

The Academic  
Accomplishments  
and Scholarly  
Spirits of An  
Exemplary  
American Art  
Educator, Michael  
J. Parsons

# The Academic Accomplishments and Scholarly Spirits of An Exemplary American Art Educator, Michael J. Parsons

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## Abstract

It is an excitement to meet a great well-known international scholar during one's academic journey, just like when you meet a great docent in art museum to guide you with professional knowledge and passion. In *The Good Guide*, a good docent is one with a magic flute whose music can lead the audience to enter a fantastic world of wonderment and amusement. To me, both scholarly and personally, professor Michael J. Parsons is a perfect model to illustrate this kind of excellent docent qualities in the academic world of art education. It is one's great fortune to meet a great professor who has such magical characteristics during academic journey. I first got to know him in academic literature and then become acquainted with him personally. Knowing such a great scholar has since intrigued my passion to study art education. This paper is a brief discussion on Parsons' academic accomplishments and scholarly spirits through the theory of great docent by Edwards (1976). Three characteristics of a great docent, proposed by Edwards, are: knowledge, passion, and affinity; these will be used to guide my discussion. The first part is discussion on his academic background, teachings, and research contributions. Also, his well-known theoretical contributions on constructing children's aesthetic understanding in ten years are discussed. The second part is on his passion in academic teaching. The

third part is on his affinity, which is illustrated through my three personal interviews with three of his disciples in Taiwan's academia. These three art educators were advised under Parsons during their graduate study at The Ohio State University. Text analysis of relevant art educational literature, and open-ended questionnaire and face-to-face interviews are the research methods used in this research paper.

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**Key words: Art education paradigm, Docent characteristics,  
Aesthetic understanding development**

## I. Introduction

### 1. Parsons' characteristics as a great academic docent

Edwards (1976) once said that a good docent is one with a magic flute whose music can lead the audience to enter a fantastic world of wonderment and amusement. Such a good docent possesses three kinds of characteristics: knowledge, passion, and affinity. Professor Michael J. Parsons to me is a perfect model to illustrate this kind of excellent docent qualities in the academic world of art education. It is one's great fortune to meet a great professor who has such magical music characteristics during academic journey. With his personal guidance and great research insights as the key to enlighten us academic beginners, we as museum audience get to understand the treasuries with profound impact. McCoy(1989)attributed docent profession as providing information service, guiding service, educational service, marketing service, and also exploring service. With such well-rounded services, docent profession then provides the museum audience a comprehensive museum visiting experience. Docent can be the curators, staff members, volunteers, schoolteachers, or artists themselves. They have in-depth knowledge about artifacts, art, and artworks, and provide contextual knowledge and experience for audience. McCoy defined a well-disciplined docent as one who can contribute to explain and encourage audience's thought-provoking learning activities.

Docent involves the process of introducing, explaining, and interpreting works of art. It is an inspiring and yet challenging work. Professor Parsons has been playing this role successfully for decades. In the summer of 2002, I attended the Ohio-State University-Art-Education-Summer-Study program that was a cross-university graduate foreign study trip made possible by professor Ann Kuo. During the 31 days at OSU, Parsons taught major contemporary art educational issues and had broadened our ordinary views about what art education encounters and embraces in our current society. The study program included in-class lectures and discussions, and field trips

to local schools and art museums. The final week was a group project titled *Integrated Art Curriculum with Big Ideas*, which encouraged students to apply theoretical ideas to reflect current relevant art educational issues and problems in Taiwan.

The most impressive of all in this learning experience to me was that Parsons was an intellectually inspiring scholar as well as a nice and friendly elder person who took care of students with detailed cares and sensitive concerns. He also showed us the American culture and enjoyed such cultural-exchange learning with us together. This foreign learning experience had not only expanded our view of art education, but also illustrated the modest and thoughtful quality of his personalities. Our admiration on his nice personalities, great academic mind, and passion for learning other cultures had made this a precious life-time learning experience for all of us, and consequently inspired our further passion to study more advanced art education issues and theories. After this study trip, I studied more on his publications and theories, and also took courses by his three OSU doctorate disciples from whom I found similar qualities on critical academic thinking and passion for educating others. I interviewed these three disciples, professor A, professor B, and professor C. They all demonstrated Parsons' academic ethics and good morals as an art education academia. They always try to evoke students' critical thinking and passionately guide students' problem solving in their intellectual journey.

## 2. Research methods

This paper will depart from Edwards' three docent characteristics as the way to organize discussion sections: knowledge, passion, and affinity. On knowledge, I will discuss Parsons' academic background, teaching, research and service, publications, and academic influences on the field. Moreover, his well-known ten-years survey research of cognitive development of aesthetic understanding is discussed. On passion, the development of his academic thinking on various topics and issues is illustrated, so are his

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contributions on advising master and doctorate studies. On affinity, the face-to-face interview of his three disciples is demonstrated.

The research method is to apply literature analysis to first layout Parsons' major theoretical works that illustrate his academic knowledge contributions to the field of art education and their profound influence on later researchers. Then, his affinity is demonstrated through my interviews with three of his disciples who are all university art education professors. This later part is especially of significance, because from the interview scripts, one can see his passionate spirits for educating others through art, which serves as good complimentary sources to understand him better as a person.

The interviewed respondents are:

Respondent 1 : Professor A (studied under Parsons from 1996 to 2000)

Respondent 2 : Professor B (studied under Parsons from 1998 to 2002)

Respondent 3 : Professor C (studied under Parsons from 1996 to 2004)

## **II. Research findings and discussion**

### **1. Knowledge**

#### **(1) Parsons' academic background**

Parsons has shown his continuation of passion on devoting his research efforts to various kinds of art educational issues and problems. His educational background in advanced philosophical training in University of Illinois has made him a critical thinker and philosopher as an art educator. His teaching to students has continued to emphasize on the importance of independent and reflective thinking. Teaching dialectically has dominated his method on interacting in class and in advising students. His education on English literature in younger age has also made him a great writer; his writing style has become distinctive among art educator researchers, which is sharp and powerful in words and perspectives. His obtainment of a teacher certification after two years study then provided him the turn to establish academic career in the educational field. (See table 1)

Parsons has shown interests on various kinds of subjects including economics, history, politics, globalization, environmental issues, technology, socio-cultural issues, etc. His research efforts have often illustrated close connections between art education and other subjects and disciplines. This is very unique, comparing with most art educators; it is very common that most art education researchers often limit their research perspectives within the worldview of art education. In his later years, Parsons has even begun learning Chinese, both language and culture, to continue his passion on learning different world languages.

