Arts Learning Practice and Policy: Best Practices Rubric

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I. Types of Organizations:

Organizations on the national, state, and local levels participate in shaping the landscape of arts learning in the United States. Although not exhaustive, these organizations may include the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), state arts agencies (SAAs), local arts agencies (LAAs), school systems, and community organizations (Galligan, 2001, pp. 9-10; National Endowment for the Arts, 2002, pp. 12-20).

II. Types of Education Programs:

Typical education programs include K-12 arts education, after-school and community programs, as well as higher education programs for training teaching artists – each provide opportunities for students to engage in arts education while simultaneously increasing the supply and demand for the arts (Zakaras & Lowell, 2008, pp. 27-29).

III. Related to Mission/Education/Audience Development:

As mentioned by Wesler (2003), “it is essential for the local arts agency or arts organization to first determine what its values towards education in the arts are based on or, rather, its mission in the community” (p. 162). The mission provides the arts organization with a guiding principle for developing arts education programs that avoid “pitfalls,” such as targeting funding streams without a concrete purpose or direction (Wesler, 2003, p. 162).

IV. Sustainability:

The sustainability of arts education requires that arts organizations and partners increase the supply of arts programming but, more importantly, the demand for participating in the arts (Rabkin, Reynolds, Hedberg, & Shelby, 2011; Zakaras & Lowell, 2008). In order to contribute to the sustainability of these programs, arts organizations and funders must address the “material conditions” of teaching artists, such as “making a living, acquiring health insurance, establishing job security, and being validated in both of their worlds – education and the arts” (Rabkin, Reynolds, Hedberg, & Shelby, 2011, pp. 21).

V. Resources:

The Oregon Children’s Theatre provides an example of a study guide that integrates arts learning with core curriculum subjects (Sweeney, 2006). School systems and other educational organizations can take advantage of additional resources, such as this study guide, that provide teachers supplemental material to increase students’ interest through interactive activities and encourage a range of literacy skills and knowledge in other subjects, such as History, English, and Science (Sweeney, 2006).
VI. Partners:

As previously mentioned, a range of organizations as partners on the national, state, and local levels is necessary “for curriculum development, allocation of time in the school day, involvement of community organizations, advocacy and outreach, and funding” (Galligan, 2001, p. 9-10). In particular, the National Endowment of the Arts has collaborated with federal, public, and private partners and supported state arts agencies by providing and expanding opportunities in the arts, including opportunities for professional development. (National Endowment for the Arts, 2002, pp. 12-20)

VII. Planning and Implementation Process:

An important aspect of planning and implementing arts education programs is the presence of “informed leadership” within an organization and collaborative partnerships, which include school and community personnel, who provide support and the knowledge to sustain programming (Wesler, 2003, p. 164).

VIII. Teacher Supports/Professional Development:

Community-based organizations (CBOs) include a variance of adult administrative and volunteer staff members, who may not have a concrete professional background in one particular area (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 20) Due to this range of experience and possible inexperience with managing CBOs, supporters such as local education funds (LEFs) provide continual and relevant professional development and training opportunities for staff members that address the needs of specific CBOs (McLaughlin, 2000, pp. 20, 22).

IX. Theories of Learning:

According to Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (1999), participation in highly intensive arts programs cultivates “habits of mind,” including “elaborative and creative thinking, fluency, originality, focused perception and imagination” (p. 43). These cognitive capacities encourage students to build technical art skills that can be applied across academic subjects as well as the students’ course of life-long learning (Winner & Hetland, 2007, p. 30).

X. Assessment and Outcomes:

According to McLaughlin (2000), “learning and development requires ongoing feedback… that challenge youth, stretch their skills and experience, and return benefits of pride and personal growth” (p. 12). The assessment process for a community organization, however, is reciprocal – also understanding how the organization itself is effectively developing programs that incorporate the interests of youth (McLaughlin, 2000, pp. 13-14).
XI. Populations Served in Types of Arts Learning Programs and Organizations, and Implications:

According to Rabkin, Reynolds, Hedberg, and Shelby (2011), participation in the arts has steadily declined since 1982, negatively impacting African American and Latino students, who have experienced the sharpest decline in the availability of arts education programming (p. 32). However, according to Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (1999) “arts learning has a more significant effect on low-income student achievement than it does on the academic performance of more privilege students” (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2008, p. 21).

XII. Models:

a. Orange Show Center for Visionary Art
b. Cool Culture

XIII. Research that Supports:

For the final project, Emily and I will propose an interactive public space that will utilize technology to develop and implement structural pieces as educational tools. In order to complete this project, we will consider research that enhances our understanding of new media as a part of education and a method for engaging students to participate, such as programs that increase new media literacies and a badge system to indicate achievement of learning objectives (Jenkins & Bertozzi, 2007; Mero, 2008).
References


