

creative processes of others, the more likely they are to understand their own impetus toward art work and to continue working on their own, outside the classroom, directing their own idea and taking more charge of their own work." Fifth, "the teacher, through conversation, can help the child to see art as a part of life (as a way of life, for some people) and can help to make the work in the art class a meaningful individual experience" (p. 16).

In Szekely's view, teachers should lead children to talk about art based on using the artist as an example. He wrote, "Children can learn a great deal from artists, from talking to them, from talking about them and their work, and from seeing their work regularly" (p. 16). Therefore, learning about the ways in which artists think and work should be the emphasis in an art discussion with children.

According to Martha Taunton(1983), the abilities of early elementary children to respond verbally to the visual arts can easily been found in the classroom. From dialogues between a teacher and children, she found that "these young children had insights about art that were surprising and that they were willing and ready to extend their ideas with only the slightest provocation from an interested adult" (p. 42). Therefore, discovering ways to enhance these abilities are absolutely necessary.

Taunton supported Feldman's critical process to talk about art. Moreover, she stated, "[The] critical process can be seen, Smith (1973) suggests, as 'exploratory' rather than 'argumentative' (p. 39). The aim of criticism is to clarify the meaning of and to share discoveries about art. As such, criticism as process allows for multiple interpretations of art and various judgmental criteria; it does not

require a particular kind of language or responses. In that light," Taunton concluded that "young children's talk about art can indeed function as critical discussion. Their level of knowledge and understanding of art will differ from the adult's. They obviously will have priorities, words, and interests reflective of their age and experiences. Their responses often will be unsophisticated, but they can, at a basic level, describe what is seen, note obvious relationships, make attempts at interpretations, and certainly give opinions with supporting reasons" (p. 40). In other words, art criticism instruction can foster children's potential for discovering and responding to the visual arts.

On the other hand, Taunton (1984) emphasized that a reflective dialogue about works is beneficial as it can help children grasp relationships between acts of art making and their consequences. First, she defined "reflective dialogue" as "discussions among teachers and children specifically focused on children's introspection during their own art-making and children's reflections about their experiences in relation to those of other artists". Then, she explained that "it can give concrete insights about actions thought to be intuitive and can serve as a way to search for and understand what will or did occur in the making process. Children's talk can give value to what they contemplate as they make art, and, through the process of verbal exchange, children's understanding of their efforts in art-making can grow. Moreover, relationships between what children do as artists and what other artists do can be clarified" (p. 15).

Taunton thought that "a discussion about works in-progress is beneficial because students are able to make use of comments in

subsequent efforts. A final critique is valuable for younger student as they share their ideas and for older students as they see how their work stands on its own merits" (p. 16). In Taunton's view, a reflective dialogue has its educational significance, whether it is before, during or after the art-making process.

Robert Adams (1985) also embraced the idea that aesthetic dialogue or talk about art should be taught to elementary school children. But, it must be "rooted in humanistic philosophy and psychology, [and] centered around children's sensuous aesthetic behaviors" (p. 13). It should not just stress formal aspects of works of art emphasizing the elements and principles of visual design. He wrote, "Ideally, formal aspects of works of art should be studied along with sensuous and expressive aspects of works . . . [since] they both are sources for a well-rounded aesthetic perception program for children" (p. 13). According to Bloom, et al. (1956), "looking at works of art and interpreting what one sees require the highest levels of activity in the cognitive domain However, Bloom and his co-authors emphasized that it should not be thought of in isolation from the affective domain. They argued that for significant learning to take place, students must respond effectively as well as cognitively to the ideas they are encountering. In other words, they must value what they are experiencing" (Parks, 1988, p. 55).

Moreover, Adams noted, "Children can be taught . . . to aesthetically perceive art objects that provide visual and judgmental training for a wide variety of life experiences" (1985, p. 13). "Thus, learning to aesthetically perceive art objects increases children's ability to perceive more profoundly both man-made and natural

objects. The outcome of children dialoguing about the aesthetic structure in art is that they transfer this learning and structure to other areas of their life" (p. 15).

Concerning the content of art criticism instruction for elementary children, Adams introduced it based on a paradigm. See Figure 1.

1) Sensuousness and Expression. This level centers on children's direct and natural responses to the content of an art object. Art objects arouse a wide spectrum of feelings and emotions, and children talk about emotional states that art objects evoke.

2) Description. It is subdivided into: 2.1. simple description, in which teachers elicit responses to convergent questions about the identification of the art object being studied. In this substage, children are asked to describe their mental images of objects and the visual elements depicted. In 2.2. technical and thematic description, the teacher and children discuss questions about technical processes and media as well as thematic, topical, and subject matter aspects of art objects.

3) Formal Analysis. At this stage, teachers focus on salient formal properties such as the elements and principles of visual design.

According to Adams, in early elementary grades, children should be taught Level 1 and 2 tasks, and not Level 3, because they "operate in their own worlds and structure their art in highly personalized ways. Consequently, children eight or younger have little or no interest in the formal organization of an art object" (p. 14). Level 3 tasks are recommended for grades four, five, and six. In that, they "are increasingly conscious of the structure of the world, shown by their

concern for realistic color and spatial organizations [They] are also concerned with art works executed in a detailed and meticulous manner. These 'gang age' children welcome dialogue that centers around formal analysis" (p. 14).

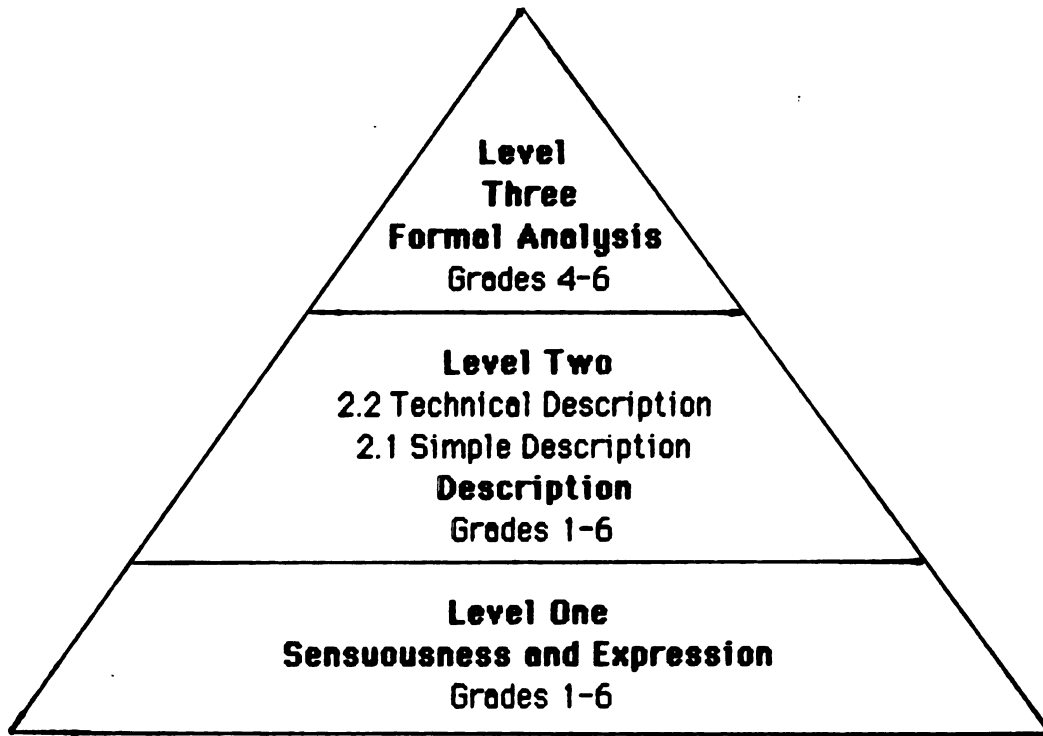


Figure 1 Adams' paradigm of children's aesthetic levels

Adams excluded "judgment" tasks for children. He wrote, "It is the domain of professional critics to judge works of art Judging a work of art means giving it a rank in relation to other works of its type Children cannot adequately do this. Ultimately, formal analytical processes may lead children to discuss matters of art preference as likes or dislikes. In this structure, children can

make known informed art preferences at any point in the paradigm" (pp. 14-15).

