

TEACHING ARTIST GUILD



IS IT EASIER TO MAKE A LIVING AS A TA HERE, OR IN THE UK?

VICTORIA ROW-TRASTER GIVES THE
INSIDE SCOOP.

IS THE ARTS ED BUSINESS MODEL BROKEN??

A TA TRAVELED THE WORLD TO
INVESTIGATE.

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA

A BI-COASTAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE
STATE OF TA SUSTAINABILITY AND
WHERE WE GO FROM HERE.

THE SUSTAINABILITY ISSUE

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES AND VICTORIES BEHIND MAKING OUR FIELD ONE
THAT CAN PAY THE BILLS



Quarterly Magazine Staff:



TAG Executive Director:
Jean Johnstone



TAG Membership Director:
Kenny Allen



**TAG Quarterly Magazine
Administrative Associate:**
Caryn Cooper



**TAG Quarterly Magazine
Design Associate:**
Wendy Shiraki

National Advisory Committee:

- Glenna Avila (Los Angeles, CA)
- Eric Booth (Hudson River Valley, NY)
- Lindsey Buller Maliekel (New York, NY)
- Lara Davis (Seattle, WA)
- Kai Fierle-Hedrick (New York, NY)
- Jon Hinojosa (San Antonio, TX)
- Lynn Johnson (San Francisco Bay Area, CA)
- Nas Khan (Toronto, Canada)
- Tina LaPadula (Seattle, WA)
- Miko Lee (San Francisco Bay Area, CA)
- Ami Molinelli (San Francisco Bay Area, CA)
- Betsy Mullins (Miami, FL)
- Louise Music (San Francisco Bay Area, CA)
- Maura O'Malley (New Rochelle, NY)
- Nick Rabkin (Chicago, IL)
- Amy Rasmussen (Chicago, IL)
- Nicole Ripley (Chicago, IL)
- Sandy Seufert (Los Angeles, CA)
- Yael Silk, Ed.M. (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Jean E. Taylor (New York, NY)

Teaching Artists Guild is a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives.



THANKS

Teaching Artists Guild would not be possible without funding from these generous organizations:



Teaching Artists Guild is also made possible through the generous support of our members.

Sustainability in the Field

- SPRING 2018 -

Hello Teaching Artists,

This Spring, we take a look at efforts in our community of teaching artists to make this work more sustainable. How do we strengthen the arts education ecosystem we work within, creating careers instead of hustles, equitable access for those we serve, and living wages for our workforce of artist educators?

This issue takes us from the East Coast to the West, and all around the world. What issues do artists in participatory settings struggle with in other countries? What solutions have they found? I am personally excited to be able to showcase such a rich array of the work being done, not just in teaching artistry itself, but towards a better system for us all. We are doing good things, people. Way to go!

Spring is here, which means another round of pastel-colored seasonal sugar, blooming flowers, and hopefully, some sunshine. I head to Austin in April to a three-day Collective Impact convening for NEA-funded arts education projects, and I hope to learn even more about what others are doing to build strong systems of support for their teaching artists. Because without that, how can we have effective, excellent, equitable arts education to offer our communities?

We have many new contributors to welcome to this issue, and I hope next issue, you will be among them! Send us your ideas for articles, reports, updates from the field, and interviews. We are so thankful to our writers and contributors!

All my best,



Jean



Jean Johnstone
Executive Director
Teaching Artists Guild



CONTENTS



TEACHING ARTIST SUSTAINABILITY: PART ONE

Jean Johnstone discusses what TAs need around the country to make teaching artistry into a sustaining income source, with a focus on what's happening in the SF Bay Area to get there. **p.6**

TEACHING ARTIST SUSTAINABILITY: PART TWO

Lauren Jost continues the conversation on making teaching artistry a sustainable career, telling us what the conversation is like on the East Coast. **p.10**

ACCESSIBILITY AND TEACHING ARTISTRY

Three attendees to the The American Alliance for Theatre & Education's symposium on "Best Practices: Inclusive and Accessible Theatre" tell us about their experiences and takeaways from the symposium. **p.12**



THE LIFE CYCLE OF A TEACHING ARTIST

Victoria Row-Traster tells us her cross-Atlantic journey, including the surprises and difficulties of finding a way to pay the bills with her teaching artistry. **p.18**

ARTISTS AS 'SOLOPRENEURS'; SUSTAINABILITY AND SYSTEM CHANGE

Churchill fellow Susanne Burns shares insights from her travels in the US, the UK, and Australia. She discusses the links between sustainability, system change, and solopreneurship. **p.24**

THE ARTS INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

Daniel Kelin of Honolulu Theatre for Youth introduces us to an incredible new tool for the field. The Arts Integration Framework helps TAs conduct high-quality professional development in arts integration for classroom teachers. **p.32**

CITIZEN ARTISTS REPORTING FOR DUTY

Read about the exciting ArtistYear program, part of the AmeriCorps network. This program trains recent college grads to serve as full-time teaching artists in Title I schools. **p.40**

TEACHING ARTIST SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS IN THE SF BAY AREA

BY JEAN JOHNSTONE

Over the last several months, arts institutions, teaching artists, and arts education advocacy organizations have begun meeting. Their explicit objective: creating a more sustainable arts education ecosystem where they work and live: in the San Francisco Bay Area, and New York City. Because if you can't create a sustainable environment for this work to happen, then there's no arts education to advocate for in the first place!

