Survey of Art Teacher Educators: Qualifications, Identity, and Practice

Melody K. Milbrandt
Georgia State University

Sheri R. Klein
University of Wisconsin-Stout

A survey conducted in the fall of 2006 on the National Art Education Association Higher Education Listserv yielded rich demographic information about the contexts, preparation, and values of 100 higher education art educator volunteer participants. The academic credentials of art educator participants, along with hiring and promotion practices in higher education, are presented in this descriptive study. Comparisons of art teacher educators’ perceptions of their professional identity, the time they invest in their professional activities, and their professional priorities are contrasted with their perceptions of their institutions’ values. The issues participants considered most critical to art teacher preparation and future concerns for the field are discussed.

In their review of the state of demographic research in the field of art teacher education, Galbraith and Grauer (2004) argued that “there is much to be learned from examining existing demographic studies” (p. 419) to determine where gaps exist in the research. Zimmerman (1997), Hutchens (1997), Burton (1998), Sevigny (1987), and Davis (1990) all pointed to the need for more demographic research at all levels of art teacher education and practices. Galbraith and Grauer (2004) suggested that demographic inquiry investigates three predominant themes: teacher education programs, preservice and practicing teachers, and teacher educators. A study conducted in the fall of 2006 through the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Higher Education Listserv yielded a wealth of demographic information about the contexts, preparation, and values of 100 art educators in higher education. This article presents and discusses survey data regarding art educators’ academic credentials, professional identity, institutional expectations, and the surveyed art educators’ most important professional concerns. While descriptive quantitative data provided a framework for discussion, the comment sections of the listserv survey also offered respondents an opportunity to extensively illustrate the contexts in which they teach. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data allowed researchers to sketch a rare professional profile of the art educator in higher education.

Background

In January 2006, a job advertisement from the School of the Art Institute was posted on the NAEA Higher Education Listserv. A posted response to this advertisement, written by Sheri Klein, raised questions about the degree qualifications of art educators at the university/college level; that is, why is
an MFA considered as an equal to an EdD or PhD? Subsequent postings followed, and for the next several months, art educator credentials and other related issues were debated by over 60 art educators with over 100 postings. From these discussion postings, there appeared polarized thinking. Many art educators took the position that terminal degrees in art education and teaching experience in K-12 were of prime importance. Other art educators took the position that there needs to be flexibility in hiring practices; that candidates' expertise were more important than their degrees. The online discussion showed that there was not strong consensus regarding the best credentials for an art teacher educator.

Although the listserv served a useful purpose in gauging the pulse of art educators on this seemingly controversial subject, more data were needed to contextualize the listserv comments and to reveal a more complete portrait of art teacher educators and their professional concerns.

**Design of the Study**

Many art educators have developed survey instruments to gain demographic data about the field of art education (Anderson, Eisner, & McRorie, 1998; Burton, 1998; Galbraith, 1997/2001; Thompson & Hardiman, 1991; Milbrandt, 2002). We developed an electronic survey, the *NAEA Higher Education Demographics, Interests and Needs Assessment (Listserv Survey)*, to gather data of 48 items from Higher Education Division members about their credentials, practices, and concerns. All NAEA Higher Education Listserv members were invited to respond in the fall of 2006. In this survey, we utilized a volunteer sample of convenience rather than a stratified random sampling procedure. The survey questions were developed from three guiding research questions:

1) What credentials, educational backgrounds, and experiences do university/college art educators possess?
2) How do art educators identify themselves as professionals?
3) What content do art educators believe is most important to address in teacher preparation and what are their greatest professional concerns for the future of the field?

In this article we present a descriptive summary of demographic survey information regarding participant credentials and qualifications, professional identity, contexts and concerns relating to practice. Qualitative comments were analyzed and grouped to determine if there were patterns or clusters of agreement or dissimilarity among the responses.

**Demographic Portrait of Participants**

**Rank and Experience**

When the Listserv Survey was posted in October of 2006, there were 956 members of the Higher Education Division, of which 422 were members of the Higher Ed Listserv. Listserv members included university/college art educators, doctoral students, and retired university/college art educators. Initially, 101 Higher Education members began the survey. One participant
completed only parts of the survey, so the total number of full participants was 100, or approximately 24% of the total Listserv membership.

