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### Interview with Suzanne Cohan-Lange, 1998

Columbia College Chicago

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## Suzanne Cohan-Lange

*This is Friday, February twenty-seventh, 1998, and this is an interview with Suzanne Cohan-Lange chairperson of Interdisciplinary Arts.*

**All right, we will start with, when did you come to Columbia College?  
1980**

**1980. And what were the circumstances that brought you here, what did you find, why did you come?**

Oh, it was quite simple actually. Four years before, myself and two other colleagues, Jean Odsworth and Rebecca Ruben, created this program. I was teaching at the University of Illinois, Jean was at Loyola, Rebecca was down in Hyde Park; and we created the program first at my kitchen table, for no apparent reason, because we knew that combining the arts was working for us. I was doing a lot of work with Rebecca combining art and music. Jean was doing it at Loyola with business and the arts. We were doing work with Nana Shineflug, who still teaches for the program, in choreography. I was doing sets and costumes and Beca was doing her music and it was one of these very '60s kinds of, "Let's have a program, we'll invite the kids." And it was almost that naive, actually. So anyway, we wrote the program and then we took it to the Consortium of Colleges and Universities, which is an amalgamation of the fourteen privates: Loyola, DePaul, Concordia, Roosevelt, The Art Institute, etc. And they also were sort of a '60s organization designed to sponsor new and innovative programs that no one institution had to, like, take

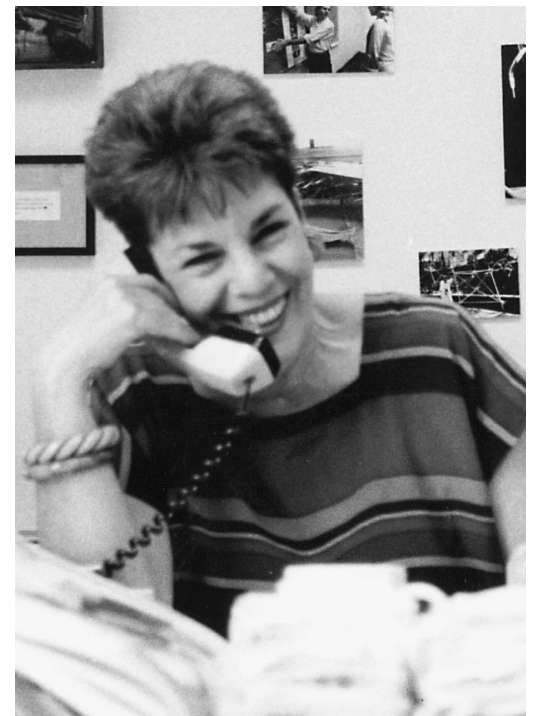
a financial chance on. So all fourteen of them would meet, every few months or so, to pick programs that they thought, that at least three thought, had a chance to make it at their university. So the three that voted for our proposal were Loyola, DePaul, and Concordia. Columbia was interested but Columbia, at the time, was not certified to get the Masters, but they were paying attention

**What was your, the kitchen table, the date of your...**

'76, we started in '76. And when we went to the consortium, there was a lot of Jesuits around that table, a lot of them. And they just sort of stared at us. But obviously three of them had voted yes and the three that voted yes were Loyola, DePaul, and Concordia, so we had most of our classes at Loyola, some classes at Roosevelt, some at the Art Institute, but mostly they were at Loyola; and some at DePaul. And this went on for four years. And then at the—the way the consortium works is they then look for a permanent home at the end of four years or five years for these new programs if they've lasted this long. Well, at that point, I don't remember whether it was Mike or Lya, I think it was Lya Rosenblum, the Dean at the time, called us up and said, "Let's talk." Well, one thing led to another and they invited me to come to Columbia and help them get certified for the Masters. They were getting a state visit in, I want to say the next year or so, and so I, and I had been with the State. In a previous incarnation I was the State Art Supervisor in Springfield. So I knew the ropes and the doors and I knew where a lot of loopholes were. And when I

sat down for my interview with Lya I think I said, "Well, I need to bring not just me but the whole program, my faculty, my students, everybody." And she said, "Fine." Because in those days we were in one building, the 600 building, and we had whole empty floors. So it was a very different place then it is now.