We advocate for increased arts education at large, but how do we achieve that? We've got to have an environment which is oxygenated enough for the work to happen. Can teaching artists afford to live in the cities they work? Can arts organizations afford to hire them?

Our sector has been talking about many of the issues affecting teaching artists for many years, in various forums across the United States, at conferences large and small. TAG has grown to provide tools and resources to help the sector become stronger, such as our database of professional development offerings and the pay-rate calculator. Local initiatives to improve the system for the deployment of quality arts education have been undertaken by various cities and regions over the year, in San Antonio TX, and Chicago IL, and other regions too. Now, New York and the SF Bay Area region are focusing more concretely on solutions which bolster up the teaching artists, and arts organizations, which deliver these services. We hope that some of these initiatives and partnerships will provide real working models for how to improve the current system. If we all commit to change, we can do it together.

What have we got to do to make this work, WORK?

“AN ECOSYSTEM OF FULL SUPPORT MEANS THAT ARTS EDUCATION IS A CAREER, NOT A HUSTLE.” *-participant quote, Oakland Ca, 2017*

In 2013, TAG conducted a survey on the needs of teaching artists, and the resultant report, called the Teaching Artist Shared Benefits report, shaped what TAG was to become. The original concept for the research and report was that by building a coalition, Teaching Artist Hiring Organizations (we called them TAHOs), could share responsibility for the needs of their often shared workforce, the teaching artists. This could be primarily health benefits, but also retirement, and other forms of benefits, service, and security. TAG hired Next Step Consultants to conduct the research. Here are some of those findings:

- Teaching artists most frequently reported **WORKING WITH FIVE DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS** in any given week, usually in K-12 settings but also in preschools, colleges and universities, adult education programs, corporate settings, non-profit organizations, and the community at large.
- 41% of teaching artists we surveyed told us they perform their work as independent contractors, with **ONLY 14% CLASSIFIED AS W-2** employees. However, their work arrangements are varied: 45% are paid as both independent contractors and employees, depending on the project or work structure, which includes part-time, temporary and seasonal arrangements.
- Nearly half of our survey participants said they earned **UP TO \$10,000** in 2013 from their work as teaching artists.
- 61% said they received pay from one or more **JOB IN OTHER PROFESSIONS**. Several respondents commented the primary reason for working in another profession was to receive health insurance.

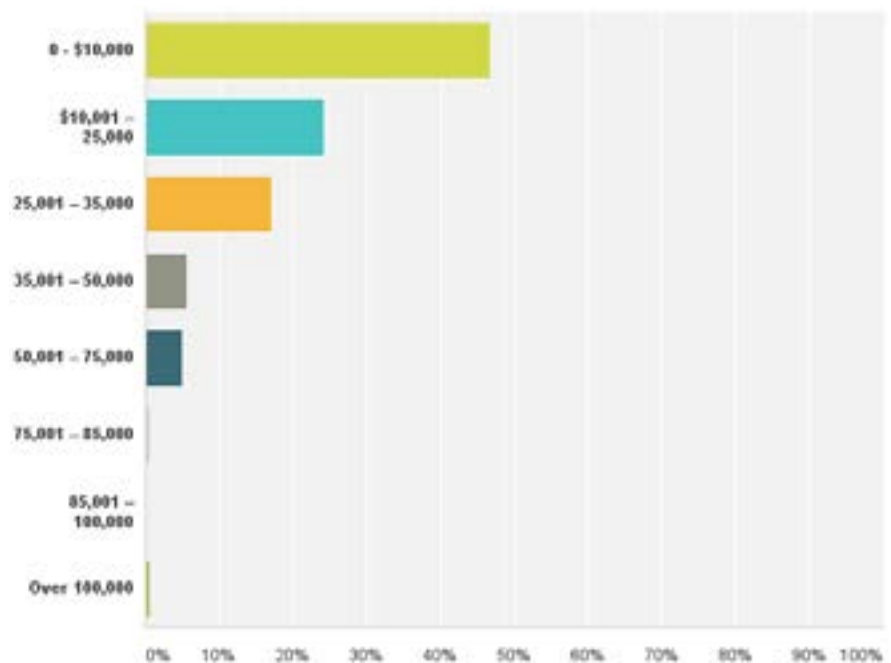
After the research was conducted, the following recommendations were made:

What Teaching Artists Need

- Steady income and a living wage
- Retirement security
- Affordable health insurance
- A way to manage scheduling and rescheduling of work, which has a huge financial impact (one of the top contributors to lack of regular compensation)
- Financial advisors (and other service providers) who know how teaching artists work

Q15 What was your annual compensation as a teaching artist in 2013?

Answered: 141 Skipped: 34



- Ways to raise awareness about their services
- Recognition as a profession through credentialing and certification

As the report was being researched, the Obama Administration passed the Affordable Care Act. This shifted the nature of the solutions we were seeking, and TAG went from envisioning the creation of a shared benefits model to provide healthcare, to looking for other ways to come up alongside that new-found availability with other need-

ed services, of which there were many expressed. A new model for support emerged.

