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Cover Page Footnote

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Active Learning in Art History: A Review of Formal Literature

Marie Gasper-Hulvat

Abstract

This article surveys the formal, academic literature on active learning in art history. It considers the history of active learning in art history and outlines the unique combination of approaches that art history takes towards active learning. A meta-analysis of the literature considers its relationship to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). This survey of literature indicates that although scholarly research on active learning in art history is a burgeoning field of scholarship, it also leaves many avenues open for additional research.

Art history courses, particularly at the survey level, have traditionally eschewed active learning practices, favoring instead a lecture-based, transfer-of-information model. In a popular textbook designed to acclimate new college students to studying art history, Christina Maranci noted that, “With a few exceptions, classes are set up in the same way: students sit facing the professor and a pair of screens on which images are projected.”¹ This article considers those few exceptions. Drawing on the scholarly literature, it first establishes a history of how active learning practices have appeared in art history courses for over three decades.

In the previous edition of this journal, Julia Sienkewicz accurately noted that, “The pedagogical significance of active learning techniques has been discussed extensively in the interdisciplinary research of SoTL [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning].” However, she continued, “relatively little has been published on the application of these ideas in the art history classroom.”² On the contrary, this article demonstrates the existence of a significant body of publications on this topic. In its second half, this article situates the published scholarly literature on active learning in art history within recognizable categories accessible to readers, regardless of their familiarity with SoTL. Moreover, it analyzes the metadata associated with thirty-one works of literature pertaining to active learning in art history in order to argue that this represents a fledgling field of serious research.³ This analysis of the literature will provide context for hiring and review committees to make grounded assessments of future scholarship in the field.

To confirm Maranci’s generalization about how art history classes are typically set up, in a 1995 edition of the College Art Association’s *Art Journal* devoted exclusively to the art history survey, the majority of articles referred to such courses as consisting of lectures, sometimes augmented with discussion.⁴ Two decades later, Yael Kali and coauthors lamented that, “the common culture of university teaching, which is mostly based on lectures,” is a particular challenge for undergraduate art history pedagogy.⁵ Preliminary results from Josh Yavelberg’s

¹ Christina Maranci, *A Survival Guide for Art History Students* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 6.

² Julia A. Sienkewicz, “Against the ‘Coverage’ Mentality: Rethinking Learning Outcomes and the Core Curriculum,” *Art History Pedagogy and Practice* 1, no. 1 (2016), 4, accessed 2/23/17, <http://academicworks.cuny.edu/ahpp/vol1/iss1/5>.

³ For purposes of brevity and clarity, these thirty-one works are denoted in the bibliography with the author’s last name in bold.

⁴ Bradford R. Collins, ed., “Rethinking the Introductory Art History Survey,” *Art Journal* 54, no. 3 (1995).

⁵ Yael Kali et al., “Harnessing Technology for Promoting Undergraduate Art Education: A Novel Model that Streamlines Learning Between Classroom, Museum, and Home,” *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies* 8, no. 1 (2015), 5.

graduate research indicate that art history instructors in 2016 still largely employed lectures, along with discussion, to address course content during class time.⁶

However, art historians have also worried that such widely-adopted methods of “art in the dark” art history instruction often fall short of producing deep and engaged learning. Even in 1954, Albert Elsen complained in *College Art Journal*, the precursor to *Art Journal*, “It is ironical that a subject which derives its existence from the creative process should be taught with such unimaginative methods. The text-lecture system encourages a passive, conforming attitude.”⁷ This pedagogical approach often has resulted, as Jerrold Kemp and Ron McBeath observed in 1994, in students who “are not motivated or interested in the subject” and whose “learning is not at a satisfactory level.”⁸ Nonetheless, an approach that focuses on factual knowledge is comfortable and familiar to most students. According to art historian Kathleen Desmond, students often seek from instructors “a body of knowledge and desire facts, landmarks, themes to hold together the complex histories of artistic practices, institutions, and aesthetics.”⁹ Yet, as Desmond pointed out, one of the major tasks of the survey is to “move our students from concrete thinking to abstract/critical thinking.”¹⁰ Even Elsen noted, “The student should be guided toward developing self confidence in his personal powers of analysis and judgment.”¹¹ Students may resist active learning, but the lecture-based alternative may fail to develop critical analysis skills.

Instructors who adopt unfamiliar pedagogical practices, particularly when different from intramural colleagues’ approaches, often face an uphill climb with promotion and tenure committees, not to mention with contract renewals for contingent faculty. They may also encounter resistance amongst their broader disciplinary colleagues. Desmond noted, “I am held in disdain by traditional art historians for not using two stuffed slide projectors in my classes and for ignoring compare-and-contrast methodology and questions about names, chronology, and style on exams.” Yet she countered, “I don’t find any of this as important as students’ remembering the ‘big ideas.’ And I want them to make these big ideas, this knowledge, their own.”¹² Indeed, the field as a whole has largely neglected practitioners’ evidence-based pedagogical innovation. Disciplinary biases have often forced art history professors to choose

⁶ Josh Yavelberg, “Round 2 Data,” Art History Survey Delphi Dissertation 2, accessed 6/21/2016, <http://arthistorysurvey.com/AHSDelphi/round2data.html>.

⁷ Albert Elsen, “For Better Undergraduate Teaching in Art History,” *College Art Journal* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1954): 197.

⁸ Jerrold E. Kemp and Ron J. McBeath, “Higher Education: The Time for Systemic and Systematic Changes,” *Educational Technology* 34, no. 5 (1994): 18.

⁹ Kathleen Desmond in Peggy Phelan, et al., “Art History Survey: A Round-Table Discussion,” *Art Journal* 64, no 2 (2005): 41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Elsen, 197.

¹² Desmond in Phelan, et al., 35-36.

between prioritizing student learning and professional advancement through peer-reviewed publications, a situation which the literature review in the second half of this article illustrates.

Active Learning Approaches

In the 1991 book *Active Learning*, Charles Bonwell and James Eison defined their subject as “anything that ‘involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing.’”¹³ They proposed that the general characteristics of active learning include requiring of students more than merely listening, an emphasis on developing skills and higher-order thinking, and exploration of students’ own values and beliefs. SoTL researchers Rodney Carr, Stuart Palmer, and Pauline Hagel defined active learning as involving students in interpersonal interactions and as prioritizing student agency, autonomy, and self-regulation.¹⁴ Art historical research reflects this student-centered approach; for example, Giada Marinensi and Claudia Matera claimed that art history should employ new technologies in order to “engage students in new activities and to facilitate them in *taking control of their learning*.”¹⁵

Active learning is supported by constructivist theory, an approach that explains how experiences and reflection upon those experiences produce knowledge. The work of psychologist Jean Piaget grounds constructivist theory. He proposed that learning takes place in the human brain through the construction of knowledge, rather than its acquisition. For a constructivist, learning must be an active process in which students interact with each other and with ideas in order to connect newly gained knowledge to previously-held knowledge and past experiences.¹⁶

Active learning pedagogy also draws upon new findings from the interdisciplinary field of neuroscience that exploded in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Eric Jensen, one of the pioneers of interpreting brain-based learning for its implications for education, “Brain-based

¹³ Charles C. Bonwell and James A. Eison, *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom*, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development, 1991), 2.

¹⁴ Rodney Carr, Stuart Palmer, and Pauline Hagel, “Active Learning: The Importance of Developing a Comprehensive Measure,” *Active Learning in Higher Education* 16, no. 3 (2015): 174.

¹⁵ Giada Marinensi and Claudia Matera, “Creating e-Learning History of Art Courses in Higher Education,” *Journal of e-Learning and Knowledge Society* 9, no. 2 (2013): 77-87. Italics added by author.

¹⁶ National Research Council, M.S. Donovan and J.D. Bransford, eds, *How Students Learn: History in the Classroom*, Committee on *How People Learn*, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, A Targeted Report for Teachers, (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2005). National Research Council, John D. Bransford, Ann L. Brown, and Rodney R. Cocking, eds., *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*, Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2000).

education is learning in accordance with the way the brain is naturally designed to learn.”¹⁷ Brain-based learning draws upon findings that the human brain naturally seeks “curiosity, affiliation, [and] challenge,”¹⁸ all elements of meaningful active learning exercises.