I started in September of '80 and I was put up on the eleventh floor along with Science, which was Zafra Lerman, and the guys with the long ponytails, veterans, the veterans. So, I mean, it was a very different place. It was very small. One of my favorite stories about those days was the very first week, before my offices were ready, before there was even a chair, I was in Lya's suite because Lya at that time had a huge office down there on the fifth floor, in the same area she is but much, much bigger, and she just had swarms of people there, doing whatever, but they actually all knew what they were doing. So



there was an empty desk and I, you know, Lya just said, "Until your desk and your office is ready, stay here."

So the next day these two white-haired men walked by. One was short and one was tall and they both had the same kind of blue workshirts and a tie sort of off to the side, loose. And I said to one of the guys, "Who are those two men?" And they said, "Well, one's the janitor and one's the President, and they're dear friends." And I said, "OK." The next day I went to that Jimmy's, dreadful restaurant, you know, where all the kids smoke, for lunch and I saw one of those men at the lunch counter. And I thought, "Oh, it must be the janitor. I'll go sit next to him and show how nice and friendly I am." So I sat down and said, "Hi. You work at Columbia, don't you?" And he said, "Yeah." And I said, "So do I. I'm new. My name's Suzanne. What's yours?" And he said, "Mike Alexandroff." I was like, oh shit. So it took me a long time to live that one down. He just thought I was... But I mean, that was the kind of place it was. It was very different. I suspect you would not see the current President sitting in a lunch counter, you know, although I suppose he does eat, but, you know, it's different, it is different, so next question.

**Well, I think that before we go on maybe you should describe a little bit of, since it was a new curriculum and program, what you brought to Columbia. I think that might be of interest, some of the things that you offered?**

OK. It's the first of its kind in America. We started the first Masters program in Interdisciplinary Arts in 1976. When the word interdisciplinary was suspect, we were considered

dangerous radicals—dangerous, I love that one—dangerous radicals because we had the audacity to suggest that artists and writers and dancers and actors could sit together for two years and have something interesting and worthwhile come out of it. When you went to graduate school you learned more and more about less and less until you knew everything there was to know about a very small area of discourse; either you just played jazz piano or you just painted. And within painting you just painted a certain way, or you just wrote concrete poetry. You certainly didn't do all of those, good grief, and what you studied had only to do with your area. and that had been the way it had been really since, I'm gonna suggest the '40s, and certainly the '50s. I mean, that's what real modernism was about, fragmentation. And it was very convenient institutionally. The fragmentation of knowledge into small bits is very convenient from an educational point of view. The point that it makes no fucking sense never got in anybody's way. So that children from the age of about, I want to say eight, yeah, from the fourth grade on, start getting departmentalized

And my first teaching experience, I think my very first teaching job I was teaching junior high out south in Harvey. And I was teaching Literature and Art, since I was a double major. And the first day I said to the kids, "OK, open your English books." They said, "This ain't English, this be Literature. English be seventh period." And I knew that America was in deep trouble; they saw no relationship between English and Literature whatsoever. And the idea that Art and Literature might have had something to do with each other,

this was a joke, how could that be? You know? And so it was at that time that I started doing this, where I began investigating what was happening at a given culture at a given time in the arts. Surprise, surprise; the same things were happening. So that Baroque art and Baroque music and Baroque architecture and Baroque fashion and hairstyles are all influenced by the same things and so they sort of look alike and sound alike. Now, this does not seem like it should be shocking news, but at the time it was this gigantic light bulb, because our education never mentioned this, ever, unless you majored in Art History, and even then you certainly got nothing about Music History, nothing about Dance History.

