

Introduction:

Throughout history, the arts—dance, music, theater, and visual arts—have been considered core areas of study in education. Only in the twentieth century have the arts been marginalized and characterized as “elective” or “enrichment” curricula, primarily designed for students with a natural inclination or talent. A national effort to correct this perception gained momentum in the 1990s with the publication of significant national studies and the adoption of *National Standards for Arts Education*. The arts are now listed in both the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* and *No Child Left Behind* as part of the core curriculum, along with language arts, math, science, and social studies. As such, there is the expectation that *all* students will have access to a sequential, content-rich, standards-based education in the arts.

Despite this national focus, there is still resistance to full implementation of quality arts programs in many school districts. The *National Standards for Arts Education* is voluntary. Furthermore, the emphasis on standardized testing—ironically, often promulgated by the very forces that stress the importance of the arts—pushes math and language arts to the forefront of educators’ attention, often at the expense of other subjects. The arts are particularly vulnerable, as several generations have been conditioned to think of the arts as frivolous and lacking rigor.

Current trends in educational studies, as well as the relatively new area of brain research, are providing overwhelming evidence of the importance of arts engagement in cognition; critical thinking and problem solving skills; and values clarification and self discovery. As the urgency to strengthen arts education mounts, the College Board Arts Framework is intended to guide instructional design teams in creating materials, services, and assessments to meet the growing needs of students and educators.

The College Board currently offers three Advanced Placement® (AP®) exams in the arts: Music Theory, Art History, and Studio Art. In addition, there is an effort underway to expand these offerings to include performance exams in dance, music, and theater and to develop materials to encourage broader studies in the historical and cultural context of the arts. This framework is designed to provide a common language in the continuance of this effort, to define the knowledge and skills to be taught and assessed in a rigorous arts curriculum.

Equity and Excellence

The concluding sentence of the College Board’s mission statement reads: “The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.”

This is a powerful statement—one which requires the highest level of dedication coupled with imaginative leadership. While most of the College Board’s activities reflect this mission statement, there is still much work to be done to bring the arts up to the level of embracing these principles of excellence and equity.

The arts teach students to look for, anticipate, and value results that do not present finite “answers,” offering unique educational facility for developing the “whole person.” Students in the arts are asked to reflect on, evaluate, and respond to their own lives and environment. This connects them to real-life experiences and lends value to these experiences. Analytical and decision-making skills are developed, while integrating the physical with the emotional. In addition, students who struggle with learning modalities can, at times, find a more natural learning process by studying one or more of the arts. The arts provide a core learning experience and expose students to a full awareness of the human condition.

Standards

Background

A focus on national standards began in earnest with the 1990 publication by the first Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce of *America's Choice: high skills or low wages!* This report said that if the United States wanted to remain competitive in the new worldwide market, it would have to redirect its focus toward high-value-added products and services, while low-skilled jobs would go to other countries where the cost of this type of labor was much lower.

The National Council of Education Standards and Testing was created in response to interest in national standards and assessment evinced by the nation's governors, the administration, and Congress. In the authorizing legislation (Public Law 102-62), Congress charged the Council to:

- advise on the desirability and feasibility of national standards and testing
- recommend long-term policies, structures, and mechanism for setting voluntary education standards and planning an appropriate system of tests (see page 1 of the Executive Summary)

In 1993, James Wolfensohn of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Harold Williams of the J. Paul Getty Trust formed The Arts Education Partnership Working Group and published *The Power of the Arts to Transform Education: An Agenda for Action*. This document brought to national attention the necessity for the arts to be included in the national movement toward the adoption of standards in all core disciplines. As a result, with the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, the arts became part of a federal law acknowledging that dance, music, theater, and visual arts are core subject areas. The law established the National Education Standards Improvement Council, which was given the task of certifying voluntary content standards in the various areas of arts education.

Accomplishing a focus on highly skilled labor required the adoption of high standards for educating students and workers. In 1994, the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations created the voluntary *National Standards for Arts Education—What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts*.

