

FORUM ON ARTS EDUCATION



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July/August 2011

A Compilation of Entries from Barry's Blog

barry's blog
News, Advice and Opinion for the Arts Administrator

For four consecutive weeks during July and August of 2011, Julie Fry, Program Officer, Performing Arts for The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Barry Hessenius of Barry's Blog (<http://blog.westaf.org/>) hosted an ongoing discussion on arts education and the myriad of issues and challenges facing the field. Twenty-six arts education leaders from across the country agreed to participate as guest bloggers, answering and responding to specific questions put to them by the hosts. Here is a compilation of their entries, reflection questions, and responses by readers.

Our enormous thanks to Kristen Engebretsen of Americans for the Arts, for designing and putting this compilation together, edited by Barry and Julie.

Forum on Arts Education

A COMPILATION OF ENTRIES FROM BARRY'S BLOG JULY/AUGUST 2011

The challenges to making progress in bringing arts education to students across the country are complex and daunting to say the least. Merely organizing the issues attendant to all of those challenges in some coherent fashion is no easy task.

Julie Fry from the Hewlett Foundation and I have been trying for several months to just get a handle on what all those issues are. In an attempt to make some sense out of all that we collectively face in this area, we planned a multi-week blog on those issues – beginning in mid-July and running for several weeks.

Our purpose is to expand awareness and understanding of the depth and scope of these issues to a broader audience than those who toil in the arts education arena, and to spark more discussion as to how the challenges might be met.

Our approach was to pose one set of questions in each of four broad categories: *practice, policy, research and field building*, and to invite three or four arts education specialists – leaders in the field - to respond to each of those questions, and then repeat the process over several blogs for the other categories. Julie and I provided some follow –up thoughts and questions for open responses.

We hope that the resulting missive will spur continuing discussions that will drill deeper into these and other issues.

I would like to thank all of those who agreed to participate in this forum. While no group of participants could ever be definitive, nonetheless this assembled group includes some very accomplished and critical thinkers, and we are extremely grateful for their insights and thoughtful, challenging participation. I am especially (and deeply) indebted to Julie Fry for all her extraordinary help in putting this Forum together. Her insights, knowledge, extensive networks and passion for the arena were critical in bringing this idea to reality. I simply could not have done it without her help. Please note that Julie's opinions expressed here are her own, not those of the Hewlett Foundation.

— Barry Hessenius, Barry's Blog <http://blog.westaf.org/>

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PRACTICE

Week 1: July 25 – 29, 2011

Day One

Question: Where does the debate on arts integration stand at present and what are the principal arguments and concerns on either side – pro or con? What role can the arts play in the new Common Core standards?

Responders:

Arnie Aprill - Chicago Arts Partnership for Education (CAPE)

Nick Jaffe - Artist, musician, recording engineer, Chief Editor of The Teaching Artist Journal, Chicago

Bob Lenz - Envision Schools, Oakland

Louise Music - Alliance for Arts Learning, Alameda County Office of Education

Ben Sanders - Center for Education Policy/CORE, San Francisco

Day Two

Question: Where do we stand with higher academia in their participation in moving forward arts education?

Responders:

Kristine Alexander - The California Arts Project

Paul Ammon - Professor Emeritus, Graduate School of Education, UC-Berkeley

Eric Engdahl – Department of Teacher Education, California State University, East Bay

Day Three

Question: What is the role of artists and arts organizations in the wider arts education paradigm?

Responders:

Jessica Mele - Performing Arts Workshop, San Francisco

Chike C. Nwoffiah - Oriki Theater, Mountain View, CA

Sabrina Klein - Teaching Artists Organized, Oakland

Ruth Nott - San Francisco Opera

Nick Rabkin - Teaching Artist Research Project, NORC, University of Chicago

Eugene Rodriguez - Los Cenzontles, San Pablo, CA

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day One

Where does the debate on arts integration stand at present and what are the principal arguments and concerns on either side – pro or con? What role can the arts play in the new Common Core standards?

Arnie Aprill

Founder and Lead Consultant for the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), comes from a background in theater as an award winning playwright and director. He consults nationally and internationally on school improvement through the arts.

So What's New? A Brief History of Arts Integration

Before we investigate the pros and cons of arts integration, and whether the “arts integration vs. direct instruction” opposition is itself a false dichotomy, it may be useful to

“arts integration vs. direct instruction” is itself a false dichotomy

consider the history and context of art education's connection to the rest of the curriculum in this country:

Is Arts integration a new idea? John Dewey may have been the first formal advocate for arts integration, with his 1934 classic *Art as Experience*, and his commitment to inquiry based teaching and learning. Building on Dewey's theories, Leon Winslow published *The Integrated School Art Program* in 1939, proposing that the arts and all subject areas be connected in order to provide a richer educational experience for learners.

In the Forties and Fifties, it was normal for grade school classrooms to include pianos, and for teachers to be expected to know how to play them. Many classroom teachers were unselfconscious arts integrators. In 1957, the launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik created a national technological inferiority complex, and a call for “back to basics” put a chill on arts education for many years, creating a perceived divide between “hard” science and “soft” arts. Ironically, science education is also currently perceived to be a “soft” subject, with only math and reading seen as “hard” enough to merit time in the curricular day.

The sixties saw the rise of the Civil Rights movement, the War on Poverty, the Vietnam War, identity politics, and the creation of Headstart and the National Endowment for the arts. Visiting artist programs began to emerge, and new vocabulary was created: *artist-in-residence*, *comprehensive arts*, *aesthetic education*, *arts infusion*.

The 1983 report *A Nation at Risk: the Imperative for Educational Reform* sent new chills through U.S. educational systems, and the arts were again placed on the sidelines. The Getty Center for the Arts was launched in this period, with its theory of Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), integrating arts appreciation and criticism into regular classrooms, and simultaneously segregating the arts as their own distinct subject areas kept separate from the rest of the curriculum. DBAE, with its emphasis on looking at visual art, was

perceived by some arts educators to be hostile to studio art practice and to other arts disciplines. School systems across the country suffered drastic budget cuts, and many arts education programs were eliminated.

The 90s saw the rise of the Standards movement, focused on clear sequences of instruction and on accountability measures; and simultaneously, the rise of arts integration and partnership initiatives such as the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE).

Arts integration has been around in different incarnations for a long time.

So what's new? New technology, for one thing. The access to information on the internet and students' access to new tools for composing, producing, and distributing films, texts, images, music, blogs, podcasts, websites, etc. shifts all education toward increasingly student centered learning, more project based learning, greater need for "soft" 21st century learning skills (comfort with ideas and abstractions, analysis and synthesis, creativity, innovation, self-discipline, organization, flexibility, ability to work on a team), more cross-disciplinary learning, more differentiated instruction, more inter-age work, more connections between life inside and outside schools, and more "real world" tasks. Rapidly changing technologies call for "just-in-time" learning, and flexibility in dealing with technologies that become obsolete before they are perfected. All this argues for an increasingly integrated curriculum – not just between the arts and other subjects, but between all other content areas as well. New technologies also support more comprehensive curriculum in the performing arts – moving beyond performing into composing, curating, publishing, filmmaking, directing, choreographing, and playwriting.

Another change in the terrain of arts education is the creation of new classics and new canons. Popular and "outsider" arts are now considered legitimate subjects for arts learning. Students study quilting. There is a classic Jazz program at Lincoln Center. Film study has become a regular subject in many high schools. Middle-schoolers study computer game design. Most of this was unimaginable twenty years ago.

What else is new? Inter-cultural global communications systems creating whole new "languages" (young people are adept, unlike their elders, at multi-tasking and at composing and "reading" multi-media messages), and massive shifts in world populations. "Everyone" has a camera in their telephone. "Everyone" is both a filmmaker AND a film distributor. Old identities are morphing, the U.S. is rapidly becoming a bilingual nation, and all the clichés about moving from an industrial economy to an information economy require a "whole new mind", to use business writer Daniel Pink's phrase.

Again, this suggests the need for more arts education, as well as for more integrated instruction in general. The whole discussion of the merits of arts integration and of direct instruction in the arts needs to be framed within this larger shifting educational context. It is this educator's position that the old turf battle between arts integration and "arts for art's sake" is the wrong lens for resolving the challenges to providing equitable arts education for our nation's children. It is my belief that the focus needs to be on creating leadership capacity inside schools for engaging the arts in MULTIPLE ways, including sequential arts instruction by certified arts specialists, the engagement of visiting artists in long term relationships, in-school and after-school programming, and the co-planning of integrated studies among all stakeholders.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day One Cont'd...

Where does the debate on arts integration stand at present and what are the principal arguments and concerns on either side – pro or con? What role can the arts play in the new Common Core standards?

Nick Jaffe

Artist, Musician, recording engineer, teaching artist, Illinois certified K-8 teacher, and curriculum designer based in Chicago. Nick is the Chief Editor of the Teaching Artist Journal, a print and online quarterly published by Routledge under the auspices of Columbia College Chicago.

I should clarify that my comments here represent only my own views as a musician, teaching artist and curriculum designer, and certainly not those of the Teaching Artist Journal of which I am Chief Editor. Along with a great team of editors, I work hard, to make the journal a genuinely inclusive forum for the work and thought of TA's of all kinds, regardless of the philosophy or methodology they espouse or the organizations with which they are affiliated. We feel strongly that TAJ belongs to the whole field and to all teaching artists everywhere.

Integrate schools.

The discussion around arts integration is shaped by scarcity and inequality, just like every discussion of education and pedagogy in this country. As a field we are constantly asked to provide reasons why learning the arts is "good" for people or for society. And, perhaps inevitably, we often respond with utilitarian arguments about math skills, "creativity," and self esteem. These arguments might be valid, but they should not be the point. They represent the logic of scarcity and race and class segregation; placing them at the center of what we do as artists and educators can only lead to curriculum and programming that is a deformed adaptation to a deformed social reality. We're artists; we're supposed to be teaching people to make their own art and make it well.

A superficial, formulaic or forced attempt to use an arts medium to explore academic content often leads to confusing false analogies, oversimplifications, and sterile, unoriginal art making that is alienating to students, teachers and teaching artists.

In spite of the endless handwringing, scapegoating, and search for magical solutions that is the "education debate" in America, the solution is obvious. To provide a balanced, thorough, rigorous but engaging education you simply need to replicate what is in place now at properly funded, well-run schools. Some of these are expensive private schools; others are public magnets, or simply public schools in wealthier, predominantly white neighborhoods or suburbs. While such schools may also have their problems and weaknesses, the ones I've seen generally seem to educate students well without much reference to pedagogical fads. They attract teachers who are well trained and provide them with good support (though

they are often underpaid); curricula are heavy on content but also allow for lots of interpretive and creative work by students; class sizes are reasonable, and there's plenty of equipment, books and computers. There's recess, and comprehensive athletic programs. And, there's lots of art and music making; usually a nice balance of classes taught by full-time arts specialists, and more integrative or cross-disciplinary arts projects led by teaching artists. In these schools no one ever seems to feel it necessary to debate whether one should teach "art for art's sake" or explore "arts integration." They just do both and often it's hard to tell the difference.

It seems clear to me that as artists and educators we should advocate for universal access to the full range of arts teaching and learning as part of a larger fight for equal, ("not separate but equal"), democratically funded, comprehensive and rigorous public education for all. More teaching artists; more full-time arts teachers; recognition of both as educators and practicing artists; decent pay and benefits. And incidentally we should be very vocal in defense of teachers and teachers unions in this climate that outrageously seeks to scapegoat them for the grotesque inequalities of segregation. It's really part of the same fight. We should also be proud, as arts educators, when we find ourselves bearing the torch for the reintroduction of curricular depth in classrooms where boring, superficial, algorithmic curricula have become the rule. We are the natural allies of teachers in this fight, and we can help them to carve out space and time to really teach what they know and what interests them. If that's what Arts Integration means then I am an enthusiastic proponent of it.

All art making is integrative.

As I see it, all art making involves the investigation of many different areas of knowledge, experience and material reality. The earliest preserved cave art is replete with highly anatomically and behaviorally accurate depictions of large mammals in action. It appears to be the work of people who were very interested in their own lives and the world around them, and had clearly had studied both in great detail; after all, the artists achieved such accuracy and expression in their work some time after they viewed their subjects—they were painting in caves from memory. The fact that much Paleolithic cave painting appears to be the work of adolescents and children makes this evidence of careful study all the more striking (see Guthrie, R. Dale. *The Nature of Paleolithic Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). So it would seem that as long as we've been artists we've also been arts integrationists.

Also, any area of human work and thought, from plumbing to theoretical physics, engages the tools of art making, whether visualization, improvisation, or expressive experimentation. So why not sometimes consciously combine art making and other types of study and work? It's fun, and potentially generative and educative.

Integrate what you know.

Can 6th graders write poetry about physics? Sure. Can it be good poetry? Absolutely. Will it lead to novel insights, and a deeper understanding of the science? It might well. The models and questions of physics, both classical and modern, are full of astounding and moving metaphor, symbol and narrative, some of which might only be well expressed in poetic language. Poetic expression of the same is also a reinterpretation and

reframing of scientific truth in ways that can bring clarity, and even new insights that are not only literary, but may spur scientific thought.

It also might suck. A superficial, formulaic or forced attempt to use an arts medium to explore academic content often leads to confusing false analogies, oversimplifications, and sterile, unoriginal art making that is alienating to students, teachers and teaching artists.

It won't suck if:

- The teacher knows the physics.
- The TA knows poetry.
- Both the TA and teacher are personally interested in exploring the connections between their disciplines, and both have time and space to find real, and interesting points of intersection.

In the absence of any or all of these conditions I think it's probably a better and more fun use of everyone's time (especially the students'), to just teach the physics, teach the poetry writing and forget about a mechanical "integration." If the teaching is any good it's likely at least a few students will write some cool poems about physics. They'll certainly be equipped to think about metaphor physically, and physics metaphorically, and isn't that really the point anyway?

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day One Cont'd...

Where does the debate on arts integration stand at present and what are the principal arguments and concerns on either side – pro or con? What role can the arts play in the new Common Core standards?

Bob Lenz

Chief executive officer and cofounder of Envision Schools - an innovative educational model through its four urban high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. Mr. Lenz is recognized nationally as a leader in high school redesign, project-based learning, twenty-first-century-skills education, and performance assessment. He served as president of the Buck Institute of Education and serves on the Advisory Board for the Kalmanovitz School of Education at St. Mary's College of California.

"I wrapped up this trip in Oakland at the Envision Academy of Arts and Technology. We saw some performances by the students, and we also visited some of their classrooms. It's very inspiring to see what they're doing there. The arts are integrated into the entire curriculum, and you really see points of intersection between the arts and other subjects... It was really neat to see this kind of intersection. It became very personal for them. And it's clear that in this school, and in so many of the arts charter schools, it's not really about art, it's really about the intersection of art and everything else. Art becomes a very useful portal to almost any subject, and it's neat to see." - Rocco Landsman, Chairman - NEA

The extent to which a young person possesses a critical, creative mind and is capable of using, applying, and communicating knowledge is ultimately what will determine success in college and beyond.

Envision Schools is an education non-profit that started and runs four innovative arts and technology themed college prep charter schools in the Bay Area. We believe the "basics," including reading, writing and arithmetic offer a necessary but insufficient foundation for success in today's world.

The extent to which a young person possesses a critical, creative mind and is capable of using, applying, and communicating knowledge is ultimately what will determine success in college and beyond. In today's global, interconnected, digitally driven economy, one must collaborate, be technologically adept and remain aware of intellectual strengths and areas of growth.

Envision Schools has been successfully modeling this kind of education for First Generation College Bound students for almost a decade: **90% of our graduates attend college and over 90% of our graduates are still enrolled in college in their second year (as opposed to only 40% college going rate and 60% retention rate in California.)**

The integration of the arts is critical to the success of our students and to all young people. The power of this type of learning is best demonstrated by examples:

Who Am I Project

This is a six week **9th Grade** integrated project exploring the question, “Who am I?” The students worked on the self-portraits in both their visual arts and language arts classes. Chuck Close's portraiture inspired the students to further their exploration of self through the use of portraiture. The essential question was “How does a portrait inform the viewer or tell facts about our lives?”

Using their knowledge of scale, proportions, and the grid process, students first enlarged a photograph of themselves on a 14 x 17 inch sheet of Bristol paper. The second part of this large-scale portrait included a personal symbol, created in the first quarter of visual art, and a color scheme that reflects a metaphor about who they are. The final part of this exhibition piece was an artist statement. In this statement, students connected their personal symbol, literature read in language arts, short stories written in their language arts class, and their color scheme to who they are socially, potentially, metaphorically, and creatively. Students presented their work and read their statements to a live audience of parents and other adults in an evening exhibition. This is the first project that all students in Envision Schools complete.

Self Portrait and Artist Statement by Isais Garcia-Ramos



The importance of all my different representations of myself was best shown throughout my painting's unique use of colors and blending values to create a distinct mood. The background is painted in different shades of orange to show how the outside world is always teaching me to find the strength to recreate myself in a better future. I am painted with many shades of blue to show how I am always trying to find a deep inner peace, but I'm not always easy on myself as I'd like to be. I'm always trying to find answers to my inner struggle and that is why I am looking up at my personal symbol in a thoughtful posture to show how I am always thinking of ways to better myself. The way all of these elements come together, despite their contrasts, is what I believe gives my painting its power and balance. This is who I am, and I'm very happy to be exactly me. – Isais Garcia-Ramos

Integrating the arts achieves simultaneous outcomes: Students master core academic content knowledge and skills; students learn the artistic discipline; students learn important deeper learning skills like collaboration, critical thinking, communication and project management and students learn to be metacognitive and reflect on their learning so they can transfer their knowledge and skills to new context in the future. Students accomplish all this learning AND have fun through the arts!

The new English Language Arts Common Core standards lend themselves very well to this type of learning. The Next Generation of Assessments of the Common Core promise to include performance assessments. Schools that integrate the arts and ask students to not only master knowledge but demonstrate it and apply that knowledge through the arts are most likely going to out-perform schools still using a traditional approach to teaching and learning. The Common Core and the new assessments are a great opportunity for arts integration to move into the mainstream of education reform.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day One Cont'd...

Where does the debate on arts integration stand at present and what are the principal arguments and concerns on either side – pro or con? What role can the arts play in the new Common Core standards?

Louise Music

Arts Learning Manager at the Alameda County Office of Education; she is the Region IV Arts Lead for the California County Superintendents of Education Services Association. Recent publications include “Arts Learning as Equitable and Meaningful Education,” in Artful Teaching (Teacher’s College Press, June 2010).

Quality arts integration keeps students in schools, and prepares them for the challenges of work and life. For more than a decade, prominent arts educators have established the value and inter-relationship between discreet, disciplinary arts education and arts integration.. As a growing movement of academics, classroom teachers, parents, students and community artists, we have moved past the false dichotomy of “straight arts instruction” and arts integration as an either/or.

The Alameda County Office of Education’s Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership has developed expertise in demonstrating the effectiveness of arts integration through more than a decade’s worth of experience working with strong partners in higher education, the arts community, school districts and multiple growing networks of schools. In this time, 38 Arts Learning Anchor Schools in Oakland, Berkeley and Emery School districts have successfully integrated the arts to improve student success across all content areas. These K-12 schools vary widely –small / large, elementary / secondary—and all are committed to arts learning for their students, arts integration and professional development for their teachers, and community-building through effective partnerships with community arts providers.

As leaders in education, we are challenged to move out of our silos and to respond as a collective field to make good on the promise of a high quality education for every child, in every school, every day.

The arts, by themselves, are not a silver bullet. They are an essential, and currently largely missing, component of a quality public education that fully engages students, and provides multiple entry points and means for expression according to student interests, strengths and learning styles. Teachers in all content areas need to build confidence and skills in teaching and integrating the arts.

Effective arts integration is designed to connect with and build upon student interest and prior knowledge, and is intentionally integrated with, and aimed at, important learning goals across the curriculum. What’s important to understand is that effective arts-integration promotes learning across all areas of curriculum which *includes* teaching the discrete arts discipline where students learn methods and techniques through active

practice. Integrating the arts *with other subject areas* also provides clarity about disciplinary learning goals in both content areas and creates opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in new and original work through artistic application.

Instructional Thinking Frames for the Real Benefits of the Arts in Schools

Our work towards effective arts integration has been greatly informed by researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Project Zero, who have made an important contribution with the Studio Habits of Mind. The Studio Habits of Mind have been adapted by teachers across the curriculum to dance, music, drama and math, science, history, social studies and English language arts. The Studio Habits of Mind provide a vocabulary for what is taught and learned, beyond skill and technique, in and through the arts, including: how well students *observe* closely and learn to focus, how they *envision* what can be and generate new ideas, how they *express* themselves, how they *engage and persist* through problems, and how they *reflect* on their work, revise, and improve it.

Using the Studio Habits of Mind allows teachers to design intentional arts integrated instruction that creates multiple opportunities for students to develop subject matter understanding by applying their knowledge in original work: drawings, dramatizations, videos, sculptures and dioramas, etc.

Across the country, students and teachers in arts classrooms in Boston, New York, Minneapolis, Berwyn Illinois, Los Angeles and the northern California region are working with networks of schools and school districts are using this vocabulary to provide a fuller picture of students as learners. There is a transition underway from Studio Habits of Mind to Student Habits - as these habits map onto the 21st century workforce skills students will need for success in their futures.

In Arts Learning Anchor Schools in Alameda County, arts teachers, teaching artists and their students use the Studio Habits of Mind and Teaching for Understanding thinking frames to focus and deepen their arts integrated instruction, and to combine the use of those thinking frames with techniques from Project Zero's' Making Learning Visible project to document student work and classroom practice, reflect, revise and improve.

Arts Integration Engages students and keeps them in school:

Across a four-year period, overall graduation rates for students in Arts Learning Anchor Schools were significantly higher than for students in the general population in Emery, Berkeley and Oakland school districts (92% for Arts Learning Anchor Schools, compared to 69%). The difference is most profound for African American students; in 2006, 94% of African American students in Arts Learning Anchor schools graduated, compared to 64% of their peers in non- Arts Learning Anchor Schools.

Arts Integration addresses the "Achievement Gap" through culturally responsive teaching:

Arts instruction that is intentionally integrated with, and aimed at, other important learning goals can, and is, eliminating the racial predictability of success in school. In year two of a three year US department of Education funded project in San Leandro Unified School District, 82% of teachers reported increased ability to differentiate instruction; and 92% percent of teachers reported that the project presented opportunities to create and implement culturally responsive teaching strategies. District Superintendent, Cindy Cathey, reflects

that while administrators and teachers had engaged national experts, and embraced the notion of squarely addressing issues of racism, it was only when the arts were intentionally integrated to build on the strengths and assets of every child, that the district began to see the improved student outcomes they were looking for. Click here: <http://www.vimeo.com/acoe/tarisli>

Arts Integration provides tools for teacher effectiveness and builds reflective, professional learning communities:

The Alameda County Office of Education has formalized a decades' worth of experience, with growing networks of schools and districts in arts learning and arts integration, into a regional Teacher Action Research Institute, and an Arts Integration Specialist Program where arts teachers, teaching artists, multiple subject, and single subject non-arts teachers are building the capacity to lead school-site based professional learning communities through the use of research based, analytical thinking frames for curriculum design and assessment, collaboration, and teacher action research. As a regional lead in the CCSESA (California County Superintendents of Education Services Association) Arts Learning Initiative, this is a model for regionally developing communities of educators, artists and universities that can respond to the ongoing, ever-changing learning needs of California's students. http://www.artiseducation.org/teaching-learning_palette-of-possibilities

Arts Integration and Common-Core Standards

We are at a critical time in public education, where educators are acknowledging the failure of the No Child Left Behind policies and accountability systems. We need new ways to assess how well our schools are educating our children, not by counting and sorting who has succeeded and who has failed, but by providing both ongoing and summative assessments so that teachers can revise their instruction according to student misunderstandings, and so that educators can provide students with useful information and next steps about how to improve and achieve. The arts and arts integration are essential to finding new and responsive ways to address the instructional and assessment needs of students and communities in our large and diverse state.