So it was then that I and this group of like-minded characters began doing this kind of teaching workshops. So we took all of that and, you know, created a program where everybody has to take a core of classes. So, like a graduate student coming into the program has to take a visual class, a movement, a choreography, a sound class, a writing class, and a performance class. And not that we're going to change your art form, but just having that experience helps really make some enormous changes in your own art, you know, really gives people the sense of what is the difference between good sense and schlock in an art form, how do you know? What's the nature of composition in these five areas? Because it turns out that composition is composition is composition. So we're really dealing with aesthetics, but with a hands-on approach so that people actually do it. They're not just reading that. It's one thing to read about music, it's quite another to compose it. It's the same with art, you know, you can't really read

about it. It's only when you get your hands dirty that you have some sense of what it's really about. So that was the program. It's a two-year program, it's thirty-six hours, it's mostly at night on weekends. Our population was and continues to be older returning adults: median age, thirty-five. We have probably the best retention in not just Columbia College but maybe America, because it's a tracked program. It's very simple, everybody gets on the bus at the beginning and goes through it almost entirely, except for their electives, together, and gets off the bus two and a half years later. So, and because it's collaborative in nature, the dancers need the artists and the artists need the composers and the composers need the performers. No one allows any one else to leave.

**Why Columbia, of those, the consortium?**

It was the only school, really, that's arts-based. Not art but arts. Out of the fourteen in town it's the only one that really cares about the arts. Loyola was always confused, "What is it you people do again?" Hey, just, they were sweet, but they were like totally puzzled as to why we were there. And I mean, we had to have our choreography classes when the basketball team wasn't playing. It was, it was not exactly perfect. And Columbia's been a great, great home.

**Has the program changed since 1980?**

Well, it's changed in just in response to the changes of the world. It's become less educationally oriented as the population changes. When it started it was all, almost everybody in it were art teachers, arts teachers, art, music, dance, etcetera, arts teachers. But then when, sort of the bottom fell out of arts education, I want to say

the late '70s, early '80s, people said, you know, "There's no jobs." So the population began changing. Instead of getting arts teachers or people who wanted to be arts teachers we got practitioners, so that changed. So we had much more sort of painters and writers and performers and stuff. Also, the world finally caught up to this collaborative notion and so the program became even more collaborative, more performative. When you get the arts together you get performance, we know that. It's gotten more rigorous in terms of aesthetics, it's less geared towards education and more geared toward aesthetics. The major changes are really hardware, to tell you the truth. We've added, you know, multimedia and computers and video and all of that, just, you have to, you just sort of have to. But the course still remains the same. It's the five core classes and there's the aesthetics class and sort of a sociology trends class and then the rest is studio based on your area that you want to do. We still are going to lecture you in Wisconsin for five days on a retreat where it's really wonderful, because we do some of the best work up there because there's no distractions. And they still have to do an exhibition or a performance or a recital at the end for their pieces. So in that regard it hasn't really changed, it's only changed kind of in response to the population.

**Here at Columbia?**

Well, generally America, you know. We have gotten bigger. We added the MAT a few years ago, which is the Master of Arts in Teaching, as the circle keeps going around and around there was, a few years ago in the early '90s, a sense that maybe now there was going to be some

jobs opening up. And Lya has always been very interested in getting a teacher training component and so we added that and now we have the MAT, which is Master of Arts in Teaching. And then just a few years ago, about three, we added the Book and Paper Center and now we've just started the MFA, the Master of Fine Arts, in Interdisciplinary Book and Paper Arts. So that is the same core, but because it's an MFA it's sixty hours and a huge chunk of it, I want to say forty, is in the book arts. And people can become involved in papermaking, book bonding, letterpress, or using those art forms to make set-ups, costumes, installations, you know, huge sculptures, etc. And they still have a performative element, too, it's just that when we brought the Book and Paper Center here we created two non-for-profits called, one was called Paperpress, which was run by one of our other ones, and the other was called Artist Book Works. And I had known both of these people for years, and I think they were tired of running tiny non-for-profits and towards the '80s sort of collapsed. It was like, "Oh God, how many more years can I hustle the rent?" But they had an enormous amount of resources, stuff, people, things, and mailing lists. They came to us and said, "If we give you our stuff will you give us institutional affiliation?" And we said, "Let's talk about it." So we then put together a proposal for just having the Book and Paper Center and then Columbia said, "Oh sure bring it, we want stuff, a hundred thousand dollars worth of stuff? Yeah, we'll take it." And so then they rented some space over at 218 S. Wabash for that. And then there became a huge amount of interest in classes over there. And then finally this Fall we started the

first group of the MFAs. So we've got the MA, the MAT and the MFA; there's a bunch of outfits. But with still the same core classes.

