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Issue Introduction

By Sonia M. Rosen and Rashmi Kumar, Editors

Urban environments are abundant with vibrant opportunities to create and consume art, yet educators are not always able to tap into these opportunities. It is in this context that Volume 6, Issue 2 of Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education explores the role of the arts in urban education. The articles and video in this issue touch on an array of ways in which the visual and performing arts can be used in urban elementary and secondary schools as they engage in critique and put forth new visions for arts education. We have deliberately selected articles that both span a range of forms of artistic expression and emerge from a variety of institutional contexts – including elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools and out-of-school learning environments – and these articles speak to the importance of partnerships between schools and out-of-school organizations. Together, these pieces make a collective call for revitalizing the arts to promote communication, engagement, and empowerment among young people in urban communities. In this issue, we are also pleased to include multimedia texts.

In the past decade, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act has been the driving force behind federal- and state-level education reform, placing a heavy emphasis on math and literacy as focal subjects for instruction and assessment. In underfunded, highly bureaucratic urban school districts, administrators have had to make difficult choices about how and where to allocate their resources. Unfortunately, this dilemma has often resulted in the elimination or paring down of arts programs around the country, leaving millions of students with little or no institutionalized access to arts instruction. Gertrude Spilka and Meg Long's *Building Local Capacity to Bring Arts Education to All Children: Lessons Learned from the First Half of the Ford Foundation's National Demonstration* offers a look at a recent Ford Foundation initiative

aimed at increasing school districts' and communities' capacity for integrating arts instruction. The preliminary findings from this study highlight the need for effective administration, partnership development, arts advocacy, and programmatic integration in order to make such programs successful. While Spilka and Long consider the effectiveness of top-down initiatives, Allen Trent and Jorge-Ayn Riley discuss bottom-up arts integration. Their article *Re-Placing the Arts in Elementary School Curricula: An Interdisciplinary, Collaborative Action Research Project* details an action research project involving the implementation of an art-integrated curriculum in a 4th grade classroom, a curriculum that was eventually adopted and implemented in other classrooms in their district.

Several articles highlight the important role of collaboration. In *A Perfect Murder: An (Imperfect) School Theater Program Model*, Nicole S. Simon and Andrew Grosso recount the successes and challenges of a partnership between a New York City theater group and a public high school. In the end, they claim that this kind of collaboration can benefit a range of stakeholders, not the least of which are the students themselves.

This issue also emphasizes the relevance of arts education beyond the walls of elementary and secondary schools. *Removing our masks: Using the Visual and Performing Arts to Promote Deep Reflection in Pre-service Teachers*, by Patricia Alvarez McHatton and Erica D. McCray, highlights the critical niche that can be filled by arts education in order to prepare pre-service teachers for engaging with urban youth. We would like to draw our readers' attention to the video accompanying their short article to understand the intertwined relationships between context and goals in this effort.

Other articles in this issue frame arts education as a vehicle for social justice. Joyce Millman outlines the use

of arts to develop young people's critical literacy in her article *Critical Literacy and Art Education: Alternatives in the School Reform Movement*, and Yolanda Medina discusses the arousal of critical consciousness in youth by embedding arts in everyday curricula in her article *Art Education Programs: Empowering Social Change*. Similarly, Sheri Hardee and Amanda Reyelt's practitioner research, discussed in *Women's Well-Being Initiative: Creating, Practicing, and Sharing a Border Pedagogy for Youth*, employed a "border pedagogy" in which adolescent girls examined and critiqued their social world using a toolkit of various visual and performing art forms.

Amanda Gulla also touches on this theme in her article, *Changing Things as they are: Promoting Social Justice through Encounters with the Arts*. She points to the contradictions with which youth in this society grapple and reminds us that many teachers and students who live in cultural hubs across the U.S. are not likely to access these institutions. In *Resources for Effectiveness: Collaborative Arts Partnerships in Schools*, Lee Ann Norman echoes Gulla's call for drawing on the wealth of resources available within cosmopolitan areas to engage schools and communities in arts exploration and appreciation. Likewise, in *Learning from Objects: A Future for 21st Century Education*, Dorothea Lasky recasts museum learning as having the potential to afford young people the space to interact with artifacts, making a strong case for the value of objects as educative texts. Carolyn Chernoff's commentary entitled *On Culture, Art, and Experience* reflects on three of these articles and engages with issues of power, agency, and legitimacy that emerge in the authors' discussions.

Closing our issue is a review of *The Art of Placemaking* by Ronald Lee Fleming in which Chris Steinmeier discusses another aspect of arts in urban areas—the subtle knowledge that is ac-

quired by viewing and processing large works of art placed in publicly accessible urban locations. Steinmeier emphasizes Fleming's concerns regarding the authority behind decisions that allow for the use of open areas for displaying visual arts in urban environments.

Collectively, the articles in this issue of our journal raise some power-

ful questions about the arts: Should the arts be engaged primarily as separate content areas (i.e. theater, dance, music, visual expression), or should they be used as a point of entry into other, "academic" subjects? Who gets to make these choices, and why? How might art educators conceptualize their roles and the possibilities available to

them in an educational environment in which the standards for success are increasingly narrowing? Moving forward, what would it take to reintegrate the arts into urban public school curricula? The articles in this issue and the questions that emerge from them frame a critical discussion that is likely to continue for years to come.

Building Local Capacity to Bring Arts Education to All Children: Lessons Learned from the First Half of the Ford Foundation's National Demonstration

By Gertrude Spilka and Meg Long, OMG Center for Collaborative Learning

ABSTRACT

Interested in bringing the benefits of the arts as integral to quality education for all children, in 2004 the Ford Foundation launched the National Arts Education Initiative, a seven-year demonstration in nine communities across the United States. Building from arts education programs that serve "pockets" of children, Ford investments aim to leverage these arts programs to reach all children through increased public will, supportive policy systems, and community partnerships. The ultimate aim is to build sustainable, coordinated arts education delivery systems for all children as part of a quality education. This article presents some of the lessons from the internal evaluation of the first half of the initiative conducted by the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning.

Introduction

In 2004, the Ford Foundation launched the National Arts Education Initiative, a bold and forward-looking effort to address issues of equity and access in arts education. The initiative advances a new and significant framework for achieving the goal of increasing access to quality integrated arts education for all children.

In its underlying strategic approach, the Ford initiative charts important new ground. It proposes that to bring arts education to scale in urban school districts, as educators and community-based arts providers build strong programs, they must also develop related political-advocacy, partnership-building, and strategic-communication skills. Through this supporting work, educators and arts providers are able to catalyze public demand and policy momentum for the kinds of systemic changes that are essential if arts education is to flourish broadly and equitably across communities and across the nation.

This article shares more broadly with the field—including educators, funders, policymakers, artists, arts educators, and others—important lessons emerging from the National Arts Edu-

cation Initiative. Based on an internal evaluation of the initiative's first phase, conducted from Spring 2004 through Spring 2008 by OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, this article will be of interest to those invested in issues of educational quality, arts learning, equity considerations, and systems change. It includes a brief overview of the state of the field of arts education and its link to urban education, a discussion of the context for change and the philosophical and strategic underpinnings of the Ford initiative, and a discussion of various successes and challenges faced by initiative participants as they work to strengthen programs and mobilize constituencies to bring arts education to all students in urban schools. Throughout the article we have also included several grantee-specific stories that illustrate the efforts of practitioners to reform education within their local communities.

THE STATE OF ARTS EDUCATION AND THE LINK TO URBAN EDUCATION

Overburdened school budgets and high-stakes accountability policies have nearly obliterated arts education from American public schools over the past two decades. A study in Califor-

nia by Stites and Malin (2008) found that 61% of schools do not have even one full-time arts teacher, and similar trends can be seen across the country. The National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2008 noted that less than 47% of tested eighth-graders attended schools with visual arts instruction and 57% attended schools with music instruction (Keiper 2009). This is particularly the case in poorer, urban school districts. In not offering these students the opportunity to learn in and through the arts, students, school districts and communities are foregoing the benefits that a high quality arts education can provide.

Research shows that students who are involved in the arts in and out of school have higher levels of academic achievement as indicated by grades and standardized test scores; they stay in school longer; and they have better attitudes about self, school, and community (Catterall, 1998; Catterall et al, 1999). These outcomes are supported by studies in neuroscience that demonstrate positive relationships between participation in the arts, cognitive development, and learning (Begley, 1996; Shreeve, 1996). While high quality arts education can lead to increased academic performance, it can be employed

to facilitate teaching about issues that pertain to social responsibility and social change (Holloway and Krensky, 2001). John Dewey (1934) presented the theory that arts should be a central component of education because the development of the imagination is the impetus for social change. Providing urban youth the space and resources to learn through the arts enables them to envision and create a positive future for themselves and their communities.

However, more importantly, and perhaps most compelling and least surprising to educators, students report that the arts “help us explore our own and others’ thoughts and feelings, critique ourselves and our worlds, express our voices, and influence our social contexts by using nonviolent means” (Walker, 1999). These outcomes are particularly important in urban settings, where today’s diverse urban students are more likely to struggle with issues of identity, voice, and their role in the community. A recent literature review by Mary Stone Hanley and George Noblit (2009) unequivocally emphasizes the importance of the arts as a strategy for culturally responsive education that help strengthen racial identity, resilience, and achievement.

THE IMPETUS FOR CHANGE

Educating the Whole Child

In the last decade, as high-stakes testing in math and reading have dominated national educational improvement efforts under the No Child Left Behind act, the Ford Foundation has remained steadfast in its belief that quality education ought to develop the whole child, cultivating knowledge in a range of disciplines and through multiple learning modalities. The National Arts Education Initiative intends to reintroduce education of the whole child into national discussions about quality education. The central longer term aim of the initiative is to increase access to quality integrated arts education for all K-8 students.

From Fragmentation to Coordination

As has been recently observed

(Bodilly, 2008), few cities have well-developed and coordinated arts and education delivery systems. Rather, communities more typically are characterized as having arts education programs that are fragmented, uncoordinated pilots, targeted to a subset of schools. The pilots are usually supported by soft dollars and run by an array of private, nonprofit brokers and arts and culture organizations in partnership with public school districts. In its underlying approach, the Ford Foundation’s National Arts Education Initiative recognizes that the long-term building of coordinated and equitable arts and delivery systems necessitates more resources, both public and private. These resources cannot be leveraged in the absence of building public will and policy commitment for expanded and systemic approaches to arts and education.

Policy and Practice

The planning phase of the initiative coincided with a period when there had been important national progress toward advancing arts education within the public school arena. The enactment in the mid-1990s of Goals 2000, which asserted the arts as core disciplines, propelled many states to adopt or develop their own arts education standards. With this, the arts were educationally validated and the bar was raised for quality pedagogy. Unfortunately, although the formulation of arts education standards was celebrated as a policy victory, practice had yet to catch up. Adequate arts education financing, teaching infrastructure, and effective and appropriate assessments remained to be developed.

Emerging Models

During this same time, there was increased recognition of the functional value of arts partnership programs in developing and delivering high-quality arts instruction. In this widely-heralded partnership model, a lead organization works outside the school district and operates as a bridge and facilitator among the teaching artists, the arts and culture community, and

public schools to deliver arts education in multiple disciplines (i.e. visual arts, music, theater, dance, creative writing, and media arts) during in-school time to public school students. Several cities, including Dallas, Chicago, and New York City have benefited from extraordinary arts partnership programs. In these cases, school penetration of arts programming grew significantly. Nonetheless, even in these cities where public school districts were partners, and at times financial partners, the burden of delivery remained on nonprofit and foundation dollars.

Equity and Access

No matter what their scale, these arts partnerships did not have the resources to reach all children with quality arts education. In many locales, reliant on soft funding, art partnerships remained fragile and provided programming to schools in which champions pursued them. Many schools and many children remained untouched, particularly in lower-income communities. Thus, no matter how the arts partnerships grew, they remained demonstration programs.

THE DESIGN OF THE FORD INITIATIVE

Ford launched the National Arts Education Initiative with the recognition that the long-term building of coordinated arts and education program delivery systems for all children requires significantly more public and private resources. Thus, for this initiative, Ford’s primary intention is to demonstrate how communities build local public will for expanded and systemic approaches to arts and education, with a focus on two key areas: partnership building and strategic communication and advocacy. For it is only through increased public will and market demand that more public and private resources can flow towards arts education. More dollars will allow successful arts and education pilots to scale up and achieve greater reach. In support of public will building and advocacy, the initiative also seeks to help locales learn how to prepare and build their arts and education delivery systems for broader impact.

To begin addressing these barriers, and to demonstrate how different types of organizations take on arts education systems-building and policy-change work, the Ford Foundation selected nine diverse grantees. The selected grantees vary in arts programming experience, arts and education reform know-how, organizational capacity, and geographic location. They range from organizations with multimillion dollar budgets that have been involved with arts-related systems-change work for over a decade, to start-up organizations with limited arts education programming experience. This diversity has led to fruitful dialogue among initiative participants and yielded important lessons about the different ways organizations and leaders mobilize for change in light of local contexts. A summary of each of

the nine grantees' core programs and capacities can be found in Table 1.

In addition to the nine grantees, Ford is supporting three other organizations: the Arts Education Partnership, Douglas Gould and Company, and the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning with expertise in arts education technical assistance, strategic communications, and evaluation and partnership-building. Supports to sites include individualized technical assistance and biannual grantee meetings to foster communication, build networks, and share emerging best practices.

BUILDING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT TAKES TO BUILD ARTS EDUCATION SYSTEMS

From the outset of the Ford National Arts Education Initiative, partici-

pants were challenged to translate the initiative's ambitious and far-reaching goals into a clear framework and action steps. While the concepts of working toward partnership-building and advocacy were understood conceptually, not surprisingly, they were also an abstraction for many of the grantees, especially those who had limited experience with policy and advocacy work. In this section we review the framework and in the following section we will highlight some of the key lessons learned in each of the key areas of the presented framework.

As the initiative evaluators, OMG engaged the Ford Foundation staff, its technical advisors, and its grantees to develop a Theory of Change and an implementation plan to build shared understanding for the initiative's agenda. The Theory of Change also articulated clear work areas and progress bench-

TABLE 1

NATIONAL ARTS EDUCATION INITIATIVE GRANTEES

Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership, housed within the Alameda County Office of Education (Alameda County, CA)

Decade-old, county-wide community partnership facilitated by Office of Education leaders. Provides professional development and technical assistance to districts and schools for the development and implementation of district arts plans and makes grants for school-based arts programs. Organizational budget exceeds \$14 million; project budget \$754,000.

Arts Every Day (Baltimore, MD)

Start-up arts education broker. Promotes information sharing and coordination of existing arts education programs and resources for Baltimore public schools. Initial programming focus on piloting middle-school arts-integrated lesson plans through shared teaching artist and classroom teacher sessions in 13 classrooms. Organizational budget \$300,000.

Arts Education Initiative, housed within the University of California-UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education (Berkeley, CA)

Newly formed partnership of six higher education institutions and professional education programs. Piloting arts-integrated curriculum planning and instruction for new teachers and school leaders; limited arts education experience at initiative's commencement. Project budget \$175,000.

Art IS Education, Housed Within Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio (Cleveland, OH)

Arts education broker. Piloting third grade arts integrated literacy curricula and corresponding professional development strategies with the school district. Organizational budget \$1.5 million; project budget \$248,000.

Big Thought (Dallas, TX)

Fifteen-old, city-wide community partnership and arts education broker. Coordinates arts education resources and services across 70 school districts, city libraries, and childcare, recreation, and community centers and provides arts advocacy and research services. Organizational budget \$4.1 million; project budget \$364,000.

Ask for More Arts Collaborative, housed within Parents for Public Schools (Jackson, MS)

Parent organizing and education advocacy organization. Piloting classroom-based arts integrated lesson plans and teacher professional development in Jackson public schools; limited arts education experience at initiative's commencement. Organizational budget \$377,000; project budget \$150,000.

Arts for Academic Achievement, housed within the Minneapolis Public Schools (Minneapolis, MN)

Arts education and teaching artist broker for public schools. Provides professional development institutes; arts integrated coaching for classroom teachers; and links teaching artists to area schools. Organizational budget \$6.2 million; project budget \$1.2 million.

Interchange, housed within Center for Creative Arts (St. Louis, MI)

Start-up arts education provider and broker. Piloting arts integrated classes in five schools, developing teaching artist and teacher professional development, testing early arts education advocacy efforts. Organizational budget \$4.3 million; project budget \$270,000.

D. C. Arts and Humanities Collaborative (Washington, DC)

Membership arts broker organization. Piloting arts integrated lesson plans in six schools and providing related professional development for classroom teachers. Organizational budget \$480,000; project budget \$150,000.

marks. The Theory of Change and implementation plan identified four key areas of activity and indicators of success in each one, as is outlined below.

Grantee Leadership

Increase grantee ability to support the Ford arts and education work, as evidenced by increased organizational capacity and leadership to carry out the arts education partnership and the advocacy and policy-change agenda.

Grantee leadership indicators. Vision and understanding of arts and education reform; respect as community leader in arts and education; designated staff and system-level data collection and use capabilities; and policy entrepreneur skills (including the ability to reframe constantly changing arts and education issues within an educational policy framework and build policy networks).

Partnership Leadership

Build local partnerships to shift lo-

cal policy, as evidenced by the establishment of a sustainable collaboration of educational advocates, arts institutions, and educators, and strengthened school district capacities to support and sustain the integration of the arts.

Partnership leadership indicators. Shared and articulated arts education vision for the partnership; diverse and appropriate membership/community legitimacy (comprised of arts, education, and youth champions); adequate networks; transparent process and structure for operations and decision-making; effective formal and informal communication processes; evaluation mechanisms; and adequate staff and resources.

Advocacy and Strategic Communications

Build public will for arts education for all children through advocacy and communication, as evidenced by greater public understanding and support for integrated arts education.

Advocacy and strategic communications indicators. Existence of arts education advocacy goal and plan; strategic communications plan, including target audiences, specific messaging, and tactics, and assigned responsibilities; impact tracking capabilities; sustainable advocacy infrastructure; school district buy-in, as evidenced by leadership participation and increased budget, staff, and professional development allocations.

Strengthen and Scale Arts Integration Program Models

Demonstrate equitable and quality arts education program models that can be brought to scale, as evidenced by observable, wider-spread integration of the arts into classroom practice in district schools.

Program Impact indicators. Theory-based approach; sufficient infrastructure; curriculum (standards-based, sequential, and tied to other content areas); student art production assessment (performance-based/embedded in curricu-

lum); and professional development.

The OMG Center Evaluation Methodology in Brief

In the first phase of the initiative, the evaluation placed an emphasis on formative progress. Methodologies included document review, annual site visits and phone interviews with grantees and partners in each site using semi-scripted interview guides, and observations during site visits and meetings. In addition, OMG developed a capacity framework for the initiative, and OMG and each site jointly assessed the site against benchmarks along each area defined in the theory of change. We also used a policy and implementation tracking tool to gauge the reach of the grantee programs, shifts in policies, and district and partner practice. As the initiative moves into its second phase, greater emphasis is being placed on outcomes.

EARLY LESSONS

After more than three years, several lessons have emerged. Given the initiative's complex nature and the grantees' diversity, it is important to stress that the findings presented here are not comprehensive. Additionally, there are a number of contextual factors, national and local in scope, that have impacted the work of the grantees that, for the sake of brevity, are not discussed in this article. At the same time, these lessons shed important light on what it really takes to begin shifting policies and practice to bring arts education to scale in urban settings.

GRANTEE CAPACITY

Successful arts education policy influence and change frequently hinges on the leadership and advocacy skills of a small group of champions. They exert pressure by effectively making their case and by mobilizing broader grassroots constituencies to change the opinion of policymakers. The Ford initiative grantees were expected to build their capacity to become arts education policy-change leaders and also to develop and manage partnerships. The experience of the Baltimore site highlights

such skill development. All grantees made advances in these areas, although stumbling blocks were encountered along the way and progress was variable—with the more experienced sites being able to mobilize quickly and work in an accelerated fashion to address initiative goals. In the following section, brief case examples demonstrate and provide support for OMG's findings.

Baltimore: A start-up focuses on developing policy entrepreneurial skills

Soon after taking over the helm of Baltimore's Every Day Arts, its Executive Director began taking courses in nonprofit management and advocacy to better navigate the Baltimore School District. She researched the policy reform agenda of the new district administration and began working closely with a policy-savvy board member to develop an advocacy action plan that specifically aligns with the city and state's broader educational goals. As a start-up organization, this policy entrepreneur skill building has helped the organization position itself as an exclusive arts education broker for the District.

Finding #1: From theory to practice. It took more time than expected for many of the grantees to understand the significant role-shift required for them to carry out advocacy and partnership-building work. For most sites, significant capacity-building was necessary as a prelude to taking on initiative work. At the initiative's inception, many sites focused almost solely on building or refining their arts integration program delivery models to be able to make the case for systemic change. Similar to other initiatives, which encourage grantees to make a major shift in how they do business, many grantees initially focused on doing more of what they do well. In this case, sites focused on program development or providing more programs, and they were slow to take up the arts education advocacy or systems-change roles required for the National Arts Education Initiative. The progress of grantee efforts can be broadly characterized as follows:

Advanced sites—seasoned organizations with existing experience

in advocacy and policy change—were able to work aggressively, systematically, and immediately toward arts advocacy initiative goals.

Developing sites—including community-wide arts education program partnership broker/service providers—found the transition to be more challenging than anticipated. Five of the nine grantees entered this work as direct service providers and/or arts brokers with limited experience with arts and education policy, education system-building, and advocacy work. They had limited or no experience building senior relationships at the district level, broad-based stakeholder partnerships, or larger grassroots constituencies, particularly beyond the arts and culture community; limited experience navigating school district education policy processes; and limited familiarity with education reform issues.

Emerging and start-up sites—these grantees had to start up or build out arts education knowledge or integrate arts education into other core capacities, which required more resources than were initially anticipated (additional allocations were made by Ford). One site was new to the arts education field but had strong, relevant experience in community organizing for education reform. The other had experience in teacher preservice training, but not specifically in integrating the arts. In these cases, it was necessary for them to develop pilot, demonstration programs to make a case in their communities for later going to scale. This early start-up work required nearly two years of conducting research, engaging with stakeholders, and testing arts education start-up models.

Finding #2: Early success indicators. Early success indicators of a site's ability to pursue policy change include the ability to forge and maintain relationships with district leaders, a commitment and capacity to research and navigate the educational policy process, and resourcefulness in leveraging current relationships to build new ones. Midway through the initiative,

all nine grantees had established direct relationships with and access to district superintendents, school boards, district curricula administrators, and other policymakers. For over half of the grantees, these were new relationships.

Multiple strategies have been successfully pursued as part of this relationship-building process, including:

- leveraging existing partnerships with senior community leaders;
- utilizing the Ford Foundation's name and program officer's visit to gain access to the new district leadership;
- recruiting new partner members who have strong relationships with city education policymakers;
- securing a regular meeting time with the superintendent to keep the issue of arts education on the district radar; and
- tapping into their pre-existing parent organizing networks.

The most successful grantees are increasingly aware of how education policy decisions are made, including the timing of the policy process and the level at which it occurs (state, regional, national, etc.). The leaders in the most advanced sites already possessed the necessary policy entrepreneur skills, including the ability to scan the political environment for windows of policy opportunity, make the case for arts integration to broad and diverse audiences, and network in appropriate policy circles to gain support for their agendas. Others have become much more intentional about tracking the policy environment and knowing which issues are most important to policy leaders. Leaders are becoming better at reframing arts education issues for diverse constituents, drawing upon the messaging platforms developed for initiative participants.

Finding #3: Securing staff. Not surprisingly, similar to other intensive efforts, appropriate and stable initiative staffing contributes significantly to grantee progress. Since many of the grantees were new to this kind of work,

identifying, attracting, and retaining the right type of staff was a key challenge. Many of the service-providing grantees found it difficult to articulate what they were looking for in new hires. Initially grantees hired new staff with skills appropriate for the program-level work. However, as grantees began to refocus their work on policy and advocacy, new skills beyond program planning and implementation were necessary. After the departure of first hires, staff positions were more appropriately defined and filled and include individuals with organizing and advocacy skills.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Partnership-building is a crucial component of the initiative's policy-change agenda. Effective policy- and systems-change efforts require a diverse set of partners and stakeholders with a clear vision and buy-in for the agenda. These efforts also require the ability to mobilize partners and networks as necessary, with the ability to assign roles and responsibilities fitting and of interest to the specific stakeholders. During the initiative's first phase, about a half of the grantees succeeded in establishing strong partnerships with consistent membership that meet regularly to work on shared, clear tasks.

Finding #1: Cultivating and sustaining district support. District buy-in, affirmed through financial support, provides a crucial partnership linchpin, which must be proactively sustained in a constantly shifting local environment. Four sites were able to secure financial support from their school districts by showing administrators how arts integration approaches can be tools to help achieve the rigorous academic goals articulated in the No Child Left Behind act, through standardized testing and other assessments. Districts were willing to provide funding for the arts integration work since it directly served their purpose.

A significant challenge to partnership sustainability is the frequent turnover in school district leadership. Since the Ford initiative began, most of the sites have experienced superin-

tendent change. In three years, these partnership leaders have had to establish school district buy-in, build relationships, and develop a plan with their school district leadership partners in some cases two or three times. The Ford grantees and partners now realize that the constant rebuilding of superintendent relationships is part of ongoing business in education improvement. The more successful sites have developed procedures to quickly approach new district administrators to build new relationships and avoid loss of momentum. In many cases, sites were challenged to ask for more arts support from their district leaders, as in the case of Jackson, below.

Jackson: "Asks for more"

Ask 4 More Arts, established in 2005, grew out of the unique and highly successful Ask 4 More collaborative established in 1999 to strengthen teaching and learning in the Jackson Public School District. The idea of "asking for more"—from teachers, principals, students, parents, and the community—has led to the creation of arts integration and artist-in-residence programs in fifteen elementary schools—over a relatively short time period. Over the next five years, Ask 4 More Arts plans to expand its initiative into most, if not all, of the 38 elementary schools throughout the Jackson Public Schools district, setting clear targets for the "more" it is asking for. By establishing clear expectations of the District, articulating specific requests, and demonstrating public support for these requests, Ask 4 More Arts is cultivating District buy-in and financial support.

Finding #2: Creating tiered, diverse, and defined partnerships. Effective partnerships typically have tiered levels of engagement, with clear accountability guidelines. At the three-year juncture, all of the sites had developed a clear vision for their initiative work among key partners. Most sites have a strong core group of partners with clear roles. These sites also have a reporting structure that allows partners to hold one another accountable

for various aspects of the partnership work. The grantee frequently oversees the day-to-day partnership work plan and is responsible for managing partnership communications, new member recruitment, strategic planning, and conflict resolution. The sites that have more success with partnership-building rely on partners not just for arts education model implementation, but also to plan and carry out other activities, such as communications and advocacy. In the case of Berkeley illustrated below, partnerships included the higher education community – a critical stakeholder in the arts education and teacher preparation system.

Berkeley: Showcasing how the arts can be integrated into the initial preparation of educators

The Arts Education Initiative (AEI), is a professional education initiative based at the Department of Education at the University of California, Berkeley. It partners with Berkeley faculty and those at five other regional higher education institutions to explore effective teacher and administrator preparation models for integrating the arts into the curriculum. Each higher education partner provides lessons about a different model for how arts integrated professional preparation occurs in different academic contexts. Through presentations, publications, and strategic alliances with teacher organizations and institutions, AEI is building a grassroots network of teacher arts education advocates. Also, AEI uses the individual partner models to show how to enhance the quality of learning using the arts for educators and for the K-12 students they will serve.

ADVOCACY AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

At the initiative's outset, it was hypothesized that its overall success would rely on the ability of each of the grantees and partnerships to build top-down (education policymakers) and bottom-up (grassroots and broad organizational) support for arts and education, with targeted, strategic communications playing an essential role in this process.

In some cases, as with St. Louis illustrated below, sites had to build their advocacy and strategic communications capacity by hiring dedicated staff.

St. Louis: Augmenting staff expertise for advocacy and strategic communications

To ensure ongoing support of its arts integration initiatives in St. Louis Public Schools, Interchange adopted a multi-faceted advocacy strategy that includes paid teacher and teaching artist advocates, in-school Family Arts Activity nights, and state-level policy work in partnership with the statewide alliance for arts education. The director expanded his team to include an advocacy consultant who works on communications and coalition-building to complement the in-school collaborative residencies and teacher professional development opportunities. He also hired a parent involvement consultant to assist with advocacy to parents of students in the St. Louis Public Schools. These consultants have increased Interchange's advocacy and public engagement capacity, and they have already identified a concrete set of policy goals and corresponding strategy that they will implement over the next year.

Finding #1: Identifying clear and specific policy-change goals. The identification of a specific and clear arts education policy goal facilitates the development of effective and targeted advocacy and communications strategies. Many of the grantees initially defined their policy-change goals very broadly, without specific objectives and measures—for example, increasing district buy-in for arts education. In such cases, it has been difficult for the grantee to articulate concrete indicators of what such buy-in would look like, or the set of activities necessary to achieve it.

In cases where policy goals are clear—for example, mobilizing the district to pay for teacher professional development in the arts, or making the case for the need to hire more arts teachers to achieve equitable distribution of arts instruction—it has been

possible to develop detailed advocacy and strategic communications implementation plans and to track success.

Finding #2: Developing system-level data. Armed with data about the current state of arts education at the district level, sites can make convincing arguments about existing conditions and what needs to change. However, most sites have been challenged with collecting data about the current state of the policy goal they wish to address. Since they have not yet been able to access system-level information about arts education provisions in their school districts, sites have difficulty determining how much money the school district is currently spending on arts education, how many certified arts teachers are in the system, and which arts providers are working within schools and the extent of their engagement. Because sites do not have a baseline from which to assess their progress in changing these key systems indicators, their advocacy efforts are hampered. The challenges that sites face with regard to data collection are in part the result of lack of grantee and partnership research staffing, and in part a consequence of the general lack of availability of this information at the school district level.

The more advanced sites, which possess research capabilities, have been able to mount compelling and convincing arguments that have swayed local politicians to lobby for more arts in schools in their jurisdictions. Linking program distribution and socioeconomic data has proven to be particularly persuasive.

Finding #3: Parent engagement. To mobilize parents and family members as advocates, the most advanced sites, including Alameda and Dallas illustrated below, are creating hands-on arts engagement opportunities for parents and families. Three sites recognized that developing enduring parent arts advocacy could be facilitated by their direct engagement with the arts: being creators

of art rather than passive observers. This is particularly true for the many parents who did not have arts education when they were in school.

To more successfully engage parents, several of the sites are experimenting with reframing the definition and term “art” to better resonate with parents. One site in particular, in addition to engaging parents in arts immersion experiences, is defining arts more broadly to include a wider range of creative and lifestyle domains: the way people dress, decorate their homes, perform folk songs, and participate in generational story-telling. Making the arts and arts learning more accessible to diverse community members is reportedly beginning to unleash local arts engagement in its emerging community arts hubs and building a cadre of parent advocates.

Alameda: Connecting with existing parent groups

Early on, Alameda successfully mobilized parents to lobby online for the passage of a state mandate for arts education. Alameda has continued to mobilize this group, The Arts Active Parents, and recently developed the Arts Active Parents Leadership Council, a partnership that leverages the membership of existing parent organizations such as the Parent Education Resource Center and the 100 Families Project. These networks provide a membership base and infrastructure that can be tapped for program participation and advocacy. The Council allows Alameda to use its resources more strategically in areas such as communications work and partnership-building, rather than on replicating the efforts of existing parent organizations.

Dallas: Redefining “art” to culturally resonate with communities and families

Building parent support for arts was central to Big Thought’s Ford strategy. Early in the work, project leaders thought that prior to supporting arts as advocates, parents first had to experience and engage in the arts. Preliminary work focused on providing arts experiences to families in downtown and community arts institutions.