When the most daunting and urgent of educational challenges is the count of students who either drop out or graduate unprepared for college and the 21st century workforce, ***we must ask ourselves which strategies will actually support educators in addressing the problem at hand.*** Educators make a mistake when they privilege teaching standards, over teaching students. In thinking about the value of arts in public education and the role they play in the new Common Core standards, an important, fundamental question should also be raised, "what are the Common Core Standards good for?"

As leaders in education, we are challenged to move out of our silos and to respond as a collective field to make good on the promise of a high quality education for every child, in every school, every day. We must ask ourselves how we can work together to apply what we know about the essential role the arts must play in a high quality education that engages students purposefully in school today, and prepares them with the knowledge, skills, enthusiasm and abilities to be successful in career, college, community and citizenship.

Our Unified Voice and a Collective Call to Action

What will it take to bring pockets of practice where arts integration is transforming teaching and learning, so that all students are building the knowledge, skills and dispositions to engage the world and participate in global solutions, into a comprehensive approach to public education?

As educators and community leaders, we can be confident that arts integration is an essential part of the solution. There is no topic more pertinent to preparing our young people as participants in a healthy, multi-cultural national democracy to address global challenges of human conflict, economy and environment.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day One Cont'd...

Where does the debate on arts integration stand at present and what are the principal arguments and concerns on either side – pro or con? What role can the arts play in the new Common Core standards?

Ben Sanders

Center for Education Policy/CORE

I am not aware of anyone who doesn't think the arts can and should play a central role in K-12 education. Indeed the arguments in favor of arts integration are myriad - everything from what it means to be a fully educated person (in the 21st or any century); to how, as research shows, a substantial grounding in the arts can directly contribute to achievement in other content areas; to how the arts provides a hook for many students to persevere in school (when they might otherwise retreat); to the ways in which the arts provides a complementary, sophisticated means of expression and communication of ideas (along with reading and writing); to the ways in which the arts can help students build and refine the knowledge, skills, discipline and habits of mind that will serve them well in virtually all future endeavors.

The skills and habits of mind that one develops through a rigorous study of the arts—i.e., precision, attention to detail, discipline, preparation for performance, ability to connect with an audience, recognizing interconnections—are all directly relevant and transferable to the learning expectations outlined in the Common Core.

The arguments against arts integration, such as they are, seem to me mostly practical. The main culprits are a) a perceived lack of time in the school day (available to adequately address the “core” subjects of ELA, Math, Science and History), b) dire budgetary pressures which take their toll first on so called non-core areas like the arts—resulting, for example, in slashing arts programs and school-based arts specialist positions, c) a lack of what we might call arts-related “pedagogical content knowledge and expertise” on the part of regular classroom teachers as to how to fully integrate the arts, and d) a general lack of awareness and/or understanding of the central role that the arts can play in increasing overall achievement.

I believe the arts can play a central role in the new Common Core standards. The very nature of the standards themselves, with their emphasis on sustained, “deeper learning;” on vertical and horizontal/cross curricular alignment and connections, lends itself extraordinarily well to the full integration of the arts. For example, a quick glance at the “mathematical practices” that recur and guide learning at every grade level, illustrate this potential. After all, what studio artist, musician, dancer or dramatist does not, at one time or another, need to attend to: making sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, constructing viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, using appropriate tools

strategically, attending to precision, looking for and making use of structure, and looking for and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning (all of which are the Common Core's "mathematical reasoning standards")?

In short the skills and habits of mind that one develops through a rigorous study of the arts—i.e., precision, attention to detail, discipline, preparation for performance, ability to connect with an audience, recognizing interconnections—are all directly relevant and transferable to the learning expectations outlined in the Common Core. It is exciting to envision the possibilities!

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day One Cont'd...

Where does the debate on arts integration stand at present and what are the principal arguments and concerns on either side – pro or con? What role can the arts play in the new Common Core standards?

Responses to the day's posts:

Talia Gibas said... (July 25, 2011 1:17 PM)

Great reading - thank you to all. I was struck by something in Mr. Sanders' post - this perception that the arts can't fit into the school day because of the time needed to "adequately address the 'core' subjects of ELA, Math, Science and History." I know several wonderful teachers who are passionate about science and history, and who would take serious issue with the idea that those subjects are treated as "core" on the ground. In their view, history and science have also been marginalized through NCLB. Arts educators may argue that they are still LESS marginalized than the arts, but to me that is beside the point - these teachers' concerns stem less from a view that history/science are somehow sacred, and more from a view that they contribute to a *well-rounded* education and students' sense of self.

In advancing arts integration, have we done enough to reach "across the aisle" and work with other content areas, not just to "meet the standards," but also to advocate against a narrowing of the curriculum? Is there value in such alliances? Is there a way for arts integration to address the concerns of the science/history folks as well as the arts community, or is beyond the scope of what arts educators can and should take on?

Nick Jaffe said... (July 25, 2011 9:47 PM)

I emphatically agree with Talia's observation. I believe we absolutely should be the most vocal defenders of curricular depth and rigor across all disciplines, and also defend athletics and yes, even shop class (or some variant of it) as essential components of a complete education.

In fact I think that as teaching artists and arts educators we are particularly well placed to argue this point of view and lead the way in developing and implementing curriculum that cuts against the narrowing trend. It is absolutely the same social and political forces and trends that are tearing arts teaching/learning out of public schools, that also dismiss real learning in history, science and literature, as "irrelevant" to students in underfunded, race and class segregated schools. In place of real learning, these youth and their teachers are served a steady diet of thinly veiled moral instruction and algorithmic exercises in following instructions.

Yes, we are the allies of teachers, parents in students in a fight to make a broad and deep education in all subjects everyone's right.

Louise Music said... (July 25, 2011 10:02 PM)

Talia ~ I think you pose a really important question. As arts educators, we often are so fixed on advocating for the arts, that we miss the opportunity to communicate about their real value by understanding and connecting to what others value.

Especially in these tight budget times, we must focus on what matters most for our children, our schools and our communities.

Bob Lenz's vivid description of how arts integration helps students and teachers at Envision schools to achieve simultaneous outcomes of deep understanding of content, student engagement, application of knowledge, and making learning visible is a wonderful example of how the arts can be solutions to issues that all educators and parents are concerned with.

Now is the time to think with like minded individuals and organizations about our shared goals for engaged and productive young people, strong schools and healthy communities. As arts educators we can facilitate productive dialogue, and offer tangible strategies for envisioning new solutions, expressing individual and shared visions, and creating new possibilities.

John Abodeely said... (July 26, 2011 2:00 PM)

First, what an amazing collection of brilliant people. I feel fortunate that Barry and Julie collected them and organized this great event!

While I can't say I disagree with anything (and I confess I lack the constitution to read every word), I think a couple things are missing.

1. I'd like to hear from someone from one of the arts teacher associations. These are the orgs most convinced of the idea that arts integration undermines arts teacher employment. I'd like to better understand their experience and perspective so that I better understand why a big, powerful portion of our professional community opposes or is ambivalent about arts integration.

2. I think that arts integration lacks national leadership. There is no single association, no national conference, no unifying organization or network. There has been no increase in quality through standardization (a common path for emerging professional practices). Any of these elements would help to advance the quality of arts integration.

Importantly, any of these elements would also help to expand the reach of arts integration into schools, as well as the accessibility of arts integration to school administrators and teachers.

Because of this lack of national leadership, I fear the prevalence of arts integration will lessen over time.

Janet Brown said... (July 26, 2011 3:18 PM)

I agree with John Abodeely. Teacher's unions (and just plain art teachers without unions) have long been suspicious of integration unless they worked in a school where it was actually functioning properly. AND there is no national leadership for integration and using the arts as a tool for learning.

Laura Reeder said... (July 27, 2011 7:32 AM)

It is a pleasure to hear from our leaders and to step back from our daily work on the ground to take another look at the "big picture". So thanks to all for opening this dialogue.

I have recently re-established my membership with the NAEA, and have been spending the past many years working in teacher preparation programs in higher education while maintaining my advocacy for teaching artists with the TAJ. I can see that we need to put what Nick describes as "scarcity and inequality" issues to rest and become advocates for the spectrum of all arts education practitioners.

Arnie reminded us to defend teachers, their unions, and support for the folks who are still holding on to the existing position of creativity in education...and then John and Janet questioned the intentions of arts educators and their professional organizations.

With my refreshed view from many situations I have found no "sides". I see arts integration, in and out of school arts education, creativity/imagination and 21st century education habits, and social justice (adult/child) education as communities that all speak of the same lack of unified national leadership for arts learning. EVERYone is addressing the need to have more and to collaborate more. But no one organization is currently capable of becoming the national voice...not just due to economics...but due to the wildly diverse and intricate networks that shape our current era.

So a challenge: How and where in your everyday work as a participant in what Eric Booth (2009, p. 19) has called the "arts learning ecosystem" are you/we/they able to step generously across borders and through walls to strengthen the ecosystem at large? It is hard work to partition your alliances...but it is actually much more redeeming work to merge them.

I do not hope for a continuation of the same old dialogue here...all advocates now speak to the power of arts integration. I also do not hope for less advocacy for arts integration...the balance sheet shows reductions everywhere. I guess I am hopeful that we can pay closer attention to the existing strengths of the ecosystem and be more generative in our own actions.

John Abodeely said... (July 27, 2011 8:34 AM)

@Laura, What I advocate for is a coming together of arts integrationists and arts teacher associations. These associations sometimes oppose or feel ambivalent towards arts integration. It's critical, but not yet done, that those of us promoting arts integration understand and address the concerns of these important pieces of the

ecosystem. I don't think we have done enough understanding or addressing of those concerns. I think we could listen better and learn more from these groups about pitfalls of arts integration strategies.

Which pitfalls are real and which are imagined? What can we do to mitigate them? What can we do to fully engage arts teachers in our work and to be fully engaged in their work?

Those questions are unanswered.

Organizations such as the Kennedy Center might be the right one to answer it. But taking this sort of risk--into a political endeavor--is not easily done for many reasons.

Talia Gibas said... (July 27, 2011 11:42 AM)

"But no one organization is currently capable of becoming the national voice...not just due to economics...but due to the wildly diverse and intricate networks that shape our current era."

So true. I wonder sometimes whether arts education can accurately described as a "field" because there are few commonly embraced definitions, theories and research reports that bind it together. What binds us together nationally is that we agree arts education is important and beneficial for students. It would be wonderful if across the country, we all agreed on everything else – WHY it's important, HOW it should be delivered, and WHO has a place at the table. But our contexts may be too different.

Perhaps the role of a "national leader" would not be to create a "national voice" (do we have a "national voice" in ANY field?) but rather to identify, support and convene the amazing local and regional models we have. Our diversity is inevitable, and at a certain moment needs to be mined as a strength rather than seen as a weakness.

Liz Hallmark said... (August 1, 2011 5:16 AM)

Hi everyone - so happy to see this great discussion here. I'm just back from the Save Our Schools conference and march in Washington DC and I see a lot of parallels between the public schools organizing discussions and the arts integration discussions.

As a segue between this and last week's focus on practice and field building, I'd like to build on others' comments about who can/should lead arts integration nationally. The SOS group's strength is that it is made up of many different groups - parents, teachers, higher ed folks, etc. With such a diversity of membership, it is more difficult for privatization interests to label and attack the public schools movement as a group of teachers who are simply interested in the status quo or 'job-saving' since conversation is clearly larger than that. On the other hand, that group's challenge is to be able to communicate and coordinate across its own diversity.

I'd say the same is true for the arts integration movement. We are many and spread out but we don't necessarily know where all of us are or how best to stay in touch so we can build upon each others' work. I

believe we are primarily in arts organizations and higher ed but have not sufficiently coordinated our lines of communication.

I'm not sure we need one leader but we do need to coordinate by making sure we have a presence inside all possible arts and education clusters/institutions and then coordinating our work. Just like there need to be parent caucuses within teachers unions that support the public school movement, we should be working toward having arts integration caucuses within every professional arts organization, every non-profit arts organization, every school of education, and every school of fine arts.

A good starting place would be to have a data base that lists such internal groups and point people within them. I'd be interested in coordinating or revising this if it doesn't already exist somewhere.

A second starting place would be to discuss how we can move the ball forward from what we began at the May AEP conference in DC. At that conference, a higher education working group gathered to discuss shared goals and coordination and I started a wiki for us to stay in touch. There hasn't been any conversation on that wiki yet, but here is the link. <http://hewg.pbworks.com/w/page/39920146/FrontPage>

If others have ideas on how to construct/massage regular discussions within this or other useful nodal points, please share!

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Two

Where do we stand with higher academia in their participation in moving forward arts education?

Kristine Alexander

Executive Director of The California Arts Project, one of the California Subject Matter Projects, a discipline-based network of university based regional professional development centers serving K - Post Secondary educators within California in support of teaching and learning in the arts.

After agreeing to be a responder for the Arts Education Blog on the question of engaging participation from higher education, I found myself navigating through a set of complex issues, questions and summer musings as I tried to focus and craft my response. This mental journey took place while I was visiting TCAP site programs across the state and talking with teachers engaged in arts education professional development. I found myself struggling at times with some of the Blog's background context and background materials when juxtaposed to the current reality of arts education in public education, teachers' practice, higher education and teacher preparation. As the deadline was upon me, I came to the conclusion that I couldn't respond to the question "Where do we stand with higher academia in their participation in moving forward arts education?" if my response gave the impression that I agreed with the assumption that *the* approach for arts education is *arts integration* as described by the President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities.

So to clarify my stance, I don't see the struggle of arts education as a choice between the "holy grail" of discipline based arts instruction v. "...the practice of using arts strategies to build skills and teach classroom subjects across different disciplines" but as part of a larger struggle we are all engaged in of rethinking education as a whole. (I am very curious to see others' comments and interpretation of the meaning of the Arts & Humanities description of arts integration.) Often the conversation and generalizations made about arts education are really about the arts education struggles as related to the multiple subject classroom challenges, but are framed as arts education as a whole. This can lead to the alienation single subject arts teachers and to unintended consequences on the single subject arts teachers teaching in elementary and secondary settings.

I also see vast differences in conversations about arts education in multiple subject education (most often elementary) and single subject education (secondary).

I caution our community to be aware of our language and generalizations when making the case for arts education. I remember a day that a group of us were in a room gathered about an arts education budget crisis and Barry Hessenius said, "Let us not do what we usually do in arts education to solve a crisis ...stand in a circle and start shooting at each other."

With that being said, and the deadline approaching, I'll get back to sharing some summer thoughts on the question of engaging higher academia around arts education.

My thoughts about the question posed brought forth four areas of action we might consider in developing a stronger relationship with higher academia. These are not new ideas nor actions not being taken at the moment in some places, but as the educational landscape has shifted and is in another stage of flux, these ideas are worth revisiting and exploring how we might build upon our collective energies.

The first centers on us as a wide and diverse arts education community. One of our issues in gathering support from anyone is that until we as the arts education community clarify for ourselves the language we use and differences in outcomes from the various stances we take in talking about and advocating for teaching the arts, we continue to confuse those from whom we are seeking support and at times alienate factions within our own community. I came to the conclusion years ago that what must happen not only to engage higher academia but other players in arts education, is educating through surfacing the underlying assumptions, and the constant seeking of clarity...clarity of language, clarity of framing the many factors that exist, of the issues, outcomes, questions, and seeking clarity in the goal or goals to be accomplished. So as a first step, I hope Question 1 will help us begin the needed work on establishing agreement, at least for the immediate time frame, upon common definitions of terms we can agree to accept and use to name the instructional approaches being proposed as strategies for arts education, education, and differentiate the expected student learning outcomes related to each strategy.

The second area of action focuses on how knowing who and how to "hook" various groups with higher academia to engage deeply in the thinking and conversation about arts education. This is not always as easy as it seems given the various configurations existing within the university systems. Teaching of the arts, either through interdisciplinary practice, yet another term, or through discipline specific approaches, or using the arts as teaching strategies for other content areas all require the teacher to have both academic content knowledge and skill in an arts discipline and related pedagogical knowledge and skill in teaching of that arts discipline. When using the arts to teach something else, that specific academic content, skills and related pedagogy is also needed. The content part of the equation opens up conversations with and support from arts faculties within higher education. The pedagogy, teaching skill, instructional design, and assessment strategies side opens up conversation with education faculties and researchers. On some campuses, the faculty might be one and the same. We need all, but the hook to engage the academic most often comes from their passion and field of study and in understanding the specific campus configuration. Does there exist someplace a live, searchable California database of who is teaching what, where, and any specialized areas of research taking place across systems in education and the arts? Is this something we could organize so we could begin larger conversations?

Another aspect of engagement is building within our community an understanding of the framework that guides teacher preparation and how to influence change, if needed as part of the arts education solution, in that framework. If we are knowledgeable as a community about the various constraints education faculty and credential programs are under, as guided by Commission of Teacher Credentialing, this can also open up

avenues for gathering support from and opportunities within existing teacher preparation faculty. Just as much of K-12 is under mandated and prescribed programs, which often allow little flexibility for the teacher, the universities are the same when it comes to preparing teachers. The undergraduate preparation programs, single subject and multiple subject programs, have specific mandates and guidelines that the campus faculty must follow. California's Teacher Performance Assessments (TPA) that all teacher candidates must pass to earn a teaching credential is the primary focus of teacher preparation students. Changes in the teacher preparation guidelines happen at the Commission level, not at the campus. As a field we can join forces with higher education in recommending changes, but first we must determine if and what changes are needed to support arts education. A current reality and growing trend that should also be considered is the large numbers of new teachers who have obtained or are choosing to obtain their teaching credentials through for profit universities which provide fast tracking of the teacher preparation process. How do we engage these institutions?

Changes in the teacher preparation guidelines happen at the Commission level, not at the campus.

The last area that comes to mind at this time, is our need to continue to engage higher education in helping us make the case for the need of on-going professional development for educators, both multiple subject, single subject, and post-secondary in the arts. Professional development for educators is needed just as in any profession and should not be limited to mandatory programs or teachers of specific subjects, but available to all teachers at all levels. It has been demonstrated and researched over and over

again of the need for professional development to support the multiple subject teacher in teaching of the arts or in using the arts to teach other subjects. University faculty engaged in professional development for K-12 must also have that work recognized as a valuable service and given credit such service as a university professional. As we begin to see the curriculum widen and shift, an opportunity arises for a collective voice of educational researchers, faculty and K-12 teachers to impact arts education through advocating for expanded professional development opportunities for all teachers.

In closing of my summer musing on this question, I do not want to give the impression that higher education has not and is not currently engaged in supporting arts education. For over twenty years the three university systems, UC, CSU and the privates, have provided support for on-going professional development in-service teachers in the arts as stewards and champions of The California Arts Project. When the curriculum and related professional development efforts were narrowed, the choice was made to continue to support the three marginalized subject matter projects of the arts, foreign language and physical education and health. This demonstrates the three systems' recognition of the need to and value of engaging higher education faculty and K-12 teachers in a community of learners focused on the improvement of teaching and learning of the arts and the recognition of importance of those marginalized subject areas in overall K-12 curriculum. Faculty from education, the arts, and other disciplines have rallied tirelessly over the years and work daily side by side K-12 educators in support of arts education.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Two Cont'd...

Where do we stand with higher academia in their participation in moving forward arts education?

Paul Ammon

Professor Emeritus, Graduate School of Education, University of California at Berkeley --retired after 45 years as a professor in Education at Berkeley, including 31 years as director of the Developmental Teacher Education Program, which prepares elementary school teachers, and 5 years as director of the Arts Education Initiative, a funded project promoting arts integration in the initial preparation of new teachers and school leaders.

If our goal is to give the arts a much more central place throughout the educational experience of all students—both learning *in* the arts and learning *through* the arts—then I think higher education offers tremendous potential, but also tremendous challenges that must be met in order for that potential to be realized.

The basic problem is that most people who are becoming educators today have not experienced the arts as central to their own education. And so the beat goes on: as new educators, they continue to see the arts as peripheral to what really matters in their schools. Higher education could play a key role in breaking that cycle, and that's because higher education has played a key role in creating and maintaining that cycle to begin with. Being an academic myself, what I see in the world of higher education is a lot of silos. Faculty members tend to be firmly entrenched in their own disciplines, and in traditional ways of teaching those disciplines. Whoever said that getting a Ph.D. is a matter of learning more and more about less and less was on to something important, and highly problematic. The result of such narrow specialization is that an idea like arts integration seems unnecessary to many academics and, even worse, is perceived as a threat to the integrity of their own beloved discipline—a view that may be held by academics in the arts as well as other fields. And because “higher education” sits atop the educational system, and because professional educators are college graduates, this point of view tends to filter down into “lower” levels of the system as well.

what I see in the world of higher education is a lot of silos...The result of such narrow specialization is that an idea like arts integration seems unnecessary to many academics and, even worse, is perceived as a threat to the integrity of their own beloved discipline—a view that may be held by academics in the arts as well as other fields.

To be sure, there are some bright spots in this generally bleak take on the culture of higher education—places where arts integration is a reality, or is at least taken seriously as a worthwhile goal. But I think the exceptions are more likely to be found in the teaching practices of individual academics than in whole programs or institutions of higher education. Still, though, bright spots of any kind, while few and far between, might

provide the kind of leverage that will be needed to bring about more widespread cultural change in academia. The question, then, is how to make good use of those exceptions toward that end.

Entrenched academics seem most likely to listen to other academics they respect, particularly others in their own field. So one key to change may be testimonials from such colleagues who can attest persuasively to the benefits of embracing the arts, not only for *teaching* their disciple, but also for *learning* and *practicing* it themselves. If that sort of testimony succeeds in persuading resistant academics to give arts integration a try, then the second key is to provide the kind of support they will need in order to get started and to see some benefits early on. Some of that support might come from academic colleagues who have already begun taking steps along the road to arts integration. But the possibilities for that sort of collegial support may be limited by other demands on the time academics have—particularly in these times of shrinking budgets for higher education. Fortunately, though, there is, in the world of the arts, a vast support system that *could* be connected with the world of higher education. It's a question, then, of how to forge such connections and make them work well.

I'm inclined to think that a particularly promising approach would be one that emphasizes partnerships between individual academics and arts educators, so that the academic's initial efforts to integrate the arts are tailored to the curriculum he or she is teaching. That sort of partnership seems most likely to succeed when there is mutual respect for, and understanding of, the disciplines that are being brought together. In other words, there would have to be an openness to learning in both directions. The partners might co-teach for a time, but the ultimate goal would be for them to practice arts integration of a particular sort on their own.

The idea of promoting individualized partnerships between artists and academics in other fields raises a host of questions. Not the least of them, in view of shrinking budgets, is how such a support system could, itself, be supported! I doubt that we can count on virtue being its own reward, so we need to address questions about appropriate compensation for the time and effort it would take for partners to engage with each other, and where that compensation would come from. But there are also questions about how to make good matches between people from the arts and people from other fields. These are the sorts of implementation questions I would like some help with, so that I can try to make the idea of partnerships work. But, of course, I'd also like to know if others see that as a worthy idea in the first place.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Two Cont'd...