Table 1 Parsons' educational background

School	Major and Degree	Duration
College of Education, University of Illinois	M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Philosophy of Education	1963-1967
Institute of Education, University of London	Certificate of Education	1958-1959
Brasenose College, Oxford University	B.A. in English Language and Literature, with Honours	1955-1958

## (2) Parsons' educational background

After obtaining teacher certification from University of London, Parsons first taught at Plymouth High School for four years, and then began his advanced academic study in College of Education, University of Illinois, where he later became teaching assistant with professor Harry Broudy. After finishing his four years study and receiving his doctorate degree, he began university teaching at College of Education, where he stayed for twenty years of service and obtained his full professorship, and also served as chairperson and vice dean of College of Education. In 1987, Parsons published his well-known book, *How We Understand Art*, and has since become a dominant academic figure in the international field of art education research and practice. His theory of aesthetic understanding has helped teachers, parents, as well as art world to establish practical conceptual base on the discipline of teaching art. For such an outstanding performance on research, administration, and teaching, Parsons was then recruited to become the chairperson of Ohio State University's Department of Art

Education, which was ranked the best of its kind in US at the time. Since then, his academic research and career has devoted more fully into inquiries of art education. After twenty years at OSU and retired, he was invited to be research professor at University of Illinois in 2006 till present time.

Parsons is an international scholar who loves to travel cross borders for academic as well as cultural exchanges. His international fame has led him to many invitations from well-known international art education departments. He has visited and gave short-term teachings in countries including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Canada, England, etc. Especially he visited Taiwan very frequently from time to time to teach short courses to students of Taiwan Normal University and Chang Hwa University of Education. From 2000 to 2004, he helped to facilitate 31-days foreign study trips at OSU and had promoted multi-cultural experience for over one hundred teacher participants from Taiwan. Below is Parsons' educational and professional background:

- University of Illinois Research Professor (2006~present)
- Ohio State University Graduate Chairperson, Department of Art Education (1987-2006)
- Hong Kong Institute of Education Visiting Research Professor (2003-2004)
- Ohio State University Chairperson, Department of Art Education (1987-1995)
- University of Utah Vice Dean and Chairperson, College of Education (1979-1983)
- University of Utah Adjunct Professor, Department of Philosophy (1971-1987)
- University of Utah Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, College of Education (1967-70, 70-75, 75-87)
- University of Illinois Research Assistant with Professor Harry Broudy (1963-1967)
- Plymouth High School, England Teacher (1959-1963)

- One-year visiting at University of British Columbia, Pennsylvania State University, University of Minnesota, Hong Kong Institute of Education, Chang-Hua University of Education (Taiwan).

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### **(3) Ten-years research on cognitive development of aesthetic understanding**

In 1987, Parsons published the book *How we understand art: A cognitive developmental account of aesthetic experience*, and has since established his research authorities importance in the field of art education. For ten years of survey and interviews of children of different ages, he constructed a theoretical framework on children's aesthetic understanding and its cognitive developmental significance. With seven survey questions, he interviewed three hundred children as well as adults on their personal ideas and aesthetic judgments on eight contemporary artworks by well-known artists. Semi open-ended interview was conducted to encourage respondents to talk freely about their personal readings of the meaning and impact of artworks. The raw data was analyzed for their common significance to observe for an overarching guidance and underlying theoretical implications. A long-term qualitative research like this was not found yet in the field and thus it became a standard research method during 90s. It was later translated to various languages and had inspired further relevant research interests on such topics.

His concluding analysis was a generation of a cognitive aesthetic model of understanding with four dimensions and five stages; four dimensions are: 1) subject matter, 2) emotional expression, 3) medium and form, and 4) judgment; five stages are: 1) favoritism, 2) beauty and realism, 3) expressiveness, 4) style and form, and 5) autonomy. This breakthrough perspective on how people generate their aesthetic understanding soon became a standard theoretical framework to be explored and compared in regards to Jean Piaget's cognitive developmental theory and Lawrence Kohlberg's moral developmental theory. This book had pioneered the link between cognitive development and aesthetic understanding. It also became



the standard reference for researchers and teachers in both art education and early childhood education.

Comparing with Immanuel Kant's three frameworks of aesthetic theory, aesthetics involves self-understanding of one's inner world, which is different from Piaget's experience theory and Kohlberg's moral judgment. The inner self-understanding is a reflection of both one's cognitive development as well as reflection of one's visual experience. Parsons' theoretical framework made it possible to further investigating such inner self-understanding. Though distinctively different in purposes and viewpoints, these three different theoretical perspectives compliment each other. They embrace the worldviews, degrees of cognitive maturation, socio-cultural norms and values, and self-understanding of a person's experience of the physical world. This is why the topics of cognition always dominate the field of educational research. Parsons' cognitive framework later has established the ground base for art educators to design curriculum and assessment.

Table 2 Parsons' seven interview questions

Seven questions	Four dimensions
1. Please describe for me what you see.	
2. What is the subject matter of this painting? Is it good subject matter?	Subject-matter
3. What feelings do you have looking at this painting?	Expression
4. How are the colors of this painting? Are they good?	
5. What is the form of this painting? Is it well organized?	Medium, form, style
6. Is it hard to paint? What is hard and why?	
7. Is it a good painting? Why?	Judgment

Based on the above survey research, Parsons concluded the following five stages of developing aesthetic judgment: 1) favoritism, which refers to pre-socialization age's preference when one cannot yet recognize one's own difference from others, such as those of pre-school children; 2) beauty and realism, which refers to one's apparent preference on the subject matter and realistic degree of painted surface. People of this stage care more about the demonstration of realism and the impact of visual expression; 3) expressiveness, which refers to attention to artistic expression and emotion,

and how artworks emphasize the emotions of portrayed figures and objects, the stronger the emotion, the better the artworks; 4) form and style, which refers to one's recognition of artworks being products of humanities and cultural developments; and, the contextual and art historical meaning of an artwork is more important than the visual property of the artwork. Meaning dominates over medium, form, expression; and 5) autonomy, which refers to how one references art history traditions to make judgment about particular artwork, and artworks change meaning and significance accordingly across time changes. (See Table 3)

There was no distinct age significance across these five different stages of aesthetic judgment. The ability of making good and proper reading of artworks is not relevant to one's age difference and educational levels. A well-structured aesthetic education can help to develop and cultivate one's better reading and appreciation of artworks. Although this theoretical framework has established major grounds for art educators worldwide for decades, Parsons still see more room for further development to make this research results more responsive of contemporary changes. As shown in the interview with Professor A who told me that "Parsons' well-known aesthetic theory was responsive to the historical background of that time, although it was long time ago, its implication to the art educational research as a whole is still significant to the field. It will continue to serve as an exemplary work to our field when doing such long-term empirical study. The value of this ten-year research also rested on its ambition to contextualize cognitive development in aesthetic understanding. However, Parsons reflected that one should not focus too much on stage differences, but should focus on presenting "cluster of ideas" in different aesthetic dimensions of understanding" ( Respondent A, interview, 2011). Therefore, when applying this cognitive aesthetic framework to teaching and learning art, students' personal and emotional development and socio-cultural background and experience should be taken into account altogether. For that, aesthetic understanding is total and complex reflection of so many dimensions simultaneously.