After a pilot, and further research, Big Thought realized that the families in their communities already had a wide array of arts talents, and rich cultural arts traditions. Big Thought changed its approach. Rather than define these experiences as arts, which were interpreted as “off putting” and identified with downtown institutions, the Big Thought team reframed these local art assets as community creativity resources. Big Thought began to harness local talents that are more resonant with their local communities’ backgrounds and interests. For example, a local Mariachi musician was tapped to provide music lessons to neighborhood children.

Also, to better understand the “arts” terminology that families preferred and why, Big Thought conducted research in 6 focus groups in 3 communities. There was a strong consensus across the six groups that “creative activities” was the most attractive language for describing the array of cultural activities’ children might do.

INTEGRATED ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The scaling up of high-quality arts and education models is a hoped for long-term outcome of this initiative. Successful, high-quality arts and education pilots not only provide experiences for children, they also provide communities with a track record, program delivery expertise, and data for making the case to broaden community support for more expansive programming. Over the initiative’s first three years, sites have experienced some success with increasing the scale of their arts integration models. Early conversations about quality programming exist in about half the sites.

Finding #1: Increase of scale. District-level support has allowed all Ford sites to modestly increase the scale of their pilot arts education models. The most rapid expansion and scaling up of arts programs have taken place in the more advanced sites, where district-level leaders, including superintendents and curricu-

lum supervisors, are strong supporters of arts integration programming.

Finding # 2: Theory-based and comprehensive programming. Several sites are grounding their programs in quality, theory-based programming. Applying a theory-based framework (such as multiple intelligences or “habits of mind” theories that explore how children learn and interpret new information) ensures that the implemented arts education programs are based on the best teaching and learning practices. Cleveland provides an interesting example of how one site has worked to embed a theory-based arts education program within the district’s literacy curriculum.

Cleveland: Targeting third grade literacy through the arts

The Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative has developed a third grade integrated arts and literacy curriculum called Art Is Education. The curriculum offers a rigorous, standards-based model with the potential of being adopted district-wide. In developing the curriculum, CMSD teachers and teaching artists drew on the work of Project Zero at Harvard University to develop a research-based program that uses arts integration to develop literacy skills. In the spring of 2007, Cleveland successfully piloted the curriculum in nineteen third grade CMSD classrooms in fourteen schools. Prior to piloting, arts specialists, classroom teachers and teaching artists participated in significant professional development. Rather than scale up to all third grade classrooms in the 2007-08 school year as initially planned, the program was maintained at a more modest level due to changing District priorities.

Finding #3: Staffing and resource barriers. Other than will, the biggest factors inhibiting scaling up models continue to be adequate staffing and funding. Most of the sites have some arts specialists in schools who are often supplemented by visiting teaching artists. However, staffing is not suffi-

cient and continues to be stretched as programs are extended to additional classrooms. In some cases, when the model includes one-on-one arts coaches for classroom teachers, coaches are likewise stretched too thin. The Minneapolis example highlighted below showcases one approach to increasing school capacity for arts education.

Minneapolis: Relying on an expanded core of arts education coaches

Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA) was initiated in 1997 in the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) as a joint venture with the Perpich Center for Arts Education (PCAE), a state agency dedicated to excellence in arts education. Since 1997, AAA has facilitated high quality artist-teacher collaborations to create arts rich classrooms for students in MPS. Using a planning process developed from the work of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2005), coaches support work with classroom teachers and artists. This established integrated arts education model promotes quality education through a community arts partnership model. Through the new Arts Reach project, AAA seeks to scale up the number of schools for integrated arts learning by providing increased numbers of coaches, focused resources for underserved schools to expand programming, and an advocacy strategy.

For the majority of the sites, the funding for the model arts integration programs is sufficient at the scale of a few pilot demonstration schools. Currently, it is not sufficient to scale up to schools throughout the districts. The exception, Dallas, is significant, because it shows what may be possible for other communities as they work toward initiative goals. Due to a robust infrastructure at the arts education broker in Dallas, a significant influx of funds from multiple national foundations, and policy-savvy leadership, Dallas has achieved district-wide goals, such as 45 minutes of music and 45 minutes of visual arts weekly for every elementary student.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Given the current state of limited

public commitment to arts education, the National Arts Education Initiative's focus on building public will is appropriate, timely, and very necessary. Supporting the arts education field locally and nationally in order to understand the critical role that communications and advocacy efforts play in influencing public and private policies provides a new and significant direction for the field. If discrete arts and education programs are ever to reach scale, learning how to influence these public and private policy decisions is essential.

As the nine sites continue to work on their advocacy campaigns and develop arts education programs that can be taken to scale, their lessons can inform and deepen the national conversation about what it takes for communities to build arts education systems. At the same time, the Ford-supported national strategic communications research and dissemination tactics can be applied and tested in various locales. As initiative participants and others reach beyond their base constituency to forge partnerships, public support of the arts as an important component of an educational improvement agenda is likely to increase.

The Ford Foundation's National Arts Education Initiative holds out a compelling vision for American education:

Across cities, students will have equitable access to quality arts programs; the majority of schools in the district will have adopted a rigorous arts integration curriculum across all grades; and schools will have the necessary infrastructure to support the implementation of the curriculum, including qualified arts teachers and teaching artists.

To be sure, there is much work to be done to achieve this vision. The National Arts Education Initiative offers a compelling road map for working toward this goal.

Author Note

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Re-Placing the Arts in Elementary School Curricula: An Interdisciplinary, Collaborative Action Research Project

By Allen Trent, University of Wyoming, and Jorge-Ayn Riley, Denver Public Schools

ABSTRACT

This article describes a collaborative action research project aimed at deliberately “re-placing” art in the elementary curriculum through targeted planning, implementation, and assessment of an art integrated unit in an urban 4th grade classroom. Findings and implications should be relevant to elementary teachers, administrators, art specialists, and teacher educators. Our findings illustrate the power of art-integrated education to support student learning at high levels and in meaningful ways.

“Using art to learn things was helpful because you can express what you have learned” (4th grade student interview 5/9/08).

The arts, and their place in school curricula, have been debated for centuries (Keatinge, 1967). An expanding arts education literature base touts multiple benefits of arts education, including cognitive development (Eisner 2002), increased academic achievement (Critical Links, 2003), and the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for democratic citizenship (Leshnoff, 2003; Silvers, 2003). Despite these documented benefits, time and emphasis on the arts in schools has decreased (*Academic Atrophy: The Condition of the Liberal Arts in America’s Public Schools*, 2004; Hetland, Winner, Veenema, Sheridan, & Perkins, 2007).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has had a detrimental impact on the arts in schools, largely because some policy makers believe focusing on literacy and numeracy, in isolation, will support students’ meeting of standardized testing targets (Hetland et al., 2007). While these “detrimental impacts” have broadly impacted students throughout the U.S., the problem is exacerbated in poor and urban schools. Recent research has concluded that while most children are receiving less instruction in the arts and have fewer opportunities to engage arts and humanities curricula, socio-economically lower children receive less arts content than their wealthier peers, and when they do receive art infused curricula, poor children receive lower

quality forms of art integrated education (Mishook and Cornhaber, 2006).

Unfortunately, this inequity is all too common. Poor, diverse, and urban schools typically have less experienced teachers, and dedicated teachers choosing to teach in these schools are increasingly subjected to rigid guidelines and mandates from which their peers teaching in more affluent schools are exempt. For example, Jaeger, a California teacher, was forced to follow a prescriptive curriculum called Open Court, “a scripted reading program that tells teachers what to say and do at every moment” (Jaeger, 2006, p. 39). This mandate, noted Jaeger, left teachers unable to include “curriculum that more fully addressed the range of levels and the varied strengths and weaknesses of our students” (p. 39). She also observed,

It is important to note here that not all teachers in our district fell victim to the heavy-handed implementation of Open Court. Teachers in other schools told me they were allowed great flexibility in use of the materials and advised by their principals to focus on standards rather than on the scripted teacher’s guide. Policing by consultants was minimal. How did these schools differ from Downer [Jaeger’s school]? They were located in middle class neighborhoods with a greater percentage of white students. The district shackled teachers of poor

children with generally lower achievement to a curriculum that did not let them modify their teaching. Teachers in more affluent schools could enrich the curriculum to emphasize higher-level thinking and aesthetics. (p. 40)

Our project counters the disconcerting trends and realities described above. This project’s aim was to bring quality, meaningful, teacher-planned arts integrated education to urban students. As co-teachers, we have decades of experience and believe professional teachers must have the autonomy to design learning experiences that relate to students’ lives and interests. Our hope is that the project described in this article serves as another model of student-centered teaching and learning and shows that integrated, multimodal approaches are as applicable and effective in urban schools as they are in affluent suburban districts.

The inquiry described in this article was conducted in Jorge-Ayn Riley’s, Denver Public School (DPS) fourth grade class at Park Hill ECE – 8 School. Park Hill Elementary is located in Northeast Denver, Colorado. The school population is diverse with the following ethnic/racial distribution: 39% African American, 39% Anglo, 15% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 2% Native American. 38% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced price lunch.

In 2007, the district provided all 4th grade teachers with new social studies

curricular materials organized under the theme “Privacy in a Democracy.” These materials served as our curricular starting point. In this article, we provide an account of this project designed to “re-place” art in the elementary curriculum through an interdisciplinary, art integrated unit aligned with district standards in multiple content areas.

This action research project was designed to integrate visual art into the elementary curriculum in ways that supported high levels of student learning and engagement. Additionally, as teacher researchers, our aims included better understanding the planning and implementation of art integrated curricula so that we might improve our practice and share our resultant learning with education colleagues and stakeholders.

In this article, we discuss the theoretical beliefs that guide our work, outline the methodology used to collect data and documentation throughout the unit, share our collaborative lesson/unit planning framework, provide examples of lessons and student responses (written and artistic/visual), and summarize research findings and present implications and recommendations.

THEORETICAL BELIEFS

Co-equal Arts Integration

We join others in asserting the arts have tremendous potential to impact schooling, and thus people and society, in ways we have only imagined. We are familiar with the essentialist argument: art should be in curriculum for valuable, art specific essentialist learning only) vs. the instrumentalist argument: art can be used in curriculum to support learning in other school subject areas, as well as art learning (Critical Links, 2003). As practitioners with extensive teaching and administrative experience focused on public schooling (40+ years combined), we argue the instrumentalist approach can be implemented effectively in ways that support a “co-equal” integrative approach. In seeking a “co-equal” form of art integration, we target student outcomes (in our case district standards and benchmarks) in both art and other

content areas. This co-equal approach, we believe, is the only feasible way for the arts to permeate regular classroom curricula in today’s standards driven educational contexts. Essentialist approaches, we fear, will lead to further marginalization (and ultimately an absence?) of the arts in schools.

Multimodality

Our art-integrated approach capitalizes on the “multimodal” nature of contemporary communication and representation. Multi-modality refers to the increasing combination of multiple modes of meaning – linguistic, visual, and auditory. Multimodality embraces a more complex view of the elements that constitute communication, as “it becomes necessary to treat ‘reading’ – and communicating in a broader perspective – as a process that extends beyond (alphabetic) writing, and includes images and other new modes” (Vincent, 2005, p. 2). This perspective aligns with multiple intelligence theories that claim individuals have a broad range of “intelligences” that encompass far more than linguistic proficiency and mathematical reasoning (Gardner, 1983).

Our obligation then, as educators, is to allow students to approach learning in ways that acclimate them to and capitalize on prior experiences with multimodal representations. In this project, students both encountered and created representations that combined multiple modes: traditional written text, constructed images, poetry, digital images, and media that combined these forms.

Constructivism

We believe in constructivist/constructionist teaching and learning. In other words, we believe children (and adults alike) construct their own understandings in unique, idiosyncratic ways and these individual understandings are deeper and more meaningful when engaged in collaboration with others (Arends, 2009). Therefore, our goals as teachers include providing students rich opportunities in which they can construct and acquire significant knowledge and skills that connect to their prior experiences and conceptual schema and that apply to

and enrich their lives. We contrast our approach with more traditional teaching approaches that view knowledge as static, teachers as transmitters of this knowledge, and students as receivers of this predetermined set of facts, skills and understandings.

The Roles for Schools in a Democracy

Multiple aims for schooling have been articulated and pursued. Our beliefs and practices honor much broader aims than those currently addressed in most public schools, and we believe that schools are the ideal place to achieve the goal of educating democratic citizens. Other scholars (e.g., Dean, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Mirón, 2003; Phillips, 2003; Silvers, 2003) believe in this potential and claim, as we do, that concepts embedded in arts education are congruent with, and overlap, the skills and dispositions needed to participate in a democracy. An Arts Education Partnership (2004) report also focuses on this link:

A fundamental purpose of schooling in America is to enable students to develop the values, understandings, and habits essential to a democracy and to apply them in their personal and public lives... studies suggest that arts engagement and processes nurture essential democratic values, habits, and actions. (AEP, 2004, p. 24)

Art and democracy share a dependency “on one extraordinary human gift, imagination [which is] their common link to civil society” (Barber, 1997). We imagine new understandings of the bonds between art, education, and democracy. Our teaching and research focus on these connections as they are manifested in schools. We believe that the learning that happens (or could happen) in arts integrated education may be among the most valuable of all, the acquisition of skills and dispositions necessary for democratic citizenship.

Our theoretical beliefs related to co-equal arts integration, multimodality, constructivist teaching and learning, and the role of schooling in a democracy come together in our teaching and in the student work products connected to this project. This study documents that our attempt to integrate visual art, mul-

timodal representations, and civic education supported student learning in all targeted art, academic, and social areas.

METHODOLOGY

This inquiry project utilized a collaborative action research approach. Mills describes action research as: any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment, to gather information about the ways their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. This information is gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment (and on educational practices in general), and improving student outcomes and the lives of those involved. Action research is done *by* teachers for themselves. (Mills, 2007, p. 5)

The aims of action researchers include better understandings and improving practice, along with sharing accounts of the implementation/research process and findings with stakeholders who may benefit. Importantly, teacher action researchers are generating knowledge and theories grounded in actual practice: "In doing action research, teacher researchers have developed solutions to their own problems. Teachers – not outside 'experts' – are the authorities on what works in their classrooms" (Mills, 2007, p. 12).

The results of this type of research are practical. Action Research differs from other forms of research "as there is less concern for universality of the finding and more value placed on the relevance of the findings to the researcher and the local collaborators" (Center for Collaborative Action Research, para 5).

In this project, we benefitted from a collaborative action research approach, as both of us assumed dual roles of teacher/researcher. This enabled us to co-plan all teaching and research activities, allowing us to work as critical friends throughout the implementation and interpretation processes, asking each other questions, raising concerns, and highlighting important findings at all stages of the project.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided our inquiry/action research project. These questions served to focus our teaching, planning, data collection, and analysis: 1) What are the student specific impacts/outcomes of integrating visual art curricula with other academic content areas? 2) What approaches, strategies, and practices support the implementation of arts integrated curricula? And, 3) What does quality art integrated education (in elementary classrooms) look like?

Data Collection and Analysis

The unit was taught and data were gathered throughout the 2008 spring semester. Action researchers allow the research questions to point them to the most appropriate data sources (Mills, 2007). While this inquiry relied heavily on qualitative and descriptive forms of data, we also utilized quantitative data and descriptive statistics when these tools provided us with insights related to our research questions. Data collection tools employed in this action research project included pre/post assessment of student learning specific to unit objectives; field notes/researcher journals; collection/documentation of student work samples, curricular materials, and lesson plans; videotaped focus group interviews; and photos of classroom activities. Analysis included multiple reviews of all data sources. We discussed and analyzed all data sets and shaped our conclusions in an ongoing series of reflective discussions usually held after school. We evaluated student work using rubrics based on Denver Public School's benchmark criteria. These data were quantified to document and summarize individual student and overall class levels of proficiency at the completion of the arts integrated unit.

We analyzed all qualitative data sources guided by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw's (1995) approach to data analysis. Activities included "open coding," or naming, organizing, and asking questions about the data set; "memo writing," identifying and writing about patterns or themes and specific analytic issues; and a "focused coding" process in which we elaborated promi-

nent themes and sub-themes, connected data, and, ultimately, formulated conclusions and theories grounded in and supported by data exemplars.

Throughout the inquiry, we focused on identifying themes, conclusions and understandings (what we call "findings") that directly informed/responded to our research questions. To corroborate our initial interpretations, we discussed our understandings with students via small focus group interviews and with each other in the reflective discussions after school. We used a collaborative data analysis process, informally sharing and solidifying our thoughts and findings over a period of months. We discuss findings later in this paper.

COLLABORATIVE LESSON/UNIT PLANNING

The integrated unit was planned to connect to the DPS 4th grade curricular unit "Privacy: Foundations of Democracy" (published by the Center for Civic Education, 1997). The class engaged in a variety of readings, research, and discussions of privacy related topics using DPS curricular materials. Additionally, we developed a series of arts integrated lessons aligned with DPS standards (Social Studies, Language Arts and Visual Art) to supplement and enrich students' learning.

Our approach included explicit attention to teaching and assessment of student learning specific to DPS curricular benchmarks and identified democratic skills and dispositions. As noted earlier, we acknowledge the importance of aligning formal district standards and benchmarks in ways that support "co-equal" arts integration, but we also have learning goals for our students that fall outside this formal, "explicit" curriculum, in this case, democratic skills and dispositions aligned with the First Amendment Schools' "Core Civic Habits" (http://www.firstamendmentschools.org/pdf_files/civic_habits.pdf). These "civic habits of heart, mind, voice and work" (p. 1) aptly describe many of the aims we have for students as they learn to be contributing members of a democratic society. A simple template was used to begin our planning for each lesson.

Lesson Objectives

- Define: rights to privacy; scope and limits of privacy
- Explain why privacy is not an absolute right
- Identify and interpret documents that grant/affirm privacy rights
- Create artistic representations related to rights of privacy

DPS CURRICULUM BENCHMARKS**Reading & Writing**

- 1.1 Students actively process text during reading
- 1.2 Students answer explicit and implicit questions orally and in writing
- 1.16 Students use information from reading to increase vocabulary
- 2.1 Students demonstrate techniques for effective conversations and small group discussions
- 2.2 Students communicate effectively by sharing ideas; offering advice, opinion, and information; and reacting to contributions of others
- 2.10 Students write using a variety of sentence structures
- 4.4 Students predict and draw conclusions

Social Studies/Civics Standards K-4

- 1.1 Students identify a constitution as a framework for government
- 1.2 Students explain why the power of a government should be limited
- 1.3 Students give examples of rights protected by a constitution
- 1.4 Students explain responsibilities for self, other individuals, property, rule of law, and civic responsibility
- 2.3 Students recognize the need for rules and the consequences of breaking rules and laws
- 5.4 ...students create a graphic representation of a governmental concept

Visual Art

- 1.2 Students use brainstorming as a means to generate ideas for works of art
- 2.1 Students recognize and apply the elements of art and expressive qualities
- 3.1 Students draw using a variety of materials, tools, techniques, technologies and processes
- 3.6 Students construct a collage using a variety of materials, tools, and techniques

Democratic Skills and Dispositions (from First Amendment Schools' "Core Civic Habits")

- Students take responsibility for self and others
- Students demonstrate knowledge of democratic principles, human rights and social justice
- Students listen and observe deeply, and respond in a connected way
- Students agree and disagree honestly and respectfully

Instructional Strategies/Activities

- Students review Privacy Rights handout (includes text and graphics related to privacy rights, constitutional amendments...)
- Pairs discuss, then whole group discussion (Questions written on chart paper; meet in group area) Discussion Qs:
 - What are rights? (Powers or privileges granted by an agreement or law)
 - What rights do we have to privacy? (Constitution/Bill of Rights Amendments 3,4 & 5 – emphasize 4; UNICEF, United Nation's Children's Fund statement on children's right to privacy; Privacy Act of 1974)
 - Why is privacy not an absolute right in the United States?
 - What do we mean by the scope and limits of privacy?
- Explain that we are going to make representations using cut paper and will make our pieces in the style of Jacob Lawrence (previously studied Lawrence's work and concept of "series")
- Students determine what concept(s) related to privacy they will represent – privacy rights, 4th Amendment to the Constitution, UNICEF privacy rights for children; scope and/or limits of privacy...
- Students write this as a title on provided planning sheet
- Students sketch on planning paper to plan their cut paper pieces
- Students work on art pieces
- Students complete written artist statements to accompany work describing and interpreting their individual artwork
- Writing and artwork shared and displayed

Assessment

- Student art pieces, artist statements, and interactions will be assessed using Privacy Rights Rubric.
- Students will complete rubrics as self-assessment. Teachers will also evaluate student art, writing and interactions using same rubric. Rubric categories: Sentence Structure and Fluency; Grammar and Spelling; Collaboration; Artwork

Above is the beginning of the framework for a lesson titled “Privacy Rights”

We utilized a detailed lesson-planning format so our lesson plans and framework could be shared and used by other teachers across the district (and beyond). In doing so, we are hoping to promote the sharing of art integrated, standards aligned plans on a broader scale among teachers. Arts integrated planning takes time, so developing a bank of shared plans will allow teachers to widely benefit from each other’s planning efforts. A number of excellent websites already serve as sources and/or starting points for arts integrated lessons and units (e.g., the Kennedy Center’s Artsedge, <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/>; Incredible Art Lessons, <http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/lessons.html>; or Arizona State’s Artswork site, <http://artswork.asu.edu/>). We hope sharing our contextualized planning process

and framework proves valuable to other educators seeking to better integrate the arts with other core subject area curricula while simultaneously pursuing broader, more democratic outcomes for students. We intentionally used simple processes and inexpensive materials so that these lessons and the general template can be accessed and used by a wide range of teachers.

Student learning was evaluated through multiple assessment methodologies. First, students’ prior knowledge was assessed before the unit and before each lesson via whole and small group discussions of predetermined prompts/questions aligned with desired learning outcomes. Students’ work products for each lesson were evaluated via rubrics designed specifically for each assignment/project. These rubrics were used by students as self-assessment instruments and by the teachers for formal evaluation of student work. Stu-

dents were also evaluated informally in small and whole group interactions with peers and teachers. Additionally, unit aims were assessed through a series of focus group interviews with all students in the studied class.

Lesson Examples

The unit involved a series of lessons extending over an entire semester. In this article, we present summaries of four arts integrated lessons: *Defining and Interpreting Privacy*; *Privacy Rights*; *Poems about Privacy*; and *Critiquing Privacy Images*. All of these lessons were explicitly designed to meet multiple district social studies, visual art, and language arts standards and benchmarks. In addition to the formal district standards, we also targeted a series of democratic skills and dispositions including taking responsibility for self and others; demonstrating knowledge of democratic



Figure 1. Excerpt from “Privacy Journal” (Student journal, 1/17/08)

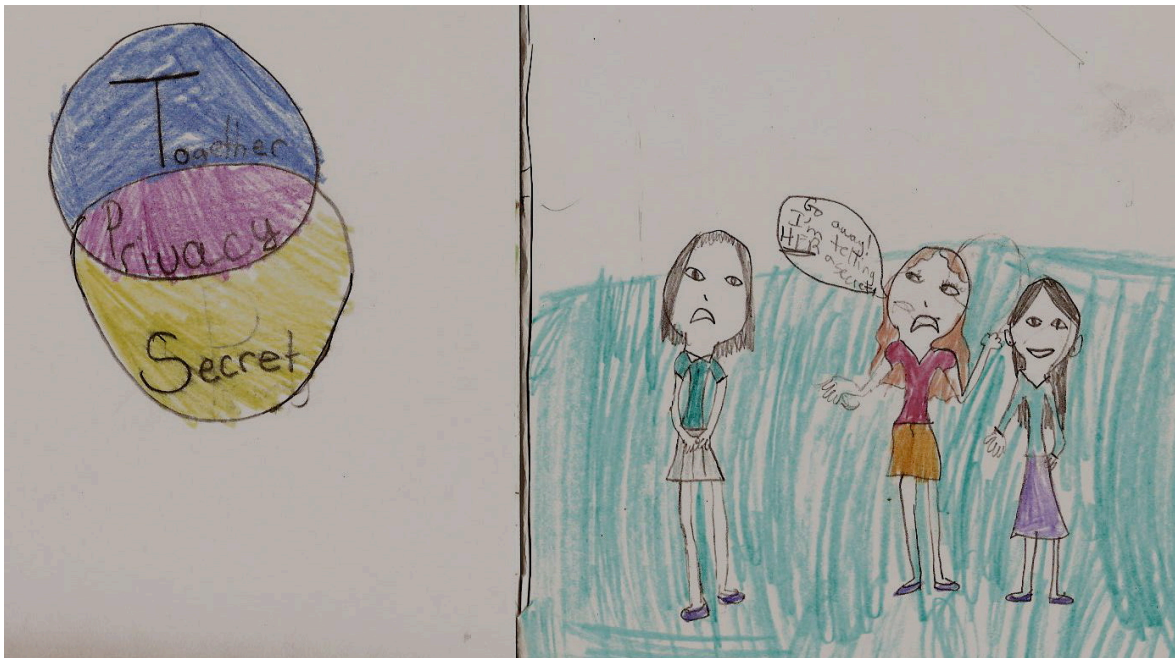


Figure 2. Excerpt from “Privacy Journal” (Student journal, 1/17/08)

principles, human rights and social justice; practicing critical reflection; agreeing and disagreeing honestly and respectfully; and demonstrating integrity, persistence, and self-discipline.

Defining and interpreting privacy. In this lesson, we gathered baseline information on students’ initial understandings of key unit concepts. We asked students to share their individual definitions and interpretations of privacy, engaged them in brainstorming and identification of examples and non-examples of privacy they encounter in their own lives, had students explain their perceptions about the importance of privacy, brainstormed ways people try to obtain/maintain privacy, and involved students in recording their ideas, narratives, and symbolic thinking related to “privacy in a democracy” concepts.

After opening whole group and paired student discussions around a set of key questions, students were paired randomly to review and discuss four short case scenarios that raised ethical dilemmas associated with privacy, including a scenario about privacy in desks, one on telephone conversations, another about searching book bags, and a situation about note writing. Stu-

dents then constructed simple journals and responded to a series of prompts that engaged them in multimodal writing, drawing, symbolizing and analysis connected to the unit’s theme. Students shared ideas recorded in their journals within their table groups and then shared across the whole class during a gallery walk in which students could leisurely view and discuss each other’s journal responses, drawings, writing, and brainstorming. Students later shared their journals and other unit learning with their parents (see figures 1 & 2 for sample journal pages). Student journals and interactions were assessed using a rubric we developed to evaluate targeted benchmarks.

Privacy rights lesson. In this lesson, students explored rights to privacy, learned about the scope and limits of privacy, and discussed why privacy is not an absolute right. Students identified and interpreted documents that grant/affirm privacy rights, including the Constitution/Bill of Rights Amendments 3,4, and 5; the United Nation’s Children’s Fund statement on children’s right to privacy; and the Privacy Act of 1974. Students discussed and debated scenarios in which privacy rights issues were pertinent.

Key questions that guided this lesson included: What are rights? What rights do we have to privacy? Why is privacy not an absolute right in the United States? What do we mean by the scope and limits of privacy? And, how can we create representations (cut paper) that illustrate our understandings and ideas about privacy rights?

To document and display their understandings of privacy rights, students were asked to brainstorm and then select a theme or topic related to privacy to illustrate. Students planned their compositions using a simple planning sheet that asked them to first identify the topic or theme they planned to address in their artwork, and then to draft a sketch of their composition. Students then created artistic representations using cut and torn colored paper in a Jacob Lawrence like series (multiple pieces on a selected theme, individual, or topic). Finally, students wrote artists’ statements to accompany their artwork.

Student art pieces, artist statements, and interactions were assessed using a Privacy Rights rubric to evaluate targeted benchmarks, skills and dispositions. Students completed this, and all other lesson rubrics as self-assessment. Students’ artwork and statements documented their increas-



Figure 3. Fourth grader's cut paper artwork illustrating privacy rights concepts. "My artwork is about someone trying to steal privacy from someone else. My message is that you don't always have absolute privacy." (Student artwork and artist's statement, 2/22/08)

ing understandings of unit concepts related to rights generally, and privacy related rights specifically. Further, students' work products illustrated their ability to *apply* privacy and privacy rights related concepts. Examples of student representations and writing are provided in Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Critiquing privacy images. In this lesson, students engaged in oral and written art criticism activities using an assembled series of artwork, political cartoons, historical depictions/advertisements, and other popular/visual cultural images related to the privacy in a democracy theme. We researched a variety of artists and websites to build this image gallery. Artists working with privacy concepts include Wendy Richmond, Scorsone and Dreuding, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, and Michelle Teran. Students were introduced to an art criticism framework that focused

on description and interpretation, and then applied this framework in whole group discussions and then in writing to images they were provided randomly. The students presented their critiques orally, and then the critiques and images were bound into a collected volume. The following excerpt from a student's critique illustrates the student's application of both descriptive and interpretive frameworks: "This image makes me feel sad. It looks like someone is in jail because you can see the bars reflected off the lock. It seems like the lock is being used to isolate someone, to take away their right to privacy" (Student written critique, 3/13/08).

Poems about privacy. In this final lesson, the class discussed, reviewed, and synthesized multiple concepts addressed throughout the privacy in a democracy unit. Students utilized the writing process to create poems

that address privacy in a democracy unit topics and concepts. Students accompanied poems with illustrations. Having studied a variety of poetry forms, students selected poetry forms and topics connected to the unit and wrote and shared poems with the class. Students wrote free verse, limerick, rhyming, haiku, narrative, humorous, shape, and concrete poems. Poem topics included: types of privacy, secrecy, security, rights, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights (Third Amendment, Fourth Amendment, and Fifth Amendment), scope and limits of privacy, and absolute privacy. Sample poems (included below) documented students' understandings and synthesis of key unit concepts. Additionally, most students' poems connected unit learning to their personal lives and experiences.



Figure 4. Fourth grader's cut paper artwork illustrating privacy rights concepts. "In my artwork, two soldiers are requesting to get into a man's house. The man refuses because his house is private property. My artwork refers to the Third Amendment to the Constitution which prohibits housing soldiers in private homes." (Student artwork and artist's statement, 2/22/08)

Samples from Fourth Grade Students' Privacy Poems:

THE SECRET TALK

Shutting all the doors
While telling each other secrets
No one else can hear us, we're
Whispering
Gossiping
Telling
With a secret handshake
We end our conversation
(Student poem, 4/25/09)

CALLER ID

Caller ID gives me privacy
When someone calls,
I can talk to them or ignore them
I like this privacy
I don't HAVE to answer the phone!
(Student poem, 4/25/09)

THE THREE TYPES OF PRIVACY

The three types of privacy happen to be
Information privacy such as passwords, files, codes and more,
So many secret things to adore!
Next is behavior privacy
Such as secret handshakes, whispering and closing the door
Last but not least, observation privacy
An example of this is not being seen
When one wishes not to be seen
(Student poem, 4/25/09)

ACTION RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research evidence (student work samples/data, field notes, teacher journals and debriefing, and focus group interviews) documents students' understandings of key unit concepts,

district benchmarks, and targeted skills and dispositions in all targeted areas (social studies, art, language arts, and civic habits). As teachers, we derived deeper understandings that will guide future teaching, planning and collaboration. All participants agreed the unit was enjoyable, but this study also illustrates that both students and teacher researchers were engaged at high levels and learned a great deal through participation.

Conclusions "tell the reader what you learned" (Meyers & Rust, 2003). We identified 13 specific conclusions, called "findings," and discuss each below. These findings respond directly to our targeted research questions, and so these questions are used to organize our discussion of inquiry results. Implications and recommendations are discussed in the final section of this article.



Figure 5. Fourth grader's cut paper artwork illustrating privacy rights concepts.