Where do we stand with higher academia in their participation in moving forward arts education?

Eric Engdahl

Long ago, Eric Engdahl, Ph.D., ran away and joined a one-ring circus as Ringmaster. He found this experience invaluable in his other roles as a theater director, artist educator, curriculum writer, charter school administrator, and now as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at California State University, East Bay.

Through teacher education programs the next generation of teachers can gain an understanding of the arts, be made to see the importance and usefulness of the arts in the classroom, understand that there are standards in the arts, and learn basic processes of curriculum integration.

When I first read this question I noticed a bias in the wording which implied to me, a “we”/ “they” dichotomy. I hope we can rapidly move beyond that and make individuals in both higher education and arts education realize we are all part of the educational continuum. I, for example, am a member of the community of arts educators who does most of my work in an institution of higher education. Members of the arts education community work throughout higher education, a broad category including researchers, policy makers, professional arts programs and undergraduate education. I am going to focus on the sector of it that I know best: teacher education in a large state university, those departments which train the majority of teachers across the country.

Teacher education is a latecomer to the arts education table. For many years the arts education community thought that professional development was the way to inform teachers about arts content, arts integration, working with artist educators and bringing arts into the schools. Indeed, having spent a good part of the 1990's working with The California Arts Project I was of that opinion. I loved working with the teachers, learning from them and seeing learning communities evolve at schools. Most working teachers who came to professional development were a great co-learners (since we were all learning) – eager, enthusiastic, and open to diverse methods of learning. By contrast, official “Teacher Education,” when it was thought about at all, was separate and not part of the conversation.

As my career path took me into teacher education, I along with many others began to realize the importance of it to arts education. In the earlier model where professional development was the main vehicle for reaching teachers there were always some who were not interested in the arts. Some of them were disinterested due to a lack of exposure, understanding and knowledge. But as we live through a generational turnover in the teaching profession the number of teachers with an interest in the arts could, I fear, dwindle further, reducing the audience for professional development even more. I say this because, at least for California, many of my current students in teacher education courses have had little arts exposure and lack

basic experience and knowledge in the arts. This is due in large part to the “arts poor” California public school system that educated them. (I am still always a little taken aback when I have to teach college juniors the difference between primary and secondary colors.)

This is where teacher education can play an important role in the training of “arts aware” elementary teachers. Through teacher education programs the next generation of teachers can gain an understanding of the arts, be made to see the importance and usefulness of the arts in the classroom, understand that there are standards in the arts, and learn basic processes of curriculum integration. Perhaps most importantly, it is during teacher training when students are most impressionable and receptive to the integrative processes and power of arts education. The arts are not something to add on later, but integral to the entire of process of education. It is a common occurrence for my students to report that their first successful solo lesson in their student teaching was an arts lesson learned in their Visual and Performing Arts Methods course.

Teacher education, it should be stressed, focuses on the complex skills of teaching. It does not focus on content knowledge. No teacher enters or exits an education program with all of the knowledge in all of the content areas in which they will teach. Teachers should leave their programs knowing that they are on the beginning of a lifetime of learning. In terms of the arts, the teachers should leave the programs ready and primed for professional development.

Does this occur all of the time? Unfortunately no. How can arts educators help to integrate arts education into more teacher training programs? It is important to remember that these programs undergo rigorous accreditation procedures through agencies such as NCATE (The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) or a similar state agency, such as the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. These agencies are not Departments of Education and do not set curriculum standards, they have no regulatory power over K-12 but they are all important to higher education teacher programs. But I have never seen them at the arts education policy table. We need to bring them into the conversation and help them to understand the need to include the arts in all teacher preparation programs.

No teacher enters or exits an education program with all of the knowledge in all of the content areas in which they will teach. Teachers should leave their programs knowing that they are on the beginning of a lifetime of learning. In terms of the arts, the teachers should leave the programs ready and primed for professional development.

So far I have been discussing the training of elementary teachers who in programs like the one I teach in, are taught the arts in a separate course. This is not true for middle and high school teachers. This group of pre-service teachers focuses on their content area. They are taught how to teach math or theater or social studies or dance or music or visual art. They are not taught how to integrate between content areas. I believe that increased integration between secondary teachers (in all content areas) is vital to improve student learning. Theater teachers need work with social studies teachers who need to work with math teachers who need to work with music teachers and so on. In this area, I believe that higher education can help. There is a movement in some teacher training programs to teach active collaboration between teachers as part of their

training. It is a trend which I think will grow and this cadre of teachers has the potential to become powerful practitioners of integrated curriculum and to help to more fully integrate the arts.

We should not forget that higher education is also responsible for teaching the future principals and administrators of schools. We all know the importance of a leader at a school site. A principal committed to the arts can change the direction of an entire school. Conversely, a principal without enthusiasm can defuse the energy a staff may have for arts education. I have been fortunate to be part of the Arts Education Initiative (AEI) at UC Berkeley, a Ford Foundation funded program of teacher educators in northern California. One of the most important outcomes from AEI for me is a collaboration I have established with a colleague in the Department of Educational Leadership at CSU East Bay. My teacher education students teach her educational leadership students about the necessity of the arts. Over the last three years we have been raising the awareness of the arts among the next generation of school leaders and we hope our colleagues at other institutions will follow.

Finally a postscript about professional arts training programs in universities. I am a product of a university professional program and have taught in them as well. The two years I spent earning an MFA were perhaps the most powerful and influential of my life. I learned much, much more than just becoming a conservatory trained actor and that training prepared me for a lot. Reflecting on it, all of the competencies that Daniel Pink outlines in "A Whole New Mind" were part of that training. But no part of the program overtly touched upon teaching or education or had a metacognitive component to reflect on the greater ramifications of what we were learning. In Eric Booth's excellent *"The Music Teaching Artist's Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator,"* he says that in essence all artists are educators. I would ask that my colleagues in professional training programs include some reflection on the richness, complexity and importance of deep artistic training in shaping a whole individual.

So what is the state of the relationship between higher education and arts education? I would say generally positive but with enormous untapped potential. And in this time when we must band together to harness the power of collective impact, that potential is a resource we must develop and use for the sake of our students.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Three

What is the role of artists and arts organizations in the wider arts education paradigm?

Jessica Mele

Executive Director / Performing Arts Workshop, San Francisco, CA

What is the biggest barrier to a high-quality education?

Time. Teachers will tell you that there aren't enough hours in the day to squeeze in creativity. No matter how hard we try, or how much money we bring to the table, time is always the enemy. And squeeze is always the verb.

I would like to suggest that the role of arts and arts education organizations is to unsqueeze the school day. We can do this because we occupy a unique position in the educational landscape. Artists and arts education organizations are outsiders. We are not part of the education world. Arts education organizations go one step further. We're outsiders to both worlds; our goal is learning, not audience development. Our mission is in the classroom.

Artists and arts education organizations are outsiders...This has an upside...we are often allowed to bring new ideas, try new things in school with a freedom that classroom teachers or arts specialists rarely feel.

This current paradigm has an upside and a downside. Upside: we are often allowed to bring new ideas, try new things in school with a freedom that classroom teachers or arts specialists rarely feel. Downside: education professionals will always see the arts as "outside" of education. It also means that we will play the game of "plugging" holes in the curriculum, rather than true educational partnership.

The arts teach skills that students need but are not getting in most traditional classrooms: critical thinking, leadership, healthy relationships, self-efficacy. (See Performing Arts Workshop's recent [evaluation report](#) with findings related to student achievement.)

Educators who are committed to these ways of learning often recognize that the arts are a way of better managing the limits of the school day. For example, a science lesson on inertia can explore that concept by learning about bodies in motion, AND through the concept of cause and effect in creative writing. This kind of curricular connection doesn't take additional instructional hours, but rather leverages existing time.

This kind of collaboration between teachers and artists is a true educational partnership; one that starts from a connection between curricular leaders ("What can we do together?", rather than "What can we do for

you?"'). Amazing things can happen in true educational partnerships. And at the same time, are we ready as arts education organizations, arts organizations and teaching artists to engage in this kind of educational partnership? In order to effectively deepen the impact of our work, we have some field building to do. We need standards of pay for artistic staff, and of teaching quality. To date, each organization has had to find its own way compensating, evaluating and training artistic staff. This work is important, and directly related to classroom quality, and yet we are inventing our own wheels without any criteria for what makes a wheel (btw, compensation for wheelmakers is all over the map).

Arts education organizations, arts organizations, and the teaching artists that they staff, offer something unique to the public education system. And some educational leaders see that. If we are to be true educational partners, we need to be up to that partnership.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Three Cont'd...

What is the role of artists and arts organizations in the wider arts education paradigm?

Chike C. Nwoffiah

Founding Executive Director of Oriki Theater, a Mountain View, CA-based performing arts company that provides African entertainment, educational and youth development programs. An accomplished writer, theater director/producer and filmmaker with over 30 stage and screen credits, Chike is also a Senior Fellow of the American Leadership Forum - Silicon Valley and on the adjunct faculty at Menlo College in Atherton, California where he teaches African History.

I am a little concerned about the notion that Arts Integration is or should be an alternative to Arts Instruction. I think this creates a distraction, an imagined dichotomy and a false premise for any reasonable solution to the challenges we face. There has to be room for a child who wants to pursue music, dance, drama, etc., as a career to train and be nurtured to full bloom. The rigor, pedagogy and the learning environment that is created for that child is what constitutes Arts Instruction. This is different but not in opposition to the idea of Arts Integration or "teaching through the arts" which means using arts as a vehicle for a child's learning in other subject areas: math, geography, history, science, etc.

Teaching through the arts does not mean that an artist will go to bed and wake up the next day as a geography teacher. It means affirming the geography teacher in their own classroom, but giving her some arts strategies that she can use in teaching geography. A lot of this kind of teaching is already happening but is often not recognized as teaching through the arts. Teachers routinely have their students draw, paint or even produce videos on science projects. It is common practice in the lower grades to have children learn complex subjects through rhymes and songs. I have seen history teachers challenge their students by dramatizing historic events; geography and biology teachers sometimes take students outside the classroom to study in nature: feel the rocks, build habitats for insects, etc. There are several "arts" processes that occur in each of the above examples. I believe that we begin to build artificial walls when we do not validate the creative work that is already going on before introducing our "high-end teaching through the arts" concept. What needs to happen is validate the vast amount of creative teaching that is happening, recognize these islands of excellence as examples of teaching through the arts; and then figure out how to support the teachers with more art strategies.

Most traditional societies have always affirmed and honored disciplined study and training in specific art forms but have seamlessly integrated the arts into everyday life. Songs, dances, folk stories, drumming, etc., are used to teach history, geography, math, social science, civics, etc.

The role of the artist is central to both Arts Integration and Arts Instruction. The artists and arts organizations are best positioned to work alongside teachers in sharing arts strategies and demonstrating the intersection of instruction and integration. Most traditional societies have always affirmed and honored disciplined study and training in specific art forms but have seamlessly integrated the arts into everyday life. Songs, dances, folk stories, drumming, etc., are used to teach history, geography, math, social science, civics, etc. This is the backdrop that my art comes from and this is what my colleagues and I have been doing for a few decades. Unfortunately our education system is still stuck in the old paradigm of "education" within the four walls of a classroom from the first bell to the last bell; where everything outside of those four walls and bell periods are branded "extra-curricular". There is a lot of art going on in the so-called "underprivileged" communities across state, but since they do not fit into what might be preconceived notions of "high art" they are not valued.

Perhaps the exigencies of the moment might force us to throw away these outdated paradigms of what, where and how a child learns. It is clear that any meaningful arts education strategy must give all cultures a voice in our curriculum and not deny nor deprive our students a lifetime opportunity to become full citizens of our globe. Maybe if we are courageous enough, we might begin to tap into the vast resources of ALL artists and arts organizations that are already doing great work across the state.

"Thus the dream becomes not one man's dream alone, but a community dream, not my dream alone, but our dream, not my world alone, but your world and my world belonging to all the hands who build." - Langston Hughes, "Freedom's Plow."

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Three Cont'd...

What is the role of artists and arts organizations in the wider arts education paradigm?

Sabrina Klein

Executive Director / Teaching Artists Organized, Oakland CA. Teacher, director and occasional performer. Having myself been deeply affected (dare I say transformed?) and influenced by works of art I've experienced and works of art I've made, I am passionate about the rights of every child to find his or her own voice through a broad array of deep and meaningful arts experiences in and out of school.

I start with an obvious, but easily overlooked clarification: not every artist or arts organization has a role in the wider arts education discussion. The role of the artist in society is a completely different question. For those artists and arts organizations who find connection with education and arts education (they are not the same thing), there are a few deceptively easy (and perfectly reasonable) answers to the question. We are as diverse, complicated, temperamental, extravagant, introverted and confused as any other field of committed professionals—so our roles can vary widely and wildly, and any checklist of possible roles is likely to far short of reality.

There are, nonetheless, two relatively straightforward “gifts” artists and arts organizations carry that can provide some answers about our role in the arts education paradigm: 1) we hold certain expertise in the discipline, rigor, joy and challenges involved in art-making. And 2) we tend to engage in our own learning about life and art through inquiry, practice, engagement, experimentation and making connections, which are keys to living a life of curiosity and passion. These hold true for most working artists, teaching artists, arts educators, and arts integration specialists, as well as for most arts organizations.

Our role as “experts” in this way of engaging with information and ideas has natural classroom and community value. Beyond this, we have a role to continue to find ways to articulate the more elusive value that artists and arts organization have--not just in any arts education paradigm, but in any social or civil discourse paradigm. Many of us became artists because we seek ways of making meaning that are extremely hard to talk about. We have a deeper obligation in the arts education conversations around us not to side-step the challenge of engaging others in dialogue and partnership about our processes of learning and making meaning.

We provide both content and context for all kinds of learning. At our best, we are nimble problem-solvers, responsive to challenges. We are transparent about our curiosity, asking questions and looking at apparently entrenched realities as reasons to think differently about what reality really is. We model life-long learning and wonder.

A checklist of what we bring as both leaders and partners with others in any arts education paradigm would include a range from the astoundingly obvious to the ephemerally subtle. We provide both content and context for all kinds of learning. At our best, we are nimble problem-solvers, responsive to challenges. We are transparent about our curiosity, asking questions and looking at apparently entrenched realities as reasons to think differently about what reality really is. We model life-long learning and wonder.

We do our best, most of us, to meet our art with both joy and rigor, holding ourselves to very high standards both internal and external because that is the joy. A singular role we have is to be models for this meeting of hard work and great joy in learning, and to continue to strive to find ways to engage others in this kind of learning.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Three Cont'd...

What is the role of artists and arts organizations in the wider arts education paradigm?

Ruth Nott

Director of Education at San Francisco Opera, overseeing programs that serve children and adults throughout San Francisco and the Bay Area. She has over fifteen years of experience in opera education, having formerly worked in the Education Departments of the Metropolitan Opera Guild and New York City Opera.

I also believe that great certified arts teachers teach in an arts-integrated manner. Hmm...maybe quality arts teaching is arts integration.

My belief is that the ideal education for all children would include sequential arts instruction by certified arts teachers in all art forms AND arts integration. Before I continue, I would like to disagree with the President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities' definition of arts integration. I don't see the arts as a tool for teaching other subjects. Learning about and doing arts teach the arts. I believe that art-learning and other discipline-learning should be taught in equal balance and importance and natural connections between the two should be made. It is about teaching the whole child—

giving them a chance to become thinking human beings and make and understand connections between art and the world. I also believe that great certified arts teachers teach in an arts-integrated manner. Hmm...maybe quality arts teaching is arts integration. What do you think?

At San Francisco Opera, we see it as our role to provide arts integration. We partner with teachers and rely on them to inform us how the art resources that we offer can connect to the disciplines they are teaching. We provide professional development for educators in our art form and consistent time with teaching artists so that together they can make a plan for how to integrate opera and evaluate that process. For the most part, but not always, we partner with non-arts teachers.

A divide between arts organizations and arts teachers can sometimes occur. Arts teachers can see the community arts organizations as trying to take over, perhaps to take their jobs. Please believe that this is not true! In our work, we would LOVE to partner with more arts teachers and give them access to our resources. Art teachers in San Francisco and many other cities are spread so thin, traveling to multiple schools in a week and do not have the opportunity to connect with any one of their many schools and the other teachers within. But they are the educators who have a vast amount of knowledge about the students at each one of their schools, working with them year after year. Again, ideally, there is sequential arts instruction and arts integration for every child.

Both the arts and non-arts teachers deal with two main obstacles to partnering with arts organizations—TIME and TESTING. Like any quality relationship, it takes time to figure out how to best work together. The

teachers we have been successful in working with have given MANY hours of their own time, unpaid, to make our collaboration successful. They do so because they see the difference that it makes for their students. And they are growing as well—they are part of a learning community because of the professional development network we provide.

The biggest problem is—when will educators be valued for the enormous difference that they make for the future of our country. When will education ever be adequately funded and valued?

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Three Cont'd...

What is the role of artists and arts organizations in the wider arts education paradigm?

Nick Rabkin

Teaching Artist Research Project, NORC, University of Chicago

Public education is a cornerstone institution and value of our democracy, vital to both social mobility and informed and engaged citizenship. But schools are stressed to the limit. Thirty years of intense effort and debate about school reform has not improved the prospects of low-income students much, if at all. It has also marginalized arts education. [In 2008](#), 25% fewer 18 year-olds reported that they had taken any arts classes or lessons than 18 year-olds in 1982, and the decline has largely been in schools serving low-income African American and Latino students, where the need for educational improvement is greatest.

There are really two main currents in arts education. One has its roots in the long history of conservatories that have trained professional artists to make work at the highest levels for patrons since the middle ages. The other is far newer, making its first appearance here in the US in the settlement movement more than a century ago, when artists began teaching new immigrants and others in low-income neighborhoods.

The first is connected to an elite European tradition – the arts for the cultivated and the wealthy. The second is self-consciously democratic, associated with social reform, and culturally pluralistic – the arts are for everyone. The first is grounded in master-apprentice pedagogy and focused on technical skills in the art

Arts organizations and teaching artists offer an abundant and rich source of help. They already work successfully alongside arts specialists in many schools. By studying how they have divided responsibilities and built teams in those schools, we can develop policies that can move us beyond the destructive perception that teaching artists are a form of cheap outsourcing for arts education.

forms. The second is more student-centered, with a greater focus on the development of voice and meaning in and through the arts. Both have influenced public school-based arts education. Free provision would suggest the arts are for all in public schools, but over time schools sort students so that fewer and fewer have regular access to arts education after the primary grades. Much of the tension and confusion in the arts education universe can be resolved by seeing it through with this binocular prism.

Fifty years ago few artists taught in public schools. Arts instruction was the responsibility of faculty members, both specialists in the arts and classroom teachers. As school budgets were cut and curriculum narrowed, starting more than thirty years ago, the number of specialists declined, and classroom teachers were no longer prepared to deliver arts instruction on their own, even in the early grades. By the mid-1980s arts deserts were spreading in district after district, and arts organizations intensified educational

programs for schools in response and new organizations emerged, dedicated entirely to arts education programming. These efforts did not reverse the decline, but they did mitigate it, and significant numbers of teaching artists have moved into schools in the last thirty years.

Over the years, the best of these programs matured. They stayed in schools longer, built lasting partnerships between classroom teachers and teaching artists, arts organizations and schools. Artists who had been involved in community-based arts education brought the sense of social purpose rooted in the settlement tradition of reform and a commitment to the value of the arts for all. They developed new approaches to pedagogy, innovative curriculum, and designed creative programs that engage some of the most alienated students, give them meaningful work to do, allow them to exercise their creativity and develop their problem solving capacities, and promote collaboration. They have expanded on the arts standards, making voice, meaning, and relevance serious goals of arts education.

A broad consensus of researchers agrees that good teaching is student centered, focused on meaningful concepts, ideas, and problems, and builds community among students. That is what the best of these programs have brought to schools. Teaching artists have established a track record of innovation and success that would suggest they should be a critical element of any strategy to reverse the broad decline in arts education, and distribute arts education more equitably. More important, they can provide an outside perspective and energy that demoralized schools badly need, bringing innovation and creativity to places that are often starved for them.

Not that partnerships between schools and arts organizations can provide comprehensive arts education for all students. That should and must be a broader responsibility, largely shouldered by specialists. But as schools change to meet the educational needs of all students and the cognitive demands of the new century, they clearly require outside help. Arts organizations and teaching artists offer an abundant and rich source of help. They already work successfully alongside arts specialists in many schools. By studying how they have divided responsibilities and built teams in those schools, we can develop policies that can move us beyond the destructive perception that teaching artists are a form of cheap outsourcing for arts education. That is essential.

Teaching artists' contributions to schools are fragile and ephemeral. Education policymakers continue to underestimate the cognitive value of arts education, and the additional resources that would be required to expand arts education are not likely to materialize until that changes, especially as budgets shrink and public services are targeted for political attack. While most teaching artists find teaching profoundly rewarding and believe it makes them better artists, teaching artists are also deeply frustrated by low pay, short hours, and a dearth of validation in the arts and in education. Half have masters degrees or higher, and my research shows that most are richly experienced teachers. Yet, more than a fifth have no health insurance. If conditions deteriorate any further, we may see many teaching artists leave the field.

As it happens, the crisis of our schools is mirrored in an emerging crisis among non-profit arts organizations. Data from the NEA's surveys of arts participation show that a declining proportion of Americans finds meaning and relevance in the work of the non-profits, and declining attendance is reversing a long arc of growth in the

sector. Arts organizations find themselves asking fundamental and existential questions about the value, relevance, and the purposes of a system that produces work for a shrinking minority of Americans. The education departments of arts organizations and community arts organizations are the sites where new and sometimes brilliant strategies are developing to integrate people into the creative process itself, engage far more diverse communities of people, and move them well beyond the relatively passive participation of the audience experience. Wouldn't it be marvelous if teaching artists could contribute to saving both our educational and our arts systems?

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Week One, Day Three Cont'd...

What is the role of artists and arts organizations in the wider arts education paradigm?

Eugene Rodriquez

Founder, Director of Los Cenzontles Mexican Arts Center

I believe that the most effective and efficient role for community arts non-profit organizations in the arts education ecosystem is to provide deeper levels of technical instruction to students, to create opportunities in cultural performance practice, and to nurture community based artists, hopefully from within the communities they serve.

The ideal arts learning paradigm begins at a young age at home through exposure to music, dance and visual and tactile arts as part of a family's daily life. The next step is the introduction of music, dance and art fundamentals in the daily school curriculum. Just as language is introduced to children first at home and then at school with more formality, arts instruction should be treated the same. School based arts instruction introduces the concept of arts as a discipline and also create common cultural bonds that are especially critical in multi-ethnic school settings. In an era of tight budgets I recommend that schools at a minimum include group classes, or sessions within classes, of chorus, folk dance and arts & crafts to be taught in elementary school.

Community based non-profits then can fulfill the next level of training by providing specialized arts training as well as opportunities for participation and performance rooted in myriad cultural and stylistic niches. Arts non-profits can connect various levels of arts professionals with community, providing rich opportunities for learning and expressions of community identity. At Los Cenzontles, we regularly maneuver our programming to respond to community need which is in regular flux due to changed demographics. Through our cultural arts projects and exchanges we have also been able to connect students to master artists in our specific field of Mexican folk arts as well as other accomplished artists. Most importantly we have served as an incubator for local artists who are also dedicated to arts education in our community.

