

CHAPTER 15

Safe and Accessible: Creating New Spaces for “Arts Education”

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with Adjoa Burrowes, Sharmaine Chamberlain, Cheryl Foster, Kari Ratka & Terry Thomas

It should be a safe place. If it's not a safe place, shame on us.

Cheryl Foster, Teaching Artist

Through arts partnerships and grants that are federally funded, community art professionals or licensed arts specialists, have the opportunity to work with children in urban settings. Typically, these artists interact with young learners where they are – in their communities, in their own language and ethnic cultural context, and they develop projects that build on the cultural strengths and assets students bring to school. Geneva Gay’s concept of culturally responsive teaching (2010) is an incredibly consistent framework for arts education through the lens of artist teachers in schools. “Arts-based culturally responsive pedagogy” (Lai, 2012, p. 18) invites students and teachers to rap, create hip-hop, participate in poetry slams, and experiment with digital storytelling. Expert community teaching artists are uniquely positioned to work directly with students, but also to plan and design curriculum with classroom teachers and arts specialists so that the standards-based content learning is not only integrated with arts learning, but deepened and reinforced by it.

This chapter introduces the reader to approaches, strategies, and belief systems that teaching artists and committed arts specialists have identified as successful when they work with children in schools. We do not intend to suggest that these approaches are not or cannot be seen in classes all over the country nor taught by certified arts specialists and general education teachers. Teaching artists and arts specialists have sparked new attention to artistic approaches consistent with problem-based learning, teaching through inquiry, integrating cross-curricular themes and big ideas, and making thinking visible – all familiar strategies used among teachers and teacher educators. Contemporary artist educators who Laura Reeder (2012) calls “hyphenated artists” (p. 160), invite us to think beyond borders and titles and look more seriously and collaboratively at teaching and learning. As Reeder notes, if we do so, “pedagogies for inventive social change emerge” (p. 160). She further explains:

With the subtle shift of a metaphorical fencepost, I become a teaching-artist because I am not on the district payroll anymore. . . . I now have “other” membership, and there is a tangible distance between teaching-artist and art teacher defined by perceived or practiced agency (p. 163).

It is precisely this sense of agency that *all* teachers can adopt. This chapter is intended to heighten awareness of the potential value added from watching and learning about artists who teach, and then enhancing our pedagogical toolbox in three typically teaching artist ways:

1. Teaching artists typically learn about students’ cultures and background and build curricular bridges to engage learning
2. Teaching artists open up maker spaces within and across content areas for students to communicate in their own voices
3. Teaching artists make things with students and then invite nontraditional communities as audiences.

The federal government, under the auspices of the United States Department of Education's Arts Education grants, supports public/private partnerships between schools and arts organizations. In part, the emergence of arts partnerships is responsible for the term 'teaching artist' in the arts education lexicon. Eric Booth (2010) describes the birth of this field, noting that there is no one accepted definition of a teaching artist, nor is there a basic set of tools, approaches or practices that teaching artists are obligated to use. Booth offers a working definition which serves us well: "A teaching artist is a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills, curiosities and habits of mind of an educator, who can effectively engage a wide range of people in learning experiences in, through, and about the arts" (Booth, 2010, np). Booth's history of the movement is important for this chapter because the roles, training, certification and presence of teaching artists as they relate to certified arts specialists (i.e., music, art drama, and dance teachers) in schools continue to be points of debate.

Booth presented at the 2006 first World Conference on Arts Education sponsored by UNESCO in Lisbon, Portugal. Here he asserted: "It became clear to me that the U.S. is far below most other UNESCO nations in arts education commitment—U.S. public school students average less than one third the number of in-school arts education hours than the average in other UNESCO countries" (2010, np). With the advent of highly visible standardized test scores serving as the litmus test for effective schools, arts education has been subject to constant budget cuts, redesigns, and sometimes the arts fields have been challenged to "prove" their value too by contributing to increased math and reading achievement. But the arts education community persists.

It was not until the 1960's that there was more intentional engagement of artists, often still as one-shot performers, but increasingly in residencies and longer-term teaching episodes or projects with schools. In the 1980's, more training programs emerged, often in conjunction with arts organizations and higher education institutions in communities. Shortly after, when the federal government began funding partnerships, arts organizations began to systematically develop programs and approaches to engaging teaching artists, sometimes solely with children and young people, and sometimes with teachers in professional development. In the 21st century, it seems clear that teaching artists are inevitably a part of the pedagogical landscape, particularly for children in low-income, rural and urban schools.

