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Caring Mentor, Brilliant Scholar

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In 1973 I was completing art school and was passionate about painting. At the suggestion of my aunt, I made an appointment with Elliot Eisner. He appreciated my interest in art, but asked me to think more about my interest in people. That next year, in the Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP), with Elliot's guidance I discovered my care for people while teaching in a continuation high school. When he visited my class, he was supportive of me, and my dialogical approach to teaching. He helped me feel validated as a person and as a teacher. That year has been the foundation of my teaching career.

That same year he introduced me to a new world of intellectual connections between art, philosophy, psychology and history, in the master's degree component of the program. Looking back now at the STEP program, after 40 years in education, it is amazing to me that Elliot could make possible such a solid real-world experience while at the same time providing, single-handedly, a world-class master's degree curriculum. During that year, and when I returned for the doctorate, I was introduced to the writing of Dewey, Langer, Broudy, Feldman and Arnheim, and then personally introduced to Broudy and Feldman when Elliot invited them to lecture. Because of Elliot I met the inspiring graduate student Charles Garoian, the wonderful English art educators John and Shula Newick, and the great Rudolf Arnheim, who had profound respect for Elliot.

Elliot and Ellie invited all students to their home, and made us feel welcome and at ease with these great scholars.

Elliot taught me to shape ideas and to write clearly. He gave me confidence in writing, and an athlete's writing ethic: five pages a day, a chapter in a week. I had the honor of serving as his research assistant for his book *Cognition and Curriculum*, and as teaching assistant for his class on educational evaluation.

His scholarship is stunning for its significance and for its range. His doctoral dissertation, a typology of creative behavior, is still one of the best works in the field of creativity. His concept of expressive objectives brilliantly located the unique place of art activities in the goal structure of the school. He synthesized a wide range of psychological and philosophical studies into a broadened view of cognition in education, and identified the cognitive contribution of the arts. His ideas on qualitative evaluation remain relevant, important, and needed to help with critical issues in schooling today.

I will always be grateful to Elliot Eisner as a caring mentor, and value him as a brilliant scholar.

About the author

Dan Nadaner received the A.B. from Harvard, the M.A. and Ph.D in Education from Stanford, and the M.F.A. in Art from the University of California, Berkeley. Since 1988 he has taught art education and studio art at California State University, Fresno. He is co-editor, with Kieran Egan, of the book *Imagination and Education*. He is a painter and video artist. He has exhibited his works in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Tokyo, and Marseille. He has been artist-in-residence in Yosemite, participated in an artist exchange in Japan, and been a visiting artist at the State Academy of Art in Oslo and the Studio Art Centers International in Florence. His current interests include the use of non-narrative structures in video art to convey dream and consciousness. He has taught Dewey and Langer every semester in his art theory course for the past sixteen years.

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