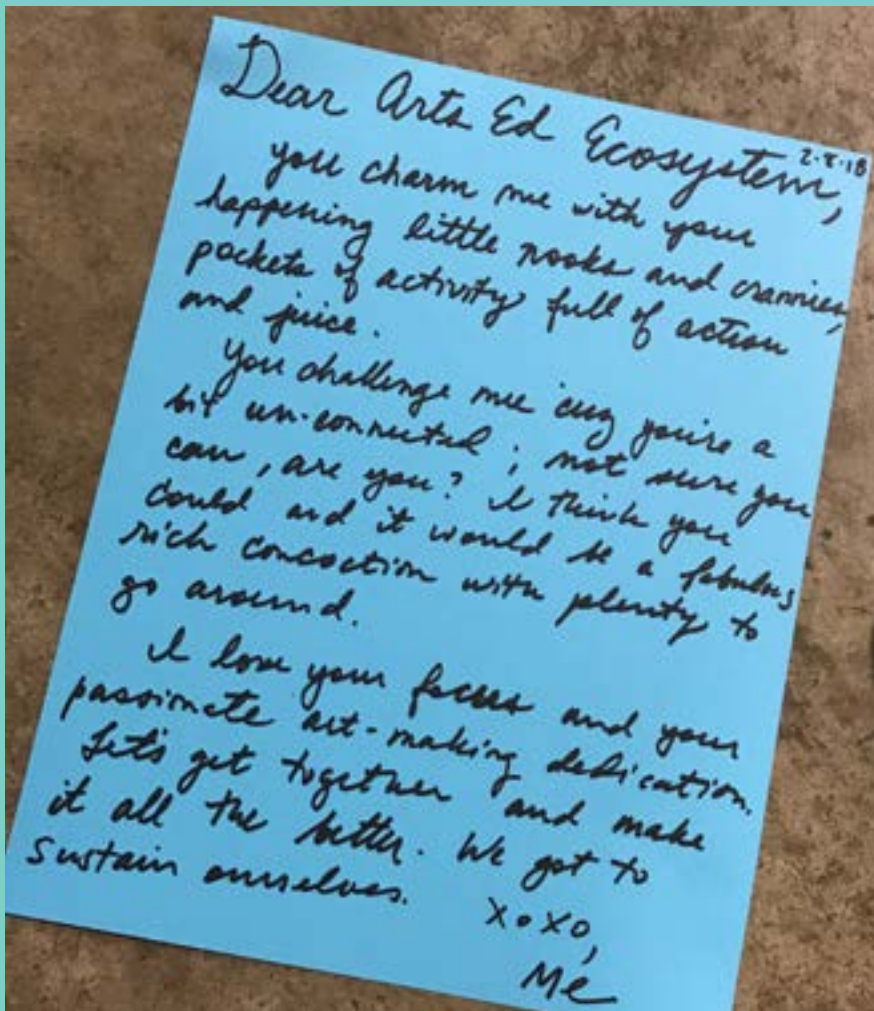
Flash forward to 2017!

Teaching Artists Guild has been offering reduced fee services for dental and vision care, financial advisors, and other services since the report's recommendations in 2014. It has been working to create tools and resources such as a database of professional development offerings across the US, and the pay-rate calculator to advocate for living wages

and to help organizations and individuals best plan. Yet a cohesive group of hiring organizations, teaching artists, funders, and arts education advocates had yet to coalesce in one location to tackle these issues together, to create working solutions for all, which could change a difficult environment to a more sustainable one.

Through a series of meetings in 2017 and 2018 in the San Francisco Bay Area, a coalition between organizations began slowly developing: Teaching Artists Guild, Arts Education Alliance of the Bay Area, and Emerging Arts Professionals, along with independent teaching artists and leaders of arts organizations. They led an event series aimed to get teaching artists thinking about and envisioning what a sustainable arts education ecosystem would look like to them, as well as looking at the issues arts organizations were having, and events bringing both groups together to build trust and camaraderie, to begin to work as a team.

Of the many issues, common themes began to quickly emerge. Not surprisingly,



they were nearly identical to the concerns and challenges expressed 4 to 5 years earlier.

- Low pay for teaching artists (and arts administrators, too)
- Lots of logistics with little support while working for multiple organizations: commuting, lesson planning, various rates and expectations, relationship-building, juggling the issues of working as an independent contractor or on a gig or part-time basis for multiple organizations
- Lack of career stability and/or discernable career ladder

- Unavailable or expensive professional development

From a hiring organization perspective, this looked like challenges in recruitment and retention. How best do you find new teaching artists? How do you keep current ones? What does quality teaching artistry look like, and how can we support it?

As well as identifying the issues, many creative solutions have been formulated. A new initiative to transform public education through the arts in overlapping Alameda County has also emerged,

and this new alignment towards strengthening the arts education ecosystem seems to become more and more tantalizingly in reach.

The team now meets to plan next steps. How do we work cohesively and collectively to lead this initiative? Can our work towards this model be funded? What can we learn from other efforts towards similar solutions?

We look forward to reporting back to you soon on the advances made here.

MORE ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE VERY NEXT ARTICLE! LAUREN JOST SHARES THE CONVERSATIONS HAPPENING IN AND AROUND NYC.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: JEAN JOHNSTONE



Jean Johnstone is the Executive Director of Teaching Artists Guild, and Interim Director of the Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership. She was the founding Director of Applied Theater Action Initiative, and developed and ran international multimedia programs for youth, programs for artists transitioning from homelessness, and incarcerated youth. She sits on the Policy Council for the California Alliance for Arts Education, and is a board member of the Francophone School. She holds her graduate and bachelor's degrees in Theater Arts from University of California, Santa Cruz, and certificates from the Moscow Art Theater and Eugene O'Neill Theater Center.