Tom Anderson (1986) defined two kinds of art discussion. "One is directed at student art work, generally in the form of formal or informal critiques. The other is directed at general talk about professional art with the end-goal of developing appreciative attitudes" (p. 5). He went on to state the different purposes of these two types of discussion. "Talking about student art is largely for instruction to further students' artistic development. Formal qualities and thematic content are discussed in relation to what the student is trying to express and how that may be furthered. Conversely, students' progress in making art is only incidental to talk about art in the larger realm of art appreciation. The primary concern of art criticism, in this context, is understanding art works for the enjoyment, aesthetic sensations, and meanings they contain" (pp. 5-6). Anderson thought that both of these types of art discussion are critically important for children. Since they "can motivate student production and increase the students' understanding of their own work. They [also] can develop appreciative attitudes toward art and the human themes art conveys" (p. 6).

Moreover, he noted, "Talk helps with . . . elaborating and refining visual forms and helps students grasp content and feelings that are beyond their normal and accustomed modes, thus helping them develop new insights and novel and vivid imagery" (p. 6). Besides, "talk about art is important in helping students refine their image-making abilities. McFee and Deggee (1977) cite research which indicates that children learn to draw more from looking at the art around them than

from looking at objects. The obvious prerequisite to talking about art is looking at art. Talking about art allows students to carefully attend to the qualities of the works they see. The result of this, as reported by McFee and Deggee, is increased image-making abilities" (p.7).

Based on two types of art discussion that Anderson defined, the content were suggested. About students' art work, he wrote, "At the elementary level, it is more appropriate to approach student critiques with emphasis on the thematic content rather than formal content. In wanting to express an idea or emotion, children are content-oriented rather than formally oriented. This does not imply that formal concern should not be discussed, but that formal talk . . . should be couched within thematic concerns expressed by the child The obvious exception would be when an assignment given is specifically directed toward formal concerns" (p. 6). Furthermore, he stated, "Critiques of student work cannot avoid evaluation or judgments [The] teacher should try to help students understand what it is they are trying to express and to examine whether the forms they have created really do express that idea or emotion [Teachers] must teach the skills that help students express their intent" (p. 7).

About professional art, Anderson suggested that it is important to teach children a system of art criticism they can use to evaluate and respond to art. He supported Feldman's structural approach to art talk which consists of four activities: 1) identification and description, 2) formal analysis, 3) interpretation and 4) judgment.

Keren Hamblen (1986) defined "art criticism" "at its most basic, [as] an exploration of the nature of art and aesthetic responses" (p. 163). She considered it "an educational procedure that results in

skills for exploring [the] aesthetic, sociological, personal, symbolic, and thematic meaning of art. Rather than so constraining the art critical procedures within the brackets of aesthetic integrity that they fail to have relevance to the student" (p. 164).

Hornblum also pointed out that selected exemplars provided for children to study might distort children's view of art. She believed that "the ostensibly altruistic goal of giving students what is deemed the very best could actually stunt their ability to critically analyze the immediate life world aesthetic as well as an ability to appreciate various types of art" (1987, p. 72).

Howard Risatti's (1987) rationale for teaching art criticism is based on the belief that "any argument for visual-art education should not rely solely on the popular notions of aesthetic beauty but should seek to evaluate realistically the function and the necessity of visual literacy as a way of communicating meaning in modern society" (p. 219). Therefore, the general goal of art criticism instruction is "to inform and educate people (including artists) about art by providing insights into its meaning so as to increase the understanding and appreciation of art and to illustrate the cultural and societal values reflected in it" (p. 219). Moreover, Risatti wrote,

Art criticism, by challenging the student to explore and evaluate the quality of a work of art, encourages the student to consider the broad cultural and social objectives of society, of which individual artistic expression is only a part and the work of art a reflection. In the end, only those who understand the hows and whys of visual language are able to construct, control, and develop a visual environment that communicates a community's values meaningfully (p. 223).

In regard to the learning of art-critical process and the concepts and skills that contribute to it, Risetti indicated, "The first component of the critical process in which the student must develop skill has simply to do with the purely internal visual aspects of the works of art. That is, the student must develop skill in descriptive and formal analyses of the perceptual aspects of works of art" (p. 221).

Descriptive analysis is "concerned with the recognition and description of the visual elements that compose the work of art".

Formal analysis means to develop "the ability to see visual relationships among shapes, forms, lines, and colors" (p. 221).

The second component of the critical process is related to the significance, or meaning of these images and forms. According to Risetti, there are two types of critical discussion of meaning; these are internal and external. "Discussions of internal qualities focus on a work's inherent aspects and may be iconographic, narrative, symbolic, and so on Discussion of external qualities view the work within a larger context, such as art-historical (style-e.g., Pop Art. Neoexpressionism, Hard Edge, etc.); historical; psychological (Freudian, Jungian, etc.); political and ideological (Marxist, capitalist, feminist, etc.)" (p. 222).

The nature and the complexity of a student's discussion of the internal and external qualities of art would naturally correspond to the student's grade level. A student at the beginning level may be engaged solely in a descriptive and formal analysis of images, shape, and color; a discussion of internal and external meanings may be restricted to identifying imagery and its place in their own lives. A more advanced student would be able to discuss the interrelationships among shape, form, color, and imagery as part of a descriptive and formal

analysis; the discussion of internal and external meaning by such a student would also be more sophisticated and would naturally reflect other subjects the student was studying at the time (p. 223).

Vincent Lanier (1987) proposed Aesthetic Response Theory (A*R*T*) which is mainly constructed to improve the philosophical problem of Discipline-Based Art Education. A*R*T* is concerned with the pupil on any level as a consumer, rather than as artist, historian, critic, or aesthetician. Lanier believed that "neither children nor adults can meaningfully play (in the sense of role play) at being those models" (p. 50) which DBAE expects the students to be. Therefore, the purpose of A*R*T* is "to teach the learner to enhance his or her appreciation of all the visual arts" (p. 50).

By doing this, Lanier thought the domain of aesthetics should be the main task for students to learn. The responses of viewers and the ways that visual arts operate to affect them should be the central issues for classroom dialogue. The content of "criticism serves to enrich the illustrative knowledge that clarifies our insight into our responses. Talking or reading about the organization of a particular work and how it affects us . . . [provides] information potentially relevant to that insight" (p. 51). In this sense, art criticism is subsidiary as an instrument to enhance the breadth and vigor of children's aesthetic responses in an A*R*T* curriculum.

From a cognitive-developmental point of view, Michael Parsons (1987) asserted that "it is helpful to children to talk about painting: it may get them to think about what they have not understood." He believed, "Discussing painting is probably the most helpful thing we

can do with children, other than giving them materials to paint with." He argued, "Our more common failing is to demand little in understanding the arts, and to avoid discussions of them" (p. 33). Also he suggested, "Young children take pleasure in almost all paintings, and rarely dislike them. Their power of enjoyment is one of the pleasure of discussing art with them" (p. 27).

