Adapting postmodernist art curricula in Malaysia and Indonesia

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Abstract

Postmodernist arts movement influence over Malaysia and Indonesia artists for over twenty years, and many Malaysian and Indonesian artists utilize these concept. However, the art education in some universities in Indonesia and UMK are still based on modernist curriculums. Adapting postmordenist curricula will be challenged in Malaysia and Indonesia because the social issues and different principal are required to be integrated into the curricula. Students should learn interdisciplinary subject matter; various media and technologies; local content (non western) and western concepts of space and design; hidden-stream art and artist; and enlarge artistic canon. Postmodernist curricula enrich existing modernist curricula. In order to know the student's prior knowlege about postmodernist issues, survey method are employed to investigate 50 students in Universitas Tarumanagara Jakarta in 2010, and 18 students in Universiti Malaysia Kelantan in 2011. The results show students from both universities have a little knowledge about postmodernist issues. Moreover, the survey used photo and film criticism instruments to know the student's prior knowledge. I recommend to develop postmodernist curricula: (1) integration value and principals of indigenous artist; (2) integration postmodernism (art history) and art criticism in curricula; (3) develop problem-based learning for art theory and project-based learning for studio productions; (4) integrate contemporaries social issues such as feminism, global warming, war, peace, violence, multiculturism, proverty to the course with various teaching methods.
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Keywords: postmodernist arts; modernist; curricula

INTRODUCTION

Why curricula change many times in Indonesia? One of UNJ professor Anna said that curricula should change because the knowledge also changes. How about curricula in art schools or visual communication design in Tarumanagara University and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan? It is not easy to change curricula from modernist curricula to post modernist curricula. Both curricula show very different concepts and content. Many art educators are not sure with postmodernist curricula because they are afraid that lecturers will be more emphasized in humanities than art as subject matters. Postmodernist artists use only canvas and paint to make their arts, and also they do their arts beyond studio. Postmodernist curricula will encourage student to explore various media from everyday use, rubbish, and recycles materials. Faith Ringgold, raises in Harlem, starts as a painter and turned to quilts when she sees her mother use quilts. She think that quilts as voice experienced borne by black women in America. Her elaborates creations known as story quilts, combine the painting and storytelling. Henry, (1992) cited in Fehr, D (1994). Agus Suwage, one of Indonesian prominent painter, developes the mixture between digital print and paintings. He uses himself as his subject matter.

Phelan (1984) recommend to change the content in drawing, because drawing is not a primacy and main skills to make art. Within the context of postmodernist arts, student should develop art from various tools and media. In addition, art educators should aware the use of new technology and media such as virtual reality, computer art, identify formation in relation to popular and visual culture, digital storytelling, interactive hypertext, and unconventional media in new platform i.e. graffiti and street art (Lee and Chung,. 2009). Although feminism movement in Indonesia has already started since R.A. Kartini in 1879-1904 (Toer, 1967) and feminism movement in Malaysia has been started since political struggles against colonial (Ng, Muhammad, Hui, 2006), but feminism issue has not been integrated in the art curriculum in Universiti Malaysia Kelantan and Tarumanagara university.

MODERNIST CURRICULA VERSUS POSTMODERNIST CURRICULA

Modernism is the major artist movement for the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the western world. In the beginning of 20th century, Modernism is exclusively European phenomenon. Unites States become important especially after World War II. Modern movement approach in architecture and design translate to rejection of extraneous ornament that had nothing to do with an object's or building function. Painters are not represent condition as accurate as possible because photography replace the jobs, and move toward abstraction (Arntson, 2006). The major movements of modernity are capitalism, industrialism, science, and urbanization (Barrett, 2006)

Modernity movement is characterized that painter paints on canvas, inside studio, and work alone except for movie makers who always work collaborative with other artist such as screen writers, director photography, etc. The art critics make modernist art products become "elite" among art communities such as artist, art critics, art buyers, and make a "distant" with public.

Post modernity has no discrete beginning, but some scholars look at the student revolution in Paris in 1968 as its birth. Postmodernist social critics object that modernity fail to provide egalitarian society. In fact, modernity creates oppression of workers under monarchies in the early modernity, and later capitalism in modern age. Postmodernism style in design is characterized by simultaneous combination of media, genres, and styles and rejects the modernists that focus on clarity and reduce of form (Arntson, 2006). Modern photography practices emphasize on clarity, make no alteration and manipulation, find their subject, and print should be the highest technical possible. In contrast with post modern photographic practice, the photo artists should invent their subject, all photo technique and prints are acceptable, can use picture produced by others as points of departure for their own (Kohler, 1989).