**Participants' Degrees and Qualifications**

When survey participants were asked to indicate all of their academic credentials, 68% reported that they held a PhD, while 24% had an EdD, indicating that 92% of all of the respondents held terminal degrees in art education or related fields. Fifteen percent of the respondents had a terminal degree in studio art, the MFA, and a few participants held more than one terminal degree. Seventy-nine percent of the survey participants indicated that the PhD was a listed employment requirement for their art education position at the time of their hiring; 53% reported the EdD was acceptable; and 20% indicated that the ABD was listed as an acceptable qualification. A few (7%) of the participants indicated that the MA was listed as an acceptable credential in the job description, along with 2% who indicated that an MS was listed. When asked if they thought the same degree requirements would be required today in a position listing, 93% responded “yes,” and 7% responded “no.” Seventy-seven percent of the art educators speculated that the PhD degree would be required today, and 46% speculated that today the EdD would be an acceptable credential; 38% speculated that other degrees might also be accepted. Terminal degrees in related arts fields were viewed as permissible credentials in art education by several participants. Fifteen percent of the respondents speculated that the MFA would be acceptable in their institution as a credential for teaching art education. No one indicated that the MS or MA degrees would be a sufficient qualification for a tenure track art education teaching position in their institution today.

Seventy-four percent of the art educators reported that the terminal degree, the PhD or the EdD, in art education was required by the time of tenure, while 23% reported that their institutions did not require a doctorate degree for tenure. Participants indicated holding other terminal degrees outside of art education including: art history (3); an MFA in sculpture, drawing, painting, fiber, fine arts, and ceramics (6); a PhD in Art and Arts Education, areas of education, curriculum and instruction, policy and distance learning (14). In several cases, participants held both MFA degrees and doctoral level degrees in art education or areas of education. Several other participants holding an MFA also reported having a master’s level degree in Art Education. Three percent of the survey respondents indicated that they taught in institutions that did not have a tenure system. Four percent reported that, as long as the terminal degree was in an arts-related field, it was an acceptable degree for an Art Education teaching position.

Regarding skills and qualifications for their position, 82% of the participants believed that K-12 teaching experience was helpful in securing their current position. Seventy-five percent indicated that higher education teaching experience was helpful. Sixty-nine percent indicated that they thought their research interests helped in their hiring; 60% indicated organis-
zational and management skills; and more than 50% indicated that artistic proficiency and research methodology skills were important.

**Discussion**

The majority of institutions represented recognize that the terminal degree in art education (PhD or EdD) is critical to meeting professional standards, gaining external accreditation, gaining tenure, and developing quality art education programs. According to Listserv Survey respondents, 15% of participants have an MFA. This finding is highly consistent with Galbraith’s (2001) study that 15% of university art educators reported having an MFA. The recent 2006 survey, however, suggests a marked increase in the number of art educators with doctorates—92% in 2006 as compared to 66% reported by Galbraith (2001) and 53% reported by Thompson and Hardiman (1991). Although this survey depicted a group of art educators with a high percentage (92%) of terminal degrees, we believe that Galbraith’s question from 2001, “Should the field be concerned that over one-third of college faculty members [in art education] do not have doctoral degrees?” (Galbraith, 2001, p. 175) is still relevant because almost a quarter (24%) of the participants indicated that even if they possessed a terminal degree in art education, it was not necessarily a criterion for employment, or for tenure and promotion.

The rationale for hiring practices needs further exploration, particularly among institutions granting doctorates in art education. Although the reasons for flexibility in institutional employment practices may be related to economic issues and institutional values, the impact on the field of art teacher education should be of equal consideration. More research is needed to determine the impact of hiring MFAs and graduates of new studio art PhD degree programs to fill art education positions. Particularly, small colleges, art schools, and universities who have small departments often seek “flexibility,” and “people with only one specialty [art education] will find it hard to compete” (Elkins, 2007, p. 109). While the field of art education traditionally tends to focus on research and scholarship related to curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, the issue of terminal degrees is important. Terminal degrees impact professional security, the direction and production of knowledge, research, and ultimately, the identity of our field.

**Perceived Institutional Values**

When asked to rank the values held as most valuable within their institution for promotion and tenure, over half of the participants (57%) reported that Research or Written Scholarship is the activity most highly valued by the institution for promotion and tenure. Twenty-five percent of the participants ranked the role of Teacher as the second most important, followed by the role of the Exhibiting Visual Artist as the most valued activity for promotion and tenure (20%). Table 1 depicts art educators’ rankings of professional roles or activities they view as most highly valued by their institutions.

In the additional written comments participants expressed frustration at the relatively low valuing of teaching and related activities in the promotion
and tenure process compared to the institutional expectation for generating publications. One respondent suggested that institutions give lip-service to the goal of good teaching, but for promotion and tenure other factors carry much more weight.