In Parsons' study, he found many examples which show young children's abilities to talk about paintings. For example, Gloria, ten years old, said of Picasso's Guernica:

(What feelings are in the painting?)

Sadness, help . . . I don't like having some of these things, when you look at it.

(Is it good to paint paintings about war?)

No. Not unless . . . it doesn't show any dead people or anything like that; if the war has just barely started, then that's OK (p.46).

"There is a whole series of insights about paintings that [children] . . . do not have Many significant aesthetic qualities are inaccessible to them and their experience of art lacks the richness available to adults." However, Parsons stated, "Aesthetic development consists precisely in the gradual acquisition of these insights. We reach the later stages [of aesthetic development] only with an education in which we encounter works of art often and think about them seriously" (p. 27).

Parsons did not agree with Kellogg's advice which suggested that young children should not be asked what their drawings are about. He wrote, "Our experience is not so fragile. On the contrary, it is vigorous enough to thrive on problems, and to ingest any material that

lies in its path. It is true that, if we ask a child what her drawing is about, we may get a strange answer. But the child may be stimulated to struggle with the idea of representation – to find something that the drawing is about. On my analysis, this is a necessary step, a natural development and not a distortion of it. The question may be helpful; and if not most children will ignore it" (p. 33).

Michael Park (1988) agreed that the ability to acquire meaning from works of art requires the same thoughtful and appreciative guidance of the parent and teacher that reading does. Otherwise, "the child will never grasp the subtlety of irony, metaphor, of analogy – the very things that give language its power and richness". Therefore, he wrote, "The teacher must set the example of one who enjoys art, values it, finds it challenging, and above all, gains meaning from it" (p. 55).

Stanley Horner (1988) opposed Feldman's (1970) approach of teaching art criticism. He stated, "Feldman sees the work of art as carrying a message irrespective of who the viewer is" (p. 3) and intends "to keep the viewer from skewing the meaning of an art work with his/her own irrelevant pre-conceptions and expectations." Horner argued that it was "an excuse to eliminate the viewer-as-presence from the scene" (p. 3). Also, he thought that describing a work of art as one's initial experience with it would constrain one to see the art work as bits and pieces. Accordingly, Horner proposed that "we encourage students to trust their responses, follow them, enrich them, track them, reflect on them and use them to unveil new revelations" (pp. 3-4).

Summary of the Historical Development of Art Criticism

Instruction

The study of historical background of art criticism instruction is useful in that it reveals the development of major ideas in art education. It seems that new ideas are always rooted in the past, experience a period of probation, and then gradually emerge until they dominate the scene. By examining the process of educational change, a future indication of art criticism instruction might be detected.

The historical development of art criticism instruction from 1895 through 1989 has been reviewed in previous sections. During this almost one-hundred-year period, divergent ideas concerning the theoretical rationale and the content of art criticism instruction have occurred. However, it seems that during every decade, a main approach developed, became broadly accepted and then it was gradually replaced by another.

The documents studied from 1895 to 1989 showed that a pattern for the critical study of works of art was beginning to emerge at that time. It was suggested that teachers were to put good pictures on the classroom walls and encourage children to discover what they represent and to express reasons for liking them. In the 1910s and 1920s, this critical study was seen to take a form of instruction called "picture study". Formal lessons about looking at master pieces were structured in ways that encouraged children to identify the beauty and also draw moral and virtuous implications from what they were viewing. The qualities intrinsic in an art work had not been noticed. Systematized methods of talking about art works had not been found.

The thoughts of progressive education received the greatest support during the 1930s and 1940s. In order to be consistent with its respect for the interest of the child, a general climate for art education was closely related to the child's development of creative expression. The picture study movement was on the wane. Experiences in making art became the main concern in art classes. Instruction in art criticism which was considered beyond children's abilities could hardly be seen in elementary schools.

The 1950s and 1960s was a period of transition for art education. Art educators were beginning to consider that the understanding and appreciation of works of art was as educationally valuable as creating art. The reciprocity between creative and critical process in art education was of concern. It was believed that creative process could not lead to rich comprehension if it were not accompanied by reflective thought about works of art. Neither could critical process alone call for the nuances of feeling that could result from personal making of art. Accordingly, the viewing, examination and analysis of qualities which appear in art works began to be supported in ways that are in close relation to art making activities. This twenty year period could be seen as an incubation period for a more comprehensive and academic art education approach later.

Over the past eighteen years, a discipline-based approach to the teaching of art has been increasingly supported. This new concern which considers art as a school subject with distinctive goals, content, and methods gave tremendous attention to the instruction of art criticism, even on the elementary level. A system for talking about art works focusing mainly on the critical processes of

description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment has been broadly suggested as the way to enhance children's knowledge and appreciative attitudes about art, as well as, their critical abilities to evaluate art works and the visual environment-at-large. While many art educators agreed that emphasis on the discipline of art criticism was desirable, some were in doubt about whether this kind of instruction was appropriate for children, what other systems were available, or how to apply them in relation to other phases of art instruction. It is a good sign that opposing opinions existed at the same time, because the future direction will be established based on a contemplation of these arguments.

The literature allows a number of major conclusions to be drawn.

1. Although the study of art appreciation might be considered an ancestor of what is defined now as art criticism, art criticism instruction has only gained its independent status during the past two decades.

2. The theoretical rationale for art criticism instruction indicate a main shift from a child-centered approach which concerns moral and creative development to a child- and- subject-centered approach which values the reciprocal relationship between creative and critical processes in art education, and then to a discipline-based approach which expects the child to be knowledgeable about art and to be visually literate.

3. The major change in the content of art criticism instruction parallels the theoretical rationale described above. It starts with an emphasis on providing children moral training and then wanes during the Progressive Era. Later, the cognitive understanding of art works

was encouraged in close relation to studio activities. And more recently, a critical system for examining visual objects became the major concern in art criticism instruction.

Chapter III

Analysis and Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the review of literature in Chapter II and to propose a future direction for art criticism instruction of elementary children. Section I will focus on the theoretical rationale for art criticism instruction. Section II will provide an analysis of the content of art criticism instruction. Section III will propose a future direction based on an analysis of the previous sections.

Analysis of the Theoretical Rationale for Art Criticism Instruction

After examining the historical background concerning art criticism instruction for elementary children, various theoretical rationale are formulated. Generally, most art educators support the idea that art criticism instruction should be included in the elementary curriculum. However, strong opposing opinions exist as well. The rationale for both positions will be analyzed here.

Theoretical Rationale for Supporting Art Criticism Instruction for Elementary Children

Seven categories of rationale for supporting art criticism instruction were found. Since categories are always simpler than the

phenomena which is categorized, I would like to restate that in this case the purpose is to point out the major differences in several views of art criticism instruction for elementary children.

Developing Visual Literacy

Visual literacy is defined as seeing with a sensitive, knowledgeable and critical eye. This ability can apply not only to art work done by professional artists or children themselves, but also to the whole visual environment. Furthermore, a visually literate person possesses critical attitudes and skills to solve problems or to choose among values by examining facts sensitively and knowledgeably. Many art educators think that it is necessary to make a specific effort to develop elementary children's visual literacy and they consider art criticism instruction the proper way to accomplish it.

