

## Pre-Raphaelite Fellowship Proposal of Valerie A. Ubbes, PhD, CHES

### Significance of the Fellowship

Like Samuel Bancroft, Jr., who was an art collector, I have been a book collector of sorts through my Children's Picture Book Database at Miami University. The Miami University Libraries has an endowed Eileen Tway Children's Literature collection that I worked to move out of a card catalog system in 1995 into an online database to be more accessible and functional for use by teacher education patrons and to also focus my action research around health literacy and quality of life indicators, e.g., art, music, craft, dance, sport, literature, which are so vital to the health and well being of children (and adults!). I designed the children's picture book database platform to be searchable by topics, concepts, and skills across all eight academic disciplines, inclusive to art education, music education, physical education, and health education, because these latter disciplines are often marginalized and thus need literature-based resources to increase their reach to children who have inquiring minds of wonder and awe. Because of my extensive background in art and music lessons at the Toledo Art Museum during my youth and my rigorous gymnastics and dance training that I integrated into dance choreography for collegiate and Olympic gymnasts in my former career, I emerged in 1988 with a PhD in health education and exercise physiology in search of *practical* applications for human behavior and performance, including how design can improve aesthetic body and mind connections for people across the lifespan. Rather than adopt a consumer approach, my curriculum designs use service learning and collaborative learning to engage people as producers of new genre and domains. I believe we need to move beyond knowledge structures to human doing to engage others in arts and craft activities that inspire the human spirit and generate aesthetic outlets for human expression.

Over the last 20 years, I have used constructivist theory to address the ways that learners access information (learning styles) and the multiple signs, symbols, and patterns that motivate them to learn (multiple intelligences). I've use inquiry-based teaching and learning approaches so that people, working alone and in collaboration, could make meaning and construct instructional materials that crossed disciplinary lines. I've taken students to libraries, museums, and health education centers in order to model how to design accessible materials for health communication, and I've encourage reading and writing as key skills for health literacy. My most recent projects with students are Electronic Texts for Health Literacy which brings together calligraphy, photography, autobiography, and ethnography to write about health-related patterns in their day-to-day lives within different geographies, both indoor and outdoor. In this integrative design assignment, calligraphy affords students the use of pens for development of hand-eye coordination and cognitive-motor development, and photography captures authentic, realistic, and natural scenes for illustrating the life stories of the children themselves. Knowing that Pre-Raphaelites had a vision for the natural world via detailed compositions of time and place geography makes for an important connection to my new genre of narrative texts using electronic media. I am also keenly aware that artists like Walter Crane painted an indoor scene of his wife reading a book surrounded by beautiful objects. Thus, the purpose of my study in the Delaware Art Museum, Bancroft Library, and Morris Library will be to study Pre-Raphaelite art collections, books, and multiple exhibition catalogs to understand and write about imagery and symbolism found in nineteenth century art while using the lens of health educator from a multidisciplinary historical perspective.

My specific goals and scope of the fellowship include:

- Studying the subjects of books, children, and human activities found in Pre-Raphaelite painting using textual thematic analysis – and to learn how to describe these themes as art objects;
- Exploring the signs, symbols, and patterns across artistic media of the Arts and Crafts movement with historical connections between the Pre-Raphaelites and the Aesthetic Movement with a focus on the shaping of art and narrative in children's literature;
- Establishing a connection between Walter Crane's illustrations of decorative art and fantastical narrative with other early literary primers from Germany, England, and the United States, especially the realistic moral subtext of the McGuffey Readers which I have written about in the context of school curricula and textbook publishing;
- Comparing the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, and William Rossetti on the works and philosophy of Walter Crane, who served as the President of the Arts and Crafts Movement and helped to shape textiles, texture, and textual messages in different materials; and
- Interrogating the understanding of "satisfying the senses and engaging the mind" in art works during the different art movements and learning how designs by Walter Crane can be read as "a language – a picture writing".

I am eager to be considered for your Pre-Raphaelite Fellowship, so I can take my scholarship to a new level of sophistication and interdisciplinary reach. Thank you for this opportunity to be considered for this academic study at your institution.