It is important to note research that indicates students of low socioeconomic status (SES) who participate in the arts have better social and academic outcomes than those who do not (Catterall, Dumais & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). And, significantly, low SES, particularly students of color, have access to fewer arts education opportunities in general. Let us consider music education as an example, which is appropriate in that, if students are to have any access to the arts in schools, it is likely to be in the area of music.

Jennifer Lee Doyle (2014) synthesized selected literature on urban music education relevant to this discussion. Doyle notes that access to music education is largely universal at the elementary level in U.S. public schools (Doyle, 2014). But at the secondary level, when schools cut arts programs, urban students lose the benefits more frequently than their suburban counterparts (Doyle, 2014). Ester (2009) studied low SES students' access to musical instruments and found that, though these students were likely to join the band in the first place, they were less likely to persist, regardless of whether the school provided them with instruments. Why might that be?

Preservice music teachers are usually trained in Western classical traditions and tend to, not surprisingly, create music programs similar to what they know (Doyle, 2014). Some researchers raise the question of whether classical music is the "most culturally relevant vehicle to incite musical interest and participation for all populations" (Doyle, p. 47). Conversely, it seems that teachers who do integrate multicultural musical styles and offer nontraditional ensembles (steel drums as well as string quartets) increase participation and give more students opportunities in music (Abril, 2009; Albert, 2006).

Given this scenario, which we may assume is far more dire for other less privileged art forms in schools such as drama and dance, what possible contributions might contemporary arts professionals bring to the arts education scene in schools? Today, teaching artistry is a viable career choice for emerging art school or conservatory graduates. Teaching artists are often community artists with acknowledged bodies of work locally and sometimes nationally. They perform on community stages, conduct master classes, teach as adjuncts in teacher education and fine arts programs at universities, and, perhaps most importantly for teachers and the world of schools, teaching artists and their peer arts specialists in schools enable children and young people to produce art, perform, and gain audiences for their culturally unique voices in and beyond the school walls.

We will see clear pedagogical stances in the three vignettes below. They challenge preservice and experienced teachers to reflect and imagine classrooms in which *cultural relevance*, *creation of authentic products and performances for real audiences*, and *personal and collective voice*, and are absolute priorities and guide teaching for all students. We invite readers to consider these questions when reading these vignettes:

1. What matters to these teachers and artists?
2. How does what matters affect their pedagogy?
3. What are the takeaway equity pedagogies in their stories?



Point of View: Aquil Charlton, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Citizen Artist Fellow 2016

Culture as a Container

Hip hop is part of my cultural identity because it provided rites of passage during my adolescent formative years. Early in their marriage, my parents were progressive cultural organizers, involved with the Nation of Islam, Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), and the New Concept Development Center. During the 1980's, when I was born, our family struggled with poverty, along with many of the associated social symptoms in communities of color. The neighborhoods where we lived were culturally rich, but financially poor, and ravaged by the “War on Drugs” in the 1990's. Hip hop provided an artistic outlet, as well as a community of other young people from similar backgrounds, that allowed me to heal from the trauma I experienced at home, in my neighborhood, and at school.

Music, dancing, and visual art were forms of celebration and healing in my home and community. However, as a result of limited access to art programs during my early school years, I did not have consistent practice or mentoring in any artistic discipline. Hip hop however provided a cultural base during adolescence from which I continued to practice visual art, music, writing, and improvisation as intuitive forms of expression and bonding in a community outside of my home. My tag, my style, and my raps were all ritual forms of communication between my peers throughout my teenage years and early twenties.

In my practice I leverage culture to provide access to intuitive and engaging music, visual art, dance, and other forms of expression. My talent in percussion comes from beat-boxing for the other rappers in my high school crew, but I learned it from scatting along with my father to his favorite jazz tunes. I validate these types of music education experiences in my practice; and replicate them through activities designed for students who may not fall into traditional categories, but who have experienced art making through more colloquial means.