So in essence, I see the overall ecosystem as a pyramid with the public schools as the base to ensure arts literacy to as wide a base as possible, with the community non-profit as a vital link to cultural specialization and arts excellence. I believe that this arts ecosystem model is an efficient, effective and sustainable use of resources that best serves to invigorate arts participation and production and to create arts consumers.

I see the overall ecosystem as a pyramid with the public schools as the base to ensure arts literacy to as wide a base as possible, with the community non-profit as a vital link to cultural specialization and arts excellence.

Week #1: July 25 – 29

PRACTICE

Barry and Julie's Follow Up Questions to the First Week Blog Posts

Here are our reactions and thoughts about some of what this week's blog participants said. We will include their responses to these questions as and when received, and we encourage any of the readers who have thoughts to enter their own comments at the end of this blog.

1. More than one responder alludes to the positive situation in what could be called the “have” schools / districts – private and to a lesser extent, public – wherein the situation is pretty good, but that only raises the equity issue for that huge portion of schools wherein the situation is not as good, and is very likely bad. No doubt that disparity is the result of a variety of causes, chief among them lack of funds. How do we deal with that? – because that continued inequity is going to result in a ‘have’ and ‘have not’ arts education world (and education outcomes) for generations to come. If we are striving for, as Nick says, “*properly funded, well-run schools*” for every child, where do the *public will*, the policy and the funds come from to make that happen? That is one of our principal challenges: if we cannot address the inequity challenge, then much of the whole edifice will come crumbling down - hard.

Nick Rabkin

I don't think the ‘whole edifice comes crumbling down’ if we don't deal with the equity problem. To the contrary, the whole edifice of public education in America has been *built on inequality*, and it always has been. Inequality in arts education is just one manifestation of inequalities built into systems of public education financed by property taxes that will always disadvantage poor communities and advantage wealthy ones. Until that is changed, it's not likely we'll see big changes in access to arts ed for poor kids. “We” – advocates for arts education - are not capable of dealing with the inequity problem on our own. It is *the central issue* in American schools, as it has been since long before Brown v. Board of Education. That doesn't mean we should give up on fighting for arts ed in poor schools. To the contrary, successful programs in low-income schools are our best arguments for arts education for all.

2. Somewhat along the same track, both Paul and Eric pointed out the problem of too many classroom teachers not having had any experience with the arts in their own educational background, another problem that is likely to get worse as even fewer kids (including future teachers) today have arts education. How do we deal with that? Does this point to teaching artists – those people who have the skill and expertise in the arts – as the best hope, in partnership with those “under-arts-educated” classroom teachers? Should there be a systemic approach to providing teachers with ongoing arts education training, both pre-service and in-service?

Nick Rabkin

We actually have no reliable data about what kind of arts education classroom teachers had in American schools historically, but I'm skeptical that there was ever a 'golden age'. The best available data shows that just 25% of 18-year olds had any arts education in 1930. That figure slowly climbed up to about 65% by 1980 or so. It has declined since and is now below 50% again, about the level it was at in the mid-1960s, and not nearly as low as it was in 1930. The popular explosion of the arts in the 1960s was a cultural phenomenon, associated with all sorts of other cultural phenomena of the time. It was certainly not the result of an appetite for the arts that was cultivated in schools! I had a music appreciation class in junior high school, in which I learned about the classical composers, but my lifelong interest in music was not shaped deeply by that class. Listening to the radio had much more to do with it. Just because classroom teachers have had little in the way of formal arts education does not mean that they have limited interest or ideas about the arts. Just like their students, they come to schools with lots of ideas and lots of questions about the arts that are waiting to be explored with a little help from the outside.

Eric Engdahl

The issue of the "under arts educated" teacher is not a simple one to resolve. Given the complexity of educating students in the diverse eco-system of educational environments there are have to be multiple solutions that work in their own context. "Under arts educated teachers" are also only part of a larger problem that includes "under math educated teachers," "under science educated teachers," etc. situated in an educational system does not work well or equitably.

Here are a few thoughts about how to deal with "under arts educated" teachers now:

First, I think we need to work on helping teachers to re-think what arts experience means. I had a preservice teacher in my VAPA methods class once who stated she had no experience in the arts. I was surprised one day when she told me she had to miss class because she had been performing hula for the last twelve years and her professional ensemble had a performance. When I asked her why she said she had no experience in the arts she explained that she meant "school arts." I have had similar conversations around photography, church choir, website design, West African music and dance, and *mariachi* to name a few. I think we need to help teachers see a broader definition of the arts, especially as more cultures are represented and as technology evolves.

Second, how do we educate the teacher who truly has had no arts experience? It cannot occur in a teacher training program. Teacher training programs focus on how to teach, not in teaching the content the teacher will be teaching. But arts education can happen in the undergraduate educational process; in which case those pre-education majors need more arts content. But it also needs to happen in the high school level, the middle school level and to my mind most importantly in the elementary school. It also needs to happen in community-

based arts education organizations, for example the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts in Richmond, Ca. I don't think there is a systemic approach to educating the arts uneducated teacher, it needs to occur where the best opportunities can be found in context.

Third, I don't think the resources exist for teaching artists to fill the gap. I doubt if there are enough of them to meet the needs of urban, suburban and rural districts. Nor do I think there is money to pay them. I did a little rough math. There were 467,278 4th graders in the state of California last year. For one hour of arts instruction with a teaching artist assuming that the artist taught 50 students and was paid \$50 for that hour the cost would be \$467,278. On the one hand that's a bargain - \$1 per instructional hour per student. But once you start multiplying hours taught and additional grade levels the costs are astronomic. This leads us back to collective impact and doing more with less – which means that we need to get talking now – and thank you Barry, because this is a great start.

3. From Kris' comments, and those of both Paul and Eric, it seems that the time might be fruitful for an arts education summit meeting that focuses solely on the role of higher education in preparing teachers as arts teachers or arts integrationists. Could such a bold move yield progress or would it be a waste of time? Has this happened anywhere else in the country?

Eric Engdahl

I think that a convening of teacher education programs would be useful, but it needs to include a cross section of all teacher training programs, including the so-called "for profit" institutions and alternative credentialing programs run by charter schools and districts. It also needs to include the educational leadership programs. In California, a beginning location for that meeting could be among the CSUs (which educates the majority of California teachers) or at the organization of teacher training programs, the California Council on Teacher Education which already has an Arts Education Special Interest Group.

That convening needs to be part of a series of meetings in which regional arts education providers meet to look at how they can work together in a time of diminished resources. Some of us in the arts education community are looking to the idea of collective impact, eloquently described in an [article](#) by John Kania and Mark Kramer in the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

Part of the notion of collective impact is that we are working on a continuum from preschool through college and beyond; that arts education can happen in the schools, in community based organizations, in the home, in cultural organizations, in churches as well as in traditional venues.

Another idea from collective impact is that in bringing together arts educators to closely examine what we do, share our work, and study the effectiveness of our work we are creating a network in which the outcome is the process.

By using the idea of collective impact, we can also join educational reformers from many fields and become part of the greater educational reform movement. I believe that in this way we can make deep structural changes in the educational system and make under educated teachers a thing of the past.

Ayanna Hudson

On Friday, May 7, 2010, Arts for All, in partnership with California State University at Northridge, hosted the Arts for All Higher Education Think Tank. This event brought together decision makers throughout the education and arts community to begin to discuss how to strategically address quality arts education in teacher preparation programs in order to impact teacher practice and student learning. Over 60 people attended representing 13 institutions of higher education, 3 foundations, 6 school districts and partners from the Los Angeles County Office of Education, Orange County Office of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Think Tank attendees participated in several sessions throughout the day to:

- Identify and analyze trends in higher education
- Build consensus on the role of higher education in quality, access and equity in arts education

In one session, Sandra B. Chong, Director of Arts Education, Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication, California State University at Northridge, led a panel discussion with generalist classroom teachers called the “Benefits of Arts Education in the Elementary Classroom,” which focused on the inadequacy of training in arts education in pre-service programs, the use of the arts in the classroom setting and the impact teaching through the arts has on their teaching practice and student learning outcomes.

Although panelists felt that ongoing professional development in the arts is necessary, incorporating arts training into teacher preparation programs would be most beneficial. All panelists felt that strong training in the arts in pre-service programs for teachers would improve teachers’ capacity to teach in a classroom setting and equip teachers with a tool that would support them in improving student learning across all subjects.

After reviewing documentation from all of the day’s sessions, participants identified the following key priorities:

1. Develop a collective vision of arts education in teacher preparation programs
2. Deliver strong teacher preparation in the arts in pre-service teacher training programs
3. Model best practices throughout teacher training programs
4. Develop and empower advocates in institutions of higher education
5. Establish a culture that values the arts in teacher preparation programs
6. Conduct research and distribute data among stakeholders

These key priorities establish the foundation for the creation of a Higher Education Initiative, especially for California.

4. Can Jessica be right? Will education professionals *always* see the arts as “outside” of education? Don’t we have to figure out how to change that dynamic if we are ever to again provide arts education to every student K-12? Jessica’s piece illustrates a certain disconnect in belief between educators / teachers and artists / arts organizations as to whether or not the relationship is indeed as solid as she thinks. It’s possible that her perspective is not necessarily shared by the majority of the educator / teacher community – and that might very well be a problem for improving the role of the artist / arts organization within the arts education ecosystem. Chike’s piece further demonstrates some distance between those who run arts organizations and the teacher / educator. Not that he (or Jessica) is in any way wrong in his (her) observations, but their optimism may not be shared across the board outside our community. What are your thoughts?

5. Sabrina seems to be a tad more realistic and experienced in the arena of the arts organization working in the classroom. She rightly sees the artist as leader and partner – but the artist also needs to come into that situation as the learner and the follower too – and it’s not apparent that they do. Her comment that not every artist or arts organization has a role in the wider arts education discussion also resonates: there are a number of arts groups working in schools because the burden of arts education/enrichment provision has fallen on them – but may not be a critical part of their mission. They may not have the resources or expertise to do it effectively. Ruth’s observations are valuable in this light. She has a practical approach. How do we expand on the experience of those that have grappled with this problem for a long time already?

6. Perhaps we need to develop a comprehensive policy position as to the role of artists and arts organizations in the future of classroom arts education (and beyond as part of Eugene’s pyramid including the community) – a policy that reflects the real and genuine needs of both teachers and educators and artists and arts organizations – jointly and separately. Have we even taken baby steps to arrive at such a unified approach to the role of each? We may be living in a somewhat fantasy world - each side clinging to antiquated, outdated and largely erroneous beliefs about what the other wants, needs, thinks, believes and will accept. Can you comment?

Nick Rabkin

There are enormously successful partnerships in schools that include teaching artists, arts organizations, and faculty arts specialists. I would suggest that a serious study of the dynamics of these partnerships would yield the very best ideas of the *principles* that underlie roles in the provision of arts ed in schools.

7. Thinking of John Abodeely's and Talia Gibas' comments about the lack of national leadership for arts integration – and later on in the blog we'll be discussing national leadership overall for arts education – it would be interesting to hear what type of organization might take on that role. Is it one with an education focus, or an arts/arts education perspective? Should the government provide this role? And is there an opportunity in Common Core standards implementation for this arts integration leadership?

Nick Rabkin

The Getty made an investment in DBAE in the 90s that has had a sustained effect on American arts education. (It's really too bad that Getty abandoned its efforts under its disgraced president, Barry Munitz, about a decade ago.) It is high time that there was an equivalent philanthropic investment in arts integration, probably the most substantial innovation in arts education pedagogy and curriculum in our time. The practical leadership for this is ready, in my view. There are brilliant practitioners and theoreticians across the country, but no infrastructure to support building the field. What a lost opportunity!

FIELDBUILDING

Week 2: August 1 – 5, 2011

Day One

Question: What are we doing to help parents and the public understand: a) Why arts education is essential to their child's future, and b) What constitutes a high level arts education component?

Responders:

Gigi Antoni – Big Thought, Dallas

Joe Landon – California Alliance for Arts Education

Paul Richman – California State PTA

Day Two

Question: How is the field addressing barriers to arts education beyond budget decreases – the need for relevant assessment and accountability methods, lack of equity and access, high turnover of education and arts leadership, the unspoken territorial divide between arts education people and the general nonprofit arts sector, and the history of the arts education segment's ability to organize itself? How do we get to innovation in the field?

Responders:

Richard Kessler – The Mannes College New School for Music, NYC

Laura Zucker – Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Pedro Noguera – Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Development, NYU

Week #2: August 1 – 5

FIELDBUILDING

Week Two, Day One

What are we doing to help parents and the public understand: a) Why arts education is essential to their child's future, and b) What constitutes a high level arts education component?

Gigi Antoni

Executive Director, Big Thought, Dallas, Texas

One of the most important things that we can do to engage parents and the public in arts education is to seek out what is valuable to them, because the customs, beliefs and traditions of communities are what will

ultimately drive their priorities. Finding community advocates for arts education doesn't have to be a conversion, but it does have to be a conversation. My organization interviewed hundreds of parents and families and came away with powerful, paradigm-shifting truths about how we engage our community.

As Nick Rabkin reminded us in an earlier post, arts education has grown up into two tracks: "One has its roots in the long history of conservatories that have trained professional artists to make work at the highest levels for patrons since the middle ages. The other is far newer, making its first appearance here in the US in the settlement movement more than a century ago, when artists began teaching new immigrants and others in low-income neighborhoods."

What we've found by speaking with parents is that these largely divergent tracks mean that most families consider "the arts" a negligible component in their child's development. After all, the arts are only in museums and symphony halls, as they saw it. But our research showed that most families were deeply, consistently creative and valued creativity in their children.

For instance, a family might have generations of women who quilt and who consider that skill to be part of their cultural identity and of the fabric of their family. What could be more powerful or more highly valued than an endeavor like that? When I was a child, my father used to lay me on his chest and play classical records on his hi-fi. As I laid there with him, listening to his breathing, he would whisper teachings to me: "Now, you're going to hear this theme repeated. Do you recognize it?" This memory, still vibrantly recallable today, was the foundation of my love for the arts. They became interwoven into something I loved, my father, and therefore it became desirable and important for me.

Yet too often, the arts education field devalues these community and family driven experiences with the arts because they aren't what we consider "high quality". Quality is generally thought of as highly-effective arts activities which maximize student/instructor interactions in a supportive setting and utilize proven techniques, methods and ideologies. Yet as a field, we can't ignore the fact that quality also means access, equity and consistency in a child's life. If arts experiences are not ubiquitous and viable over the duration of a child's education, they become a tangential episode in students' educational journey. In the nexus of the two tracks' convergence is the place where we will find the most powerful arts education advocates you can imagine. If we can effectively connect community experiences, which are happening in neighborhoods day-in and day-out across geographic and socioeconomic areas, to what happens inside classrooms, museums and concert halls, then arts education will naturally become a community concern.

Parents and the public are in the business of "ends" – parents want their children to be successful, well-rounded adults and the public wants kids who grow up to be productive citizens who will contribute to the greater good. If we want to persuade parents and the public of the importance of arts education, we have to build a case that it is a means through which these ends are achieved. When they understand this relationship, they begin to see the arts as a significant, critical piece of education that will yield the highly-valued outcomes that communities already intuitively understand.

My organization often asked students the "three C's" when determining how to best program for them: What do you care about? What are you concerned about? What challenges do you face? The same questions should be applied to parents. All parents care about the future of their children. All parents are concerned about how to give their children opportunities to experience things that will help them succeed.

Unfortunately, the arts education field itself is sometimes the challenge parents face because we haven't sufficiently connected the arts as a meaningful part of life and of learning. Instead, we get caught up talking among ourselves using language and concepts which, while they are undoubtedly valuable to our field, are without context or relevance in our communities. We use words that are technical and sterile – arts education, discipline-based arts education, integration, sequential learning, etc.

What's more effective is to spread our message in a way that resonates with most parents or community members – creativity, self-expression, self-esteem, educational success, cultural literacy, etc. These ideas are the convergence of both tracks. They are both the goals of the public and outcomes of art, both the root of educational success and the foundation of community life.

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I'll leave you with a link that describe how Big Thought has tried to mitigate the challenges of parent and public engagement in Dallas and hope that you'll share your experiences with me, as well.

[Creative Learning: People and Pathways](#)

Week #2: August 1 – 5

FIELDBUILDING

Week Two, Day One Cont'd...

What are we doing to help parents and the public understand: a) Why arts education is essential to their child's future, and b) What constitutes a high level arts education component?

Joe Landon

As of August 1, Joe Landon is the new Executive Director of the California Alliance for Arts Education. Earlier in his career he was a playwright and television writer, and worked for the California State Legislature. This blog entry constitutes his first official act as Executive Director.

When I joined the Alliance as its policy director in 2006, we were savoring the hard earned victory that led to California's historic investment in arts education, including the one time block grant shared with physical education and the ongoing "Arts and Music" categorical funding. But even then, the Alliance's concern was shifting toward the question of how to sustain advocacy at the local level, where crucial decisions made by local school boards determine the quality, equity, and access of arts education in a school district.

When the state legislature gave local districts the 'flexibility' to spend the Arts and Music Block grant on whatever programs they considered most essential, the Alliance had already embarked on a project to build a local advocacy network in communities and districts throughout the state.

Our goal was to gather the expertise around what would be required to foster an ongoing coalition of local leaders who share a commitment to *build public understanding and support for the critical role of arts education in the development of every student.*

In the first year of this pilot program, we selected ten sites throughout the state, reflecting diverse communities, geographical areas and economic conditions. Our goal was to gather the expertise around what would be required to foster an ongoing coalition of local leaders who share a commitment to *build public understanding and support for the critical role of arts education in the development of every student.* Each coalition represents a cross section of community interests, including business, community, education and arts organizations.

Part of this effort includes providing advocates with information that articulates the crucial value that arts education provides in preparing our students for the future: <http://www.artsed411.org/toolkit/index.aspx> Although there have been communities throughout the country where there was a sustained effort to organize arts education advocates, there is no precedent for a statewide effort to capture local advocacy.

Today our Local Advocacy Network (LAN) includes over thirty coalitions throughout the state, from San Diego to Fresno to Humboldt County. Over the past three years, our work has become more codified, as best practices and indicators of success have emerged from these efforts in local communities. Earlier this year we pulled together evidence of this ongoing work in what we refer to as the [LANBOOK](#). It includes resources for building relationships with school officials, organizing a launch event and garnering media attention. Feel free to use these resources and to contact us if you have any additional questions about building a local coalition in your community.

One of the most effective projects undertaken by local advocates was the District Election Survey. Candidate surveys provide a time-based, newsworthy way to raise awareness about the value and challenges of providing arts education in our public schools. In 2010, with the help of local advocates, the Alliance surveyed school board candidates in over 40 California districts. The results were published a month before election day and made arts education a vital part of public conversation leading up to the election. To read more about the project, including how to get involved, [click here](#).

We will continue to share what we are learning in our ongoing effort to build support for arts education at the local level. This September, we're launching an online home for our Local Advocacy Coalitions that will be a place to find tips from seasoned organizers, information about events in a particular area, and ways to spread this work to new communities. We're also expanding our online action center, to provide advocates around the state with the resources they need to promote arts education.

Week #2: August 1 – 5

FIELDBUILDING

Week Two, Day One Cont'd...

What are we doing to help parents and the public understand: a) Why arts education is essential to their child's future, and b) What constitutes a high level arts education component?

Paul Richman

In 2007, Paul Richman joined California State PTA as the first executive director in the association's 100-plus year history. Prior to that he served for nearly 10 years as an assistant executive director of the California School Boards Association. He began his career working in the state legislature. He has a degree in political science from Vanderbilt University and an MFA in creative writing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

As much as we can. And yet, still not nearly enough.

That's what California State PTA is doing to help parents and the public understand why arts education is essential to their children's future.

With nearly 1 million members in the state, PTA has a long track record of promoting the importance of arts education for every child. A fall 2010 survey of our local leaders showed "access to a complete curriculum that includes the arts for every student" was a top priority for 90.6 percent of respondents, exceeded only by "adequate funding for schools" at 97.5 percent and "teacher effectiveness" at 90.9 percent.

At one of the typical initial campus-wide parent engagement nights, about 80 parents and family members attend with their children. They share a light meal, hear from the principal, learn about their school, and then they participate in a standards-based arts activity. An art instructor takes them through a lesson – in perspective maybe, or diorama, or African drumming. For a half-hour on these evenings, mothers, fathers and grandparents create alongside the children.

This survey data suggests that actively involved parents and volunteer leaders already understand how important arts education is. In the past two years, we've worked to build up our network of more than 4,000 "Parents for the Arts" who receive [SMARTS](#), a monthly e-newsletter about arts education, including reports, legislative updates, and strategies for promoting the arts and engaging others in the cause. This past year we also launched an initiative to identify an arts education chair at each of our local PTA units, councils and districts, with the intent that these chairs will help build local partnerships, and provide the needed sparks to forge larger communications chains.

In addition, we're working closely with tremendous partners like the California Alliance for Arts Education, California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, and many individual county offices of education, such as those in Alameda and Orange (to name just two), to make sure that parent advocacy components are built into more trainings, events and

programs.

Despite this work, we know we have only begun to scratch the surface in terms of building greater understanding about the importance of the arts in education – and beyond that, inspiring a groundswell of support and action. Make no mistake: When the time comes that we truly can activate a million parents (or even a half million) to demand higher quality education that includes the arts – then we won't be analyzing these types of questions in blogs any longer. Then we'll see policy and budget decisions that have changed dramatically at the state and local levels.

How do we get there, though? It's no easy lift.

In much of our recent work at PTA we've strategized about two things: How to engage more of the traditionally underrepresented or uninvolved parents, and how to reach those critical next circles of potential advocates – the ones beyond what we know to be a reliable, knowledgeable and passionate core of arts education advocates already in place.

With limited capacity, we can't keep spending time talking to ourselves or convincing our core supporters and advocates. We have to reach more of the parents who didn't grow up with arts education programs in their own public schools because those programs have been gone for a generation or two. We need to reach more of the parents who were not born in this country or are not native English speakers.

Again, PTA has taken some exciting, initial steps. This past school year, with the support of the Hewlett Foundation, we launched a pilot parent education program in 14 elementary schools in California. This program, called School Smarts, builds on our research indicating that before we can build a larger network of parent advocates for arts education, many of those parents first desire more foundational training. When it comes to advocacy, we can't instantly go from zero to 60. There is no shortcut to increasing the number parent advocates. This is true whether we're talking about speaking up for arts education or speaking up for healthier school lunches or on any other issue. We have to start by making more parents feel comfortable coming to the school, then providing basic information and training. Our research shows this is what parents want.

PTA's School Smarts program starts with a campus-wide parent engagement event open to all, followed by a seven-week parent academy where interested parents learn the basics and begin to think collectively about how to support their schools. The program is delivered in English, Spanish or Cantonese. In our pilot year, half of the participating parents among the 14 schools were Spanish speakers.

A special feature of the program is that we also expose parents to arts instruction. At one of the typical initial campus-wide parent engagement nights, about 80 parents and family members attend with their children. They share a light meal, hear from the principal, learn about their school, and then they participate in a standards-based arts activity. An art instructor takes them through a lesson – in perspective maybe, or diorama, or African drumming. For a half-hour on these evenings, mothers, fathers and grandparents create alongside the children.

The arts are then woven into the instruction provided during the seven modules of the parent academies, so parents gain a firsthand sense of how the arts facilitate learning. In some cases, the parents go home and teach their children the arts activity they learned that evening.