**Gong back to when you first came, who are some of the people that perhaps you remember the most, whether it be students or peers?**

You mean like Louis Silverstein? Is he gonna read this?

**Eventually, I would imagine.**

I remember that, such a different place. Columbia was started by '30s radicals and '60s radicals. And if you weren't one or the other what the hell were you doing here? Luckily, I had marched in Selma. Because one of the first questions they asked was, "Were you in Selma?" And the answer was yes, thank God.

**Really?**

Oh sure. If you weren't, why weren't you? I mean, Bert's hair was still real long and Lou had just moved from being Dean to being Chairman of Liberal Education, if it was even called that at the time. And I remember having an interview with Lou where I was so astounded that he still had his conscientious objector, I want to say, it was like a plaque, if you will, mounted on the wall, you know. And this was '80. We're not talking '65 here, this is 1980, fifteen years later and he still had that hanging on the wall and so I thought, "Well, this is a very hip place." What was it like? It was that one building and the Dance Center, which we did not own but we rented. So one of the, there was Shirley of course, Sheldon was brand new, he was hired the same year I was. And I don't know where he had classes, I don't know where he was. But I know that they had the Dance Center. And Zafra ran Science, Lya was the Dean, Mike

was at the end of the hall, Pearl Cristol wrote everybody's paychecks and Peggy O'Grady took care of, you know, money from the kids; she was the Bursar. And I was always calling her and saying, "Peggy, can we just pay like a dollar down and a dollar a week for the rest of our lives?" And she'd say, "Oh Suzanne, send them down." You know, it had the quality of a very small town. Kind of a mom and pop grocery store where everybody knew everybody. And let's see, Bill Russo was of course here, he was one of the originals, and Tony Loeb, who else? John Mulvany had been there a year so he really disliked me instantly, upon sight, yeah. We won't get into that. I remember sitting in the hall and talking to one of his faculty who said that, she said, "Oh, your program sounds so interesting, I think I'll take it." And he happened to be walking by and he just said, "I forbid it, it's a bunch of sandbox arts and crafts." And it was like, "Excuse me, who are you?" You know who he was, but anyway, what else? The janitor, Jake, Jake the janitor and Mike were inseparable, they were dear, dear friends, had been for years. Always sort of running up and down the halls together. Bert, Bert Gall was always in charge of bricks and mortar, always. Before he became the Provost he was just, you know, sort of Vice-President in charge of everything. And his brother, Gerry Gall, was in charge of Printing Services. So if you wanted to have a poster done or something like that you went to Gerry Gall. And I remember the first word Gerry Gall would say, to any question, which is pretty much the first word that Bert Gall says as well, he answers, "No." And so we assumed that that was probably the first thing they learned from their

parents which was, "No." But then they would do it, you know. I think it took Bert and Mike, it probably took a couple of years before they decided I was OK, you know, one of the guys. But I suspect that's the same in all places. I remember once Mike calling and saying, "What is it you people do? I don't know enough about this program. Send me stuff!" So it was like, OK, so I started sending things left and right. And then he had this wonderful open door policy so that if you went by his office and his door was open and you could stick your head in and there was nobody sitting there, you just sort of walked in, plopped down, and said, "I have this idea. What do you think?" Well I have to tell you, it's not like that anymore. But I didn't know that when Dr. Duff came on board. I was very naive. I had been so used to the plopping down approach with Mike that one day, right after Dr. Duff came on board, I walked by, there was nobody in so I came in, I plopped myself down and said, "Hi. My name..." And I had this good idea for the Book and Paper Center. And, you know, I ran the whole idea by him. He just sat there and he went, "Cohan-Lange who are you, what are you doing here? Don't you people have committees, structures for these stupid things? This is just not the way things should be done." So I realized that it was going to be a different place.