TEACHING ARTIST SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS IN NEW YORK CITY

New York City is home to the most diverse and professionalized workforce of teaching artists in the nation. We have nearly two thousand cultural institutions that employ thousands of teaching artists, robust professional networks and associations for teaching artists, and frequent professional development opportunities ranging from workshops and lectures to certification and master's degrees from world-class institutions.

And yet, for many teaching artists, there is still great uncertainty about the viability of **"TEACHING ARTIST" AS A LONG-TERM CAREER**. Is it worth investing in training and degrees and struggling through the entry-level hustle? What kind of standard of living can

a professional teaching artist expect? **CAN YOU SUPPORT A FAMILY AS A TEACHING ARTIST? BUY A HOME? RETIRE?**

For the last three years, the Teaching Artist Affairs Committee, part of the [New York City Arts in Education Roundtable](#) (a professional network of cultural institutions and individual arts education practitioners in NYC) has tackled the question of teaching artist compensation, benefits, and pay structures in order to better understand the reality of being a professional in our field. We surveyed teaching artists across the city, asking about how, and how much, they are paid by their various "gigs" and how teaching artistry fits into their overall income and work.

What we found was that the vast majority of teaching artists in New York City do not

earn a professional income for their work, despite holding degrees, training, and experience that in any other field would qualify them as a "professional." In fact, the **MAJORITY OF NYC TEACHING ARTISTS DO NOT EVEN EARN A LIVING WAGE**. You can read the full report and findings [here](#).

This winter, we have been hosting discussions with teaching artists and administrators about how to address this challenge. Administrators are grappling with how to budget for increases to teaching artist pay within their restricted grant funding and Department of Education contracts. Teaching artists are questioning how to negotiate raises for cost of living and tenure in a field too diverse to sustain an organized union.

These discussions have led to more questions than answers. Some frequently asked questions include:

- If organizations can't pay a higher rate, can they at least **GUARANTEE US A CERTAIN NUMBER OF HOURS?**
- What kind of **BENEFITS** can cultural institutions offer their part-time employees that can offset a low pay rate? Insurance? Retirement savings?
- How many jobs should a teaching artist be expected to have?
- Can organizations start to think of their **RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD AN ARTIST** as 25% of that artist's annual income rather than just "per gig"?
- What do organizations lose when low pay leads to high turnover? Can they save costs in hiring and training new artists by better compensating the artists who already work for them?
- When are funders invited into this conversation? Can **FUNDERS ADVOCATE** for including higher teaching artist wages as a prerequisite to funding?
- How do we deal with the fact that school schedules only allow teaching artists to work 40 weeks a year at most? How can employers support their staff during times that work is not available to build retention?
- **WHAT ARE WE SAYING TO STUDENTS** about the viability of a career in the arts if we are unable to pay our teaching artists living wages?

In order for our field to continue offering high level professional quality programs to our schools and family audiences, we need to support the professionalism of teaching artists not just in training, but in quality of life and career longevity. This discussion has only begun, and must include voices from all constituents – not just artists, but administrators, grant-writers, school partners, and funders. We look forward to continuing this conversation, in New York City and nationwide. Join us at the [Face to Face Conference](#) session on April 4, "Paying for Professionalism" if you're located in NYC. Although our conversation is currently rooted in the arts education landscape of NYC, we look forward to using this work as a means for advocating for the continued professionalism of teaching artists nationwide.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lauren Jost is a theatre artist and arts educator in New York. She is the Artistic Director of Spellbound Theatre, New York's award-winning theatre exclusively for the very young. Lauren can occasionally be found performing as a storyteller and puppeteer, but spends most of her time directing and producing Spellbound's public, school, and national touring theater productions for children ages 0-5. Lauren works as a Master Teaching Artist in schools, libraries and community centers around New York with organizations such as The New Victory Theater, Lifetime Arts, Brooklyn Public Library, and New

York University. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the Association of Teaching Artists and a committee member of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable's Teaching Artist Affairs Committee and an advocate for the professionalization of the teaching artist field.



AATE SYMPOSIUM REFLECTION

**BY BRANDON HUTCHINSON,
CHRISTOPHER TOTTEN,
AND EMILY BALDWIN**

Photo from Inclusive and Accessible Theatre Symposium.
Photo credit: Oscar Alvarez



**SNEAK
PEEK**

This article is a preview of our next issue, which will be on accessibility and inclusion. Got an article idea? Let us know!

Kenny@TeachingArtistsGuild.org

IN FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR,

The American Alliance for Theatre & Education (AATE) held a symposium on “Best Practices: Inclusive and Accessible Theatre.” After the symposium, we at Teaching Artists Guild heard the buzz of excitement from many teaching artists in our network who were energized and inspired by the deep and thoughtful content presented at the event. We asked three of the symposium’s attendees to share some of their reflections with us after the event. The result? Some incredibly powerful questions that YOU as a teaching artist can use to reflect on your own practice. Teaching artists are known for being especially interested in social justice work, and we hope that our readers will find these reflections and questions useful in making their teaching practice more inclusive and accessible.