My practice: ALT-City and the Mobile Music Box

The ALT-City new music ensemble and the Mobile Music Box best exemplify my approach to creating greater access to the arts. Through directing ALT-City I have negotiated space for students' influences, compositions, improvisations, and interdisciplinary collaborations in the otherwise didactic culture of Chicago Public Schools and the eighty-year-old All City Performing Arts program. As creator of the Mobile Music Box, I teach others how to make music intuitively, and instruments cheaply; as well as engage the public in improvised music production and performance.

ALT-City is purposefully inclusive of self-taught and intuitive musicians, new and diverse genres, non-traditional techniques, and unconventional equipment. We have featured an electronic mini-ensemble, including several smartphone and tablet musicians playing music through apps. ALT-City is also the only ensemble in All-City that performs student-written compositions. In 2013, “Music Sets Me Free,” written by

the inaugural ALT-City ensemble, was arranged for orchestra and performed by the entire cast as the finale of the spring showcase. Each year more students perform original works at auditions demonstrating how eager students are to have their ideas validated. This year, high school freshman, McKennan Campbell, served as student musical director for ALT-City, writing and arranging music for the spring show.

Chicago ALT-City 2015 Student Electronic Mini-Ensemble led by Aquil Charlton

The idea for the Mobile Music Box came from a strong desire to make music as accessible to communities in Chicago as possible; which is why I decided to incorporate making simple music instruments from recycled materials and public music production as the primary activities. I also used call-and-response songs, rhythm exercises, and rhyming games to engage the audience's intuitive capacity for music and employ culturally relevant activities. Through the "Street Studio" public music production activities I also hope to create positive interventions in neighborhoods where violent activity often detracts from the residents' sense of safety.

Is art safe and accessible to everyone?

The issues of safety and accessibility are not as clear-cut as they may seem, but are critical factors in a child's ability to fully engage in the creative process. Accessibility is not simply a matter of the number of art classes available in schools, which are already unevenly distributed in most school districts; but of how those classes and schools embrace diverse populations. Children's creative expression must be validated by others, and supported both in and outside of school.

Children and youth already struggle with feeling validated because of systemic ageism. But poor and/or queer children of color face additional systemic oppressions, resulting in even less support than their more privileged counterparts. In order to create access to the arts for all children we must acknowledge and counteract the systemic issues that interfere with the creative process.

There are many examples of how social barriers like poverty and racism affect children's engagement in the arts. Those who cannot afford private lessons or instruments do not have access to training or practice. Youth from cultures that are marginalized in society will not feel safe to produce art that is authentic. Students who do not find security in their immediate environment, or who have limited sustainable options ahead of them, will have difficulty fully engaging in an artistic practice because that requires support on all levels. Unfortunately, many students attend schools where the culture reflects the barriers they face in society. Arts and cultural activities provide important healing spaces for these and many other young people, which is why I believe they should be as accessible as possible, especially in neighborhoods and schools where there are existing gaps in opportunities to learn and practice art.

Point of View: Working for Equity Pedagogy Among Immigrant Children

A Teacher Embraces Arts Integration

Susan Gay Hyatt and Kari Ratka

What makes up a person's identity? Is it our physical make-up? Our stories? Our family, culture, or heritage? How can we explore who we are and what makes us a community as well as unique individuals? At The Conservatory School in North Palm Beach, Florida, Kari Ratka teaches visual art to a diverse population of K-8 students. The Conservatory School is part of the School District of Palm Beach County, which is "the 11th largest in the continental US and the 5th largest in the state of Florida with 185 schools, serving 176,724 (Total K-12) students who speak 150 languages/dialects" (School District of Palm Beach County, 2016). As a way to engage students and honor their diverse backgrounds, Ratka uses arts integration as a pedagogical approach to

teaching the students to write original stories about their culture, identity, and heritage and then incorporate those stories into the creation of a piece of visual art.

The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts defines arts integration as “an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both” (Silverstein & Layne, 2010). Ratka’s use of arts integration enables her to teach both literacy and a visual art skill while honoring students’ individuality; this approach is uniquely suited to teaching in a multicultural classroom, as students are able to bring their own narratives into a creative environment and share them with peers in a way that honors who they are and where they came from.