That document points out that, “[t]he arts have emerged from the education reform movement of the last decade as a vital partner in the continuing effort to provide our children with a world-class education. The Standards are a crucial element in that enterprise.” Nearly every state in the United States has adopted or adapted these standards for arts education.

Nature of the Learning Identified in the *National Standards for Arts Education*

The *National Standards for Arts Education* state that students should know and be able to do the following by the time they have completed secondary school:

- communicate at a basic level in the four arts disciplines: dance, music, theater, and visual arts;
- communicate proficiently in at least one art form, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems with insight, reason, and technical proficiency;
- develop and present basic analyses of works of art from structural, historical, and cultural perspectives, and from combinations of those perspectives
- have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods, and a basic understanding of historical development in the arts disciplines, across the arts as a whole, and within cultures
- relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines.

Nature of Standards

The *National Standards for Arts Education* are broad statements intended to encourage local goals, objectives, and instructional methods. They “present areas of content, expectations for student experience, and levels of achievement, but without endorsing any particular philosophy of education, specific teaching methods, or aesthetic points of view.”

According to the *National Standards for Arts Education*, student assessment in each of the competency areas is guided by two kinds of standards:

- *Content Standards* specify what students should know and be able to do in the arts disciplines.
- *Achievement Standards* specify the understandings and levels of achievement that students are expected to attain in the competencies, for each of the arts, at the completion of grades four, eight, and twelve.

Grant Wiggins suggests that there is a third type of educational standard that should be considered in relation to assessments:

- *Task (work-design) Standards* which ask, “What is worthy and rigorous work? What tasks should students be asked to do?” in order that their performance be based on credible, intellectual work (*Educative Assessment*, pg. 106)

Conclusion

Standards for student achievement in the arts provide a foundation for individual student assessments of arts learning, which also provides insight into how well arts programs are preparing students to do high quality work.

The *National Standards for Arts Education* states: “They will help our nation compete in a world where the ability to produce continuing streams of creative solutions has become the key to success.”

Tough Choices or Tough Times (2007), a recent publication by the second Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, insists that as a country we need to develop standards, assessments, and curricula that reflect today’s needs and tomorrow’s requirements. The authors are concerned that what is currently being measured is too narrow, stating that, “On balance, they are designed to measure the acquisition of discipline-based knowledge in the core subjects in the curriculum, but, more often than not, little or nothing is done to measure many of the other qualities that we have suggested may spell the difference between success and failure for students who will grow up to be the workers of the 21st century America: creativity and innovation, facility with use of ideas and abstractions, the self-discipline and organization needed to manage one’s work and drive it through to a successful conclusion, the ability to function well as a member of a team, and so on.”

Curriculum Design

Tenets

The adoption of the *National Standards for Arts Education* and subsequent Visual and Performing Arts Standards adoptions in most states have created a foundation for the scrutiny of arts curricula and have energized the arts community nationwide in designing substantive and sequential arts curricula that are standards-based.

A framework for curriculum and assessment must be based on and derived from beliefs and convictions widely held by practitioners in a certain field. Among these are:

- The arts play a vital role in cognitive development. They support students in learning how to learn.
- The arts define and are defined by human culture and society. They are essential to the study of history. They exist in connection with real-life experiences; they are not separate from them.
- Study and practice of the arts help develop skills useful to one's overall growth. These skills include: perception, critical thinking, decision making, self-discovery, interpretation, values clarification, organization, and collaboration.
- The arts develop independent thinkers with potential to contribute positively to our culture and to our society.
- The arts integrate body, mind, and spirit to engage the participant in constructive, individual expression.
- The arts offer access and opportunities for all people.
- The arts cross cultures and embrace differences.
- The arts foster community building by removing cultural barriers, developing creative and productive individuals, and providing an accessible platform for performance that is receptive to diverse contributions.

Instructional Goals

No single, prescriptive model exists for developing a rigorous, college-level course in the arts; however, common instructional goals may be adopted to guide curriculum development:

- Encourage both creative and systematic investigation of formal and conceptual issues.
- Emphasize the study and practice of the arts as an ongoing process that involves the student in informed and critical decision making.
- Help students develop technical skills and effective application of principles and theory.
- Encourage students to become independent thinkers who will contribute inventively and critically to their culture through the arts.
- Explore the universal role of the arts in cultures and societies throughout history.

