

Respond to and discuss one or both of the following questions: How have Vincent Lanier's writings informed your thinking about art education, both past and present? What are the implications of Lanier's approach to art education for your own educational beliefs and practice?

I chose to start this week's reading with, "A Plague On All Your Houses," in which I found it interesting that almost forty years from when the article was written, that the issues and the discussion of the direction and practice of art education is pretty much the same. Lanier is advocating for social change, aesthetics, morality, and visual culture to be the dominant concerns addressed by art education. For the most part, I listened to Lanier's voice as one from the past that had seen and experienced much in the world of art education; I feel that Lanier was very wise and that as a young art teacher who has less than a decade of teaching experience, that I should listen to what he has to say very carefully and learn from his experience. It was incredible to read, although he was being somewhat sarcastic, his predictions in the article, "The Future of Art Education or Tiptoe Through the Tea Leaves." He had quite a lot of insight about technology and technology and the arts. I began relating what he said in his articles to my own teaching practice and what insights I have gained from this program thus far. I came up with a list of themes that I believe Lanier would approve for the core objectives of my art curriculum. They include, but are not limited to: Developing Self-Identity, Morality, Aesthetics, Social Change, Cultural Identity, Visual Literacy, and Visual Culture. The only problem I think Lanier would have with my teaching approach and the area of his discussion that I disagree with is that I will still focus on the ideation process and production. I understand where he is coming from and am absorbing the idea of using an "aesthetic persuader", as discussed in the article, "Returning the Art to Art Education," as a jumping off point before I begin to discuss more traditional works from art history or from contemporary art. I think what Lanier was saying about teaching about popular art and the aesthetic culture that our students have previous experience with as a starting point is common sense and I totally understand the logic. What I disagree with is Lanier's obsession with placing an emphasis on the media arts. See as he wrote these articles in the mid-seventies, I understand what he envisioned, but I think if Lanier was alive today he would see how our culture has become totally obsessed with media and technology and would comment in two ways: First, I think he would support visual culture education more than ever and see the opportunity and need for educating our youth in the aesthetics and visual literacy needed to understand the hidden messages we are constantly inundated with. Secondly, and I think it would be contradictory, I feel that Lanier would promote more hands on studio based artwork in the school curriculum as a way to provide students with the skills to think for themselves, practice patience, and "unplug" or experience nature (and by that I mean the thinking, making, and reflecting process that embodies human nature). Lanier's desire was to make art education more accessible to all learners, children and adults, and make the education pertinent to contemporary human experience. His writing may be extreme at times, but there is a lot of wisdom in his words if we can listen to what he had to say objectively. Technology has come a long way since Lanier's day, but I don't know that art education has made many changes. Almost forty years later, I have read his articles, I have heard what he had to say, and it has impacted the way I am currently thinking about art education, and I will adapt and adopt some of his ideology into my teaching practice. I bet he was quite a force to be reckoned with...happy to read his work, not so sure I would want to be one of his students though ;).