BRANDON'S THOUGHTS



I like to look at the clouds. They have an irony to them: they look light like ideas we can manipulate with our imagination. In actuality, clouds are heavy masses, carrying a complexity that you wouldn't understand, unless you experience it. As I was headed to the AATE Symposium, I had time to look at the clouds and begin questioning the way I've interacted with the disabled community through Arts Education. I had time to remember the ways that I've experienced communities creating arts based activities for students with disabilities and the times they have not, and compared the two. "How have I provided enriching experiences, if I haven't taken into account all experiences?" Before engaging in the AATE Symposium space, I had to step into my space and reflect on my positioning within this community. Having worked with younger

students most of my career, I understand when and where I might have to act as advocate for persons who aren't usually able to advocate for themselves. As the symposium took its course and I started gaining more understanding of the community around, I had to change my perception and my thought process. "How do I as a person without disability support a platform that allows for the voices of people with disabilities to be heard?" is the question that started to build and grow as I experienced more and more of this Symposium.

I had to remember that my position as an able-bodied, cisgender Caribbean-American male, emerging into the world of Teaching Artistry within this communal space is to do something that I've done and been doing no matter what space I'm in: listen and think proactively. Reflecting on my youth and what it was like to grow up with a "stigma" attached to myself, it made me realize the similarities between Civil Rights equality and Equality and Inclusion for Disabled Persons, but I had to take that realization to a heightened sense of awareness to understand that even though there might

be a cross-point between the two battles, where as the fight for civil rights equality has been mainstreamed for decades, the basic conversation for how educators, administrators, and the government should treat or even discuss persons with physical or cognitive disabilities has been menial. All these thoughts led me to ask myself "Is what I'm doing enough? How do I do more with a community that's been told they can't?"

CHRISTOPHER'S THOUGHTS



First, a bit of context: I am an able-bodied artist, arts administrator and teaching artist. I'm aware of the intrinsic privilege that comes with being an able-bodied person. And that privilege is, in part, why we need to talk.

It was during a workshop at the 2017 NYC Arts In Education Roundtable's Face to Face conference that I was first introduced to the



Photo from Inclusive and Accessible Theatre Symposium. Photo credit: Oscar Alvarez

term *ableism*. Going into that workshop, I had questions: *What does that word really mean? In what ways is ableism present in the arts? How does ableism affect processes and practices across arts disciplines and the spaces in which the arts are administered and works of art are created?* I left that workshop with two thoughts: (1) I needed to change the way I view and talk about the arts, artists and artistic processes, and (2) I needed to rethink the ways in which I facilitate the arts in different spaces with varied populations. And those thoughts led to one big question: *Where and how do I begin this reframing process?* So, I decided to take action.

My aim was to find ways to become more informed and learn methods that would help me make space for people with disabilities to participate, create and lead conversations that would help expand the landscape of what art is, how art is presented and perceived, and how it is experienced for people of all abilities. To be clear, this desire to become more informed was not an attempt, as an able-bodied person, to just help include folks with disabilities. That would be a gross oversimplification. It was and remains a means of seeing, thinking and listening in new ways, and creating artistic content via a different perspective—one that could only serve to add layers to an already complicated and, for

some, uncomfortable conversation. It's important to remember that people with all abilities can make art and should have the opportunities to experience art in ways that celebrate their disabilities, or rather, their superpowers.

When I first read about AATE's symposium, "Best Practices: Inclusive and Accessible Theatre," I knew it was an event that I needed to attend. But, again, I had questions: *In what ways are the arts not inclusive or accessible across all populations? Is the use of the term "disability" acceptable in larger conversations around accessibility and inclusion? If the arts aren't already as inclusive as I perceive, what work needs to be done to break down those barriers? How can I help to create new pathways for access?* Furthermore, in what ways do I need to work to notice when and where inclusivity and access should be, but are not, available? It was only when attending this symposium, co-facilitated by artists and advocates with disabilities, that I realize the importance of stepping aside, making space and listening to new perspectives.

EMILY'S THOUGHTS



To authentically and intentionally engage in arts education is to constantly be asking yourself:

- A) *Who am I?*
- B) *What am I doing here?*

At AATE's Symposium I could answer easily enough:

- A) I am an able-bodied, white, cisgender, queer woman, and also an educator, artist, admin, human, and bagel-bred New Yorker.
- B) I am at this Symposium to learn everything I can to make all the work I do more inclusive.

It seems simple enough to spell it out, and yet, when I think about my role as an advocate for radical inclusion I end up barraging myself with a host of circular "buts" and "what-abouts." *Who am I to say any of these ideas? How do I talk about inclusion in a way that addresses*

real societal barriers without falling into a binary of 'disabled' and 'non-disabled'? Am I using the most respectful language possible? Am I framing all of these thoughts in a way that's actually centering able-bodied folks? Am I ultimately being a bad ally and making this all about me by spending so much time thinking about my positionality??!

Talleri McRae, the incredible Louisville-based artist/educator/disability scholar/accessibility specialist and the real brainpower behind the Symposium, offered a solution to this mindset. She began a day of panels, workshops, and discussions--as any good facilitator will--by establishing our Community Agreements for the weekend.