Curriculum

The arts have been the leaders in “learner-centered instruction,” “active learning,” and “differentiated instructional strategies” since long before those phrases were coined. Any effective arts curriculum should adopt a multi-faceted approach to developing knowledge, skills, and abilities in the student. The curriculum should be designed to:

- develop a balance of skills and conceptual understanding of the arts;
- activate the imagination in order to develop the individual student’s interpretation of principles and theories in the arts;
- address art historical contexts as well as current issues and trends;
- recognize the value of both production and process;
- provide a supportive and open environment for exploration, experimentation, and discovery;
- afford access and opportunity for all students;
- foster thinking that enhances effective cross-disciplinary study;
- align with current standards and practices.

While each discipline needs its own curriculum, the common threads shared across all of the arts can be nurtured and enhanced through shared development of standards, curriculum, and assessment tools. Major consideration should be given to curriculum design that utilizes the following: *Principles and Theory; Historical Exploration; Breadth of Knowledge and Skills; Depth of Investigation; Cognitive and Metacognitive Analysis; Interdisciplinary Connections.*

Principles and Theory

Each discipline in the arts identifies primary principles and theories necessary for the understanding and creation and/or performance of the given art form. Curriculum must present, clarify, and contextualize these principles and theories to guide students’ development. This is most effectively achieved by providing an “active learning” environment in which art historical contexts are studied, while creating and/or performing is also required.

Historical Exploration

The arts define the political and social structures of a culture. They uniquely reflect the values and the aesthetics of the people who have shared the culture. Thus, the arts offer students access to their own history and culture, as well as that of others. They provide a pathway to knowledge about cultures throughout history and throughout the world. The *National Standards for Arts Education* were developed with close attention to the study of history and culture, and provide a foundation on which to build rigorous and content-rich curriculum throughout the K-12 educational experience.

Breadth of Knowledge and Skills

Within one's discipline, development of a variety of skill sets can improve the level of understanding, as well as one's ability to create and/or perform at a sophisticated level. Curriculum designed to develop students' understanding of various approaches and techniques should integrate problem solving, reasoning, and conceptual questioning strategies that help students approach new situations with a focus on learning. It should also combine knowledge-centered and learner-centered classes organized around core concepts and activities to most effectively facilitate the mastery of subject matter. Both verbal and performance skills should be developed.

True understanding of one's chosen art form is further enhanced through a study of all of the arts. Wherever possible, cross-disciplinary study should be integrated, analyzed, and discussed to show connections and differences among the arts. Connections made to areas outside the arts will further enhance understanding.

Depth of Investigation

The ability to develop and concentrate on a focused investigation is imperative in the fields of creative and performing arts. The curriculum must be designed to allow for in-depth study and development of large, complex bodies of work, or series of related works investigating a common theme.

In-depth study affords opportunities to improve both physical skills and creativity. Learning through problem solving, personal investment, and trial and error simulates most closely the real-life experiences of practitioners in the visual and performing arts. Curriculum must include components of both skills-based and open-ended investigations in order to emphasize the "expected results" rendered from an application of the principles and theories, and "unexpected results" that might be discovered by exploring "new territory." In order to engage the imagination, sufficient time and open-ended structure must be built into the curriculum. Creativity unfolds when individuals are motivated by curiosity and determination, and this process requires time, encouragement, and the freedom to succeed or to fail.

Cognitive and Metacognitive Analysis

Discussion, verbalization, analysis, and self-discovery all contribute to the development of art practitioners capable of guiding their own growth. "Arts literacy" can best be achieved through group critiques and discussions that offer opportunities to use appropriate vocabulary and to apply the theory and principles associated with the discipline. Students should analyze historical works, other students' work, and their own work in order to develop cognitive and metacognitive abilities.

Active and inquiry-based work encourages anticipation of problems, problem solving, and a greater understanding of the complexities and subtleties of the creative process. Students learn about their own abilities as they discover what "works" and what "doesn't

work,” assessing the value of their prior knowledge and their misconceptions. When students learn and process new information through active discovery, they are more engaged in thinking at a higher level, as well as exploring their own attitudes and values (self-discovery).