**Discussion**

Most institutions of higher education generally evaluate faculty based on three general areas: Professional Development, Service, and Teaching (NASAD, 2006). These three criteria were also consistently identified by the art education participants as the most important in their institutions. However, the value awarded to each of these areas within the overall evaluation varies greatly among and within institutions. Further research is needed to determine if significant relationships exist between the size and structure of institutions and their expectations and evaluations of faculty.

**Professional Identity**

Survey participants were asked to rank items that best describe their professional identity or the activities in which they felt they made their most important contributions to the field. The following chart (Table 2) illustrates the percentage rankings by participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Activity</th>
<th>Art Educator’s Perception of Institution’s High Valuing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research, Written Scholarship</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching, Art Education</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibiting Visual Artist</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Art, Researcher</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Duties</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Service/Leadership</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/Dissertation Chair</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Art Teachers’ Perceptions of Institutional Highly Valued Activities.
Aspects of Art Educator Identity | Percentage of Teachers Highest Valuing
--- | ---
Educator, Art Educator | 52%
Advisor, Mentor | 23%
Researcher, Art Education Written Scholarship | 18%
Professional Service, Leadership | 17%
Administrative Duties | 15%
Educator, Artist | 11%
Activist | 10%
Thesis/Dissertation Chair | 10%
Visual Artist Researcher | 5%
Exhibiting Visual Artist | 3%

Table 2. Rankings of Professional Art Educator Important Aspects of Identity.

Art educators assumed a variety of roles based on their institutional needs, professional preparation, interests, and areas of expertise. It is not surprising that participants ranked the role of Art Educator, or Teacher, as the most important aspect of their identity (52%) because that is the focus of art teacher education programs. This finding correlates to Galbraith’s (2001) study in which 45% of the respondents indicated that they identify themselves first as an “art educator” (p. 167). Ranked lower (23%), but second in its importance to the participants’ perceptions of identity, was the role of Advisor or Mentor. Survey respondents ranked Research, or Art Education Written Scholarship, as the third most important aspect of their identity (18%). The role of Exhibiting Visual Artist was ranked lowest (3%).

Discussion
In comparing Tables 1 and 2, there is a strong sense that Teaching is very important to an art educator’s identity (52%), but is perceived as a lower institutional priority (25%). Respondents perceived Research as the highest value of the institution (57%), while they ranked this professional activity third as an aspect of their Art Educator identity (18%). Likewise, although participants ranked Advising and Mentoring (23%) as second to Teaching as a valuable aspect of identity, it was perceived as a much lower institutional priority (11%). The reverse ranking of Professional Service, Leadership and
Administrative duties (17%) were placed in the top half of participants’ important identity roles, but in the bottom half of those roles perceived important by the institution. Participants valued equally their roles as Activist (10%) and Thesis/Dissertation Chair (10%), but perceived that their institutions ranked both activities at the lowest level of importance. Although it was not believed to be valued by institutions, the role of art educator as activist clearly emerged as a new category of activity based on recent Higher Ed Listserv discussions, and is supported by scholarship within the field. Galbraith (2001) also found that “individuals and institutions prioritize expectations differently” (p. 169).

It was also interesting that only 5% of the participants identified with the role of Visual Artist Researcher, and 3% identified being an Exhibiting Visual Artist, as being important to their identity. Yet 50% of respondents reported that artistic proficiency was important in their hiring process. This compares with Galbraith’s (2001) findings that only 7% of art educators she surveyed identified with being an artist, yet, curiously 56% of her respondents reported that they were expected to produce and exhibit their art (p. 169).

Participants in the Listserv Study perceived the activity of Exhibiting Artist as the third highest value of their institution (20%). Participants also ranked the role of Educator/Artist (11%) much higher than being a Visual Artist Researcher (5%) and more important to their identity than being an Exhibiting Visual Artist (3%). This may suggest that art educators engage in art production and research within the context of their classes, and may identify themselves as artists without engaging in producing a substantial body of artwork and/or do not exhibit their work on a regular basis in the established artistic forums of galleries.