In her words:

1. ***We honor lived experience.*** We prioritize the authentic lived experiences of the disability community (especially if we identify as nondisabled) and embrace the curiosity required to explore the richness of disability culture.
2. ***We give participants space and privacy.*** We acknowledge the paradoxical truth for many of our students: their disability is their super-power, yet many want neither positive nor negative attention for it.
3. ***We assume respect and positive intent, while striving for accomodation-centered language.*** We connect with each other as learners with respectful intentions, and not focus on our words. When in doubt, we use accomoda-



Photo from Inclusive and Accessible Theatre Symposium. Photo credit: Oscar Alvarez

tion first language that respects the complex history of disability. Examples:

- Students who benefit from
- Students who use
- Patrons who request

As a bonus, here's the same idea put another way (as shared by Talleri during AATE's annual conference in August 2017):

"Accessible": *Environments (physical, social, informational environments can be made ACCESSIBLE)*

"Accommodation": *Legal word for RESPECTFUL CREATIVITY!*

Our Goal: *A welcoming space where WE are the experts on our space and ARTISTS/PATRONS/EMPLOYEES are the experts on themselves.*

It's impossible for me to do the work I do without acknowledging who I am and therefore why I have the experiences and the opinions that I do. The next step is to charge forward in the fight for better universal access with respect, openness, and courage.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Brandon Hutchinson is an emerging Teaching Artist whose focus is in Media Arts, using creative writing and storytelling as a medium. Brandon currently works as a Fellow for the New Victory Theater's Education Department with their School Engagement team and as a Teaching Artist for the Queen's Theater CASA (Cultural After-School Adventures) program at a Queens Middle School. Brandon is also a photographer and poet who uses the creativity of the two artforms to tell stories to communities in an inclusive and exciting way.

Christopher Totten is the Education Programs Manager / School Engagement at The New Victory Theater in New York City. As an Arts Administrator and Arts Educator, Christopher is dedicated to developing and providing educational theater experiences accessible to students of varying abilities, and developing and leading professional development opportunities for educators of varying abilities and skills. Christopher holds a Master's Degree in Educational Theatre from New York University and a BFA in Theatre Arts from the University of the Arts.

Emily Baldwin is an NYC-based educator/artist/administrator with a focus on early childhood and accessibility. She currently serves as a Community Educator for the Children's Museum of Manhattan and as Outreach Coordinator for Spellbound Theatre, NYC's only theatre for audiences ages 0-5. As a student at Northwestern University, Emily was the Artistic Director for Seesaw Theatre and a member of Team Education for Purple Crayon Players. In her spare time Emily bops around New York in search of good bagels and best practices in radical inclusion.



2018 AATE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

**AUGUST 1ST-5TH
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
WWW.AATE.COM/2018**

**EARLY BIRD DEADLINE APRIL 27TH
SPECIAL FIRST TIME ATTENDEE RATE \$175**



THE LIFE

OF A

ARTIST.



LIFE CYCLE

TEACHING

**ADAPTING TO LIFE
HERE & ABROAD**

Victoria Row-Traster interacting with kids before they see a show



I am a Teaching Artist – I share and teach my art – will you give me a job? This thought (or ambition) has crossed my mind many times over my 17-year career in Educational Theater, almost as many times as I have crossed the pond looking for an opportunity to fulfill that ambition. After graduating from The Central School of Speech and Drama, London, in the early 2000s, I relocated to New York City. Coming from the UK, my experience up to that point had been that the arts and theater were embedded deeply within the National Curriculum, a framework that ensures all state schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland provide a common, consistent curriculum to all students. In the schools in which I trained and taught, the administrators had recognized Process Drama as a valuable teaching tool for addressing the social and emotional issues that high school students face. So you can imagine my surprise when the only positions I was offered in the U.S. were for two hours a week in after-school programs... while incredibly rewarding - this was not going to pay my bills and I had to adapt.

I had wanted to return to graduate school for some time and was thrilled to be accepted into a Master's program at New York University. As I had already earned my teaching degree, I was interested in applying my theater skills within a range of community, educational, and college contexts. I enrolled in the Educational

Theater in Colleges and Communities program and developed new strategies for teaching and learning through drama, and explored creating theater for audiences of all ages.

While at NYU, I saw a job advertisement seeking something called a "Teaching Artist." I learned that this is an artist who is trained by a theater company to go into schools and teach residency programs built around the work in their theater. This sounded like an ideal way for me to continue teaching the subject I love in a school environment and work directly with professional artists. Soon, I was working for several theater companies in various schools all over New York City. This was both rewarding and an eye opener to the life of a working Teaching Artist.

A year before graduating from NYU, I applied for a job at [The New Victory Theater](#) on 42nd Street. With my Masters in Educational Theater within reach, I applied for the position of Curriculum and Publications Manager in the education department where my responsibility was

to research, write and produce The New Vic School Tools™. I was also a member of the New Victory Theater's Teaching Artist Ensemble, a collection of professional New York-based artists working collaboratively to create workshops and residencies taught in conjunction with the shows being presented on the stage.

After five successful seasons at The New Victory Theater, I decided to relocate back to

London. Returning to the UK after working in educational theater mere feet away from Broadway, I was not sure how I would fit into the educational theater scene in London. I had left England as a drama teacher who loved her job but returned a Teaching Artist... Does my profession exist here?