Interdisciplinary Connections

The making of art is a social act that is, by its very nature, cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural. The arts derive new contexts and develop nuance and complexity by borrowing from cultures across the globe, from other disciplines, and from other modes of communication. Students’ learning is enhanced when concepts are taught within the context of their everyday lives as well as contemporary events and issues. Students’ comprehension of meaning and content as it applies to them as individuals promotes a greater understanding and appreciation of the historical, political, and social links among the arts, careers, communities, and society at large.

Assessment

Background

Today, there are several theories in education for changing school systems in order to improve them. Standards-based reform is one theory that is aimed at building a better system of educational excellence, equity, and accountability. The promise is that high standards and appropriate assessment linked to those standards will greatly improve performance for all students (Pope, 2002). If accountability has become the cornerstone of education reform, then student assessment has become the “touchstone” of education reform. Federal legislation coupled with state legislation and regulations have intensified the need for quality student assessment.

All too often, states and school districts are hesitant to move forward with arts assessment for a number of reasons. Lack of expertise, lack of commitment, budget considerations, and resistance from some stakeholders all factor into the reluctance to develop and implement authentic and credible assessment tools for achievement in the arts.

Given the nature of arts education, assessment presents a number of special challenges. Performance tasks can be costly to develop, implement, and score. Students studying the arts are often involved in creating, reflecting, and responding; thus, assessment in the arts requires multiple types of tasks and procedures. Traditional approaches alone, such as true/false, multiple-choice, and constructive response, cannot effectively measure the breadth and depth of student learning in the arts, nor will such methods provide sufficient data to inform curriculum and instructional practices. Assessment in the arts should include such methodologies as process-folios and performance tasks scored by rubrics. These types of assessments, which produce significant insight into student learning, have emerged in the arts as well as in other disciplines. As internal, ongoing assessments, they are profoundly effective in promoting student reflection and revision, but they do not provide the quick “snapshot” view of achievement provided by standardized tests in other subject areas.

The arts education field has largely relied on anecdotal evidence to prove the value and significance of the arts’ vital role in the curriculum. The field is now grappling with more researched-based, reliable assessment to make the case for arts education. At the same time, the education community is struggling with the implications of studying the arts for the purpose of improving academic achievement in other subject areas—and how said learning might credibly be measured. (Americans for the Arts, 2006).¹

Nature of Arts Assessment

Assessment is inherent in the arts. Arts engagement is public and visible: the interactive nature of creativity and the assumed presence of an audience, viewer or sharer, requires that students, both alone and collectively, apply criteria to assess and revise their own work and to knowledgeably critique the work of others. This examination and inquiry address both aesthetic and conceptual development and are embedded in the interactive “studio” or

“rehearsal” processes of art production. This is where deep and significant life-long learning resides.

Arts assessment serves three primary purposes: 1) improvement of student learning and instruction; 2) accomplishment of program mission and objectives; 3) accountability within overall achievement of broad educational goals.

Assessment of Student Learning and Instruction

Arts assessment should measure students' knowledge and skills in creating, performing, and responding to works of dance, music, theater, and visual arts. At its best, the teaching and assessment of the arts will emphasize the creation and performance of works, as well as the study of existing works of art and the application of valid criteria for making aesthetic judgments (NAEP, 1994). Given the very nature of arts education, appropriate assessment in an arts program requires multiple strategies for the selection, collection, and interpretation of information about student performance. Arts assessment should provide data that allows teachers to articulate student learning in the arts to students, parents or guardians, and the community. It should also provide sufficient data to improve instructional practice. This would preclude the use of true/false, multiple-choice, and constructive response assessment items alone. Authentic assessment procedures are particularly suitable for use in arts education. These methods include: portfolios of finished and unfinished work, peer critiques, self-valuation, contracts, and student journals; teachers' observation comments; videos of discussions with students about their artwork; examinations of students about their artwork; examinations of students' artwork based on special assignment, final art display, and group presentations that testify to arts learning (Stokrocki, 2004).