There are several theories of art criticism instruction based on the development of children's visual literacy. Some think that art criticism instruction can prevent children from making quick decisions about art based on their limitation of experience and knowledge. It can develop children's potential for decision making and the abilities to make informed judgments about the aesthetic merit of works of art (Ecker, 1973; Gaitskill & Hurwitz, 1970; Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977; Linderman & Herberholz, 1979).

Some support the idea that art criticism instruction can help children gain critical insight into their own art work (Anderson, 1986 ; Feldman, 1973; Miller, 1976; McFee, 1961; Linderman & Herberholz, 1979; Szekely, 1982; Taunton, 1984). They argue that creativity should be defined as the manipulation of ideas as well as

the manipulation of art materials. Therefore, if children know when they have succeeded in communicating their ideas in their work, when they have failed and how they can improve them, their visual literacy will develop.

Some art educators such as Gaitskell & Hurwitz (1970) and Linderman & Herberholz (1979) think that art criticism instruction can refine children's visual abilities and develop their visual sensibilities which provide a more valid basis for judgment.

Others assume art criticism instruction is a more active process. It not only requests children to identify visual forms, but also teaches them how to search for significant meaning inherent in visual forms. It will enable children to perceive more profoundly both works of art and the visual environment (Adams, 1985; Chapman, 1978; Linderman & Herberholz, 1979; Park, 1988; Risatti, 1987).

Finally, Feldman (1973) and Risatti (1987) support the idea that art criticism instruction can teach children how to cope with their environment where communication increasingly relies more heavily upon visual images. They think that it can educate children to be visually literate citizens who understand visual language and will be able to control, improve and develop a meaningfully communicative environment.

Enhancing Studio Experience

Discussion about works of art can enhance children's studio experiences and is another reason for art educators to support art criticism instruction.

Barkan and Chapman (1967) think even the most sensitive

creative process cannot lead to rich comprehension, unless it is accompanied by the conscious attempt to recognize, attend to, and understand works of art (Gaitskell & Hurwitz, 1970). Douglas and Schwartz (1976) find that guided discussions about art objects focusing on aesthetic qualities and the artists' ideas and intentions can increase children's interest and success in studio experience (Taunton, 1983).

Taunton (1982) thinks that reflective dialogue about works can help children grasp relationships between acts of art making and their consequences. She states, "It can give concrete insights about actions thought to be intuitive and can serve as a way to search for and understand what will or did occur in the making process. Children's talk can give value to what they contemplate as they make art, and, through the process of verbal exchange, children's understanding of their efforts in art-making can grow. Moreover, relationships between what children do as artists and what other artists do can be clarified" (p. 15).

Anderson (1986) also supports the idea that talk about art can help refine children's image-making abilities. Based on McFee and Deggee's (1977) study which indicates that children learn to draw more from looking at the art around them than from looking at objects, Anderson indicates that talking about art allows children to carefully look at the qualities of the works. Children can also understand artists' techniques, solutions, and expressive content in relation to their own art work. The result is an increase in image-making abilities.

Developing Verbal Skills

The benefit of improved verbal skills is another rationale for supporting art criticism instruction for children. Goitskell and Hurwitz (1970) note, "Since critical discussion focuses the attention of the pupil on concepts that can be mentioned, pointed to, and used in the student's own activities" (p.422), her/his verbal skills may be developed. Eisner (1972) points out that art criticism can help children develop the ability to describe qualities of both visual art and the visual environment. He thinks children would benefit from art criticism instruction, since it deals "with the ability to use language artfully, poetically, and suggestively" (p.136). In Feldman's (1977) study, he also found that children's verbal skills can be developed by practicing art criticism. He indicates that it is a way of building vocabulary, because discussion about works of art often promotes discoveries such as names of things that interest children.

Corresponding with Children's Natural Inclination to Share Discoveries

Another reason for supporting art criticism instruction is that it corresponds with children's natural inclination to share discoveries. According to Taunton (1983), one of the aims of criticism is to share discoveries about art. Children have the potential to discover art and they enjoy telling others what they prefer or venturing opinions about art (Feldman, 1973; Taunton, 1983). Art criticism instruction implies a group discussion about art in the classroom. In this designed learning environment, children have opportunities to talk, argue and share what they have found about art. Their natural impulses for

sharing discoveries can be satisfied. They may also have new insights about works of art by listening to other people's opinions.

Similarly, Szekely (1982) notes, "Art class is the logical place for such talk Being in class implies a relationship with others as artists and as audiences" (p. 16). Sharing discoveries also helps children learn from others as well.

Developing Children's Aesthetic Responses

From studies of children's aesthetic behaviors, art educators found that children had potential for responding to visual arts. Children were willing and ready to extend their ideas about art (Barkan, 1960; Ecker, 1973; Parsons, 1977 & 1987; Taunton, 1983). Although young children's "level of knowledge and understanding of art will differ from the adult's, they obviously will have priorities, words, and interests reflective of their age and experience. Their responses often will be unsophisticated, but they can, at a basic level, describe what is seen, note obvious relationships, make attempts at interpretation, and certainly give opinions with supporting reasons" (Taunton, 1983, p.40). Some art educators believe that art criticism instruction can correspond with this potential and can develop children's aesthetic responses.

The ability to perceive visual form aesthetically can probably develop with appropriate instruction (Adam, 1985; Eisner, 1972; McFee, 1961). Gaitskell and Hurwitz (1970) believe that it is important to learn to observe, describe and interpret, because it will help children to respond more fully to art. According to Chapman (1978), critical process should be taught to children in order to

enhance the range and depth of their responses to art. Linderman and Herberholz (1979) write, "Reinforcing intuitive response to art works by helping children to understand and articulate their feelings can heighten their aesthetic awareness" (p. 132). Taunton (1983) also contends that art criticism is the way to enhance children's potential for responding to art. In Anderson's (1986) point of view, talk about art in the larger realm of art appreciation could help children to understand art works for enjoyment and aesthetic sensation. Appreciative attitudes toward art also could be developed.

According to Parsons (1987), children can "reach the later stages [of aesthetic development] only with an education in which we encounter works of art often and think about them seriously" (p. 27). He considers that discussion about art might get children to think about what they have not understood and to gain new insights. Similarly, Voss (1938) maintains that the teaching of principles of art "could wean children away from their dependence on subject matter and turn their perceptions toward the organization of the work" (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, p. 27). And, children's responses to art could be extended. Finally, Lanier (1987) notes that "[art criticism] serves to enrich the illustrative knowledge that clarifies our insight into our responses" (p. 51). He believes that art criticism is an instrument to enhance the breadth and vigor of children's aesthetic responses.

Increasing Knowledge of Art

Another rationale for supporting art criticism instruction is that it can increase children's knowledge of art. Art instruction should place emphasis on the viewing, examination and analysis of qualities

in works of art as well as the characteristics of the child (Barkan, 1960). The shift from biological to cultural orientation in art activities must be accomplished (Ecker, 1973). Obviously, informing and educating children about art -- which should be treated as a field of knowledge to be learned -- is the strong opinion of these art educators. Also, they consider art criticism instruction a good way to arrive at this goal.

Art criticism instruction is important for children, because it can provide them with two aspects of knowledge of art. On one hand is the perceptual forms of works of art. The operation of analysis may help children to identify characteristics and the relationships of visual elements and principles which constitute the visual forms we call works of art (Barkan, 1960; Miller, 1976; Risatti, 1987) as well as the cultural and sociological meanings. From the examination of art objects, children may gain "ordinary information about man, about history, geography, economics, and social relations" (Feldman, 1973, p. 54). Risatti (1987) thinks the general goal of art criticism instruction is to increase the understanding of art and to illustrate the cultural and social values reflected in it. The meanings of images and forms will be learned through discussions about works of art. McFee(1961) also conceives that sociological aspects of art are important for children to learn, especially in the art symbols of western culture.