"My artwork is about having information privacy. My artwork represents a person texting on the phone to another person. The phone represents a way to have privacy and not be interfered with." (Student artwork and artist's statement, 2/22/08)

Student Learning/Outcomes

Four of our research findings relate to the question: what are the student specific impacts/outcomes of integrating visual art curricula with other academic content areas? Student learning was assessed via multiple measures: formal rubric assessment of work products and interactions, pre and post assessment of students' mastery of major unit concepts, informal assessment via observations recorded in field notes, and focus group interview questions designed to assess student learning. Findings specific to student learning/outcomes include the following:

Finding #1 - Arts integrated lessons supported student learning across all targeted content areas and benchmarks. High percentages of students met and/or exceeded benchmark proficiency levels in Art, Social Studies, and Writing. While students had cursory levels of understanding about key unit concepts at the beginning of the unit, almost all of the students scored at or above the proficient level

on all summative assessments, including rubric evaluations of student work products. This outcome is significantly higher than student performance on other, non-arts integrated work evaluated throughout the academic year. Students were able to illustrate understandings specific to many targeted concepts. For example, all students (at the completion of the unit) were able to define privacy, explain privacy rights, articulate the scope and limits of privacy, differentiate between the different kinds/forms of privacy studied (information privacy, behavior privacy, and observation privacy), and create multimodal representations related to privacy. A student's writing about an art piece illustrates a solid understanding of many unit concepts: "My artwork is about the 4th Amendment to the Constitution. My message is that the 4th Amendment to the Constitution is a good thing because it prevents people from barging into your home... whether or not you are in or out of your home, a search warrant is needed" (Student artist statement, 2/22/08).

Finding #2 - Students enjoyed the art integrated approach, experienced high levels of engagement, and also displayed a strong sense of efficacy. We closed the focus group interviews by asking all groups, "What else would you like to share about the 'Privacy in a Democracy' unit?" Participants in all eight groups' responses included telling us how much they liked the unit lessons and activities. One student summarized the comments of many, saying, "I liked learning with art. It was fun, but it was also challenging. It was fun and challenging all at the same time" (Focus group interview, 5/9/08). Additionally, our field notes indicated a high level of engagement in all unit activities. Classroom management/discipline problems were non-existent. In fact, our only management problem was having enough time, as students wanted to continue to work on unit projects even after the allotted time had expired. Finally, students displayed a strong sense of efficacy in engaging unit concepts and assignments. Many students wrote

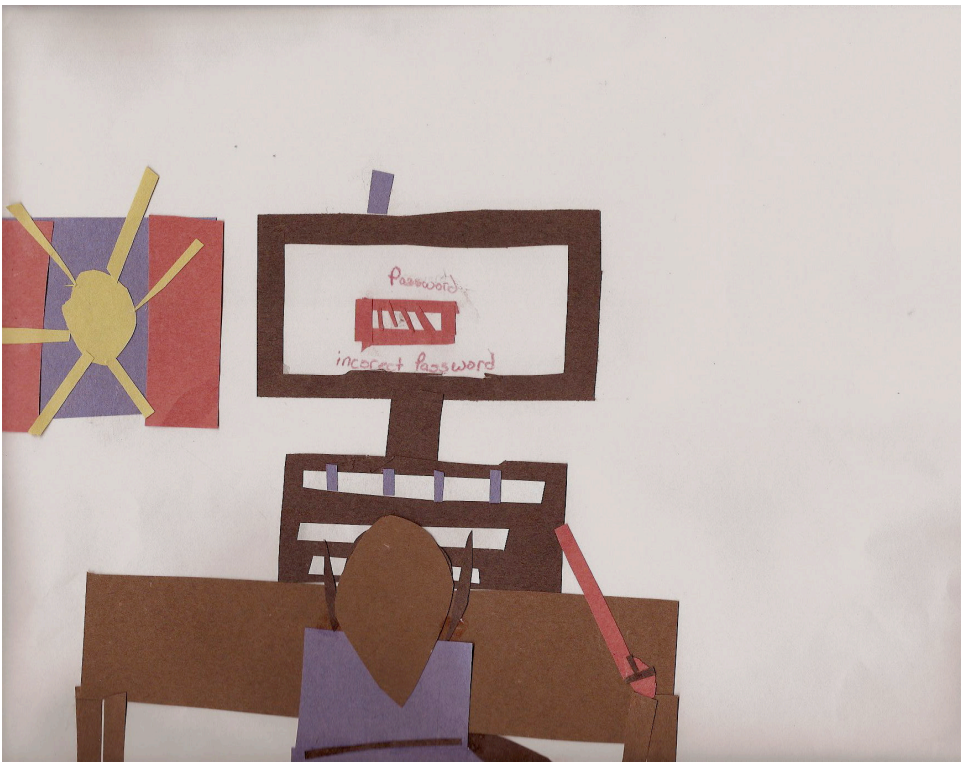


Figure 6. Fourth grader's cut paper artwork illustrating privacy rights concepts.

"My artwork is about a girl trying to figure out someone's password on the computer. Every time the girl tries to crack the password, it is always incorrect. As an artist, I am trying to show that a way you can protect your privacy on the computer is by having a password. This is shown in my artwork." (Student artwork and artist's statement, 2/22/08)

and talked about the challenges associated with visual expression of conceptual ideas but also wrote that they were pleased with the results of their efforts. One student said, "This project made us think in different ways. That was good. Sometimes it was hard, like when we were making the cut-paper artwork. It was like drawing with scissors, but when you finish, you're proud of it" (Focus group interview, 5/9/08).

Finding #3 - Student comments, writing, and work samples illustrated a solid commitment to human and legal rights and democratic skills and dispositions that were explored during the unit. Prior to the unit, most students weren't even aware of the existence of human and legal rights related to privacy (field notes from whole class discussion, 1/16/08), and yet they ended the unit of study committed to exercising and protecting these studied privileges: "I learned that be-

cause of the Fourth Amendment, I can say no to search of my house, and that I won't get in trouble" (Focus group interview, 5/9/09). A number of student art pieces illustrated citizens saying "no" to illegal search and seizure (Fourth Amendment) and "no" to demands to house soldiers in homes during peace time (Third Amendment). "Everyone," claimed a student, "has a right to some privacy, even kids" (Focus group interview, 5/9/08). Further, students discussed (in writings and in focus groups) the positive nature of the collaboration and sharing/debate that was a part of many lessons. A number of statements were similar to a student that remarked, "I'm glad we had the chance to help each other and talk about these ideas. It was good to hear how other people felt about things. It helped me understand the lessons better" (Focus group interview, 5/9/08). A student referencing the art projects said, "my artwork was better, because my classmates helped me think about

my designs" (Focus group interview, 5/9/08). Connected to this finding is our belief that aims outside the formal curriculum, in our case the acquisition of specific democratic skills and dispositions, can be achieved when they are identified and pursued alongside more traditional academic aims.

Finding #4 - Students demonstrated a high degree of transferability of unit learning. In other words, they readily related the concepts studied in the unit to their own lives and changed some practices/behaviors as a result. Students were articulate in describing how concepts related to privacy were present in their individual contexts. For example, this is the first year these 4th graders are allowed to have their own lockers, and so lockers and privacy were an ongoing topic of debate and discussion "My locker is a good way to keep things private. Even if there isn't a lock on it, people should respect my privacy"



Figure 7. Fourth grader's cut paper artwork illustrating privacy rights concepts.

"This artwork is about two kids. One is trying to keep her privacy by keeping her locker secret. The boy wants to see the girl's locker, but he can't because there is a lock on it... you need to respect others' privacy, unless they allow you to look in their locker." (Student artwork and artist's statement, 2/22/08).

(Student artist statement, 2/22/08).

Students also understood and related to the many complex privacy issues associated with technology. Students had ongoing discussions about privacy issues associated with text messaging, computer passwords, and surveillance cameras. One student noted, "I like text messaging. Text messaging is a great way to communicate privately" (Student artist statement, 2/22/08), but another claimed, "people think text messaging is always private, but that's not always true. People can sometimes get your text messages or can even get your phone and see all your texts" (Focus group interview, 5/9/09). A number of students created artwork and poems that focused on computers and privacy. One student asserted, "you do not have absolute privacy on a computer, but when you use a password, it makes it much harder for people to invade your privacy" (Student artist statement, 2/22/08).

A student with multiple siblings claimed, "it's important for people to

have privacy at times, but it is hard for me. Even if I am in my room, my brothers and sisters are always barging in!" (Focus group interview, 5/9/09). Another student discussed her family's attempts to gain privacy: "We keep privacy by having a fence and by closing the window shades" (Student artist statement, 2/22/08). Overwhelmingly, data showed that students increased their understandings of privacy concepts and, as a result, felt strongly about having and protecting privacy for themselves and others.

Art Integration: Teacher Learning
In addition to the documented student learning outlined above, as co-teachers/co-researchers in this project, we also claim new understandings that resulted from our facilitation/participation. Teacher learning was identified through the analysis of research journals/field notes, and via collaborative planning and reflective debriefing discussions. The six findings discussed below correspond with the research question: What approaches, strate-

gies and practices, support the implementation of arts integrated curricula?

Finding #5 - The use of easily obtained materials and simple art making processes makes arts integration more feasible and also allows for a greater number of teachers to utilize these same or similar lesson plans. We intentionally used inexpensive materials and tools that can be accessed in most U.S. elementary schools – scissors, glue sticks, copy and construction paper, crayons, colored pencils and markers. As public school teachers we are accustomed to small (or non-existent) budgets and improvising with materials. Still, the use of a variety of basic art materials in this unit allowed students a wide range of opportunities to express their ideas creatively via a variety of modes. Many students commented on the positive nature of being able to display their understandings in visual, symbolic ways (Focus group interviews, 5/9/08).

Additionally, the use of inexpensive, accessible materials cuts down on the amount of preparation time needed and enables other teachers to use these lessons in their classrooms without spending huge amounts of time and money tracking down specialized supplies (Reflective discussions, 4/25/08 & 8/14/08). We were asked to share/present our integrated unit with all new teachers in the district. As a result, the district Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator informed us that teachers across the district are using these same lessons in their classrooms and further, that teachers are now utilizing our process and format and are adding to the bank of lesson/unit plans aligned with district standards (Field notes, 8/14/08 & 10/31/08).

Finding #6 - Systematic documentation served many purposes including: formative assessment, provision of research data and artifacts, and evidence of student learning. We copied, organized, and kept documentation of everything. Lesson plans, student journals, student art, student writing, photographs and scans of student art and in-class activities, videotapes of discussions and interviews, district curricular materials, and field notes/research journals were all organized in large binders that served as invaluable resources for teaching, assessment, and research. We each had similar notes on this topic: “collecting, copying and organizing all this stuff has been tremendously time consuming, but now that it’s done, it’s all so accessible. I shared our project with a colleague this week, and it was so easy to explain using the documentation we’ve put together” (Field notes/researcher journal, 5/13/09).

This systematic documentation served as formative assessment, supported data analysis and validated student learning. Collaborative review and assessment of student work allowed us to modify lessons and assignments as the unit unfolded (Field notes/researcher journal, 3/13/09). Organized documentation facilitated the process of data analysis as we worked to respond to our guiding research questions (Reflective discussion & field

notes, 5/13/08). Finally, these multiple forms of documentation clearly illustrate students’ learning, understandings and interpretations (Student artwork, photographs, critiques, poems, and focus group interviews).

Finding #7 - Arts integrated education can be facilitated by “regular” classroom teachers without extensive art skills or background. Both of us are trained as elementary teachers and principals, and neither of us has had much formal art training. What we do have is a common core belief in the power of the arts generally, and in this project visual art specifically, to enrich the curriculum, engage students, and support divergent, higher order thinking and problem solving (Field notes/researcher journal, 1/10/08 & 5/9/08). Thanks to the Internet, resources for art integration are plentiful and easily accessible. For example, simple Google searches yielded artists and images that address concepts related to privacy in a democracy (Field notes, 3/10/08). Information about the artists and electronic copies of images were readily downloaded into PowerPoint files that we were able to use with the students in multiple unit activities including the art criticism lessons. Also, for prominent artists like Jacob Lawrence, used in this unit to introduce the concepts of an artwork “series” and “art that makes political commentary,” not only high quality images are available, but also lesson plans and activity ideas are also simply accessed for use or adaptation. One of us, at the conclusion of the unit, wrote, “I think we were able to achieve the ‘co-equal’ integration we were seeking in this unit. We documented student attainment of benchmarks in art and in the other targeted areas. While we were apprehensive at first about whether or not we could do justice to the ‘art’ parts of these lessons, in the end, we seemed to be able to find the information and resources we needed to support the students’ learning across all content areas” (Field notes, 5/10/08).

Finding #8 - Collaboration between K-12 and teacher education faculty is a win-win situation

for all involved parties and is an underutilized practice. Both of us agree this collaboration served us as high quality professional development. We also agree that, in partnership, we were able to provide rich experiences and unique learning opportunities for the students. For Allen (teacher educator), the opportunity to spend extensive time co-teaching in an elementary classroom provided valuable, real world experiences that have directly impacted the curriculum and assessments used in his teacher education courses. Teacher educators typically spend too little time working in K-12 classrooms. K-12 teachers are the real experts in their classrooms, and acknowledging and learning from this expertise is priceless. We both laugh about the first time Allen presented a lesson in a collaborative planning session, planned for an hour and a half. “This,” Jorge-Ayn (4th grade teacher) commented, “will take about three times that long to do with my kids!” (field notes, 1/10/09). For Jorge-Ayn, the opportunity to engage in a collaborative action research project proved valuable. As a current doctoral student, she benefited from working through all phases of the research process with someone who has engaged in the process for the last 15 years. Ironically, as valuable as we both viewed the collaborative process, collaborations of this sort are still the exception rather than the rule. We have each asked our colleagues if they have engaged in similar partnerships and usually find this has not been the case, even with veteran teachers and teacher educators. A comment from Allen’s field notes/journal (4/25/08) corroborates this finding: “I realize each time I’m in the classroom how valuable the experience is. I observe and participate and always learn things that I take back to my teacher education classes. I am constantly reflecting on how our theoretical knowledge is translated into practice. I also realize that the practice of collaboration between teachers and teacher educators should be used much more extensively. For me, this is the ultimate professional development.”

Finding #9 - Administrative support for integrated teaching

and learning is essential. The building principals were tremendously helpful throughout the process. Both the principal and assistant principal assisted us in brainstorming ideas, orchestrating the project, and sharing the results with parents and community members. Both agreed that this integrated approach bolstered student learning in multiple, meaningful ways. Both also advocated for our sharing of the project inside and outside the school so that others could hear about the powerful impact of arts integrated teaching and learning. Without this administrative backing, this project would have been difficult, if not impossible, to execute. We talked about administrative support throughout the project. Initially, we informed the principals of our intentions to make sure, they “were on board.” As the project unfolded, administrators came into the classroom when they knew we were working on the project. They were excited to see the high levels of student engagement. Further, they created opportunities for us to share about the project with others. On multiple occasions, we were asked to summarize the unit and share student work examples with district administrators, parents of prospective students, and other adults visiting the building (field notes/research journal, 1/10/08; 2/22/08; 4/25/08).

Finding #10 - There are always some drawbacks and challenges associated with collaborative work. Our project was no exception. Despite our efforts to use simple materials, plan ahead, communicate and trade planning and research documents via e-mail, stay well-organized, etc. time is still a factor. Finding time for extensive collaborative planning and research activities is difficult (field notes/research journal 3/13/08). K-12 teachers teach significantly more hours per week than do teacher educators and are responsible for numerous formative and summative mandated assessments. Alternatively, teacher educators typically have a wide range of responsibilities in addition to teaching courses – advising graduate and undergraduate students, research and publication, service, and administra-

tive responsibilities all complicate the schedules of higher education faculty. We also must admit that planning and teaching innovative lessons and assessments takes longer than using lessons already designed in extant curricular materials. One of us noted (field notes/research journal, 4/23/08), “this unit is meeting or exceeding our expectations, but we’re also exceeding the amount of time we anticipated it would take to put this together. Teaching like this is hard work.” Still, as we were committed to the success of the project, we found the time needed (including some long evenings) and believe the resultant learning was worth the effort.

Additionally, K-12 teachers are constantly dealing with problems associated with curricular coverage. The typical U.S. school district curriculum is immense. Just covering and assessing curricular goals in multiple subject areas is a huge challenge. Many other countries address far fewer learning aims. Teaching strategies that allow students to construct their own conceptions of the world take quite a bit of time, a precious commodity in all educational settings.

Finally, the representation of understandings in visual, poetic, multimodal, and other non-traditional ways presents assessment challenges for teachers, and so it becomes necessary to develop unique evaluation instruments and processes. “We quickly realized that we’d have to create our own assessments for these lessons and projects. “The projects are idiosyncratic and integrate benchmarks from multiple content areas, and so creating rubrics aligned with learning aims will help us assess student work and will also help students understand our expectations” (field notes/researcher journal, 2/23/08). These and other challenges are real and should not be discounted, however, we believe the results warrant the effort to overcome the obstacles. Our belief is that as teachers do more integrated teaching and students engage more frequently in integrated learning experiences, these challenges will increasingly be minimized.

Art Integration in Practice

We ended this unit with a clearer picture of quality art integrated teaching and learning. The following findings respond to the final research question: What does quality art integrated education (in elementary classrooms) look like?

Finding #11 - Quality art integrated education is directly aligned with standards from multiple content areas and is assessed via multiple measures. In our current context, attending to district and state curricula/standards/benchmarks is not an option. We found the targeted district benchmarks helpful in guiding our planning and assessment. Data confirmed that attending to benchmarks in art and other targeted curricular areas allowed us to achieve the co-equal status we seek for our arts integrated teaching (field notes/research journal, 5/10/08). In fact, we were pleasantly surprised to see how many benchmarks were actually addressed and assessed in the context of these integrated lessons.

Students also demonstrated skills and understandings aligned with the democratic skills and dispositions we highlighted in the unit. While these “standards” fall outside the formal district/state objectives, we affirm their importance for students’ growth as participatory, democratic citizens. Students’ artwork, writing, statements, and interactions demonstrated their evolving knowledge of democratic principles and human rights and their abilities to practice skills such as listening, examining multiple perspectives, responding in connected ways, and agreeing and disagreeing in honest and respectful ways (Student artwork, 1/17/08 & 2/22/08; Student critiques and poems, 3/13/08 & 4/25/08; Field notes/research journals, 3/13/08 & 4/25/08, and Focus group interviews, 5/9/08).

We also appreciated the fact that we were able to provide a variety of activities that allowed us to assess students in multiple forms (writing in the form of critiques, artist statements, and poems; visual art projects; symbols; interviews; whole and small group dis-

cussions; and informal presentations). This practice provided a wider range of opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency specific to the unit aims (reflective discussion, 5/9/08).

Finding #12 - Quality art integrated education is interactive and deliberately includes multiple perspectives on studied topics. We found the interactive nature of this unit -- students in ongoing discussion and collaboration, collaborative teacher planning/teaching/research, student creation of representations in multiple forms, and deliberate presentation/exploration of multiple views on studied concepts and topics -- supported high levels of engagement for students and teachers alike. We were all excited when it was time for unit lessons. Participants in all lessons were eager to share, discuss and debate contrasting views.

Interpreting art images, case scenarios, and events and issues in students' lives related to the privacy unit theme provided ongoing opportunities to shape, present, analyze, and counter practical arguments. For example, in a critique/discussion of a privacy related image (Student discussion responses, 3/13/08), one student asserted, "There are people building a house to get privacy." Another, however, provided a different interpretation: "No, they are actually taking the house apart. There are little men building a fence around the people who do not know what is happening, but the fence is being built with wood they are pulling off the house. These men are taking away these people's privacy without asking." Another student refined and added to this interpretation: "Yeah, and they are doing it for security. It says 'security' on the fence." The first student then stated, "OK, I think you are right. They are taking the house apart for security." This exchange is one among many anecdotes we recorded that illustrated the students' willingness to hear others' arguments and allow these to influence their own opinions and ideas.

Finding #13 - Quality art integrated education includes connected opportunities for artmak-

ing, criticism, and writing. The art integrated approach allowed for student creativity, but our framework also kept students focused on the unit's learning goals.

Students were proud to share their various unit work products and appreciated the varied opportunities to represent their ideas about a topic in many different, multimodal forms. In doing so, they furthered their knowledge and skills in the individual content areas, and, more importantly, they made connections across these content areas to generate deeper, more complex understandings. For example, the student's poem included below documents the use of targeted social studies vocabulary (personal privacy, information privacy) and creative language. However, the poem also documents integrated understandings that apply these new lessons to personal preferences and experiences in the lines "Cell phone messages/Your stuff/Privacy, to get and keep privacy/That's what I want."

PRIVACY, THE WORD THAT SAYS IT ALL

Privacy, the word that says it all
 Personal
 Room
 Information
 Very secret
 Addresses
 Cell phone messages
 Your stuff
 Privacy, to get and keep privacy
 That's what I want
 (Student poem, 4/25/08)

Our deliberate attempt to integrate objectives from multiple content areas involved allowing students space to be creative but within a framework that focused their learning on unit concepts. So when we asked students to create artistic representations, they were representations specific to targeted ideas and concepts. For us, this approach provided a nice balance between open-ended exploration and overly prescriptive assignments that do not allow for individual interpretation.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

A variety of implications and recommendations flow from the findings articulated above. Our results prompt us to call for **increased emphasis on integrated curricula** in both K-12 and teacher education. Standardization, including the prominence of standardized testing in mathematics and language arts in the U.S. (driven by NCLB mandates), has caused us to isolate subject areas in artificial ways. This tendency has hindered efforts to provide meaningful, interdisciplinary teaching and learning opportunities.

For integrated/interdisciplinary teaching and learning to claim a more prominent place in our educational institutions, **we believe that increased professional development will be required for educators at all levels.** Recently, professional development in school districts and education colleges has diminished the importance of interdisciplinarity, when previously (in the 1980s and 90s for example) integrated teaching and learning enjoyed a place of greater prominence. We call for a renewed focus on interdisciplinary educational experiences, specifically in the form of co-equal arts integration. As noted above, this change in the direction of professional development will require administrative support.

Clearly, our inclusion of multiple ways for students to create and display their knowledge in this integrated unit enabled them to construct deeper understandings and facilitated a larger percentage of students achieving proficient levels of performance. **We, therefore, recommend the regular practice of providing students multimodal forms with which to explore and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and dispositions.**

Finally, **we want to emphasize our advocacy for "re-placing" visual art in a central, connected, more prominent role in schools and classrooms. Quality art integrated education should be an educational right for all students, not just for the wealthy, White, or otherwise privileged.** We earlier referenced research that documents that poor children have fewer opportunities to engage the arts, and when these opportunities are available, these children receive lower quality forms

of art integrated education. This is a social justice issue, and the continuation of these inequitable practices is in stark contrast with democratic aims, NCLB's primary goal, and even defies the intent of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision. Our research presented here and our experiences as educators spanning decades of practice confirm our core belief that ALL children can benefit in rich ways from engaging the arts and connecting related learning to their lives in and outside school. We call for increased high quality art integrated educational opportunities for all children, especially children in urban and socio-economically low schools. To do otherwise will continue to exacerbate already unacceptable educational disparities.

Our contemporary societal contexts are highly visual and multimodal and thus require constant processing and interpretation of visual information and stimuli. To deny students regular opportunities to both analyze and create representations in a variety of modes does them a disservice. Our collaborative efforts described in this article have bolstered our beliefs in the power of art integrated teaching and learning. We do not profess to have all the answers but instead provide our account as one step in our journey to better serve students by "re-placing" art centrally in the elementary school curriculum. We hope others join us in sharing and building a knowledge base supportive of co-equal arts integration.

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Women's Well-Being Initiative: Creating, Practicing, and Sharing a Border Pedagogy for Youth

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines alternative arts-based education in two urban educational settings for underrepresented or marginalized youth. In particular, the authors use postcolonial and feminist theories to create borderland spaces where marginalized youth can develop strong identities, establish a community mindset, and cultivate leadership skills through supplementary arts education programs. Our goal with this work is not only to empower youth but also to bridge the gap between postcolonial theories of the borderland and traditional classroom practices. In addition, our efforts bring students' work and voices to the forefront, helping students take the first steps to becoming critical change agents within their communities and beyond.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

You walk through school everyday and know that theres people that heard the "rumors" about you and not the truth so they have their mind set on you. You cant tell them the truth because your already labeled, and you cant change what they think of you. You feel trapped and surrounded by all these rumors when you know who you really are but cant make them see that. (Cassie's Journal Entry, 11/18/06)

At first glance, it seems that Cassie—a fifteen-year-old female—is highlighting the anxieties of a typical youth, from a sense of isolation to an overall lack of agency. What makes Cassie's comment even more poignant, however, is that she is a teenager living on the margins, a first-time youth offender who has been labeled and marginalized by her urban community. She is in need of a borderland space in which she can affirm her identity, feel a part of and contribute to a community, and develop a sense of leadership. She needs an educational space where she can reclaim and redefine herself, carving out her own path.

Scholars have theorized about multiple approaches to creating these types of liberatory environments, and the need for such spaces is even more critical in an era in which education has become more and more conservative and stagnant, causing urban schools to become increasingly segregated (Apple, 2000, 2001, 2003; Freire, 1970, 1973; hooks, 2003; Kincheloe & Steinberg,

2000, 2007). As graduate students involved in education and Women's and Gender Studies, we were inspired by theories of educational borderlands, especially living in an area where some schools are grossly undervalued and underfunded and too many low-income youth and students of color are ignored. Our involvement with the Women's Well-Being Initiative (WWBI) gave us the opportunity to engage in the work of putting these liberatory theories into practice. The WWBI, created by faculty, staff, and students, is an initiative sponsored by a southern flagship university's Women's and Gender Studies Program to address oppression in the surrounding urban areas through research, education, and action. As two arts-based, multicultural educators, we wanted to use creative tools to reach marginalized youth in the community because many educational institutions lacked the resources and teachers to offer arts programming. In particular, we developed arts-based programming for a juvenile arbitration program dedicated to keeping first-time youth offenders out of the court system and for a private, last-chance school for youth who were not succeeding in or had been pushed out of public schools. Until our involvement, neither setting had any arts programming.

In many ways, then, these youth, their environments, and the arts were marginalized, and we came to see the programs we developed in collaboration with our students as borderlands.

In *Borderlands: La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) defines the terms "borders" and "borderland" as follows:

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. (p. 25)

For most of these youth, society had stereotyped them as "at-risk" or "troubled," and thus they were the "prohibited and forbidden." Most of the youth with whom we worked were marginalized due to race and/or class. Both the private school and Juvenile Arbitration were intermediary programs, last attempts at reaching children who did not fit into the supposed norms of dominant society (i.e., White, middle-to upper-class society). The programs too, then, operated on the margins. The arbitration program was on the margins of law-abiding society and those who break the law. Similarly, the private school was on the margins between public school and juvenile detention centers, alternative schools, or no school altogether. In both situations, most of the young people were in the position of having one last chance to prove themselves by moving out of the margins, following the rules, and assimilating into dominant society. Moreover, the community itself is on

the fringes of the larger city. In interviews with community members, we found that they often felt marginalized from the city itself, left out of city-wide initiatives, and lacking adequate resources and programs for their youth. Similarly, the arts are borderland or “at-risk” subject areas. After all, state and federal governments and boards of education too often view the arts as expendable, and arts educators know that their areas teeter on the margins when it comes to support and funding, especially in schools or educational programs that do not cater to dominant society.

Our goal, then, was to use alternative methods of teaching to embrace and celebrate the diversity of our students, their unique individuality, and their points of view in order to build an inclusive multicultural community. We did not want students to pretend to assimilate to a society that never accepts them fully. Rather, we wanted them to develop a sense of identity and community that would help them navigate through dominant culture without losing themselves. We argue that the arts-based programming we co-created with the students acted as what Anzaldúa (1998) and Homi K. Bhabha (1995, 2004) term borderland spaces, where students learned to cross cultural, class, and gender borders; to flourish in an often unfriendly world; and to be critical, active agents by examining, analyzing, and deconstructing dominant ideologies.

Through the process, we witnessed students develop a sense of mission and purpose as citizens of their community, and thus we made it a goal to share our findings with researchers/teachers with a focus on urban education and students. Many postcolonialist and feminist scholars have expressed the need for a border pedagogy (Giroux, 1990; Maher & Tetreault, 1994, 2000; McLaren, 2000; Rains, 2000). The difficulty comes in bridging the gap and using the theories of border pedagogy in daily classroom practices. Both of the settings described here provide examples of how educators can begin to bridge these gaps and develop borderlands along with their students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While we approached our project with a number of questions, this particular paper seeks to address the following research questions: (1) How can arts-based pedagogy become a borderland space where underrepresented students learn to cross cultural, class, and gender borders? (2) How can this borderland pedagogy help students develop community? (3) How effective were the artistic tools we used to help students become critical, active agents? (4) How can educators work to bridge the gap between theory/research and practice to achieve praxis? (5) How can students and educators be collaborators?

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Banking versus Liberatory Education

Throughout the history of public education, Americans have viewed education as the great equalizer, the cornerstone of the American dream (Weber, 2001). We also know, however, that our education system has failed a great number of our youth—particularly low-income students and students of color. In part, this is because the structure of American public education has abided by the “banking” model Freire (1972) warned against in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Too often, we view students as empty vessels that we cram with facts and we track them based on their ability to memorize and recite. This is the paradox of education—we continually have faith in a supposedly democratic system that privileges some and marginalizes others. Conversely, critical educational theorists claim that liberatory education has the potential to move us toward a truly democratic society. Within this process, “if teachers or students exercised the power to remake knowledge in the classroom, then they would be asserting their power to remake society” (Macedo, 2000, p. 10).

This pull between liberatory and traditional education creates a binary felt by students and educators. Within the school environment, for example, teachers feel pulled between strict

standards and creativity and freedom. Many marginalized students, meanwhile, adopt a mask, a façade of normalization, yet their identities are in contradiction to the norms by which society expects them to abide. bell hooks (1994) explains, “Ultimately, they end up feeling they can only reject or accept the norms imposed upon them. This either/or often sets them up for disappointment and failure” (p. 183). As hooks (1994) argues, then, we need to move beyond binaries to create borderlands for marginalized students, spaces where they “creatively invent ways to cross borders” and “alter the bourgeois settings they enter” (p. 183).

Borderland Spaces

The question as educators, then, is how to make the borderland a reality and develop the tasks of this space. Giroux (1991) outlines the basic theoretical underpinning of a border pedagogy in the following description:

... a pedagogy of difference provides the basis for students to cross over into diverse cultural zones that offer critical resources for rethinking how the relations between dominant and subordinate groups are organized, how they are implicated and often structured in dominance, and how such relationships might be transformed in order to promote a democratic and just society. Difference in this case does not become a marker for deficit, inferiority, chauvinism or inequality; on the contrary, it opens the possibilities for constructing pedagogical practices that deepen forms of cultural democracy. (p. 509)

The idea, then, is to provide students with a space to question dominant ideologies, a space where students have freedom and room to grow without assimilating. As scholars have noted (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Giroux, 1991), the marginalized and displaced need spaces where they can speak and write about critical issues. This is the function of the borderland.

Theory/Practice Gap

The problem is that it is often difficult to put these postcolonial theories

of borderlands and pedagogies of difference into practice. As hooks (1990) explains, postcolonial theory has been “dominated primarily by the voices of white male intellectuals and/or academic elites who speak to and about one another with familiarity” (p. 23). Often, borderland theory is “opaque” and falls into the realm of the academic (Kapchan & Strong, 1999; Niesen de Abuña, 2003). This is antithetical to a theory meant to work toward the liberation and support of marginalized populations. We seek to contribute to the field, then, by bringing these borderland theories to life, meaning out of the ivory tower and into the realities of the marginalized. Our findings from these two case studies demonstrate the ways in which we, along with our students, began bridging the gap between theory and practice.