SoTL experts Terry Doyle and Todd Zakrajsek explained the crux of this learning paradigm thusly: “New learning requires a considerable amount of practice and a meaningful connection to other information in order to become a more permanent part of memory.”¹⁹ They elaborated, “the more ways you engage with something that you are learning...the stronger the connections in your brain become and the more likely the new learning will become a more permanent memory.” Brain-based learning and constructivist principles work hand-in-hand, emphasizing active student engagement as critical to the learning process. In other words, “the one who does the work does the learning.”²⁰

In a constructivist classroom, the instructor is a collaborator and facilitator of these interactions, rather than an authoritative deliverer of knowledge; Doyle and Zakrajsek deem this “learner-centered teaching.” Art historians are no strangers to constructivist, learner-centered classroom models. As Linnea Dietrich and Diane Smith-Hurd noted in the 1995 edition of *Art Journal*, “When the classroom paradigm shifts from authoritative lecturer filling empty student vessels to a collaborative, cooperative one, students are empowered.”²¹ As Dietrich and Smith-Hurd also noted, this paradigm of thinking about teaching and learning is supported by the same feminist theoretical models that have supported advancements in art historical scholarship since the theoretical turn of the 1970s and 1980s.

The literature on active learning indicates that even traditional, lecture-heavy courses can implement doses of collaborative interaction. Bonwell and Eison noted that, “The evidence suggests that if an instructor’s goals are not only to impart information but also to develop cognitive skills and to change attitudes, then alternative teaching strategies should be interwoven with the lecture method.”²² They suggest several such strategies in their chapter on “The Modified Lecture.” Art historians have successfully employed such activities in order to add active learning into lecture courses. The 1995 edition of *Art Journal* included

¹⁷ Eric Jensen, *Brain-Based Learning: The New Paradigm of Teaching* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008), 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁹ Terry Doyle and Todd Zakrajsek, *The New Science of Learning : How to Learn in Harmony With Your Brain* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2013), 7.

²⁰ Terry Doyle, *Helping Students Learn in a Learner-Centered Environment: A Guide to Facilitating Learning in Higher Education* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2008), 63.

²¹ Linnea Dietrich and Diane Smith-Hurd, “Feminist Approaches to the Survey,” *Art Journal* 54, no. 3 (1995): 44.

²² Bonwell and Eison, 10.

“Recommendations” such as group-generated study guides and one-minute response papers to clarify, question, and evaluate lecture content.²³

However, these are hardly the only approaches that art historians have taken. In what follows, I consider five broad approaches to active learning represented in the literature on art history teaching and learning. I show how evidence-based SoTL research supports each of these approaches: 1) object- and 2) problem-based learning, 3) discussion, 4) debates and role playing, and 5) interactive multimedia and computer gaming.

Object-Based Learning

Art history as a discipline poses singular opportunities for studying objects, which are “powerful pedagogical tools” that “can provide active learning experiences that engage learners.”²⁴ Object-focused inquiry lies at the center of art historical methodology, and thus, as Kali et al. noted in 2015, “one of the options to expose students to original artwork and encourage active learning is to integrate museum visits in art courses.”²⁵ Museum field trips can provide tangible and personally relevant object-based learning within art history courses, and they represent standard practice in many courses and programs. For example, Ellen Kenney commented that, “When teaching Islamic art as a non-Western course in the United States, one customarily supplements assigned readings with a visit to the nearest museum with Islamic art holdings.”²⁶ Kristen Chiem described how class visits to the Getty and Los Angeles County Museum of Art helped students “problematize the object, museum, canon” in order to “uproot the master narratives that have guided our pedagogical approaches in the past.”²⁷

How much such trips count as active learning depends largely upon the instructor’s guidance and the approach of the museum and its educators. With a constructivist approach to curating, viewers of museum objects are invited to collaborate in creating meaning.²⁸ For example, Kali et al. demonstrated how technology can be used within a constructivist model to help introductory

²³ Thomas Russo, “A Collaborative Learning/Assessment Model,” *Art Journal* 54, no. 3 (1995): 82-83. Brian Steele, “The One-Minute Paper,” *Art Journal* 54, no. 3 (1995): 88.

²⁴ Kirsten Hardie, “Engaging Learners Through Engaging Designs That Enrich and Energise Learning and Teaching,” in Helen J. Chatterjee and Leonie Hannan, eds., *Engaging the Senses: Object-Based Learning in Higher Education*, (London: Ashgate, 2015), 1.

²⁵ Kali, et al. 1.

²⁶ Ellen Kenney, “Where It’s At: Reflections on Teaching ‘Islamic Art’ in Cairo,” in Aditi Chandra et al., “Looking Beyond the Canon: Localized and Globalized Perspectives in Art History Pedagogy.” *Art History Pedagogy and Practice* 1, no. 1 (2016), 1, 17, accessed 2/25/2017, <http://academicworks.cuny.edu/ahpp/vol1/iss1/2>.

²⁷ Kristen Chiem, “Mediating the West/Non-West Divide: What is the Significance of Art to Humanity?” in *ibid*.

²⁸ E. Louis Lankford, “Aesthetic Experience in Constructivist Museums,” *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 146.

undergraduate students learn how to analyze works of art.²⁹ Fran Altvater presented in 2009 another constructivist approach to museum-based learning in a case study wherein students visited the Wadsworth Athenaeum twice in a semester in order to create podcasts about that collection.³⁰ And Sarah Beetham described a course taught for half of the semester in the PAFA collection galleries, where students led classmates in presentations and discussions in front of the works of art being analyzed.³¹

However, the literature is clear that object-based active learning does not require interaction specifically within museum collections. Marice Rose reported in 2009 how visiting a local Greek Orthodox church helped concretize concepts for survey students.³² Chiem included in her survey course, alongside museum field trips, a visit to a local Hindu temple.³³ Kenney described how her courses are able to use the city of Cairo itself “as a living, open-air architectural museum.”³⁴

Students interact with objects of art and visual culture constantly; active, object-based learning within art history courses can take place regardless of the proximity of an institution to museum collections. This literature supports how the geographical and cultural location of the institution can meaningfully inflect art history course content: when geographically possible, museum trips are customary for art history courses, which can take various constructivist, active approaches to interacting with collections. Moreover, visits to sites such as houses of worship and local architectural monuments can further expand object-based learning in art history courses.

However, object-based learning can also occur directly in the classroom without reliance upon archival materials. The work of Joanne Sowell demonstrated how active learning using concrete objects like blocks can augment standard brick-and-mortar classrooms.³⁵ Activities designed around manipulation of tangible objects can challenge students’ inadequate habits of thinking about course material. Experiments may involve construction of arches or organizing printouts of images. Sowell’s research suggests that there is no disciplinary reason why art history students, particularly in the age of 3-D printing, should not spend classroom time actively manipulating,

²⁹ Kali, et al.

³⁰ Fran Altvater, “Words on the Wadsworth: Podcasting and the Teaching of Art History,” *The Journal of Effective Teaching* 9, no. 3 (2009): 77-88.

³¹ Sarah Beetham, “Teaching American Art to American Artists: Object-Based Learning at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts,” *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 2, no. 1 (Summer 2016), accessed 7/6/2016, <http://journalpanorama.org/sarah-beetham-lecturer-pennsylvaniaacademy-of-the-fine-arts>.

³² Marice Rose and Roben Torosyan, “Integrating Big Questions with Real-World Applications: Gradual Redesign in Philosophy and Art History,” *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 119 (Fall 2009): 67.

³³ Chandra, et al., 7.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 17.

³⁵ Joanne E. Sowell, “Learning Cycles in Art History,” *College Teaching* 39, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 14-19; Joanne E. Sowell, “A Learning Cycle Approach to Art History in the Classroom,” *Art Education* 46, no. 2 (March 1993): 19-24; Joanne Sowell, “A Cross-Cultural Approach,” *Art Journal* 54, no 3 (1995): 72-75.

organizing, and experimenting with concrete objects regardless of their access to special collections.