Providing Moral Training

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, discussion of paintings was encouraged in the elementary classrooms. It was

called "Picture Study". Art educators at that time felt that talking about paintings could introduce children to patriotism, prettiness, religious values or other such sentiments (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977). "The underlying implication was that art was one of the finer things of life and that the finer people in life understood and were enriched by art" (Anderson, 1966, p. 5). In the St. Louis, Missouri, guide: "The object of picture study is to bring the pupils in contact with some of the great works of art, and to arouse in them a love and appreciation of what is beautiful" (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977, p.21). Obviously, discussion about paintings is supported just because it can provide training in moral values for children.

Opposing Opinions about Art Criticism Instruction for Elementary Children

Although opposing opinions about art criticism instruction for elementary children are the minority of ideas in the review of literature, they can not be neglected. Some of them concern children's readiness to be taught art criticism. Some examine the negative effects on children. Others note some debatable problems existing in the teaching of art criticism. The voice of these opposing opinions is small, but strong. If we take them into consideration, our proposed future direction will be more complete. In this section, opposing opinions about art criticism instruction will be discussed in three aspects: 1) negative aesthetic and social influences, 2) lack of developmental readiness, and 3) problems of art criticism instruction.

Negative Aesthetic and Social Influences

Teaching children to recognize the value of art -- including the work of children as well as adult artists -- by providing the knowledgable information may cause negative influences on them. First of all, the child's spontaneity may be disturbed. In Lowenfeld and Brittain's (1982) point of view, growth affects the products and also affects the aesthetic awareness of children. Any standards outside the child himself will interfere with his own development of visual relationships and his free expression in art. Kellogg (1970) also warns that "the inevitable consequence of adult assistance or criticism is . . . to divert the child from his self-education in art . . . toward an effort to please the teacher" (Ecker, 1973, p. 61). The child's spontaneity will be negatively influenced as well as his honesty.

Moreover, children may feel frustrated and insecure. According to Lowenfeld (1955), "if [a child] does not face his ~~own~~ experiences but experiences which are imposed upon him and therefore are inconceivable to him--like perspective: the ability to express distance, depth, and the three-dimensional quality of objects--the child will only be frustrated" (p. 124). Conversely, he thinks we should only see the child's picture as part of his life and appreciate the significance of it by understanding the child. To direct attention only to the painting and to be concerned only with technical abilities would be an injustice.

Some art educators consider fragmenting of the total aesthetic experience another bad influence on children. Although a systematic approach which usually consists of the stages of description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation is broadly suggested to teach art

criticism for children, problems have been raised in the literature. Horner (1988) argues that it is inappropriate to describe a work of art as one's initial experience with it. Because by doing this, "one is being seduced into seeing the work, not as a whole, 'other', integrated world over there, not one that is capable of reflecting the complex 'one' in here, but rather as an amalgamation of unconnected fragments. One is constrained to see the 'other' as 'bits and pieces'" (p. 4). According to Goitskell and Hurwitz (1970), Fry also feels that the abuse of teaching the identification of characteristics that provide the structure of a unified work of art can lead to fragmenting of the whole aesthetic experience.

Lack of Developmental Readiness

Another reason for not teaching art criticism to children is based on the idea that children are not developmentally ready. Many art educators point out that elementary children do not have abilities to learn about the critical phase of an art work. It seems too difficult for them and alien to their interests. The child's developmental readiness will be discussed in relation to aesthetic, intellectual and visual development.

In aesthetic development, the dominant idea of children's aesthetic response is to subject matter. Their preferences for and evaluations of a painting depend on the attraction and realistic representation of the subjects (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982; Parsons, 1987). The aspects of expression, form and style of an art work are usually neglected by children. They can hardly see the character of the art object as a whole outside themselves. According to Lowenfeld and

Brittain (1982), it is not until eleven or twelve years that the aesthetic qualities can be evaluated aside from the concrete qualities of an object. In addition, children are committed to the "intentionalist fallacy" because their criteria for evaluating paintings are relative. Children believe that the artist's intentions are sufficient for judging a painting (Parsons, 1977). They also depend on the criteria of whoever is looking at the painting. Therefore, this situation permits an indefinite number of criteria for judging works of art (Parsons, 1987).

Concerning intellectual development, children's vocabulary level may not allow for an effective performance which emphasizes a critical process based upon description, analysis, interpretation and judgment of an art work (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977). Also, the linguistic metaphor of a picture is not noticed until the middle years of childhood and is not talked about until early adolescence (Hamblen, 1986). According to Bee (1985), Piaget finds that elementary school children are not good at going from a general principle to some anticipated experience, because it requires imagining things that the child may never have experienced. Therefore, the information such as art principles may only confuse these children. Munro (1956) also criticizes the presentation of art in theoretical, synthetic order. To proceed from simple "art elements" and "art principles" to complex works of art is not appropriate. He thinks that the power to grasp abstract elements and to be interested in them comes rather late in the child's mental growth. This procedure is too abstract and formal to fit in with the development of children. In Smith's (1973) point of view, the elementary grades are not the stages of reflective

understanding, but the stage of tacit learning when feelings for shape, sound, and touch are understood.

Regarding visual development, a study indicates that children can not reach a standard visual acuity until about ten or eleven (Bee, 1985). For early elementary children, the visual impression they receive of an object plays a more minor role than their concept of the object (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). They are strongly guided by the direct emotional and kinesthetic experiences (Barkan, 1960). In addition, according to Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982), Carothers and Gardner (1979) point out that most children, up through sixth grade, are insensitive to line variation and shading in drawings.

Problems of Art Criticism Instruction

In this section, problems of art criticism instruction will be examined. Even though the art educators who raise these questions do not consider them important enough for not teaching art criticism to children, their discussions do help us reconsider the future direction for art criticism instruction in elementary schools.

According to Munro (1956), teachers of art excessively rely on a few concepts such as "art principles" that oversimplify the problem of aesthetic value. He criticizes their use of these concepts as yardsticks to measure the value of art, including the work of children as well as adult artists. "The main trouble with these so called 'art principles' is not that they are definitely wrong or false, but that they are so vague and abstract as to mean very little in practice, or rather to mean whatever each individual . . . teacher wished them to mean. . . . The principle is likely to be so narrow as to be very debatable. Past

works of art, commonly recognized as good, can always be found that do not conform to it." Munro believes that "in art education, their excessive use often indicates a desire to reduce all problems [as] quickly as possible to some simple, stereotyped formula" (pp. 46-47).

Another problem of art criticism instruction concerns the selected exemplars provided for children to study. "This aspect of art criticism is predetermined in that children will be asked to evaluate what has already been given validation by the learned." Hamblen (1987) says, "Focusing on what is deemed to represent the aesthetic heights of a culture could give students a distorted view of art and a view that has little resemblance to the world in which they live." She believes that "the ostensibly altruistic goal of giving students what is deemed the very best could actually stunt their ability to critically analyze their immediate life world aesthetic as well as an ability to appreciate various types of art" (p. 72).

The other problem concerns Feldman's (1970) critical process of teaching criticism. This process which has been adopted by many art educators consists of four stages. They are the stage of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. Horner (1988) states, "Feldman sees the work of art as carrying a message irrespective of who the viewer is." He argues that the process is "a method that is intended to keep the viewer from skewing the meaning of an art work with his/her own irrelevant pre-conceptions and expectations." It is "an excuse to eliminate the viewer-as-presence from the scene" (p. 3).