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Table 3 Five Stage Aesthetic Development by Parsons

Aesthetic Understanding Stage	Characteristic Responses
Stage One: Favoritism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Showed intuitive delight and simplistic response.</li> <li>2. Have a strong attraction to color.</li> <li>3. Have a free wheeling associative response to subject matter.</li> </ol> <p>I.e.: "It's my favorite color!" "I like it because of the dog." "It looks like a big pickle coming down from the sky..." "I don't believe in bad paintings."</p>
Stage Two: Beauty and Realism	<p>Pay special attention to subject matter and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is able to tell the difference objectively and avoid personal preference. Is able to distinguish between their aesthetic experience from relevant and non-relevant from paintings.</li> <li>2. Believe in portraying realistic objects in real life.</li> <li>3. Pay special admiration to detailed rendering paintings and realistic.</li> </ol> <p>Parsons described that "beauty, realism, and rendering skills" are the criteria for making aesthetic judgment at this stage.</p> <p>I.e.: "It's gross! It's really ugly! It's really just scribbling. My little brother could do that."</p>
Stage Three: Expressiveness	<p>Is able to understand what artist tried to represent; make judgment based on how effective the artist was in creating the emotions and feelings including intensity and interest. This stage shows the following distinctive responses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Value more on expressiveness than subject matter.</li> <li>2. Recognize the effect of expression more than realistic rendering skills.</li> <li>3. Held creativity, originality, and depth of feeling as the criteria for good or bad art.</li> <li>4. Emphasize on personal subjective response in valuing art instead of being objective.</li> </ol> <p>i.e.: "That really grabs me!"</p>
Stage Four: Form and style	<p>Able to see art as the product of cultural expression, not just personal product. Therefore, historical contexts and background are needed for good aesthetic judgment to be concluded and is able to discuss media, forms, and styles as references, and modify for more objective perspectives.</p> <p>This stage shows the following distinctive responses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Less subjective comments, and is able to evaluate the objective relationship between media, forms, colors, textures, and spatial compositions, etc.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. Able to understand the cultural and historical contexts of artworks.</p> <p>3. Able to analyze formalistic and compositional features, and explain artist's underlying meanings, and make proper and rational aesthetic judgment.</p>	<p><b>The Academic Accomplishments and Scholarly Spirits of An Exemplary American Art Educator, Michael J. Parsons</b></p>
<p>Stage Five: Autonomy</p>	<p>Able to show individual judging priorities and aesthetic preferences and propose meanings and values of artworks. View both individual and societal criteria as equally important, but prefer holding personal opinions as final conclusive standpoints.</p>	
<p>There is no distinctive age difference in different stages. The stages are described based on how individual read artworks and how they discuss their responses.</p>	<p>Stage four and stage five is different in formalist style attributions. People are able to situate artworks formalistically and historically in accordance with artistic traditions, but understand that artistic value can change over time, therefore they are more open-minded to make aesthetic judgment that speaks to historical trends and regional features.</p>	

(\*This is summarized from his original book by the researcher for discussion in this paper).

Before 1987 when cognitive psychology began dominating the research field, aesthetic understanding was missing, and it was Parsons whose research offered better insights for the broader community of psychological research. His research also directed people's attention to art education as a growing academic research discipline. Psychological development and influences of one's cognitive learning also got more attention within the field of school art education. Just like well-known people often attract more criticism than others, Parsons' research was not without being challenged from the research point of view. For example, the eight paintings being discussed on the interview were considered by others as too narrow in selection and not representative enough of different artistic cultures other than modernist paintings. The limitation of selected paintings on discussing different aesthetic cultures can be an issue. Other debates centered on the rather small sampling, and demographic limitations (most of the three hundred respondents lived in the salt lake city area who shared similar western cultural background). Many people proposed that this would downplay the applicability of the theoretical framework to other cultural situations. Also, the respondent selection process seemed not based on

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proper sampling procedure, and the interviewing process not well organized enough. In addition, Parsons didn't provide comprehensive review of previous aesthetic theories and to compare it with his own research. One would want to see how he situates his own research in the context of long tradition of human's aesthetic understanding. Neither did he offer comparative perspectives regarding the different characteristics of different stage development. Are they replaceable to one another, or are they independent to one another? After the book was published, no further research followed to answer many key aesthetic developmental questions generated that brought people's attention.

Nevertheless, criticism didn't decrease the book's influence on art educator's thinking, especially to those in Taiwan who were eager to explore theoretical framework for practical curricular application. Kuang-Chou Tsui conducted similar research in light of Parsons' book in 1992. He used ten artworks from both western and eastern cultures with 335 respondents from pre-school ages to adults. Tsui's attempt was to investigate whether cultural difference and factor played important role in such research. His research brought more awareness about cognitive aesthetic development to Taiwan's educational research. His findings indicated that age and artistic proficiency were highly related to one's aesthetic understanding, but it was not apparent with pre-school children. (See Table 4)

Table 4 Five Stage Aesthetic Development proposed by Kuang-Chou Tsui

Aesthetic Understanding Stages		Characteristic Responses
Stage 1	Preference	Aesthetic preference reflects personal likings; subjects are confused their feelings with fear, playfulness, and dislike. They made judgment based on freewill thinking, fragmented ideas, or colors as criteria.
Stage 2	Beauty and Realism	1. Pre-stage preference is based on realistic degree, delicate qualities, compositional factors, and rigid visual principles. 2. Post-stage preference gained more mature insights which indicates better understanding of visual characteristics and affective expression.
Stage 3	Expressiveness	3. Pre-stage preference indicates more inner feelings

		and responses. Aesthetic judgment can surpass realistic form and style; subject is able to describe the expressiveness of artwork and the inner emotional and spiritual implications. Use expressiveness, visual impacts, and effectiveness as judging criteria. Post-stage indicate more mature ability in interpretation.
Stage 4	Form and Style	Aesthetic judgment surpasses personal feelings; subject sees artwork as reflection of broader Socio-cultural tradition, and is able to see from others' perspectives. Use style-in formativeness, form-in formativeness, and visual-effect-in formativeness as judging criteria.
Stage 5	Autonomy	Aesthetic judgment is more open-minded, not limited to personal preference. Subject tries to situate his/her understanding to broader socio-cultural contexts and offer balanced viewpoints. Use autonomy, relativism, and open-mindedness as judging criteria.