Problem-Based Learning

The literature shows that art historians have employed an active learning approach called Problem-Based Learning (PBL) to productive effect. PBL employs authentic, discipline-specific problems to guide students working in small groups. PBL encourages students to self-direct in the generation of new knowledge and acquire communication and critical thinking skills. Although the parameters of what constitutes PBL have widened significantly since its development in the 1960s for medical student education, it typically features what Dorothy Evenson and Cindy Hmelo described as “a rich problem that affords free inquiry by students.”³⁶ A PBL problem should place students into situations where they realize where there are gaps in their knowledge, motivate them to fill those gaps, and allow them to reason towards conclusions based on their new knowledge. PBL problems do have answers, but those answers are contingent upon the students who answer them.

The use of PBL in art history was first documented by Mark Miller and Molly Lindner. In an intramural online newsletter from 1996, Miller gave the example of a PBL problem asking students to plan filming for a movie set in Ancient Greece in as historically accurate a setting as possible.³⁷ In a 2005 newsletter from the College Art Association, Lindner described how she used PBL to structure an introductory Ancient to Medieval survey course.³⁸

Elaborating on these precedents in 2008, Allen reported incorporating PBL assignments into fully online courses,³⁹ and Donahue-Wallace described designing an online course structured around PBL in order to foster student-driven learning.⁴⁰ Perhaps with reference to this same course, Donahue-Wallace and Baxter described in 2010 the redesign of an art history Survey II

³⁶ Dorothy H. Evensen and Cindy E. Hmelo, *Problem-Based Learning: A Research Perspective on Learning Interactions* (Mahwah, N.J.: Routledge, 2000), xi, 2.

³⁷ Mark Parker Miller, “Introducing Art history Through Problem-Based Learning,” *About Teaching: A Newsletter of the Center for Teaching Effectiveness* (Spring 1996), accessed 6/22/16, <https://www1.udel.edu/pbl/cte/spr96-arth.html>.

³⁸ Molly M. Lindner, “Problem-Based Learning in the Art-History Survey Course,” *CAA News* (September 2005): 7-9, 41-43, accessed 6/22/16, <http://www.collegeart.org/pdf/caa-news-09-05.pdf>.

³⁹ Allen.

⁴⁰ Kelly Donahue-Wallace, “A Tale of Two Courses: Instructor-Driven and Student-Centered Approaches to Online Art History Instruction,” in Kelly Donahue-Wallace, Laetitia La Follette, and Andrea Pappas, eds., *Teaching Art History with New Technologies: Reflections and Case Studies* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 109-18.

to incorporate seven “PBL challenges” that confront “students with ‘real life’ scenarios, reflecting the real work of the discipline of art history.”⁴¹

Moreover, PBL has the potential to elicit significant original research at the undergraduate level. Peter Scott Brown and Jace Hargis have shown how PBL can produce “intellectually significant, original contributions” to art historical scholarship when curriculum designers frame undergraduate “instruction and evaluation in terms of authentic scholarly problems that are scaled to students’ abilities to understand and resolve them.”⁴² And Nancy Ross has described an activity that resembled PBL in terms of posing a rich problem about which students freely enquired in order to understand an answer; in her course, upper-division undergraduates used data visualization to produce meaningful art historical discoveries.⁴³ Thus, over the course of twenty years, art historians have shown that the use of the widely adapted pedagogical technique of PBL has the potential not only to structure significant student learning in introductory courses, but also to produce meaningful scholarship at the undergraduate level.

Discussion

Bonwell and Eison noted that discussion is more effective than lecture at helping students with long-term retention of material, with learning to apply knowledge, with changing their attitudes, and with raising their curiosity about a field of study.⁴⁴ Surely, all these are also implicit, if not explicit, objectives of most art history courses. In fact, discussions were the most commonly cited technique in the literature on active learning in art history. Even in 1954, Elsen identified discussion as a useful pedagogical approach for taking advantage of the diversity of students in the classroom: “The discussions analyzing the works of art are enriched by the variety of viewpoints and backgrounds which the students bring to the course.”⁴⁵ While Elsen’s comment likely referred to the disciplinary backgrounds of the largely white student body at Carleton College in the 1950s, it nonetheless resonates all the more so sixty years later, as the diversity of backgrounds in college classrooms has expanded to include much broader categories of cultural and life experiences.

⁴¹ Kelly Donahue-Wallace and Denise Baxter, “Case Study: Redesigning Art History Survey II,” *Next Generation Course Redesign*, Philip M. Turner and Ronald S. Carriveau, eds. (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 89-101.

⁴² Peter Scott Brown and Jace Hargis, “Undergraduate Research in Art History Using Project-Based Learning,” *Journal of Faculty Development* 22, no. 2 (2008): 153.

⁴³ Nancy Ross, “Teaching Twentieth-Century Art History with Gender and Data Visualizations,” *The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy* 4 (December 2, 2013), accessed 7/6/2016, <http://jitp.commons.gc.cuny.edu/teaching-twentieth-century-art-history-with-gender-and-data-visualizations/>.

⁴⁴ Bonwell and Eison, 21.

⁴⁵ Elsen, 199.

However, as Kristin Baxter has noted, employing discussion as an active learning tool can be problematic because students “are sometimes reluctant to fully participate in group discussions,”⁴⁶ a problem that can be exacerbated even more so by feelings of exclusion due to diverse cultural backgrounds. One solution to this problem is to employ artifacts with which students maintain a personal relationship. Baxter found that through dialogue relating family snapshots to works of art, students were better able to empathize with historical figures’ experiences and perform formal analysis.⁴⁷ Rose also noted the incorporation of student-led discussion and student moderation of debates as factors relating to a greater level of trust on the part of the instructor in her students.⁴⁸

In most large universities, if discussion accompanies large-enrollment lectures, it is most frequently in the form of teaching assistant (TA)-led sections. The extent to which such sections employ active learning on any level is largely dependent upon the training and mentorship given to graduate assistants. Donahue-Wallace and Baxter provided a model for TA-led discussion sections in their redesign of an art history Survey II. In their model, designed to be transferrable to other instructors, TAs led sections where students worked in collaborative small groups to discuss specific instructor-designed problems.⁴⁹

Online courses pose their own distinctive challenges and opportunities related to discussion. In *Best Practices in Engaging Online Learners Through Active and Experiential Learning Strategies*, Stephanie Smith Budhai and Ke’Anna Skipwith asserted, “frequent high-quality interactions between learners and instructors add to their success and serve as a learner engagement technique.”⁵⁰ Such interactions, they note, can certainly take place within and also beyond discussion boards. Cass Johnson affirmed that “online classrooms can be designed to investigate intricate and in-depth issues and tasks just as a traditional on-campus class discussion might.”⁵¹

However, Anahit Ter-Stepanian has noted that “the adaptation of art history courses to online environment is particularly problematic because of the nature of art history instruction,” and that “the asynchronous nature of distance learning poses problems, particularly in securing efficient

⁴⁶ Kristin Baxter, “The Role of Family Snapshots in Teaching Art History Within a Dialogic Pedagogy,” *Art Education* 65, no. 1 (January 2012): 11.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁸ Rose and Torosyan, 69.

⁴⁹ Donahue-Wallace and Baxter.

⁵⁰ Stephanie Smith Budhai and Ke’Anna Skipwith, *Best Practices in Engaging Online Learners Through Active and Experiential Learning Strategies* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1.

⁵¹ Cass M. Johnson, “Rethinking Online Discourse: Improving Learning Through Discussions in the Online Classroom,” *Education and Information Technologies* 21, no. 6 (2016): 1483-1507.

class interaction, both instructor-student and student-student.”⁵² Nevertheless, both she and Eva Allen related how discussion boards encourage active learning in fully online art history courses. Ter-Stepanian also argued that asynchronous, online discussions provided notable advantages over face-to-face interactions, allowing students more flexibility, comfort, and preparation in discussion contributions.⁵³ These sources demonstrate that in both the brick-and-mortar as well as the online environment, art historians have employed discussions to actively engage students in learning.