In addition to a dedication to arts integration as pedagogy, The Conservatory School at North Palm Beach also embraces an *inquiry-based approach* as an entry point for a unit of study. According to Ratka, this involves exploring universal human themes, such as *identity, home, love, dark vs. light, nature, and innovation*, and then “stepping back to allow the students to collaboratively make meaning.” Ratka further notes, “looking for that authentic spark” to engage the students in a topic they find intrinsically motivating gives the students “voice and choice,” as it is the students who lead the lesson by asking questions, conducting research, and framing their knowledge. In a multicultural classroom, allowing the students to lead through an inquiry-based approach opens the classroom into a dynamic environment in which the students have agency: their perspectives are important and reflected in the communal body of knowledge. According to Ratka, her students work together to plan, create, share, and discuss classroom projects in a “safe, creative environment where students are hearing the ideas of others and are encouraged to share their own.”

The Conservatory School at North Palm Beach uses the students’ artwork to reach into the community by displaying work in spaces outside the classroom; they use Twitter and other social media to share with other educators, community members, and parents, and they also host a monthly “farmers’ market” in which the students sell their artwork and vegetables they’ve grown in their school’s community garden to the public. By



“Fingerprint Portrait” from a 7th grader
The Conservatory School @ North Palm Beach
Student work reprinted by permission.

displaying the students' work in forums outside the classroom, the school is honoring the unique contributions from each of their students.

"You Be You" Project. "At TCS we celebrate the differences that make us unique individuals – the way we each look, act, and think isn't like anyone else in our school! That's what makes us even more beautiful as we 'swim together.' In the Art Lab, TCS students fell in love with the story of Adri, the fish from Linda Kranz's book, 'You Be You.' They took the challenge to design a fish that was different and special, just like them, Our sandbox contains nearly 350 one-of-a-kind painted rock fish that are amazing alone, and even better TOGETHER!" (Kari Ratka, Visual Art Teacher)

Implications for Teachers

Equity pedagogy is an approach to teaching that draws on students' real life experiences and reflects their understanding of the world around them (Chin, 2013). By letting students decide what is important to them and what they want to know, the teacher develops "buy-in" from the class at the outset of the lesson unit. A student-led, rather than teacher-led, learning environment can open opportunities for students to bring their own experiences into the classroom, creating space for students with diverse backgrounds to present their ideas and shape a project in ways that might be overlooked in a teacher-led environment.

In an arts-integrated classroom, the students' narratives and experiences are wound into the work of art. By using the artworks as "sites of knowledge, the texts for deconstruction," teachers and students can challenge "preconceived assumptions and stereotypes about categories of art and what is considered art" (Chin, 2013). In this way, the students become the teachers, validating their cultural identity, challenging the norm, and gaining agency in the classroom as they make meaning of the world around them.

By presenting student artwork in forums outside the classroom, the school becomes an agent in creating a dialogue with the community. In sharing and honoring students' artwork, the students' views of themselves and

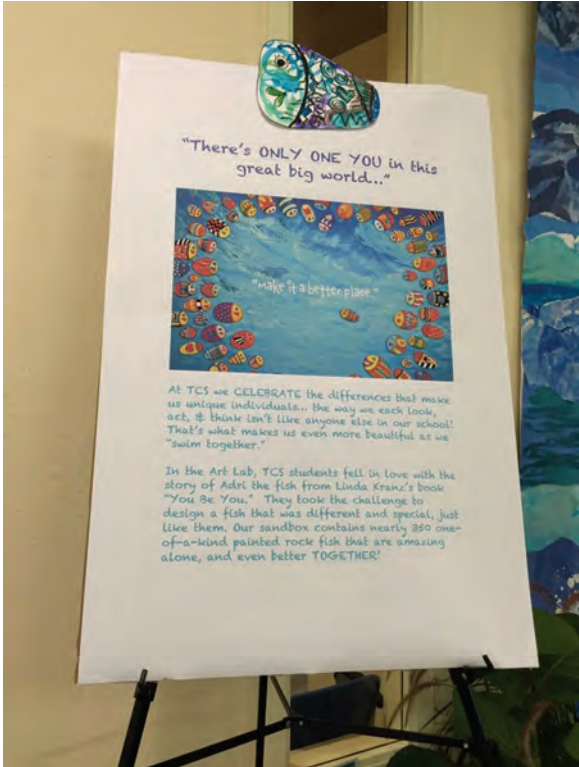


Figure 15.20a



Figure 15.20b

the world around them become part of a larger conversation about what is the norm, challenging assumptions and opening space for better understanding of those around us.