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After Tsui's research, Professor Mei-Lan Lo of Taiwan Normal University in 1993 conducted similar research to follow up and continued the investigation on aesthetic development. This empirical study took place in Taipei Art Museum with 1200 museum visitors, and the artworks were selected from the ongoing exhibitions. The results led to a five-stage aesthetic understanding. (Table 5). The findings indicated that children's limited artistic experience prevented them from being able to describe artworks in proficiency. Therefore, they could only focus on the meaning of the subject matter, which made them prefer more on realistic and readable works. The overall conclusion indicated that age, education, profession, artistic proficiency was all related to aesthetic understanding.

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Table 5 Five Stage Aesthetic Development proposed by Mei-Lan Lo

Aesthetic Understanding Stages		Age	Characteristic Responses
Stage 1	Subjective Preference	Age 4-8	<p>Freelance imagination without direct relativity to artwork's subject matter. Unable to see the relationship between series of artworks.</p> <p>Prefer high contrast colors; dislike artworks, which they couldn't understand. Use intuitive judgment as criteria. Show general likeness to all artworks.</p>
Stage 2	Visual and Realistic Preference	Age 9-15 Teenager-adult	<p>Being attentive to subject matter. Like pretty subject matter. Admire detailed and delicate visual presentation. Favor "realism is best."</p>
Stage 3	Affective and Expressive	Teenager-elderly	<p>Search for inner emotion instead of visual representativeness as the meaning of artwork.</p> <p>Try to capture the essential spirit of artwork and its emotional implication. Base affective transformation on intuitiveness as main judgment response. Able to take artist's role to judge the expressiveness of artwork. Use emotional uniqueness and creativity as judging criteria.</p>
Stage 4	Stylistic Judgment	Artistically-proficient group	<p>Use rationality and objectiveness as judging criteria.</p> <p>Emphasize on visual quality, form, and style. Understand artwork's historical dimensions and cultural implication, and is able to discuss stylistic content. Interpret meaning based on form and style. Able to analyze in comprehensive manner on total representativeness, partial balancing, and overall stableness.</p>
Stage 5	Holistic Judgment	Adult, Artistically-proficient group	<p>Able to describe and judge artwork with open-minded attitude and self-awareness. Able to integrate self-knowledge with broader implications of artwork. Able to offer mature and complicated insights that based on art history and aesthetic values. Able to offer holistic views and judgment that reflects both personal creative ideas and historical understanding.</p>

In conclusion, these three researchers' findings indicated that aesthetic discussion and exploration on artworks was a way to further exemplify artistic implications of both artist and artwork. The artistic richness of artwork could not be appreciated without the viewers' cultural participation. Developing one's ability in making good aesthetic judgments is important both in art-making activities and art appreciation education. This is why aesthetic developmental research is an important domain of research in art education. We need to gain more insights as to how to cultivate one's ability to read artworks in culturally informative process. Therefore, this kind of research will continue to play central role in art educational literature.

Although Parsons' aesthetic framework has evoked more questions than giving answers, as he himself said once, "much remains to be done; more research is anticipated to offer more suggestions, modifications, and reconsiderations" (Respondent B, interview, 2011). Thus, developing a conceptual aesthetic framework should not be seen as providing a definite answer or solution as an universal guide in art education. Rather, it is to be considered as a broader perspective for teacher and research's further reference. More practical curricular application should be seen as more important than strictly following the underlying theoretical framework. Parsons once described why it is important to conduct research on aesthetic development. First of all, when we talk about art, we gain more understanding into each other's personal as well as cultural background. Secondly, it helps us teachers and parents to gain better understanding of children and students' way of articulating themselves and the world around them. It is from such cultural discussion and reflections that more communication among different people will then take place. In all, it is important to emphasize aesthetic education as part of the art education curriculum. Through such aesthetic education, students are not only able to express themselves through artworks, but also to be able to communicate with others through cultural explorations. From this standpoint, learning about Parsons' aesthetic research will make one more aware of different perspectives and how cognitive development in aesthetics determines one's



cultural understanding. From the researcher's point of view, any aesthetic understanding-related research should take into account the cultural difference of the subjects and make conclusion that is responsive to related cultural heritages and characteristics. Professor Jo Chiung-Hua Chen at Taiwan Normal University has conducted many field researches on such topics and has offered many valuable curricular suggestions and applications to improve aesthetic education (Chen, 2000).

## 2. Passion

One of the most important characteristics of a good docent is his/her ability to evoke and encourage people to think differently. He/she is also one who loves to learn and self-educative.

“Parsons has long academic career and he continued to show great interest and passion for learning, he never stop learning and being curious about new developments both inside and outside educational field. This can be shown in his new inputs on graduate curriculum at OSU. In 2002, he partnered with Professor Arthur Efland to offer a new advanced graduate course on cognition and art education. It was about cognitive development in art and how it affected assessment and curriculum integration. These art educational issues are correlated and responsive to the broader contemporary art educational development. From this we can see how Parsons continued to introduce his new thinking and learning about art education to his graduate students” (Respondent A, interview, 2011).

Parsons has displayed important docent characteristics on both his research contributions and academic teaching. From his research efforts, one can see his long-term devotion on conducting research, which took time-consuming energy and strong beliefs in finding theoretical validity on human behaviours. Even though he finished the aesthetic book long time ago, he expressed open-minded attitude to fellow researchers for offering diverse perspectives. He has always welcomed more challenges from other

researchers to his previous research. Because of his well-known contributions in art education research, he was invited to conduct the well-known large-scale art educational curriculum reform project called *TETAC* (Transforming Education through Art Challenge). This internationally known research project was a part of the bigger educational movement in the United States to promote for revolutionary educational change during the late 90s. During his leadership to guide the project with a team of university professors and k-12 art teachers, Parsons showed his ambition and ability to integrate major curricular issues and topics to be experimented in the project. Topics included art assessment, creativity, globalization, distance online learning, etc. The project later became a standard school reform art project to be referenced frequently. We can see how his professional ability has pioneered and also expanded to different subject matter area every few years, and continued to integrate new learning to enrich his academic career. This has made him a leading academic figure in guiding and shaping the directions of contemporary and future art educational research. His profound impact to the field of art education is without a question. Below are discussions on the major research areas that Parsons has explored and flourished since his previous major research on aesthetic development.