Debates and Role Playing

Research indicates that activities that ask students to take on positions and even identities with which they may hold little in common, such as debates, role playing, and simulations, are effective methods to facilitate student learning.⁵⁴ Chet Meyers and Thomas Jones asserted, “Because simulations require the personal involvement of participants, students are forced to think on their feet, question their own values and responses to situations, and consider new ways of thinking.”⁵⁵ Mark Carnes has discussed the history of simulations and role playing in higher education, noting that “even simple role-playing exercises are often effective.”⁵⁶

Such simple debates and role plays have appeared in the literature on art history teaching. Allen discussed an online activity wherein students debated the thorny issue of repatriation for the Parthenon Marbles.⁵⁷ And Ter-Stepanian noted that elements that “can be used effectively to create an engaged learning environment in online art history courses” include “role playing and acting according to the scenarios of suggested situations.”⁵⁸ She described how she employed such scenarios within the context of online learning. And, indeed, this represents best practices:

⁵² Anahit Ter-Stepanian, “Discussion Board Assignments and Their Impact on Creating Engaged Learning Environments in Art History Online Courses,” in Paolo M. Pumilia-Gnarini, et al., eds., *Handbook of Research on Didactic Strategies and Technologies for Education: Incorporating Advancements* (Hershey: IGI Global, 2013), 683.

⁵³ Anahit Ter-Stepanian, “Online or Face to Face?: Instructional Strategies for Improving Learning Outcomes in e-Learning,” *The International Journal of Technology, Knowledge, and Society* 8, no. 2 (2012): 41-50.

⁵⁴ Barbara Kensington-Miller, Julia Novak, and Tanya Evans, “Just Do It: Flipped Lecture, Determinants and Debate,” *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology* 47, no. 6 (January 1, 2016): 853-62; Caroline Mellgren and Anna-Karin Ivert, “Criminal Policy Debate as an Active Learning Strategy,” *Cogent Education* 3 no. 1 (2016).

⁵⁵ Chet Meyers and Thomas B. Jones, *Promoting Active Learning: Strategies for the College Classroom* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 1993), 93.

⁵⁶ Mark Carnes, *Minds on Fire: How Role-Immersion Games Transform College* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 9.

⁵⁷ Eva J. Allen, “Tradition and Innovation: Using New Technology in Online Art History Surveys,” in Kelly Donahue-Wallace, Laetitia La Follette, and Andrea Pappas, eds, *Teaching Art History with New Technologies: Reflections and Case Studies* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 98-108.

⁵⁸ Ter-Stepanian (2013), 684.

Budhai and Skipwith noted that “several studies have shown that learners prefer using games... role playing, and interactive case studies as active learning strategies to shape the evolution of a new learning landscape for online learners.”⁵⁹

Carnes also commented, “Simulations are an effective active-learning pedagogy, but role-immersion games have a deeper psychological resonance and cognitive power.”⁶⁰ Carnes’ book, *Minds on Fire*, makes a case for a very particular type of role playing known as Reacting to the Past (RTTP). With elaborate, historically-specific, multi-week role playing games grounded in primary source materials, RTTP pedagogy has recently made headways into art history. As Gretchen Krehling McKay, Keri Watson, and Mary Zawadzki have demonstrated in posts on the Art History Teaching Resources (AHTR) Weekly blog, RTTP is one of the most rapidly developing and engaging methods of active learning in art history today.⁶¹ However, currently no formal published literature has explicitly addressed the use of this technique in art history classrooms. Several chapters in a forthcoming book on RTTP pedagogy promise to rectify this lacuna.⁶²

Active learning through role playing and debates is amply supported in SoTL literature. Art historians have employed these strategies in both online and face-to-face contexts, although few researchers have thus far studied its effectiveness. Future scholarship to support these techniques would both substantiate their learning outcomes and help to develop tested, peer-reviewed curricula.

Interactive Multimedia and Computer Gaming

Perhaps the most extensive developments in facilitating active learning in art history have manifested within digital technologies. As Virginia Spivey and her coauthors noted, “technology should be recognized as an inherent aspect of art history’s pedagogy, not as a distinct topic.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Budhai and Skipwith, 40.

⁶⁰ Carnes, 312.

⁶¹ Gretchen Krehling McKay, “Reacting to the Past: Art in Paris, 1888-89,” *Art History Teaching Resources* (March 18, 2016), accessed 6/22/2016, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2016/03/reacting-to-the-past-art-in-paris-1888-89/>; Keri Watson, “There’s a Game for That: Teaching Art History with ‘Reacting to the Past,’” *Art History Teaching Resources* (April 17, 2015), accessed 6/22/2016, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2015/04/theres-a-game-for-that-teaching-art-history-with-reacting-to-the-past/>; Mary Zawadzki, “Reacting to the Past in Practice,” *Art History Teaching Resources* (March 25, 2016), accessed 6/22/2016, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2016/03/reacting-to-the-past-in-practice/>.

⁶² C. Edward Watson and Thomas Chase Hagood, eds., *Playing to Learn with Reacting to the Past: Research on High Impact, Active Learning Practices* (Palgrave-Macmillan, forthcoming).

⁶³ Virginia Spivey, et al., “White Paper on the Need for a Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Art History,” (2015), accessed 2/25/2017, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AHTR-White-Paper-2.pdf>, 6.

However, while they noted that discussions on art history pedagogy on the whole “overwhelmingly...are not dependent or focused on technology,”⁶⁴ that is not the case when it comes specifically to active learning in art history courses. Of the literature reviewed for metadata in this article, eighteen of thirty-one works (58%) incorporated discussion of technology, if not focused entirely upon technological innovation.

For example, a number of interactive multimedia programs have augmented or replaced the art history lecture. In 1989, David Carrier and Robert Cavalier were the first to publish about this kind of program. They outlined an “interactive videodisc system” that asked students to discern authentic paintings by Vermeer from forged ones.⁶⁵ A decade later, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst pioneered interactive multimedia case-study modules “to enliven the lecture format with more active learning” in large survey courses.⁶⁶ They involved tasks such as building a Greek temple with appropriately selected functional design elements and experimenting with proportion and linear perspective.

Eva Hoffman and Christine Cavalier have employed student-generated concept maps using software known as VUE as “a strategy for brainstorming or jumpstarting a topic.”⁶⁷ They explained how groups of students could cooperatively design concept maps to “refine and expand their understanding” of the material.⁶⁸ Additionally, Nancy Cason and Larry Gleeson both discussed yet another interactive multimedia program “designed to take the place of slide study” in a survey course.⁶⁹

In a 2005 article, Donahue-Wallace and Chanda described Flash-based “animated interactives” in an online context, programs they also referred to as “simple games [that] enable the translation of a slide-based lecture into a dynamic interactive online experience in which the student plays an active role in seeing the relationship between text and images work.”⁷⁰ Three years later,

⁶⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁶⁵ David Carrier and Robert Cavalier, “Theoretical and Practical Perspectives on Technology and the History of Art History,” *Leonardo* 22, no. 2 (1989), 245-49.

⁶⁶ Laetitia La Follette, “Blending New Learning Technologies into the Traditional Art History Lecture Course,” in Kelly Donahue-Wallace, Laetitia La Follette, and Andrea Pappas, eds., *Teaching Art History with New Technologies: Reflections and Case Studies* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 44-56.

⁶⁷ Eva R. Hoffman and Christine Cavalier, “ARTIFACT: Mapping a Global Survey of the History of Art,” in Ibid, 85.

⁶⁸ Hoffman and Cavalier, 86.

⁶⁹ Nancy F. Cason, “Interactive Multimedia: An Alternative Context for Studying Works of Art,” *Studies in Art Education*, vol. 39, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 336-49; Larry Gleeson, “An Interactive Multimedia Computer Program on Art History,” in Diane C. Gregory, ed., *New Technologies and Art Education: Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice* (Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association, 1997), 92.