Assessment of Arts Programs

It is also important to touch on program assessment. This type of assessment focuses on the evaluation of curricular offerings and implementation: staffing, course offerings, instruction and pedagogy, time and budget resources, commitment, facilities, equipment, supplies, and the like. It is important to note that the assessment of student learning alone will not provide sufficient data to thoroughly determine program adequacy; however, the data from student assessment should provide some indicators of program effectiveness. Internal program assessment or evaluation should be ongoing, and an external assessment or evaluation should be conducted every five or six years.

Data from program assessments or evaluations should foster strategic planning and be used to inform curricular practices and the implementation infrastructure and policy.

While there are challenges in developing and implementing assessments that provide sufficient data to articulate student learning and inform curriculum and instruction, these two demands are vital to effectuating programs that foster proficient student achievement in arts education. To achieve this balance, careful planning must be undertaken and

assessment should be guided by clearly stated beliefs valued by the arts community. Such planning should:

- reflect standards, curriculum, and instructional program;
- focus on student learning;
- support student learning;
- improve student learning;
- exhibit sensitivity to equity and access;
- align with professional development;
- employ assessment review strategies;
- align with accountability for achievement expectations.

Quality arts programs should employ a variety of assessment strategies to gain a comprehensive evaluation of student progress and program effectiveness relative to the total arts curriculum.

The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) provides a model for multiple-task, high-stakes assessment methodologies in arts education. The 1997 NAEP arts assessment measured students' knowledge and skills in creating, performing, and responding to works of music, theater, and visual arts. (The dance assessment was not administered at that time because an appropriate sampling of student work could not be identified.)

The Arts in Support of Assessment of Overall Academic Achievement

There is an ongoing debate about the importance of learning in the arts in support of other core subject areas, particularly language arts and mathematics. The current emphasis on assessment in these areas through the use of standardized testing naturally results in a temptation to justify arts education as a way to improve scores. While there is an enormous body of research that purports to establish a connection between the study of the arts and improved scores on tests such as the SAT[®], much of the evidence is, at the time of this writing, inconclusive. Harvard's Project Zero's REAP (Reviewing Education and the Arts Project) was able to establish irrefutable causal links between the study of the arts and math and verbal scores in only three of ten areas of focus: 1) listening to music and special-temporal reasoning; 2) learning to play music and spatial reasoning; and 3) classroom drama and verbal skills. However, the executive summary of REAP points out that justifying the arts by these causal links is a double-edged sword. Such links are extremely difficult to prove because of the many variables, and if math and verbal scores do not appear to improve in an arts-rich educational environment, the arts may be marginalized yet again. "The arts must be justified in terms of what the arts can teach that no other subject area can teach" (REAP, Executive Summary).

According to the Arts Education Assessment Framework developed by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), dance, music, theater, and visual arts are important parts of a full education. When students engage in the arts, they use intellect, emotions, and physical skills to create meaning. These findings justify the teaching of

the arts for their own value and evidence the requirement of multiple assessment procedures in order to measure the full spectrum of learning in arts classes.²

Conclusion

Beginning with the development and promulgation of the *National Standards for Arts Education* (Consortium of National Arts Education, 1994), the development of the Arts Education Assessment Framework (NAGB, 1994) and the National Assessment of Arts Education Initiative (NAEP, 1997), significant research, publications, and a growing field of expertise have emerged. The theoretical framework, research, models, and expertise exist in order to move forward with assessment in the visual and performing arts.

While the need exists for significant research regarding the implications and effect of studying the arts on student academic achievement in other subject areas, the field of arts education asserts the irrefutable benefits of a substantive engagement in arts learning for its own sake. Through the arts, students learn critical thinking, independent thinking, self-assessment, self-definition, time management, cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary understanding, and historical context—all undeniably important for any educated student. A well-executed authentic assessment can indicate levels of student learning in the arts, and the data from such assessment can be used to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student learning, as well as provide some basic indication of program adequacy.