Postmodernism feminist rejects genius terminology for modern male artist, and introduce feminist theory: sex is different with gender. Sex refers to state of being male or female, but gender is physical or condition being male or female. Feminist is instrumental, in order to be feminist is a political factor, a choice toward action to change status quo. Woman is not born as feminist, but some of them can choose to be feminist. Not all woman artist do feminist art, and feminist believe that art and politics are not separate (Barrett, 2006).

Multicultualism is a social reform movement developed in the early 1960s in the United States to make society more equitable and fair with every individuals. Multiculturism identify and talked about cultural complexity and issues of power associated with social affiliated and aspect of personal, national and global cultural identity. Multiculturism encourages social skills and action that helps person to be responsible to their environment through an interpretation of visual culture. The belief of visual culture is to place art within a larger context of the communicative world (Stuhr, 1994). Garber and Constantino, 2007 suggest that student has to learn self-knowledge about their own culture, and approaches to studying the art of "Others" which means that students and lecturers should look their indigenous artists or as a way to expand understanding of who makes and interprets art. Multiculturalism has been replaced by "inclusive education" which embrace wider meanings, and consider students with disabilities, different learning styles, and varying socioeconomic backgrounds (Irwin and Chalmers, 2007)

Teresa de laurentis invent the term "queer theory" in 1989, and meant to cover lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (Barrett, 2006). However, the important things about queer theory addressing dismissive langguage, encourage student to have diverse friends, refusing to suppress difference, discussing sexual imagery so students develop a comfort level, and investigating the building gender identities and factors that shape them through studio productions (Constantino & Garber, 2007) .

RESEARCH METHOD

The research started on September – December 2009 at Visual Communication Design, Tarumanagara University. The subjects of the research are fifty students in fifth semester. The fifth semester students are chosen to learn appreciation photos because the students have prior knowledge in appreciation arts. Survey research methods (Cresswell, 2008) are the main forms of inquiry used in this qualitative study. The survey research is designed to investigate hierarchy of learning and to find questioning strategies which develop analytical skills and *rasa* (feeling-affective aspect). Structured observations, written questionnaires (a pre- and post test), and oral questionnaires are used to gather in –depth data of students' learning on how to interpret photography. Pre test and post test are to compare students' interpretations of photographic images before and after they had received instruction in photographic appreciation course. Using these results, the student's initial interpretation of the five photographic images compared with their interpretations of the same five images near the end of the photographic course to see if the use of Barrett's photo criticism model improved their interpretations. For written questionnaires, five types of photographs are projected through projectors along with the questions. The five types of photographs are commercial (*Gudang garam* tobacco ads.), photojournalism (*Minamata Disease, 1971-1974,* by W.Eugene Smith), landscape (*New Hambrug Boat Marina, 1983,* by Robert Glenn Ketchum), fine art (*Three Graces, 1994*) by Sally Mann, and abstract photos (*Piedras-Destinos,* by Maria Martinez-Canas). The three questions are listed with each photographic images are (a) what do you see? (b) What does this photograph mean? And (c) How do you know? These three questions are similar to Barrett's interpretation questions to students (Chia, 2008).

Furthermore, the research started on september 2011 to june 2012 in fifth semester product design student, in Faculty of creative technology, UMK. This preliminary survey test used Structured observations, written questionnaires (a pre- and post test), and oral questionnaires are used to gather in –depth data of students' learning on how to interpret movies.   Fifth semester student are chosen to interpret movies because they have already known basic art, and the objective of this research is to

investigate on how the students interpret the movies and also to know their previous knowledge about art. Students watche "Monalisa Smile" and three guestions are given: (1) What is your impression of this movie?; (2) How the story is told?; (3) Which element of arts or design principals are used?.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

Although both university Tarumanagara University and UMK, has different culture, students, lecturer's competency etc, but the students has a little knowledge about contemporaries issues and postmodernism issues.   Most Tarumanagara students (visual communication design) have family or parents background: 70% female students, 95% Indonesian Chinese descent, 5% Javanese, 58% traders, 26% private employees, 4% government employees, 2% retirement, 44% high school graduates, 2% D3 (polytechnic), 38% bachelor degree, 4% master degree, and only 2% job that relate to art. Further, most UMK students have parents background: 27% female, 95% malay, 5% Indian, 11% graduate 89% high school degree, 11% job that relate to art. Their academic record have GPA above 3.4 are 16% and GPA 3-3.4 are 84%. Most Tarumanagara Students have GPA above 3 are 60% and GPA between 2.5 to 3 are 27% and below 2.5 around 13%. This is a good achievement in studio production for Tarumanagara University. However, I gave photo appreciation test with five different photo styles, and student have nearly 47% have D or E (failed) and 53% have C, none of them have B or A. Also UMK students cannot answer history of western arts and art appreciation because we seldom give them written test or art appreciation test.   Most of the marks derived from studio productions, but we seldom give theoretical test. Theories in art are aesthetic, art criticism and art history which are not included in UMK curricula and only small credit in Tarumanagara University. Most UMK students do not know western painters, painting styles, art history, and the discursive of art theory.   Both curricula are against Broudy's art theory, which stated that aesthetic experience is derived from exposure to exemplary works of art (Butler-Kisber, Li, Clandinin, Markus, 2007). Looking at their background that most of them have little exposure to exemplary works of art; therefore, students need to be encourages to visit art exhibitions, museum, reading books.