⁷⁰ Kelly Donahue-Wallace and Jacqueline Chanda, “A Case Study in Integrating the Best Practices of Face-to-Face Art History and Online Teaching,” *Interactive Multimedia Electronic Journal of Computer-Enhanced Learning* 7,

Donahue-Wallace wrote about “interactive learning objects,” some of whose descriptions align with those of the “animated interactives”/“games” discussed in the previous article. She noted that, in these “learning objects,” students “perform a sequence of decision making tasks to create a work of art,” among other activities.⁷¹ She observed that with these, “I was permitting students to make choices, to apply learning, and to move at their own pace and according to their own path within my content.”⁷²

Additionally, computer games provide a way to bring active learning experiences through technology into art history courses. Budhai and Skipwith noted that “Digital gaming, a means of participatory culture, presents the opportunity to learn through the direct experience of playing a role or becoming a character and infusing oneself into a virtual situation.”⁷³ They added, “Game-based learning not only cultivates learner development, but also enhances skills needed in education; such as...problem solving...memorization, information gathering, analysis, [and] developing and testing solutions.”

The literature indicates that at least two art history computer games have been developed and tested within undergraduate classrooms. ARTEMIS, developed by Jeff Janet and Melissa Miles at Monash University, was an online, multi-user, virtual environment game that promoted “the skills of reading, visual analysis, criticism, and communication.”⁷⁴ Learning objectives for the game included recognition of key works, ability to contextualize and analyze these works, and development of argumentation skills based on that knowledge. Collaborative quests led students to “develop an appreciation for textual analysis, argument, context, and discourse.”

Art Thief, a demo game developed at the Electronic Visualization Laboratory at the University of Illinois, Chicago, was a clue-based game wherein the player needed to collect “nuggets” of information from conversations with a variety of characters representing diverse art historical methodologies.⁷⁵ If the player collected sufficient information, it would lead them to a correct final answer (i.e., the correct painting to “steal”) to win the game. According to the authors of articles about these games, both prioritized constructivist approaches to learning over the memorization of facts.

no. 1 (2005); reprinted in *Formamente* 2006/1-2, 97-102, accessed 2/17/2017,

http://formamente.guideassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/kelly_donahue_wallance_2006_1_2_5.pdf.

⁷¹ Donahue-Wallace, “A Tale of Two Courses: Instructor-Driven and Student-Centered Approaches to Online Art History Instruction,” 111.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Budhai and Skipwith, 47.

⁷⁴ Jeff Janet and Melissa Miles, “ARTEMIS: Reinvigorating History and Theory in Art and Design Education,” *Journal of Art & Design Education* (28.1 2009): 54-55.

⁷⁵ Jonathan Kinkley, “Art Thief: An Educational Computer Game Model for Art Historical Instruction,” *Leonardo* 42, no. 2 (2009): 133-37, 110.

While the rapid pace of technological advancements means that computer programs developed in the early 2000s appear archaic in 2017, these art history computer games nonetheless demonstrate that art historians have consistently engaged with technology as it has advanced in the past three decades. This supports Spivey and her coauthors' claim that technology cannot be considered separately from the teaching and learning of art history.

Rather than a few isolated cases, the body of literature indicates that a broad range of art history instructors across programs and institutions have employed active learning practices. There is a decades-long background of art history classes where students have experienced more than sedentary listening and looking. Such classes employed evidence-based active learning strategies backed up by significant developments in the wider SoTL field.

The diverse array of approaches that art historians have taken to active learning is particular to this field. None of the surveys on active learning cited here, from Bonwell and Eison in 1991 to Budhai and Skipwith in 2017, discussed all of these categories in a single publication. This suggests that approaches to active learning in art history are grounded in some of the most basic methodologies and issues of our discipline. Our object orientation undergirds object-based learning; humanistic, archival, and textual inquiry inspires problem-based learning and discussion; scholarly discourse finds its way into classrooms through discussions, debates, and role playing; and our perpetual struggle as a discipline to teach about objects which we cannot visit propels forays into active learning through technology.

Parameters of the Survey

Although my discussion in the first half of this article reflected some of the diversity of writing genres that have addressed learning in art history—from blogs and newsletters to peer-reviewed articles—I chose a more limited focus in collecting metadata for this literature review. I included only formal, scholarly materials published in refereed academic journals or edited volumes, either in print formats or their digital analogues, such as online, peer-reviewed journals. I deliberately chose to exclude metadata from blog posts, webinars, and newsletters because of their more informal, non-refereed nature. And while I found one master's thesis that proved relevant, including more relevant bibliographical references than any other source, I ultimately decided to exclude it from the data set due to its non-professional context.⁷⁶ Moreover, although many conferences in the field of SoTL referee their proceedings, I did not include any conference papers, because I did not find any relevant, full-text examples of such refereed presentations available beyond their abstracts online.

⁷⁶ Penelope Gioffre, "An Investigation of Interactive, Dialogue-Based Instruction for Undergraduate Art History," Master's Thesis, Wilmington University, 2012, accessed 4/15/16, <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED531704>.

The literature considered for this review pertains specifically to undergraduate, college, and university teaching of art history, primarily but not exclusively at the introductory level. This included authors at major research universities, regional universities, private colleges, community colleges, public liberal arts institutions, art colleges, and United States universities abroad. I excluded literature concerning high school and Advanced Placement art history.

Although I have attempted to make this a comprehensive survey, I inevitably missed something due to the diffuse nature of art history SoTL. Nonetheless, the results of my searches yielded thirty-one journal articles and book chapters. The body of this literature primarily reports the scholarship of U.S.-based researchers, with the exception of three articles representing the work of Australian, Italian, and Israeli researchers, respectively, and one with an international array of co-authors. I placed no chronological parameters upon the search, and the dates of publication range from the 1954 article by Elsen to articles published in 2016. (I did not include any forthcoming publications.) Aside from a large gap between 1954 and 1989, as well as a much smaller one between 1998 and 2005, the literature appeared evenly across this span.

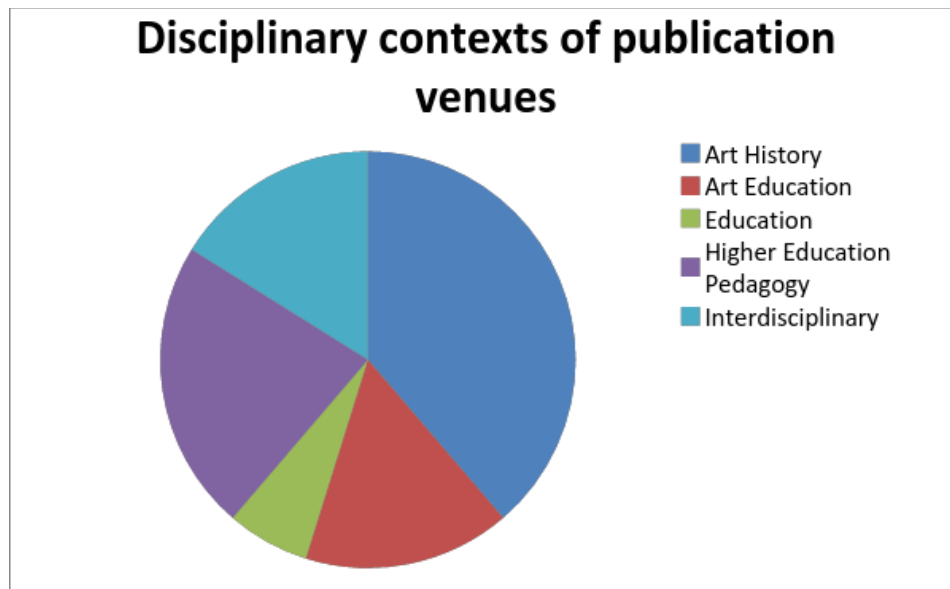
To be included in this set of literature, a work had to specifically address, although not necessarily focus exclusively on, learning activities during class time, whatever that might amount to in a face-to-face or online course. Although many assignments require students to engage in active learning outside of the classroom, this review excluded articles concerning homework assignments alone in order to focus on literature that specifically addressed active experiences which structured class learning. Thus, articles that I excluded included Rose's "Encouraging Integrative Learning through Current Events and Learning Portfolios,"⁷⁷ which focused largely on a semester-long assignment. This was not the easiest line to draw, as several of the articles I included concerned software that students could utilize either inside or outside of class time. I included these discussions of software, because they discussed the activity of learning itself rather than assignment content or the independent work students produced.