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### **(1) Promoting the TETAC (Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge)**

In March of 1997, National Art Education Association (NAEA) selected thirty-five schools to participate in a national-wide school reform project, called Transforming Education through Art Challenge (TETAC).

“TETAC was a new idea to all participating member schools... They applied the framework of action research and experimented new teaching philosophy and strategies to classrooms. They recorded the changing process and reflected on issues and problems in groups. Teachers began to see how integration could improve school curriculum. Qualitative assessment of student learning becomes an important topic. As a result, the collective research efforts in teaching discourse were to become important

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guidelines for integrated art curriculum, which called “Art Making Curriculum with Big Ideas.” Parsons was responsible for the final project evaluation and offered his keen observations and suggestions for this art curriculum reform project. His insights later brought more and more art educators to consider the implication and significance of integrated curriculum with other subject areas of learning. It was a way to build dialogues between art and other school disciplines, and promote more conceptual bridges for students. Integrated movement in art education was largely because of the TETAC experiment whose results were often cited in international literature” (Respondent A. interview, 2011).

TETAC project included different levels of participating schools in K-12, and aimed at 1) raising awareness of art education in schools, 2) helping to promote professional development for art teachers and administrators, 3) developing practical theory for art educational application, and 4) designing art curriculum. This project was a response to the diminishing role that art played in school education during industrial and scientific revolution of contemporary society. Art as a school subject was marginalized during the 80s and 90s. This project raised attention of school administrators and parents about the importance of art learning in school. With the well-planned reform guidance and ambitious goals of TETAC, school officials got to see how art can be integrated with other subjects and how it offered unique opportunity for students to learn about cultures and humanities, which other subjects can't do.

TETAC pioneered on exploring how art can be integrated into daily school curriculum, and how art made student better understand humanities and cultural traditions. The essential goals of integrative education were to 1) offer authentic curriculum problems for students to learn from daily life experience and recognize what role art plays in humanities; 2) help students to learn to communicate with others through exploring and interpreting the cultures, histories, media, people that reflected from the meanings of artworks; 3) help to build connection between artwork and one's

social/cultural awareness and understanding, and enrich this kind of understanding through integrating with other subjects of learning. The underlying teaching strategy was to encourage students for problem solving and solution finding, instead of only learning fragmented bits of subject knowledge. Students should learn to develop viewpoints and understand the significance of overarching ideas, not just passive information seekers. Integrated curriculum led students to investigate deeper problems beyond surface or isolated facts of information.

After five year, TETAC had helped participating schools to make art an important subject of learning with encouraging and rewarding educational outcomes. Most schools raised the role of art learning in school curriculum. It also encouraged collaborative teaching, which also improved the conventional isolated school culture among teacher with different subjects. Integrated curriculum successfully placed the students as the key factor to construct what to learn and how to learn. Student took more active roles in learning process. On the teacher's side, more creative teaching approaches were encouraged to compliment curriculum process. Higher student interests were found because students were the main person to determine how to learn. The result was more student creativity and active participation. Art and humanities are important tools, which help people to face the challenges of new centuries. To promote social changes, explore more opportunities, and build hopes for a better world to come, one needs to know human being's purpose and values, which are found in art and cultural heritages. It also helped to enrich children's conceptual development and promote higher learning motives. TETAC was indeed a recall for renaissance of cultural awareness and understanding in conventional school education, which was often dominated by science.

Parsons' frequent visits to Taiwan's universities helped to introduce another art education curriculum theory that was developed by his colleague at OSU, professor Sydney Walker. The theoretical framework was derived from their experience from TETAC and was called *Designing Art Curriculum with Big Ideas*. Walker proposed four key curriculum designing elements

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including big ideas, rationale, key concepts, and essential questions. It was to formulate curriculum problems and learning process during art project. It was able to break different disciplinary boundaries for knowledge building and content-exploration. Walker (2001) emphasized three important curriculum essentials: 1) curriculum topics should focus on important life issues and problems, 2) art making and thinking should play important role in constructing humanities curriculum, 3) offer basic curriculum development guidelines. Unlike conventional product-oriented art learning, Walker rather emphasized more on developing students' cultural understanding and awareness of self-character. Art learning should be a product of students' self-exploration and thoughtful demonstration of how they situate themselves in the contemporary society through creating artworks. Both Parsons and Walker have continued to investigate "what kind of art learning is most valuable to students?" in their curriculum design. Curriculum should be closely related and responsive to students' cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural development. This is what he called "a form of education that echoes social development." Students should learn to observe the social conditions around their daily life and be able to understand broader implications and meanings, which will then enable their community/cultural awareness and identity.

Parsons (2003) confirmed the important role of art in integrated curriculum, for that exploring contemporary life issues is more responsive to our life, which break different disciplinary boundaries. The issues can include such important contemporary development such as gender issues, environmental concerns, war and geopolitical disputes, and community problems, etc. For that art and visual culture are products of close observations on socio-cultural phenomenon. For instance, art can speak to the cultural and ethnic struggles that most people face today. Deeper level of critical understanding becomes possible when students weave together bits of information and experience. Art is a very useful weaving factor to embrace such kind of conceptual adventure.

Parsons' research on curriculum experiment has encouraged many school art teachers to change their conventional teaching approach. For example, Chien-Ling Chen and Cheng-Yue Chung (in 2002 and 2003 respectively) who visited OSU and learned about TETAC project did their own version of integrated art curriculum after they came back from OSU. They both reaffirmed the impact of integrated art curriculum on promoting deeper student thinking and knowledge construction. They also found that art making should play primary role in the curriculum otherwise the purpose to make art will lose. They proposed that students should spend more time to articulate their art making, which is not found in conventional art teaching. Critical thinking and problem finding are both key elements in integrated art curriculum, which solicits more student potentials and active participation.