Analysis of the Content of **Art Criticism Instruction**

From the examination of art educators' opinions supporting art criticism instruction for elementary children, five emphases of the content of instruction were found. They are: 1) Exploratory criticism, 2) Critical process, 3) Incorporation with studio activities, 4) Moral training, and 5) Transition from fine arts to visual objects.

Exploratory Criticism

"Exploratory criticism" is defined as "those techniques and procedures that are helpful in realizing the aesthetic values of works of art" (Smith, 1973, p.39). For some art educators, exploratory criticism should be the central concern of art criticism instruction for elementary children (Adams, 1985; Hamblen, 1986; Lanier, 1987; McFee, 1963; Munro, 1956; Park, 1988; Parsons, 1987; Rissati, 1987; Taunton, 1983; Voss, 1938). They think that it is important to develop both the attitudes and the skills required to experience, describe, analyze and interpret the aesthetic qualities of visual forms. Therefore, they will help children to be acquainted with the components of and to explore the meaning of art works. Moreover, Adams (1985), Munro (1956) and Taunton (1983) feel that it is not necessary for children to pay specific attention to learn highly developed powers of evaluative judgment. They consider that judging a work of art means giving it a rank in relation to other works of its type. It is the domain of professional critics and children cannot do

this adequately. Although different art educators have various degrees of interest in discovering aesthetic aspects of a work of art, four major phases can be concluded as follows:

1) Sensuousness. This phase centers on children's frank aesthetic responses to the content of an art object. It is based on the idea that significant learning is affective as well as cognitive. Since art objects can arouse a wide spectrum of feelings and emotions, children are encouraged to talk about emotional states that art objects evoke (Adams, 1985).

2) Description. The main task of this phase deals with the recognition and description of the more literal aspects of visual elements of the art objects being studied. Children are asked to note objects, shapes, colors and other items: to take an inventory of what is seen (Adams, 1985; Eisner, 1972; Risatti, 1987).

3) Formal Analysis. In this phase, teachers focus on the principles of art — that is, on the structure of art objects. Children are expected to develop the ability to describe visual relationships among shapes, forms, lines, and colors with respect to their aesthetic and expressive character. Also, awareness of how artists use these principles in expressing their thoughts and in producing certain effects is requested (Adams, 1985; Eisner, 1972; Lonier, 1987; McFee, 1961; Risatti, 1987; Voss, 1938). However, Adams (1985) recommends the phase of formal analysis only for grades four to six.

4) Meaning. This phase concerns the overall meaning, or significance of the images and forms of art objects. Thematic, cultural or sociological aspects of art works should be introduced to the child corresponding to the grade level (Eisner, 1972; Hamblen, 1986;

McFee, 1961; Parks, 1968, Taunton, 1983). The child is also encouraged to share his own interpretation of art works with others.

Critical Process

A critical process of talking about art works is recommended for children by some art educators (Anderson, 1986; Barkan, 1960; Chapman, 1978; Ecker, 1967; Feldman, 1973; Gaitskell & Hurwitz, 1970; Linderman & Herberholz, 1979; Mittler, 1976). They believe that the child should be made aware of the process of making an aesthetic judgment of a work of art, so that the child can apply it when confronted with any art works or the visual environment. An aesthetic judgment means having both aesthetically experienced a work of art and provided an estimate of its value (Smith, 1973). Therefore, the task of this kind of art criticism instruction is to help children observe works of art, gather information from them, synthesize their findings, speculate about meanings and then use such knowledge as a basis for critical judgments.

Feldman's (1973) approach of critical process is broadly applied or slightly revised by other art educators. It consists of stages of description, analysis, interpretation and judgment. The first three stages are the ways of gathering visual facts and the details of their content have been stated in the "Exploratory Criticism" section. The last stage "judgment" will be described here.

In the judgment stage, children are invited to render their opinions regarding the worth of an art work. Their opinions must be based on what they have learned in the previous stages, so they will not draw premature conclusions. Also they will be challenged to

defend their own acceptance or rejection of an art work. At the same time, teachers will help them to improve the quality of their judgments, with the emphasis on practicing a critical process of talking about a work of art to develop the children's attitudes and skills by using an inquiry method which plays an important role in art criticism instruction.

Incorporating With Studio Activities

Anderson (1986), Barkan (1960), Barkan and Chapman (1967), McFee (1961) and Taunton (1984) want art criticism instruction to be incorporated with children's involvement in studio activities. They believe that the interplay between the making of art, and the viewing, and examination of qualities which appear in works by children or professional artists is beneficial. Personal experience is considered essential in art criticism instruction.

Teachers with this emphasis should help their children to discuss art work produced in the classroom and to discuss related work done by other artists. According to Barkan (1960), teachers should pay attention to helping children to attend to some conscious ways of improving their art work. In McFee's (1961) opinion, teachers may have children compare their own work with that of famous painters. Taunton (1984) suggests that teachers should consider children's reflections about their experiences in relation to those of other artists. Anderson (1986) thinks that the discussion of children's work should be focused on thematic content in relation to what the children are trying to express and on further development of expression. Besides, she suggests that the talk about formal qualities of art work

should be couched within thematic concerns expressed by the child unless there is an assignment specifically directed toward formal concerns.

Moral Training

Based on the rationale that art works can provide moral training for children, the content of art criticism instruction emphasized the moral training aspect during the 1910s and 1920s (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977; Kern, 1987). Qualities such as beauty and morality were used as bases for discussion. Teachers brought children in contact with masterpieces and introduced them to patriotism, religious values or a love of what is beautiful. The moral and virtuous implications were drawn from what they were viewing, but the intrinsic qualities in art works were neglected.

Transition from Fine Arts to Visual Objects

Another emphasis of art criticism instruction refers to a broader view of materials which are offered to children for discussion. It has been considered that a sole emphasis on fine arts is too restricted, since expressive qualities of visual forms are found not only in works of art, but also in the forms we encounter in the environment at large. Art educators think that fine arts (painting, sculpture, etc.), practical arts (architecture, decoration, graphic arts), and any visual objects in our environment should be included as the resources for children to experience and understand (Eisner, 1987; Linderman & Herberholz, 1979). Furthermore, children are expected to transfer their learning about art objects to other areas of their daily lives (Adams, 1985; Feldman, 1972; Risatti, 1987).

A Future Direction for Art Criticism

Instruction of Elementary Children

The objective of this section is to propose a future direction for art criticism instruction of elementary children. It will be constructed by evaluating different art educators' ideas which have been presented in previous sections. Two subsections will be presented. They are: 1) Evaluation of opinions concerning art criticism instruction for elementary children, and 2) A prospective statement of art criticism instruction for elementary children.

Evaluation of Opinions concerning Art Criticism Instruction for Elementary Children

Should elementary children be taught art criticism? This is the question that will be answered in this section. "Art criticism" as defined in chapter I, means knowledgeable and organized information, written or spoken about art work. It not only requires children's perceptual and linguistic capabilities, but it also expects children to be acquainted with the work of art in an systematic way or even with judgments concerning the work. Accordingly, the success of art criticism instruction depends on the child's developmental readiness.

For children before the fourth grade, it is not appropriate to be taught art criticism. They are not capable of this kind of learning for several reasons. First of all, they have not reached a standard visual acuity (Bee, 1985). The visual impression they receive of an object plays a more minor role than their concept of the object (Lowenfeld &

Brittain, 1982). They are strongly guided by direct emotional and kinesthetic experiences (Barkan, 1960).