We used the arts as a medium for this borderland pedagogy, but we approached the arts from a critical standpoint. As Brazilian theater activist Augusto Boal (2006) argues, “Theatre is a form of knowledge” (p. 20), and we argue the same is true of the arts in general. Visual art, performance art, music, poetry and prose, and dance are mediums through which we can examine dominant society and its binaries. We can use art to investigate and deconstruct the “either/ors.” In this way, the socially critical arts are essential to problem-solving education. As an example of critical arts education, we often used Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, forum theatre in particular, as opposed to more traditional forms. As Boal (1995) asserts, role-playing sets in motion a transformative experience:

In the Theatre of the Oppressed, there is a proposition: interference, intervention. In the conventional theatre, we present images of the world for contemplation: in the Theatre of the Oppressed, these images are presented to be destroyed and replaced by others ... the action shown on stage is a possibility, an alternative, and the intervener-spectators (active observers) are called upon to create new actions, new alternatives which ... we want to transform a reality we are trying to change. (p. 72)

As noted here, critical arts can provide a means for us to question and

challenge dominant ideologies, and this is one of the purposes of the borderland. With these creative tools, we constructed the basic foundation of these borderland settings using Beverly Daniel Tatum’s (2007) work on inclusive environments. Tatum (2007) describes the work of inclusive environments as “affirming identity, building community, and cultivating leadership ... three critical dimensions of effective learning environments in which students feel invested and engaged” (p. 114). With these three elements as the guiding framework, we used socially critical arts education to apply theory to practice and co-create borderland spaces where “high-risk” and low-income students and students of color could begin changing their social landscapes.

METHODOLOGY

Positionality

As graduate students, we spearheaded the activities of the Women’s Well-Being Initiative, a program focused on a community surrounding the city in which the University was located. Although the purpose of the program was very broad—to use grassroots efforts to lessen oppression based on race, class, gender, and/or sexuality—we wanted to focus on youth because of our experiences and our expertise. Sheri had a particular interest in the youth in this community because she grew up there and knew that resources for youth, especially those on the margins, were lacking. Having been a first-generation, low-income college student, Sheri’s purpose was to ensure that students in this community had resources and support to reach their goals. Being a theater director and puppeteer, Amanda wanted to utilize the performing arts as a means for critical investigation and problem solving. What better way to speak about bullying in a school environment, but to act out the scenarios with one’s peers, educating one another about potential behavioral alternatives in the situation? Amanda’s goal was to ensure that the youth had the necessary tools to defend against and free themselves from oppressive situations. Although both of

us came from different backgrounds and expertise, we knew the arts were critical in terms of our own educational histories, and we wanted our students—those without easy access to the arts—to have the same opportunities.

In terms of methodology, we used postcolonial and feminist methods and approached our settings as ethnographic case studies. According to Jordan and Yeomans (1995), feminists argue that lip service and a superficial application of postmodern techniques have succeeded in “merely exposing power relations within texts rather than overcoming these relations in the field” (p. 395). In this way, “the ethnographic gaze,” they argue, turns into an ethnographic “glance” (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995, p. 396), but the hierarchical power relations are present all the same. In terms of how to address this issue, Jordan and Yeomans (1995) argue that studies need to take the environment and the daily lives of the participants into consideration. We made it our goal, then, to position the environment and lives of the students as the focal point of our work. We see the students interacting, we hear their voices, and they bring the borderland to life. Their voices move the work past mere textuality.

As mentioned earlier, this paper examines two settings, a juvenile arbitration center and a last-chance, private school. Along with approval from our institutional review board, participants in both settings gave written assent to use their work, and we use pseudonyms for all students, administrators, and places to protect identities.

Settings and Participants

Juvenile Arbitration. As stated in the introduction, the Juvenile Arbitration (JA) program seeks to keep first-time youth offenders out of the court system. Instead of a court hearing, youth choose to participate in the JA program, which includes community service, educational workshops, and visits to the local juvenile detention and adult detention centers and the local prison. Before we collaborated with the program, JA coordinators required students to attend workshops focus-

ing on life skills, but they were eager to have the WWBI introduce arts into the program. We decided to develop four workshops per year—two in the spring, one in the summer, and one in the fall/winter—for four different sets of young women. Each workshop took place over four consecutive Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Typically, each series had between five and ten female participants ranging in age from 12 to 17.

Old Brookland Christian Academy. Old Brookland opened in 1979 “as a daycare service for children who were unwanted in other schools” (Fieldnotes, 6/5/06). Now a K-12 institution, the school “predominantly serves underprivileged students having a hard time academically,” as one of their employees noted (Fieldnotes, 6/5/06). In our initial involvement with Old Brookland, we developed a weeklong summer workshop for young women attending the school. On any given day, the workshop had anywhere from three to five girls in attendance. After the summer, the WWBI returned to the school to create a class entitled “Creative Arts for What?” every Monday and Thursday afternoon from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Our class included ten students, ranging in age from 16 to 18 years, equally split with

half boys and half girls and five Black students and five White students.

Data Collection and Analysis

In deciding what types of data to collect, we used Yin’s (1994) six sources of data collection for the case study: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct and participant observation, and physical artifacts. We summarized the data collection in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, we had a lot of data to examine, but we wanted to ensure that we created “a triangulated research strategy” by using “multiple sources of evidence as a way to ensure construct validity” (Tellis, 1997, p. 2). While we will not analyze all data sources in this paper, they all informed the direction of this study. We included a broad range of students’ experiences, and we do not attempt to generalize about these students or educational institutions. We realize that the problems and the measures taken to address oppression differ from place to place. There is no cure all, and what works for one program may not work for another. The point is to learn and share all we can from our students.

For analysis, we read through all fieldnotes, re-examined physical artifacts, and began coding data or looking for themes and patterns

that emerged (Spradley, 1980). Using these initial patterns, we coded by dividing bits of data into three major domains—identity, community, and leadership development. We individually coded these bits of data and came together to discuss patterns and differences. For many of the activities we conducted, we also created graphs to visualize the effects of specific activities. The coding of data and the search for patterns expanded as we began writing about our experiences.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Identity

From the beginning of our work with both programs, we saw a need for borderland spaces where students could discover and/or strengthen identity through art. In reference to Old Brookland, the program’s director at the time told us that the students “are starving for opportunities to be creative. They all have a range of talents, and the school doesn’t have the resources to develop their artistic talents further” (Fieldnotes, 5/05). Not only did the school not have the resources, but also, as the students noted, the institution of school failed to support the development of identity through the arts or through other means.

Many of the students felt that they had to develop two different identities, one for school and one for outside school walls, and the arts enabled them to reveal these feelings to us. As John, a Brookland student, noted in reference to a visual arts project in which he created a mask, “When I’m in school, I use my mask around the teachers so they think I’m a good kid and I’m responsible, just a good kid. But around my new friends and old friends, I take my mask off and I’m just my self” (Classroom Presentation, 10/4/05). The indication is that John wore a mask or disguise in school, but this performance did not allow him to be his true self and feel comfortable. Similarly, Angie, another Brookland student, stated in reference to a self-portrait, “To me, this picture is expressing how I *really* am. In school I’m quiet and keep to myself but out of school I’m loud and obnoxious and

Table 1
Summary of Data Sources Used for Case Study

Data Sources for Case Studies	Types of Sources Used for This Study
Documents	School website, histories, and pamphlets
Archival Records	Census bureau information and research on school and city demographics Minutes from meetings with administrators and program coordinators Past and current meeting minutes
Direct and Participant Observations	A combination of direct and participant observation and field notes from every class at Old Brookland Christian Academy during the academic year, from a week-long summer workshop at Old Brookland, from fieldtrips to the local university with students from Old Brookland, and from a series of Saturday workshops with Community Juvenile Arbitration.
Interviews	Several informal interviews with students, faculty, and staff.
Physical Artifacts	Students’ written work: journaling exercises such as freewrites (rants) and dialogue books; individual and group poetry; character research and analysis (table work) for theatre pieces; written critiques of movies, literature, and songs; and written feedback from students on the class, including content and activities Students’ visual work: self-portraits, social collages, drawings of oppression and liberation, masks, murals, and photography

I just smile!” (Fieldnotes, 10/2/05). Like John, Angie indicated that she could not be herself at school. Neither student noted that he or she felt happy or free. We did the mask exercise to give ourselves an idea of how students self-identified, but they taught us that a line was visible between their school persona and their after-school persona, illustrating for us the need for a borderland space. From this activity, we were able to talk about ways in which we could bring their “after-school” identities into the classroom through music, movies, and other culturally relevant materials of their choosing. In answering their call for a more critical and thoughtful form of education, both teachers and students could dissect this binary and deconstruct the normalized White academic student from the marginalized, “at-risk,” rebellious youth.

In many cases, students have difficulty discovering or strengthening their identities because school stifles youth to the point at which they do not know how to express themselves or simply cannot express themselves. At the beginning of our time at Old Brookland, Terry wrote in a journal entry, “I’m most of the time angry” and Billy also noted, “I am a big storm of emotions and I don’t know why” (Journal Entries, 10/9/05). Without an outlet for students to understand or express these emotions, many youth end up in trouble. It was these types of statements that led us to introduce activities that might provide a space to speak freely, examine emotions, and critique environments.

Students also wrote about themselves through poetry and journal entries, and this helped them to work through some of these emotions. Initially, the students had a difficult time with freewriting. As Shor and Freire (1986) note, students often want assignments to be exact and have definite directions and structure. We constantly found ourselves repeating that we just wanted them to write or rant about something that bothered or inspired them. After asking the students to start class with a “rant” for several days in a row, they finally realized the importance of writing for the sake of writing. Several students noted that this felt “wonderful” and “radi-

cal” (Written Evaluations, 9/08/05). As we went through the fall semester, students began to feel more confident, creating amazing pieces about themselves and life. As one student wrote, “I was born and raised in Brooklyn. My love for you goes away and I get so depressed. Brooklyn is the home of my loud sounds. The noise of a loud drum set and pianos playing at night” (Sasha’s Journal Entry, 10/9/05). Another student wrote, “I feel like a tiger standing in the weather with it changing from thunderstorms and rain that soothes me to ice storms that just cause pain with the hail hitting me. I’m stuck in a place with annoying tamberines” (Angie’s Journal Entry, 10/9/05). Students went from wanting strict direction to being able to tune into their emotions and write fluidly about themselves, including poignant details that drew on their senses. They began to discover outlets for expression.

We also focused on creating exercises that asked students to examine their identities in relation to others and society in general, and, eventually, students began to create pieces about themselves involving social critique. As Denado pleaded in a freestyle rant, “teachers, parents need to stop giving up on their children so soon. ... Now the student’s in the office, parents don’t want him no more, now he’s dead up in a coffin. Adults never give up on your kids because it’s hard to maintain that

same child up in your crib” (Denado’s Journal Entry, 10/11/05). Pulling from his experiences, Denado indicated that schools and parents often fail to provide the support that children need and fail to hold high standards for all children. Another exercise we used with both Old Brookland and JA was social collages. We asked students to create collages representing their selves including who they wanted to be and who they felt pressured to be. Figure 1 is an example of a collage created by Mary during the summer workshop for girls at Old Brookland.

Mary explained that the image in the middle is herself, but the self is disjointed and almost abstract. She explained that the media indicates that young women constantly need to fix their bodies to be the “cream of the crop” through dying their hair, getting plastic surgery, and losing weight. The push is to be perfect and better than every other girl. From creating and discussing their collages, though, the girls brought these issues out into the open, and, as Tamika noted, “It helps to talk about this kind of stuff ’cause this isn’t stuff we talk about in school. I could talk about this all day. It makes me feel stronger inside, like I know me” (Fieldnotes, 05/25/05). If given the chance to examine themselves and the pressures put upon them, students can learn to form a strong sense of identity that does not need to fit into



Figure 1. Mary’s Collage from May 2005.

any specific mold. Liberatory education asks us to question stereotypes, and activities such as social collages allowed us, as teachers, and the students to investigate critically the creation and maintenance of such stereotypes, to examine alternatives to dominant society, and to embrace ourselves.

As with the students at Old Brookland, many of the girls in Juvenile Arbitration were on the border and were struggling with identity, and this program was trying to keep them from teetering over the edge and being labeled as permanent “troublemakers.” When they came to our workshops, they expected us to lecture them about why they needed to stay out of trouble. As one participant noted, “I thought it was going to be like punishment or like a lecture like school, but we actually get to talk about things” (Fieldnotes, 1/24/09). Before the arts class, they spent their time in Arbitration learning about the identity they did not want—the troublemaker—not focusing on cultivating their own sense of self.

Although we were with the girls in Juvenile Arbitration for only four Saturdays each session, we tried to spend as much time as possible on identity development using some of the same techniques from Old Brookland such as journal writing, “I am” poetry, role-playing games, self-portraits, and abstract drawings of oppression and liberation. For many of the young women in this program, “I am” poetry, in which the girls developed poems about themselves beginning with the phrase “I am,” became the favorite activity. When asked to respond to the prompt, “what annoys you about this world,” one young woman noted, “it’s hard to stand my ground in a male-dominated society” (Fieldnotes, 4/7/07). She expanded on this idea in the following “I am” poem:

I am pain and sorrow
 I am joy today and tears tomorrow
 I have so much, but yet so little
 I have so many companions, that
 I’m always caught
 in the middle
 I am walls that I’ve put up to hide
 the real me
 I am over everything but still left
 with the memory

I always get what I want, its always
 been that way

I never take no for an answer, its
 always been that way

I am putting away my love letters
 from long
 gone boyfriends, to liberate my
 heart

I am putting away my notion of
 how women

Should act in male dominated soci-
 eties to liberate
 my mind

I am mistakes, that I cannot take
 back

I am bad decisions, throwing me
 off track

I am forgetting about my old boy-
 friends so that its
 easier to find the next

I’ve found something better, better
 than all the rest

I am free of stress. (“I Am Poem,”
 4/7/07)

Here, this young woman highlighted the pull between those binaries created by dominant society. She is “caught / in the middle” and constructs walls “to hide the real me.” Both the workshop setting and the activity of writing the poem, though, become a borderland for her to deal with these binaries. In this poem, she finds liberation in being herself. She “puts away” notions of how boyfriends and men think she should act, she puts away mistakes, and she puts away bad decisions. When she takes control and decides to “liberate her heart,” she becomes “free of stress,” free from the pull between various worlds and free from the pull between the body and the mind. We would argue that she also becomes free through the act of writing and putting these words on paper. She comes to define herself rather than relying heavily on how others define her. At the end of this same session, this young woman stated, “The poetry was good for me because it helped me release some things I was holding on the inside and made me stand up for myself in a stronger way” (Evaluation, 4/7/07). In this borderland space, then, she finds a tool for self-discovery and for the emotional release of this stronger, willful self.

In both settings, the youth asserted

that they felt the creative arts classes provided a space for freedom of speech and stressed the importance of this freedom in both self-identity development and social critique. Sherika wrote, “This class is different because we get to express ourself freely, but yet mannerly and we get to learn about the outside world in ourselves as well” (Evaluation, 10/16/05). John also wrote, “In this class we get ta talk and work in groups. All the other ones are the teacher talking and us writing” (Evaluation, 10/16/05). Whitney agreed, stating, “I value the opportunity to come to a great school and be able to express myself the way that we are allowed to do not only in this class but being able to express myself in the world” (Evaluation, 10/16/05). Students appreciated the opportunity to speak on their own behalves, whereas their voices are generally debilitated and silenced and they endure an education of taking notes from the chalkboard, listening to the teacher, and regurgitating information for the test. In using some of the techniques mentioned above, these teens became fearless in revealing themselves. Poetry, theater, and visual arts became windows to their souls, and, at the same time, these arts-based activities offered a sense of protection to students. As creative pieces, these activities took the pressure off of the individual from having to face external scrutiny so that the students could deconstruct dominant ideologies without feeling the pressure to assimilate.

Community

Community went hand in hand with identity. As students worked to discover and express themselves, it was important that they had a supportive community in which to engage in borderland work. Establishing community elicits a number of advantages for teens’ sense of self – accountability towards themselves and others, motivation, discipline, recognition, exploration, trust, and diversity (Global Kids, Inc., 2008). As Deangelo, an Old Brookland student, said, “Be real with me like I am with you” (Fieldnotes, 10/11/05). We made this idea of “being real with one another” and

creating a community environment key to the creation of a borderland space. Asking teens to invest in a “border pedagogy” can cause fear and uneasiness because they have to embrace their multiple social identities, find strength in their diversity, and overcome the plight of power and privilege.

It is difficult to deconstruct stereotypes surrounding sexuality, race, class, and gender, and establishing community is an important part of approaching issues of diversity. One of the activities we often used to establish a supportive community was theater, particularly role-playing. During one class, for example, students at Old Brookland participated in numerous role-playing scenarios in order to examine their cultural stereotypes. With their bodies facing off and clashing, they wore headband labels on their foreheads, playing along with a fictional story line in which they were oppressed on the basis of their label.

In one scenario, labeled as a physically handicapped teenager, Angie and her bully, played by Terry, engaged in a confrontational harassment scenario. The bully attacked the physically handicapped girl using derogatory name-calling, and Angie decided her tactic was to ignore her bully. She stated, “It doesn’t bother me” as her defense. One way in which the oppressed can defeat the oppressor is by cutting off the device that empowers her/him to insult. Finally, Terry gave up because it was not fun to pick on Angie with her silent protest and successful, non-confrontational defense. The role-playing scenarios helped us to explore the idea that community is not always about peace, but it is also about the struggle. This particular role-playing scene took two roles—the oppressor and the oppressed—and asked the students to live through this scenario and put themselves in another’s shoes. Therefore, although we did not come to a point of catharsis, we deconstructed the challenge of this particular oppression. Like a mirror, the reflection of these imaginative performances might influence encounters on the street. As actors alter their course of action in a play, students may arrive at change in the “real world.”

In terms of community, it is also im-

portant for students to develop trust by engaging physically with one another in safe, dynamic, and trusting physical orientations (Boal, 1995, 2002). The body is a part of the educational apparatus; without understanding its capability, again the student is relegated to being a receptacle filled by dominant ideologies illustrated by distance and fear. Rejecting the traditional practice of preventing students from becoming physically involved with one another, we integrated physical exercises into both settings to retrain the body and brain to rethink personal space, trust, and community partnership. As an illustration, we asked the students to “mirror” one another, as described below:

Colombian Hypnosis: One actor holds her hand palm forward, fingers upright, anything between 20 – 40 centimeters away from the other actor’s face who is hypnotized by the hand. The actor moves his hand slowly in all directions while the other actor must contort his body in every way possible to maintain the same distance between the face and hand, so that they remain parallel. The other actor will use muscles rarely ever activated or forgotten. The leader mustn’t do any movements which are too violent; she is an ally not an enemy. The roles are swapped so all actors have the opportunity to be the leader. (Boal, 2002, p. 51)

Following an initial hesitance, we saw partners moving freely in the space, connecting gazes, sharing the responsibilities of the exercise, and taking creative risks such as contorting their bodies down onto the ground, showing an absolute freedom of bodily expression. They began to trust one another as a community of learners.

At the same time, though, this community exercise asked students to question their stereotypes concerning sexuality and gender, and this was difficult. For the exercise, we paired boys with other boys and this caused them some anxiety, as they feared the effect such an activity would have on their reputations. In our discussion following the exercise, Terry responded

that the exercise made him feel “gay” or “cake-ish” because we paired him with another boy. Homosexuality was a topic about which these students felt very strongly, especially considering their Christian beliefs. By engaging in a conversation about this topic, we collectively arrived at a crossroads where “to build community requires a vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination” (hooks, 2003, p. 36). By falling into a pattern of categorizing physical contact as “gay” and using derogatory terms, the teens perpetuated biases and acted as oppressors. We recognized the males were performing their gender as traditionally constructed concepts of masculinity and strength, while the females engaged in the physical exercise as traditionally giving and vulnerable partners; however, the ultimate goal was to crack open these gendered and sexualized assumptions and consciously move towards a community of acceptance.

This activity, though, led us to engage in dialogue that we might not have had otherwise. It also moved students into a borderland space that was uncomfortable yet necessary. The physical activity itself, the assisted mirroring, forced them to confront certain stereotypes. The exercise took them out of the classroom and put them into a performance that provided a protective barrier for dealing with the more difficult issues of homosexuality and heterosexuality. This activity of community led to a rigorous analysis and discussion of oppression. Students worked through their feelings and stereotypes, and opened the door for a dialogue about change.

Eventually, these dialogues about stereotypes and change became some of the most important community-building moments. One day during class, Kathryn, a young White woman, told a story of a “Black man” who “started getting up in her face at a game,” and she went to “sit next to her father so he would protect her from the Black man.” Deangelo piped up and said, “Hey, I’m a Black man.” Terry teasingly remarked that Kathryn was being racist, saying “just ‘cause he’s a

Black man” (Fieldnotes, 1/25/07). We used the opportunity to examine the stereotypes society has developed concerning what it means to be White or Black. bell hooks claims, “this disconnect between their conscious repudiation of race as a marker of privilege and their unconscious understanding is a gap we have to bridge, an illusion that must be shattered before a meaningful discussion of race and racism can take place” (2003, p. 26). The students understood Kathryn’s story about personal space invasion but did not approve of her ignorance of race and culture. Another White male, Marshall, educated Kathryn by forewarning “there is a difference in how you describe the person and what actions you say they have – it could be offensive to some” (Fieldnotes, 1/25/07). The debate developed into an anti-racist commentary analyzing white supremacy. bell hooks (2003) asserts, “every citizen of this nation, white or colored, is born into a racist society that attempts to socialize us from the moment of our birth to accept the tenets of white supremacy, it is equally true that we choose to resist this socialization” (p. 56). The other students resisted white supremacist ideology by adopting an anti-racist position that affirmed diversity and humanity as synonymous.

Quite frequently, anti-racist remarks are illustrations of power dynamics that are counteractive to a democratic community. Using the conversations above as catalysts, we engaged in an activity called powerwalk or identity circle. The students listened to a question about identity, and, if it resonated with their story, they stepped into the middle of the empty space and faced those remaining on the sidelines. We asked students whether they were Christians, minorities in their neighborhoods and in the city, knew someone who had been assaulted, lived in one place their whole lives, had been picked on or had picked on others, and so forth. We discovered that each of us was different, and yet we may be similar in more ways than we think – “As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one an-

other’s presence” (hooks, 1994, p. 8). After engaging in this activity in one of our Juvenile Arbitration sessions, we noted that the girls “were amazed that they all had so much in common, but were also very different. They liked it and enjoyed figuring each other out” (Fieldnotes, 4/7/07). After another powerwalk at a JA session, one young woman claimed, “I was really surprised that we all have so many things in common ’cause we all look so different on the outside, you know? That was cool” (Journal Entry, 1/31/09). An essential component of community development is breaking barriers of difference, thus helping youth to feel connected through similarities and to respect diversity.

Students in each setting expressed the desire for and appreciation of community. As a student at Old Brookland commented, “This class is a lot different ’cause we open ourselves up to one another” (Evaluation, 10/16/05). His statement affirmed that community development can be achieved through the liberatory practice of redefining borders and establishing trust. As Angie stated, “I hate that we can’t have this class everyday, so without it I feel lost. This class is different because it’s fun. We can speak freely. We learned to be

honest and open and to listen to other opinions” (Evaluation, 10/16/05). Sometimes the sense of community shocked us as facilitators as well, especially with Juvenile Arbitration. Since we had these young women for a short time, we feared that community development would be difficult. As one of us noted in the fieldnotes after one session, “I’m really amazed by the sense of community that has been established. Every week, the girls become closer and are even talking on the Internet now, and they didn’t even know one another before this. Hayden even said she didn’t expect to feel so ‘comfortable’ in these sessions” (Fieldnotes, 7/21/07). We can promote community only if students are truly comfortable with themselves, with one another, and with their instructors. We, as instructors, had to become a part of community by opening our minds as well. We introduced activities such as the powerwalk and mirroring exercise, but the students taught us about community by sharing their experiences, challenging one another, and understanding one another’s choices and perspectives. The borderland relies on a community of diversity, acceptance, and trust from all participants,



Figure 2. Spring 2007 mural project at Old Brookland.

and it is important for teachers to become students and students to become teachers. These roles are never fixed.

IMPLICATIONS: FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Cultivating Leadership

One of the major implications stemming from this work is that we need an increased focus on providing leadership opportunities for students. As Tatum (2007) notes, along with identity and community development, educational borderlands should provide marginalized students with opportunities to cultivate leadership and take what they have learned outside of the borderland. This is key for youth whom society fails to identify as future leaders. As is evident in the data presented above, these youth created some strong works of art and have tremendous potential if they have a system that supports and believes in them. We felt that by helping students develop a strong sense of self and community we were also helping them find the tools to become stronger leaders. At the same time, however, this area needs additional work and more time.

In both settings, the students showed leadership through the creation of murals. Figure 2 and Figure 3 are examples of mural projects led by students.

In both of these mural projects, drawn by artist Julie Jacobs, students had to share leadership roles in painting the murals. The young women who painted the mural in Figure 3 were in Juvenile Arbitration because they had been in a group fight with one another, yet they were able to put these differences aside, work together to create an amazing artwork, and become friends in the process. In addition, these activities are examples of students moving outside the borderland to share their work with local communities, an opportunity that they rarely had. These culmination projects brought together identity, community, and leadership, thus achieving praxis through border pedagogy. Furthermore, both murals emphasized the importance of diversity and acceptance. The Emily Geiger mu-



Figure 3. Fall 2005 mural project with Juvenile Arbitration.

ral, for example, highlighted a local female heroine too often neglected in history texts. With the mural in Figure 2, the idea was to emphasize diversity and internationality. Each element, from the tree to the fish to the bird (not pictured), stemmed from a different culture, and the word “vision” highlighted the importance of seeing, accepting, and embracing the diversity of the world.

Beyond the mural projects, we also asked local university students to work with our youth on various projects and events. These particular university students were from a program serving first-generation and low-income students and students of color. We wanted our high-school students to have mentors who could demonstrate some of these leadership skills. We do not mean to imply that college is the only option for leadership, but we wanted to introduce our students to possibilities that expanded beyond their schools’ and parents’ expectations. This became a leadership opportunity for the college students as well. As one first-year college student noted, “some of these girls reminded me of myself,” and “this was one of my favorite events all year. I felt like I was doing something important ’cause it was like talking to myself two years ago when, before I knew about college” (Written Evaluation, 12/06/05). All of the students involved—high school and college—crossed borders in terms of location and with their knowledge. As we noted above, however, the im-

plications from this research indicate that educators need to offer students increased opportunities to share their knowledge outside the borderland and to celebrate students within their local communities and beyond.

Changing Education

Community-based programs such as the WWBI are good examples of spaces where we can offer students increased opportunities to engage in border work, but educational institutions have to be willing to provide borderlands as well. Within individual classrooms, too, teachers need to provide spaces for self-discovery and need to work to know their students and emphasize multicultural education. As one student from Old Brookland noted, “the flaws in education are you have to learn what *they* [teachers, schools] want you to learn instead of learning things to better your future” (our emphasis, Written Evaluation, 10/16/05). To many of these students, “bettering one’s future” does not involve memorizing and repeating facts and following the rules set by dominant society. As illustrated in our research, education should involve being able to speak freely and express oneself and being able to see oneself and one’s values reflected in the curriculum, opportunities that do not exist in many schools. As we argue, the arts are a vehicle for providing these opportunities; however, liberatory education can occur in any setting

and subject. And once educators and students create these borderlands, we need to share the successes and challenges that went into this process.

Challenges

This does not mean that the journey to self-discovery and community development is easy for those involved. John, for example, expressed suspicion at least twice over the arts class at Old Brookland. When we told John that he could write anything in his journal, he asked, "Are you sure? 'Cause other teachers say that and then they go and get us in trouble" (Fieldnotes, 10/9/05). This same week, John repeated, "it seems like other teachers at this school have started out [nice] and then turned on us" (Fieldnotes, 10/11/05). We saw a big part of our job as establishing trust with students through continued identity and community development exercises.

In addition, not every session went as planned, and not all students left feeling empowered and ready or capable of change. There were times when students fell short in terms of assignments, not finishing projects. When we developed an end-of-year showcase at Old Brookland, for example, only three of the 12 students showed up on the day of the show. As with any high-school students, there were also times when we had to deal with behavioral issues. Once we knew the students better, though, most did not want to disappoint us by not following through on assignments. In addition, many of our students dealt with multiple oppressions stemming from their class, race, gender, and sexuality, and the convergence of these oppressions added another element of difficulty in classroom activities. Students often missed class due to environmental factors that were out of our control but influenced our work as we became further involved in students' lives. We had to realize that liberatory education involves facing harsh realities. It does not result in the creation of a utopian community.

Although we knew this deep down already, we learned that schools and administrators do not necessarily view their students as potential leaders, see

art as a technique for self- and community development, or value the same type of growth or change as the teachers do. When one of our male high-school students wrote a poem about drugs for the end-of-year showcase, the school's director told us that she did not want his work shown. Although we explained that drugs were a pressure that Stephen was dealing with and that this highlighted his reality, the director told us we were "young, fresh, and naïve" (Fieldnotes, 4/3/07). We did not take Steven's work out of the show because he needed that space where he could bring together those two masks—the one he wore at school and the one he wore around friends. He needed a place to move beyond those binaries, and we viewed our class as this space.

As a final challenge, we must remember that the road to liberatory education can be a frightening and overwhelming journey on which to embark. We first feared the repercussions of the administration at Old Brookland Academy and the rules and regulations of Juvenile Arbitration. We had times where some teachers or parents resented our approaches and felt that we were helping the students find too much power. At the same time, though, there have been cases where they have seen students become better writers and public speakers. We felt a great divide between our two classes a week and the rest of the curriculum at Old Brookland. We also felt a divide between our workshops in Juvenile Arbitration in juxtaposition to scare tactics such as visiting prisons and detention centers. For adults critiquing our programs, they feared the unknown, saw us as challenging their authority, and viewed our class as too open around issues of sex, race, class, and violence. In essence, though, we wanted to offer students borderland spaces to deconstruct and investigate these oppressions and their roots, and, as a result, we hoped they would choose more proactive alternatives to addressing oppression.

CONCLUSIONS

Our goal as creative arts facilitators at both sites was to offer these underrepresented students a space support-

ing their discovery of a strong sense of self and community. Contrary to the anti-democratic educational system in which the students were situated, our classrooms valued individuals, embraced difference, and critically investigated reality. We used a toolkit that included theater role-playing, movement, poetry, creative writing, and dialogue to access liberatory education. While we definitely have room to grow, we hope that we moved toward liberatory education and the creation of a borderland space through arts education. As one of our students, Steven, noted, "I think this class is more open to the reality of things" (Fieldnotes, 1/25/06). While some at Old Brookland argued that arts were not necessary in everyday life, the arts helped these students understand themselves and become closer to one another. In addition, the young women participating in JA expressed the importance of self-reflection, self-discovery, and community. These young women were excited to be together and participate in these activities—even early on a Saturday morning.

Co-creation of borderlands requires flexibility on the part of both teachers and students. Teachers come in with a framework, but the creation of a borderland is a daily process of negotiation and adaptation. We saw students' preconceived ideas about intersectionality expand with a greater awareness of humanity and critical perspectives. We ask that more teachers of all disciplines attend to liberatory education as a home for themselves and their students as it can break down the borders of domination and conformity. If we are patient and willing to change and learn, the borderland can be a space where we bridge the gap between theory and practice. We feel grateful to have worked with these programs, for our experience has been a journey to the borderlands, a pedagogy of truth, passion, and persistence – one we will never forget.