Analysis of Metadata

I compiled metadata from the thirty-one works of scholarship in order to situate the research within the disciplines of both art history and SoTL. The following charts provide indications within which sorts of contexts we can consider this scholarship as well as whether or not we can consider any of it within the specific parameters of SoTL, as defined by leaders in the SoTL

⁷⁷ Marice Rose, "Encouraging Integrative Learning through Current Events and Learning Portfolios," *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal* 3, no. 2 (November 2009): 1-7, accessed 7/6/2016, <http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=visualandperformingarts-facultypubs>.

field. Discussion follows each chart in order to add context to and draw conclusions from the data pictured.



Alt-text: Pie chart for data comparing Disciplinary contexts of publication venues. See table below for data.

Disciplinary contexts of publication venues	Number of works
Art History	12
Art Education	5
Education	2
Higher Education Pedagogy	7
Interdisciplinary	5

This graph indicates that venues dedicated specifically to art history as a discipline published a significant percentage (39%) of the works. However, this data should not lead to a conclusion that adequate disciplinary venues for publishing scholarship on active learning pedagogy in art history have existed in the past thirty years. Of the twelve works published in art history contexts, seven come from only two collections: the 1995 edition of *Art Journal* and 2008's *Teaching Art History with New Technologies*. (Two more come from the inaugural issue of *Art History Pedagogy and Practice*, whose existence represents an attempt to redress the absence of adequate venues for such scholarship.⁷⁸) As such, the majority of works published in the discipline of art history represent two very specific and focused instances of attention to

⁷⁸ Chandra, et al; Sienkewicz.

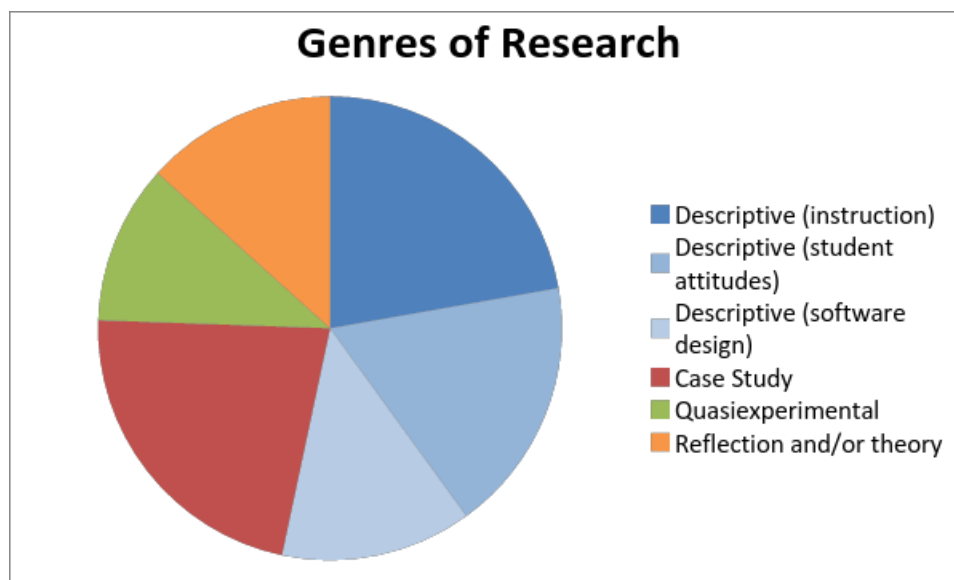
pedagogical issues, rather than a steady and sustained outlet for scholars seeking to publish research in this arena.

The works published in venues dedicated to art education, education, and higher education more accurately represent the venues historically available for publishing scholarly work in this field. Between those three disciplines, nine different journals and three edited volumes are represented, with dates evenly dispersed across a range from 1991 to 2013. As such, this data demonstrates that the fields of art education, education, and higher education have facilitated scholarship in active learning in art history more faithfully than the discipline of art history has itself.

This situation is problematic, because SoTL has been historically highly focused within specific disciplines. SoTL theorist Kathleen McKinney noted that, “SoTL is most often context specific,” because it focuses on particular, discipline-based learning problems within particular courses and is usually authored by the instructors of such courses.⁷⁹ This is certainly the case with respect to the literature reviewed here: twenty-eight of the thirty-one works included were authored or co-authored by art historians focusing upon problems within the art history courses they taught; the other three were written by software developers or instructional technologists. Thus, this study indicates that, while the large majority of research has been performed in context-specific paradigms and by practitioners within the field, art history as a discipline has not supported this scholarship. McKinney also noted that this context-specificity constitutes, “in part, what separates SoTL from traditional educational research at the college and university level.”⁸⁰ However, in the field of art history, it appears that pedagogical researchers have had to rely largely on the support of venues for more traditional educational research rather than for discipline-grounded SoTL.

⁷⁹ Kathleen McKinney, “Introduction to SOTL in and Across the Disciplines,” *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in and Across the Disciplines* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 2.

⁸⁰ Ibid.



Alt-text: Pie chart for data comparing Genres of research. See table below for data.

Genres of Research	Number of works
Descriptive (instruction)	10
Descriptive (student attitudes)	8
Descriptive (software design)	6
Case Study	10
Quasiexperimental	5
Reflection and/or theory	5

We can categorize the scholarship into four categories of SoTL research methodologies, based on the scholarship of McKinney, along with Cathy Bishop-Clark and Beth Dietz-Uhler.⁸¹ Some works employed more than one methodology, hence the total entries in the chart above adding up to forty-four despite representing only thirty-one works. Most research in active learning in art history falls into the broad category of descriptive research. This category concerns any study or scholarship whose aim is to state what has happened. Descriptive scholarship can draw upon the author's experiences as an instructor or software designer, generally across a range of courses and semesters, if not a career. In the White Paper which preceded the genesis of this journal, Spivey and her coauthors observed that "anecdotal discussions that are important to sharing teaching techniques in the field" drive much of the existing literature in art history SoTL.⁸² Such discussions fall into the "Descriptive (instruction)" category in the chart above. On the other hand, descriptive scholarship about student attitudes relies on surveys, focus group interviews, or

⁸¹ Cathy Bishop-Clark and Beth Dietz-Uhler, *Engaging in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (Sterling, Virginia: Stylus, 2012), 48-59; Kathleen McKinney, *Enhancing Learning through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The Challenges and Joys of Juggling* (San Francisco: Anker Publishing Company, 2007), 73-79.

⁸² Spivey, et al., 5.

other means of collecting data. Such data grounds descriptive research within a broader spectrum of perspectives.

Case studies, on the other hand, describe a single, circumscribed event. In the literature covered here, case study events generally consisted of one active learning intervention or one course where an instructor implemented active learning interventions.

Quasiexperimental studies, by contrast, compare two or more single, circumscribed events without the ability to control for all factors that might affect differences between the events. Quasiexperimental research places students into different groups and compares their performance; at least one group receives the intervention and another serves as a control. Five works within this literature review compared student performance in one or more course sections or other experimental groups.⁸³ These all qualify as quasiexperimental (rather than experimental), because assignment to a given group was not completely random; therefore, extenuating factors such as student self-selection into particular course sections could not be accounted for.

One category that McKinney presented, but that Bishop-Clark and Dietz-Uhler did not, is that of “reflection and theory.” This category of SoTL literature appears frequently in art historical pedagogical discussions, and Spivey et al. noted theoretical analysis as an important component of existing art history SoTL research.⁸⁴ Arguably a large portion of the content in the 1995 issue of *Art Journal* fell into this category, although not in a way that pertained specifically to active learning. A reflection and theory piece usually concerns the philosophical grounding of pedagogical approaches. With the emphasis placed on theory in late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century art historical methods, it should come as no surprise that, as a discipline, we employ theoretical justifications for our pedagogical approaches.