## **(2) Assessment and evaluation in art education**

For the past ten years, Parsons has begun focusing more on the assessment issues. It was his response to the standardized testing movement in the American public education on accountability issue. He has found that it is difficult for most art teachers to conduct proper assessment on student learning and outcomes. The criteria for art assessment are somewhat a mystery to most art teachers and art students. Most art teachers are reluctant to make clear to others about what rubric they base on when doing art assessment. Parsons tried to solve this problem. Parsons (2004) stated that through good assessment art teachers could enhance student learning by making the criteria clear and obvious. With good assessment content and approach, students are able to see not only the visual representation of art making product, but also the thinking behind the visual forms and compositions. They can learn to assess themselves on their artistic thinking. Using thinking as a criterion to assessment, art teachers can convey to students that a good artwork should be good in its meaning making and standpoint taking. Parsons emphasized that assessment is itself an educative process and that teachers must teach students how to conduct good self-assessment as well. For this reason, he has often stressed to

establish well-thought plan of assessment in both his research process and curriculum design. This is obvious from the following interview script:

“Through advising my thesis on school reform and art assessment, Parsons and I often sat together to discuss and reflect how us art educators can learn from the broader accountability movement in the US. How art assessment should modify itself to raise the quality of art education? In 2001, Parsons spent a lot of time to establish relevant literature to offer a new course in art assessment for a group of distance learning practicing art teachers. His course made art teachers think some essential issues regarding art assessment that they rarely thought of before. Assessment should be used to monitor and reflect both student learning and teacher effort. Assessment should also genuinely improve, modify, and validate the process and validity of art education. It is not just giving final grade on student works. The act to define student outcomes is of central value to continue to construct and improve quality and strength of art education” (Respondent C, interview script, 2011).

As a great educational philosopher, Parsons made more teachers to reflect art assessment's philosophical questions, which caused them to seek deeper meaning and the role that assessment should really play in art classroom. He proposed that good assessment can guide student learning and should reflect the art learning and making process which makes it multi-dimensional in perspectives and considerations. In addition, good assessment plan and content will help school administrators and parents to better understand student outcomes (Parsons, 2004).

### **(3) Globalization and art education**

In the eyes of his students, Parsons has in-depth visions on various subjects as an academia that always keeps him informed on important social issues and developments. Respondent B mentioned that “Parsons' concerns are not limited to art education only, he studied and observed broader

national phenomenon and developments as the background sources for improving future art education, such as cultural developments, educational reform, political reforms, international trends, economic developments, etc. Although art education is his way of making educational difference, his ultimate goal is to seek for better social conditions and progress.” (Respondent B, interview script, 2011)

In November of 2009, I attended Parsons' lecture at Department of Art Education, Chang-Hua University of Education. He talked about broader topics on socio-cultural trends, including world trades, cross-border communications and conflicts. For example, he raised the questions of solving some social problems for students to contemplate about: take small town's population outward moves in Brazil for an example, how far preserving art traditions can go to save losing population and diminishing township identity? Should art traditions transform in response to contemporary social changes? What should be preserved and what should be abandoned? What is being reflected when tourists buy art and crafts in relation to their idea about the local culture? In addition, Parsons showed many artworks from different cultural roots, including the design works on colorful David statue by students at art department of Hong Kong Institute of Education, and traditional textile works from Ghana, the indigenous dance performance by Taiwan's primitive tribes, and a David statue that stands in front of a modern building in Chang-Hua city. During discussion, he didn't offer any straightforward answer to us, but raised series of questions regarding the socio-cultural changes brought by globalization. What is lost and what is preserved under the globalization trend? Is homogenization unavoidable by globalization? What does it mean when multiplicity in cultural diversity was replaced by economic concerns and priorities? He then brought us to consider cross-cultural implications of defining and building one's ethnic and cultural identities. The ultimate question for us art educators is how we react and relate our teaching to the trend and impact of globalization. What can teachers do to make students better informed and make good judgment on cultural phenomenon. From reading artworks of

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diverse cultures, one can see how original meanings have transformed through different socio-cultural contexts, and viewer's perspective changes accordingly. This is an important practice of thinking in art curriculum, which evokes students to become a better cultural reader. In all, Parsons' rich and wide perspectives shown from his lecture indicated that one should open up art curriculum for deeper socio-cultural examination of students' life experience and larger global trends. The wave of globalization has broken national and cultural boundaries and diverse ideas are mixed together. Such rich contexts should be included in art teaching and learning. Thus, we should learn from Parsons on integrating socio-cultural developments in art education if we are to educate culturally sensitive students under the overwhelming globalization transformation.

#### **(4) Creativity and art education**

Creativity is among the popular topics in educational world today, because it is seen as the deciding factor for better problem-solving ability and improved educational outcome. Parsons (2010) used “boxes and corrals” as analogy to explain a new way to understand what creativity is and how it can be applied to education. Think outside of boxes referred to thinking freely without boundaries, however, the concept of “boxes” implies that there are certain rules and criteria which can serve to guide one's thinking activity. The rules and criteria can be flexible and adjustable for better results. Creativity is such an activity that can both respond to rules and criteria but also can redefine and break them anytime when necessary.

Although creativity is highly valued across all disciplines of learning in school education, Parsons (2010) thought that it should be defined differently and embrace different dimensions than in other disciplines such as mathematics or science. The way art cultivates creativity is different than what is done in other subject areas. He proposed two standpoints to support art education's special role in fostering creativity. First, most artistic formalism is derived from media but not abstract symbolic representation, which can be manipulated to explore and experiment with abstract notions

and content. Art media and forms are flexible and elastic in nature to represent thoughts. Students can develop their creative thinking in such process. Secondly, of all disciplines, only art exists in creative nature, and art is both a process and product of creative endeavor. This is distinctively different from other disciplines of knowledge where there is a right-or-wrong answer. To most other subjects of learning in school, the one-and-only good answer or the final product is the ultimate goal. What is most valuable of fostering creativity in education is to help students obtain better problem-finding and solving abilities, but certainly not the raising high creativity index itself. Artists are often interested in both process and product of creativity, if not value the former more than the later. Parsons advocated art's phenomenal potentials in fostering creativity and offered how art educators should do to achieve this goal. His teaching strategies are described in the following:

**Step1:** Guide students to make art that directly speaks and responds to their real life experience. For example, when exploring about environmental issues, students can make art that speaks to ecological topics. Before adopting proper artistic media to create, students should make proposal, which is a blueprint of what problems they will investigate, and how they will present their conclusion in artistic approach. Students should apply different art media and consider the effect and results which different media bring; like the contemporary artists today who always manipulate different media at the same time to present different perspectives, such as installations, video and photography, digital art, etc. Students can also adopt such wide diversity of art media in classroom to enrich the whole creative process.

**Step2:** Offer students more collaborative learn opportunities where they can share their ideas, drafts, insights with others during art-making process. They will be able to learn and reflect different perspectives and become more thoughtful and creative in making wise assumptions and interpreting artworks with critical minds.