Point of View: Community Teachers in Action

Jeanette McCune, Adjoa Burrowes, Sharmaine Chamberlain, Cheryl Foster, Terry Thomas

Two arts specialists and two teaching artists were brought together by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Director of District of Columbia School and Community Initiatives, Jeanette S. McCune to discuss their work. Because personal voice and expression is an essential element of powerful arts education, they tell their stories in their own words. There are three pedagogical themes that become clear from this conversation. The first is the notion of **maker spaces** for young people to explore, create, and speak up. If we envision classrooms as such spaces, we are teaching children to be citizens in a democracy in an intentional and deliberate way. Second, the group responded to the notion of **audiences** for students' work beyond the classroom coupled with authentic art making that contributes to positive change in the world. Pedagogy built around real projects that move beyond the teacher as sole arbiter transforms learning. Finally, these educators offer their advice for **teachers in communities** who want to make a difference. First, they introduce themselves.

My name is Terry Thomas and I'm a visual arts teacher at Seaton Elementary. This school helps define who I am as a teacher. Seaton is a very diverse school and I'm proud to be a teacher here because I learn as much from my students as my students learn from me. I like working with teaching artists because it allows me to bring someone with different expertise than what I have. Art is a way to reach all students and there are some students who perform so well academically, but art gives the students who may not perform as well a chance to be heard and to be heard through their art. Art levels the playing field.

I am Sharmaine Chamberlain and I am the music teacher here at Seaton, native Washingtonian and a mom myself with a first grader who attends Seaton, so a lot of what I do when I'm teaching, I think about him. What sort of music education do I want him to have? I want him to have the best so I definitely try to give the best to my students as well. I have worked with teaching artists over the years and it's such a wonderful experience. A lot of times they're used to working with just the classroom teachers but they enjoy working with another music teacher too and that collaboration is so great. I learn so much from them.

I am Adjoa Burrowes and I am a practicing artist and an educator. I have worked as a teaching artist with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for the past 8 years. I come to my teaching through the lens of a visual artist as well as a writer and illustrator. I think that everybody has a story they can tell – it's about creating stories, narratives – sometimes visual and sometimes written. It's so powerful – giving them that space to express themselves.

I am Cheryl Foster, an artist and art educator from the United States. I design and implement visual arts workshops for children of all ages through the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. For the past five years, I have tried to concentrate on designing programs that build character and force children to think about the hardships of others and what small things they might do to make someone's life path a little smoother.

Maker Spaces: Where Students Show the World Who They Are

What are the new ways of envisioning teaching in and through the arts? These teachers and artists describe the importance of **maker spaces** for students to explore traditional arts media as well as digital arenas for creating. The new focus on “maker spaces” (Peppler and Bender, 2013) for adults in the workplace is also a compelling and vibrant concept for artists, teachers and children. Cheryl Foster, Teaching Artist: *We are looking for spaces to display the work of our children. We can have a corner, but we deserve more than a corner. If they have exposure to that technology, this will make them workplace-ready. And yes, I love the finger painting and getting my hands dirty, but we need maker spaces; when they graduate, they should be able to slip right into those jobs.* The Reggio Emilia early childhood notion of an *atelier*, or artists’ studio (Edwards, Gandini, Forman, 1993) at the center of a school is not far from the contemporary maker spaces in which children see artists do what they do and work right alongside them. Cheryl continues: *We need spaces for children to meet real artists and learn that, “Hey, you can buy your groceries, your toothpaste and a car with a career as a professional artist.” But how else would they know if they weren’t part of our programs? We need artists to come in and tell them, “This is what I do.”*

Cutting-edge maker spaces do not negate the value of traditional instruments, media, and arts experiences that arts specialists and artists bring to learning. Sharmaine Chamberlain, Music Teacher: *We need artists coming in and doing the traditional arts too . . . people singing opera, playing the piano. Our kids are just not used to that. Kids are more used to the digital music, hearing things on their computers. They are not used to hearing a piano or a violin.*

The idea of Space is not just a physical concept for these teacher artists. It is also a framework for conversation that grounds their practice. Accessible learning spaces in and through the arts also include plenty of opportunity for talk. Perhaps surprisingly, these artist teachers all confirmed the power of making art collaboratively and then talking about it. Terry Thomas, Visual Arts Teacher explains: *It is important for us to start children collaborating at a very young age. When they collaborate, they learn how to work together, how to listen and respect one another’s views and then they take that from school to home, from home out into the community and from the community out into the world. They are actually learning to be global citizens when they start here at age 3.*

There is an agency about this conversation that focuses on giving students voice and choice, not only in the language arts or social studies classes, but in the art room: Terry asserts, *These children are citizens and they learn at a very early age whether what they have to say is important or not. . . whether what they have to say is respected or not. When they realize that what they have to say is important, then they say more.*

The pedagogy of arts education that incorporates collaboration, discourse and consciously giving students voice requires teachers to be aware of who their students are and how the arts can be a safe space to help them build enough confidence to speak and listen to each other.