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NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Removing Our Masks: Using the Visual and Performing Arts to Promote Deep Reflection in Pre-service Teachers

By Patricia Alvarez McHatton, University of South Florida, and Erica D. McCray, University of Florida

The role of reflection is central to teacher preparation. As individuals integrate new information within their existing schema, they refine their practice (Dewey, 1933; Schon, 1983). Another view of reflection suggests that as individuals have new experiences, they frame and re-frame issues within their own actions and also in the broader socio-political context (Hatton & Smith, 1995). We learn by reflecting on what we do not just by doing it. Through reflection we examine, evaluate, and adjust. It is both an assessment of our performance and also of our selves. Yet, the practice of reflection is rarely explicitly taught. Often as teacher educators, we found our students aligning their written reflections with what they think we want to hear rather than what they themselves think. Disconcerted by the censoring that occurs in writing, we chose the visual and performing arts as alternative media for student reflection. Using the arts involves the artist who creates the performance, the audience that personally responds to it, the shared experience between the artist and the audience, and the intersection of all three. We offer students the opportunity to reflect using a creative method that liberates them to honestly examine their personal belief systems including their biases and share them.

Discussing the value of the arts in education, Eisner (2005) offered that the arts create three unique possibilities:

First, they develop the mind by giving it opportunities to learn to think in special ways. Second, they make communication possible on matters that will not take the impress of logically constructed language. Poetry, after all, was invented to say what prose can never say. Third, the arts are places and spaces where one can enrich one's life (p. 8).

Our students use the arts as vehicles to express the inexpressible.

In doing so, our students thought deeply and critically about whom they are and the implications of their work with children and families who have diverse backgrounds.

The products included in the accompanying video were created by our students, pre-service teachers in special education courses taught at a large Southeastern urban university. This is a small sample of the pieces our students have produced over the past several years. Their responses stemmed from a variety of activities including reactions to guest speakers, course readings, field experiences, and culminating activities. Surbeck, Han, and Moyer (1991) provide a three-tiered framework for reflection. The first level, *reacting*, involves reflecting on a specific experience. Level two, *elaborating*, attempts to situate the new feeling by comparing it with other occurrences. Finally, *contemplating* causes individuals to focus on issues of importance, including their attitudes, goals, and ethical and moral dilemmas. These products were selected to exemplify these three levels of reflection. Their individual and collective work represents their awareness of issues of inequity and awakened a sense of advocacy in addressing these issues within their classroom.

As America becomes even more culturally and linguistically diverse, so will the needs of students in schools. Data reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (2007) showed that over three decades, the racial make-up of K-12 schools changed by 20% (i.e., the percentage of White students decreased from 78% in 1972 to 58% in 2005). Projections suggest student demographics will continue to diversify based on the overall population shifts that are occurring and have been referred to by Johnson (2009) as the browning of America. Scholars in mul-

ticultural education refer to this shift as the "demographic imperative," a call to action to ensure all teachers are able to meet the academic and social emotional needs of all students and collaborate with their families (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999).

Pre-service and in-service teachers must be prepared to teach in a variety of settings and cultural contexts. In fact, teachers will need to be knowledgeable, skilled, reflective, and most of all amenable to effectively teach all students. Novice teachers are often employed in high-poverty, hard-to-staff schools, with high teacher turnover rates (American Federation of Teachers, 2007). The majority of students in these settings performs below their more affluent peers, experiences high transiency rates, and is at greater risk for identification of disabilities (Artiles, Aguirre-Munoz, & Abedi, 1998; Margai & Henry, 2003). Their experiences differ from those of the average teacher who remains predominately White, female, and middle class. Prior to entering their own classrooms, teacher candidates benefit from various opportunities to understand the realities of their students and families. This informed perspective is essential to their sense of teaching efficacy and professional commitment (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007).

Reflecting is a conscious act. In addition, reflecting is not intuitive; it is a learned skill requiring instruction and practice. It involves knowledge and skill as well as the disposition to do it. Dispositions are complex and difficult to assess. As a result, deep critical reflection becomes more of an afterthought or burden than an essential characteristic of praxis (Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles, & Lopez-Torres, 2003). Thus, preparing teacher candidates with sound content and pedagogical mastery coupled with the ability to critically reflect is essen-

tial for them to teach all children well.

Several strategies for improving meaningful reflection in pre-service teachers include action research, ethnographic/case studies, field experiences, and writing exercises (Cruikshank, 1985; Ross, 1989; Zeichner, 1986). Other methods commonly used in classes involve small group discussions, journaling, discussion boards, and exit cards. While all useful, these approaches are not the only ways to get pre-service teachers to critically examine institutional structures and personal behaviors that impact their and their students' learning. Therefore, we offer the arts as vehicles to deepen our teacher candidates' personal and professional identities. Removing their masks is the first step on a long journey.

To watch the 18-minute video to which this article refers, please go to the Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education website at <http://urbaned-journal.org> and click on the Watch Video link next to this article in the Table of Contents. You will need Quick Time player in order to watch this video.

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NOTES FROM THE FIELD

A Perfect Murder: An (Imperfect) School Theater Program Model

By Nicole S. Simon, Harvard University, and Andrew Grosso, The Essentials

INTRODUCTION

On a rainy night in January 2009, ten Brooklyn public high school students walked through Times Square to the stage door of Theatre Row, an acclaimed theater on 42nd Street, to perform their show *A Perfect Murder*. They entered a few minutes before Lili Taylor arrived for her show. It was the same stage door that Ethan Hawke, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Cynthia Nixon and various other Off-Broadway stars had used in the previous months. The students went to their dressing rooms, warmed up by dancing around to Beyoncé's "Single Ladies," and then took the stage of The Kirk Theatre at Theatre Row before an audience of family, friends, the school community, and curious members of the theater-going public. They performed their own play, a hip-hop inflected "remix" of the Leopold and Loeb story (Hidgdon) entitled *A Perfect Murder*, and received a standing ovation.

Over the last five years, the Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice (SLJ), a new, small public high school in Brooklyn, and The Essentials, a professional theater company, have joined forces to offer a low-budget, high-quality, in-house afterschool theater program for SLJ students. Both SLJ and The Essentials were in nascent stages when the partnership began. This article will describe the model the two organizations developed together over the course of five years. It will also recount lessons learned from pitfalls and successes encountered along the way so that the model's successes can be replicated – and improved upon – elsewhere.

The Model

The defining features of the SLJ/Essentials model are two-fold: structural

and pedagogical. Structurally, it is an in-house after school program taught by a partner organization and offered exclusively to students who attend the school where the program is held. The program is funded by the partner organization and is free to the school and its students. In exchange for this free service, the school offers the partner organization in-kind support (in this case, The Essentials were granted access to SLJ space for its own rehearsals) and agrees to pay for program supplies (e.g. costumes) and a program liaison. The after school club (in this case, theater) is taught by professionals working in their field of expertise, not by the school's teachers. The program is offered as part of the school's larger on-site after school program (at SLJ, the After School Learning Academy), which has attendance policies and recruitment structures universal to all after school clubs at the school. A member of the school's full-time staff serves as liaison and co-directs the club with the volunteer outside professional. In addition to being present and active at all club meetings, the liaison is responsible for logistics (e.g. finding a classroom, communicating with parents regarding schedule changes, etc.), student behavior, and all aspects of retention (e.g. monitoring attendance, recruiting understudies, etc.). The staff member also liaises between the school and the partner organization. This article will detail the development of these partnership structures, which are foundational to the success of a program like this.

Pedagogically, the primary goals of this model are to (1) make high quality extracurricular programming accessible to all types of students – from academic strivers to those at great risk for dropping out and from natural ac-

tors to painfully shy teens – while establishing a culture of high expectations, collaborative problem solving, and craftsmanship and to (2) ensure that students have a stake in the artistic process. This article will detail both why these goals are important and how they have been accomplished.

In Context: About SLJ & The Essentials The Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice.

The Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice (SLJ) is an unscreened New York City public high school that was founded in 2004 by the Urban Assembly, a non-profit educational organization that creates and supports small 6th-12th grade public schools. It is one of the dozens of new small schools that has been opened in the city over the last decade. Most of the school's 450 students are low-income, Black or Latino, and will be first-generation college graduates. At the core of SLJ's mission is the belief that the success of each student is a community responsibility; partnerships with outside organizations are therefore integral to the school's foundation. Staff, families and partners work together to challenge and support students with a curriculum that respects their right to learn at high levels and with enrichment services that every student deserves. SLJ delivers personal attention in an empowering environment that fosters intellectual independence and civic engagement. The goal of SLJ is for students to graduate ready to succeed in college and to affect change in society. In 2008, 93% of SLJ's first class graduated on time, and to date, roughly 85% are enrolled in college.

The theater program is offered through the school's in-house After

School Learning Academy (ASLA), a component of SLJ's Early College Awareness Program. Beginning in ninth grade, students learn about the virtues of extracurricular involvement. They study its importance in becoming a well-rounded, passionate and talented person and, of course, the role extracurriculars play in the college admissions process. Throughout their four years of high school, all students partake in a series of lessons dedicated to early college awareness and preparation.

The Essentials. The Essentials Organization Inc., a 501c3 non-profit incorporated in 2008, is a professional theater company in New York City. The Essentials have been hailed as "Magnificent," "Sensational," and "Well-nigh perfection," by critics from *The New Yorker*, *Show Business Weekly*, *NYTheatre.com*, *Theatremania* and *Backstage* among others. Company members perform on Broadway and off, internationally, and at regional theaters around the country. The Essentials teaching artists are all active actors, designers, or directors in the company, and have taught at some of the country's premiere secondary schools, colleges and regional theaters around the country such as The Dalton School, NYU and The Shakespeare Theatre. Founded on the belief that great theater is essential to the civic dialogue and that teaching is a crucial part of the artistic tradition, The Essentials devote equal time to making theater and providing arts education programs.

A core piece of The Essentials' mission is to bring world-class theater education to underserved communities. The type of teaching program that they provide to a top prep school typically costs several thousand dollars and is beyond the budget of the average urban public school. Using creative budgeting structures described later, The Essentials are able to offer a theater education residency to schools serving low-income students at minimal or no cost to the school.

The Need: Why an In-House Theater Program?

In New York City, students have ac-

cess to a myriad of free arts programs. Museums like the Museum of Modern Art and The Whitney Museum of American Art offer courses in drawing, photography and even museum curating that are open to all New York City high school students at no cost. Ghetto Film School and Global Action Project offer excellent film programs free of charge to students. The Red Hook Community Justice Center and the Brooklyn Academy of Music offer performing arts programs that are not only free, students are actually paid to participate. SLJ has developed relationships with these organizations and numerous others, and students have participated in all of these programs. Though students' experiences have been powerful and almost always transformative, there are several reasons why an in-house program is still critical.

Extracurricular participation has been linked with a wide range of positive outcomes (Feldman and Matjasko, 2005), and are particularly important for students who are at risk of dropping out (Mahoney and Cairns, 1997). Research demonstrates that students who are involved in afterschool activities are more likely to succeed academically in high school and to thrive in college. Involved students learn perseverance (Dunne, 1977) and leadership and demonstrate these characteristics years after participation. Participation has also been linked with greater self-confidence, maturity and self-esteem (Feldman and Matjasko, 2005). The problem with off-site extracurricular activities is that they often attract students who already possess many of the important skills that the most at-risk students lack. Off-site programs frequently appeal to students who have a certain degree of self-motivation and responsibility and do not need some of the support structures that on-site programs can provide for students. On-site programs allow schools like SLJ to target students who might not otherwise become involved in extracurricular programs or might not succeed in them, especially a demanding program like theater that requires a significant time commitment, involves homework (e.g. memorizing lines), and culminates in a high pressure event (a performance).

Furthermore, on-site programs allow low school staff to monitor participant progress and scaffold each student's experience according to individual needs.

Nearly 50% of New York City students drop out before high school graduation (NYC Department of Education, 2008; Schott Foundation, 2008). This rate is considerably higher for low-income Black and Latino youth, and it is highest amongst Black males (61%) (Schott Foundation, 2008). Mahoney and Cairns (1997) conducted a six-year longitudinal study beginning when their 392 participants were in 7th grade. They found a striking correlation between dropout rates and non-participation in extracurricular activities. This outcome was observed primarily among students who were at highest risk for dropout.

Feldman and Matjasko (2005) suggest that students who participate in extracurricular programs in their own school buildings are more likely to stay enrolled in school and less likely to get involved in risky behaviors than their counterparts. By offering students an opportunity to stay in the school building and partake in something they are passionate about, an in-house extracurricular program helps create positive associations between students and their school. On-site programs are important for creating community and for building a sense of ownership over the school as well. These positive connections can be especially important for low-income students, who often see school as an unfriendly place instead of a source of hope and opportunity (Noguera, 2008).

Another very practical reason for offering an on-site theater program is that students do not have to travel to participate. Many SLJ parents worry about their children commuting around Brooklyn or even into other boroughs, like Manhattan, to participate in extracurriculars. Students who participate in off-site programs often ride the New York City subway alone. Many students come from crime-ridden neighborhoods, and parents do not want their children traveling around alone after dark. Parents who may otherwise not allow their children to participate in off-site ex-

tracurricular programs may be more likely to allow their children to partake when the program is offered in school.

Why partner with an outside organization?

SLJ believes that students should be taught by educators who are experts in their field. Partnering with a professional theater company that employs a highly creative budgeting structure allows low-income students in underfunded public schools to benefit from the same high-quality instruction enjoyed by their much wealthier peers in elite prep schools. Though several SLJ faculty members have experience acting or even graduate degrees in teaching theater, partnering with The Essentials allowed the school to benefit from the full resources and connections of a professional theater company. The Essentials brought in a professional director, costume designer and lighting designers to work on the production. Students received voice and speech training, and an acting coach taught and worked particularly closely with some of the more advanced students on their longer soliloquies. The playwright for The Essentials' most recent production wrote a custom script for (and with) the SLJ students. Finally, The Essentials were able to leverage their existing relationship with professional theaters in New York and find a subsidized performance space in which the students could perform.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

It Wasn't Always Perfect: Creating the Essentials/SLJ Partnership

Take one: *Antigone*. In its first year, 2004, SLJ had a class of 100 ninth grade students. Although no drama program was offered, over twenty percent of the incoming students wrote in this option as their extracurricular preference. SLJ lacked a plan for theater instruction and the faculty was already stretching to provide extracurricular programs. SLJ's founding principal, a board member of The Essentials, contacted their artistic director, and The Essentials provided a three month resi-

dency as a pro-bono effort. This was the first time that The Essentials' had formally offered an in-house theater program in an urban public school.

The Essentials helped the students create their own adaptation of *Antigone*. Students read the play together, debated its main issue, and read complimentary texts, including "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Then the students began creating their own modern translation of the play. They discussed what might happen if the story took place in New York today. The students thought about Sophocles' chorus of ordinary Thebans and created modern versions of these characters (TV news reporters, bodega owners, doctors, teachers, Antigone's classmates, etc). The director videotaped as the students acted out these characters - improvising, giving mock interviews, and engaging in debates. The videotapes were transcribed and culled and the script was created. Students rehearsed intensely, and six weeks later, the students had created their own production of *Antigone*. The following spring, the play was performed at The Ohio Theater in SoHo, New York as a sold out benefit performance.

The partnership was considered an unqualified success by all the invested parties. Students, teachers, the administration, and The Essentials all considered the experience to have been exceptional. Four years later as those students reached senior year, several of them wrote their college essays on their freshman year experience with *Antigone*, and others mentioned it at graduation. However, although this program was a success, there were a few factors that made replicating it unrealistic: it was one of only a few extra-curricular options that students had in their first year, it was provided entirely pro-bono, and for an afterschool program *Antigone* received an usually high - and completely unsustainable - level of attention from the administration and faculty. Attendance was checked by the school's Director of Programs, and the Principal called parents of students who failed to attend or showed up tardy. Because the program required so much attention from the school administration, SLJ and the Essentials

decided not to offer theater again until the school had finished growing and could dedicate human resources to the program in a more sustainable way.

Take two: *Romeo and Juliet*.

Three years later, when both organizations were four years old and SLJ had grown to capacity as a 9th-12th grade high school, The Essentials and SLJ tried another program with less success. By this time, the after school environment at SLJ had changed radically. Students had almost two dozen after-school activities to choose from and the robust After School Learning Academy had been incorporated into the Early College Awareness Program. Performing arts offerings included dance company, step squad, poetry slam, and drama at Brooklyn Academy of Music, as well as theater and dance curricular options. Much like *Romeo and Juliet*, the play chosen for the semester, the 2008 spring afterschool theater program was star-crossed from the start. Though the *Antigone* experience had made it apparent that a faculty liaison needed to be assigned responsibility for the theater club (so that the principal was not dealing with attendance), the responsibilities of this liaison were not fleshed out. As such, it was not clear to anybody involved what the liaison's responsibilities were, and it was therefore impossible (and unfair) to hold the liaison accountable for the program's success. This quickly became problematic. It was unclear who was in charge of recruitment and retention for the club. It was not made explicit that the liaison was responsible for student behavior during rehearsal. In fact, it was never even specified that the liaison had to attend rehearsal, which surfaced as a problem when it became apparent that the liaison had several competing responsibilities - including teaching another after school club during the theater club meeting time. In addition, though theater was now being offered in the context of a more structured afterschool program, it was also not articulated how the Director of Early College Awareness Programs and the Program Coordinator responsible for day-to-day operations of the afterschool program managed problems

that arose – particularly with faculty members who are directly supervised by the principal, not other school staff, and with volunteer-run programs, like theater. In short, the roles and responsibilities of the various staff involved were ambiguous and the structures for communication were poorly planned.

Consequently, *Romeo and Juliet* was beset by calamities. The rehearsal schedule was unclear to students, and early on, the cast dwindled. The lead actors had erratic attendance, and this affected the morale of the supporting cast. Because the liaison's duties were unclear, these problems were never followed up on with students or their parents. Furthermore, since there were no real communication avenues between The Essentials and the Early College Awareness Program staff, there was no intervention to clarify the liaison's role.

As the production date neared, it became apparent to The Essentials that the student cast alone could not perform a full-length show. Though the staging had originally called for ten actors, only eight remained committed and at least three cast members were absent on most given rehearsal days. Rather than scrap the entire performance, The Essentials decided to augment the cast with three professional actors from its company. They modified the script accordingly and the new company, comprised of professional actors and students, gave a book-in-hand staged reading of *Romeo and Juliet* for an invited audience of students and faculty. Though the performance was lauded as impressive by its audience, it was clear that major structural changes needed to be implemented before another theater program was offered.

Take three: Towards a more perfect union in *A Perfect Murder*. The Fall 2008 Theater program was created with an understanding of the previous two programs – a determination to capitalize on their success and avoid their failures. During the summer, the director of The Essentials and the director of SLJ's Early College Awareness Programs held a brainstorming session to work through goals, processes, and allocation of resources. A memo of understanding was created

detailing partnership goals, metrics for success, roles and responsibilities, schedule and locations, and budget details. A teacher liaison was selected to co-direct the club with The Essentials staff member, and his responsibilities were delineated in the memo of understanding. These responsibilities included overseeing recruitment and retention, attending every rehearsal and managing any behavioral issues, and coordinating all logistics (including calendar and budget) with the Early College Awareness Program staff. It was agreed that before the semester began, and periodically throughout the semester, the liaison would meet with the directors of both The Essentials and the Early College Awareness Program to check in about the program.

Both organizations agreed that students would have a stake in the success of the artistic process – they should feel like it was “their play.” Students would collaboratively create a new play and perform it for the SLJ community. Students, SLJ, and The Essentials would establish a culture of high expectations, collaborative problem solving, and craftsmanship. While the program staff would be encouraging and supportive and accept any student into the program regardless of acting capabilities, it would also demand much of our students and help them produce work of the highest artistic quality. If the school-based performance was high enough in caliber, The Essentials would attempt to procure a space to perform the show in an Off-Broadway theater.

The energy devoted to defining the partnership and delineating roles and responsibilities during the creation of *A Perfect Murder* definitely paid off. Because good communication between the school and The Essentials was prioritized, small problems were dealt with efficiently and effectively, and the show was able to go on with little interruption. When the program runs again next year, this model will most certainly be replicated.

The Other Structural Piece: Partnering on the Budget

A theater program of this magnitude is a costly endeavor: it requires ma-

terials for sets and costumes, fees for designers, stage lighting, and food for students after school. Most costly, however, is personnel, as the faculty liaison and teaching artists need to be present for a minimum of 60 hours of rehearsal.

At a private prep school or in wealthier school districts, these fees and costs are often absorbed into an existing performing arts budget. Those performing arts budgets are often augmented by booster clubs, by charging admission fees to the performing arts events, and by selling advertising space in the programs. Though SLJ had enough money to compensate a liaison for two hours of rehearsal per week, the school did not have funds to compensate a teaching artist (let alone a teaching company). Furthermore, such additional revenue sources were not a viable option for the school; the majority of students are low-income and even a small ticket price could be a significant barrier to attendance. The school community is also small enough and sufficiently lacking in resources to limit the appeal to local advertisers.

The Essentials and SLJ came up with several creative solutions to meet the budget. Each organization paid the salaries of its respective teacher(s). In return for receiving The Essentials services pro-bono, SLJ agreed to provide free rehearsal space to The Essentials during the summer so that The Essentials could develop their next production. Meanwhile, the play was written and designed so that it could be performed without a set – The Essentials were able to create theatrical lighting by repurposing backstage lights and work lights in combination with simple hardware store dimmers. Additionally, the costume designer kept costs low by borrowing costumes.

The final revenue piece was the fundraiser performance at Theatre Row. The Essentials used their connection with the theater to rent the theater on a “dark night” at a dramatically subsidized cost. Both SLJ and The Essentials invited their donors to attend and to “Get One, Give One” – that is, purchase a ticket for themselves and purchase a ticket to be donated to a student's family. The Essentials also invited their patron list

of previous ticket buyers. All of these efforts combined to produce a capacity crowd for the student performance and funding for SLJ's theater program.

PROGRAM PEDAGOGY

Theater for All: Attracting and Retaining a Diverse Array of Participants

Since a primary reason for offering an in-house theater program is to ensure participation of all kinds of students – and, in particular, at-risk students – recruitment is the first step in meeting this mission goal. By the time *Romeo and Juliet* was produced, SLJ had developed a standardized, school-wide club recruitment process. Most recruitment takes place at the After School Fair, which every student attends at the beginning of each semester. For both *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Perfect Murder*, over thirty students at the fair expressed interest in the theater program. For *A Perfect Murder*, students were also directly recruited by the liaison from his classes. Interested students then attended an information session.

For *A Perfect Murder*, nine students chose to commit to the program. One student dropped out within the first month of the program, another joined, and two understudies were recruited. Because students really understood their commitment before joining, and because attendance was monitored so closely by the liaison, attendance was overall very high throughout the program. The cast was comprised of an eclectic group of students who ranged in age, gender, acting background, and academic achievement. Six of the students were freshmen (including one freshman male who was repeating the ninth grade). Two students were sophomores (though one was new to SLJ), one was a junior, and one was a senior. In total, three students were male. Seven of the students failed at least one class during the first marking period, and all three of the non-failing students made the honor roll.

Playwriting Using the Joint-Stock Method

The pedagogical techniques employed by The Essentials did not change much between the years. In all three iterations of the theater program, students spent the first few weeks of the program learning the basics of improvisational acting and collaborative story telling. Because SLJ is an unscreened public school, students come from a variety of different reading levels and academic backgrounds. Thus, all scripts had to be written at multiple reading and speaking levels, be accessible to all students, and be capable of challenging the most advanced readers and performers.

The play scripts were created using the "Joint-Stock Method" (Ritchie, 1987). During the initial weeks, students worked with a teaching artist and used improvised documentary style interviews to create a modern retelling of the basic story (in this case, the famous 1924 murder trial of Leopold and Loeb, two wealthy University of Chicago alumni who kidnapped and murdered another teenager in an attempt to commit the "perfect murder" (Higdon, 1975)). The Essentials teaching artists then transformed the student generated material into a script that the students rehearsed under the direction of the teaching artist and performed for the school community. As the process was fairly similar for all the plays, the details of *A Perfect Murder's* creation serve as the example following.

Initial weeks: Artistic creation.

The first day of the after school program was designed to be a self-contained unit that was a microcosm of what students would do in a semester. The group took the story of Humpty Dumpty and imagined how it might have happened in modern day America. Improvising characters and scenes, they created an investigative squad of detectives trying to figure out how Humpty fell (or was pushed), breathless news reporters interviewing sources, and even an Al Sharpton-esque character proclaiming that Humpty had suffered from "Eggism." The activity was a hit among the students. Every student in atten-

dance created at least one character, and their enthusiasm was palpable.

When they then dove into the Leopold & Loeb story, the students were initially just as enthusiastic as they had been on the first day. They responded passionately to the theme of evil and had animated debates about such questions as, "What is evil?" "What is good?" "Is the purpose of punishment to rehabilitate or to get retribution?" The students quickly generated almost two dozen characters for their script. However, while the students had no problems imagining scenes for the Humpty Dumpty adaptation, some of them had repeated difficulty remembering which events and characters existed in the historical story and which ones existed only in the play.

Middle process: Arrival of the script, rehearsals, & finishing the script.

During the fourth week, The Essentials playwright began to bring in scenes adapted from the student generated materials. Students responded enthusiastically to seeing their creations in print and expressed impatience at not getting to see their characters in a full play. The playwright exercised confusion at the task of trying to reconcile the students' wildly imaginative characters with the events of the original story. So with the play still not finished, he decided to let the students chose the ending. He led the students through a writing exercise, and, as a group, they analyzed each character's needs, the obstacles to those needs, and how the character might try to achieve her/his objectives. Students were asked to create final scenes (keeping in mind the events of the actual story) that would resolve each character's story line. The playwright incorporated many of those scenes into the final script, and the students began rehearsing immediately.

One very important lesson of playwriting for the youth was the importance of keeping the script modular. Because of the script's modularity, the play director was able to decrease the size of a role for a student who was hospitalized for two weeks and to increase the prominence of another role for a student who was thriving on her existing material.

Facing attrition: The realities of working with academically at-risk youth

Though the structural components of the program were largely worked out (and highly effective) by the time *A Perfect Murder* began rehearsals, lateness and attrition were still a reality that needed to be dealt with. The lateness issue was related to students' academic responsibilities. As mentioned previously, several participants were failing classes. The school's policy is that students who are failing must attend after school tutoring, which conflicts with club meetings. The policy also dictates that failing students cannot perform publicly. During the creation of *A Perfect Murder*, the problem of failing students was dealt with by recruiting understudies. From an artistic standpoint, having understudies allowed rehearsals to continue uninterrupted when students were late or absent because of tutoring. The presence of understudies also provided a non-threatening reminder to students that their commitment to the play was taken very seriously and that if they could not improve their grades and make rehearsals, they would be replaced. One lesson learned from this experience was that it would be beneficial to monitor students' grades so that sudden absences to attend tutoring would not disrupt the rehearsal process. Interestingly, when students in the drama program who were failing classes realized that their academic status would cause them to miss rehearsals, they generally responded with an increased level of academic effort and output. In the future, it would be sensible to include report reflections as a systematized component of the program.

Performance week. As the performance drew near, two behavioral patterns emerged: students asked repeatedly if the play "was really happening?" and they started to "goof off" (talking during rehearsals, forgetting lines they previously knew, etc.). Consequently, the Essentials staff asked students to run their own rehearsals and take turns acting as Director and Stage Manager. The two adults were present at these student led rehears-

als but spoke only on rare occasions. The students were also asked to make a short marketing video to be posted on YouTube, which they successfully completed with little adult coaching.

The initial performance of *A Perfect Murder* took place on the floor of the basketball court (the students set up their stage at "top of the key" while the audience sat in folding chairs below the "foul line"). Following the performance, the response from the school community was warm and embracing - they showered the students with praise. The performance took place on a Friday night, and by Monday morning, dozens of congratulatory emails had circulated throughout the school's listserves. Though The Essentials director was not satisfied with the artistic standard of the performance, virtually every audience member - from parents, to teachers to school safety agents - was impressed by the play's caliber.

The decision to hold a benefit performance.

Deciding that the quality of performance was adequate and repairable and that the level of student commitment was serious enough, the Essentials and SLJ staff jointly made the decision to produce a benefit performance Off Broadway, at Theatre Row, one month later. Together, the staff gathered the students together, explained that this would involve an even more intense level of effort from them, and asked if they were willing to commit as a group to performing. Additionally, students were informed that, congruent with school policy, anyone with disciplinary issues between then and the performance would not be able to perform. The students committed to the extra work enthusiastically but expressed some trepidation about the disciplinary ruling. Ultimately, however, they all exhibited exemplary behavior; in fact, teachers remarked to the liaison that they had seen marked improvements in certain students' behavior and participation.

Artistic changes included bringing a voice and speech coach in to work with the students and changing the script so that it included a framing device that incorporated the students (and many of the internal arguments that the cast

had about the play during rehearsals) into the actual text of the play. The student response to becoming characters in the play was incredible; whereas they had previously been reluctant to change lines once they had been written on the page, students were now enthusiastic tinkerers - they repeatedly changed and adapted lines so that they would "feel more like something I'd say." By the time the play was performed, its artistic quality had improved tremendously.

The Off-Broadway performance went off without a hitch. Veteran Broadway actor Noah Weisberg introduced the performance to a theater packed with an array of audience members, from students' families and friends to school staff, Theater Row patrons, and donors. Then the lights went down and the students took the stage. Thirty minutes later, the cast took their bows and the audience erupted with pride.

CONCLUSIONS

It took five years and three iterations of a partnership between The Essentials and SLJ to develop a sustainable and replicable model for a high-quality, in-house theater program. Congruent with SLJ's mission, the theater program provides students with high level enrichment services that involve whole community support for students and empower all students, regardless of prior experience, skill, or academic achievement, to get involved. For The Essentials, the performance had a tangible benefit. It allowed the company to invite its audience that normally only sees its professional work to come to a familiar theater and experience its teaching work. Following the performance, patrons who may not have ever attended a high school play chatted with the stars in the Theatre Row lounge. For these theater patrons, the play provided an approachable access point through which to learn about the challenges in urban education and the work being done on that front.

That the program was in-house allowed it to target high-risk students and provide them with support to achieve what for some of them was their first significant success in an academic setting. One junior who pre-

viously had suffered from acute absenteeism, managed to avoid a single unexcused absence to rehearsal. Further, he had in years past failed several New York State Regents examinations. This year, when warned that he could only participate in the Times Square performance if he attended all of his Regents prep classes, he did so. On the morning of our Theater Row performance, he passed his final Regents exam, which would allow him to graduate from high school. Another student, who transferred to the school because she been disinterested academically at her previous high school and had gotten involved in high-risk behaviors and negative peer groups, remarked that she “loved coming to school because theater made life worth living.” Though she failed most of her classes during the first marking period, she said, theater made me want to good in school. I love theater because it made me realize that this is a great school, with lots of opportunities. Theater made me realize I should pay attention in my classes, cuz, it made me realize that there’s so much interesting stuff going on in this place. (Anonymous Student, 2009) She passed almost all of her classes during the second marking period. Several other students claimed that they felt more self confident, empowered to be a leader, and a sense of belonging for the first time because of theater. The students developed a tangible sense of positive community and exhibited impressive collaboration skills. Students who had previously been in separate social cliques continued to maintain their friendships after

the play ended. In addition, students who had previously lacked positive relationships with school staff developed close relationships with the liaison and The Essentials staff. On more than one occasion, students approached a staff member for advice about how to avoid a risky decision. All of these experiences are in line with prior research on why extracurriculars are so important for adolescents (Dunne, 1977; Feldman and Matjasko, 2005; Mahoney and Cairns, 1997; NFSHSA, 1985).

When this model is replicated or adapted by us or by others, there are several critical elements that should be considered. Developing clear lines of communication between the school and the partner organization is absolutely key. Appointing a liaison and delineating clear responsibilities is positively imperative; without an effective liaison who worked full-time at the school, knew the school culture, and interacted with students on a daily basis, this play would never have come to fruition. In addition, employing pedagogical techniques that foster student ownership and allow for last minute script changes are crucial to serving at-risk students and simultaneously offering artistically high caliber educational programming.