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Step3: When students' art-making skills are more mature, teachers can ask them to create series of artworks to play with different possibilities under same topics and do more experiments with multiple angles of thinking.

Parsons' proposal of fostering creativity in art education, which discussed above are very practical in classroom and curriculum application. The primary goal is to provide better learning platform to educate students' problem-finding and solving abilities. Collaborative learning, continuous dialogues, and communications between one another is important during this educational situation.

#### **(5) Profession development in art education**

Museum educators are often keen lifelong learners themselves, and they always continue to attend different professional developments and trainings. The museum exhibitions can involve wide ranges of topics, which make museum educators and docents more opportunities to learn new ideas. Self-initiated learning is a common phenomenon in such profession. Parsons has displayed same characteristic in his academic career. Consequently, this characteristic makes him very interested in teacher's professional development as well. During interview, respondent C talked about this: "Parsons' special interest and passion for improving teacher's professional development opportunities made him took a revolutionary lead to facilitate an online master's degree program in 2001 which was not found elsewhere in US. He spent a lot of time trying to convert traditional graduate seminar course to online version to reach practicing art teachers who eager to learn but unable to come to university campus in person. This was also his response to utilize the broader rapid development on online learning technology during the 2000s. (Respondent C, interview script, 2011)

Helping art teachers to continue to learn as they teach at schools was always in Parsons' mind. Through the convenience of online distance learning platform, he can reach the art teacher practitioners in real-time and help art teachers to contemplate what art educational problems they face in

daily teaching. In online learning classroom, he played the role of a mentor who listened well to art teachers' professional struggles and accomplishments. He fostered deeper thinking for art teachers to re-consider art educational issues and student learning. He had successfully built a productive online learning community for the participating teachers. Thanks to online program, he was able to encourage two-way dialogues and communications between theory and practice. This was one of his major academic accomplishments in recent decade for art education. "Parsons loved the online classroom where true and real-time dialogues are made possible among art teachers who come from different cultural backgrounds and communities of schools. This kind of online learning process really demonstrated the real issues and problems that art education faces today. It was a very educative experience for all of us to be able to exchange professional ideas about curriculum, assessment, and learning with such diversity of teacher voices. He also valued the collaborative problem solving and brainstorming process of the art teachers in the online community. The online classrooms helped to break the boundaries of space and time, and helped to foster globalization exchanges among art teachers" (Respondent C, interview script, 2011).

Parsons has been devoting himself to lifelong learning and education, and continues to be a leading mind in the art education academia. He is a good role model for art educators and researchers in his passion for research on learning and teaching. He has also developed passion to learn about Chinese language and culture, and always kept a creative and curious mind to discover new ideas about art education. "Parsons has never been overwhelmed by his academic fame, but always very modest about his personal accomplishments and also is ready to overrule his own past assumptions and ideas to reflect his new understandings. He has been critical even to his own contributions which is why people don't see any sign of arrogance in his personality" (Respondent C, interview script, 2011). This is reaffirmed in Respondent B's interview: "Parsons thinks that researcher should be ready to overrule his own assumption if he finds things in different

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perspectives, but the overrule should be based on careful examination with sound evidence. About the stages of aesthetic development, he has always hoped to see other challenges to modify or compliment his previous research and welcomed different opinions” (Respondent B, interview script, 2011).

### 3. Affinity

McCoy referred docent as the host of museum, and good host will play proper role with friendly and sensitive manner in hosting the visitors to make them feel welcomed during the whole visiting process. Good museum visiting experience will promote future museum trips. Therefore, docent is a job with high professional skills and it is full of challenges and thought-provoking activities. It requires docent's multiple social abilities to fulfill diverse roles and respond to diverse visitors' needs. If the great tradition and abundant literature of art education was the museum collections, and Parsons was to play the model docent to guide visitors to learn about the treasures, we would see the visitors learn a lot to cultivate their critical and creative thinking. He is good at promoting meaningful dialogues between artworks and visitors, and build valuable learning experience for them. According to Hans-Georg Gadamer's aesthetic dialogue theory, docent (Parsons) and the visitors (students) participate in exchange dialogues to build communication. Visitors are not isolated social bodies but are active in creating meanings for artworks, and docent's social response is a key to foster the visitors' active participation. The following section will discuss Parsons' personal characteristic that has resonated with the good docent qualities described above. These are extracts from interviews with three of his doctorate disciples as demonstration.

#### **(1) Direct language with deep implications and brief-yet-clear conversational style**

Parsons' affinity also shows from his language style. Respondent A reflected about her experience: “Parsons can make complicated terms readable to students and use simple words to convey complex meanings. The clarity of his thinking maybe related to his educational training which

made him especially aware of the proper use of words to make precise communication.”

“Both in public speeches and in-class lectures, he always uses daily language vocabularies to convey philosophical and complicated theories. He often used questions and analogies to explain complex situations. Fostering students to think through questions was his main seminar-leading style.... his words are precise and right to the point which may partly due to his educational backgrounds in literature and philosophy” (Respondent A, interview script, 2011).

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## **(2) Philosophical dialogues in daily conversations**

As Gadamer stressed the importance of dialectic aesthetic discourse in building understanding, Parsons too has adopted dialectic conversational style to facilitate quality thinking during interaction with students. The main subject of aesthetic value emerges from artworks and artistic contexts through language communication. Art is closely related to time in essence, and displays its flexibility in creating meanings to justify human existence and self-definition. Art exists only to serve human purpose and life journey.

“Because of his educational background in English literature and philosophical training, he often used dialectic method in class. There was no absolute way of perceiving ideas, often time more questions were generated in class than offering answers. Every time he came to Taiwan for short-term visits and teaching, he always prepared new materials in the basis of previous topics, which demonstrated his continual quest for new meanings. He was not satisfied with theories only, but tried to examine real-life problems with different theoretical perspectives” (Respondent A, interview script, 2011).

“Because of his open-mindedness in learning and life in general, he has kept his focus on what he thinks are important, and remained as a critical

thinker for educational and socio-cultural observations. He especially told students not to follow fancy research trends without examination but to keep focus on those research topics that really speak to their minds and values” (Respondent B, interview script, 2011).

### **(3) His hard-on-self-and-easy-on-others personality**

Parsons has high self-expectation on doing quality research. However, his way of dealing with people is always with nice gesture and thoughtful consideration for others' benefits. This is an important role model behavior for young art educators to follow:

“Parsons' personal style has made me realized that doing academic research and getting along with people are both important. Unlike other well-known international scholars who may have certain sense of feeling their own importance in mind, Parsons does not act like that at all. He is really nice as a person to everyone. He doesn't take his own career fame and accomplishment as personal bets to seek higher returns or paybacks. No any bit of arrogance is found in his way of dealing with people from all backgrounds. His great personality and sensitivity is the reason why he is often the leader in managing large-scale projects. People admire and welcome his leadership and he is always a good listener to all people” (Respondent C, interview script, 2011).

