

Team Assignment 2 – Meredith, Erin, Marcus, & Zach

Section I

As mentioned in “Revitalizing Arts Education Through Community-Wide Coordination” and “Acts of Achievement: The Role of Performing Arts Centers in Education,” there are specific goals for implementing arts learning programs. Bodilly, Augustine, and Zakaras (2008) discuss four, main purposes of arts learning, including developing distinct skills for creating art, “build[ing] artistic appreciation and outlook,” increasing achievement in other subjects, and strengthening human development in children and adolescents (pp. 12-13).

These main goals are reflected in art education programs and residencies. According to Rich, Polin, and Marcus (2003), performing arts organizations typically provide three types of residences, one of which will be discussed in the following paragraph (p 12-13). The first program – performance residencies – focuses on “spark[ing] students’ interest in the arts” while understanding the progression of a storyline and roles as characters. Additionally, the authors describe another type of program – in-class residencies, which aim to “develop students’ knowledge and skills in the arts and/or help them learn other subject areas through the arts” (Rich, Polin, and Marcus, 2003, p. 12). These residencies specifically focus on bridging the arts with increasing cognitive capacities and motivation (p. 12).

Rich, Polin, and Marcus (2003), however, provide an additional learning outcome for arts-based programs through professional development residencies. These reflect similar outcomes for the previously mentioned residences; however, they are directed toward elevating teaching skills (pp. 12-13). These provide workshop and planning opportunities for teachers to expand their “appreciation and knowledge of the arts” by collaborating with various arts organizations as well as school and teaching personnel (p.12). Through these opportunities, teachers also enhance their abilities to instruct and appropriately guide students through lesson plans (p. 12).

As an example of a residency, combining parts of a performance and in-class residency, the Oregon Children’s Theatre provides study guides to encourage student participation in theater productions. Through performances, this particular study guide, “The Red Badge of Courage,”

focuses on enhancing knowledge in subjects other than art. Students are instructed through a series of class activities, which contribute to the actual performance of the play. These class activities include group discussions, readings, practices, and reflections of the story, all of which encourage learning in English, Science, and especially History.

In implementing this type of program, arts organizations and artists require support from experienced teaching and school personnel, who understand how to develop and apply age-appropriate curriculum and, in this case, are familiar with subjects outside of the arts.

Additionally, “finding space and time for arts instruction” is crucial for supporting a successful education program (Bodilly, Augustine, and Zakaras, 2008, p. xvi). The facilities, in particular, are necessary for this type of program, which uses props and requires storage space, especially for the final, in-class museum project.

Although the guide provides a great example of an arts education program, there is room for improvement. One includes mentioning the age level for this type of performance and education program. Such activities, which reference heroes such as Skywalker, Frodo Baggins, and Achilles, suggest that this study guide is targeted toward adolescents (Sweeney, 2006, p. 3). In order to accommodate younger children, study guides, such as these, should provide alternative resources and instructions on how to adjust the curriculum so that it is age-appropriate.

Section II

The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts in Hartford, CT has been recognized twice by the NEA for its education work. It's flagship program is called PARTNERS, which integrates the arts into social studies and language arts classes to "improve literacy, enhance self-confidence, encourage creativity, and foster understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures" (Rich, Polin, and Marcus, 2003, p. 34).

The program exemplifies several of the items on the Arts Learning Checklist for teachers and artists presented in *Acts of Achievement*. These two groups meet in advance of the program and work together to plan the residency. We can presume that they also clarify their expectations and go through the "reality check" discussion mentioned in the report. The deep integration of the arts into the curriculum and the preparatory lessons that teachers present before the residency

allow them to make the most of the experience. Lesson outlines and activity guides support the residency. Teachers participate in the residency and go through all the activities that the children will as part of the planning process. The description also says that the Center also supports both the teachers and teaching artists through professional development opportunities.

It's harder to assess the degree to which this program adheres to the guidelines for arts organization and school coordinators because this aspect of the program is not in the description. It does say that the program incorporates evaluation. The current website for the program, ten years after the release of the Acts of Achievement report, does not list documented improvements in literacy scores or graduation rates linked to the program. Perhaps there is more evidence of the program's academic impact, but we would expect to see such improvement promoted by the organization.

The checklist also urges arts learning programs to make themselves visible to the community. Bushnell does this through performances and through the student exhibits in the lobby of the center. The program also is not just about "making art." Its goals relative to understanding and appreciation of other cultures means that it is preparing students for aesthetic experience. This follows the recommendations of Zakaras and Lowell (2008) for taking a discipline-based approach to arts learning.

Some examples of classroom lessons from the program's web page showcase how the residencies are not just, or even primarily, about performance:

- Seed Mosaics: connected to Math curriculum
- Leather Pouches: connected to Native American cultural curriculum
- Mask Making: connected to Recycling curriculum or Native American cultural curriculum
- Legend Writing: connected to Native American cultural curriculum
- Fish Kites and Storytelling: connected to Japanese cultural curriculum
- Poetry: connected to Language Arts curriculum
- Community Mandala: connected to Social Studies curriculum

- Middle School Civil War unit: includes poetry, cartooning, marionette making, music, Readers Theater, quilting, printmaking

It would be interesting to find out more about their high school curriculum. PARTNERS started as an elementary school program but is now a K-12 endeavor. Perhaps these high school programs do exist but are not just on the website. But this could mean that the program has not been as successful within high schools. Their website does say that they've begun a career development program with a high school through a nine-week residency that help high school students explore careers in the entertainment industry. Following best practices, they planned this program in close consultation with the school administrators. But this is a single school. With a commitment to education that goes back almost a hundred years, we expected to see more evidence of impact at the high school level.