For some of the parents, this may be their first encounter with the arts in many years. Many are nervous at first, even uncomfortable. Soon enough they lose themselves in the activity. Generational differences are bridged. Cultural and linguistic differences are bridged. In this sense, the arts are a version of breaking bread at our school campuses. For some parents, if we can get them to come onto the campus and if we can create a positive experience for them while they're on the campus, then we have taken a small but so-very-important first step on the longer road to helping them become confident, engaged advocates for their own children – and for all children.

The data and evaluations of our pilot-year program indicate strong success in educating diverse groups of parents. When I visited the parent academies at some of our school sites I observed something even more striking than the pre- and post-survey data. In the multi-purpose room at many of the campuses, I saw the artwork of parents hanging side by side with the works of their children. Parents who had rarely even set foot on the campus before were now proudly displaying their works of visual art on the campus walls! As much as anything, that tells me we are on to something big.

Week #2: August 1 - 5

FLDILDUILDING

Week Two, Day One Cont'd...

What are we doing to help parents and the public understand: a) Why arts education is essential to their child's future, and b) What constitutes a high level arts education component?

Responses to the day's posts:

John Abodeely said... (August 3, 2011 7:47 AM)

Wow, Gigi. What a moving post, full of wisdom and humility that is a rare find. Thanks for writing that!"

Barry and Julie's Follow Up Questions to Week Two, Day One

1. How do we more expansively engage parents in the kind of dialogue Gigi refers to in her post – one that effectively links the arts to the “ends” she identifies as being of primary concern to parents and which incorporate those cultural intersections she argues work best? Who can and should lead the charge in this parent engagement? How do we get away from the technical, cold and sterile words with which we talk about creative learning, and education itself, and focus on outcomes?
2. Is convincing parents of the value of an arts education, an advocacy function as Joe seems to imply, or does the essence of the challenge lie elsewhere? How is advocacy best deployed in moving more parents to first appreciate the role of the arts in the overall education of their children, and second move them to be more proactive in demanding it in their schools? How do we remove the stigma and misperception of the word “advocacy”, which can be a barrier to some parents’ participation?
3. Paul summarizes the challenge in this arena when he observed that the question is: *“How to engage more of the traditionally underrepresented or uninvolved parents, and how to reach those critical next circles of potential advocates – the ones beyond what we know to be a reliable, knowledgeable and passionate core of arts education advocates already in place.”* Paul describes how the PTA is trying to do that, with bilingual trainings, welcoming family activities etc. Are there any other ways we might accomplish that?

Week #2: August 1 – 5

FIELDBUILDING

Week Two, Day Two

How is the field addressing barriers to arts education beyond budget decreases – the need for relevant assessment and accountability methods, lack of equity and access, high turnover of education and arts leadership, the unspoken territorial divide between arts education people and the general nonprofit arts sector, and the history of the arts education segment's ability to organize itself? How do we get to innovation in the field?

Richard Kessler

Across a kaleidoscopic career, Richard Kessler has been a senior level arts administrator, professional musician and educator, teaching artist, consultant, and arts and education policy fanatic. A practitioner involved in virtually every aspect of arts education, Kessler is departing The Center for Arts Education at the end of July, becoming as of September 1st, the Dean of The Mannes College New School for Music.

Right out of the gate, I find myself stumbling on the definition of the term “field” (or “community” as is often used). Now, don't get me wrong, I use these terms all the time, but I have felt for a very long time that the field is quite asynchronous. So, perhaps a term better than field might just be “ecology.” To play that out a bit, you've got all sorts of components in the ecology, that are ultimately connected to each other, but often behave in highly independent ways. Sometimes, parts of the ecology work together, creating something that might be a bit more healthy, but still independent of many other components and this independence ultimately inhibits the improvement of the overall ecology. It's also possible that when those particular parts become stronger, others become weaker. Rarely does the ecology come together intentionally, by design.

Think about some of the components and how they might be classified: local, regional, national. Different types of teachers, administrators, parents, teaching artists, all in different schools, with different demographics and a variety of organizations/associations that claim to speak for their particular constituency. Then you have higher education, policy makers, districts, funders, and they have their associations too. Each school and each organization is part of its own sub-ecology, as well as part of the larger ecology. And let's not forget the various disciplines, approaches, etc. Finally, new component can crop up at any given moment. It could be something that say Quincy Jones creates, or The White House giving the Creative Coalition a platform in setting context for

So, perhaps a term better than field might just be “ecology”...you've got all sorts of components in the ecology, that are ultimately connected to each other, but often behave in highly independent ways. Sometimes, parts of the ecology work together, creating something that might be a bit more healthy, but still independent of many other components and this independence ultimately inhibits the improvement of the overall ecology. It's also possible that when those particular parts become stronger, others become weaker.

policy and practice. And, these new components, emerging out of nowhere, might appear to be positive, but might also have either a negligible effect on the ecology, or sometime even a negative effect, no matter how well intended. And, when the ecology might be improved by a bit more care and attention paid to a long-standing component, it is unlikely to happen because some of the more powerful parts of the ecology, or let's say components that feed much of the ecology, tend to like things that are new.

Another way of looking at it could be as a giant jigsaw puzzle, that somehow or another, never quite comes together completely.

Let's also imagine that some of the pieces of the puzzle are difficult to put together, because they don't quite fit, and need adjustment or creation of new pieces that do fit. Let's call that part of the puzzle the barriers.

So, some of the puzzle reworking may be the State Education Department of Washington, making the investment in a statewide assessment regimen for the arts. It may be The Ford and Wallace foundations having worked with local arts education ecologies to address key barriers such as coordination, extended day, system mapping, and more, and then brought those geographically disparate puzzle groupings together for some sharing, and even a formal report to the entire ecology, or whomever within the ecology is willing to give it all a moment's notice.

In any smaller part of this ecology, you will find those are trying something new. It may be in the area of a new district program coordinating the provision of arts education. It may be those who are trying to advance the understanding of arts education within the greater ecology of K-12 education. It may be those focusing on leadership development, or the use of technology. There are those who are seeking to advance the role of the teaching artist, in training, certification, and via the social justice route. And, there are those who are pursuing what lobbying and coalition building might bring. And let's not forget those who seek to develop new standards as their part in advancing some portion or all of the ecology.

Of course, there are tons of examples I have missed of how the ecology (or field as was used in the formal blog prompt) is addressing barriers, most often in ways that are disconnected and asynchronous. For all those who take issue with that statement, how about I assert that the exceptions prove the rule.

And then, there are the outliers in the ecology, the parts that have not quite been examined forthright. My one big example stems (pun intended), from the confluence of change in the ways the arts are created, disseminated, classified, and recorded, combined with the changes to the nature of delivery of instruction, meaning arts teachers, teaching artists, classroom teachers, or no one, all mixed together with the evolving and dynamic nature of the disciplines, including music, art, theater, dance, arts integration. And then just for fun, let's think about the role of the arts in youth development programs or ESL. Put this all together, and you now have a menu of what the arts can be in many schools, no matter what the standards might dictate. A principal can spin the roulette wheel and land on any combination of the above, and in more schools than many would be willing to admit, that principal can make their program out of whatever the roulette wheel of arts education options brought them.

And if you want to talk about innovation, it is in this witches brew, as wonderful, beautiful, and frustrating as it is, that all sorts of innovations are ripe for understanding and development.

I hope I haven't given anyone a headache...

Week #2: August 1 – 5

FIELDBUILDING

Week Two, Day Two Cont'd...

How is the field addressing barriers to arts education beyond budget decreases – the need for relevant assessment and accountability methods, lack of equity and access, high turnover of education and arts leadership, the unspoken territorial divide between arts education people and the general nonprofit arts sector, and the history of the arts education segment's ability to organize itself? How do we get to innovation in the field?

Laura Zucker

Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, which provides leadership for Arts for All, the largest collaborative initiative in arts education in the country, restoring standards-based arts education into the public school core curriculum of 81 school districts. Ms. Zucker also directs the Masters in Arts Management program at Claremont Graduate University.

I'm glad you started this question by asking what the barriers are *beyond* budget decreases, because in our experience—currently working with 44 school districts—budget is not the primary barrier. Budgets in public school districts, even when they're reduced, are still huge in comparison to the nonprofit arts sector: The collective budget of all 81 school districts in Los Angeles County is currently \$14.56 billion, yes, that's billion, serving 1.6 million students.

The first focus tends to be on access-- we just want some kids to get some arts education. Then we start thinking about equity-- shouldn't all kids get arts education? Once we get to this point we realize that the primary delivery system has to be schools. When we (hopefully) have a lot of kids getting some arts education, we start to focus on quality.

Most school administrators don't know which of their existing revenue streams can be used for arts education. Since No Child Left Behind made the arts a core subject, the answer is a lot! From general purpose funds to block grant to title funds (particularly Title I funds), the arts can be woven throughout budgets. *Arts for All* has created a [cheat sheet](#) on funding sources for school districts on our publications page.

So how should school districts target their funding for arts education strategically? The reality is that most administrators don't know how arts education is currently being delivered in their schools beyond anecdotal information.

I think for many of us toiling in the arts education trenches, the first focus tends to be on access-- we just want some kids to get some arts education. Then we start thinking about equity--shouldn't all kids get arts education? Once we get to this point we realize that the primary delivery system has to be schools. When we (hopefully) have a lot of kids getting some arts education, we start to focus on quality. That's where we are

now in LA County. How do we define quality in arts education, how can we measure it, how can we implement programs of consistent high quality?

That's why *Arts for All* developed a survey to measure access to, and quality of, arts instruction at the school site level. The results surprised us and even the superintendents: the delivery of quality arts education services varied widely even within the same school district. Having this information has enabled participating superintendents to make informed decisions about how to direct resources. Understanding what's working in their schools--and what isn't-- is key. Here is a [summary](#) of the findings from the first 100 schools surveyed in five school districts.

The quality conversation leads naturally to the importance of teacher professional development, both pre-service, which was discussed as part of the responses on higher education last week, and in-service. And that's where the schools' internal budgeting priorities become critical, because all schools have existing funding for in-service professional development. They just have to decide to spend it on professional development in arts education for their teachers. *Arts for All* incentivizes the districts to do so by providing tools, such as a [handbook](#) on creating and sustaining the arts through Professional Learning Communities, and, starting this year, we will partner with school districts to develop and implement professional development plans through coaching and matching grants.

So who makes the decisions about where to invest budget dollars?

The average tenure for urban superintendents nationally is 3.64 years (according to the Council of the Great City Schools, a collation of 65 of the nation's largest urban school systems)! Four out of the five superintendents who participated in our pilot [leadership fellows program](#) changed jobs during the year of the program or shortly thereafter. Luckily, superintendents often move to another school district within the region. In fact, the new superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District, John Deasy, was the superintendent of one of our vanguard school districts, Santa Monica-Malibu USD, when we first started *Arts for All* in 2002. So arts education efforts are often not lost, just transferred.

But we all need to do a lot more to educate not just superintendents, but assistant superintendents as, in addition to managing the budget and hiring school principals, they often have lengthy tenure in their jobs. We're focusing on assistant superintendents more and more in capacity training.

The good news is that in our region, at least, I don't think there's a territorial divide on how to address these issues strategically. That common sense of direction and focus is what's made progress possible. Arts education service providers, school district leaders, and funders—we're all in this together. I wish I could say the same about a national strategy...but hopefully, the bloggers next week will solve this!

Week #2: August 1 – 5

FLDDBUILDING

Week Two, Day Two Cont'd...

How is the field addressing barriers to arts education beyond budget decreases – the need for relevant assessment and accountability methods, lack of equity and access, high turnover of education and arts leadership, the unspoken territorial divide between arts education people and the general nonprofit arts sector, and the history of the arts education segment's ability to organize itself? How do we get to innovation in the field?

Pedro Noguera

Professor of sociology in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Development at NYU. He is also Exec Director of the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education.

As a result of severe school budget cuts, high stakes testing and the subsequent narrowing of school curricula, arts education is under attack on a scale never seen before. In the name of raising student achievement schools across the country are eliminating arts programs. This is largely because schools are under considerable pressure to raise student test scores, and there is no state in the nation where the arts are included in student assessments.

When our policymakers choose schools for their own children, arts, physical education and a rich array of extra-curricular programs are typically widely available.

Yet, when it comes to educating poor children in urban and rural schools, concern for nurturing the physical and aesthetic talents of children is often lacking.

Of course, the damage is most obvious and critical in schools serving poor children. In such schools it is not uncommon to find students languishing in test prep courses, while their need for enrichment in the arts, science and even history is neglected because these subjects are not included in state exams. Under the guise of raising standards, poor children are increasingly receiving an impoverished education.

Ironically, almost none of our policymakers would support such an education for their own children. On the contrary, when our policymakers choose schools for their own children, arts, physical education and a rich array of extra-curricular programs are typically widely available. Yet, when it comes to educating poor children in urban and rural schools, concern for nurturing the physical and aesthetic talents of children is often lacking.

There are of course a few notable exceptions. For example, one "failing" middle school in Brooklyn, NY decided that it would increase student motivation and engagement by building a school-wide dance program into the academic plan. The principal, Dakota Keys, attributes the gradual improvement of her school to the improved morale that resulted from students being engaged in a program that "touched their hearts and souls". Similarly, Brockton High School in Massachusetts adopted a full

inclusion arts curriculum to its course offerings and found that it contributed to significant improvements in student test scores. The fact that Brockton serves a student population that is over 75% low-income and minority, yet scores among the top 10% of high schools on state exams, should serve as a clear sign to policymakers that the arts should not be treated as an "extra" that can be cut when budgets are tight or test scores need to be raised.

What we need to see arts education children made available to children and schools on a larger scale is a total shift in the education policy agenda. For too long we've been emphasizing "basic skills" through high stakes testing. What we should be doing is emphasizing the development of higher order skills through an enriched curriculum, experiential learning and a holistic approach to child development. Without such a vision and policies to support it, we are likely to continue to see our children turn off to school because they are bored to death, while our schools continue to fail. We need a new approach!

Week #2: August 1 – 5

FIELDBUILDING

Week Two, Day Two Cont'd...

How is the field addressing barriers to arts education beyond budget decreases – the need for relevant assessment and accountability methods, lack of equity and access, high turnover of education and arts leadership, the unspoken territorial divide between arts education people and the general nonprofit arts sector, and the history of the arts education segment's ability to organize itself? How do we get to innovation in the field?

Responses to the day's posts:

Laura Zucker said... (August 3, 2011 8:28 PM)

Richard is quite right when he talks about the idiosyncratic nature of how arts education is delivered in most schools, driven largely by either a passionate teacher or principal who grabs onto whatever is at hand. When that individual leaves, the arts education program, such as it is, falls apart. The solution to this is school-based planning involving all the stakeholders that rolls up into the district's comprehensive plan for arts education. A plan! What a concept, but absolutely achievable. In LA County that's always the first step: putting together a community arts team that involves all the stakeholders—policy makers, administrators, teachers, arts service providers, parents, and even students—to fit the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together to make a picture of what arts education should look like in their school district that's right for them. Once the school board adopts a strong policy statement and the plan for arts education that came out of that process, that same community arts team transitions to become more of a community advocacy team, insuring that implementation of the plan keeps moving forward.

Week #2: August 1 – 5

FLDILDUILDING

Week Two, Day Two Cont'd...

Barry and Julie's Follow up Questions to Week Two, Day Two

1. Richard offers us a new model in moving from "field" to "ecology". Perhaps a better question than *"how do we move towards innovation"*, might then be *"how to we expand the innovation that can grow in the Petri dishes that are happening all over the place within the ecology?"*

2. Laura observes that the realistic approach is to first zero in on getting the arts in the schools for at least some students, then we can move to expanding that reality. She also notes that data is crucial to decision making, and that the budgetary process (or perhaps more accurately, the *"politics of the budgetary process"*) becomes the critical focal point. She suggests one starting point might be with the superintendents. How might we go about systematically and methodically *"engaging"* that group of decision makers? Are there any other possible intersections that we might make in trying to influence the budgetary process?

Ayanna Hudson

It is important to note that engaging superintendents starts long before the budget process. We have found that the path to engagement starts with asking superintendents their priorities for student learning and needs for the school district, really listening to their responses, and then articulating how the arts support their goals - helping them to see the arts aren't one more thing to do, but instead a key strategy to helping them achieve their goals. Engagement also happens when we actively support them by making it clear they are not alone and that they have a whole community behind them to help them to be successful. They especially need support and ongoing access to learning opportunities for them and their staff (to deepen knowledge about the rigor of arts education and the steps that they as leaders need to take to ensure arts education happens, etc.), along with access to up-to-date tools and information to support their efforts. By the time the budget process rolls around, a level of trust, rapport and mutual respect has been established.

Once engaged, our role becomes one of providing a real-time, accurate analysis of state and federal budgets, and identifying funds that can be used for the arts. The key is making this analysis available to school board members, superintendents, assistant superintendents for business services, district leaders and arts coordinators/arts leads, followed-by a letter congratulating them for their leadership in staying the course, as well as reminding them of their commitment to arts education. This same analysis is shared with community leaders who have been trained to track school board meetings, read school board agendas, and have developed a coordinated strategy focused on the fiscal impact of the arts in the district and the community's expectations when it comes to the arts, which they present at school board meetings. (Cultivation and presence at school board meetings also starts way before the budget process).

We have seen the arts maintained during the budget crisis through this multi-tiered strategy. We have also found the great power of small investments to make big things happen, which is why we provide modest matching grants. By requiring school districts to match an external grant with school district funds, we continue to leverage and influence the school district's investment in arts education.

3. Pedro asserts that *"What we should be doing is emphasizing the development of higher order skills through an enriched curriculum, experiential learning and a holistic approach to child development."* How do we go about convincing education decision makers to do that? And that the arts have to be a critical component of such a strategy?

Ayanna Hudson

Pedro raises an excellent point about the lack of access to arts education for kids from low income communities. Through the Arts for All School Arts Survey, we found in LA County that students attending Title I schools in districts deeply committed to arts education do not have the same level of access to quality arts instruction as other children in their district and across the County. In addition to the reasons Pedro cited, one of the barriers to arts education in these schools is the utter confusion and differing interpretations around the use of Title I monies for arts education. While the arts are core under NCLB and Secretary Duncan has stated publically and in writing that Title I funds can be used for arts education, we know firsthand that many Title I administrators throughout California continue to block the use of the funds for the arts and receive conflicting information regarding the use of these funds. Despite all of this, there are some school districts in LA County where students in Title I schools are receiving arts instruction through the concerted efforts of district leadership. And now that we have data, Arts for All and school districts across the County can better target services and resources to serve low income students. But to really increase the numbers of students in Title I schools that have an arts education, we need our state policymakers to provide leadership and a consistent message about the use of Title I monies for the arts.

4. Who are the likely candidates to take on the role Laura describes in her comment when she says: *"the first step (is): putting together a community arts team that involves all the stakeholders—policy makers, administrators, teachers, arts service providers, parents, and even students—to fit the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together to make a picture of what arts education should look like in their school district that's right for them. Once the school board adopts a strong policy statement and the plan for arts education that came out of that process, that same community arts team transitions to become more of a community advocacy team, insuring that implementation of the plan keeps moving forward"*? Who initiates such an effort where no such team currently exists? Is there any support available for those who might want to take such an approach?

Laura Zucker

Who can take the leadership role on putting together a community arts team to create a plan for arts education? Anyone! While it's great to be a neutral convener like a local arts agency, such as we are, or

county office of education, as is the Alameda County Office of Education, this role could also be taken on by a funder or group of funders (Chicago) or an arts service provider (Big Thought), or parents' council... Anyone can step up and lead this kind of effort if they're inclusive. The key is to have a very big welcoming tent. The California Alliance for Arts Education has an "[Insider's Guide to Arts Education Planning](#)" that provides a roadmap for the process. On our Web site you can [search over 250 resources](#) nationally, including looking at arts education plans from 31 school districts.

POLICY

Week 3: August 8 – 12, 2011

Day One

Question: What opportunities are there for developing a national arts education policy that can inform state and local policy? How important is it that the arts are part of Common Core Standards and the reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)?

Responders:

Janet Brown – Grantmakers in the Arts, Seattle

Bob Lynch – Americans for the Arts, Washington, DC

Richard Kessler – The Mannes New School of Music, NYC

Day Two

Question: Many contend that arts education advocacy has largely been a failure. Others disagree. Where are the successes? Where will funding come from in the future to implement policy?

Responders:

Narric Rome – Americans for the Arts, Washington, DC

Laurie Schell – formerly of California Alliance for Arts Education

Cyrus Driver – Ford Foundation, NYC

Week #3: August 8 – 12

POLICY

Week Three, Day One

What opportunities are there for developing a national arts education policy that can inform state and local policy? How important is it that the arts are part of Common Core Standards and the reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)?

Janet Brown

Executive Director of Grantmakers in the Arts is past executive director of the South Dakota Alliance for Arts Education, Chair of the Augustana College Performing and Visual Arts Department, an arts lobbyist and a drama teacher. She has a BA in Theatre Education and a Masters in Public Administration.

Sometimes the very ingredients that offered success in one political and economic climate become liabilities or less successful when politics and economics change. That's what's happened in the arts at the federal policy level. Fifty years ago, America was feeling pretty damn good about itself, post WWII boom had occurred, industry was skyrocketing and we were going to the moon. If we could do that, we, as a society, could do anything. This was the federal political outlook on American life in the early 60s. In reality, there was great discrimination towards anybody who wasn't white both in law and in societal mores, women weren't in politics or the workforce, poverty in inner cities and rural areas was acute and schools were segregated. But, the perception was that we were "Camelot" economically and socially on the rise. It was into this environment that the National Endowment for the Arts was born to give us world-class institutions that could compete with the great museums, operas, ballets and symphonies of Europe and Asia.

We built an industry based on this premise with the help of major foundations like Ford who supported infrastructure and gave form and organizational structure to institutions. We focused on specialization, creating training programs for administrators and artists to fill the jobs and carry us forward. We did the same thing in education developing associations for arts teachers with standards and credentials and an entire industry of teaching artists. This was all good. This was professionalizing the field. It was necessary.

But politics and politicians are fickle. Politics follows the rules of physics and the pendulum having swung in one direction, returns to swing equally in the opposite direction. In the 80s, the "arts" no longer were viewed as an opportunity for Americans to rise to a higher level of intellectualism but as elitist, something the average American didn't participate in. (Remember this is perception, not reality.) We had separated "artists" from those individuals in our communities who were making art but not making a living at making art. The arts were no longer bi-

I am convinced that a successful national arts education policy will be one that meets the goals and objectives of the Department of Education...it's not really a national arts education policy but it is a policy where the arts are an integral part of a national education policy.

partisan but perceived by conservative Republicans, for their own political purposes, as liberal and a waste of taxpayer dollars. Politicians competed with each other about who was most “like the average guy or gal.” Populism became a plus, even as economic policies under Reagan began to whittle away at the strength of the American middle class.

In education policy, we became one more special interest group vying for the attention and resources with all other curriculum areas. If I were giving an advocacy lecture, I'd say we focused too much on the “top down” supporters and not enough on the “bottom up” supporters. We never made the case with the US Department of Education or Congress that the arts were as important to an education of a child as learning to read or write. This is where our own battles within the arts community of integration and arts instruction did not serve us well with policy makers. As one Congressional staffer told me recently, “*arts people seem to not be able to come into the policy arena with any clear objectives.*” Part of that is that we couldn't agree among ourselves and there was no clear leadership placing the education agenda above the inside politics of the arts.