It was now the late 2000s, and in my absence, many London-based theater companies had also built their



Victoria Row-Traster interacting with kids before they see a show



Victoria Row-Traster leading a talk back session with the artists and a school audience after they have seen a show.

education departments and outreach programs similar to those in New York and were actively and effectively pushing for presence in their local communities and schools. There had been a shift towards involving classroom teachers in the artistic endeavors of visiting artists and bringing our young people into theaters. I was excited to find that in the UK, Teaching Artistry was now also becoming a very real and rewarding way for an artist to work, share and teach their within art form. I was fortunate to be invited to join the

Education Department at the [Royal National Theatre](#) working as an “Actor Teacher,” going into primary schools and delivering active and creative workshops based on plays being produced and presented by the National.

After five rewarding seasons at the National Theater, I relocated once again across the pond to Miami and where I am currently Education Director at [Miami Theater Center \(MTC\)](#). In 2017, together with Executive Director, Giselle Kovac, we transitioned MTC from a producing

house to a presenting house and returned to our roots focusing on live performance for young audiences. In our first season, MTC will have presented four incredible companies who have performed theater, music and dance performances for almost 8,000 kids, teachers and families, taught over 3,000 workshops in schools and created an ensemble of 12 incredibly talented Teaching Artists who I train and support through professional development.

Over the course of this whirl-

wind year, Giselle and I identified the gap in American touring theater companies verses many of our European or Australian contemporaries who often receive government funding to tour their work, and as a result often dominate the TYA touring field here in the US. We asked ourselves what role MTC could play and in our 2017/18 season, MTC launched our LEAP Project (Launching Emerging Artists for Presenting), which utilizes our talented education staff and technical crew, to give back to the local, national and

international artistic communities. We are able to offer emerging and established theater companies the opportunity to launch new work and create a shared legacy between MTC and the artists creating a structure to support American theater companies and the arts community, while at the same time providing value to our local community by presenting dynamic and innovative TYA performances.

What I have observed from building my career over (almost) two decades and two

continents is to stay fluid and move with the ever-changing trends in the field. Educational Theater will always need strong Teaching Artists who advocate for their profession and their place within it, the field will always need innovators who identify gaps and take risks, and the field will always need pioneers who above all value the arts for young people, teachers and families. And I am grateful that I have the opportunity at this point in my career to offer something back to the field on both sides of the pond... and pay my bills.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Miami Theater Center's Education Director, Victoria Row-Traster, builds partnerships with schools and community organizations, and alongside Executive Director, Giselle Kovac, selects live-performances presented at MTC. Victoria liaises with school administrations and classroom teachers, creates arts curriculum and facilitates the professional development for the MTC Teaching Artist Ensemble who delivers high-quality education programs supporting the work on MTC's main stage.



[@vrtraster](https://twitter.com/vrtraster)



[@MiamiTheaterCenter](https://www.facebook.com/MiamiTheaterCenter)



[@mtcmiami](https://www.instagram.com/mtcmiami)

ARTISTS AS ‘SOLOPRENEURS’; SUSTAINABILITY AND SYSTEM CHANGE

BY SUSANNE BURNS



The HOLA Team in the Ramparts, Los Angeles on the site of their new building

The artists' world of work is complex. It is estimated that less than 25% of all artists are 'employees' on a permanent or casual basis being paid a salary or wages.¹ The remaining three-quarters operate as freelance or self-employed portfolio workers or micro businesses. Whilst there are many positive benefits of this independent and 'hybrid' form of working – flexibility, independence and variety, challenge and stimulation to name a few - there are also many shortcomings. The self employed condition brings a lack of economic and social stability, often

¹ Throsby, D and Zednick, A (2010) Do you really expect to get paid: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia, Australia Council

involves long hours working across multiple projects and roles and it can be very lonely working alone and with little support. Further, because artists exist outside of the parameters of major institutions, they operate within rapidly changing systems and policy and political frameworks with very little power to lobby for change or to have their voices heard.

Research for Australia Council modelled the artists 'world of work' as comprising:

- Creative work - defined as the artist's core creative practice, located primarily in his or her central art form;
- Arts-related work - defined to include teaching in the artist's artform, arts administration, community arts development, writing about the arts;
- Non-arts work including paid work not related to any artistic field and unpaid work such as volunteering or studying outside the arts.

In the UK, an ever increasing number of these artists are engaged in a range of practices variously called socially engaged arts practice, relational art, dialogical art, community art, collectivism, participatory arts and collaborative art. This reflects a recognition of the varied contexts and art forms, approaches and methods that are at play in the practices. The nuances, complexities and subtleties of the work are exciting and more and more artists are actively choosing to work in this way.² Artists who locate themselves within these practices engage with people, work collaboratively and connect with a variety of voices in the creation of work. They are passionate and committed to the work and, importantly, new approaches to collaboration can be seen as creating a new and emergent aesthetic. They are providing services to organisations, commissioners and public agencies that enable others to participate in artmaking and yet they are largely unsupported and self sustaining as businesses. Their work lacks both economic and social stability and yet, society depends on them to deliver impact in health, criminal justice, education and community settings.

These concerns sat at the heart of my work as Project Director of the ArtWorks special initiative for the Paul Hamlyn Foundation between 2010 and 2017. ArtWorks was a workforce development programme seeking to support the training and development of artists who worked in participatory settings at all stages of their careers. I was aware that in the USA, and increasingly in Australia, this work was called 'teaching artistry' – in the UK we lack this consistency in terminology and, for some years, I have speculated about whether the low value placed on the practice and the artists who carry it out is partially about our lack of consensus about the work, what it does and even what we call it.