Arts teachers, as these educators explain, can help young people move beyond one-word answers: Terry Thomas, Visual Arts Teacher: *We as educators have to build children’s confidence from a very early age. Confidence in talking about art making, the synthesis of art making. We do a lot of the Thinking Routines (Harvard Project Zero, 2007). When children are first introduced to those thinking routines, they may not see a lot, but as this becomes a routine, those one-word answers become sentences.*

Cheryl Foster, Teaching Artist: *We have one-word young people, we have soft-spoken young people, and we have young people who will just not say anything at all. . . just won’t. If you refuse to accept a one-word answer, then they have to move forward and eventually they will, but it takes practice. Sometimes it’s about confidence and sometimes it’s about discipline. Some children have been taught to be quiet.*

With an art project, it’s not only doing the project, but it’s also about talking about it. How did you arrive at these decisions? Make it your own, as they say on American Idol. You can give them lines and patterns and then you say, “So now what are you going to do? Take it that next step.” “I saw what this artist did. Now what are you going to do?” “The swirls go this way, but how else can swirls go?” You have to just keep on, keep on, and in the end, they will talk.

Kennedy Center Arts Administrator, Jeanette McCune says it all: *The arts classrooms are the one place where it can be truly a democratic education – the one place where you can contribute. The word ‘citizen’ is really powerful – children being able to understand and articulate what their process is in learning and making justifications on their own. It’s not about being right or wrong; it’s about being critical enough and being given the space to do that kind of work.*

Audiences and Agency for Community Connection

Arts should be about inclusion. They *should* be about connections, to the community, to each other, connecting even to other countries. It’s the reach that’s important. Art is power. You are starting with nothing and you’re creating something. You don’t get that everywhere (Adjoa Burrowes, Teaching Artist).

Building confidence in students’ sense of self is part of what it means to be a teacher. Performance spaces afford children amazing opportunities to get applause and feel somehow affirmed: *Maybe you won’t get “Good job!” from your teacher, but you stand in front of an audience and perform and those people don’t have a nickel in that dime and they still say, “Good job!” You can physically see the impact – shoulders back, chin high, stepping a bit lighter. You can just see it. If I’m not getting it at home or in school, if I can find a place to shine, I will shine. But if there’s no reason to shine, I will just stay in my corner* (Cheryl Foster, Teaching Artist).

Beyond providing those opportunities to perform, what do good teachers do? Cheryl Foster, Teaching Artist, offers one idea: *I try to remind them, “How do you feel right now? Think about what you did to get that feeling. And you can get it again. You deserve that for the rest of your life.” If they can remember how special it felt, then they’ll look for more opportunities to be special.* Good teachers help students remember what it feels like to be special.

We as educators have to search for those special experiences for our children. If I had to tell a preservice teacher one thing that would be it. You have to go out into the community and seek out these special experiences (Terry Thomas, Visual Art Teacher).

Teaching artists and their artist teacher colleagues in schools provide a lens on being a community teacher (Murrell, 2001) who is engaged, not just with a class of students, but with the school, neighborhood and community. *Teachers first need to know their community; my job is to get my children engaged with their community, whatever my discipline* (Terry Thomas, Visual Art Teacher).

Audience for students’ work then becomes redefined to include unlikely candidates who are more like participants in the learning than passive recipients. Teaching Artist Adjoa Burrowes speaks to the importance of making learning relevant for children and design learning around issues that students can relate to in their community and their world. *There are so many issues – what are the things that are important to **them**? Arts principles and techniques are not enough especially in today’s world. You have to deal with things that they can feel.*

Teaching Artist Cheryl Foster describes three projects in which her students connected with communities and their world. Students wrote a script and filmed a video under her guidance about bullying. As they were working on the project, they realized that they themselves were being bullied. *When someone shakes you down in the lunch line, you are being bullied!* That was an unexpected outcome for the project as students realized the ways in which bullying was happening right under their noses. The video representation heightened their awareness as well as the knowledge of their peers who viewed the end product.