They can appreciate the concrete qualities of an object but not aesthetic ones (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). Their aesthetic responses are dominated by the subject matter. The expression, form and style of art work are normally neglected by these young children (Hamblen, 1986; Parsons, 1987). Values and ideals are also not important for them. In addition, they are not ready to deal with abstract concepts or to think deductively (Cohen & Gainer, 1976). Moreover, they lack the vocabulary to perform art criticism adequately (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977). This is not a stage of learning using reflective understanding or critical process.

However, aesthetic awareness should be encouraged. Several studies indicate that the most rapid improvement in perceptual analytical ability appears between five and eight years (Barkan, 1960; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). At this age level, the instruction of feeling for shape, sound, and touch of things is strongly suggested by emphasizing personal experience (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982; Smith, 1973). On the other hand, children have the potential to share discoveries, to enjoy telling others what they prefer, and to venture opinions about art (Feldman, 1973; Parsons, 1977 & 1987; Taunton, 1983). Although young children are not able to operationally participate in formal art criticism, they should be given opportunities to talk about their own ideas about art or art works done by themselves.

The literature concerning children's developmental growth reveals that the fifth and sixth graders are ready for a beginning level

of instruction in art criticism. Children at ten or eleven years of age are starting to develop a more critical awareness. An increased level of analytical clarity and maturity in ideas and interests is apparent at this age level (Borken, 1960). This is also a period when children are beginning to develop an understanding of themselves as independent individuals and are able to conceive of other people's viewpoints (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). In addition, linguistic metaphors have been understood to describe psychological states, i.e., an unkind person as icy, or in a cross-sensory manner, a color as loud (Hamblen, 1986). Moreover, older children have been able to interpret what is happening in a picture. They gradually notice aesthetic qualities aside from the concrete qualities of an object, such as the expressive properties in works of art (Hamblen, 1986; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982).

In visual development, fifth and sixth graders' visual growth is obvious. Most of them have reached 20/20 vision that is the usual standard for visual acuity (Bee, 1985). They also are discriminatingly aware of characteristic details of things in their environment (Borken, 1960). With older children, the visual impression they receive of an object plays a more important role than their concept of the object (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982).

However, it is essential to consider some aspects of instruction in art criticism for which fifth and sixth graders are not quite ready developmentally. First of all, although it has been proven beyond doubt, that children do respond to and are able to talk about art, their vocabulary level may not allow for an effective performance of art criticism which involves the use of a great deal of professional terms (Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977). Next, the ability to grasp abstract

elements and to be interested in them comes rather late in the child's mental growth, usually in adolescence (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982; Munro, 1956). According to Piaget's stages of cognitive development, indications are that children cannot deal with verbal abstractions, reason about hypotheses and utilize deductive capabilities until the stage of formal operations, that is, about the age of 12 to 15 (Cohen & Gainer, 1976). In visual development, a study shows that most children, up through sixth grade, are insensitive to line variation and shading in drawings (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). Accordingly, the teaching of formal analysis which emphasizes the visual relationships among forms, lines, and colors seems too abstract for children at this age level and too alien to their interests.

The characteristics of upper elementary children's aesthetic growth also should be taken into consideration. The dominant basis for elementary children's aesthetic response is subject matter (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982; Parson, 1987; Taunton, 1980). The fifth and sixth graders, just like younger children, evaluate a work of art dependent upon the attraction and realistic representation of the subject. They are normally insensitive to the aspect of medium, form, and painting styles of various artists. A study by Gardner (1972) shows that with little training, ten-year-old children could successfully sort paintings by stylistic clues. However, as Parsons (1987) indicates visual detection does not mean aesthetic understanding. Children at this age level do not understand styles as meaningful. Gardner's reward system to teach style only brings unnecessary pressure on these children. In addition, children believe that the artist's intentions are sufficient for judging a painting. They

also depend on the criteria of whoever is looking at the painting. This situation permits an indefinite number of criteria for judging works of art (Parsons, 1987). Therefore, to teach children how to make aesthetic evaluations in a more objective way seems beyond their capabilities.

There are three more concerns which influence the art criticism instruction for fifth and sixth-grade children. First, children's frank aesthetic responses should be emphasized in the first stage of a critical system. This idea is not only based on the belief that significant learning consists of affective as well as cognitive thinking (Adam, 1985), but also responds to the warning that describing a work of art as one's initial experience with it can lead to a fragmenting of the whole aesthetic experience (Horner, 1988). Art objects can arouse a wide spectrum of feelings and emotions. Children with different backgrounds and previous experiences should be encouraged to look at these art works independently and to share personal reactions to them.

Another concern is that art criticism instruction should be related in some way to ongoing studio projects. The interplay between the making of art and the viewing and examination of qualities and meanings which appear in art works is considered beneficial (Anderson, 1986; Barkan, 1960; Barkan & Chapman, 1967; McFee, 1961; Taunton, 1984). According to Piaget's theory, children at this age level are still developing the ability to use inductive logic, that is, to move from their own experiences to a general principle (Bee, 1985). In art-making experience, children may gain concrete insights about the qualities and meanings of other people's art work.

The last concern is that the choice of materials for art criticism

2instruction should be very broad. It has been considered that a sole emphasis on fine arts is too restricted, since expressive qualities of visual forms are found in the environment as well as in works of art (Eisner, 1987; Linderman & Herberholz, 1979). There is also the limitation of only introducing art of a certain type or from a certain culture to children. It can give children a distorted view of art and stunt their ability to appreciate various types of art (Homblen, 1987). Therefore, the materials for art criticism instruction should consist of art objects from fine arts to visual objects and from western and eastern culture.

A Prospective Statement of Art Criticism Instruction for Elementary Children

In this section, a future direction of art criticism instruction for elementary children will be suggested based upon the evaluation in the previous section. From the aspect of children's development, we find that it is not appropriate to teach art criticism to children before the fourth grade, while fifth and sixth graders are found ready for a beginning level of instruction in art criticism. Accordingly, the following statement will be dedicated to the latter.

These are rationales for art criticism instruction for fifth and sixth graders.

- 1) Children at ten or eleven years old are beginning to develop capabilities for learning art criticism. However, they are not developmentally ready for a higher level of instruction in art criticism.

- 2) Art criticism for children is an exploratory process rather

than a discipline. It should be considered a method which can help children discover the meaning of the work of art and find the cultural and social values reflected in it. It should also help children see how their opinions may have shifted or what new insights they gained through the process.

3) Children naturally share discoveries. Art criticism instruction can provide good opportunities for children to communicate their ideas about works of art with others.

4) Learning to accept and deal with human feelings is an important part of growth. Children's frank aesthetic responses should be treated as the initial experiences with works of art. Aesthetic responses should be discussed before any other information is given. By doing so, the aesthetic experience will imprint more firmly in the minds of children.

5) The reciprocal relationship between making art experientially and understanding art intellectually is considered educationally essential. For children at this age, personal experiences are helpful for gaining new insights. It will enhance the effect of the instruction of art criticism. Art criticism instruction ought to be related to ongoing studio projects.

6) In order to provide children with information about those who make and use art and about the kinds of art being produced in the world, materials for art criticism instruction should consist of art objects from fine arts to visual objects and from western to eastern culture. This will prevent children from having a narrow view of art and from not being able to appreciate various types of art.

Based on the above rationale, an exploratory process which consists of four stages as the main content of art criticism instruction for fifth and sixth graders is proposed as follows:

Stage 1: Sensuousness. This first stage concerns children's frank reactions to the work of art. Children are encouraged to trust their responses and to talk about them freely. The sharing of sensory content which is derived from different backgrounds and experiences can also broaden children's views of art and human feelings.