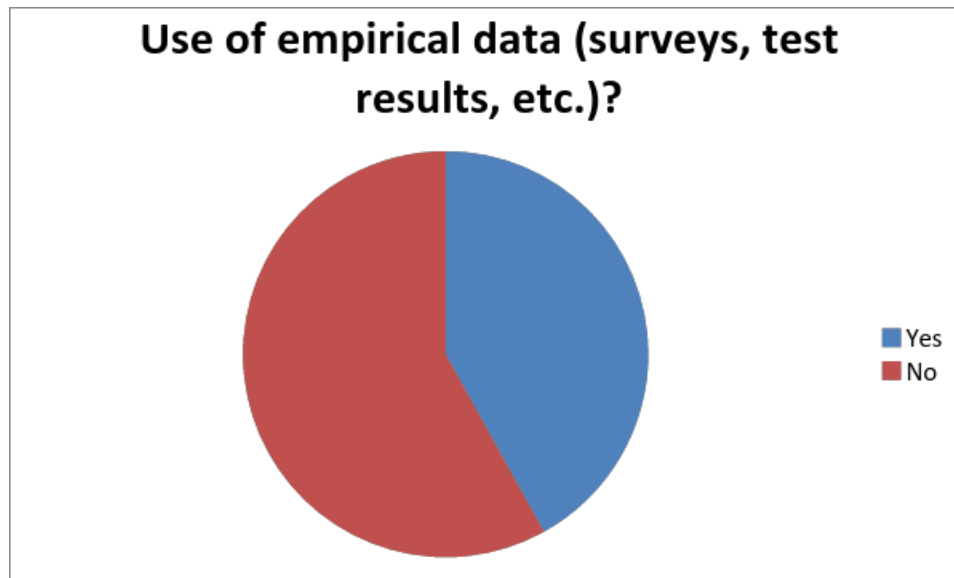
However, only five of the thirty-one works reviewed consider the theoretical implications for implementing active learning strategies in art history. As a discipline, we are rich in our foundations in feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theories, to name but a few, but we have yet to interrogate deeply the activities of students in our classrooms from these theoretical perspectives.

This data concerning the genres of research indicates that all the works discussed in this literature survey fit into defined genres of SoTL research. However, that does not necessarily mean that all qualify as bona fide SoTL research. Paul Witman and Laurie Richlin have articulated that SoTL must include 1) “systematic observation of the effects of teaching on

⁸³ Cason; Donahue-Wallace and Chanda; Gleeson; La Follette; Ross.

⁸⁴ Spivey, et al., 5.

learning,” the results of which are then 2) contextualized in the scholarly literature and 3) presented to the wider disciplinary body through publication or presentation.⁸⁵ The third of these characteristics is fulfilled by all of the works included in this literature survey, as they were all made available to the field through publication. However, we must still consider the first two characteristics.



Alt-text: Pie chart for data comparing use of empirical data. See table below for data.

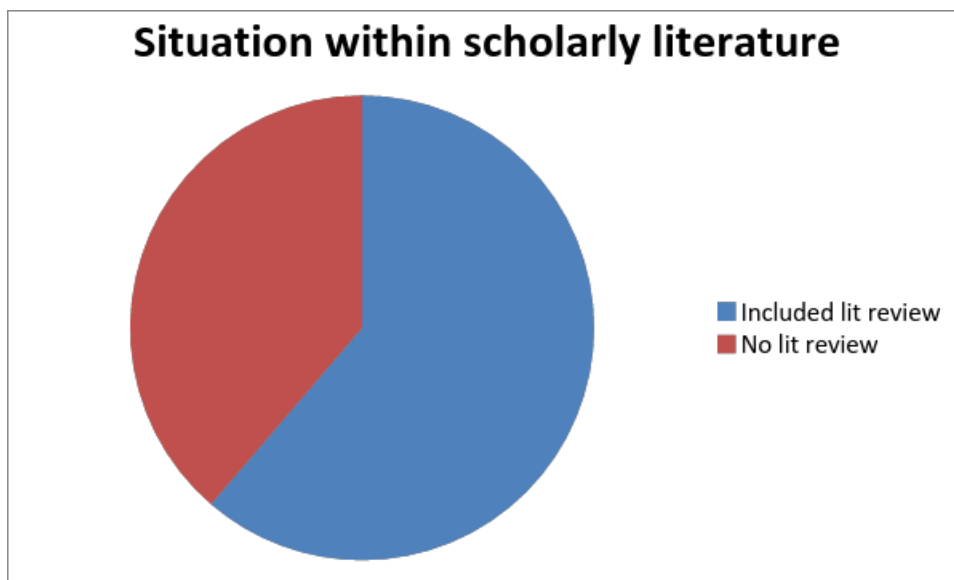
Use of empirical data (surveys, test results, etc.)?	Number of works
Yes	13
No	18

As for the first of Witman and Richlin’s characteristics, the words, “systematic observation,” imply that a grounded method or paradigm is employed to obtain empirical information to analyze. The authors in this review who did collect such data employed survey responses, student evaluations, results from class exams and quizzes, course grades, interviews, and classroom observations. However, the majority of works in this study did not employ empirical data. This also should not come as a surprise, given the nature of art history as a discipline. Art historians traditionally have examined works of art, along with historical documents, as the primary focus of our research. Only in recent years, with the rise of digital humanities projects in art history, has the concept of employing empirical data in the service of art historical research

⁸⁵ Paul D. Witman and Laurie Richlin, "The Status of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the Discipline," *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 1, no. 1 (2007), Article 14: 2-4, accessed 6/22/2016, <http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/ij-sotl/vol1/iss1/14>.

become more accepted (albeit still marginally) as a methodological approach. Perhaps less surprisingly, nine of the thirteen studies that used empirical data were published since 2006.

More importantly for our consideration of this literature within the parameters of SoTL is how authors collected and analyzed this empirical data. Spivey et al. noted an absence of “studies that assess the effectiveness of teaching practices, present evidence of student understanding, and discuss achievement of specific skills and learning objectives essential to art historical study,” adding that “the current literature is practitioner-driven but not evidence-based.”⁸⁶ A key component of meaningful SoTL research is the establishment of a baseline and quasiexperimental comparison of results following a teaching intervention to that baseline.⁸⁷ Of the thirteen studies which employed empirical data, only five followed this comparison model, with only two discussing the statistical significance of the findings.⁸⁸



Alt-text: Pie chart for data comparing situation of work within scholarly literature. See table below for data.

Situation within scholarly literature	Number of works
Included lit review	19
No lit review	12

In terms of Witman and Richlin’s second characteristic (situation within scholarly literature), 61%, or nineteen, of the works in the review included significant, relevant discussion of previous scholarly research. Of the nineteen, eleven also employed empirical data, thereby fulfilling both

⁸⁶ Spivey, et al., 5.

⁸⁷ Witman and Richlin.

⁸⁸ Cason; Donahue-Wallace and Chanda.

of Witman and Richlin's qualifications for SoTL. Equally interesting, however, is that not all nineteen of these referred to scholarship that would qualify as SoTL. Many referred instead to educational theorists, psychological research on teaching and learning, and research on game-based learning. Indeed, most of the works included in this study, particularly before the past decade, were conducted largely in isolation from one another.

A particularly notable example of this is Kemp (a well-known pioneer in Instructional Technology) and McBeath's 1994 contribution to the longstanding, discipline-standard journal *Educational Technology*.⁸⁹ This article outlines a \$20,000-grant-winning redesign of an art history survey using active learning modules, with data-supported results, albeit somewhat vague ones, from ten years of implementation. Nonetheless, neither the 1995 *Art Journal* issue devoted to pedagogy of the survey course nor any other work in the thirty-one studied here makes reference to this groundbreaking article.