The purpose of this article is to provide a model that can be employed by other schools and theater companies. This partnership built real relationships between students, faculty, professional artists, and members of the general public. And, in the context of a difficult economy, it provided a unique way for a theater company to increase its outreach and for a school to address its most at-risk students. Most impor-

tantly, this partnership provided incredibly high quality programming to students who would not have had access to or taken advantage of it otherwise.

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Andrew Grosso is the Artistic Director of The Essentials. Recent directing credits include *MOTHER*, starring Emmy Award winners Holland Taylor and Buck Henry, *Perfect Harmony*, *Wrong Way Up!* with the rock band The Niagaras, and the New York Premier of William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*. He has taught for the NYU Dramatic Writing Program, Fordham University, The Shakespeare Theatre, Off the Hook, the Urban Assembly School for Law & Justice, and The Dalton School. He is an alumnus of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, and Duke University. He is also a member of SDC and Dramatist Guild.

ENDNOTES

i In the context of this paper, the term “at-risk” is used to describe students who are at-risk for dropping out of high school. Some factors that put students at risk for dropout include failing classes, being overage or not on track to graduate, having poor attendance, and/or lacking a pro-active parent (Bridgeland et al, 2006).

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NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Changing Things as They Are: Promoting Social Justice Through Encounters with the Arts

By Amanda Nicole Gulla, Lehman College, The City University of New York

The Case for the Arts in Schools

Zach walks into my office, drops his knapsack and falls wearily into the chair across from my desk. He is in his third year as a high school English teacher, and his final semester of the Masters Degree program in English Education of which I am faculty adviser. “The data is suffocating me;” he says first, and then follows up with “this is the only thing keeping me sane.” The “this” Zach is referring to is his Masters thesis in progress, which is an examination of his efforts to employ an aesthetic approach to teaching the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960). “The data,” on the other hand, refers to reams of statistical breakdowns of students’ standardized test scores, intended to inform instruction through detailed analysis of student errors. For Zach and many of his colleagues, the use of numerical data derived from tests to shape and drive instruction is misguided in its failure to take into account the rich qualitative information that becomes available when students are given time and guidance to craft authentic aesthetic responses to the arts. For Elliot Eisner (2002): “Narratives, film, video, theater, even poems and collages can be used to deepen one’s understanding of aspects of educational practices and its consequences” (p. 210).

Beyond having value as an assessment tool, engagement with the arts in the K-12 classroom can offer aesthetic experiences that have the potential to transform the way students encounter the world, engaging the imagination in acts of perception that stir them to “wide-awakeness” (Greene, 1978, p. 2).

At a time when so much attention is given to quantitative data in K-12 schools, there are countervailing forces

that argue that interacting with the arts in a deep and sustained way actually expands the definition of literacy by introducing new epistemologies informed by aesthetic encounters with the visual, performing and literary arts, as well as new media (Kist, 2005). Advocates for the arts in education call for a variety of types of arts programs, some whose aim is to teach mastery of a specific art form and others whose chief mode of interaction with the arts encourages children to “acquire from their consideration of works of art unique skills of analytic thinking and familiarity with a wealth of aesthetic texts” (Davis, 2008, p. 20). This latter type of arts program, called aesthetic education, seeks to awaken us to the possibilities contained in works of art (Greene, 2001). Following is a vignette shared by Jeanette Del Valle, a high school English Teacher at the School for Community Research and Learning in the Bronx, New York. She writes about the importance of her students’ involvement in an aesthetic education program offered at her school by Lincoln Center Institute:

One of the most important functions I serve is making the arts accessible to my students. More often than not, they view the arts as an indulgence of the ‘rich and White.’ Convincing them that the fine arts are for everyone is sometimes a hard sell, which is why their work in aesthetic education is so critical. Not only do we expose them to the arts, they get to spend time discussing, thinking about, and actually making art. By the end of the experience, a whole new world has been opened to them. (Email communication, Oct. 2008)

Jeanette received her Masters degree in English Education from a university which has a long-standing relationship

with Lincoln Center Institute (LCI). Through this relationship, participating faculty immerse teacher candidates in aesthetic experiences with a variety of art forms. As they encounter visual art, theater, music and dance, they also explore the theoretical underpinnings of this work. For many of these teacher candidates, this may be the first time they themselves have visited a museum or seen a live performance. If we agree with Eisner that “many of the most complex and subtle forms of thinking take place when students have an opportunity either to work meaningfully on the creation of images—whether visual, choreographic, musical, literary, or poetic—or to scrutinize them appreciatively” (2002, pp. xi-xii), then surely we must expect teachers to have knowledge and skills that will allow them to facilitate these experiences. However, school systems often regard arts programs with a kind of ambivalence. Few administrators would actually say that they do not value the arts, but during tight budgetary times they are the first to go. Davis (2008) quotes a school committee member:

Our students have so many demands on them from staying out of trouble to gaining the skills to be successful in the adult world. The important subjects in preparing students for such responsibility are reading, science and math (p. 25)

Aside from the fact that such comments ignore the many ways in which learning in the arts often incorporates skills such as reading, science and math, the chief objection against their inclusion in the K-12 curriculum is that they are expensive in terms of time, resources, and money. Perhaps administrators are uncomfortable with

the fact that the time spent making and interacting with works of art is synonymous to time taken away from the curriculum that gets reflected in standardized tests. Perhaps it is also a lack of comfort and familiarity that teachers and administrators themselves have with the arts. Teachers who insist that they do not dance or sing or write poetry tend to be excused much more readily than those who might limit their curriculum by claiming that they do not 'do math' (Davis, 2008). But why are so many teachers uncomfortable and unfamiliar with the arts? In all likelihood it is because they themselves are products of school systems that did not have strong arts programs.

Access to Arts Institutions as a Social Justice Issue

When I began teaching middle school students in the 1980's in the Bronx and later in East Harlem, New York, I was dismayed to discover that although my students lived in one of the cultural capitals of the world, a great number of them had had almost no exposure to the cultural institutions housed minutes away from their front doors. An informal survey of seventh-through ninth grade students revealed that not one of them had ever visited Lincoln Center or any other professional performing arts venue, although some had seen live performances by arts organizations that toured public schools. Only a few students had visited any of the city's art museums. Students who had visited a museum had done so only on school field trips, and among those who had, often it was during elementary school years. Once they entered middle school, virtually all cultural field trips had come to an end. There were few opportunities for students to interact with the performing and visual arts, particularly in settings outside of school. The lack of exposure to the arts became a self-perpetuating problem as students matured with the sense that art forms and genres were not a part of their world. Often, students responded to the challenging and unfamiliar aspects of music, art or literature by claiming that it was "boring." The "boring" response was one

that usually came about when students had no frame of reference for how to respond to the work of art. They had simply not learned how to see or hear what the work presented. This phenomenon was particularly noticeable, on field trips to art museums on the rare occasions that such trips were allowed. Without sufficient preparation to ground their experience and give them a frame of reference from which to view the art, students often wandered around the museum completely disengaged from their surroundings.

Even when the students were being placed in proximity to art, the world of art was really not open to them. Exposure to the performing and visual arts in schools was rare enough, but the deeper problem lay in the fact that little was done beyond the mere act of exposure. Entire cultural histories and milieus were opaque to them. In all likelihood this was due to a lack of experience, training or comfort on the part of their teachers. No time was spent on professional development to support teachers in ways that they might incorporate the arts into the curriculum, and no time was spent preparing the students to have meaningful encounters with the art they were about to see. As Dewey said:

Everyone knows that it requires apprenticeship to see through a microscope or telescope, and to see a landscape as a geologist sees it. The idea that esthetic perception is an affair for odd moments is one reason for the backwardness of the arts among us. The eye and the visual apparatus may be intact; the object may be physically there, the cathedral of Notre Dame, or Rembrandt's portrait of Hendrik Stoeffel. In some bald sense, the latter may be 'seen.' They may be looked at, possibly recognized, and have their correct names attached. But for lack of continuous interaction between the total organism and the objects, they are not perceived, certainly not esthetically (1980, pp. 53-54). The lack of continuous interaction was certainly part of the problem. Eisner (2002) has observed that the arts are either implicitly or explicitly treated as a frill in relation to the school curricu-

lum. In the traditional K-12 school art is a discrete subject that students partake in once a week, if at all. It is rare in public schools that students beyond elementary school will have experiences with more than one art form, say visual art and music, in any given semester. Grades in art classes often do not count toward graduation credits, and students are quite aware of this.

LCI Teacher Education Collaborative

Eisner (2002) raises another key issue, even when arts curricula are undertaken with the best of intentions; they usually fall short of helping students to become fully conversant with a broad range of art forms and genres. Early childhood and elementary education certification programs usually require at least one semester of training in the arts, but these requirements are not consistent across programs. Teachers in New York State seeking certification require no more than one semester of course work in "artistic expression" (New York State Education Department <http://eservices.nysed.gov/teach/certhelp/CertRequirementHelp.do>), which may include any form of art. With such inconsistent attention to the arts, it is no wonder that students have few opportunities for meaningful encounters with them. However, there are some arts organizations whose mission is to provide students with prolonged encounters with works of art. LCI (www.lcinstitute.org), has been in existence for over thirty years, and is known for its work in the field of arts with public school teachers and students, as well as with college professors and teacher candidates. Encompassing dance, theater, music, visual art, and architecture, LCI focuses on aesthetic education through imaginative learning, rather than focusing on arts education or art appreciation. According to LCI's founding Philosopher-in-Residence Maxine Greene (2001), aesthetic education requires that "the learner must break with the taken-for-granted, what some call the 'natural attitude,' and look through the lenses of various ways of knowing, seeing and feeling in a conscious endeavor to impose different orders upon experience." (p. 5).

LCI accomplishes this goal by bringing “students into the world of imaginative learning and a work of art through participatory activities that include art making, questioning, reflection, and contextual information and research” (Lincoln Center Institute, 2008, p. 4). A key part of this endeavor is the professional development of the teachers involved. This takes place in a variety of ways. Participating teachers usually attend a week-long summer intensive training which includes immersion in the study of several works of art as well as experiential workshops with teaching artists who are professionals in dance, theater, music or visual art. Some teachers and teacher candidates also participate in university-based courses that are taught with the participation of Lincoln Center Institute teaching artists. These courses, which are housed in education departments of colleges and universities, may be primarily focused on aesthetic education, or they may offer an aesthetic education component within the context of another course.

The courses in aesthetic education are designed to provide teachers and teacher candidates with encounters with works of art that are similar to those that their K-12 students would normally experience. According to LCI’s document *Entering the World of the Work of Art* (2008) which is used as a planning guide for teachers:

The Institute’s approach to arts and education initially brings students into the world of imaginative learning and a work of art through participatory activities that include art making, questioning, reflection, and contextual information and research. (p. 4)

The core assumption within the aesthetic education approach is that encounters with works of art will bring students into the world of imaginative learning. Learning in the arts goes far deeper than the capacity of being able to name and identify various forms and genres. It is about understanding the creative process, and the choices made in executing a work of art and experiencing a work of art through the senses and imagination.

Graduate Courses in Aesthetic Education

In my current role as a professor of English Education I teach graduate level courses in aesthetic education, as well as other graduate methods courses that incorporate inquiry into works of art in collaboration with LCI teaching artists. These courses are taken by a mix of preservice and inservice teachers. Some of the students in the class, such as Jeanette, work in schools that have a relationship with Lincoln Center Institute, and interestingly, may be studying the same works of art in their own classrooms. The majority of the students in these classes, however, do not work in schools with LCI teaching artists. They come with a broad range of experiences regarding arts. Some, just like their students, have never visited major museums or performing art venues and have had very limited encounters with the arts.

One of the primary goals of these courses is to help teachers find ways of bringing the performing and visual arts to their students; it is important to create an atmosphere in which teachers and teacher candidates can begin to feel comfortable experiencing and discussing a variety of art forms, even if they have had little experience up to that time. The skill and competence these teachers will need in order to introduce a work of art to their own students begins with creating an atmosphere that encourages open discussions that probe beneath the surface of initial responses. Such discussions can level the playing field between those who may have a somewhat substantial background in the arts and those who have little or none. This is because in an aesthetic education classroom, our discussions of a work of art are not based in expertise. One needs not to be able to identify a school of painting or type of dance, or even name the instruments of the orchestra to be able to enter into such a discussion. What is essential is a willingness for participants to be open to what is present in a work of art, to “lend works of art their lives” (Greene, 2001 p. 6).

The process by which we enter into these relationships with works of art

begins with what LCI calls “Noticing Deeply” (Holzer, 2007, p. 6). Repeated encounters with the same work of art are important for helping students achieve a sense of intimacy with the work. Through this process participants in an aesthetic education experience learn to articulate and support their responses to the work of art, thus moving them beyond first impressions. By engaging in these types of experiences, learners do gain a measure of authority through which they can have meaningful discussions about the work of art. Another key part of making the encounter with the work of art successful is to prepare students to open their minds to what the work contains. This is accomplished through careful preparation, spending time “Noticing Deeply” and brainstorming themes, noticing and identifying patterns, and making connections between this work of art and the world from which it emerged until one can begin to name and describe the processes the artist went through to create the work of art. This is a technique that LCI teaches by pairing teachers or professors with LCI teaching artists who are professionals in the particular art form being studied. Faculty meet with the teaching artist for a planning session in which they discuss the work of art (which have both already seen or heard and revisit during the session) and the context of the course in which they will be studying it. The conversation generally begins by collecting observations and ideas, and gradually narrowing of themes. These themes lead to the development of a “Line of Inquiry,” which LCI defines as: “an open, yet focused question that incorporates elements and concepts found in a specific work of art, and is related to the concerns of students and teachers” (p. 8).

Developing the experiential lessons based on the Line of Inquiry is a key element for preparing students to enter into an open discussion of a work of art framed by the concept of “Deeply Noticing” and describing. Another essential part of the planning session involves gathering contextual materials to support the study of the work of art.

After three consecutive semesters of working with LCI teaching artists

on creating these experiences around works of art in aesthetic education classes, I decided that it was time to begin to develop some “Lines of Inquiry” and experiential lessons on my own. After all, many of these students would not have the benefit of working with an LCI teaching artist in their own classrooms. If they were to be able to develop Lines of Inquiry and experiential lessons to prepare their own students for a meaningful encounter with a work of art, they would benefit from practicing this fairly complex set of skills in a supportive environment.

Independent Journeys into the Aesthetic

For our first encounter with a work of art, the class explored Picasso’s *Guernica*, by projecting the image on a blank white wall using an LCD projector. Click on this link to view an image of the painting: <http://arts.anu.edu.au/polsci/courses/pols1005/2007/Images/Picasso.Guernica2.jpg> We plunged directly into “Noticing Deeply” by describing the painting, and simultaneously, refraining from interpretations or judgments, pointing out details, asking questions, and commenting on specific techniques such as the use of black and white, the distortion of faces and the overlay of figures which many students felt lent the painting a sense of movement, violence and chaos. After nearly an hour of “Noticing Deeply,” I gave the students some contextual information, explaining that Picasso had painted *Guernica* in response to the horror of the bombing of the village of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. The more details that the students learned about the context that led to the creation of the painting, they asked more questions, and wanted to go back and look at the painting again and again. We revisited *Guernica* three times over the course of the semester, with the students sketching, discussing, and finally planning and trying out lesson plans to explore its themes. This activity was based on a lesson originally developed with an eighth grade class in the Bronx. It was helpful to these teachers and teacher candidates to hear about the way in which students

who were similar to the ones they were currently teaching or would soon be teaching, might respond to lessons centered on the close study of a work of art.

After several semesters of repeating and refining the *Guernica* lesson, it was time to try a new work of art. Again, I wanted to focus on a painting that told a compelling story. Teachers working with LCI teaching artists have the opportunity to use theatrical, dance and musical performances from LCI’s repertory in addition to several of their traveling photography exhibits and paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s permanent collection. The point of these independently developed lessons was to model ways in which teachers could bring works of art into their classrooms at no cost and without having to leave their school buildings. Since more and more school administrators are discouraging field trips on the grounds that it takes time away from test preparation and other academic pursuits, this approach could help teachers navigate some potential obstacles to bringing art into their classrooms. For now, with access to the Internet and a laptop and LCD projector, students could have access to many of the greatest works of art in the world. While looking at a projected image is not the same as the original, and in fact considerations of scale, texture and dimensionality need to be taken into account when choosing a work of art to be viewed in anything other than its original form; being able to view an enlarged image in the classroom and revisit it repeatedly allows for an immersion in the aesthetic experience. The other advantage of working with visual art is that, unlike a performance, the work of art can be taken in all at once, whereas any performance is by its very nature ephemeral and therefore can only be described retrospectively. Being able to point to and describe an object allows learners to think about a work as it stands still.

Continuing the Adventure with Brueghel

The next work of art we explored was Pieter Brueghel the Elder’s *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*. The

image is viewable on Web Museum (<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/bruegel/icarus.jpg>). In this painting, which depicts a bucolic seaside village at work, the tragedy of Icarus is not immediately apparent. First the viewer takes in the red shirted ploughman, then the shepherd, leading the eye to the “expensive delicate ship” (Auden, 1939). Finally, next to the ship, we see a tiny pair of human legs flailing in the water. The lens for viewing and considering the painting was: “In *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, How does Brueghel use perspective and composition to place the narrative of Icarus and Daedalus in the context of a scene of contemporary daily life?”

In preparation for viewing the painting I asked the students to recall a time in their lives when they were undergoing an experience that transformed their lives, while people around them were unaware of what they were going through. I gave out paper, colored pencils and oil pastels and asked them to draw a representation of their experience, and then, to gather in small groups and share their drawing and the stories behind them. Then each group chose one story from which to create a tableau to represent the scene. After the students performed their tableaux and we discussed the fact that the world tends to move around us even when we may feel that it has stopped, it was time to view Brueghel’s painting.

Projecting the image on a screen, I asked students to describe what they saw in the painting. None of them had ever seen it before. Their observations followed the sequence described earlier, with the red shirted ploughman as the most prominent image. Some of these graduate students were so unfamiliar with the style of painting and the era from which it came that they had difficulty recognizing the ploughman as male, and had never seen terraced fields such as those that appear in the scene. After being told that the painting was done by Brueghel in the 1500’s, most of the students were better able to consider the painting in the context of other European Renaissance paintings they had seen before. We engaged in “Noticing Deeply” for quite some time, and then someone noticed the bare legs

sticking up out of the sea. “Someone is drowning!” the student said. There was speculation about whether the figure had fallen off the ship. Then it was time to reveal title of the painting and ask the class if anyone knew the story of Icarus and Daedalus. Several had never heard the story. After one a student gave a synopsis of the myth, everyone immediately realized that the legs belonged to Icarus. “What does it mean that the painting is called ‘Landscape with the Fall of Icarus,’ rather than, say, ‘Daedalus and Icarus?’” Several students picked up on the fact that it was not just what happened to the two main characters that was important; the landscape was just as essential to the story, just as it had been in the tableaux they had created. “The world just keeps on moving no matter what you are going through,” said one student. Through the students’ comments and writing it was clear that they understood that the story of Daedalus and Icarus was a vehicle for telling the larger story about the rest of the world being indifferent to private suffering.

At this point we read Auden’s poem “Musee des Beaux Arts” (1939) aloud several times and then looked for points of comparison with the painting. This passage in particular offered a poignant illustration of the indifference of those who surrounded the subject:

In Breughel’s Icarus, for instance:
 how everything turns away
 Quite leisurely from the disaster;
 the ploughman may
 Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
 But for him it was not an important failure

Next I asked the students to think about whose eyes we were witnessing the scene. The point of view from which we see the scene is that of a bird, or, more likely, poor Daedalus still airborne on his waxen wings, helplessly watching as his beloved son Icarus drowns. “It looks like we are seeing the scene from above,” a student said. I asked why Brueghel might have chosen that particular vantage point. There was a sharp intake of breath as one student said: “It must be Daedalus. He sees what is happening and there’s nothing he can do.”

For homework students read Ovid’s poem from *Metamorphoses* and they chose a moment in the poem to which they could write their own responses. Following is one student’s response to the moment of transformation Brueghel captures from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* as he refers to “the unlucky father, not a father” (line 360).

The Unlucky Father, Not a Father

I have lost the self that mattered.
 If I am not father then who am I?
 Broken, I grasp the awful reality as
 one by one the feathers fall
 and along with them, my spirit.

Writing their own poems in response to Ovid brought the experience to full circle, as it allowed students to make connections with passages that resonated for them. Another student chose the line “Fly midway. Gaze not at the boundless sky” (line 322) as a point of departure for his poem that considers the story of Icarus as an extended metaphor on an adolescent’s quest for autonomy:

Fly midway, Gaze not at the boundless sky
 Sacrifice truth, purity, and gold
 Submit to. Abide. Live and die
 With rules and tradition, I’ve been told
 Not ever, I say, I would rather die!
 Then listen or resign to the midway fly
 Oh my spirit will soar, because
 today I will try
 And no longer just gaze at the
 boundless sky

Over the next several weeks we revisited Ovid’s long poem along with several other excerpts from the *Metamorphoses* to which students responded by writing their own poems, drawing, and dramatic interpretation in addition to the more traditional discussions and analytical writing. This led to several other iterations of the practice of “Noticing Deeply.” Among them was an activity in which we used double entry journals, or what Anne Berthoff (1988) refers to as a “dialectical notebook.” This is a method of note taking in which the page is divided in two, with the left side consisting of quotes from the text being read and the right side is used for comments, questions and a variety of notes and responses

intended to help explicate the text for the reader’s own purposes. In this case, though, the ‘text’ was an apple that each student chose from a large wooden basket. In the left hand column, students took notes on what they could perceive about the apple by using their senses. In the right hand column they wrote about memories or associations regarding apples. This was to be used as raw material for writing poems and personal narratives. These experiences were accompanied by readings that explore the notions of observation, reflection and interpretation.

These graduate students took up this question with their responses and some of them took it up again in their own classrooms as they began bringing activities like these into their classrooms. One student, a middle school teacher told our class that every year she has her students read “How to Eat a Guava,” the opening story from Esmeralda Santiago’s memoir *When I was Puerto Rican* (1993). Before sharing our classroom experiences regarding Brueghel and then with apples, she had students read the story, and afterwards, showed them a guava. Now, she crafted her lesson around the students’ experiences, asking them to describe and write about a food that reminded them of home, family and heritage. Then she brought in several guavas for the class to share, and as they ate the guavas, they were able to: “hear the skin, meat and seeds crunching inside your head, while the inside of your mouth explodes in little spurts of sour” (Santiago, 1993, p. 4) She then had her students write similarly descriptive pieces about foods that reminded them of home and family. For the students who were already teaching, the work of “Noticing Deeply” was beginning to take hold in their practices, and the range of ways in which they were beginning to consider using art in their classrooms was increasing. Both teachers and teacher candidates were developing a level of comfort that made them willing to incorporate art in their work with middle and high school students in ways that they had not previously considered.

Midway through the semester the students wrote reflection papers on their experiences with “Noticing Deep-

ly.” One student who is a middle school English teacher recalled our work with Brueghel’s painting in this way:

Holzer’s distinction of students learning through continuous interaction with a piece of art over time really cements my first major breakthrough in academic instruction. In class, I was thankful for a model of this ‘continuous interaction’ through our interactions with art concerning Daedalus and Icarus. The chronology was entirely different than anything I’ve tried as a teacher. We interacted with the Brueghel painting and the Auden poem before we even read the actual text of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. This is precisely the kind of buildup that allows context to play a role in shaping the comprehension and involvement of students.

As our campus continues to develop its long standing relationship with LCI, various faculty members are engaging in inquiries into aesthetic education

and its relationships to teacher education. A colleague who teaches courses that incorporate aesthetic education to graduate students in the literacy for K-12 program and I have begun to gather data to explore the extent to which the work we have done with these students in our graduate classes has had an impact in their teaching practices. Preliminary findings of this study suggest that while 100 percent of the respondents felt that art is an important and valuable part of all students’ education, more than sixty percent said they felt too much pressure from administrators to prepare students for standardized tests, and too little support to take students on trips or spend significant amounts of time studying art in their classrooms. Still, most reported that they find ways to bring music, paintings, photography and film into their classrooms. When there is an opportunity to visit a museum or take their students to see a theater or dance performance, they grab it. They work with

their students to study poems and stories more slowly, savoring the language just like Santiago did with the guava. For every work of art that teachers bring to their students, they give the students another piece of the world.

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NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Art Education Programs: Empowering Social Change

By Yolanda Medina, Borough of Manhattan Community College/CUNY

The aim of this article is to bring attention to an important connection between art education programs and the development of social justice practices in K-16 classrooms. This article is organized into three sections. The first is an analysis of the hierarchical and unilateral approach to education that urban students experience throughout their schooling, and how this educational model fails to develop traits that can empower students to promote social justice for those who are marginalized or oppressed. The second section advocates for the promotion of art education programs infused with particular aesthetic experiences that can help students develop the missing traits. The closing section discusses the changes that will be required to institute these programs in the United States in general and New York City (NYC) in particular, and the challenges this will entail. The author is a lifelong resident of NYC, which is both her hometown and one of the largest urban cities in the world.

THE BANKING APPROACH

My teaching experiences in urban K-16 settings indicate that students' educational experiences are being formed by a pedagogical system that is hierarchical and non-interactive. Freire (2000) refers to this model as the "banking concept of education" (p.71) in which students are reduced to storing bits of information provided by the instructor, who considers her/himself a superior authority, and "turns them [students] into receptacles to be filled" (p. 72). In this educational model, students' experiences and ways of interpreting the world are not valued. The learning process has no personal relevance, and students are discouraged from creating meaning in the classroom or their lives. Over the course of time, this educational approach can weaken students' faith in their own

power to transform the world, leaving them at the mercy of authority figures who tell them how to live. This process separates students from what somatic theorists call their *somatic sensibility*.

Tomas Hanna defines *soma* as "the body as perceived from within by first-person perception" (Green, 2001, p. 2). The *soma* represents a subjective understanding of our emotions and motivations as we perceive them inside our selves, as opposed to the objective viewpoint of a detached observer. Somatic Theory focuses on embodied experiences such as sensation, movement, and intention, which carry memories connected with feelings of love, joy, passion, compassion, and sorrow. I suggest that our understanding of the world is not restricted to our minds, but also deeply embedded in our bodies in the form of experiential memories. If we take a minute to consider, we realize that memory is triggered not only by language or thought, but sometimes by odors, sensations, or colors. A disembodied experience is emotionless; it can be recalled by our memory, but this recollection does not arouse the feelings that accompanied the experience when it entered our lives. Somatic sensibility allows us to recall the emotions connected with our experiences, and this gives us a stronger visceral understanding of how they affect our lives and shape the way we see ourselves and others.

Students come into our classrooms already accustomed to the banking model of education, in which their individual ways of interpreting the world are disregarded and the learning process is detached from personal experience. They have learned to see the world as fixed, with units of knowledge set and defined by authority figures pontificating in front of the class. Over time, students lose both the ability to question the status quo and the confidence to change it.

The world they are to inherit is seen as unchangeable and static. Greene (1995) describes this situation well:

My argument is simply that treating the world as predefined and given, as simply there, is quite separate and different from applying an initiating, constructing mind or consciousness to the world. When habit swathes everything, one day follows another identical day and predictability swallows any hint of an opening possibility. (p. 23)

Because this type of learning process is predetermined and leaves little room for critical and independent thinking, it reduces students' capacity to imagine, which Greene (1995) defines as the "ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise" (p. 19). This is the same skill displayed by an interior designer who walks into an empty room and creates a mental image of how s/he wants it to look, then works towards the realization of that image. We must be capable of imagining things as we want them to be before we can see ourselves as agents of change. If students cannot develop their imagination, they cannot envision their own power to create and recreate the world.

The next section will briefly explain how certain types of aesthetic experience can enable students to engage in social change by encouraging them to identify with others who share similar experiences. I will advocate for infusion of the arts into K-16 classrooms as a way of producing focused aesthetic experiences that can facilitate this process. The goal is to bring the body (*soma*) and its somatic sensibilities into the classroom along with our students' minds.

THE AESTHETIC PROCESS

Greene (2001) defines the field of aesthetics as "concerned about perception, sensation, imagination, and how they relate to knowing, understanding, and feeling about the world" (p. 5). An

aesthetic experience can be described as the relationship created between an observer and a specific artwork, and the way that work of art affects the observer in light of his/her background and personal history. Aesthetic experiences differ in their effects depending upon what each observer brings to the encounter. Susan Stinson (1985) discusses three different levels of aesthetic experience and explains why they must be used carefully in educational contexts, because not all of them will encourage constructive engagement with the world. This article will briefly discuss the first two, but the third level of experience is the one I am interested in promoting as an educational resource. This is the type of experience that will help students to embrace their own power to create positive social change.

Stinson's first dimension is limited to appreciation of the particular beauty of the artwork. According to her analysis, the observer is not deeply moved at this level of perception because the artwork bears no connection with his/her previous experiences. For this reason, the first level of aesthetic experience cannot release the imagination or empower the observer. This is analogous to the banking method of education, in which students are limited to storing new information without applying critical thought or interpretation.

Stinson's second level of aesthetic experience concerns the way in which the artwork moves the observer. The effect the work will have in this dimension depends upon the life experiences the observer brings to the encounter, and thus upon the degree to which the observer can relate to the piece in question. Some will see this level of experience as a transcendental moment that can give the observer the strength and security to create positive change in her/his life. Stinson (1985) describes this kind of experience as a "source of knowledge of God and a major source of meaning in life" (p. 77).

Aesthetic experiences at Stinson's second level can release the imagination and allow the observer to see a path towards a better life, but this does not necessarily encourage movement beyond the personal into the social realm. The experience fails to engen-

der compassion, which according to Fox (1999) "is political as well as personal" (p. 109). I share Fox's belief that "compassion leads to work" (p. 8), and that without it, social empowerment will have no relevant effect. For this reason, I agree with Stinson's concern that "transcendent experiences may too often simply refresh us – like a mini vacation – making us better able to tolerate some things which we ought not tolerate" (p. 78). Though I would not wish to devalue the positive effects felt at this level of aesthetic experience, the particular type of educational encounter I am promoting is intended to engender both personal empowerment and a desire for social change. Stinson describes a third level of aesthetic experience that strengthens the relationship between the observer and the world around her/him. The work of art becomes a vehicle for appreciating other people's suffering and connecting it with our own. Stinson elaborates by quoting Maxine Greene:

... certain works of art are considered great primarily because of their capacity to bring us into conscious engagement with the world, into self reflectiveness and critical awareness, and to sense moral agency, and it is these works of art which ought to be central in curriculum. (Greene cited in Stinson, 1985, p. 79)

In order to create an environment in which students can reach this third level of aesthetic experience, we must offer quality education programs that expose them to artworks that will help them to recognize common sources of oppression. These encounters must involve the body (soma) as a mediator of experience and employ its somatic sensibilities to explore the work of art. This is the only way in which observers can fully appreciate the human emotions that are represented in the work. This process helps students to achieve what Greene (2001) refers to as "uncoupling" (p.69), or using our imagination and our own personal history to help us *feel* what the artist means, rather than simply seeing or hearing it. Encounters of this kind have an extraordinary capacity to release the imagination and engender compassion, because they

engage our personal experience at the bodily level. This process reconnects us to our somatic sensibility, which is the source of our power to create and recreate the world in which we live.

I have briefly explained how creating a particular type of educational aesthetic experience is of the utmost importance in empowering students to promote social justice for those who are marginalized or oppressed. On the one hand, this process helps students understand how oppression affects them personally, which will allow them to initiate a healing process. On the other hand, students can use this critical lens to see how, consciously or unconsciously, they have oppressed others, and this will help them to appreciate the commonalities in all human suffering. The compassion they develop through this kind of encounter will eventually empower them to create social change. The final section of this article will discuss the challenges involved in establishing this kind of art program in our urban classrooms, and the changes that will be required.