Almost all comparisons of participant rankings suggest a disconnection between the personal/professional values of art educators and their perceptions of the institutions in which they work. This lack of match between participants’ identity and values and their workplace may result in ongoing professional tension (Alsup, 2006). Because art educators typically work with colleagues in a variety of different institutional units, there may be a sense that the scope of their work is not always fully understood or appreciated. In some research institutions, publications based on instructional, curriculum, or theoretical research are not as highly valued as empirical research, so even scholarly research may be viewed with bias (Fassett & Warren, 2007). The survey participants’ high valuing and ranking of Teaching in contrast to their perceived value of Teaching by their institutions suggests that art educators may believe that their institutions value research production and external grants over good teaching. Yet, the criteria for retention and promotion of faculty include successful teaching, and as the next section of this survey suggests, art teacher educators spend a great deal of time on teaching-related activities.
Time Spent on Professional Activities

Survey participants were asked to assign a percentage of time to eight activities so that the total accounted for 100% of their time on the job. The structure of this question caused participants the most difficulty in completing. Some respondents commented that the overlap of many of the activities could have been more productively described using another kind of instrument. However, as researchers, we feel that it is possible to gain a sense of how participants use their time, based on the frequency of responses in specific clustered areas.

Findings, Percentages of Time Spent

The constraints of reporting time in this instrument were problematic not only because of the survey instrument but also because participants revealed that the time they spend on professional activities is difficult to dissect and compartmentalize. Written comments revealed that art teacher educators in higher education work many hours beyond the typical 40-hour work week, so conveying a specific amount of time was difficult. Participants also suggested that the amount and kind of work varied depending on the time of year or needs of the department. Still, approximately 30% of the written responses suggested that teachers worked between 60 and 70 hours per week.

Commenting on their workload, several art educators noted that they give more than 100%: “(I work) 120 percent. I work long days six days a week.” Another explained, “We are really required to do 40 percent Teaching, 40 percent Research, 20 percent Service, but do much more in our free time and at night. We do 160 percent.” Although participants realized that research was important, they sometimes viewed research as an activity to “fit in” around the demands of teaching, advising, and addressing clerical or administrative tasks. As one participant reported “I’m required to do it all.”

Because of the lack of flexibility in the survey question, specific time allocations for individual activities cannot be made, but responses did cluster into groups (Table 3) so we as researchers could see some patterns indicating the participants’ average use of time. Outlying single rankings of individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Average Time Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>approximately 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>approximately 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Work/ Student Advising</td>
<td>16% (average of 2 categories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Service</td>
<td>approximately 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>approximately 8% (with 81% below 10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. General Ranking of Time Spent on Different Activities.
items were withheld from the averages calculated to focus the results on clusters of responses.

These results bear some similarity in ranking to those in the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) 2006 Report on Faculty Responsibilities. In public institutions with 401 or more art majors, faculty spent 36.4% of their time in teaching students (or supervision); 19.9% of their time in advising [about] theses or dissertations; and 18.2% of their time in committee work. These percentages represent all faculty members of Art and Design programs but did not include Professional or Administrative/Institutional Service. That category of activity would likely have impacted the distribution of faculty time in responses.

**Discussion of Time Spent on Professional Activities**

Even with the difficulties of the survey instrument in reporting time allocations, some interesting comparisons (Table 4) may be made by comparing the time participants reported spending [on various activities, their valuing of different activities related to their identity as an art educator, and their perceptions of institutional valuing of their activities.

An interesting phenomenon was noticed when comparing the general amounts of time participants spend on these activities, the importance they place on these activities to their sense of identity as an Art Educator, and the importance placed on these activities by institutions. In each activity, the percentage of time art educators spent on the activities was situated between

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Activity</th>
<th>Time Spent</th>
<th>Valuing of Activity to Art Educator Identity</th>
<th>Art Educators’ Perception of Institutional Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Committee Work/Advising average of Advising 23%, 11% &amp; Thesis/Dissertation Chair 10%, 6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Average Identity Value 16.5%</td>
<td>Average Institutional Value 8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Institutional Service</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Service</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio Exhibiting Artist</td>
<td>10% (81 less than 8%)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Time Spent on Professional Activities Compared to Importance of Items to Identity and Institutional Valuing.
the value rating of the art educator and the perceived value rating of the institution. In other words, art educators seem to allocate their time based on a negotiation between their valuing of the activity and the valuing of that activity by the institution. In some cases, the amount of time allocated was more closely associated with art educator’s identity value, as in the case of Research, Studio Production, and Advising/Student Committee activity, but sometimes the time allocated to the actual activity was in closer proximity to the institutional value, as in the time allocated for Teaching and Professional Service and Administrative/Institutional Activities.