### **(4) Promoting young scholars without profits in consideration**

Respondent A was Parsons' advisee, and she mentioned that Parsons helped students whenever they needed him with great sensitivity and caring. “He wrote recommendation letters very often for students and fellow young scholars to help people move forward in career. He cared about students and young scholars in ways that make people appreciative of his warm heart and friendship” (Respondent A, interview script, 2011).

Respondent C mentioned that she advised her graduate students the same way that Parsons advised her. She said:

“Parsons was strict in examining students' research. He would carefully check every sentence and paragraph in a research paper or thesis/dissertation. He taught students to be highly critical and reflective of their own research and writing. He hoped for students to really learn some important lessons from doing research, not just carelessly submitting papers for grades or thesis for graduation. When he saw students' hard work and improvements, he would not hesitate to give oral praise and encouragement. He spent a lot of time to discuss with students on their personal strengths, abilities, and potentials; and he was very happy and feel proud whenever he sees students' high performance and academic accomplishment” (Respondent C, interview script, 2011).

#### **(5) Always learning to improve himself and loves to sharing**

When Parsons turned to his seventy, he said that he felt his life has just begun, and he was ready to move forward with more interesting life learning to come. This is why he can keep offering us renewing ideas and up-to-date perspectives.

“Parsons said that after becoming seventy-years-old, he felt his decade-long research experience has prepared him for a real good start for his next level of learning and teaching. Before seventy, everything was a preparation for this new era. He has also continued to involve in cross-cultural exchanges with international scholars. He was a great host or many international art educators to promote academic exchange and resources-sharing” (Respondent C, interview script, 2011).

As a great docent, Parsons is not only very knowledgeable to museum treasuries and collections, he also understands student needs well and is



sensitive to guide them in creating meaningful and valuable learning process. He has demonstrated what Edwards has prescribed about quality docent's characteristics: providing information, guiding learning, offering educative learning, and promoting thinking. He has enabled student learning with new insights and passed on his passion for learning to students. His is a great role model, or a great academic leader, in defining what one can be done enormously to change people's lives in art education.

### III. Conclusion

This discussion is to apply docent-visitor relationship to explain Parsons' academic contribution to the field of art education. Examining from McCoy's (1989) descriptions about quality docent characteristics in *Docents in art museum education*, a lot of dimensions echoes Parsons' academic contributions and personalities. For example, 1) must has passion for promoting art, 2) promote and utilize museum collection as resources for learning, 3) able to listen to and respond well to visitors and audience, 4) is able to understand visitors' needs and background, 5) actively respond to promote visitor's understanding, 6) is able to provide learning opportunities for everyone, 7) is able to offer relevant information for further understanding, 8) is able to advocate museum experience among visitors, 9) is able to take visitors' standpoints for collaborative learning, 10) is able to encourage visitors to define new meaning or alternative perspectives for themselves. What we have learned from Parsons can be applied in our research work as well as art teaching. He has shown us how to be good docent and his performance is resulted from hard work for decades. As the old saying, "ten minutes of brilliant performance on-stage, ten years of hard work off-stage," his attitude about learning and art education can be a standard example for us to follow.

The famous French writer François Rabelais (1494-1553) once said, "A child is not a vase to be filled, but a fire to be lit." Parsons has been serving as the matches to lighten up students and people's learning quest. He has been playing magic flute to enrich people's lives, and fire up their passion for

learning and improving. Whether it is about passing on theories and knowledge of art education to students, or modeling good research attitudes, he has provided clear vision and insightful perspectives for us to follow. His passionate self-learning and improving has continued to enrich his contributions to the field. His vision also embraces greater societal issue such as online learning technology, globalization, and multiculturalism. He has been invited to international universities for exchange visiting and teach a rather global audience of art educators. His great personality has made him a popular and well-respected international scholar. Moreover, his passion for teaching and inspiring students is admirable. Teaching people how to think can really make people's life different; after all, we are what and whom we think. Parsons has also passed on his good academic advising style to his advisees of many countries and has passed on good traditions on conducting good research. It is so-called one exemplary paradigm generates another, and one life inspires another.

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- Parsons, M. J. (2010).Boxes and Corrals: Creativity and Art Education Revisited. *The International Journal of Art Education*. 8 (2), 31-41.

### Appendix 1

List of master's thesis's and doctorate dissertations under Michael J. Parsons' advising during 1995-2006 at Ohio State University

Author	Title of Thesis/dissertation	Degree	Year
Hill, Phyllis Thelma P.	A case study exploring the development of The Jamaica Masters Online Project.	Ph.D.	2006
Kuo, Chien-Hua	A post-colonial critique of the representation of Taiwanese culture in children's picturebooks.	Ph.D.	2005
Chan, Wen-Chi	A case study of Grace Lin's picturebooks on Chinese themes : "Why couldn't Snow White be Chinese?"	Master	2005
Menke, Katherine Ann	One teacher's search for meaning in the classroom.	Master	2005
Buffington, Melanie L.	Using the Internet to develop students' critical thinking skills and build online communities of teachers: A review of research with implications for museum education.	Ph.D.	2004
Hsu, Karen Ching-Yi	Teaching and learning on-line in in-service art teacher education: The Ohio State University experience.	Ph.D.	2004

Cheng, Ming-Hsien	Culture and interpretation : A study of Taiwanese children's responses to visual images.	Ph.D.	2002
Cohen-Evron, Nurit	Beginning art teachers' negotiation of their beliefs and identity within the reality of the public schools.	Ph.D.	2001
Parrish, Mila	Discover dance CD-ROM for dance education : Digital improvisation and interactive multimedia.	Ph.D.	2000
Wang, Li-Yan	Teaching art in an age of technological change.	Ph.D.	2000
Hsu, Karen Ching-Yi	A study of Grant Wiggins' development in philosophy of educational assessment.	Master	1999
Cohen-Evron, Nurit	Examination of the changes in beginning art teachers' beliefs during a process of curriculum development based on dialogue and reflection.	Master	1999
Gooding Brown, Jane S.	Text, discourse, deconstruction and an exploration of self : A disruptive for postmodern art education.	Ph.D.	1997
Shumard, Sally L.	A Collaborative PDS Project About Computer Networking in Art Education.	Ph.D.	1995

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