Foster led a project after the major Haiti earthquake in 2010. When the students saw the aftermath on TV, they noticed that there were children their age who were walking around in Port-au-Prince on concrete and steel with no shoes. She bought \$7 shoes and the children painted Haitian voodoo, flags and other cultural imagery on the shoes and sent them to Haiti. *You know, they can be little Einsteins and not feel,* she observed.

In another project, fifteen and sixteen year olds researched the abandoned baby problem in seven countries (India, Malaysia, Canada, Australia, the United States and South Africa). They wrote poems, rap songs, and lullabies to babies who had succumbed to or survived abandonment. The students then painted international symbols on infant onesies. They sent the onesies to organizations that cared for abandoned babies in the seven countries. *It was the students’ way of showing compassion for the babies and offering thanks to those who hold them close,* Foster noted.



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Walk a Mile in My Shoes
Seaton Elementary School Haiti Earthquake Science
Cheryl Foster, Teaching Artist, Terry Thomas Visual Art Teacher



Onesies: For Abandoned Babies around the World
Wilson Elementary School
Cheryl Foster, Teaching Artist

As our conversation came to a close, these arts teachers offered some pieces of advice for teachers, beginning and experienced. These tidbits speak to a pedagogy that is grounded in human connection as well as engaged intellectual learning.

- *Books are good, but you have to have heart too. You have to be able to connect with the kids on a human level (Sharmaine Chamberlain, Music Teacher).*
- *Think about the baggage that they bring with them every day. I have children in my class who are the caretakers of the family. Teachers need to be sensitive to that. They need to know that they have to look for those things (Cheryl Foster, Teaching Artist).*
- *Look for artists in the community. There is a tendency for art teachers to just look at the textbook artists. But it's important to allow the students to make a connection with someone who is right in their neighborhood (Adjoa Burrowes, Teaching Artist).*
- *Art is a connector. Look for those connectors that can be made with the students and with their parents. Here at this school, we serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner. So we have big connections with the children. But we also have the chance to make strong alliances with the parents. They trust us with their children (Terry Thomas, Visual Art Teacher).*

Conclusions

The stories of these arts educators and teaching artists suggest that quality teaching in dance, drama, music, visual art is closely connected to the notion of community and making curricular and interpersonal connections. Their work with young people also challenges our thinking about access and voice as an integral part of the learning process. Equity pedagogy at its best pushes our expectations of what it means to learn and then express understanding. Duncom writes, “The products of most art education remain within the classroom or the hallway display cabinets, for which there are powerful reasons, including the expectations of parents, fellow teachers, and school administrators, as well as the students themselves, that art is an innocuous subject without a social agenda.” (p. 359–360). These educators suggest that art making, choreography, original digital plays by children and young people are much more than that. They teach us that curriculum content, albeit art or any other content area, is not separate from culture, but rather substantively embedded in it.

But how do we learn to teach and continue to teach in these ways? First, our chapter contributors underscore the need to experience this pedagogy first hand. Visual art teachers, Terry Thomas: *They (preservice teachers) need to see this work. They have to see what this work looks like. Young teachers need to see arts teachers and teaching artists in action. If they see it, they can do it.* Field experiences and classroom observations, provided by university programs, sought individually by prospective teachers, or arranged as cross-school exchanges, expose teachers to partnership programs and teaching artist residencies. Arts Administrator Jeanette McCune claims that leaders in a school need to provide the environment and support for such work with children, their families, and communities. Teachers, particularly collectively in teams or grade levels, can educate administrators by documenting the powerful work that students do when encouraged to express their skills and their points of view through art works. Principals and their administrative teams also need to see the work that their young charges can do.

A final thought. Arts education, and indeed all learning, is also about play. Artist teachers introduce the casual observer to all kinds of playful pedagogies that “engage directly with young people’s emotional investments . . . and with their sense of agency” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 314). Maxine Greene (2010) echoes this notion when she calls for a “pedagogy of imagination” (p. 30). Because when children play, they are engaging, emotional, imagining, investing and enacting. Such learning environments are joyful spaces in which everyone listens, speaks, practices, and participates.

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