¹ A complete version of this policy document may be viewed on the American for the Arts web site: http://www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/research/impact_areas/arts_education/007.asp

² Additional information on “What does the NAEP measure?” can be found at the following web site: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/arts/whatmeasure.asp>

Professional Development

Background

Federal, state, and local foci on education accountability are forcing schools to reform curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to improve student achievement. Achieving this goal requires effective professional development. By most accounts, the brand of in-service training we have been offering teachers and administrators has not proven to be effective in helping them gain the deep content knowledge, classroom management and interpersonal skills, technological know-how, understanding of schools as organizations, and other concepts and attitudes required by an increasingly complex education context (Fry, 1997).

While school districts place heavy emphasis on the sciences, mathematics, and language arts, it is to be noted that the arts are also designated as core disciplines, and as such are coming under the current accountability. Thus, the College Board is committed to providing resources and information to inform thinking about professional development in arts education.

Research on effectiveness of staff development (Joyce and Showers, 1970) suggests that as few as 10 percent of participants actually use what they learn. In a 1987 synthesis of the research, Showers, Joyce, and Bennett examined the conditions necessary to change teachers' practices. They proposed a combination of theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback and found that sustained practice was a critical element. "For a complex model of teaching, we estimate that about 25 teaching episodes during which the new strategy is used are necessary before all the conditions of transfer are achieved" (Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987)."¹

Providing Effective Professional Development

In a 1989 meta-analysis of existing research and the relevant literature, Sparks and Loucks-Horsley described five effective models of staff development and identified the following characteristics of effective professional development practice: ²

- Activities are conducted in school settings and linked to other school-wide improvement efforts.
- Teachers are actively involved in planning, setting goals, and selecting activities.
- Self-instruction is emphasized and a variety of "differentiated training opportunities" are offered.
- Ongoing support and resources are provided.
- Training is concrete and includes ongoing feedback, supervised trials, and assistance on request.

According to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), critical characteristics of effective professional development also include: ³

- alignment with school/district educational goals;
- facilitation by a skillful instructional leader capable of guiding professional development;
- treatment of participants as professionals;
- adequate time for follow-up;
- research-based with an appropriate evaluation component;
- incorporation of knowledge and sensitivity to human learning and change;
- preparation of participants to deal with issues regarding equity;
- concentration on enhancement of participants' content knowledge and pedagogy.

The NSDC provides the following set of guiding questions⁴ to facilitate effective professional development programs for the education community:

- What are all students expected to know and be able to do?
- What must teachers know and do in order to ensure student success?
- Where must staff development focus to meet both goals?

The NSDC concluded that staff development must be results-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded in order to provide direction for designing a professional development experience that ensures educators; acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills. To this end, the NSDC developed categorical professional development standards: Context, Process, and Content.⁵

Standards and accountability requirements alone will not necessarily foster effective professional development. Arts education stakeholders must do their part. They must identify their particular professional development needs and find ways to address those needs. Opportunities exist for professionals to participate in setting the agenda of their organizations; this is an excellent starting point for facilitating effective and meaningful professional development experiences. However, participation in professional development activities alone will not necessarily foster improvement in student learning. Participants must apply knowledge and skills gained through professional development in their school community [classroom, school, and at-large community]. It is imperative that participants understand that professional development must be ongoing.

Conclusion

“A school system's most important asset is its teaching force. And, the most important investment a school board, administrators, and parents can make in a school system is to ensure that teachers continue to learn. Continuous, high-quality professional development is essential to the nation's goal of high standards of learning for every child.”⁶

American Federation of Teachers, 2008

The responsibility for effective arts education professional development should be a shared venture—school districts investing in professional staff and vice versa. This

phenomenon has become obvious as accountability measures continue to raise the stakes in the education system. With this in mind, professional development must be a continuous process of individual and collective endeavors—constantly examining and re-examining education research and practices to discover, and in some cases create, effective professional development opportunities.

Given the nature of the arts, professional development providers may discover that the need for resources (e.g., time, commitment, budget, appropriate facilities/meeting space, array of consultants to address the unique needs of the respective art disciplines) exceeds the professional development requirement of staff in other subject areas. However, while addressing these diverse and unique needs, it is important to view such professional development as a part of, rather than apart from, the overall school community.