**How'd you get by his secretary?**

She was in the ladies room that moment, I guess. Yeah, it's true, Joyce can be formidable. But it was just a little...

**Who were your—a lot of people talk about, you know, people that helped them out when they were first here if they were starting something new and then were**

**there people that kind of maybe smoothed the path or if you needed, I don't know, extra money or you had an idea...**

Well, I went to, I had two people to go to: Lya or Mike. I didn't really deal much with her in the first few years. All of my budgets all went through Lya; there was no Vice-President for Finance. I mean, John Schiebel did the books and he kept them secret. He never sent you anything that told you how much you still had, "What kind of budgets? Don't ask, what do you want to know for?" So there was this... I remember going up to him once at a party and saying, you know, "Do I have any money left in my budget?" "What do you care?" So, but pretty much anything that I needed I went to either Lya or Mike. There was really nobody, you know, I mean, Zafra? You know? I don't think I went to Zafra ever. Mary Dougherty, now Mary Dougherty was a wonderful woman, is a wonderful woman, she still is. She's Peter Thompson's wife and she's an art therapist. And she was running a program at the time, down the hall, called AIA, Artists in Apprenticeship. And it was a program for freshmen, it was wonderful. It was two people: her and Eileen Cherry, who is an alum of my program from one of the very first years, and is now full-time at DePaul. And the two of them ran this AIA program and it was really for like a small group of freshmen, as a form of mentoring for freshmen. And it was just fabulous. And I learned a lot about Columbia and sort of how things worked, from Mary. But I had been at the State of Illinois and then I had been at the University of Illinois. So this place was a piece of cake; are you kidding? Compared to both of those institutions this was so small and warm and friendly that when-

ever you need it you picked up the phone, you called one of two people. The answer was either yes or no or how to get it. So it was none of the sort of layers of bureaucracy that I had to file through at the University of Illinois, Circle or the State Office of Education, Springfield where, you know that place. So, for me, I had died and gone to heaven. It was just the greatest thing in the whole wide world, you know? And to a greater or lesser degree it still is. You know, I mean, there's more levels, there's more layers, there's more paper, dear God, we've got paper out the kazoo. The students are still wonderful, the faculty, I have fabulous faculty; a lot of them are the same ones that I had before. The staff at Columbia's great. Morale is probably different than it was. I think that, I don't know, because you see the whole P-Fac thing, I mean, times have changed so much and there's so many more layers. But because I had access to those two people, the dean and the President, I always thought it was the greatest thing since sliced bread. The other thing about this place is there were always parties. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday there was a party. There was a party for this one and for that one. You couldn't have three people in a room without a party and I loved that. When I was at Illinois, I had been there for eight years and there was one party and I gave it, OK? I mean, that was the difference between a state school where nobody knew their name or cared and a place like Columbia, where somebody was going into the hospital or getting out of the hospital or getting married or getting divorced..

**How would you describe or define the mission, the educational mission of Columbia College, and has that changed over time or...**

Yeah, I think it hasn't changed one bit. Well, you see the graduate and the undergraduate missions have always been very different. The undergraduate mission is open enrollment and, you know, giving a voice to the voiceless, and giving a chance to all the people who would not have normally gone to college; kids who maybe were not so great at reading and writing but were fabulous at singing and dancing. But at the graduate level, it was always very selective. And I don't have any undergraduates, so what do I know from them? I really don't. The few undergraduates that I have dealt with at all have been upper-classmen who took our fifty-one, sixty-one classes. And we do have some of those, but they're pretty much very advanced and very committed. I think the mission is exactly the same as it's ever been. I think what's changed is, the numbers are so out of control that we cannot handle the numbers that we've got and they're going to have to figure out how to limit enrollment. And that is such a hot fucking issue that if you suggest limiting enrollment through any, you know, like make a cut-off date and just stick with it, something, you know, they get all freaked because it's always been enrollment driven and there might still be twenty-five people downstairs who want to do the money. That's gonna have to change. Because we just can't enroll... Years ago, years, years ago I faced down Mike and said, "I will not take double my hours. I can't with the current faculty, you know, unless you hire me some more full-time people. I'm at totally part-time. I mean, I have sixty-three graduate

students in, you know, two completely different programs and I've still only got two other full-time people besides myself. The rest of us are all part-time." So...