Perception and reality get all confused in the political arena. There is a perception that education is a local issue; that policies are determined locally and funds come primarily from local property taxes and state funds. This is also the reality. Well, sort of. The reality is that the federal government through the US Department of Education (DOE) designs education policies and programs that have a huge impact on state and local education decision-makers. Because any attempts to have a real education policy with a national curriculum and control are so unpopular, the USDOE doesn't have the authority granted by Congress, to dictate educational policies. Instead, as with many federal programs, they use the money carrot. The federal government can't force local schools to act a certain way but it can withhold funding if they don't. Or the feds can create new programs and provide huge sums of money for them to incentivize actions at the local level. If No Child Left Behind (NCLB, the Elementary and Secondary School Act) didn't include any funding from the feds to state education departments, do you think anyone would care what the bill had to say?

Where does all this leave us in arts education? We know that we've seen a steady decline since the mid 80s in the numbers of students receiving at least one class in the arts per week. (Read Nick Rabkin's blog posted earlier). We've seen local districts scramble to “teach to the test” as a result of NCLB. Since we have no test to find out how your music class enhanced your math skills, the arts are out in the cold. We now have a new administration that seems to have no greater creative solutions to education than the one that created NCLB. There are no arts incentives for major USDOE

I am convinced that a successful national arts education policy will be one that meets the goals and objectives of the Department of Education and Congressional education committee leadership. In this sense, it's not really a national arts education policy but it is a policy where the arts are an integral part of a national education policy. The argument that every student needs to have art for art sake hasn't and isn't going to work in this climate. Going back to the research of Howard Gardner about how children learn and what keeps kids in school come closer to arguments that policy makers understand. Using the arts as a tool to teach other subjects and experience the world around us in the lower grades and moving into specific arts instruction as a student matures and has developed artistic interest are strategies that have been, and again could be, successful.

Advocacy at the federal level is paramount just as state and local arts advocates must work on the local level. We have to make the arts part of the carrot. To do this, we have to give up industry infighting, play at the 30,000 feet level and change our language from arts education to education. Our partners need to be math, science, physical education, social studies, other curriculum advocates, child advocates and school reformers. Our reach needs to extend to national associations of chief school officers, superintendents, school boards, teachers' unions, associations and accreditation entities.

This is a big and full-time job that will take strategic planning, resources, lobbying efforts and a willingness on the part of all the arts community to say, *"we'll give up our special interest to get our foot in the door."* We, the arts people, might not even be the right people to do this work. We've never played that game at the federal level. Until we do, arts at the local level remain vulnerable, with policies changing every time a supportive administrator or school board member leaves their post.

Week #3: August 8 – 12

POLICY

Week Three, Day One Cont'd...

What opportunities are there for developing a national arts education policy that can inform state and local policy? How important is it that the arts are part of Common Core Standards and the reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)?

Bob Lynch

President / CEO Americans for the Arts

At Americans for the Arts, we see an opportunity to advance national arts education policy by working in a very specific way.

We focus on forging strategic alliances with key leaders in the public and private sectors and on working alongside these allies to educate the decision-makers who have leverage in the national policy arena. We concentrate on giving those decision-makers meaningful research and specific information about the benefits of arts education in an effort to impact and inform future decisions about education policy.

Together, these advocacy efforts (influencing federal policy and building national clout) will help create a strong voice for arts education and a platform for action that engages the many layers of decision-makers, stakeholders and advocates...

This work is informed by the best practice examples surfaced by our national network of state and local advocates and the specific stories they share about the impact of arts education programs on the ground. It is further shaped by the opportunities we create for high-level corporate, philanthropic, and thought leaders to take action personally and speak publicly about the value they see in arts education before new audiences.

All of this work builds the clout that is critical to the success of our decision maker education effort. Without the clout, there will be no change.

At the Federal Level Arts Education Policy

In terms of investment, we advocate for resources to support the arts in the broader education agenda, including issues of equity, improving college and career-readiness, and workforce development. This work includes encouraging the U.S. Department of Education to focus on state and school district fulfillment of regulations already in place that support arts education, as well as working to ensure that the guidelines for new grant programs (e.g., Investing in Innovation, School Improvement Grants, and Promise Neighborhoods) allow the funds to support arts education programs and services.

Among federal policy issues, no other issue stands out as more important than reversing the narrowing of the

curriculum that has taken place since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Americans for the Arts began working to prepare for NCLB reauthorization over five years ago, and we have continued throughout each Congress to work to inform decision-makers about the importance of 1) language in the legislation that would increase the role of the arts as a core academic subject; and 2) appropriations that would allow funds, such as Title I or federal grant programs, to be used for arts instruction and/or professional development. We developed these recommendations through a collaborative planning process, a process through which we have consistently engaged over 80 national organizations. In my view, this process represents the best mechanism for debating, refining, and uniting behind shared policy objectives.

To be truly effective, we need many more organizations to join us in this process and commit to working with the group. This is critical to our future success, and one of my chief areas of focus right now is doing whatever I can to help build this larger national coalition.

Building National Clout for Arts Education

We deliberately collaborate with leaders from many different arts and culture, education, and public and private sector organizations to advance education reform at the national level and in local communities. We interface with a complex web of national, state, and local support entities that advocate for arts education to help develop the leadership that is necessary to strengthen policies and expand resources for arts education.

These efforts focus in three areas: (1) Supporting an advocacy network comprised of national service organizations, state arts and education advocacy organizations, and over 100,000 citizen activists through our [Arts Action Fund](#); (2) Cultivating more than 50 strategic partnerships with organizations representing arts and culture, elected officials, businesses, and policy and funding decision makers; and (3) Engaging in national visibility for the cause of arts education, through efforts such as [Art. Ask for More](#), and the Keep the Arts in Public Schools [Facebook](#) Cause with its more than 1.2 million member network.

The combination creates the capacity of powerful outcomes. Consider, for example, our 2010 National Arts Policy [Roundtable](#) at the Sundance Institute. The dialogue at this meeting, which included officials from the President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities (PCAH) and the U.S. Department of Education, helped to inform the landmark report released by PCAH, *Reinvesting in Arts Education*. At our annual convention, we hosted a special session on the PCAH report and began what will be an ongoing discussion in the field as to how some of the objectives outlined in this report can be realized at the local level.

We take strategic data and case making information like the PCAH report out to decision makers through our broader network of strategic alliances and leadership venues ranging just this summer from the Chautauqua Institute, Aspen Institute, Sundance Institute, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties, League of Cities, National Lieutenant Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, and many others focused on variously the national, state, and local levels. Relentless messaging and a large army of messengers are the keys.

Together, these advocacy efforts (influencing federal policy and building national clout) will help create a

strong voice for arts education and a platform for action that engages the many layers of decision-makers, stakeholders and advocates in making sure that the arts are a robust and vital component of education in every community in America.

Week #3: August 8 – 12

POLICY

Week Three, Day One Cont'd...

What opportunities are there for developing a national arts education policy that can inform state and local policy? How important is it that the arts are part of Common Core Standards and the reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)?

Richard Kessler

I think that the issue of “opportunity” for a national arts education policy is ultimately connected to the larger question of who will lead it, how it will become purely child/student focused, and who will fund it.

I would wager, that at first blush, the notion of a national arts education policy conjures the sort of static, sort of declarative statement of philosophy and principles that have been bouncing around for years. At The Center for Arts Education, we created an [Arts Education Bill of Rights](#). And yes, there's policy in there, but it's more in the realm of the credo document many have come to view as the sum total of policy.

The opportunity for a national agenda is really to be found in the development of a powerful platform that has teeth: one that means what it says and says what it means. I have often found arts and arts education policy writing to be overly friendly, soft, and all too often crafted without connection to other key education organizations, such as the school boards association, teacher unions, national funders, and key think tanks.

What I would really love to see, would be a *living*, substantive policy agenda that *includes* key principles and guiding statements, but is ultimately anchored by a policy platform that is dynamic: a significant series of policy goals that are calibrated and recalibrated to the rapidly changing environment. For many, standards are enough, and lord knows, they are more than enough when it comes to the work required to assemble. But, standards, on their own, are often created from a political perspective, or in other words, overly influenced by one group of practitioners or stakeholders, over another. Even worse, too many districts and educators give lip service to standards, so practically speaking, standards should remain in the realm of instructional practice. Let's not conflate them with an actionable policy agenda.

The opportunity for a national agenda is really to be found in the development of a powerful platform that has teeth: one that means what it says and says what it means. I have often found

arts and arts education policy writing to be overly friendly, soft, and all too often crafted without connection to other key education organizations, such as the school boards association, teacher unions, national funders, and key think tanks.

When I look at the ESEA platforms coming from the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, ASCD, the National Council of the Churches of Christ, just to name a few, I see the types of policy agendas that we should be aiming for. These are agendas that not only speak with power, clarity, and great meaning, but also serve as rallying documents for constituencies.

And in order for this sort of agenda to be living, breathing, vital, it needs the best strategic thinking we can apply to it and not just in its creation, but in making it that living document, designed with critical strategic questions in mind: what goals are short-term, mid-term, long-term? How do you turn a loss into a win? How does the agenda shift to respond to changing environment? How to move to action? And, how does the agenda avoid becoming purely responsive. (N.B, the last two items are ultimately in conflict, a point that speaks to the complexity of this work.)

Without question, ESEA must be part of this agenda. We need much more out of ESEA than we have gotten traditionally. It's great to be listed as a core subject, but in the end, the engine of ESEA must include the arts, and ultimately, ESEA is a categorical funding program for students below the poverty line. We're talking money here folks.

To be happy with a letter from the education secretary reminding principals that the arts are a core subject is the most minimal of starting points.

In all this there is always the question of reach. How much is too much? How is credibility established through the framing of the ask/goal? The opportunity here, I think, is to ask for more. Not less, but more. If the arts education field doesn't frame what's best for kids, without hedging our bets, who will do this for us?

The opportunity is to be bold.

Is the work tough? You bet. Do we have a lot to learn? You bet. Should be we grateful to the leaders like Narric Rome and Heather Noonan who have advanced this work light years beyond where it once was? Absolutely. Does that mean we should be satisfied with where things stand today? I should think not.

I like to think about the work that moved STEM to the forefront of education policy, real policy with real money behind it.

Let's not forget that much of this work was advanced through a broad-based coalition that did not include the arts. And, what happened? The STEM train left the station, with its bags of money and STEM- friendly policy, ultimately stranding the arts at the station, hoping to catch a connection to a train called STEAM.

What could have been different? Well, a place at the table of that STEM coalition and ultimately all we would have wanted would have been a simple clause, not even a full sentence mind you, but a simple clause that opened the door to the arts in the Federal STEM initiatives. Something like: " including the arts."

The opportunities? They are all around us. Look to the Common Core, look to the Opportunity to Learn Movement, look to early childhood, digital learning, and more.

The one thing I learned in creating and working in broad-based coalitions during my tenure at The Center for Arts Education, is that you have to know who you are and what you want, and be willing to let go of some of it in order to be a part of the coalition. These things are fundamental. And naturally you have to be interested and willing in coalition work. It should be part of your identity.

For us in the arts, too often the coalitions are internal to the arts education field. The opportunity is for us to get ourselves together as a field, and begin to make greater headway outside of our field. There's the opportunity.

Anyone want to join?

Week #3: August 8 – 12

POLICY

Week Three, Day One Cont'd...

What opportunities are there for developing a national arts education policy that can inform state and local policy? How important is it that the arts are part of Common Core Standards and the reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)?

Responses to the day's posts:

[andDESIGNmagazine](#) said... (August 8, 2011 8:41 AM)

What if we did what English and Math teachers have done to get the top spots in schools - broaden the perception of our fields?

How English classes are perceived:

1. Reading and writing as basic communication (ESL, reading signs, menus, mail, newspapers, etc.)
2. Reading and writing non-fiction for the purposes of job applications, contracts, technical instructions, etc.
3. Reading and writing for recreation and pleasure (summer reading, popular fiction, etc.)
4. Reading and writing poetry and great literature.

Here are the counterparts in the arts:

1. Basic communication visually, aurally, kinesthetically (maps, photos, graphs, acoustics, physical fitness and wellness).
2. Applied skills in visual design, acoustics, health and wellness, etc. (design, recording industry, mass media, etc.)
3. Cultural knowledge (popular culture, mass media, folk arts, crafts, etc.)
4. The arts (dance, fine art, music performance, opera, etc.)

The arts focus mainly on number 4. If English teachers focused on number 4 on their list they would be electives in the schools as well. The way to gain a foothold in the schools is to focus on (1) basic communication and (2) application skills of visual literacy, aural communication, and kinesthetics which address the question "What should EVERY student know and be able to do?"

<http://andDESIGNmagazine.blogspot.com>

Week #3: August 8 – 12

POLICY

Week Three, Day Two

Many contend that arts education advocacy has largely been a failure. Others disagree. Where are the successes? Where will funding come from in the future to implement policy?

Narric Rome

Senior Director for Federal Affairs and Arts Education, Americans for the Arts

Not long into my tenure at the U.S. Department of Education during the Clinton administration, I came to understand the limits of what the federal government can do for K-12 education. At the time, the Department boosted funding to support the hiring of 100,000 new teachers and the launch of a new national after-school initiative, an initiative that is now a \$1.1 billion program. Arts teachers were among the 100,000 new hires and many of the after-school programs embraced the arts. Federal investment had an important impact. But many arts education advocates would not rank these two accomplishments as major successes. Why? Because a new arts teacher and a new arts after-school program did not appear in every school in every community.

“Successful advocacy projects must simultaneously pursue opportunities at the local, state, and federal level, as well as across governmental institutions.”

We all need to remember that the federal share in total education spending is only 11 cents on the dollar. The remaining funds come from state and local sources. Which brings me to federal policy.

The single most powerful provision in federal education law benefitting arts education is the designation of the arts as a “core academic subject” in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This allows schools to use federal funds to support arts teachers, arts programs, and services provided by local cultural organizations. Even more importantly, the designation also sends an essential policy signal. It affirms the value of the arts as an area of instruction. This is why Americans for the Arts, and our national advocacy partners, have worked so hard to protect this designation from being weakened or removed.

It appears to me that the secret to being effective lies in vertically integrating our federal, state, and local advocacy strategies. It's a complex web of jurisdictions and policy inputs that determine whether and how a public school student in a given school gets formal training in, and through, the arts. We cannot hope to make change for every public school student unless we begin to work to impact the system as a whole. Pushing the lever on federal policy---while critical---in and of itself is not enough. **We have to concentrate on impacting federal policy that can impact state administration that can in turn affect local implementation.**

Federal

Americans for the Arts hosts more than 80 national arts and arts education groups at the annual Arts Advocacy Day as part of the ongoing effort to influence K-12 federal education legislation. We are working in a narrow space. NCLB (otherwise known as the Elementary & Secondary Education Act, or ESEA) became law in early 2002, and there hasn't been a major K-12 education law passed since then—just short-term grant opportunities funded through appropriations bills. Reauthorization of ESEA, which is now several years beyond its intended shelf life, has become that piece of legislation always “expected” to be considered, but which fails to be because of Congressional dysfunction and the electoral calendar.

Our federal advocacy opportunities, however, are much larger than ESEA reauthorization. Recently, the White House and U.S. Department of Education have taken a number of important, and independent, steps to advance arts education. I believe that the [report](#) recently issued by the President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities represents the broadest and most detailed statement of support for arts education from any administration in recent history. The President and First Lady have hosted a half dozen arts education events and the White House recently highlighted the work of 14 arts education “Champions of Change” on its [web site](#).

This year, the U.S. Department of Education is spending more on direct arts education projects than ever before through the Investing in Innovation and the Arts in Education programs. In early 2012 the Department will release the full results of the Fast Response Survey System [report](#)—the most comprehensive look at the status of arts education in our nation's public schools since 1999. At Americans for the Arts we continue to work to convince the Department of Education to include measures of the arts in their national research efforts and in their school turnaround efforts. (We think that arts education can lead school turnaround through individual student turnaround.) We continue to ask for an end to the narrowing of the curriculum, for less of an emphasis on summative testing and for the use of multiple measures to gauge student achievement.

We work with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) leaders to find ways to bring in the arts and concentrate on strategic alliances to make it happen, alliances like our work with the American Association of School Administrators and The Conference Board on research like the [Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce?](#) report.

But all of this work—if confined only to the federal level—will not be enough to get where we need to go. As articulated by the Stanford Social Innovation Review in a recent [article](#) on how foundations, and others, can evaluate advocacy, “Successful advocacy projects must simultaneously pursue opportunities at the local, state, and federal level, as well as across governmental institutions.”

State Local

That's why we have been so focused on building a state and local advocacy network to integrate with our federal network. In 2009 we took an important step forward when the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network joined our State Arts Action [Network](#). Together these 73 organizations reach arts education leaders and advocates in 47 states. Our Arts Education Council and [Network](#) connects the statewide work to the local level, to decision-makers, community organizations, and the general public. It was the combined effort and impact of this federal, state, and local nexus that recently helped advocates in [Pasco](#)

[County, FL](#), [Transylvania, NC](#) and [San Diego, CA](#) win their battles to keep arts education alive even as other communities underwent grueling budget cuts.

Investing in Change

The challenge, not surprisingly, is sustaining financial support for this work. Many funders mistakenly equate advocacy with partisan lobbying—and shy away from supporting work that could help advance shared public policy goals. I think that our field could and should do a better job of helping funders overcome this barrier, explaining why advocacy is needed and why as decision-maker education it is fundamentally different from lobbying. As the seminal 2008 [report](#) from The Atlantic Philanthropies stated, “...funding advocacy too often is the philanthropic road not taken, yet it is a road most likely to lead to the kind of lasting change that philanthropy has long sought through other kinds of grants.”

“...funding advocacy too often is the philanthropic road not taken, yet it is a road most likely to lead to the kind of lasting change that philanthropy has long sought through other kinds of grants.”

We need our private sector partners who care about arts education to support advocacy for the issue as strongly as their colleagues in the larger education arena support advocacy on behalf of education reform. Arts education will not simply materialize in every school— it will emerge when thoughtful and directed resources at the federal, state and local levels have been aligned to make it possible.

I hope we can work together to realize this vision.

Week #3: August 8 – 12

POLICY

Week Three, Day Two Cont'd...

Many contend that arts education advocacy has largely been a failure. Others disagree. Where are the successes? Where will funding come from in the future to implement policy?

Laurie Schell

Former executive director of the California Alliance for Arts Education. During her tenure at the Alliance, the organization coordinated a successful campaign to secure over \$100 million in state funding for arts education, created responsive local strategies to advance policy change at the local level, fostered enduring partnerships with key statewide parent, arts, and education agencies, developed a new governance structure with a Policy Council and governing Board, and mobilized a vast constituency around budgetary and legislative issues of critical importance for arts education.

Advocacy. The A-word. The word everyone loves to hate. The slippery word that has multiple meanings, depending on whether you're talking to a funder or the IRS, to an elected official or a concerned citizen. The word that no one knows how to measure effectively. The word that elicits a groan in polite company, only one step removed from another unfairly tainted word: lobbyist.

Yet for my money, we would not have achieved – or been able to hold ground— on any of the arts education policy and budgetary (however fleeting) gains in California of the past 5 years without good, old-fashioned advocacy work. And widespread systemic change in education—including the arts-- cannot happen without changes in public policy. But policy doesn't live only in Washington or Sacramento these days; it lives in every one of our communities and school districts. The trick is in the implementation-- getting the policies to align and be mutually supportive at all levels.

We have to stop treating advocacy like a third-cousin-twice-removed who isn't always welcome at family gatherings. It doesn't work if you believe it's someone else's job.

Policy change is the result of a multi-layered, iterative process. Progress is measured not only by outcomes such as more students have access to arts education, but also by the degree of constituent engagement and the depth and quality of conversations across a broad spectrum of stakeholders and policymakers. Looking back on recent arts education policy-related events in California, the most notable achievement might be the historic 2006 allocation of \$105 million in ongoing categorical funds and one-time funding of \$500 million. No less significant is the defeat—twice—of a bill that threatens to dilute arts graduation requirements with the addition of a new career technical education requirement. This year, the California Alliance is working to defeat this bill for the third time, while also advancing a new bill that promotes creativity and innovation in California schools. Consistent message, multiple fronts. Big victories, small ones. It's all important.

The external environment has always been the wild card. Were it not for the current state and national economic and political firestorms, I am convinced the impact of the ongoing categorical funds would be now be visible and measurable; and we would be well on our way to creating a stronger accountability mechanism for California's existing arts education policies. Although policymakers (and the public!) view the arts positively, there is a gap between existing policy and accountability for arts education in California-- what my colleague Sandra Ruppert calls a "policy paradox." This trend toward local control is the real culprit here, and is going to make it increasingly difficult to solve the access and equity issues of arts education through national and state policy alone.

In California this means mounting advocacy efforts in more than 1,000 school districts. The California Alliance's theory of action is a dual "top-down/bottom-up" approach that addresses distinct perspectives: to continue to cultivate decision-makers, legislators and thought leaders at "the top" while creating regional advocacy coalitions at the grassroots "bottom" to organize and advocate for policy change at both the local and state level. Combining the approaches of the environmental movement and MoveOn.org. High touch and high tech.

But really, the main point I want to make is we have to stop treating advocacy like a third-cousin-twice-removed who isn't always welcome at family gatherings. It doesn't work if you believe it's someone else's job.

On balance, though, we have seen great progress in arts education advocacy, as measured by expansion and sophistication in constituent engagement. We know from colleagues in other fields that it can take time, measured in years, if not decades, to see impact. We know also that advocacy works best when the message is consistent, the thinking is visionary and strategic, the work is focused and coordinated, and above all, connected to the students' well-being at its core.

Week #3: August 8 – 12

POLICY

Week Three, Day Two Cont'd...

Many contend that arts education advocacy has largely been a failure. Others disagree. Where are the successes? Where will funding come from in the future to implement policy?

Cyrus Driver

Director, Program Learning and Innovation, Ford Foundation

Disclaimer at the author's request: 'The opinions expressed here are those solely of Cyrus Driver.'

Arts education advocates must learn how to work more effectively in the center of this murky, messy terrain that is educational policy writ large.

I offer a few observations on arts education policy from my vantage point as a former funder of projects to scale-up arts integration in cities, a current board member of the New York Center for Arts Education, and a public school parent. My point is pretty simple here – arts education policy is in fact *educational* policy, and those of us who are committed to arts education must be capable of working effectively in the educational policy space, to become part of the struggle for educational equity more generally, and to assure that arts learning is at the core of how

the education field envisions 21st century schooling.

We know much about the types of policies that would further high quality arts education and we see some of these enacted in various places and various times. These include policies enabling essential resources – enough arts teachers, supplies, time in the school day, professional development to plan integration, funds to engage teaching artists, public resources for CBO's/arts organizations to train teaching artists and facilitate partnerships etc. We also see policies on the books, if not enforced, to assure accountability, including minimum expectations around time (e.g., 'minutes per week'), staffing etc. Arts education policies can also be testing policies, as in the performance-based assessments used in various states and locales over the years (e.g., Rhode Island).

All of these— whether teacher training, professional development, planning time, length of school day and funding – are matters squarely of educational policy writ large. Moreover, the state of arts education policies at local, state and national levels show us the extent to which policymakers' are committed to educational equity, and thereby how they choose to define educational quality, for different groups of students. We need only compare wealthy suburbs or private schools and their myriad arts programs with big city public schools that often have *no* arts whatsoever to recognize how arts education provision is a barometer of privilege as well as public will for equity.

