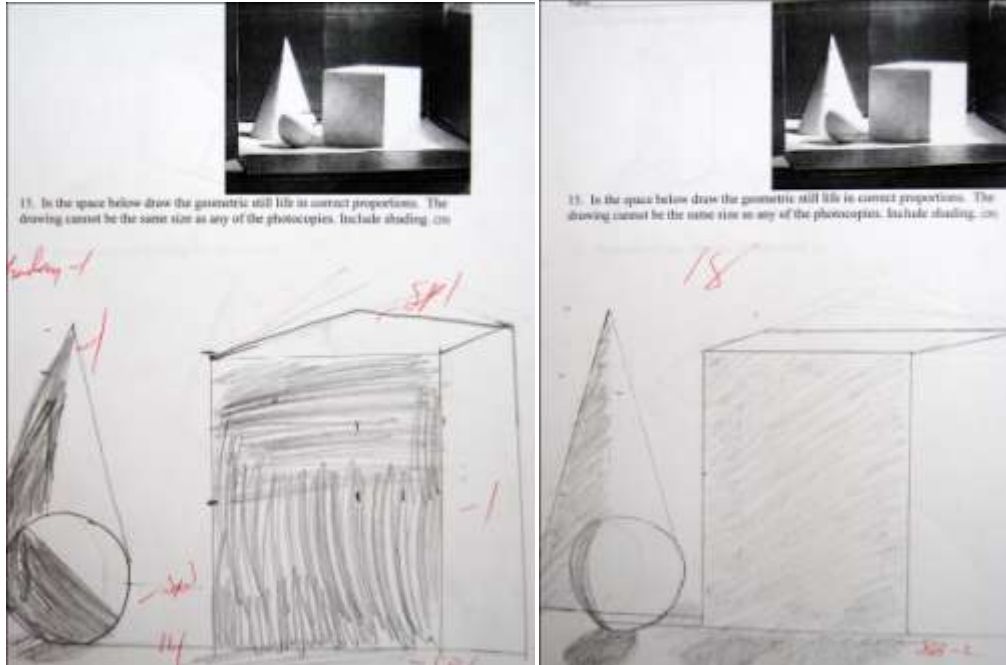


Forgetting is Learning

Lesson learned from Holderlin and Heidegger

The poems by Holderlin are intensely spiritual as are the elucidations of Holderlin's poetry by Heidegger. Heidegger is also poetic in his metaphysical elucidations of Holderlin's poetry. As I read I begin to understand the format for which Heidegger has chosen. The poetic, the metaphor define by multiple experiential sensations rather than relying on mere word definition. What is expressed is felt beyond interpretation of the word and creates complex sensations that ring of truth yet dissolve under the scrutiny of words and you are left with only an imprint of the thought. By the process, instead of closing in on a definition you find yourself opening up to the idea. The Idea is no longer containable and becomes interconnected and inseparable with other ideas, experiences and blurs the line of reality and imagination. What cannot be defined becomes the thinking experience which intern becomes the beginning of the learning journey. They allude to something more. This complex combining of thought, senses and experience is similar to what Kandinsky refers to striking a cord (causing vibrations) to the soul. The key is the cord, multiple notes. In *Consciousness a User's Guide* they explain a thought as neurons signaling in a synchronized rhythm from different locations in the brain much like the musical harmonic cord. Harmony comes from the conflict of duality which is pared opposites. To flow out from the source is to flow back to the source and to open up to the inner self. Remembrance is the ability to forget and forgetting is the ability to remember and being lost is the only way to find (anything of) value/self. Creating is dependent on forgetting and remembering. An example of duality is Holderlin's reference to a migratory bird. The bird is free to flight but at the same time is a slave to its instincts. In Van Gogh's paintings the conflict of nature is revealed in the constant use of the opposite complementary colors. Van Gogh is also easily seen/heard in Bach's counterpoint and the color of music is heard in its octave range and its harmony from opposites.

What I have been able to see from this learning/thinking experience/study of Holderlin and Heidegger are the real obstacles facing me as an artist/teacher. What I am encountering are students that have become closed systems. They are closed because they have formed concepts which become preconceptions and misconceptions. They become immovable objects/obstacles to learning. What I find I must do is first identify the misconceptions/preconceptions and try to persuade the student into seeing what is false about their preconceptions and then try to get them to the state of openness/open mindedness to find a solution. The solution can only be realized if I am successful in getting them to forget their past knowledge (current concept) of the problem. In this case learning begins with forgetting and with each additional project/problem forgetting must occur if learning is to continue. The first set of preconceptions are formed at an early age and solidified at around the 1st through 5th grade level. What you are seeing below is known as the base line drawing.



The two sides of the cube and the sphere are resting on a single straight base line. This comes from the analytical idea that the objects are sitting on a flat level surface of a table which is represented as a flat line and all objects must sit on that line. This is most apparent in the cube. The cube also has a flat bottom and rests on a flat table so both are combined into the same line as the table line. This all stems from the analytical idea of flat bases on flat tables. The student cannot let go of this concept, even though they were introduced to the ideas of representing 3 dimensional space in a 2 dimensional format through measuring and use of a set scale. The students are unable to forget their preconceptions and view their misconceptions as analytically correct and are unable to see the visually correct solution/answer.