Federal and state foci on highly-qualified teachers have prompted colleges and universities to prepare teachers more effectively, school districts to create more effective professional development programs, local administrators to implement new recruitment and retention strategies, and teachers to think and act differently with regard to their own profession. Effective professional development is a key touchstone to addressing these issues—pre-kindergarten through grade 12 (Goodwin, 2005).

And last but not least, it is vitally important to not lose sight of the overarching reason for professional development—to improve student achievement.

¹ Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory High Quality Professional Development: An Essential Component for Successful Schools, Portland, Oregon (1998), 4-5.

² Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory High Quality Professional Development: An Essential Component for Successful Schools, Portland, Oregon (1998), 5.

^{3,4} Additional information on these critical characteristics and guiding questions for effective staff development can be found on the National Staff Development Council web site: <http://www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm>

⁵ The NSDC Staff Development Standards may be viewed at following web site: <http://www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm>

⁶ Source: American Federation of Teachers web site: <http://www.aft.org/topics/teacher-quality/prodev.htm>

Technology and Teaching

Technology and Teaching in the Arts

The College Board works to define expectations and guidelines for the use of technology by teachers and students in arts classrooms. The performing and visual arts disciplines were, and continue to be, leaders in the use of technology in both production and learning: actors, artists, dancers, and musicians have always used various tools and equipment to extend traditions as well as to create original forms. The arts' commitment to innovation has insured that artists and arts educators of all types are at the forefront of new technology creation and usage: for example, musicians have devised new electronic instruments, graphic artists now employ the computer as their primary working tool, and art history teachers have been among the first to instruct with digital images.

With such a high purchase on originality, making use of new forms of expression and understanding underscores the learning experience in the arts classroom. When technology is used to help compose, choreograph, and design, students extend the capabilities of their minds and bodies to explore and shape space through sight, sound, and movement. Digital tools and virtual environments do not replace material and physical experience; rather, they enhance educators' and learners' capacities to envision and realize their goals. Computers with Internet connections and design software packages enable learning communities to access and use information; moving and still images; and sound to understand historical art forms and to create new dance, drama, music, and visual art experiences.

New technologies are reshaping how we represent our world in all forms: cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) give us the means to communicate with others instantly and efficiently; the Internet provides us with the opportunity to acquire data, goods, and services with the click of a button; and digital cameras are transforming how we perceive, catalog, and translate our world. These technologies are becoming increasingly inexpensive and prevalent, thereby dramatically recreating our information and communication cultures. Arts students need to understand these cultures in order to be informed and productive citizens. Furthermore, with their skills as innovators and communicators, art students are in a position to see that emerging technologies meet the needs and fulfill the dreams of all users.

One of the key goals of the *National Standards for Arts Education* is to ensure that arts students are exposed to as many technological tools as possible. However, the *National Standards for Arts Education* maintain that whatever technologies students access must be appropriate for achieving learning goals and specific artistic ends rather than being used merely for their own sake. New technologies can become fashionable and can fuel consumption (the iPod revolution is a case in point); educators and students should use new products not merely to become techno-savvy but also to accomplish tasks and produce art that is best achieved by the technology in question. Bearing in mind that technologies used by art students can range from personal computers to digitally-driven

lighting equipment, some of the benefits of diverse technologies in the arts classrooms include:

- stimulating interest and motivating work;
- access to all types of visual and auditory information;
- streamlining activities and aiding production;
- creating studies and models of objects or environments realized in other media;
- producing virtual learning communities to reinforce in-class study.

Technology changes rapidly, therefore, schools must work hard to ensure that teachers and students have the most up-to-date products available. Because some such equipment can be expensive, educators and administrators must work closely with government and community leaders, as well as with families, to see that optimal experiences with technology are available to all arts students regardless of their socio-economic status.

Conclusion

The broad outlines of an education in the arts prepare all students to be conversant with the foundational elements and vocabularies of each art form; to study the arts in the context of history and culture; to make informed aesthetic inquiries and critiques; and to recognize the interconnectedness of the arts throughout their studies, their careers, and their engagement in society and culture at large. This framework should serve to advance the best thinking in designing and implementing this type of education.

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