**Do you have a number for the part-time?**

How many part-timers?

**Yeah.**

About eighteen or twenty, you know, depending upon the year; probably a total of twenty and two are full-timers, eighteen are part-timers. And I still teach classes every semester. There was just no way that I could increase my numbers the way they liked. The school has always been numbers-driven. I mean, Mike could never understand why my numbers didn't go up, why they stayed steady year after year, decade after decade. And it's very clear: I set out to keep it that way. I like having twenty people. I think the perfect class size is eighteen and that's exactly what I have. So, and pretty much if I accept twenty I graduate eighteen, a couple drop out along the way but that's about it. So, you know, we'll see what the numbers are for the MFA, but this first new group of MFA is gonna be sixteen. So once we have a double group of MFAs and a double group of MAs, you know, we'll see what the numbers are for the MFAs, but this first new group of MFAs are sixteen. So once we have a double group of MFAs and a double group of MAs, you know, first year and second year, we'll see if we can handle it. We might have to find more people, but the mission's exactly the same as it ever was, as far as I can tell. And I think the primary difference is that numbers and the fact that they have to be...

**If the graduate school mission is different from the undergrad could you, in a few sentences maybe, if you were asked to define that for the grad school...**

Well, sure, the grad school mission, I think, is printed somewhere on the grad school catalog. It's essentially for training professionals in the arts, that is precisely what we do.

**Does that raise problems with your relationship to the larger institution?**

No, never has, never has. I think for the departments that have both graduate and undergraduate it is a problem because sometimes one seems to be taking away from the other because they have the same faculty often from both. But since I don't have any undergraduates, and never did and have no desire to, it's never been an issue for me. It's just a subject about which I'm really not very real. I've only just started going to chairpersons meetings a year or so ago. All of us who were directors of graduate programs became chairpeople, finally became chairpeople after seventeen years.

**What brought that about? Did anything change?**

Well, we got a little more money. We get a credit card; that was nice. What changed is, you know, our being part of that entire group of chairpeople, which, if you knew them, it's a blessing. But really for the first time I'm aware of all of the problems they face, you know, because I never had undergraduates here. I've had them at other schools but not here. You know, you hear about it but you don't really realize the vast numbers that we're dealing with. And, you know, like in a department like Film, which is totally driven by equipment, it's a nightmare, it's a total nightmare;

and TV to a lesser degree, but they don't really have a graduate program in TV so I think Film, Art, and Photography. But I think Film is the worst when it comes to struggling with the balance of graduate versus undergraduate. I don't see that we have anything like that.

**You touched on earlier your, you know, your personal vision of education and having those, was it fourth graders opening the books? Could you elaborate on your vision of that and has that changed over time or have you become more certain?**

More adamant.

**More adamant.**

More adamant than ever that the interdisciplinary approach is the way to go. Certainly, there's two groups that desperately need it the most: elementary and graduate school. I do believe that at the bottom end and at the top end people have to be taught the relationship between bodies of knowledge. In the middle, high school and to perhaps a lesser degree undergraduate school, they need to develop separate and discrete skills, that's true. But the problem is the way the arts have always been taught is in this: art schools, music conservatories, dance conservatories have always concentrated on methodology and not ideas; how to stretch the canvas, how to string the bow, how to point the toe, skills, skills, skills, skills. And eliminated, avoided, entirely the problems of ideas: Why do people make art? What do they have to say? Who do you want to say it to? Who cares? Issues of, you know, aesthetics and why do people do this? And that information is critically important at the bottom and

at the top and, you know, it needs to, of course, run all the way through. But I can see where, in the middle, you want to develop the separate and discreet skills. But the ideas have always been missing in the arts—well, certainly in the past forty, fifty years that I know about. And that was part of modernism, I suspect, you know, who knows exactly what it was about. But I am now absolutely more, more, and more convinced that it is the only, one of the only ways of a holistic approach to not just the arts but really all of education, to get people to see the connections and the relationships.

