

Design Matters

When I was in New York City in March attending the National Art Education Association (NAEA) convention, I was eager to visit the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), which was less than a block away from the convention hotel. Upon entering MoMA, the first thing I saw was a shiny vintage Airstream Bambi trailer. It was an absolute joy to see, as my husband and I had just bought, only a week before, our own twenty-two foot Airstream Safari trailer. And why did we buy it? Completely because of its awesome, love-at-first-sight, perfectly proportioned design!

As a former graphic artist, I have always been drawn to design, so it was gratifying to see the Airstream, a 1963 Jaguar XKE convertible, an early Bell helicopter, and other examples of classic design in MoMA's collection. As a teacher, I want my students to understand and appreciate how much of their environment is the product of human design.

Daniel Pink, the author of *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* and one of the major speakers at the NAEA convention, offered an engaging argument for "good design": design that is not only functional, but also beautiful or emotionally engaging. In his very readable book, Pink suggests that any job that can be done more cheaply overseas will be, and that, with so many choices, consumers will choose to buy well-designed objects over those lacking good

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design. He also suggests that personal, empathetic, and compelling stories will be needed to sell products and services. He believes that for Americans to compete in the global economy, we must develop creative thinkers who can use their whole brains, both left and right, to develop creative, intuitive solutions. Isn't this what art teachers are encouraging their students to do? We need to share Pink's ideas and message with our schools and communi-

ties! Pink proposes six essential right-brain directed

aptitudes or senses that creative thinkers should master: Design, Narrative, Symphony, Empathy, Play, and Meaning. These senses will serve as themes and be explored in more depth in the first six issues of *SchoolArts* this year. This month we begin with Design.

In his book, Pink presents John Heskett's reason for why design matters: "[D]esign, stripped to its essence, can be defined as the human nature to shape and make our environment in ways without precedent in nature, to serve our needs, and to give meaning to our lives." I think one proof of a widespread desire for good design is evi-

dent in the success of Target stores, whose motto is "Design for All." Access to computers, now from a very young age, has also brought the possibility to design within the reach of anyone who uses one.

Why does design matter to you? What is the epitome of design to you? We invite you to share your thoughts. In the meantime, I'll be in my Airstream! ☺

Resource

Pink, Daniel H. *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2006.

Nancy Walkup

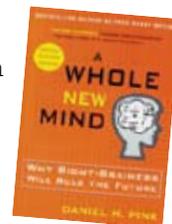
Nancy Walkup, Editor



Nancy in her new Airstream.

A Few of Pink's Suggestions for Design Activities

- Keep a design notebook.
- Read design magazines.
- Become a design detective.
- Visit a design museum.
- Be choosy.



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