Section III

For this assignment, we have created a fictitious performing arts organization, Arts & Co., a five-year old nonprofit organization based in Detroit, Michigan. The organization has been in existence since 2001, primarily focused on national touring musicals and plays. We currently offer minimal educational outreach through post-show performance talkbacks but are expanding our efforts, as outlined in the following program plan below.

Community Planning Process:

1. We plan to conduct a self-audit to recognize our organizational resources and capacities for bringing a program like this into our goals and strategic objectives. (Wester, p. 11, Bodilly, Augustine, Zakaras, p. 70).
2. We will assess need by conducting an environmental scan of the Wayne Co. school districts to learn of the opportunities and challenges that come with an initiative such as this (recognizing previous attempts to structure an arts education program in the area). Determining who this benefits will assist us in refining long term objectives and goals, which include: a) to spark student interest in the arts, b) to broaden student learning

through the arts across other subjects/curriculum, and c) to build teacher capacities to teach in, through, and about the arts (Rich, Polin, and Marcus, p. 16-18). Our short-term objectives include immediate involvement of teachers and administrators in planning and aligning Michigan education standards to our proposed initiatives, promotion of educational events and outreach for upcoming seasons from local arts organizations, and to develop, implement, present, and evaluate two new pilot arts programs within the Wayne Co. school system.

3. Finally, we propose a series of collaborative discussions, of a roundtable nature, that will include members of city council, the Wayne Co. Board of Education, relevant state government agencies, as well as arts organizations in the Detroit metro area that include educational outreach as part of their governing mission (Rich, Polin, and Marcus, p. 7). In order to implement a refined arts learning model for the school districts of Wayne Co., we hope to integrate the vision-based outcomes from our roundtable discussions with Art & Co.'s findings based on the environmental scan.

Partnerships:

Our community players will include representatives from Wayne Co. school districts, superintendents, principals, the district Arts Coordinator, parents, community educational foundations, local artists, and arts organizations from the Detroit community who currently have educational initiatives in place, such as MICA and The Michigan Craft Center (Wester, p. 16). Art & Co.'s organizational players include the Executive, Artistic, and Educational Program Directors; other key leaders include our Director of Development as well as our Director of Marketing/Public Relations for sustained funding and program visibility/awareness, respectively.

Issues & Concerns:

Obvious concerns at the public school level include lack of time, lack of space, and lack of resources available. Leadership turnover is also a concern, as it has been a problem historically in Wayne Co with regard to arts learning programs. We also need to consider philosophical and personality differences within our support network, recognizing that there are

numerous delivery mechanisms for arts education programming, underpinned by assumptions and possible misconceptions from the players involved (Rich, Polin, and Marcus, p. 19). This is especially pertinent in our case, given the history of arts education programming within Wayne Co. When education policy is modified, we recognize that there will be obstacles among our partners, programs, and evaluations. We anticipate these uncertain outcomes but will account for their change in direction by consistently evaluating and assessing the reach and impact of our initiatives (Bodilly, Augustine, and Zakaras, p. 82-91).

Program Descriptions:

1. **Peking Acrobats** (Elementary Schools) – We chose to sponsor this performing company to partner with our school districts, created as an on-site experience for students and teachers in Wayne Co. A similar program was implemented at Cal Performances in Berkley, California in 2013 to wild success within the Alameda School District, but we have slightly enhanced our program with Peking Acrobats. A general outline follows:
 - a. In the morning, performers from Peking Acrobats greet students and teachers at our theatre, conduct movement activities and introductory lessons in body awareness and physical space.
 - b. After lunch at the theatre, students engage in a historical discussion with their teachers about acrobatics, Chinese arts and culture, etc.
 - c. We lead students and teachers on a tour of the theatre to explore theatre practices and conventions.
 - d. We culminate with a matinee performance of the Peking Acrobats, followed by a short Q&A session with the cast and crew.
 - e. Study guides with pre-show and day-of activities and introductions will be supplied in advance to educators attending the field trip with their students.

2. **“A Day In the Life...”** (Secondary Schools) – This artist residency is a partnership with the Michigan Craft Center’s photographers and visual art instructors. This artist-in-residency program will take place at the beginning of the school year (August) and run until the term ends (December). A general outline follows:

- a. Students and teachers will brainstorm and create a storyboard/script of their “Summer of Fun”, laying out a narrative form, giving details about the author’s summer activities and experiences. These stories will consider and apply Michigan’s language arts state standards.
- b. Michigan Craft Center artists will lead exploratory work sessions once a week to assist students and teachers in bringing their storyboard to life through physical and digital representations (coloring, drawing, painting, crafting, and the use of point-and-shoot digital cameras/video recorders).
- c. Students will continue to work over the term with teachers and artists to assemble these memories, culminating in a public exhibition with our partner organization, MICA, the Michigan Institute of Contemporary Art, before the holiday season. This will accomplish two things: a) to give participants the opportunity to showcase their work in a professional public forum, and b) the chance to bring community awareness to these new and exciting initiatives made possible by Arts & Co.

Sustainability:

We seek to create long-term relevancy and impact among Wayne Co. participants, as well as arts education within the state of Michigan, with the following objectives:

1. Collaborate and develop partnerships and programming with multiple constituencies within our community (Bodilly, Augustine, and Zakaras, p. 86).
2. Allocate a portion of our allotted ZAP tax funding stream towards our education and outreach programs.
3. Develop an Educational Advisory Committee, made up of civic, artistic, educational, and community leaders to mitigate turnover within leadership positions (Bodilly, Augustine, and Zakaras, p. 83).
4. Increase the responsibilities of the Director of Development at Arts & Co. to include funding streams and sources dedicated to our new Education/Outreach Department.

References Cited

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