The fight for arts education in our cities and rural communities – our main order of concern – should be viewed as core to the struggle for educational equity as a whole, and so arts education advocates need to effectively participate in this larger struggle. To date, we have largely tried to go it alone, and as a result we have stayed on the margins of educational policy. To become more of a partner in this broader struggle, we first need to strengthen capacities to be effective *education* advocates, including research capacity to document inequities and system failures, and policy development that directly ties into core equity issues of the day, whether school finance, teacher quality, extended school day or student assessments. We also must be more capable of building coalitions and partnerships with other educational advocates, including the investments of time needed to build relationships and to develop a shared language and platform for reform. New York's Center for Arts Education (CAE) has done brilliant work to build such relationships with a wide range of allies, from the teachers union and administrators' association to parent and community organizing groups to city council members. These groups have helped show CAE what it takes to shape educational policy more generally, and built CAE's political acumen to pick the right battles. It also means understanding how to navigate multiple sources of power, from policy elites, funders and business leaders to parents, as Big Thought has done so successfully in Dallas, leading to policies to restore arts teachers in every Dallas public school in 2008, for the first time in 30 years. Finally, it means in fact *participating* in the rugged politics and exercises in political power that define educational policy.

Arts education advocates, however, need not give up core identity – what we bring to the table is a broader vision of education that evokes the centrality of student experience, imagination, creativity, and voice to the process of learning. Our work helps rekindle more democratic and humanistic purposes of public education as opposed to the almost singular emphasis around economic concerns. From CAE's work and others', it is clear that this perspective is what excites our allies, what they feel is often lacking in policy debates, and what draws them to ally with groups like CAE. Moreover, high quality arts education programs provide real-world examples for anyone concerned about public education about what's possible and desirable, informing a much-needed, broader vision of 21st century education.

But, to succeed in realizing this vision, arts education advocates must learn how to work more effectively in the center of this murky, messy terrain that is educational policy writ large, not go it alone as much, and without the clout to shape policy. We will need to build relationships, forge new common ground and shared language, learn myriad educational policy inside and out and ultimately partner with other equity advocates, unions, community organizations, supportive policymakers, school system and business leaders to weave a perspective on arts education into all forms of relevant education policy. As a friend once said to me, *'if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together!'*

Week #3: August 8 – 12

POLICY

Week Three, Day Two Cont'd...

Barry and Julie's Follow Up Questions to the Third Week's Blog Posts

1. What would a national policy on arts education look like? What provisions would it ideally contain? How do we insure (as Richard suggests) it have "teeth" to it?
2. How we can represent all of the myriad voices, needs, and agendas out there on a national level with standards and a policy agenda? Is it possible for the field to begin by putting forward a few key tenets that we can more easily share as part of a policy message?

Bob Lynch

In pondering Barry's reflection questions, I immediately think of the Arts Education Working Group. Here is how this coalition is responding to Barry's questions:

The Arts Education Working Group, a coalition of national arts and arts education advocacy organizations, has written a set of [legislative recommendations for thereauthorizations of NCLB](#). The coalition continues to work with House and Senate committee staff to incorporate the following recommendations into the reauthorization drafts:

- Retain the Arts in the Definition of Core Academic Subjects of Learning
- Require Annual State Reports on Student Access to Core Academic Subjects
- Improve National Data Collection and Research in Arts Education
- Reauthorize the Arts in Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education

Americans for the Arts has also joined peer efforts in the larger education policy arena, such as signing onto the [Broader, Bolder Approach to Education](#) statement, which details the need for educational policy to address economic inequalities and to reconsider the parameters of the school day in order to ensure student success. Here's an excerpt from their website:

"The time has come for U.S. policy makers to rethink their assumptions and adopt a *broader, bolder approach for education*...The new approach recognizes the centrality of formal schooling, but it also recognizes the importance of high-quality early childhood and pre-school programs, after-school and summer programs, and programs that develop parents' capacity to support their children's education. It seeks to build working relationships between schools and surrounding community institutions..."

<http://www.bolderapproach.org/index.php?id=01>

The Arts Education Working Group invites state and local organizations to join the efforts to create a broad, bold national education policy by signing-on to a statement in support of arts education: [Arts Education: Creating Student Success in School Work and Life](#).

This 2010 paper is an update of the original unified statement that the coalition created in 2007, which was endorsed by more than 60 national organizations, representing a cross-section of stakeholders in federal education policy, including teachers, parents, administrators, schools, education policymakers, corporations, artists, and arts and community based institutions. The statement has been refreshed to reflect new research and policy.

If you would like to add your organization's name to those already supporting **this unified statement**, please email Kristen Engebretsen, Arts Education Program Coordinator at Americans for the Arts, kengebretsen@artsusa.org. Visit the [website](#) to see the organizations who have currently signed on in support of the unified statement.

3. As Richard asked: Who will lead the effort to try to develop a consensus national arts education policy that focuses on the child / student; how might that best be pursued; and how will such an effort be funded? And we might add: When will that happen?

4. How do we recognize the local nature of arts education, but, as Janet advised, fly at the 30,000 foot level and insinuate ourselves deeply into the wider education matrix and debates?

5. As Bob noted, Americans for the Arts has built the framework for a national arts education lobbying effort. But as Narric noted, the federal support is a small percentage of overall funding. How do we grow that infrastructure, integrate it vertically and apply it locally (as Narric suggests) in the face of continuing threats to arts advocacy efforts as typified by the plight of the New York State Alliance for Arts Education, which as reported Monday in the New York Times, is struggling to stay afloat? *"The arts education alliance's some 100 members are struggling to pay dues of \$35 to \$250. 'Paying membership dues to support advocacy or making payroll — that decision doesn't even get considered',"* said Jeremy Johannesen, its executive director.

6. In that same New York Times article, Robert W. Wilson, a former New York City Opera chairman who now serves on the Metropolitan Opera board, is quoted as saying: *"I've never supported any of these groups (advocacy), and I've never seen any reason to do so. I would rather support the arts organizations themselves."* How do we deal with this attitude of dismissing advocacy efforts within our own ranks, and how prevalent and big a problem might that be for us?

Richard Kessler

Okay, where do I start? First, it really bugged me the Robin's piece in The Times asserted a false dichotomy, that advocacy organizations must be different from presenting/performing organizations. It's one or the other. Well, I am not so sure about that. Particularly in arts ed, I think there will be more and more emerge that do both. In fact, there's a lot to aspire to in that hybrid model, not the least of which is that by providing advocacy/policy and programs, you're work in advocacy/policy is informed by actual practice. I also think

that the field has been too hung up on the notion that you have to be a membership association in order to advocate. Here the problem is that the association's primary interest is in its membership. When we considered becoming a membership association at The Center for Arts Education, we ultimately dropped the idea, after we asked the question of who our primary constituent was. The answer: the children. Funny enough, when the NYC Department of Education was trying to minimize some of CAE's public criticism, they actually accused CAE of being a pawn for the arts organizations who were our members. It would be better to allow form to follow function, rather than insisting on certain organizational models just because that's the way it's been done.

I do think that quote by Robert Wilson underscores a problem to be addressed. It is short sighted of donors to only support organizations providing direct service or presentation/production. If a funder is interested in arts education, it is critical that they recognize the need for a variety of support/organizations. This is true for institutional and individual funders. Perhaps this is an area that Americans for the Arts might want to take on, in terms of a national campaign to educate donors and funders as to the importance of advocacy?

I really think this is an area that institutional funders need to support, and in turn, their support could lead to more broad-based support of advocacy/policy. Really, isn't it obvious, with all the challenges, that we need real advocacy and policy work?

Narric Rome

Furthering advocacy in the face of this adversity takes educating of funders, and I would again highlight the article mentioned in my blog, a 2008 [report](#) from The Atlantic Philanthropies that states:

"...funding advocacy too often is the philanthropic road not taken, yet it is a road most likely to lead to the kind of lasting change that philanthropy has long sought through other kinds of grants."

Funders in the larger educational field have started to fund advocacy (see the article [Behind Grass Roots School Advocacy, Bill Gates.](#)) If we want the same thing in arts education, we need to begin educating our own funders about the importance of advocacy work.

Unfortunately, it sounds like the gentleman quoted in the New York Times article is not informed about this possibility of philanthropy creating systemic change. This demonstrates that much of advocacy work is simply educating decision-makers and communicating our message well.

If we want to keep programs around like the ones at the Metropolitan Opera, someone has to do the work of creating policy to protect them because (and I quote my colleague Richard Kessler here) "Programs do not equal policy." And someone also has to do the work of advocating for funds that will ensure the program's existence.

I'll leave you with this thought:

*"Somebody should do something about it
How hard could it be
Somebody should do something about it
Maybe that someone is me"*

—Kenny Rogers

7. If, as Laurie points out, the battles are continuing to gravitate down to the local school districts where the real decision making is at play, how are we ever going to be able to organize and manage the effort, and who will pay for that effort say in California with 1000 school districts? Does this reality virtually insure an inequity problem that we will likely never overcome, and what are the implications for that?

8. How do we shift emphasis and gears to embrace Cyrus' observation (echoed by Janet) that: *"arts education policy is in fact educational policy, and those of us who are committed to arts education must be capable of working effectively in the educational policy space, to become part of the struggle for educational equity more generally, and to assure that arts learning is at the core of how the education field envisions 21st century schooling."* Who needs to be at the table with us, and how do we encourage them to join the effort, or conversely, how do we get invitations to sit at their tables?

RESEARCH

Week 4: August 15 – 19, 2011

Day One

Question: How does the recent report from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities help to inform the public debate on arts education? What other new research data is out there (FRSS, NEA, WESTAF etc).

Responders:

Sandra Ruppert – Arts Education Partnership, Washington, DC

Narric Rome – Americans for the Arts, Washington, DC

Note: Laurie Lock, (Senior Director of Programs and Policy, VH1 Save the Music) was scheduled, but unable to participate in addressing this question on the blog.

Day Two

Question: We have argued for a long time that the arts teach the necessary 21st Century skills our students need to be globally competitive – that deeper learning in the arts delivers the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in a world that is changing at an unprecedented pace, but what research or data do we have to back up those claims? In what ways can we demonstrate and verify that it does prepare our kids for the future? Along the same lines, what areas of research do we need to shore up?

Responders:

Chris Shearer – The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Bernie Trilling – 21st century learning expert, author

Larry Scripp – New England Conservatory

Ayanna Hudson – Arts for All, Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Week #4: August 15 – 19

RESEARCH

Week Four, Day One

How does the recent report from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities help to inform the public debate on arts education? What other new research data is out there (FRSS, NEA, WESTAF etc).

Sandra Ruppert

Director of the Arts Education Partnership (AEP)

In May, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (also known as PCAH) released at the Arts Education Partnership's Spring 2011 National Forum a major report entitled, *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools*. Since its release, the report has received considerable media attention. It's also been the focus of meetings with White House staff, the President and the First Lady. Last month, the report served as the catalyst for a White House-sponsored roundtable discussion that honored leaders in arts education who are "Champions of Change."

Most definitions of arts integration suffer from a syndrome I call TMW – Too Many Words. These tend to be definitions laden with qualifiers and caveats. We actually do a better job talking about what arts integration *isn't* than what it is (e.g. "it *isn't* about signing your ABC's...").

All of this activity is consistent with the PCAH's mission, which is to advise the White House on cultural issues. President Ronald Reagan created the Committee by Executive Order in 1982. He designated the First Lady to serve as the Honorary Chair of the Committee, which is composed of prominent public and private citizens. *Reinvesting in Arts Education* is designed to further President Obama's Platform in Support of the Arts, in which he argued as a candidate in 2008 for a reinvestment in arts education.

I believe the issuance of this report represents a pivotal moment for our field of arts education, one in which we have a rare opportunity to elevate the conversation about the role of the arts in education policy and practice. We can shape the public debate if – and this is a BIG if – we can come together around some common messages.

Since the release, I've been asked to speak to various arts and education groups about the report and its findings. I've noticed that a lot of people are aware of the report, but most haven't read more than a few snippets of it. (In fairness to overworked people everywhere, it does run 76 pages with appendices.) What's in or not in the report and what its key messages are remain open to interpretation, based more on a set of impressions than on a close reading of the content. This has helped stir up the perennial hornet's nest of divisive issues that stubbornly persist no matter how much we chant the "both/and, not either/or" mantra. The

list is familiar. Standards-based sequential arts instruction versus arts integration. Teaching artists versus arts specialists. Intrinsic benefits versus instrumental benefits. And so on.

Even if these distinctions were helpful in advancing the field, they will not help to inform the more public conversation about arts education. In fact, to many people outside of our field, these debates sound like a lot of noise. That point was driven home to me again recently when in my home state of Colorado the head of a well-regarded community foundation that supports arts and cultural projects flatly stated that the foundation didn't invest in arts education because they couldn't "make any sense out of it."

Reinvesting in Arts Education has the potential to be a highly effective tool for "sense-making" with a wider audience if we can put aside for the moment the issues that confound us and focus instead on the issues that confront us. Are there aspects of the report on which we can all agree? The answer is yes; there are many points of agreement. Here are "five easy pieces" of prose or text taken directly from the report for which a strong consensus already exists and which we can use to frame our conversations.

1. "Reinvesting in Arts Education." Let's start with the title. A publication issued by an influential advisory committee to the White House with the words reinvesting in arts education in the title ought to be something we can all get behind. Some have argued even using the word "reinvestment" in these economic conditions suggests a certain naiveté. But the title also refers to investing in strategies that build the human and social capital that are at least as important as financial capital in promoting and sustaining any serious change effort. As one example, AEP, in partnership with the President's Committee, has published a new brochure that identifies 15 no-cost or low-cost strategies that principals can use to increase arts education in their schools. The strategies are drawn from real examples gathered from highly-effective principals from around the country.

2. "Two themes emerged...about the provision and distribution of arts education." The result of 18 months of investigation led to two big "a-ha's" that should come as no surprise. First, when it comes to the *provision* of arts education, there is a wide range and diversity of approaches – a "patchwork of approaches," to quote the report. Second, there exists at present serious inequities in the *distribution* of arts education. These conclusions are consistent with the findings from other studies conducted during the last several years and the PCAH report does a good job in making its case. We may not be able to agree on the solutions to these conditions as offered in the report, but we should be able to agree on the basic premises and use them as context for our conversations with the public.

3. "The arts are not flowers but a wrench." This statement appears in the Executive Summary of the report on the PCAH website. They are eight simple words that convey an immediate and powerful image. Yes, we could invoke our "both/and" rule, but it would be so much more effective if we focused instead on the wrench part of the equation. The arts are a tool – a wrench -- that can help students succeed, enhance teacher effectiveness, transform schools, and strengthen communities. And the PCAH report does a credible and accurate job summarizing the evidence-based research that supports these findings.

4. “Develop the field of arts integration.” This is second of the report’s five recommendations. Earlier blog posts have discussed some of the common barriers to developing the field of arts integration, including a lack of time, resources and commitment. To this list, I would add a lack of clarity about what arts integration is as a significant barrier. To many outside our field the concept of arts integration is not well understood. And we don’t make things any easier with our definitions. Most definitions of arts integration suffer from a syndrome I call TMW – Too Many Words. These tend to be definitions laden with qualifiers and caveats. We actually do a better job talking about what arts integration isn’t than what it is (e.g. “it isn’t about signing your ABC’s...”).

We – the arts education field – need to come up with a common straightforward definition of arts integration if we ever hope to get a real conversation started with the public. Here’s my less than perfect stab at it, cobbled together from various existing definitions:

Arts integration is instruction that integrates content and skills from the arts with other core subjects to increase knowledge in both areas.

Arts integration is instruction that integrates content and skills from the arts with other core subjects to increase knowledge in both areas.

I think my definition leaves much room for improvement. So here is my challenge to readers of this blog: Complete the following sentence in 25 words or less: “Arts integration is” To the individual who comes up with the best definition, AEP will present him or her with one of our highly coveted and always useful AEP grocery-shopping bags!

Why is having a simple common definition so important? Because the reality is the arts integration ship has already sailed. Yet too many of us are still arguing at the shore over who should be the Skipper, when we should be onboard leading the way forward. I was reminded of arts integration’s resonance a few weeks ago when I was invited to be a presenter on an art integration webinar hosted by the publication *Education Week*. A total of 2,143 people registered for the webinar and 718 attended the online session, with hundreds more viewing the archived recording on the *Education Week* website. More than 400 questions were submitted in advance or during the webinar. These numbers make it clear that a much wider education audience than we previously believed existed is interested in learning more about arts integration.

5. “Widen the focus of evidence gathering.” This is the last of the report’s five recommendations. Yet to us at AEP, it is one of the most important for our work. Yes, we need to widen the focus of evidence gathering to include more and better research that documents the contribution that learning in and through the arts makes to addressing some of education’s biggest challenges – problems such as reducing dropout rates and increasing rates of high school graduation, college going and college completion. But we also need a “one-stop shop” where access to that research and other high quality studies is readily available in a form that is useful to us and to the public. To address that need, AEP will launch later this year *ArtsEdSearch*, a comprehensive online clearinghouse of arts education research and policy. Fulfilling a vision for arts education research in the 21st century, *ArtsEdSearch* will provide user-friendly summaries of key research findings, point

to areas where additional research is needed, and identify strategic policy implications based on the existing research.

These five “points of agreement” represent just a few areas of consensus that can be drawn from the PCAH report. What are some other points of agreement in the report that we can use to leverage the public conversation about arts education?

Week #4: August 15 – 19

RESEARCH

Week Four, Day One Cont'd...

How does the recent report from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities help to inform the public debate on arts education? What other new research data is out there (FRSS, NEA, WESTAF etc).

Narric Rome

Senior Director for Federal Affairs and Arts Education, Americans for the Arts

We have more arts education research available to us than ever before. That statement alone probably needs to be researched more fully, but it certainly feels that way.

Last week I mentioned the President's Committee report in a post on this blog last week as the, "most detailed statement of support for arts education from any administration in recent history." In terms of content, the PCAH report touches on all areas of arts education topics which I think is one of its' strengths. It includes research, examples of programs and coverage of the many benefits accrued to an education in and through the arts. Because of its summative nature it can serve as a key influencing document for arts education advocates to work with other education leaders to consider strengthening their arts program.

While we most certainly need to find better national research, we also need to do a better job of translating and adapting what we have into everyday use before school boards, principals and superintendents.

In addition to the PCAH report there are several other new sources of information as well that have caught my eye. Off the top of my head I'm thinking of:

1. The federal "First Look" that previews the full Fast Response Survey System in Arts Education report expected in January 2012. The last time this study was conducted was in 1999, and it was published just after No Child Left Behind was signed into law - so it wasn't available to inform policy makers then. At the rate the next revision of federal education policy appears to be taking place I think we'll have the FRSS study to aid our efforts.
2. I was excited when Westaf finalized the "Statewide Arts Education Assessment" (2010) on the status of arts education in Idaho, Montana, Utah and Wyoming. The state arts agencies of these four western states worked with their state education departments to develop a study that was affordable and a project within the staff resources as well. This report fills a greatly needed gap in the national picture of arts education access.
3. The National Endowment for the Arts has continued their Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, which provides helpful context for the changing way citizens engage in the arts. The NEA also had the foresight to

support further study of the survey data specific to arts education by commissioning Nick Rabkin and Eric Hedberg at the University of Chicago to delve into the data further. They show that “long-term declines in Americans’ reported rates of arts learning align with a period in which arts education has been widely acknowledged as devalued in the public school system. Nor are the declines distributed equally across all racial and ethnic groups.”

Now the intent of the question posed by Barry and Julie was to discuss the issue of research and “help to inform public debate on arts education.” I spend most of my time advocating for more quality arts education research at all levels. But I’ve also found that there are many pieces of arts education that remain untapped for contributing to the public debate. The public debate does not necessarily take place on a campus, in a think tank or include well-informed participants. In order to contribute to the public debate we have to provide information that will be USED by those engaging in the public debate. If they don’t read it, they can’t use it. So I believe that while we most certainly need to find better national research, we also need to do a better job of translating and adapting what we have into everyday use before school boards, principals and superintendents.

Week #4: August 15 – 19

RESEARCH

Week Four, Day Two

We have argued for a long time that the arts teach the necessary 21st Century skills our students need to be globally competitive – that deeper learning in the arts delivers the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in a world that is changing at an unprecedented pace, but what research or data do we have to back up those claims? In what ways can we demonstrate and verify that it does prepare our kids for the future? Along the same lines, what areas of research do we need to shore up?

Chris Shearer

Education Program Officer, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Past associate executive director of the National Geographic Society Education Foundation, former Secretary of the Board of Washington Grantmakers, and the son of a visual artist. He has a BA in English Literature and Biology and an MA in English, both from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Let me speak first as an education reformer who aspires to see this nation provide a truly “elite” education for all American schoolchildren. We know that the Arts are a vital element in a quality education.

We see Arts education in highly selective private and public high schools. We see it in top-tier higher education institutions. We see it in affluent communities. We see as a hallmark of national pride and success. So, at some prima facie level, a look at what educationally elite institutions provide their charges leads us to claim that Arts education is a must.

We might also simply trust the personal decisions made for their children by our most advantaged and affluent parents. US Education Secretary Arne Duncan has ensured that his own children get an arts-infused education. Consummate power-broker, Obama insider, and Chicago Mayor, Rahm Emanuel was trained as a ballet dancer.

After they are done crushing us on standardized international achievement tests, other nations come to the US to ask us how to better inject creativity into their schools. The oft-referenced “secret sauce” of the American economy is that our workers are innovative and creative in a way that allows us to stay ahead of the hard-working, lower-paid global pack.

It is less attractive, more risky, and more difficult to support research than to simply offer a new program. Research requires a different kind of expertise. And research may take quite a long time to pan out. Moreover, the field may not agree on shared measures or, indeed, any perceived new accountability. But...without research the field cannot adequately defend itself, cannot find a toehold for expansion, and has too few ways to discuss impact and improvement.

Also, many “next century skills” groups agree that creativity is a vital element of schooling. Organizations such as the Partnership for 21st Century Skills--created by the nation’s leading tech businesses--make it a hallmark of their reform model.

We see it in what elite organizations already offer, we see demand for it among our global competitors, and we see consensus for it as a key element of “next-gen” school reform.

All that said, let me now speak as a cold-hearted policy wonk. Without at least some research base, Arts Education advocates are at risk of being branded as zealots who rely solely on their own convictions. Research on design, effectiveness, impact, and scale is important for at least four reasons:

- Without it, Arts is an easy target for the classic question used by overwhelmed policymakers and leaders. **“Got any evidence?”** they ask? If the answer is **“No,”** the conversation defaults to **“Come back later when you can prove your case.”**
- Without it, even the most committed reformer is at risk of re/allocating resources to well-intentioned but ineffective educational schemes that may waste the time and energy of teachers and students alike.
- Without it, no program can get to scale. Arts Education may languish in the sphere of reforms that reach few kids via programs that are “precious exceptions” to the norm. It may never jump the innovation gulf into reaching large numbers of systems and students.
- Without research, even successful Arts Ed programs may stagnate in the educational status quo. Without rigorous reflection on successes and challenges, programs may fail to continuously improve in a time of rapid demographic, technological, financial, and global change.

So, if research is essential to advocacy, quality, scale, and innovation, what kind of research do we need? Typically, reforms should be judged based at least in part on their own claims.

Let’s ask if Arts Education programs do, in fact, promote better achievement in such deeper learning skills as critical thinking, reflection and metacognition, and communication. Do they foster creativity? Do they--say, in the performing arts--actually teach teamwork and collaboration?

Evaluation could be based in analysis of whether or not Arts Education programs are designed toward these impacts. Do they provide rich access to such learning opportunities? Do they result in better student achievement on valid and reliable measures?

It would help to develop a commonly agreed-upon study agenda and promote it to researchers in academia and private institutions. Strong tests should be identified that measure the outcomes the community itself is looking for.