CHALLENGES AND CHANGES

Infusing the arts into K-16 classrooms will involve substantive change in our educational system, and will therefore present serious challenges for administrators and teachers alike. This final section will examine some of these challenges, and in particular, how to achieve the level of financial support required for educational programs that use the techniques I have described. Finally, speaking as a New Yorker and a Teacher Educator involved with Aesthetic Education, I will end the discussion by demonstrating the limited value that has been placed on art education by the New York City Department of Education in the past few decades, and by describing the changes needed to ensure the implementation of art programs at the local and national levels.

Interest in new progressive pedagogies will always be initiated by concerned educators who submit requests to administrators for the adoption of new or revised curricula. A difficult step in the introduction of arts-driven curricula is convincing education ad-

ministrators of the importance of this approach. Before they will agree to the necessary changes, administrators must come to value the arts as an indispensable part of the education of all children. Then they will be more willing to allot funds for the use of artistic venues that are available in the community, and to allow teachers to use aesthetic curricular approaches that develop skills not measured by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandated tests or the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. Educators must advance strong arguments in favor of the idea that artistic programs can be implemented successfully in all curricular areas and will develop qualities in students that strengthen academic performance.

At the Local Level

The likelihood of the arts playing an important role in a child's education is ironically slim in New York City, the artistic capital of the world. Since the fiscal crisis of the 1970's, art education has essentially been eliminated in New York City's public schools. The situation has barely improved in recent years, despite the efforts of Mayor Giuliani, who in 1997 created Project ARTS (Art Restoration Throughout the Schools) with the assistance of the Department of Education. This program was designed to restore arts education to all New York City public school curricula over a three-year period, with one third of all schools joining the program each year. Seventy-five million dollars were allocated for this project, but "as of the 2004-2005 academic year, out of 1,356 public schools over 152 schools have no art education program, and more than 160 elementary schools that have more than 500 students have one or no art teacher" (Moskowitz, 2005, p. 2).

Although funding for this program has been in place since 1997, the New York City Department of Education has repeatedly found ways to put these monies out of reach, with the explanation that "nearly half of its middle schools are already deemed in need of improvement" (NY1, 2004, p. 4). Luckily for the children of NYC, the city's artistic and cultural institutions recognize

the importance of art education and the effects of restrictions posed by low per-pupil budgets and wide funding gaps between urban and suburban schools. Whenever possible, organizations such as the Lincoln Center Institute and Project ARTS have shouldered a large portion of the financial responsibility for promoting the arts in NYC public schools. However, in a city served by over 1,350 public schools with an average of 1,000 students per school, the monies allocated for arts education are spread very thin. Some urban districts that educate large numbers of poor minority children and cannot count on the support of local artistic and cultural institutions have even fewer opportunities to expose their students to the arts.

Quality art programs are indispensable in the schooling of urban children. Through the arts, children can learn to imagine possibilities, to "look at things as if they could be otherwise" (Greene, 1995, p. 19). The aesthetic learning process can enable students to broaden their perspectives, to overcome the taken-for-granted, and to envision a better world. If we prevent underprivileged children from developing these capacities, we close the door to a brighter future for them and for our country. Greene (1995) argued that "Too rarely do we have poor children in mind when we think of the way imagination enlarges experience. And what can be more important for us than helping those called at risk overcome their powerlessness?" (p. 36). Unfortunately, the essential capacities for imagination, compassion, and social responsibility are not measured in the state mandated standardized tests, nor are they considered in the standards required by NCATE.

At the National Level

Before quality art education programs can reestablish roots in our urban schools, we must take a long hard look at our required learning standards and traditional assessment tools. Existing standards should be amended to allow educators more flexibility, and better criteria should be devised for measuring student learning. This will allow teachers to abandon

"banking" models of education, and to experiment with alternative methods such as I have described – using the arts to help children understand the world, their roles within it, and their capacity to change it.

Each state should commit to providing an adequate and equitable funding system for its public schools. As things stand today, public schools in urban neighborhoods receive much smaller annual per-pupil allowances than those in the suburbs and other privileged areas. The year-by-year perpetuation of this disparity demonstrates our politicians' inadequate concern for the education of our urban youth, and it seems increasingly unlikely that they will voluntarily pursue the establishment of art programs that could teach students to question the inequalities and injustices of the existing system.

This is the biggest challenge that promoters of aesthetic educational methods will face when approaching education administrators for approval of art-related curricula. The challenge to the system is twofold: the new methods will require additional expenditure, and they will empower students to question the status quo. Individuals educated through the exploration of aesthetic experience are more likely to challenge existing power structures and imagine how they can be changed to benefit the socially disadvantaged. If students feel empowered in this way, they will develop a sense of entitlement that will allow them to take a stand when necessary in the name of social justice.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The absence of arts programs in urban public schools constitutes a violation of human rights, harming the neediest of our children. I can attest that art education programs are well worth fighting for, because after infusing arts into my teacher education curricula, I have witnessed powerful changes in students' consciousness as they exit my classrooms and transition into their teaching careers. They have blossomed into newly empowered individuals with a strong desire to change the lives of the children they will teach. I believe in the ability of a committed community to

create change because I have seen this process in action. By infusing art education programs into K-16 classrooms, we can teach students to appreciate and exercise their power to change the world. The educational communities they go on to build will contribute to the empowerment of all people.

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COMMENTARIES

Resources for Effectiveness: Collaborative Arts Partnerships in Schools

By Lee Ann Norman

INTRODUCTION

Chicago, like many urban settings, offers incredible opportunities to immerse oneself in diverse cultures and traditions through art. The quantity and quality of its vast artistic choices are integral to the city's appeal and vibrant civic life. Chicago's rich history spans artistic disciplines including music, theater, visual art and performance, media, architecture and design. Forward thinking by several interest groups, and the feeling of possibility have helped solidify the city's reputation as one of the world's cultural leaders.

Despite its cosmopolitan nature and openness, Chicago has always been a city of tight-knit communities with distinct boundary lines and unwritten rules of membership. Such social constraints rooted in race, gender, and class bias create challenges for a number of Chicagoans who wish to access the wealth of cultural resources in the city, since many of those resources lie outside of their neighborhoods, forcing them to turn to alternative sources. Similarly, across the nation, informal arts programs fill gaps in neighborhoods, schools, and communities where cosmopolitan culture and excess, collide with poverty, want, discrimination, and invisibility. Teaching artists provide additional exposure to the arts through programs that affirm the value of cultures that are marginalized; recognize practices that lie outside of the mainstream; and embrace those from whom traditional cultural circles choose to distance themselves. Unfortunately, the need for community-based arts programming has grown even stronger, as funding for first-line, school-based arts programs continues to diminish. When it was once unusual *not* to have music or art instruction included as part of the school day, an omission of both is now the norm. As educators deliberate on how to provide

a well-rounded education for all, the idea of working more collaboratively with a *range* of arts education providers has become increasingly attractive.

Allowing outside organizations and individuals to gain access to institutions in a more evenhanded way and create long-term relationships that reinforce the idea of education as a community-centered effort is a little new for schools. Yet many are finding it is worth exploring, as the process of creating alliances and partnerships with other community organizations places schools in a different light and allows them to appear less intimidating and more approachable. In the past, schools have been able to operate as self-sufficient entities, but cost cutting has forced them to focus on the "core curriculum," and leave education that involves sports and leisure, or the arts and humanities to others. Arts organizations and teaching artists play an important role in realizing well-rounded educational strategies, and they are at the forefront of providing arts instruction in many classrooms. Now more than ever schools, teaching artists, and cultural workers must find common ground that allows them to share their practices. Through partnerships that draw on all of the resources within a geographic or cultural area, different kinds of knowledge and experience are shared, and communities are enriched by the exchange. Most would agree that this concept of partnership is feasible. When we consider what strategies are most effective in situations where issues tied to cultural representation and access in the arts reveal themselves, we are forced to re-prioritize our lines of inquiry away from process implementation and towards a re-examination of social relationships. Reflecting on this process through the case of the Multicultural Arts School provides valuable insight

into how arts partnerships can contribute to building a democratic learning community in which students, teachers, cultural workers, and artists are able to redefine their roles and obtain an alternative sense of community by expanding boundaries and definitions.

CASE STUDY- MULTICULTURAL ARTS SCHOOL

MAS Background and History

The Multicultural Arts School (MAS) began as a big, bold idea on May 13, 2001, when fourteen community residents of the Little Village neighborhood staged a nineteen-day hunger strike demanding the construction of a new neighborhood high school. School administrators had promised to begin construction on a new facility as an alternative to the existing failing neighborhood school, but the process had been delayed (the school board cited monetary constraints). After passionate commitment from parents, community advocates, educators, and students, the Little Village Lawndale High School campus opened its doors to approximately 400 ninth grade students in the fall of 2005.

The campus (comprised of four, autonomous small schools: the Multicultural Arts School, the World Language School, the School of Social Justice, and the Infiniti Math, Science, and Technology School) is located in the southwest Chicago neighborhood of Little Village (or South Lawndale), a predominantly Mexican and Mexican American community. To comply with desegregation laws, however, the school boundary lines extend into neighboring North Lawndale, a predominantly African American community. This has caused resentment in some residents, who felt that North Lawndale students should not be given any consideration for attendance since the actual fight for the

new high school was viewed as a Little Village community effort. MAS planning team members were keenly aware of the underlying tensions surrounding the school in both communities. They made a concerted effort to include the voices of teachers, artists, and community leaders from both the Black community in North Lawndale and activists dedicated to education reform from other neighborhoods, as well as similar voices from the Mexican and Mexican American communities in Little Village and other neighborhoods.

The school's design concepts are based in critical pedagogy, multicultural education, inquiry-based instruction, performance-based assessment, critical literacy, and arts integration. According to the school concept paper, MAS embraces a philosophy that supports the understanding of different cultures so that concepts relating to them are taught in ways that honor people of different cultural backgrounds. Members of the school planning team believed culture, in this sense, would become much more than a shared way of doing or being; here, culture might also exist as relationships and lived experiences. Realizing this idea would be critical to addressing issues between the black and brown communities who would soon be learning together in this space. MAS administration and staff felt the arts would be the perfect tool through which such a feat could be accomplished.

The MAS Partnership Model

In an effort to create a seamless arts delivery system that would align with its mission, vision, and values, MAS pursued two basic kinds of arts relationships: individual and organizational. While hoping to focus most organizational energies in one place, administrators felt it was important to address the diverse needs, experiences, desires, and abilities of all students. Collaborations undertaken with peer (smaller) institutions and organizations seemed like a logical outgrowth of the primary institutional partnership.

The classroom model called for all teachers to participate in two arts-integrated units per year. Teachers had the

choice of working with an in-house certified arts specialist in music or visual art who would collaborate with them to create an integrated unit, or hiring professional teaching artists to collaborate on a unit(s) with them as part of the Residency program. Ideally, artists participating in the Residency program would work with a class for a minimum of ten weeks, but if teachers wished to have shorter projects and use multiple artists, that could also be arranged.

Project collaborators would meet to brainstorm ideas, plan the curriculum, and design the lesson plans as well as assign tasks and other responsibilities as needed. Teachers and teaching artists used the Arts Integration Handbook (created by author) as a planning guide. The book contained resources such as lesson plan templates; a list of sample project ideas; advice for embarking upon a successful collaboration; a summary of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory; suggested learning adaptations and responsive teaching strategies; basic roles and responsibilities for teachers and artists; documentation suggestions; and the Illinois State Fine Arts Standards. Teaching artists would have a formal introduction to the school as well as be invited for informal observations in classrooms well before the projects actually began. Once the arts-integrated unit began however, artists were expected to teach an introductory lesson that demonstrated their art form, gave the students some context for their experience and art practice, as well as their interest and role in the unit. Classroom teachers felt this preparation and type of introduction was important so that on days when the artists were not on campus, they and students could assume responsibility for the lesson's artistic content.

In contrast, where the classroom relationships with teaching artists focused on arts integration, the organizational relationships focused primarily on arts enhancement and exposure. Much of this was accomplished through after school arts learning experiences like a visual art club, play production, and dance classes. Some traditional cultural institutions did conduct a limited number of classroom collabo-

rations and interventions through a weekly studio, in which MAS students worked on a focused artistic project each academic semester. In these cases, the arts educators who worked in classrooms took on more of an expert role and did not engage deeply in collaborative planning with a non-arts subject teacher. These organizational relationships treated the art as a stand-alone subject or special project. Faculty and graduate students from SAIC delivered most of these interactions when classroom teachers were not able to be there. For the studio projects, students were able to self-select into an arts area in which they had interest or more experience; the arts integrated lessons as part of the regular curriculum did not offer this range of freedom and focus, since all students in a class were required to complete the specific project and lesson.

In addition to its relationships with traditional cultural institutions (like the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the primary institutional relationship) and various community-based organizations, MAS also established relationships with arts presenters to create different kinds of cultural events that were open to the entire campus.

Study Background and Process

By observing and participating in the process of creating project-based, arts integrated learning units at the Multicultural Arts School, the need for an analysis of their planning process, the participants' roles and expectations, and the implications of this model of partnership became apparent. The collective background and history of the participants along with their individual past experiences and present realities lead them to move in a direction that aimed to challenge notions of traditional partnership practice.

The analysis was conducted over a nine-month period between September 2005 and June 2006 during which a team was assembled to create a framework and structure for these in-school collaborative relationships, test them, and refine them. Study participants were asked six questions around issues involved with the implementation of a

successful collaboration, by responding at the beginning and at the end of the project; once in writing and once in person. Observation activities included informal conversations with classroom teachers and teaching artists in the *Embedded in Stories* arts integrated unit, MAS and SAIC faculty and staff liaisons, and reflection via reasoning and analogy by comparisons to similar school based arts partnership programs.

As principle investigator, I acted as a participant and observer throughout the process. My role included serving as project director for the Artist Residencies and Community Partners program, prospecting for external arts partners, conducting teacher and teaching artists orientation and professional development, financial management and contractual oversight, and proposal writing. I also acted as a teaching assistant for the English Department's arts activities related to the project. Additionally, I participated in some planning and reflection meetings for the Multicultural Arts School (MAS) and School of the Art Institute (SAIC) institutional partnership.

Embedded in Stories

Once preliminary negotiation, planning, and consensus was reached by Arts Integration committee members and the larger school faculty and staff, MAS decided to test their partnership model through a 12-week unit, *Embedded in Stories*, based in English and Reading class curriculum (all freshman students were required to take both of these courses). Students used personal writings and reflections from assigned readings to create original artwork in the visual, performing, literary, and media arts. With the help of teaching artists in each area, students explored themes of personal identity, community, and culture. Both parties understood that in order to achieve success for themselves and the students within a project of such a large scale, the role of the artist and the teacher needed to be fluid. Both groups would have to learn new knowledge and skill along with students, while also being able to function as teacher, mentor, motivator, and art critic. Based on budget-

ary and time constraints, collaborators knew there would be limitations to their time commitments at MAS, but setting personal limits was a struggle for teaching artists who worked on the 12-week project. Teaching artists were attracted to the school's mission and educational concepts, but found the project itself overwhelming. Nonetheless, this was not a deterrent for participating in the project.

Teaching artists enjoyed the idea of working with young people and sharing their art forms with new audiences. "I think initially, I just felt really good about brainstorming (with the English and Reading teachers) about how an arts-integration model could work..." one teaching artist said. "... But then I think I agreed to help them implement it because it seemed like a cool opportunity to take some of these things that roll around in my head about what kids need to be successful and the importance of art in schools (and test them out)," he continued.

Teaching artists were also interested in creating opportunities that increase the likelihood of success for students who normally have difficulty in traditional classroom settings. A teaching artist specializing in media reflected upon his own schooling experiences and concluded that if he had been able to use art to learn other academic content, he may have been more successful. All teaching artists admired and respected the skills of the classroom teachers and felt that their own teaching would likely improve as a result of working with MAS.

MAS teachers and teaching artists ended up working on the 12-week project without direct support from SAIC; they revealed that they never felt like they were on equal footing with SAIC partners in this endeavor of creating a collaborative program model. They felt SAIC representatives seemed to possess a theoretical understanding of the challenges students faced such as living in a gangland area or coming to MAS to repeat freshman year as a result of failing at other underperforming schools, but lacked a practical viewpoint that would help students succeed in the classroom and beyond. Additionally, some MAS teachers perceived a discon-

nection between SAIC's assumption in their students' potential and capacity to learn challenging academic concepts and create compelling artwork. Since they were intimidated by the perception of power associated with SAIC's name recognition and reputation, none of the teachers or teaching artists voiced the above concerns with the SAIC representatives. Instead, they shut them out of the *Embedded in Stories* project completely. With this gap in dialogue and collaboration, this arts community suffered and missed a potentially rich and lasting experience.

Reflexivity In the Work

Seed funding that allowed the school to have outside support for meeting their goals was limited to the first year of the project. Collaborators, staff, and institutional partners knew that in order to be successful, MAS needed to figure out a way to continue the collaborations into the future for themselves.

A participant researcher affects outcomes through methodology and design, and automatically brings bias to the subject. Focusing too much on the personal details of the principle investigator detracts from the quality of the research; however, self-reflexivity can be a valuable tool to strengthen the quality of the study by allowing a reader to determine the validity of the findings. By being aware of our biases and the narratives that we construct about our lives, our work, and our environment, we may be better able to analyze shifting power dynamics (Ristock and Pennell, 1996).

While working on this project, I relied primarily on my previous experiences of establishing partnerships.. I expected to see a partnership model develop at MAS that would reflect what I had gleaned about organizational behavior from my studies, various models from different jobs, and personal beliefs about successful working environments. As a result, my interview questions tended to probe more deeply into areas that I felt were critical for partnership success. To counter this tendency, I gave study participants the opportunity to share their own views on operational structures and best practices

through open-ended questioning and asking suggestions for improvement. I believe that my original assumptions about helpful structures and protocols were accurate; however, based on my understanding of organizational behavior, I am not convinced that a traditional structure is appropriate for arts partnerships between large cultural institutions and schools or community-based organizations. These relationships require that collaborators not only acknowledge the inherent power imbalances in arts delivery and instruction (especially in communities of color which are often under resourced) but also create infrastructure that can negotiate the imbalances in a way that provides mutual benefits to all.

Additionally, I felt a deep connection to the philosophical underpinnings of the school. I had spent time as a school music teacher and often was unable to find the modes of support needed to provide my students with the best instruction. And, often, I felt that my beliefs about teaching and learning were in conflict with those of my school. I was excited about the opportunity to not only participate in the project but also analyze it and reflect upon it, since I wanted to see it become an innovative teaching and learning practice.

ANALYSIS

In this case, MAS administrators conducted thorough research on art schools and university arts programs in Chicago, community and cultural organizations in the neighborhood as well as researched the general arts landscape of the city. They were strategic in their approach in choosing initial collaborators, and identifying key people at prospective institutions and organizations with whom to develop relationships. Relationship sustainability was a challenge because little consideration was given to differing organizational cultures and educational philosophies and how these would help or hinder forward movement in collaborative endeavors until *after* partnerships had been entered into. For example, MAS allowed teachers a great deal of freedom in decision making regarding curriculum planning and management,

while SAIC was more comfortable implementing formal organizational and management practices. "Because it is such a big organization, they seem to be quite structured and complex," one MAS staff member noted. "However, it is not my perception that this stifles creativity or freedom when it really matters," she concluded. "I really don't know much about that (MAS's organizational culture)," an SAIC representative admitted. "It seems fairly unilateral; teachers seem to have a good amount of autonomy." Still, when asked about each partner's understanding of the other's organizational culture, most felt confident that they understood it.

Conversations about the value of other types of assets (like community-organizing knowledge, relationship and trust building) that schools and smaller community-based organizations may have were rare in this case. As a result, most problems between MAS and SAIC occurred when one side assumed that the assets they brought to the partnership were not being respected. As "art experts," the School of the Art Institute representatives found it was much more difficult to create a sense of trust and belief among the MAS community, in the sense that they were committed to the partnership for the long-term, therefore lessening their impact and presence. MAS' other organizational collaborators and teaching artists often commented about feeling an impenetrable distance from SAIC. Many felt they could not use SAIC as a resource for their own professional development during the *Embedded in Stories* project because of the philosophical conflict with SAIC's student engagement philosophy. "I think...that it is becoming evident that our (SAIC) organizational culture...is evasive and purposely unavailable (to MAS)," another SAIC representative and alumnus concluded after feeling disappointment that the School did not participate in *Embedded in Stories*. As the faculty liaison for MAS, she also thought many professors that were approached about working with MAS in the endeavor showed a lack of commitment while some MAS teachers let opportunities pass by not following through.

Factors such as trust and follow

through were easier to cultivate in the relationships the classroom teachers developed with each other and teaching artists. Classroom teachers brought with them a rich network of artists on whom they could rely for expertise, advice, and assistance. Equally, the partnership between MAS and SAIC had elements indicating that collaborators would be able to move beyond traditional hierarchical methods of ascribing value, and assigning roles and responsibilities and work in a more equitable fashion. Unfortunately, negotiations always seemed to stagnate in the planning phases for lack of clearly defined goals, unified commitment levels, or adequate resources. It always remained unclear about what exactly MAS and SAIC would do together that they could not do alone, making it difficult for SAIC and the Museum to justify diverting more resources to help sustain the project and integrate it into larger institutional life.

Power and Possibilities for Resistance

Critical education comes out of a philosophy that looks to examine the impact of race, class, and gender bias on lived experience by believing it is important for self-actualization and empowerment. Being aware of how people use discourses to shift responsibility and place the burden of improvement and change on marginalized communities helps expose structural inequalities in art, education, and cultural representation. MAS administrators planned to integrate the arts throughout the fabric of academic and social life at the school in a deliberate way. Since the school was rooted in social justice, finding collaborators with similar educational philosophies was important. Considering different types of knowledge from multiple sources increases equity in relationships whereas institutional capacity and financial resource cannot.

Most research around collaborative learning environments focuses on the implementation of collaboration, and less attention is given to how power dynamics affect the process. Given that "power plays" cannot exist without agreement and collusion, smaller organizations like MAS will find it valuable

to examine the impact of resistance on their educational philosophy and community engagement strategies. Power is embedded in relationships (that suggest to us patterns of behavior and protocol). Throughout the planning process, it was important for MAS administrators to elevate traditionally marginalized voices (such as youth, the poor, and racial and ethnic minorities) by encouraging them to resist dominant hegemonies designed to keep their cultures, ideals, and hopes at the periphery of the program. Instead of promoting structures that reinforced the idea of one person's (or institution's) ideas as more valuable than others, MAS hoped to encourage all members of their community to contribute to its well being, growth and development. MAS wanted the people who were involved to believe in their capacity to add value to the community. This was no small task, and many collaborators found it difficult to resist following the traditional power structures. These conflicts were most noticeable in the relationship between MAS and SAIC and the Museum.

MAS functions in a larger system that has been progressively moving away from a centralized governance model to one that respects a school community's ability to choose a curricular path that works best. . It made sense to choose a structure that put more decision-making power into the hands of teachers and students. MAS and SAIC had representatives in place in both organizations, but never actually defined specific roles that would make this relationship part of the larger institutional structure and programs. This would be important for SAIC, a traditional institution with an intricate organizational structure. At the time, this was deemed necessary for creating a positive, democratically oriented working environment.

To date, there is no formal agreement that secures this relationship; and only recently has a faculty member received additional compensation for her work with the partnership. Since the relationship did not penetrate SAIC's infrastructure, this partnership remained a self-contained opportunity for people who have discovered it and find it of interest. This also severely

limited any contact SAIC had (and continues to have) with MAS' other organizational partners and individual teaching artists. Increased contact among all partners may have allowed everyone to avoid common pitfalls of collaboration like resource and project duplication, limited ability for implementing large scale or campus wide projects, and reduced professional development for teachers and artists on both sides.

SUMMARY

Sharing artistic endeavors with others helps youth and adults experience positive public affirmation and recognition. This can be a significant experience for people who see little value in their lives, and have received messages from society which end up in reinforcing anonymity and failure (Weitz, 1996). Formal instruction in the arts, integrated with core-subject instruction shows students that knowledge is transferable and applicable to multiple situations. Long-term, creative, and collaborative relationships between schools and arts organizations and institutions allow artists and educators to follow the benefits of arts activities on students' development over time. When partnerships involve classroom teachers, professional teaching artists, community members, and cultural and educational institutions, learning outcomes can improve, and the experience can become more pronounced for everyone involved.

More than 75% of MAS students successfully completed a project in the *Embedded In Stories* arts integrated unit. The entire community (comprised of students, teachers, SAIC and family, and partners) celebrated with an open-house with exhibition and performance to view student work. Despite setbacks and challenges along the way, this project proved that knowledge could come from less traditional sources and still produce positive learning outcomes.

Partnerships are dynamic entities that must have some structural consistency. However, the structure needs to only serve as the framework for modifying the scope of the project as time goes on. In school-based settings, most collaborations follow the path of strategic

alliance¹, as schools are most likely to seek out partners to fill in gaps where they lack resource or expertise. This leaves room to challenge traditional notions of how we learn, what students need in order to be successful, and what structures are necessary for consistency and success. . Our educational settings are diverse and complex places that lack continuity across them for a variety of reasons, but allowing an outside entity to become part of the school community through partnership is a process that requires time, patience, vision, and a willingness to resist the status quo in ways that open up access to resources and experiences for all.

Although we may have become better informed about our choice of partners and the way in which we assess and evaluate them, we must continue to consider the effects of those relationships on our educational environments. Whether our partners are transient or long-term, it is important to consider how their presence in our work spaces influences future learning inside and outside of the classroom.

Lee Ann Norman is an educator, interdisciplinary artist, and cultural worker who is interested in the ways artistic practice, race and ethnicity, class, and culture collide. She frequently plans and presents arts programs with organizations and incubators in and around Chicago, as well as facilitates, lectures, and presents on nonprofit arts management issues and community cultural development. Ms. Norman serves as a board member to Insight Arts, a Chicago-based contemporary arts organization dedicated to increasing access to cultural work that supports progressive social change; she received the Bachelor of Music Education degree from Michigan State University and the Master of Arts Management degree from Columbia College Chicago.

ENDNOTES

¹Strategic alliances can occur in a number of ways, such as joint programming (in which organizations work to share resources or to create new products or programs), or as administrative consolidation (through which collaborators work specifically to share human capital) (LiPiana & Hayes 2003).

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COMMENTARY

Critical Literacy and Art Education: Alternatives in the School Reform Movement

By Joyce Millman, Moore College of Art and Design

Art education offers a way to reach students and make schools more relevant for them. Art teachers can create alternative formats that allow students to explore and learn about their lives. Thereby, students and their communities become the focus of the curriculum and students' responses are valued as individual expression. While teaching art in Philadelphia schools, I began to explore connections between curriculum and teaching techniques and thought of strategies I believed would be beneficial to my students. Now in my new role as an art teacher educator, teaching prospective and practicing art teachers in the current climate of "reform" is a pressing challenge. In this article I discuss critical literacy and its connections to art education. I provide examples from my own experience as a middle school art teacher in the School District of Philadelphia, and more recently as an art teacher educator.

Rationales for Critical Literacy in an Art Education Context

Critical literacy theory suggests that opportunities to learn about social issues related to the inequities in society must be addressed. According to critical literacy theory, a meaningful curriculum that involves students to relate to their own social and political situations will result in increased involvement in school. Critical literacy theory proposes learning about politically relevant issues through language arts skills as a way to make language arts more meaningful. Teaching must be done in ways that give students the authority to make decisions and participate in discussions that are not teacher dominated. Shor (1999) defines critical literacy as follows:

Critical literacy... challenges the sta-

tus quo in an effort to discover alternative paths for social and self-development. This kind of literacy...connects the political and the personal, the public and the private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical for reinventing our lives and for promoting justice in place of inequity. (p. 1)

By recognizing art as a cultural narrative while using a critical literacy framework, teachers can help students develop an understanding of social and cultural meaning in art, and can provide students with the tools to understand their culture and history and a means to work towards social justice.

Many art educators have discussed the importance of learning about culture (e.g. Chalmers, 1996; Stout, 1997). Chalmers (1996) noted that the arts are critical for developing cultural understanding because arts are a way to transmit the "values, beliefs, myths and traditions of a culture to its people" (p. 36). Likewise, Stout (1997) pointed out that artists are storytellers who do not simply describe their personal thoughts, but reflect the "true essence of history" (p.106). As these scholars point out, learning in the arts provides vital connections to cultural understanding.

Teaching art within a critical literacy framework involves interdisciplinary learning. In a framework like this, students have the opportunity to examine social issues through the narrative qualities of art by combining art with language arts skills, such as discussions and writing. Utilizing writing and discussion in an art classroom provides students with the time and opportunity to become more familiar and relate to the ideas and concepts being studied. Art educator, Stuhr (1994) advocates a radical change in art education that would "entail cooperative planning among teachers

from various subject areas, such as social studies and language arts in the secondary schools, and among teachers in the elementary schools" (p.177).

Historically, art has been a means to educate about social justice. In the nineteenth century Eugene Delacroix challenged his contemporaries with his work *Liberty Leading the People*. The French government terminated the display of this painting, as it was feared that the painting might incite revolt. During the same time period, the work of Daumier and Courbet depicted the plight of the poor. In the twentieth century, Picassos' *Guernica* displayed the horrors of war. Artists' themes and ideas may be related to the form of their expression. For example, contemporary artist Faith Ringgold's story quilts are a form of art that previously was not identified as fine art. Her use of traditional African American craft as a vehicle for merging storytelling and quilt making and painting, expands ideas about American life, as well as our ideas about the definition of art. Ringgold's work validates traditional African American quilting and quilting done by women across cultures.

Proposals for Visual Arts Curriculum

Many perspectives and cultures are represented in the work of American artists who question issues of identity, the immigrant experience and past representations of society that exclude or marginalize women and minority groups. Students' work in response to work by Nikki S. Lee and Pepon Osorio, artists who look at identity issues, could include self-portraits with the inclusion of cultural references. Other examples of students work in response to artists dealing with cultural perspectives include explorations of these art-

ists' statements, and students' descriptions about their own work and the cultural connections in self-portraits. An examination of work by artists such as James Kerry Marshall and Faith Ringgold not only provide students with these artists' points of view, but since both of these artists use written text, students have the additional opportunity to "read" the work. Students could be using language skills and integrating the reading and visual art experience. In a related art project within a critical literacy framework, students could use text and images to tell about issues in their neighborhood or family in the form of a comic book..

With the addition of postmodern works to art education curricula, students can begin to find meaning in works beyond the traditional Western art. For example, feminist artists such as Miriam Shapiro, whose work includes the construction of collages that evoke textile design and crafts by women in the 1800s, moves away from previous notions of mainstream modern art. In *Postmodern Art Education: An approach to Curriculum* (1996), Eflan, Freeman and Stuhr describe a postmodern curriculum that is based on the disintegration of the modernist idea that art is a progression toward abstraction. The underlying the idea is that knowledge passes on through the mainstream group at the expense of the minority and the notion that there is not a singular representative cultural art form.

An art education curriculum that is designed by a teacher within a critical literacy context includes knowing the students and determining the techniques and routines based on that knowledge. Opportunities to work collaboratively are beneficial for students; they afford the students opportunities to learn from each other, they displace the teacher as the authority and provide the students with time to process their ideas before sharing with the whole group. Conversations between students that can support learning are vital.

Community Resources and Visual Arts Curriculum

Experiences outside of the classroom give students the opportunity to

interact as members of a community. The Santa Barbara Museum in California recently displayed the work of students with difficulties in school. As part of the program, students worked with graphic designers in a studio. They also worked with their teachers to produce statements about themselves. Then they combined writing, graphic design, and art technology to produce self-portraits, which they called *Who I Am*. Providing opportunities to visit art museums and engage in dialogue with museum teachers is a way to involve students in learning about social issues in our culture. In a tour designed to teach students about art and social issues, The Philadelphia Museum of Art challenges students to imagine, think and communicate when they are confronted with art that deals with social issues including race, gender, class, isolation and war. On a tour designed by the museum to teach about social issues and art, students have the opportunity to investigate their feelings about recent events in Iraq when examining a photograph by Jeffrey Wall, *Dead Troops Talk, a Vision After an Ambush of a Red Army Patrol, near Moquor, Afghanistan, Winter 1986*. An exemplary program at The New Museum of Contemporary Art involves teachers and students from the New York City Public schools. The program examines artists and writers who address themes including the experience of minorities, cultural identity and war.