The portion of time allocated to each activity was within a 10-point range of the importance value ranking placed on the activity, except in the area of Research. Participants perceived the institutional valuing of research (57%) at more than double, both of their valuing of that aspect of identity (18%) and of the time they were able to allocate for it (20%). The constraints and tensions on art educators as they navigate between a variety of roles and expectations are made apparent in these comparisons. More research is necessary to determine how the negotiation between individual and institutional values in the higher education workplace is manifested as time spent on a variety of job-related tasks.

Relevant Issues

When participants were asked to identify the issues they felt were most important to address in their teacher preparation courses or program, the highest priority were issues of pedagogy or “how to teach” (48%). The second highest priority was planning art instruction, writing lesson plans, and addressing standards (37%), while the third highest ranked issue was addressing multicultural content and pedagogy (31%). Assessment was ranked fourth (24%); behavior management techniques were ranked fifth (23%); and issues of social justice were sixth in importance (21%).

Discussion

When art teacher educator participants ranked issues that they considered most important to address in teacher preparation, the highest priorities listed were issues of pedagogy and planning instruction. This response reflects a strong interest in teacher candidates’ performance in the K-12 classroom. The third highest ranked focus, multicultural content and pedagogy, also strongly related to the context of the K-12 classroom performance.

Most Pressing Issues

When asked to rank the most pressing issues in the next 10 years, participants prioritized the 10 concerns found in Table 5.

The top two most selected important concerns in the coming decade depict the intertwining of curriculum concerns with external political pressures. The mid-ranked concerns centered the internal institutional environment of collaborations, workload, and access to and use of technology. The concerns in the lower third centered on program funding, broad professional issues regarding teacher preparation, salaries, and institutional funding.
In the additional written comments regarding the most pressing issues facing higher education in the next 10 years, there appeared to be a continued emphasis on content, pedagogy, and research. Participants expressed that a pressing issue would be the emphasis on issues of global concern, including multicultural content, women’s issues, and issues of social justice (40%). Simultaneously, other respondents (20%) felt there was too much emphasis on issues of social justice. Twenty percent of the comments described the need for training highly competent art educators, equipped to deliver a rigorous curriculum and utilize contemporary methods of assessment.

**Discussion**

Participants viewed the two most important issues for the field as concerns about 1) teacher preparation practices, and 2) external practice and policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). As the field continues to evolve through research and experience, the content of what is important to teach and systems of delivery will need to be continually reviewed and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking/% of Participants</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 38%</td>
<td>Curriculum, connected to item #6, global issues &amp; curriculum</td>
<td>The content and focus of the art education curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 34%</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>External political forces, i.e., No Child Left Behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 21%</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Working across departments, institutions, organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 19%</td>
<td>Increase in work load</td>
<td>Preparing greater numbers of quality K-12 art teachers/ work load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 17%</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Utilizing technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 13%</td>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>Need a published record of salaries for reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 13%</td>
<td>Connecting</td>
<td>NAEA’s connection to global issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 12%</td>
<td>College Teacher Preparation</td>
<td>Need and implications of more quality art educators for higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8 12%</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Accountability issues arising from accreditation agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9 11%</td>
<td>Internal budgets</td>
<td>Program budgets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Participants’ Rankings of Most Important Issues in the Next 10 Years.
revised. These two items may also have a causal relationship. In the history of education, the focus and the content of curriculum often has reflected the social and political climate of the day. How politically driven educational policies will impact the quality and time for art education instruction is yet to be fully determined. The third greatest issue of concern for art teacher educators is the need for working collaboratively. According to Fassett and Warren (2007), working collaboratively to establish a sense of community is essential to critical pedagogy, and to move organizations or institutions toward change or growth. Respondents to this survey seem to understand a need for art educators to develop strong relationships across departments, colleges, and institutions, as well as the need for NAEA to become a more collaborative organization, both internally and externally.

The fourth item of greatest concern for art educators is an increasingly heavy workload. The time consuming demands of service and administrative duties required of many higher education faculty increase the teacher-researcher workload significantly. Workload issues will continue to be impacted by the increased use of adjuncts in higher education and the juggling of teaching, administrative, research, and service responsibilities. In a 2006 American Association of University Professors (AAUP) report, Curtis and Jacobe (2006) noted that 46% of all higher education faculty serve in part-time appointments and non-tenure-track positions, accounting for 65% of all faculty appointments in American higher education.