**Where did that come from then, maybe that's more important.** In me? At University of Wisconsin, I was in a special program called ILS, Illustrative Liberal Studies Program, which was, I forgot to mention that. It was a program based on the Great Books and I just fell into it, you know, I had a high school counselor, I don't know, it was for kids that had very high reading scores and lousy math scores. And that was me. And I look at the clock because I have a one-thirty appointment so, I mean, we can finish this up next week if you want. But that program was so fabulous. It was a two-year program for a small group of freshmen, I think there were two hundred of us at the University of Wisconsin, at the time, in it. All of your core courses were based on periods of history. So your first semester you did Greek and Roman culture, Greek and Roman literature, Greek and Roman history, Greek and Roman science, Greek and Roman economics, and Greek and Roman arts. So by Thursday you never knew which class you were studying for because it all, and then they were all together up on stage. It

was so fabulous. You had the head of the Classics department, you know, and an anthropologist all up there sort of lecturing and going back and forth. It was brilliant. And then second semester was early Christian/Byzantine: science, economics, history, art, and literature. Third semester was European and fourth semester was America. So by the time you were, you didn't have any electives, you had no time for electives, all you did was read; you read, and you read, and you read, and you read, and you wrote papers. And, but at the end of two years you had this terrific grounding in, certainly Western civilization. And you saw how everything connected to everything. That the notions of science and the notions of economics and the notions of art and music were totally interconnected. And it was like, "Oh, OK, you know, I was dumb enough to think that everybody had that."

Well, when I got out, and then, you know, my second two years I took all my art classes and sculpture classes and stuff. But it still didn't occur to me that the whole world was not on that wavelength. And even graduate school, I didn't get it that everybody didn't know all that. And then when I started teaching that first day I realized that there was something really wrong, that people didn't realize how connected everything was. So I became like this, you know, proselytizer for interdisciplinary discourse. And so my first student teaching, I was student teaching at Parker High, not Francis Parker but Parker High, Sixty-eighth and Stewart, serious ghetto. And the kids were all Blackstone Rangers, every one of them, but that was OK as long as the East Side Disciples didn't come by. It was all

right within one room, so it's cool. And I was supposedly teaching transcendentalism, you like that? Yeah. These were kids that had all failed sophomore English and I was the student teacher. And they didn't have any art student teaching jobs for me so they threw me in this English class, because after all I was a poetry/lit minor. And the very first day, you know, I came in and God, it was just a joke, it was totally a joke; I was so unprepared. And I said, you know, "We're gonna talk about transcendentalism" and these kids have never seen a tree. "Why are you telling Walt Whitman, Thoreau, come on." So, luckily it was the '60s; I had a bus, actually my girlfriend and I had a bus, VW bus. So I put them all, I got permission to take them on a field trip and I put them all on this bus and we went to the Evanston Lighthouse. You know the beach up there with the lighthouse? Well these kids had, most had never seen the lake, never seen a lake, certainly never been to Evanston. And I had them sitting on the beach, doing drawings, and writing poems about the beach. We spent the whole day and I watched them change from East Side Disciples to wide-eyed children. They were like, "Wow, this so beautiful, this so peaceful, this so nice, this so cool." And so, and I still even have slides of the some of the work they did; they did wonderful work. So then the notion of talking about transcendentalism made a little sense, you know? Nature, OK, what is nature? What nature? Sixty-eighth and South Park? Not a lot of nature there. So I realized then that it was gonna be the only way I was ever going to be able to teach was to do this sort of interdisciplinary thing. And I guess I've been doing it ever since. And on that note I must go, my darling. But if you need more I will...