However, there is indication that, as the field has developed over time, it has developed a more integrated conversation between scholar-practitioners. Ten of the nineteen cases with literature reviews included reference to one or more of the other works included in this study.⁹⁰ Eight of those were published since 2008. Thus, while the thirty-one sources surveyed in this article did not form an integrated, corporate body of literature that was in dialogue with itself, trends indicate that the discipline is headed in this direction.

This metadata analysis demonstrates several key points. It shows that the field of art history has not adequately supported SoTL scholarship into active learning, despite the fact that, as this article establishes in its first half, active learning practices have shaped art history teaching and learning for some three decades.

It also affirms that SoTL research into active learning in art history falls into defined methodological genres. However, the least two represented genres may be the most relevant and important. Quasiexperimental studies allow researchers to compare the outcomes of pedagogical techniques; more studies in this genre could provide art historians with data-driven, statistically significant proof that active learning practices generate positive learning outcomes. Reflection and theory discussions, on the other hand, would provide foundations within discourses in which art historians have amply trained.

This analysis also illustrates that the majority of art history scholarship on active learning does not draw upon empirical evidence, and a significant portion of it fails to demonstrate grounding

⁸⁹ Kemp and McBeath.

⁹⁰ Four fellow scholars cited the most frequently referenced work, which was Donahue-Wallace, La Follette, and Pappas's 2008 edited volume.

within the existing literature. Only eleven works within the thirty-one peer-reviewed works met these two basic standards of SoTL as a discipline.

Last, this metadata analysis demonstrates that art historians over the past thirty years have largely worked in isolation from one another on SoTL investigations of active learning. This lack of significant interaction or collaboration between practitioners in the field has limited the pace of development within this subfield.

Results

What this metadata analysis does not show is whether these active learning pedagogies have been effective in helping students learn art history. It also does not compare learning outcomes from courses with active learning with those of “art in the dark,” transfer-of-information lecture models.

Nonetheless, we can glean some conclusions regarding learning outcomes from the literature. On the one hand, Gleeson found no statistically significant difference in performance between a control group who did not employ the active learning technique and an intervention group who did. However, he noted that, “a different form of assessment than machine-scored exams will have to be devised to determine whether this program can achieve” the goals of the intervention: greater understanding of works of art, retention of knowledge, and transfer of skills to future study of material in the course.⁹¹

On the other hand, Cason, working with the same active learning intervention as Gleeson but with a different assessment method, found that the intervention was an effective means to acquire art historical knowledge and skills.⁹² Moreover, she found that students who received the intervention on an earlier unit demonstrated, on a later unit without the intervention, statistically significant, higher-order understanding related to the course content. In other words, the active learning technique led not only to learning more art historical content and ideas, but also to acquiring new strategies for learning art historical content outside of the active learning intervention.⁹³

Other results indicated positive content-related learning outcomes for active learning. Donahue-Wallace and Chanda found that students who used interactive multimedia modules were able to

⁹¹ Gleeson, 87, 93.

⁹² Cason.

⁹³ Cason, 346.

use art historical terminology more effectively and at higher levels.⁹⁴ La Follette found that students were more likely to employ information learned through the active learning intervention on assessments.⁹⁵ And, although not included in the metadata analysis, Gioffre found in her master's thesis a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on exams between the control group and the group that received the active learning intervention, demonstrating increased skills in art analysis.⁹⁶

Outcomes regarding student attitudes and beliefs, assessed through surveys, were also positive. Kali et al. found that their intervention led to greater student self-efficacy and independence in analyzing artwork.⁹⁷ Gleeson, as well as Janet and Miles, both found that student enthusiasm, energy, and interest in the content increased with the active learning approaches.⁹⁸ Carrier and Cavalier, as well as Kemp and McBeath, found that students on the whole believed the active learning intervention to be more effective than lectures.⁹⁹ Donahue-Wallace and Chanda found that students believed the intervention helped them learn the material better.¹⁰⁰ And although not based on data, Rose, Ross, and Sowell all anecdotally reported that the active learning strategies they implemented in their classrooms resulted in greater student engagement, deeper thinking, and more of a sense of ownership of the learning by students.¹⁰¹

Rose and Sowell also noted personal perceptions that the loss of lecture time did not result in loss of content.¹⁰² Sowell commented that, "those concepts to which I used to give a great deal of lecture time...are actually dealt with more effectively by the students" in the course of the active learning exercises.¹⁰³ Rose noted that lecturing less required trust that students were doing reading outside of class. She also commented that by refocusing her assessment strategies onto writing assignments instead of slide quizzes, foundational course goals remained the same but could be accomplished through alternative means.¹⁰⁴

Thus, we can determine from this literature that active learning interventions, on the whole, resulted in positive student outcomes in art history courses. Overall, Cason's research provides significant insight into the value of active learning pedagogy. Her research suggested that

⁹⁴ Donahue-Wallace and Chanda, 103.

⁹⁵ La Follette, 51.

⁹⁶ Gioffre.

⁹⁷ Kali, et al., 9.

⁹⁸ Gleeson; Janet and Miles.

⁹⁹ Carrier and Cavalier, 248; Kemp and McBeath, 18.

¹⁰⁰ Donahue-Wallace and Chanda, 104.

¹⁰¹ Rose and Torosyan; Sowell (1991); Sowell (1993).

¹⁰² Rose and Torosyan; Sowell (1991).

¹⁰³ Sowell (1991), 18.

¹⁰⁴ Rose and Torosyan, 66-67.

students who have been exposed to an active learning intervention may be more likely to learn similar disciplinary content differently and more deeply in subsequent passive learning situations than they would have if they had not participated in the intervention. This has significant implications for future research, particularly in curricular or institutional situations where active learning is employed only in one unit of a course, or only by one instructor in a program. Follow-up on Cason's research in a broader context should be completed to determine if her findings are repeatable and transferable.

Conclusions

This article demonstrates that active learning is a part of art historical pedagogy and has been for three decades. While active learning classrooms may have been the exceptions to the slide lecture approach, they nonetheless have persisted and contributed to the discipline. Undergraduate art history instructors have adopted a wide variety of techniques supported by evidence-based research into active, brain-based learning. Moreover, the art history brand of active learning is particular to our field. We engage in active learning through approaches that overlap with many other disciplines, but in a particular combination that is unique to art history and grounded in its basic issues and methods.

This article also shows that peer-reviewed scholars have researched these pedagogies within the context of art history using accepted methodologies of SoTL. Of concern, however, this article proposes that our discipline has not supported scholarship concerning active learning, from avenues for publication to derision from colleagues for engaging in purportedly non-serious research. However, it has also shown that art historians do not always know how to engage in this type of research in a serious manner. Because of the lack of interaction amongst scholars of active learning in art history, there has been little sense of the scope of existing literature on the topic (an issue which this article aims to rectify). This has made it problematic to conduct comprehensive and meaningful literature reviews to ground our scholarship.

This article has also demonstrated that scholarship in active learning in art history is not consistently founded upon empirical evidence. Spivey and Renee McGarry noted in the introduction to the first issue of this journal, "As scholars in the humanities, art historians are skilled at addressing the ambiguities and inherent contradictions of the subjects we pursue, and we recognize the intellectual rigor and scholarly value in qualitative data."¹⁰⁵ However, I would contend that while we may be rich with methods for qualitative analysis of objects and contexts, as a discipline we lack training in methods for research on human subjects. In order to collect

¹⁰⁵ Virginia B. Spivey and Renee McGarry, "Editor's Introduction: Advancing SoTL-AH," *Art History Pedagogy and Practice* 1, no. 1 (2016), accessed 3/1/2017, <http://academicworks.cuny.edu/ahpp/vol1/iss1/1>.

empirical evidence to support meaningful SoTL research, we will need to collaborate with other SoTL practitioners across the disciplines. Qualitative art historical methods and theories can bring much to the SoTL table. As we develop a discipline-grounded approach to SoTL, we will be most effective when we build together with the strength of our colleagues within and beyond our field.

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