Conclusion

As researchers, we realize that the information generated from the 100 volunteer responses to the NAEA Higher Education Listserv Survey may not be generalized to the entire field of art education. However, we feel there is sufficient data to confirm earlier demographic studies, and we hope to encourage future studies. This article does not address all of the information gathered in the Listserv Survey, but we have selected an interesting slice of the data to report in this article in the hope of painting a candid portrait of current conditions in the field of post-secondary art education.

Summary of Research Questions and Findings

What credentials, educational backgrounds and experiences do university/college art educators possess? When participants were asked to indicate their academic credentials, 67% reported that they had a PhD, and 24% had an EdD, for a total of 91% participants holding an Art Education terminal degree. The NAEA suggested standard of a doctoral degree in Art Education (Johnson, 1993) appeared to be the predominant practice in hiring for art educator positions. However, while this study revealed a high number of individuals holding terminal degrees in art education, those credentials were not necessarily mandated by the institutions where they are employed; some institutions accepted alternative qualifications. Although the diversity of educational and artistic experiences of art teacher educators has enriched the field, the breadth of experiences and qualifications may also have complicated issues related to work load, compensation, accreditation, tenure, promotion,
and professional identity. Approximately one-third of all survey participants did not teach more than 3 years in a public school setting.

More research is needed to determine the impact of K-12 public school experience and other kinds of community-based K-12 art teaching experiences on art teacher educators and their students. Additional pro-active research into hiring practices in higher education art education is necessary to determine the circumstances in which alternative qualifications and teaching experiences are accepted or sought and the implications these practices have for the field.

**How do art educators identify themselves as professionals?** Most of the art education participants in this study viewed themselves as teachers first. They valued their research and their relationships with students as mentors and advisors directing and serving on theses and dissertations committees. Higher education art educators negotiated their use of time between the activities that they value and their perceptions of the values or expectations of their institutions. They reported working long hours and performing numerous different administrative duties beyond their roles of teacher and researcher. Very few teachers strongly identified with the role of exhibiting artists.

More research is needed regarding the professional daily life and identity of art educators at all teaching levels (Anderson, 2000; Eisner, 1998; Hutchens, 2001).

In most universities, the ultimate mission and criteria for faculty performance has been based on professional development, teaching, and service. These have traditionally been viewed as discrete, disconnected, and compartmentalized professional activities. Based on the writings of John Dewey regarding education and society, University of Pennsylvania historian and academic administrator, Ira Harkavy, suggested that the links between the three areas of academia need to be more integrated and perhaps holistically evaluated, so that research and teaching become more visibly connected and closely aligned with needs in the community or environment (Valli, 1999). Recent discussions among members of the College Art Association (CAA), Foundation in Art: Theory and Education (FATE) and the National Art Education Association (NAEA) suggested that the merits of sound pedagogical practice in higher education teaching might be a rising concern not only for art educators, but also for studio art teachers, particularly at the foundations levels.

Within the university setting, teacher preparation must become more highly valued within academic units so the institutional lines between academic content and pedagogy are more blended and diffused. This requires that “university policies, rewards, and incentives must be used to effect the normative and cultural changes needed to encourage and enable faculty to deal with real problems” in education (Valli, 1999, p.66). More research is needed to determine how the roles of teacher, teacher preparation programs, and specifically, art educators are valued within institutions of higher education.
Finally, what content do art educators believe is most important to address in teacher preparation and what are their greatest professional concerns for the future of the field? The most important priority for participants in this study seemed the preparation of effective art teachers who are competent to plan and deliver meaningful art instruction to our increasingly global P-12 population. Changing contexts and demographics in the art classroom have necessitated ongoing research in art teaching and learning. The second highest ranking concern was the impact of external political agendas on education and the arts.

More research is needed that may be used to address policy issues in general education as well as art education. Four concerns raised by art educators in this study were also listed as pressing issues in higher education noted by the AAUP (American Association of University Professors, n.d.): accreditation, workload, compensation, and tenure.

Through their collective responses the higher education art educator participants in the Higher Education Listserv Survey emerged as a well-prepared, hard-working and caring group of individuals. Regardless of the differences in their educational credentials and experience, most participants seemed to negotiate their way through their institutions even when they held a somewhat different set of values and expectations.

More cross-disciplinary research is needed to determine if these conflicts are unique to the field of art education or higher education in general. The art teacher educators in this study held a strong commitment to students and to art teacher preparation. Many have a vision for art education in a global society with multiple pluralistic values. Ongoing research is needed to further document the complexity and demands of teaching art education within institutions of higher education, which may help us to better understand the plurality of visions, the tensions and constraints, and the collective goals necessary for future growth of the field.

References