The Picasso Project, a Philadelphia based foundation, provides funds for teachers who connect the arts with curricula in various subject areas. Recently, grants were provided for Parkway High School where students participated in arts based activities that linked to African American literature and to the Pennypacker Elementary School where students worked with neighborhood artists to perform a play that examines the implications of hair in African American culture.

My Art Classroom

As a middle school art teacher in Philadelphia, I was faced with issues similar to those confronted by many teachers and students in urban ar-

reas. I saw the inequities that my students faced such as poverty and lack of school services. I experienced the difficulties within my attempts to close the achievement gap between urban and suburban students. The change in my approach to presenting and developing the curriculum in my art classroom was a gradual process through which I learned about critical literacy theory and was able to team-teach with both social studies and language arts teachers. One of the first changes I made was to help students in imagining themselves as artists in their cultural context. For example, I asked students what they would design if they were stained glass artists living and working in medieval Europe. After viewing and discussing the cultural context of Maoist posters, students created a poster that depicted social or political action relevant to their own lives using techniques similar to those in Maoist posters.

My teaching began to utilize a critical pedagogy stance in small steps. I was interested in teaching so that students are involved in issues that are relevant to them and encourage social action (Nieto, 1991). As my students learned about the work of Faith Ringgold, Alice Neal and Diego Rivera, I began to tie their assignments to ideas and concepts that would connect to the students' experiences and issues of social justice. For example, after exploring the art of Faith Ringgold, my middle school students created books depicting a social issue of interest to them. Motivated by the clean -up of the surrounding community; students worked on a long-term project exploring art and recycling. They explored the feminist art of Judy Chicago and created a design depicting a special woman in their lives. My students also created an illustrated book of idioms after a discussion with language arts teachers revealed a need for clearer understanding of figurative language. I utilized writing as a way to reinforce learning, to help to establish interdisciplinary connections between art and other subjects, and to establish community in the classroom. Students discussed art and art issues in small and large groups, and wrote about their own art, art from diverse parts of the world and art

representing their own ethnic groups.

College Level Art Education

As a college level teacher in an art teacher certification program, including many students who have little experience with urban issues, my challenge involves creating awareness of ways that will be beneficial for all students in an art classroom. This includes learning about art education with a critical literacy stance. To approach this challenge my students read from a variety of sources, write about and discuss how ideas related to diversity, culture and ethnicity affect learning. They observe in urban art classrooms and they are presented with many examples of art activities, lessons and projects that address culture and social justice issues. The class utilizes journals and reads literature that explores the history of education in the U.S. and the inequities in schools. As the students read and respond in their journals, their writing demonstrates sensitivity to issues of diversity and culture, as well as a need to know more about the concerns of urban students.

Conclusions

The needs of students should be perceived in terms of their ethnicity, gender, culture and social status. In addition, teachers need to know the students and their cultures as well as the nation's political history to create pro-

grams that address the needs of diverse students and make school more culturally compatible. The complexities of teaching students from diverse groups influence instruction. Currently, the lack of support for curriculum not directly linked to standardized tests is a concern. Art teacher preparation programs need time for preparing teachers who can teach about social issues. Art teachers need more meaningful materials to facilitate the discussion of social issues and social action through art. They also need to be able to deal with sensitive issues and uncertainty, and to be willing to change and question their own curricular decisions. As teachers cope with the implications of this kind of instruction, they should realize that in turn they are influenced by political and social systems which require an awareness of their own socially constructed understanding.

When art teachers, social studies and language arts teachers work cooperatively, students and schools stand to benefit. This may involve team teaching and/or cooperative planning which can provide students with expertise of specialists from subject areas. Team-taught units that involve language arts, social studies and art provide students with long-term opportunities to examine issues and ideas. Flexibility in scheduling and planned time for teachers to meet is essential for projects that involve such collaboration. In many schools, it is possible that the

art classroom is one of the few places where students can experience a different type of learning. The addition of skills such as writing and discussion, reinforce and clarify learning in the arts, and offer students an opportunity to use language skills in different and meaningful ways. A broader focus of learning can be developed by bringing together language arts and visual art with a critical literacy stance. There is much that can be learned from pairing arts experiences with literacy, and much that art teachers need to learn in the areas of language arts and social studies as they approach teaching and learning with a critical literacy stance.

Joyce Millman is a retired School District of Philadelphia teacher who taught art at the elementary and middle school levels. She established connections to her classroom with community and educational institutions including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The World Affairs Council, and the Picasso Project through grants and special programs. She attended the University of Pennsylvania in the Language and Literacy Division in 2003 as part of her work as the Philadelphia Writing Project Scholar that year. For the past five years, Joyce has been an instructor in the teacher education programs at Moore College of Art and Design. She has been an instructor for Philadelphia Futures Sponsor-a-Scholar program for two years.

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COMMENTARY

Learning from Objects: A Future for 21st Century Urban Arts Education

By Dorothea Lasky, University of Pennsylvania

THE STATE OF US URBAN ARTS EDUCATION IN 2009

Among the 510 promises Obama (2008) made the American public in his presidential campaign was a promise to use his position to endorse the arts in our public educational system (St. Petersburg Times, 2008). Included in this endorsement was his promise to fund an Artist's Corps program, which would bring and train young artists to low-income schools and their surrounding communities. If this promise is fulfilled, it is surely a welcome change of priorities to many of our country's arts educators. In the previous administration, many arts educators faced the seemingly arts-friendly rhetoric of the No Child Left Behind Act, but were left with little real support for enhancing, let alone maintaining, their school arts programs. In a time of decreased funding for the arts, many arts educators have been forced to defend a causation (rather than a simple correlation) for the arts and many attractive deliverables (like increased test and SAT scores) in order to maintain their place in the public school curriculum (Winner and Hetland, 2007). As Partnership 21st Century Skills suggests, the opposite should be the case, as skills readily learned within the arts, like creativity, innovation, and social collaboration, are marked as important skills to foster in learners today (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2007).

Arts Education Partnership (2000) suggests that there are key ways that schools can utilize their local cultural partners to enhance their school arts education programs. Local cultural partners that schools traditionally partner with for their arts education needs are museums. Although many arts educators realize the benefit of such partnerships instinctively, it is important to consider why these stu-

dent experiences in museums are so important for learning. Some of the benefits of such partnerships can be found in uncovering the key learning qualities of object-based learning experiences, easily afforded to learners in museums. In our technological age, where mind and body are increasingly disconnected in the classroom, object-based learning—along with strong museum-school partnerships—provide many benefits for student learning.

In the following brief discussion, I will first outline some of the special mind-body connections that object-based learning in museums affords learners and how this learning is specific to the kind of object-based learning one finds in museums. Next, I will discuss how integral museum-school partnerships are to making a space for arts education in general school curriculum. Lastly, I will make a case for increased funding for museum-school partnerships and object-based learning school initiatives, as I think they should begin to be rightly seen as part of the future for arts education in the 21st century. In reviewing all of these ideas, I hope to reinvigorate the argument that, in the current technological learning revolution of the early 21st century, we do not forget the great benefits of learning from physical objects.

Body and Mind, Making, and Museum Learning

Educators often ask themselves a fundamental question: How can I best utilize the precious potential of my students' minds? As we begin to frame how the arts can be reengaged in our educational system today, it is pertinent again to see how we might best connect learners' bodies with their minds. We must explore again the tie between experience and thinking. In his seminal work, *Art as Experience*,

Dewey (1934) discusses the connection between the body's actions and the mind, as he suggests that arts learning is closely connected to bodily experience. Varela (1999), a more recent philosopher, writes of how humans begin to know and learn through the experience of their bodies, just as animals do. In 2009, as we consider what future arts education has in 21st century learning, we should begin to look more closely at what arts education can do to reengage a mind-body connection in education. Recognizing the relationship of arts education to objects is an efficient way to reengage this connection.

Before they became public institutions, museums started first as private and personalized collections, or cabinets of curiosities and wonder. The first museums started as haphazard collections of fascinating things, often existing in glass cases in people's homes as jumbles of natural history objects, manuscripts, artifacts, and ephemera. As Weil (1995) explains, a contemporary museum's collection of objects is just as haphazard and may be representative more of "local wonders" (p. 15) than any sort of universal ones. In turn, the information housed in museum collections may be just as fleeting as any idea is within a learner's mind. A museum collection can teach visiting students that objects are representative of the transitory nature of ideas (Weil, 1995). The similar impermanent nature of both ideas and objects connect in the state of wonder that both incur in the learner. Just as a wonderful idea connects the learner to his specific time and place, a wonderful object does as well. This similarity of their wonder is the stuff of meaningful learning.

How, then, does the state of wonder present in the best museum collections help people learn? What about the physical make-up of museums engages learners more than a set of facts alone?

Why is a museum, as a particular kind of learning environment, so special? As Hein (1998) describes, “museums are extraordinary places where visitors have an incredible range of experiences” (p. 2). Often the act of museum going is social in nature, whether social in a family context or in the context of a school group. Whatever the case, museum going is both experiential and social and, likewise, educative in both the Deweyian and the Vygotskian sense of the word¹. Museums provide special environments for learning, as they have the ability to create and recreate experiences for learning in a bodily and social way that simple conceptual learning cannot. Human learning is an enormously complex endeavor, so it would make sense that an ideal learning environment should be equally as complex. Learning environments, like museums, which take into account the sensory needs of their learners (their sight, their feeling, and sometimes audial responses and reactions), have the greatest possibility of engaging the learner in a fully bodily way. Museums afford a special kind of learning; they do more than teach learners a simple set of facts, they show them cultural worlds that have been lost into the insatiable vortex of time (Hein, 1998).

Reengaging a mind-body connection for learning can be best achieved in learning from objects. Many contemporary learning theorists have suggested as such, and not only in the context of discussion about art. In recent literature, a group of researchers have been doing work that seems to reconnect body and mind through the act of making new physical objects in the classroom. Barry and Kanematsu (2008) suggest ways that teachers can create learning environments that support original thinking through multi-sensory and interdisciplinary approaches. Burke-Adams (2007) writes that learning to think of new ideas is not an “intangible component” (p. 58) of the classroom but a process that requires teachers to use tools to foster it. Jacucci and Wagner (2007) describe an ideal classroom in which materials (e.g., art objects) expand collaborative communication and promote new ideas by the very act of pinning them down to

finite reality. As we move forward into a digital learning age where objects are becoming less and less important to educational contexts, it is pertinent that we reengage our students’ mind-body connections with the experience of real art objects. How this can be done efficiently is through the benefits of museum-school partnerships and the objects with which they ask students to come in contact directly.

Object-based Learning: Looking at its Benefits

Learning from objects in museums helps learners access their imaginations to engage with a set of concepts, the history of a people, the history of an aesthetic movement, or the cultural norms of a society. Still, what is it in a set of objects that aids learning so much? Researchers like Frost (2001) think it is an object’s connection to the culture that made it that gives learners an opportunity to interact with a culture (and its ideas) on a bodily level. Smith (1989) writes that it is the constantly changing status of artifacts through history that allows students to better understand how the status of ideas change throughout history. When student learners engage with objects during museum-school partnerships, they access the rich cultural significance of these changing relationships. And, as they begin to see the changing meaning of objects in relation to their changing selves, they begin to get a larger, critical perspective of the mercurial nature of the world around them and their relational place within it.

Objects provide an important curricular set up for learners to access information. No matter the kind of museum in which they are housed (constructivist, traditional, or otherwise), the nature of objects makes them, for all practical purposes, physical repositories geared toward individualistic learning. When museums present the information they seek to convey, the objects within them govern how the information is presented and organized. There is a finiteness to a set of objects, and this engages a learner’s mind through his physical experiences (Dewey, 1934). Scholars like

Weil (1995) point out that some educators might see that this could be a kind of limitation for learning. However, some might see the physical finiteness as a helpful constraint, as it keeps ideas manageable in their determinate forms.

In addition, how museums choose to curate their collections gives learners a lot of information about the world. For example, an art museum may choose to organize its objects as part of a group of aesthetic movements or it may choose to organize its objects in groupings of time periods and cultures. Or it may act as the Dewey-constructed Barnes Foundation and organize its objects entirely by aesthetic principles and provide surprising juxtapositions.² Nevertheless, all museums present a physical curriculum that is intrinsically geared towards individualistic learning and experience.

As Weil (1995) explains, we represent our world of experiences through the objects in our museums and help to create an alternative world of objects for learners—one that projects directly into learners’ imaginations and allows them to learn deeply. When a learner experiences an object in its material form, something engages within him that is deeper than learning from the text or visuals of his classroom alone (Dewey, 1963). Intrinsic to this is his ability to experience the ideas he learning about in the world in its material form. Objects house the human drama and help reflect the human condition back to learners. This human relationship to objects (and direct access to them through museum-school partnerships) can help to dissolve the cultural barriers that sometimes mire them in unjust power relationships. As Dell (1987) argues, there is an egalitarian nature to cultural art objects themselves, as a museum full of them provides a physical example of cultural products that is paradoxically both tied up and free of cultural relevancies through their physical presences. Although the objects themselves are bound up with cultural significance, allowing students access to them creates agency and, in this way, helps to promote a more democratic distribution of information. Duncan (1995) argues that museums themselves mediate the

public's views of the art objects they hold. In this way, the objects of a museum provide students with a constantly changing set of information about themselves, hopelessly relevant to the context of their home institutions, their histories, their makers, museum visitors, and the objects surrounding them. As learners can begin to engage with the universality of object collection and learn based on the human lessons these objects hold, they can learn in a more just system and engage with timeless ideas of the human and natural world.

TAKING STUDENTS TO WHERE THE OBJECTS ARE: THE BENEFITS OF MUSEUM-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

The kind of learning that occurs in museums is distinct, as museums are both repositories of culture and themselves learning environments that allow students to engage with the objects that have traveled through time as physical entities or things. In considering the partnership works of the arts and education, no more so is this partnership more evident and important than in the halls of a museum. As Pearce (1921) explains, "supplement[ing] historical records with relics illustrating the matters with which they deal, such as weapons, costumes, personal belongings of famous personages" (p. 11) is a way to connect with the people who lived through the history. Museums, whose role has arguably always been to act as repositories of culture (and being both susceptible to and representative of all the underlying power issues present in a culture), can be exciting places for students to learn more about the ideas they encounter in schools. As Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995) write, many of our great adults had their future career paths sparked by a museum visit as children. And since many urban schools have had their arts funding cut drastically in recent years (due to both the NCLB assessment movement in education and governmental funding cuts for education in general), museum-school partnerships seem to be a way to help students access the cultural knowledge that might be inaccessible to them otherwise.

Museums have a long history of working with schools to enrich schools' arts programming with their own collections and resources (Hall & Bannon, 2006). Contemporary museum-school partnerships seem to take a varied many ways of implementing programming (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007), all of which are quite dependent on the types of museums, the age groups of the children involved, and other practical considerations, such as locale and accessibility of students to the museum. What is evident above and beyond these specific considerations is that younger students are often the learners in museum-school partnerships (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). Future researchers might seek to uncover both *why* this is the case and how in fact these younger students are learning. For example, a good question might be: How might young learners, within the halls of humanity's wonderful things (museums), experience this sense of awe and how is it important in sparking their lifelong learning?

Nightingale's (2006) work at the Victoria and Albert Museum has shown that by creating educational "programmes linked to culturally specific collections," she has allowed her museum to reach "specific communities" (p. 82) that might otherwise feel shut out of museums, due to the unseen (but felt) cultural boundaries present in elite art institutions. This and other similar shifts in relational educational programming at numerous museums around the world have profound implications for museum learning. Message (2006) argues that the best museums today make transparent their curatorial decisions in hallmark postmodern fashion. Other museum-school partnerships simply ask students to engage with interesting objects. Museum-school partnerships like The Museum Learning Initiative at Albany Institute of History and Art, Fitchburg Arts Academy's learning partnership with the Fitchburg Art Museum, and The Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center have more traditional, but successful, approaches to quality museum learning programs in which student lessons in a variety of subjects are taught directly in contact with objects from the

museum. Whatever the methods used, in contemporary museum-school partnerships, contemporary art educators should see the use of objects as cultural and educative tools as noteworthy. Inherent in these programs is the idea that people learn from objects in a deep way and, as arts educators, we should continue to support programs like them.

The benefits of learning in museums are worthy enough to break down cultural barriers for partnerships with schools (Berry, 1998), especially since the very act of a partnership helps to soften the boundaries between two institutions that prevent the sharing of information. Museums themselves help to break down learning barriers between the real and imagined worlds and can act as important catalysts for learning in this way. As Lorimer (2003) writes, as a museum exhibit full of objects "allows co-presence of subjects with models and swatches of an integrated world" (p. 34), subjects (learners) are better able to enter the space of their own imaginations. This important imaginative space gives them both agency within the world through access to their own minds and helps them to have more meaningful learning experiences.

For example, if a third grader is studying the country of France in her social studies class, going to the local museum and viewing (and in some cases, perhaps actually touching) in person the artifacts of such a culture helps to make alive in her imagination the world of France in a way text or 2-D visuals might not on their own. A museum experience helps to ignite a child's imagination and, subsequently, her learning. As Greene (1995) discusses, when the "imagination enters" into a learning experience, it becomes the "felt possibility of looking beyond the boundary where the backyard ends or the road narrows, diminishing out of sight" (p. 26). When children learn from objects, they begin to see the "integrated world" (Lorimer, 2003, p. 34) in which they live more fully and freely. This learning should be a "felt possibility" (Greene, 1995, p. 26) in order to be a meaningful one. Children *feel* their learning in a museum environment as they experience the knowledge

they are learning or, in some cases, as they are actually touching it. As children learn in museum settings, they begin to comprehend ideas in their entirety. This comprehension is related to their sensory experiences and imaginations being activated (Sartre, 1940) for great learning benefit.

Most arts educators, and educators in other subjects, would argue that in developing students' imaginations in school you begin to develop "a more active sensibility and awareness" (Greene, 1995, p. 8) within learners. It would follow, then, that learning within experiential learning environments like museums would instill active sensibility in learners through active learning with objects. Certainly, as learners engage with the objects in museums, they somehow engage with the *real thing* (Gurian, 1999). What real means is another story. The objects within museums are the real relics of the past, however culturally skewed a view these relics might hold. Objects in museums are forever caught up in the boundaries of their time and the power dynamics therein. Still, as students learn from the *real things*, they arguably learn differently (and many might argue better) than from facts alone. And as long as there are publicly accessible collections of objects, learners might as well have every opportunity possible to learn from them.

THE ARGUMENT FOR AN OBJECT-BASED ARTS EDUCATION THROUGH ENGAGED MUSEUM-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IN URBAN SCHOOLS: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The urban high school graduation crisis is finally getting more exposure among policymakers and the media. In "Cities in Crisis: A Special Analytic Report on High School Graduation," Swanson (2008) states that high school graduation rates are on average 15 percentage points lower in our nation's urban centers. The National Endowment for the Arts (2008) has indicated that arts programming can play a role in increasing high school graduation rates. While Swanson (2008) does not identify any rela-

tionships between arts education (let alone object-based arts education or museum-school partnerships) and the possibility of higher graduation rates, he does explain that a student's community largely affects the possibility of her graduation. When this community, whether it be school or home, fails to engage students' imaginations, something goes wrong for student learning.

Despite these conclusions, when funding gets cut from schools to make room for subjects that might positively affect graduation rates, like math and science, what usually goes first is funding to the arts. As arts educators, we need to consider how to create new communities of learning in our urban schools that are alternative ways to engage our students' imaginations. Museums provide a backdrop to create these communities, as the objects they house both contain the real world and inspire new ones through an engagement of students' imaginations. Museum-school partnerships could be a powerful 21st century learning tool in cultivating better learning experiences for our students and helping to slow down, and potentially stop, the high school graduation crisis.

Greene (1995) argues that the arts can bring unexplored possibilities to student learning, reengage student agency and imaginations, and thus, bring about social change through this reengagement. Perkins (1994) explains that the visual intelligence stimulated by engaging with art objects during arts learning sessions strengthens learners' imaginations, which, in turn, strengthens critical thinking skills. By engaging students with an object-based arts curriculum, we can begin to reengage students with the important mind-body connections that may be left out of many digital learning initiatives. By giving funding and support to increase museum-school partnerships, by encouraging teachers in all disciplines to use objects in their classrooms, and by asking students to create and co-construct with their peers their own novel objects, we might begin to give our students "the comprehension of *total reality*" (Freire, 2006, p. 108) they so deserve. Looking forward at how we might best improve

graduation rates in our schools and the depth of learning occurring therein, it is necessary that we begin to think of learning from art objects as synonymous with quality arts learning (and, moreover, quality learning in general) and provide the platform for object-based learning in our urban schools.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 To define these theorists' relationships to the word *educative*: a Deweyian definition of *educative* is learning that is experiential in nature and a Vygotskyian definition of *educative* is learning that is social in nature.
- 2 "Surprising juxtapositions," of course, is only a fitting description to a public that is familiar with other more normative methods of museum education. Barnes' and Dewey's choices in the Barnes Foundation can be seen as ironic and elitist or democratic, depending on your view. Certainly, their choices can be seen as both simultaneously.

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COMMENTARY

On Culture, Art, and Experience

By Carolyn Chernoff, University of Pennsylvania

While the arts in the United States are themselves often controversial, arts in public schools rarely are. That is to say that teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members tend to agree that the opportunity to participate in the arts is beneficial to students and to the wider society. Whether discipline-based arts education (DBAE or “art for art’s sake”), integrated arts (art that promotes core content knowledge—literacy, numeracy, critical thinking—alongside self-expression), or somewhere in between, the *desire* to have art (including music and theater) in public schools is well-known. Also well-known, however, are the local and national pressures and mandates that place arts at the bottom of the list of school priorities and possibilities.

In their thoughtful articles about the centrality of arts in education (included in this volume), Gulla, Milman, and Norman raise a series of interrelated issues amidst snapshots of best practices. School funding, the pressures of standardized testing, and the lack of opportunities for engagement in the classroom all present a reminder that it is particularly because of these realities that schools, teachers, students, and communities need arts in the classroom. The authors also remind us, through evocative description of best-practice programs, that arts participation enables students to engage deeply with subject matter and school itself, countering grim notions that the most vulnerable students in the most vulnerable schools are necessarily the least engaged. Arts involvement for academic achievers and others is correlated with higher rates of school completion, lower rates of delinquency, higher levels of self-esteem and efficacy, and a host of other “magic wand” type effects.

And yet the same cries echo in the

corridors of schools in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York: there’s just no money for arts. There’s just no time. There are no personnel—and besides, aren’t “arts and culture” a luxury?

As poet Gwendolyn Brooks neatly illustrated in her 1967 poem “The Chicago Picasso,” this tension over experiencing art as essential on the one hand and elitist or alienating on the other hand is not a new one. She asks, “Does man love Art?” Answering her question, she reminds us that
 Man visits Art, but squirms.

Art hurts. Art urges voyages—
 and it is easier to stay at home
 Art is not necessarily easy. Arts provide a place to question the heretofore unquestionable, to imagine a different world. While critical for imagining new possibilities, this realm of the imagination can be frightening. Teachers who lack deep experience with art, in the sense of art as experience promoted by John Dewey (1932/2005), may be afraid—or at least likely to squirm in its presence. Students may lack exposure to museums, public sculptures, and works of art across the spectrum even in some of culturally richest cities in the United States. Proximity to museums, theaters, and other formal venues does not necessarily guarantee access.

But beyond art in its cages, in its “official” homes in cities around the world, there is the reality that art is a part of everyday life. In that, no teacher, no student, no community is a stranger to art. As Stern and Siefert (1998) remind us, the most underresourced and historically excluded sections of Philadelphia and Camden are full of people who are artists, who boast high levels of arts participation, who integrate arts into their daily lives. From gardening to cooking to home decorating, to singing and listening to music on the radio, to attending performances at

religious institutions and schools, art is alive and well—well, everywhere.

Yet this notion that art is somehow foreign to students, particularly low income students of color attending schools in highly concentrated areas of poverty, persists. Brooks illustrates and mocks this point of view, writing,

But we must cook ourselves and
 style ourselves for Art, who
 is a requiring courtesan.

We squirm.

We do not hug the Mona Lisa.

And yet children above all know that art can be anything, that everyone is an artist, that art is all around us. And adults know this too, even if they rarely articulate it. The reality of art—of cultural expression, of the joy and pain of being alive in this world right now—is too often seen as separate from the world of Art that Brooks pillories. Even dedicated arts activists and educators too often labor under the belief that art lives in museums, that art is a language too tricky for most of our tongues, and, most of all, that art is an experience that trained professionals need to bring to students.

These three articles provide hopeful visions of what can happen when arts are included in the classroom, even amidst the funding crises, the standardized testing schedules, and the challenge of administering any innovative program in overburdened and under-resourced public schools. But these articles raise important questions as well, some of which go unanswered. While arguing for *multicultural* art experiences, there remains the whisper that *real art is Western European*, that *real art is for wealthy people*, that *you have to dress up and speak English to visit real art in its faraway home*. Is the hopeful vision of arts in education one that encourages all people to participate in certain kinds of art, or perhaps

suggesting that certain demographic groups should participate in certain kinds of art (either demographically similar, or a more traditional notion of “high art,” or the art of the powerful)?

If *everything* is art, then there may be no need to “include” it in school; it is already there. That is one danger of taking a position that says *art is everywhere, all people have art, we are all artists*. But that is an extreme and almost deliberate misinterpretation. If *everything* is art, then we can provide spaces in which to look and listen more closely to the art all around us, including young people’s practices of visual art, poetry, and dance too often deemed anti-social by well-intentioned school administrators and other authorities. Rap, graffiti, dancing, cell-phone photos and movies—these are often seen as orthogonal to “real” learning, the learning that is tested and almost always found lacking. But too, to include youth culture in our canon of art is not necessarily to say that is the only art young people under-

stand. It is, however, a point of entry.

These three articles remind us that good intentions are not enough, that narrow visions of art will not necessarily lead to a sweeping social change that will enable all youth to paint themselves into a beautiful mural of learning and sharing and positive growth. The arts—or “real art”—can reflect and reproduce the hierarchy, tedium, and inequalities of larger society and of public schools. The arts, the *real arts*, can also act as Brecht’s hammer to shape society. But to do this, we need to consider not only the constraints of public school funding and test mandates, but larger notions about what art is—and whose art it is.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community Through Public Art and Urban Design

By Ronald Lee Fleming, Merrell, 2007, 384 pp.

Review by Christopher Steinmeier, University of Pennsylvania

Ronald Lee Fleming's *The Art of Placemaking* is a book crafted largely on the premise of connections – between people and cultures, between eras in history, between materialism and mythology, and between disciplines. It is also a book that emphasizes the strength of the connections which in turn determine the resonance and sustainability of a given place. The book is divided into two major sections: the first section offers case studies of various places along with descriptions of the design processes and their impact, while the second details the design process in general, including the questions one should ask of a place and potential designs. Within the case studies, there are numerous narratives about conflict, confrontation, and resolution, such as tensions between the artists' work and the political desire to avoid controversy.. The beauty of Fleming's work can be appreciated because he directs our attention to the tensions that exist within the decisions that allow public art to be brought into open urban areas.

Fleming's first section, case studies, combines dazzling photographs with descriptions of design, process, and impact to illustrate his understanding of the four principles of urban design: orientation, connection, direction, and animation. His narratives chart a trajectory for each project, from the initial concept to the finished product's place in the community. He emphasizes the give and take crucial to the establishment of vital public art. What makes this section extraordinary is Fleming's attention to the kinds of places, from train stations and federal buildings, where visitors have to spend significant amount of time in the uncomfortable limbo of waiting. It is

significantly less challenging to craft a place where people already want to be, and far more difficult to create a meaningful experience in the locales that seem saturated with bureaucratic ennui and numbing facelessness.

A good portion of the book deals with transit, or transition, whether in the literal sense of transport or in the more subtle notions of ecological or interpersonal change. One significant example of this is the Stuyvesant High School project, *Mnemonics*, in which the history of the school and community is told via artifacts placed randomly throughout the building, in small glass cubes. Unlike other public works, where visitors follow a linear narrative through a space, *Mnemonics* unfolds more gradually and in ways that are different for each person. As students progress through the four years of high school, they come into contact with different artifacts at different times and become entwined with the history of the school. As a final gesture, each graduating class leaves an artifact of its own, which fosters both a connection to the place and a sense of responsibility to it; the place is constantly being made and remade, and students who were once part of the process become part of the product.

Although Fleming's work is commendable, he has included a few case studies that cause me to question his choices. One of these "places" is *Artifact Fence*, in Denver, Colorado. It is a winding trail of discarded or antiquated farming implements meant to tell the tale(s) of Rocky Mountain agriculture before the Denver International Airport, and indeed modern America, encroached on its territory, and it seems to fall short of Fleming's high

standards for placemaking. It is difficult for me to understand why Fleming included this piece, unless as a warning – a place cannot simply speak to its past, but must also reach into the future. But if this is a warning, it is left to the reader's implicit understanding and therefore is inadequate in its offering.

The second half of the book serves both as a call to action and a manual for the design process, discussing often overlooked components such as maintenance, conservation, and the rights of the artist. These pages map out specific steps to ensure that the artist's vision is integrated as fully as possible into the space, and that the artist's vision also reflects the diversity and the will of the public for whom the art is intended. Fleming does an effective job of balancing the skill, creativity, and ingenuity of the artist with the budgetary and political constraints of the various departments overseeing the construction. In many ways these are the gems of the book. While the first section draws the reader in with pictures and endearing stories, this section encourages the readers to commit to 'making' places in their own town or city.

As part of this section, Fleming offers some questions to ask of a space, in order to best coax the space into a *place*. These questions allow me to ponder the potential of bridging the gap between sport and art. Throughout much of the book, public spaces – "places" – seem to be almost subordinated by the artwork, as if to say that people congregating in the space must be given topics for conversation or safe havens from urban sprawl. But what about spaces where people already gather, where the culture of the space may not be intrinsically aesthetic, such as playgrounds

or sports courts? These spaces often have close ties to the community as those lauded by Fleming, if not more so, and they offer an opportunity to introduce visitors to the community or the history of the community. In South Philadelphia there is a basketball court that shares land with a “sprayground”, which is essentially a playground with sprinklers built in. Children can run around and enjoy themselves without overheating in the city’s harsh summer heat. The area is beautifully landscaped and colorful, and it offers something for people of all ages, including shaded areas for conversation. There is also Rucker Park in New York City, which is a Mecca for basketball players and fans. The courts are a living piece of New York and American history, a gathering place for current players and living legends, with events and artwork to celebrate the past and the future, all of which make it a prime example of Fleming’s four keys to making a place.

The *Art of Placemaking* succeeds in

many ways, not the least of which is in giving readers a list of destinations, of places to see and to create, and does a masterful job of pairing what has been done with what remains to be done to recover from the Modernist Era (Fleming’s refrain throughout). Aside from a few minor miscues and moments of self-promotion, this is a good read and a powerful elixir against the slow creep of corporate sprawl and generic suburban planning. By emphasizing connection and connectedness, by placing function alongside aesthetics, and by focusing on the stories told about and around the artwork, Fleming has set a high standard for making places. By focusing only on those places where the commissioned artist intersects with the public will, Fleming may inadvertently sever the very connections he has worked hard to draw out. While I do agree with his idea that areas where people convene are not automatically deserving of the term “places”, I am convinced, both by some of the examples

in the book and by my own experiences, that the converse is also true: places do not have to be designed to be ‘made.’

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