Stage 2: Observation. This stage focuses on perceiving obvious and subtle qualities of the work of art. Children are asked to observe objects, shapes, colors and other items. They are also requested to be aware of unfamiliar items, such as symbols. Teachers should encourage children to ask questions when they are especially interested in knowing something concerning the art object being studied.

Stage 3: Meaning. The main task of this stage concerns the overall meaning or significance of the art object. Not only do teachers provide answers to children's questions raised at the previous stage, but they also introduce basic information concerning thematic, cultural, symbolic or personal aspects of the art work. Besides, children are encouraged to relate the work of art to their own lives and to interpret it in their own ways.

Stage 4: Self-discovery. In this final stage, children are expected to discover what they have learned through the previous stages. Students are encouraged to share any personal changes, regardless of emotional state or intellectual understanding.

A final note is essential. The above four stages of the

exploratory process often overlap. Within this format, teachers are encouraged to apply them creatively based upon their educational needs. In addition, the content of art criticism instruction should be related to ongoing studio projects. The materials provided should be broadly selected, including art objects of various types and from different cultures.

Chapter IV

Conclusions and Recommendations

Research findings and conclusions drawn from this research will be summarized in this chapter and followed by the recommendations for further study.

Summary of Research Findings

The objective of this research was to provide an insight into the direction of art criticism instruction for elementary children. Several themes which have emerged from this study are:

- 1) Children's capabilities for accepting art criticism instruction
 - a. aesthetic development
 - b. intellectual development
 - c. visual development
- 2) Historical development of art criticism instruction
 - a. theoretical rationale
 - b. content

The findings regarding these themes are:

1. Based on the examination of child development theories, elementary children's abilities to accept art criticism instruction relate to their grade levels. Children before fourth grade should not be

taught art criticism, since they are not developmentally ready. However, perceptual awareness activities and opportunities to share their responses about art should be encouraged. For children in the fifth and sixth grade, a beginning level of instruction in art criticism is appropriate. The learning of highly analytical criticism has been proven beyond their capabilities.

2. Art criticism instruction as we have defined — knowledgeable and organized information, written or spoken about art work — has gained its independent status only during the past two decades. Nevertheless, the study of art appreciation which might be considered an antecedent to art criticism dates to the end of the nineteenth century. The historical development of art criticism instruction concludes that:

Art criticism instruction for elementary children started with an emphasis on providing moral training in the 1910s and 1920s and then waned during the Progressive Era of the 1930s and 1940s. In this period, a general climate for art education was closely related to the children's development of creative expression. In the 1950s and 1960s, the child-centered approach to art education shifted to a child-and-subject-centered approach which started to notice the value of cognitive understanding of art itself and emphasized the reciprocal relationship between creative experiences and critical processes in art education. The critical phase of art was to be taught in close relation to studio activities. Over the past eighteen years, a disciplined approach to the teaching of art has been increasingly supported. Art criticism instruction has gained tremendous attention from art educators. Children are expected to be knowledgeable about

art and to be visually literate. Critical systems for examining visual objects became the main concern in the instruction of art criticism.

3. After investigating the historical background concerning art criticism instruction, seven categories of theoretical rationale supporting art criticism instruction were found. They are: 1) developing visual literacy, 2) enhancing studio experience, 3) developing verbal skills, 4) corresponding with the nature of sharing discoveries, 5) developing children's aesthetic responses, 6) increasing knowledge of art, and 7) providing moral training.

4. Three categories of theoretical rationale which oppose the idea that elementary children should be taught art criticism were concluded from the review of literature.

Negative aesthetic and social influences. Teaching children to recognize the value of art work by providing information and using strict critical systems may cause negative influences on them. First of all, the child's spontaneity may be disturbed. Children will also feel frustrated and insecure. In addition, it can lead to a fragmenting of the child's whole aesthetic experience.

Lack of developmental readiness. Elementary children do not have abilities to learn about the critical phase of art work. It seems difficult for them and alien to their interests, or to their aesthetic, intellectual or visual development.

Problems of art criticism instruction. There are three problems existing in art criticism instruction. First, teachers of art oversimplify the problem of aesthetic value by excessively relying on some simple, stereotyped formula. Second, selected exemplars provided for children to study may give children a

distorted view of art. Third, the broadly adopted critical process which generally consists of four stages of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment does not see the viewer who has preconceptions and expectations for discussing art.

5. From the examination of art educators' opinions supporting the idea that art criticism instruction is appropriate for elementary children, five emphases of instruction were found. They are:

Exploratory criticism. The development of both the attitudes and the skills required for realizing the aesthetic value of the work of art.

Critical process. Making an aesthetic judgment about a work of art or the visual environment.

Incorporation with studio activities. Art criticism instruction should occur in relation to studio activities.

Moral training. Moral and virtuous implications are emphasized by bringing children in contact with masterpieces.

Transition from fine arts to visual objects. The development of an understanding of both fine arts and visual objects. It suggests that a broader view of materials be offered for discussion.

Finally, a future direction of art criticism instruction for elementary children was presented by evaluating the above findings. It indicates that art criticism should not be taught to children before the fourth grade, while the fifth and sixth graders are developmentally ready to discover the meaning of an art object to some degree through an exploratory process. However, the process should be in close relation to ongoing studio projects and the materials provided for

discussion should include art objects of various types and from different cultures.

A four-step process which consists of sensuousness, observation, meaning, and self-discovery was suggested in Chapter III. The content of this process emphasizes both the child's need and the significance of the art work being studied. It concerns the child's response that the art object evokes. Based on the child's interest and ability, it also provides basic information concerning the cultural, social and artistic aspects of the art work. In addition, children are encouraged to interpret independently the meaning of the art work and to relate it to their own lives. The process itself may also suggest a meaningful way for children to look at works of art. In a word, the dialogue between the child and the art object is considered important in this fresh approach. It believes that children do not need a strict discipline to understand an art work, but a stimulating environment in which they can enjoy exploring art work as well as themselves.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study points out a general direction for art criticism instruction of elementary children. Based on this direction, further studies in curricular design and teacher preparation can be done. For example, what kinds of symbolic meaning in art forms are appropriate to be taught to both fifth and sixth grade children? And what proper related studio activities can be suggested?

Although the results of this study supported the idea that fifth and sixth grade children should be taught a beginning level of art

criticism and also suggested an exploratory process for teaching it, these ideas and methods need be tested empirically. For example, how does the exploratory process influence children's responses to works of art? Is there any social or aesthetic negative impact on children after receiving the instruction for a period of time? If so, how can this method be revised?

Another recommendation is made for cross-cultural study. Since this study was based on research findings of the United States, a comparison between the results of this study and findings from other countries will help extend our knowledge and fields of vision in art education. Related themes such as the historical development, the theoretical rationale or the content of art criticism instruction for elementary children can be investigated. For instance, articles on art education from the United States may have had great impact on the approach of art instruction in Taiwan. Has it happened in the domain of art criticism? If so, what are those main ideas which have been adapted and how are they going to influence the future direction of art criticism instruction in Taiwan?

Finally, study of the relationship between the instruction of art criticism and aesthetics for older children would be another direction for further research. For example, it is believed that aesthetics is closely related to art criticism. Does it mean that instruction of aesthetics is as appropriate as art criticism instruction for fifth and sixth grade children? If so, what should its content be and how could it be integrated with art criticism instruction?

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