Practically speaking, reforms are also judged against current needs. In a competitive and under-resourced school system, reform agendas must often demonstrate that they have a positive impact on the “Three Rs.”

Research could determine if students who participate in Arts Education do better than their peers on common assessments of reading comprehension, writing and communication, and applied mathematics. Research might measure a variety of Arts programs against common measures of basic educational achievement.

One area I think gets overlooked is student engagement. Students who are deeply engaged in their work will spend far more time on their academic projects. I suspect that Arts could be well-correlated with student satisfaction, time on task, persistence, learning-to-learn, and even drop-out prevention. Research backing this up would go a long way to making a stronger case for Arts Education.

At the same time, I would caution educational reformers not to hang themselves with their own research rope. It is not often wise to set the evidence bar higher for your programs than the state of the art can measure or than other programs are held accountable to.

Much research of even successful programs shows a “no-effect” finding. Far too much high-end research is conducted inside an artificial construct so that every factor can be controlled--robbing it of real-world relevance. And, in education, research typically shows only small rates of improvement. Our sector does not typically have findings such as ***“hand washing by surgeons reduces fatalities by thirty-fold.”***

The primary recommendation I have is to support more research and to communicate a common research agenda--and its results--more deliberately.

It is less attractive, more risky, and more difficult to support research than to simply offer a new program. Research requires a different kind of expertise. And research may take quite a long time to pan out. Moreover, the field may not agree on shared measures or, indeed, any perceived new accountability. But, the aggregated decisions by institutions and funders not to pursue better research leads to a sort of reverse tragedy of the commons. Without research the field cannot adequately defend itself, cannot find a toehold for expansion, and has too few ways to discuss impact and improvement.

Week #4: August 15 – 19

RESEARCH

Week Four, Day Two Cont'd...

We have argued for a long time that the arts teach the necessary 21st Century skills our students need to be globally competitive – that deeper learning in the arts delivers the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in a world that is changing at an unprecedented pace, but what research or data do we have to back up those claims? In what ways can we demonstrate and verify that it does prepare our kids for the future? Along the same lines, what areas of research do we need to shore up?

Bernie Trilling

21st Century learning expert, author

The Arts and Deeper Learning: Power Tools for an Innovation Nation

"What we can do – what America does better than anyone else – is spark the creativity and imagination of our people." – President Obama, State of the Union Address, January 25, 2010

Innovating Learning, Learning to Innovate

A few years ago an official delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Education visited an innovative California school, now part of the Hewlett Foundation's Deeper Learning initiative.

The Chinese educators watched as students took energy measurements; analyzed student surveys; did online research on energy alternatives; created energy awareness videos, an energy song and a short play; and rehearsed their upcoming presentation to the school community. One very excited Ministry official asked as he held up the school's curriculum guide, "Where in here do you teach innovation and creativity? I want to know how you teach this – this is just what we need to teach Chinese students!"

The official was very disappointed to hear that Creativity and Innovation were not official subjects in the curriculum, but vital parts of the fabric of American culture – a rich history of inventors and entrepreneurs, like Franklin, Edison, Ford, Gates, and Jobs; a deep culture of tinkering, problem-solving and inventing, taking risks, failing and trying again; and an openness to celebrating artistic and cultural expressions from an incredibly diverse population.

A few years ago an official delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Education visited an innovative California school, and asked: "Where in here do you teach innovation and creativity? I want to know how you teach this – this is just what we need to teach Chinese students!"

Though there are some indications that our innovation edge may be dulling a bit (see the July 10, 2010

Newsweek article “The Creativity Crisis”), and that this edge may be disappearing from our schools (such as Ken Robinson’s “schools kill creativity” theme), there is a rising wave of support for restoring and reinvesting in creativity, invention, ingenuity and innovation in our nation’s schools.

Arts experiences are an essential part of getting back our “edge in education”.

The Arts Edge

There is little dispute from a compelling and growing body of research (summarized in the PCAH report) that integrating the arts into student learning experiences can help:

- Raise learning *engagement* and *motivation* levels
- Boost *academic achievement* in many subjects
- Develop *critical* and *creative problem solving* skills
- Deepen and widen *communication* skills and student *expression*
- Support *collaboration* and *social* competencies
- Build *innovative* and *entrepreneurial* habits of mind

There is growing evidence, from both theory and practice, that these essential skills (for more, see *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times*), applied to a common core of knowledge, lead to deeper understanding and a more motivated and capable lifetime learner ready for the tough challenges of our times.

There is growing proof that integrating a deeper understanding of academic subjects with 21st century skills, the arts, invention and innovation, is not only achievable, it is happening in schools every day. Some of the most compelling evidence is coming from the Deeper Learning Network of schools.

The Deeper Learning Network

Over four hundred schools in eight networks are currently part of the Deeper Learning Network, an initiative supported by the Hewlett Foundation, which includes:

- Asia Society, International Study Schools Network
- Big Picture Learning
- ConnectEd
- EdVisions Schools
- Envision Schools
- Expeditionary Learning
- High Tech High
- New Tech Network

These school networks are providing proof that academics, 21st century skills and the arts can be learned together, and that *all* students can achieve high levels of performance across this expanded definition of student success.

Some of the common learning approaches and practices that engage students in their learning and enable them to reach high levels of performance are:

- 1) **Learning** – deeply engaging, personalized and collaborative learning motivated by relevant questions and deep inquiry, problems and the design of creative solutions, and real world issues and challenging projects, all with a focus on high quality student work
- 2) **Teaching** – teachers as learning designers, model learners, mentors, guides and school leaders
- 3) **Evaluation** – student work evaluated through public presentations and by a variety of authentic performance assessments incorporated into everyday learning
- 4) **Culture/Climate** – for both students and educators, a professional culture of high expectations, responsibility, ownership, and self-direction; and a personal culture of caring, respect, trust, cooperation and community
- 5) **Development** – teacher and student development focused on improving the quality of student work through collaboration and embedded coaching, modeling, mentoring and leadership
- 6) **Tools** – pervasive use of technology and other learning resources to support Deeper Learning outcomes and practices

A study has been launched to provide further proof that this “ecosystem” of deeper learning approaches consistently provides students with the learning experiences and “power tools” they need for personal success and for securing our country’s position as a leading “innovation nation”.
Stay tuned.

Week #4: August 15 – 19

RESEARCH

Week Four, Day Two Cont'd...

We have argued for a long time that the arts teach the necessary 21st Century skills our students need to be globally competitive – that deeper learning in the arts delivers the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in a world that is changing at an unprecedented pace, but what research or data do we have to back up those claims? In what ways can we demonstrate and verify that it does prepare our kids for the future? Along the same lines, what areas of research do we need to shore up?

Larry Scripp

arts educator / researcher, New England Conservatory

As a long-time researcher in the field of arts and human development (from my early days at Harvard Project Zero, to the establishment of the CMIE 's Music-in-Education National Consortium and its Learning Laboratory School Network, my first response to the point of departure argument that arts 'teach' 21st century skills is to be at first skeptical, if not a bit argumentative, about the premise of this assertion.

Thus, the assumption of that the 'arts teach 21st century skills' may sound good for hunches, provocative rhetoric or advocacy for arts in schools in general, yet not so simple for the concerned, yet aptly confused, arts or non-arts teacher, parent or the school administrator wants to create an research-based view of arts learning as a catalyst for a high quality 21st century education.

On a relatively superficial level I find the personification of 'the arts' teaching skills a bit awkward. From the viewpoint of a research agenda, this aphoristic assumption, as yet, makes little sense. Shouldn't we know more about high quality arts teaching and learning practices before we make any assumptions about its relationship to the current proposed framework of 21st century education outcomes?

At the very least, I feel researchers still have some research methodology housekeeping to do. What do we mean by the 'arts'? Is one art form in depth sufficient enough to learn 21st century skills? Or do we need the traditional four arts disciplines of music, dance, theater and visual arts? Why do we not usually include English Language 'Arts' as part of the arts curriculum? Can

only one or two arts disciplines represent 'the arts' because of shared concepts or processes across all art forms? Do we really mean arts learning? Where do arts learning processes fit in, especially with multi-disciplinary media arts or opera-based learning? When will schools finally embrace the challenge of administering individual arts learning assessments for all children?

If conceptual conflations and lack of data abound in school-based arts learning research, we will have no less of challenge trying to grasp what is meant by the enormous complexity of new core subjects and support

systems that constitute [21st century learning skills](#).

It is reassuring to me that the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities report (PCAH) makes a final recommendation in the form of an exhortation: we must 'widen the focus of evidence gathering about arts education.' This is important to researchers because, in part, research in schools has been limited to reporting that *participation* in arts learning is associated with higher test scores in reading, in math. From my viewpoint, we have yet to see a broad consensus on the association between relatively deep *measures* of arts learning and its association with comparatively better understanding of mathematical or language arts skills that have been reported in isolated [studies](#).

As the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities concludes in its report:

"...PCAH found much less sustained research on the connections between arts education and 21st century skills such as creativity and innovative thinking, as well as the effect of arts education on engagement, attendance, behavioral problems and other factors that are early indicators of a student's likelihood of dropping out. PCAH recommends support for research on arts education and its effect on innovative thinking and creativity, and on engagement, motivation, focus, and persistence. While it is hard to find the resources for these evaluations, they are vital to demonstrating the ability of the arts to solve a number of problems at once."

Thus, the assumption of that the 'arts teach 21st century skills' may sound good for hunches, provocative rhetoric or advocacy for arts in schools in general, yet not so simple for the concerned, yet aptly confused, arts or non-arts teacher, parent or the school administrator wants to create an research-based view of arts learning as a catalyst for a high quality 21st century education.

Yet, as a researcher and consultant for schools committed to measuring arts teaching and learning outcomes, I do welcome the research challenges of investigating the impact of particular arts and arts integration practices in the context of well-defined standards a high quality 21st century education. The [list of 21st century outcomes](#) is comprehensive and sophisticated. They point to multiple factors as the path toward optimizing teaching and learning. By expecting students to deal with change and complexity effectively, a much more dynamic and flexibly applied education is likely to result.

It is the 'deeper learning' in the arts that promises to deliver the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in our fast-changing world.

And by working backwards from this last question in this Research topic— "In what ways can we demonstrate and verify that arts learning does prepare our kids for the future?" --I think a clearer path of investigation can evolve in the next few years. By introducing the qualifier that it is the 'deeper learning' in the arts that promises to deliver the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in our fast-changing world, we will need to assess rigorously the impact of arts learning in schools while testing for the relationship of the arts to projected 21st century education outcomes.

The problem is, as the previous research questions suggest, we have only begun to work through our comprehensive understanding of the role of arts learning in our schools. At the top of the pyramid of available research, we now can see that a fortuitous mixture of arts and arts integration teaching and learning practices produces evidence of higher academic performance and positive changes in school culture. Yet, we have not yet recognized fully what quality of teaching that is needed to produce these results, nor do we yet acknowledge what difference 'deep learning' makes to those students who excel or do not progress well with arts learning.

My suggestions to researchers, teachers who participate in action research, and those who seek to apply research findings in education is threefold:

**Consider the 'strategic priority' modeling and investigating the impact of arts learning in laboratory schools first and followed by school district dissemination later. As our Music-in-Education National Consortium school-based research project demonstrates, school communities that are committed to the challenges and rewards of school reform leadership, accountability and rigorous research based [school practices](#) provide an optimal method for investigating arts learning factors and disseminating change in school district policy based on these [outcomes](#). It seems no accident to me that several of the case study examples described in the PCAH report were associated to some extent from our MIENC laboratory school network in Chicago, Maryland and New York. Research-based methods of school reform do not happen all at once, nor should it. Multiple levels of leadership are required in schools in order to conduct sustained research that is relevant and valid for practical application.*

In summarizing my thoughts I offer three suggestions for researchers and their school community partners in interested in the relationship of arts learning to 21st century learning goals:

** Provide the best evidence available for the effectiveness of arts-in-education practices in your community before investigating the assumption that arts learning embodies 21st century education ideals. That is, be reluctant to make assumptions about the connection for arts learning to 21st century outcomes prior to a research-based understanding of how these outcomes are can be measured. The impact of arts learning in schools needs to be sufficient for applying these findings toward answering new questions about the contribution of arts learning to 21st Century outcomes, or vice versa, how 21st century skills can optimize arts learning outcomes in schools.*

My hunch is that the proof of the pudding will be clear only when future consensus on education policy stipulates that artful thinking, teaching and learning is needed to define, measure, or create optimal conditions for what a broad consensus of educators think 21st Century should be like. My hunch is that the unique contribution of arts learning to 21st Century education outcomes can only be determined through the validation of comprehensive arts learning curriculum as a core subject for all children in schools, arts integration as a key strategy for understanding concepts and processes that are cross curricular, arts as a key component of a new emphasis on multiple literacies, and arts metacognitive skills shared across disciplines (such as creative problem solving, systems thinking,,) and social-personal skill development (self-discipline,

collaboration).

* *Stick to the principle of 'differentiation and synthesis' as a prime factor in assessing human development in the arts.* Arts learning and 21st Century education research will be hopelessly complicated if we do not allow for certain paradoxes to be recognized as part of the journey of our growing understanding of arts learning. For example, the more each student knows about a wide ranging set of core disciplines, the better all students will come to an understanding of the factors that eventually connect them; the more all students understand a wide ranging set of fundamental concepts and processes shared among disciplines, the more all students will understand the unique contribution of each discipline. And, as Richard Kessler suggested earlier, try to bridge "false dichotomies" in arts learning research that look at the synthesis of *arts plus arts integration* learning rather than pitting arts learning vs. arts integration learning.

* *Embrace the inherent complexities of education research in schools.* Approached through the lens of 21st century education outcomes, arts learning research should now embrace the rich complexities of human development rather than narrowing the scope of learning assessment, as has been done in the past, to the point of decontextualized isolated subject areas devoid of the factors of social dynamics or social conscience, let alone the cognitive and meta-cognitive complexities of understanding the myriad processes of arts making, response, and analysis that lead to a broader understanding of the place of the arts in education. We can be optimistic that the effort to create new kind of research focused on 21st century learning outcomes will inform what educators, parents and administrators are most interested in: an education for our children that differentiates and interconnects conceptual understanding within and across disciplines, that fosters lasting forms or critical thinking and creativity skills, that is fueled by a social context of equity of resources and respect for the diversity of learners, and which promises to be infinitely applicable to the demands of our new century.

Week #4: August 15 – 19

RESEARCH

Week Four, Day Two Cont'd...

We have argued for a long time that the arts teach the necessary 21st Century skills our students need to be globally competitive – that deeper learning in the arts delivers the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in a world that is changing at an unprecedented pace, but what research or data do we have to back up those claims? In what ways can we demonstrate and verify that it does prepare our kids for the future? Along the same lines, what areas of research do we need to shore up?

Ayanna Hudson

Director of Arts Education, Arts for All, Los Angeles County Arts Commission

We know from the Americans for the Arts *Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce* report that business leaders put a high premium on applicants who can demonstrate an ability to approach the workplace with a sense of creativity and innovation. Intuitively we know the arts are about creativity and innovation and therefore arts education must be important. In fact, when leaders in 80 of the 82 Los Angeles county school districts were interviewed in 1999 every single one – 100% – said they believe in and value the arts. This single unanimous response led to L.A. County approving the countywide collaborative, *Arts for All*, with the directive to focus on policies, long-range plans, tools and resources to support districts as they renewed their commitment to arts education for all students. They believe in it and *Arts for All* helps them to make it happen.

Now, fast forward 10 years to our School Arts Survey, which Laura Zucker referred to in her blog post, where we measured quality, access and equity in arts education across 100 schools in five *Arts for All* school districts with a high commitment to the arts - districts *Arts for All* has supported for years. A major finding was that in

the majority of schools, the arts curriculum doesn't include real-life applications that prepare students for postsecondary education, focused training, and eventual employment.

So even though 100% of school district leaders value the arts, we found a huge disconnect between a commitment to quality arts instruction and an understanding of how the arts prepare students for the 21st Century world of work.

We had mistakenly assumed all these years that the link was clear.

Yet, since 2007 the Otis College of Art and Design began publishing its annual *Report on the Creative Economy in Los Angeles Region*, which defines and documents the impact of the creative economy in Southern California as providing one out of six jobs in the region and emphasizes the importance of a K-12 arts education pipeline to this economy.

So even though 100% of school district leaders value the arts, we found a huge disconnect between a commitment to quality arts

instruction and an understanding of how the arts prepare students for the 21st Century world of work. We had mistakenly assumed all these years that the link was clear.

Clearly we all now have a strong mandate to focus our attention on raising the visibility of the link between arts education and workforce development. *Arts for All* has begun in earnest to look at developing cross sector relationships, such as becoming a key strategy for the *Los Angeles County Strategic Plan for Economic Development* to achieve its goals for workforce development. Additionally, a number of *Arts for All* leaders from the business sector, specifically The Boeing Company and Sony Pictures Entertainment, are on the frontlines making the case to their peers and colleagues that a creative workforce is dependent on an education that includes all of the arts. Boeing also supported our district leaders' attendance at the unveiling of Otis' 2010 *Report on the Creative Economy*.

But it's not enough to have education and business leaders talking to each other about preparing our students for the current and future workforce. It has to happen in a real way inside the classroom. To this end, *Arts for All* and the Los Angeles County Office of Education have developed a professional development series, "Teaching Creativity with the Core Curriculum," that will be offered in three different regions of the county three times during the 2011-12 school year.

We need more opportunities for our business and education partners, as well as arts partners and students to make these connections. I have two questions for colleagues: how are you creating cross sector partnerships and what do they look like? How are you making creativity and innovation relevant in the classroom?

Week #4: August 15 – 19

RESEARCH

Barry and Julie's Follow Up Questions to the Fourth Week's Blog Posts

Week Four, Day One

1. Sandra talks about coming together on common messages in arts education, with the PCAH research providing a few key points that we can all get behind. Who is the "we" in this case? Do the key recommendations coming out of the report resonate with people who are not in the arts education field? How do we go about leveraging a report like this to build public will in a way that translates directly to specific constituents – parents, students, policymakers, educators - and meets them where they are? As Sandra states, the definitions of key terms alone are enough of a barrier to further engagement in the discussion.

2. Some have cited as a fundamental flaw in the PCAH report the absence of any discussion about the costs of implementing the recommendations, and that without some integration of consideration as to where the funds might come from, the report ends up somewhat meaningless and irrelevant. How do you respond to that criticism? Should we zero in and prioritize the recommendations based on funding considerations? Which recommendations are short term, which are longer term?

3. Narric mentions a number of national and state research reports from the past few years that can help inform the debate on arts education on a broader level. However, when policy is driven from a bottom-up approach, what can the more local and regional arts education advocates do to provide data to the local decision makers? As Narric says, information has to be used by those engaging in public debate; how do we make that information resonate more effectively at a variety of levels?

4. Is there really any "**public**" debate about arts education going on at all? Isn't whatever debate and discussion that is happening basically *within* the arts sector and not even within the larger education community - let alone the public? How do we make the debate a truly "public" debate?

Week Four, Day Two

1. To Chris's point, where are the gaps in arts education evaluation and research? And how much data is too much? Who can come up with a "simple" common research agenda, who funds it, who does it in a way that has credibility outside of the arts education field? What do decision makers outside of the field need to know in order to make favorable policy and funding decisions?

2. - All of our responders have indicated the value of various types of research to moving forward an arts education agenda. Are we in danger of assigning too much problem-solving responsibility to arts learning? Are we forgetting about those intrinsic values – the joy of creating art, the ability of young people to self-express, have

fun together, take risks, figure out how to play "Purple Haze" just like Jimi Hendrix, for no other reason than to play like Hendrix – in the need to justify the existence of arts in schools?

3. In the politics of decision making at the government level, research is often embraced or denied based on the position the 'politician' wants or needs to take. It provides cover for those disposed to be supportive, and a place to attack for those who are not. Where do "research" and politics intersect in terms of arts education and to what extent should that phenomenon be taken into account in our research models - especially if one of the primary goals of research is to impact political decision making?

4. Chris implies that we are really in the very earliest stages in terms of credible, reliable research and advises that we do more, and focus in on what kind we should do as we create that research agenda. Larry similarly questions how far we really are in design of our research. In contrast to both Chris and Larry, Bernie says there is little doubt the arts do most of the things we claim they do. Which is it? Do we have credible research to make the case now, or do we need more? If we need more, what else do we need?

5. Is a vibrant and healthy "climate" conducive to creativity just that -- an ecosystem that does not itself make creativity happen, but rather encourages, nurtures and supports it happening. And if so, then how do we conduct research into how the arts plays a part in the growth of that kind of ecosystem as opposed to arguing the direct link of an arts education to the very specific skills that we claim are part of, and linked to, creativity and the creative instinct?

Final Thoughts for the Forum on Arts Education

Barry Hessenius

I would like to thank all of the responders who participated in this forum over the past month. Julie Fry and I are both grateful for their time and for their insights, thoughts and keen observations. This was, I think, an outstanding discussion.

I am especially indebted to Julie for all of her help and support in making this Forum possible. I have no illusions that I would have been able to assemble such a stellar list of responders or been able to so intelligently frame the issues and questions on my own. To the extent this was of value to the field and a success, the credit belongs largely to her. She is the consummate professional and few in the field are more conversant with all the myriad issues and challenges in the arts education arena.

Personally, I am left with as many questions as answers. Reading all of the comments by all of the participants over the past month, my overall feeling is that arts education has so many levels of complexity that addressing the main goal of getting arts education in every school is Herculean to say the least. Our whole approach seems to be vivisected, with each facet of the challenge compartmentalized and isolated, with too little overall, comprehensive organization to our thinking and actions. I would hope that we could address that challenge by moving forward with the development of one national policy on arts education - one that could be adapted to local circumstances but which would promote consensus messages. The PCAH Report and the work of AFTA are good places to start, but only a start.

Otherwise two major concerns stand out to me:

1. We have to be more practical and realistic in our approaches, and dial down too much lofty rhetoric about some ideal that we are chasing and take into account two realities and make them a part of every discussion on every aspect of arts education:

First, the politics of things - from local government and school districts to that of the wider education reform debate (and acknowledge that politics plays a part in everything from how, when and where we advocate to research, to arts integration and beyond); and

Second, the actual costs of doing any of the things we talk about. We simply must include identification of funding streams for any and all proposals at every level. Otherwise we are just whistling in the wind.

2. Because of the dollar costs involved, I think the equity issue of access to arts education will unquestionably continue to result in some (wealthier) districts providing at least some arts education, and many more, little or nothing at all. And so the danger is not just that many kids in whole generations do not (will not) get arts, but

that others do, and if we are right that arts education is essential for a well rounded, quality education and preparation to be competitive in this world, then the net result is an increasingly **have** and **have not** world and the gap between those will widen further.

Julie Fry

To Barry's comment in #1 above, I would also add **public will**: in order to move the politics and secure the funding, the public needs to demand that the arts are part of every child's school experience – for the learning, problem-solving, team-building opportunities it provides children, for the importance of creativity and innovation to our economy, for a civil society.

I agree that the field has been fragmented, and is likely to remain that way – one size does not fit all in the mosaic of learning in and through the arts. While a national policy may help provide some guidance and cohesion, I think that a lot of the most important work is happening locally and regionally.

Overall, this is an education issue, and should be part of the national debate that is taking place on education reform.

I'd like to add my sincere thanks to Barry for providing this forum and for his probing questions about the arts education field, his grand enthusiasm for this endeavor, and his generosity in devoting a month's worth of blog space to the discussion! This is much appreciated by the field, Barry.