Tarumanagara students are showing Minamata Disease photo that show fisherman's in minamata bays are poisoned by mercury. Tarumanagara students can give a good answer for photojournalism, but they found difficulties in answering environmental issues which are shown in Robert Glenn Ketchum photos, and feminism issues in Sally Mann's photo. Feminism or post modernism curricula and environmental issues are not integrated in visual communication design in Tarumanagara.

One of the recommended movies is *Monalisa smile* which told about the lives of Katherine Watson as a teacher of art history and work at Wellesley College, a prestigious New England women's school around 1950's, the screen play casts Julia Roberts as Katherine Watson.   At that time, the young women in prestigious schools are expected to memorise course content as they prepare to became exemplary mothers who look after their children, and to be wives of the nation's elite males.   The Wellesley college offered a curriculum that would make student attractive in marriage market (Purvis, 1991 cited in Hamdan, 2007).   In the movies also show the work of Sautine, Van Gogh, Jackson Pollock, and some comment about their work. Showing *Monalisa Smile* movie, most students in UMK talk about relationship between teacher and students, student's preparation, "strange" western culture, Katherine Watson try to change the students, moral value.   However, none students interpret that Katherine Watson as a teacher try to encourage feminism for the students.   Students in UMK have also seldom criticized their own work or self criticize and seldom do art criticism.   Using the movies for teaching elementary to senior high school is quite common in USA, but it is the first time in UMK, Kelantan.

THE POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION POSTMODERNISM CURRICULA

Taylor (2002) recommends the criteria for developing postmodern curriculum: (a) continuity of experience; (b) program and community specific of training opportunities; (c) collaborative goals and curriculum design; (d) continual and meaningful reflection activities; and (e) a theoretical and practical support system.   However, Taylor's recommendation will be not easily applied for university students in Tarumanagara and UMK students. Taylor recommendation is for art education in elementary schools.   Art appreciation, art history, visiting to museum are part of USA curricula in elementary schools, and the curricula will give it for all students and not only for student who have talents in art (Feldman, 1980).   Therefore, elementary students in USA can appreciate painting or photo since early ages. In contrast with Tarumanagara University and UMK students, they start to learn art appreciation when they enter university.

I recommend to develop postmodernism curricula: (1) integration value and principals of indigenous artist; (2) integration postmodernism (art history) and art criticism in curricula; (3) develop problem-based learning for art theory and project-based learning for studio productions; (4) integrate con-

temporaries social issues such as feminism, global warming, war, peace, violence, multiculturism, proverty to the course with various teaching methods.

Integration value and principals of indigenous artist

Postmodernism curricula encourages lecturers to exposure students with indigenoust artist. Student can understand about the value and principals of their ancentors, for example, the subject matter in old Balinese paintings can be divided into two; pure (*utama*) and impure (*nista)* aspects. These subject matters have their own arrangement, and the arrangement has meanings. Although the theme usually related with Hindu mythology or legends, but theme is important to be described. Old Balinese paintings are telling story about Hindu mythology, for example, Ramayana stories and Mahabharata Stories. These stories usually have moral lesson and religious values, and lecturers should integrate the moral and asian value of lifes, or follow Ki Hadjar Dewantara"s value.

Integration postmodernism (art history) and art criticism in curricula

Postmodernism artist are very different with modernism artist, and derived from many races, minorities, woman, homosexual. Postmodernism embrace pop culture, indigenous culture, pre renaissance culture, and "non original" action which dare to use and redesign previous artist works.

Develop problem-based learning for art theory and project-based learning for studio production.
Problem-based learning is a good teaching method for art theory (art criticize, art history and art aesthetic) course. Lecturers can brainstorm the theme that involves postmodernism issues, or contemporaries social issues; therefore, the course will embrace other disciplines. Project-based learning is suitable for art courses which emphasize on studio productions such as drawing, photography, video productions, etc.

Integrate contemporaries social issues such as feminism, global warming, war, peace, violence, multiculturism to the course with various teaching methods.
The curricula should embrace Postmodernism issues or other social issues which triggering student's awareness of their surroundings; therefore, this action will interrelates with other disciplines.

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