In the above drawing from the final exam all three students were exposed to the same lessons of structure and proportions of the face. They were all given a precise system of measurements to

use. In the left and center picture the students could not release themselves from their preconceptions of how to draw the face and the proportions. The misconception here is the location of the eyes relative to the top of the head. The students perceive the top of the head to be the hairline and place the eyes high on the forehead. The hairline is actually on the front plane of the face and the top of the head is higher up above the hair line. The drawing on the right understood this concept and drew the eyes in the correct location. The rest of the features of the two drawings on the left also are misconceptions that become analytical representations of the nose, mouth and ears. The one on the right was able to forget their previous analytical symbols for the features of the face and were able to construct 3 dimensional looking representation of the nose, eyes and mouth. In the more advanced classes students still hold to their preconceptions of the different features of the face. I have had recent successes by explaining their errors in drawing by naming them as misconceptions and to assert that they need to abandon their ideas of (we'll use the nose) of the nose to look for new/different solutions for the nose. If they could not see/find solutions on their own then I provided them with a new model (representation of the structure of the nose) and ask them to implement the new form on their drawing/painting. I will not know if the student has successfully forgotten their misconception until the problem of drawing the nose is faced again. At that point I will be able to see if the old preconceptions have been forgotten and if new ones have formed. The eventual goal is to have the student keep forgetting each solution and learn to see the problem as a present problem that requires a solution of the present moment releasing prior knowledge and solutions of the past and by doing so eliminates any preconceptions of how a nose should look or be rendered. The solution must be original each time if the student is to improve.

Conjecture

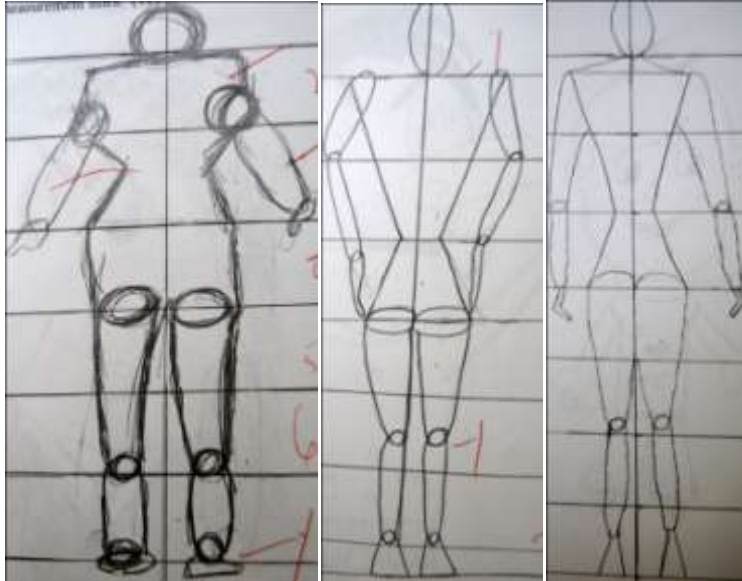
If preconceptions exist in the visual spectrum then one could assume they exist in all other disciplines of learning. If students are to learn then they must learn to forget and to form new ideas. If one is to perceive their 5th grade vocabulary is adequate for conversational communication then they will never see how poorly they communicate or see the possibilities that arise from communicating intelligently from an expanded vocabulary.

The overriding issue in education is perception that leads to preconceptions that are usually misconceptions and always ends the thinking process and the searching process.

Plato's cave is a good example of how one holds on to their conceptions or misconceptions. In Plato's cave individuals lived in an artificially created environment/reality. This environment/cave had become the individuals' concept of the world and the reality of their world. When they were led from the cave to the light of reality they became afraid and wanted to return to the reality of the cave. They could not let go/forget the reality of the past to experience the true reality of the present. This is the description for most of humanity and possibly the way we learn or prevent ourselves from learning. A similar view is by Nietzsche who asserts that reality is constructed by the mind and that all human understanding is interpretation.

In the next example when I introduce drawing the figure and discuss proportions as measurements I always receive the most resistance in discussing the location of the elbow. When the students are told that their elbow extends down to the waist they usually disagree. So I have them stand up, putting their arms down to their side I ask them to look and see where the

elbows are located in relation to what body part (waist). Here the misconception comes from the fact that the hands seem to always be in full view of the face through writing, eating, grooming, etc. Even though their arms have always been in full view and they have lived with them for 14, 15 or 16 years they were still unaware of the length and location based on the functions of the hand. Reality was experienced based and now they must change or forget that reality and change to a visual based reality. You cannot move on from one to the other until the old preconception/misconception is forgotten.



The two left images represent the misconceptions of the length of the upper arm and the placement of the elbow. Both students had gotten the worksheet/class assignment correct and they had drawn the figure in correct proportions with the elbows in the correct position but they/we failed to replace the concept/misconception/preconception. Even though once drawn correctly the thinking was not changed and this represents the student's analytical concept of the arm/elbow which fails to see/reflect the reality of the arm/elbow. The drawing on the right represents a student who had the flexibility to change their concept of the proportion and location of the arm/elbow.

Another example from my reading:

Einstein built his theories through synthesizing and bi-associating the work of others to form something new and original. The scientific authors of quantum physics in turn built their theories from the work of Einstein. In the Source I had read, Einstein defended the importance of his own theories and rejected the accepted ideas of quantum physics. He could not let go/forget his work to embrace the evolution of his work. He became closed rather than open to.