

## Young Audiences Arts for Learning

### Green Paper: Humpty Dumpty Looks to the Future 'Putting the Arts and Education Back Together Again'

The arts in education field may be poised for greatness, but as Robert Frost wrote, 'two roads diverged in a yellow wood,' and it is unclear whether we will take 'the one less traveled by.'

Ever since the arts first found their way into school (music in the 1830's as a means of improving singing in church choirs, and drawing in the 1880's in order to help young people learn the skills needed to manufacture shoes and hats), we have 'tossed and turned' about the fundamental value proposition for including arts learning as part of American schooling. As a result, according to no less an authority than Nancy Hanks, the first chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts, the fields of education and the arts have developed separately and apart rather than as an organic and inextricable part of one another.

In our lifetime, this divide has been an underlying stream that has carried forward debates and competition for scarce resources among and between various arts and education factions. Some practitioners have had an abiding interest in the intrinsic or instrumental value of arts learning. Others have championed the role and status of certified arts specialists who provide sequential instruction. And others have called for teaching artists to carry out a wide variety of programs and services in and through the arts, but rarely as a part of a comprehensive design and delivery system that reaches all students.

The history of the arts *in* education includes highly regarded projects (e.g. Arts Propel in Pittsburgh) and major institutional efforts (e.g. the Getty Institute's DBAE Program -- *discipline-based art education* -- and the Galef Institute's DWOK -- *different ways of knowing*). Each of these was an important player and influence in its time, but today they no longer exist and are largely forgotten. There also are many examples of organizations and agencies that have survived (e.g. the NEA/State Arts Agency Arts in Education Program) and thrived (e.g. the Kennedy Center's Education Program, Young Audiences, and Thriving Minds led by Big Thought in Dallas).

The record in arts instruction also is mixed. Currently there are approximately 90,000 music specialists and 50,000 art specialists working in schools, and the great majority of them are providing valuable instructional services for their students, but most of these practitioners have lost ground in terms of ‘time on task’ with students, particularly among underserved populations in urban areas.

The value of arts instruction *and* arts in education programs and services is continually under attack, both as a result of financial and time constraints, and also because of the failure of arts and education leaders to call for and help create *arts learning* outcomes for young people that 1) are community based as well as school based; 2) involve classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists working cooperatively; 3) address both the intrinsic and instrumental value of arts learning; 4) and most important, require the design and delivery of integrated programs and instruction including accountability measures for the entire arts learning field.

And so today, ten years into the 21st Century, the broad arts learning “field” is as fractured, though not nearly as fractious, as it was 30 years ago. The more positive tone of our dialogue and advocacy is due to the efforts of many practitioners, most notably the Arts Education Partnership, which was created a dozen years ago by the US Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts to help define and establish common ground through field-based research, policy and practice; however, this hiatus in hostilities in favor of harmony also may be due to the increasingly marginalized role arts learning is playing in K-12 education.

There is a greater sense than ever that ‘if we don’t hang together, we surely will hang separately’.

The erosion of arts learning in formal schooling also, in part, has resulted in the blossoming of arts activities in informal educational settings: after school, in extended day programs, and through early childhood programs. These services are carried out in a variety of community settings including schools, libraries, parks and recreation facilities, as well as more recently in the home. Many of these initiatives involve parents, guardians, caregivers, and professional practitioners devoted to the well-being of all children and youth, especially to those who have limited access to quality, life changing arts learning experiences.

There is risk as well as reward in this proliferation of arts learning in the community, whether it is delivered 'live' or electronically. The increase in the number of programs and young people being reached may become a proxy and substitute for deep and meaningful impact on the intended beneficiaries of all this activity. In other words, it is possible that we will lose some quality outcomes even as we make gains in the number of players, programs and participants in arts learning.

However, since this Green Paper is about envisioning the future, not raking over the coals of the past, or highlighting the questions and challenges we face at present, let us take this opportunity to put forward a new 'to do' list that is informed by past experience, but not held hostage by it. By definition, this list will reflect high aspirations, will be articulated in broad brushstrokes, and expressed without attention as to how we might achieve these outcomes.

Think of this list as a view of the future from the 50,000 foot level, not as a GPS map for reaching particular destinations. The timeframe for our 'To Do' list is 30 years, or approximately the time it takes two generations of young people to pass through their K-12 school years, not enough time to change the world or the fundamentals of the human condition, but more than enough time on task to secure the value and place of arts learning as a distinct and distinctive means of enhancing young people's creativity, learning, and quality of life.

### **To Do by 2040**

1. Arts learning practitioners from the academy as well as those in the field, will have conducted research that defines, measures and affirms the effects of arts learning on young people's creative, learning and life skills and habits of mind. In response to this evidence, and the public's call for access to arts learning for all young people, the respective state and federal agencies will have developed policies and sufficient financial support to ensure that arts learning is established as a basic area of study in all American schools, pre-school and after school programs for children and youth.
2. The continuum of arts learning instruction and arts in education programs in pre K-12 education will be delivered by arts specialists, classroom teachers and by teaching artists using a comprehensive and unified curriculum. This curriculum will include

direct experience of art, a focus on understanding the role of the artist, opportunities to create art, and activities that connect arts learning to other learning, including other cultural, social and emotional domains.

3. The best and the typical schools of art and schools of education, charged with providing pre-service and in-service training to artists and educators, will have established joint degree granting, undergraduate and graduate programs in arts learning. These programs will draw on the resources of education and arts faculties, and involve community-based organizations, agencies, and individual practitioners as well. Together, they will train and certify arts learning professionals for strategically planned and consistent employment in schools and community settings.
4. Arts learning teachers, teaching artists and practitioners will integrate the delivery of arts learning as part of the daily experience of all young people in school and in the community through a comprehensive effort, designed by each community, involving the full spectrum of public and private sector organizations and agencies that focus on the well being of children and youth.
5. The great majority of pre-professional artist training programs in the fine and performing arts will include substantial amounts of class time and field work in the area of arts learning in response to the need for well trained teaching artists in the nation's performing arts centers, theaters, dance companies, museums and musical organizations.
6. Arts learning programs in the academy and in the community at every level of engagement, design and implementation will utilize digital and media technologies that serve to enhance arts teaching and learning.

Over the past 50 years, much has been accomplished to raise the awareness of and appreciation for the value of a vibrant arts community, and the value of student centered education that is focused on and accountable for preparing the nation's young people for productive work in a global economy. However, the education and arts fields have failed to coalesce around a

common core of goals and strategies for establishing the distinctive role arts learning can play on behalf of our nation's young people. This will require 'putting Humpty Dumpty back together again'.

It remains for the next generation of artists and educators, and their respective institutions and leaders to fashion the way forward. For those of us who have labored in the fields to date, in good faith but with limited success, there is much to look forward to, not the least of which is the prospect of fresh ideas from new leaders who will engage in the work that must be accomplished before the results we envision and desire can be realized. Your comments, insights and criticisms of this Green Paper are welcome, but your participation in and pursuit of the outcomes presented here is essential.