Following ArtWorks, I applied for and was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to enable me to visit the USA and Australia to explore these concerns. I wanted to make connections with key leaders

² Burns, S (2015) ArtWorks: Reflections on Developing Practice in Participatory Settings Paul Hamlyn Foundation

and practitioners who are engaged in developing and supporting artists who carry out participatory arts practice. I wanted to explore business models, institutional models of support and support structures from which we in the UK could learn. I wanted to consider the issues and challenges through the lenses of the artists, institutions, educator/ trainer, funder and policy maker. My two month trip started in mid September 2017 in New York and I then travelled to Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles. From there I moved on to Australia where I visited Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane before returning to the UK in mid-November. It was an incredible journey and one that will take some considerable time to process and reflect upon. I have visited places and seen sights that will stay with me forever and, most importantly, I have learned a lot about my field, my practice and myself. Across the seven cities, I met a total of 90 people face to face. The fact that I used different lenses to examine the field meant that the learning was rich. I met some extraordinary people and visited some amazing organisations that are breaking paradigms in so many different ways.

I found differences and similarities. I found common concerns around short term and declining funding, political change, agency and differential power. I found differences in scale and resources that made my eyes water! Differences in the value placed on the arts in education and in the funding systems and differences in cultures of collaboration and partnership working. Whilst, the context of the USA and Australia are very different – for example, the funding systems are totally different with the former being dependent on private philanthropy and the latter with a stronger federal and state public funding system – the similarities in the issues and challenges that we are facing in the UK was striking.

As my trip progressed, I realised that there may not be any simple answers as we were all seeking solutions to similar challenges. My field of enquiry widened as I realised I could not separate the needs of artists working in participatory settings from those of all artists and indeed the institutions that they work with and for.



Round Table of Artists at Australia Council, Sydney

I realised that the notions of sustainability, system change and 'solopreneurship' sat at the heart of the questions I was asking about how we as a field can ensure artists are better supported. Without system change will we be able to create sustainable programmes, sustainable organisations and sustainable and thriving artists' careers? Can our sector be sustainable if our organisations are dependent on a pool of self-employed/freelance/contract artists whose careers are not sustainable and who are surviving but not thriving? As one Australian interviewee put it:

“Our industry is being propped up by independent artists who are not being properly paid, who have no security, no superannuation plans and whose health and well-being are suffering.”

This is critical as we are living in times when the role of the artist in civil society is perhaps more important than ever before. But artists can only play their role if they are supported by the other players in the system – the funders and policy makers, commissioners and employers and institutions. As a complex ecology no player can operate in a vacuum and thus, social and civic impact can only be achieved when all components are working to the same end.

This makes it imperative that we find ways to render their working lives more sustainable, stable and supported. The notion of thriving and sustainable artists careers appears to be two dimensional - we are concerned with both the practical circumstances and the emotional well being of the independent artists.;

- a 'liveable' field where artists earn enough to live and afford decent housing, healthcare etc;
- a field where artists who are cultivating the creativity of others are supported in their own creativity and well being and don't burn out.



"I think sustainability is about the artistic sustainability of the artists own practice, the emotional sustainability (and cost) of their work with people and the financial sustainability of their living conditions." (Employer)

I came across models that were artist led where artists have taken solutions into their own hands and are working collectively to reach solutions. I was stimulated by activists and those engaged in developing collective and supportive movements including the Creative Recovery Network in Australia and Artists U being run out of Philadelphia.



Looking up, down, around and forward in San Francisco

"We are the agents of change that we need and we need to start valuing ourselves more." (Artist)

But, this is not enough. 'Self care' is all well and good but we must adopt an approach to 'shared care' that is sector wide. We need our individual organisations to take responsibility for the pool of artists upon whom they depend, ensuring that duty of care is taken, professional development is available and accessible. I found many organisations making deep commitments to their artists in supporting training, providing health insurance, part time contracts that provided security and retainers such as Lincoln Centre in New York, Footscray Arts in Melbourne and Metro Arts in Brisbane. Similar to the UK, I found taxation systems that mitigated against the provision of such support to self employed artists but also found a greater willingness to engage artists on part time employment contracts than we have in the UK.

There are issues around responsibility when so many artists are working across organizational boundaries and

for multiple employers:

'...whose responsibility is it to address those challenges? Which employer given that artists work for more than one?'" (Employer)

"Industry impact is key. We need collective conversations about the workforce. Competition is the key mode because of funding but we have to move beyond this. Artists are struggling in Australia and they don't just work for one organisation but across organisations. We are underfunded and potentially set up to fail because of our dependency as a sector on public subsidy which breeds competition and not collaboration." (Employer)

There was a recurring theme of moving beyond individual to collective impact. In both the USA and Australia there was a recognition that the new paradigms needed within the field required a move away from the competitive to the collective. That the systemic changes needed in the sector were not going to occur without this recognition that we are interdependent and that no one institution exists in a vacuum.

"Moving beyond competition to a more ecological approach, moving to places where our common interest and concern leads to shared solutions, where collective impact and collaborative solutions create the key shifts that are required in the field must be our goal."
(Employer)

"The funding system mitigates against this collaboration because of its reliance on contestible funding - it creates competition rather than encouraging collaboration." (Funder)

We need to generate significant system and 'field' change and this will require traction and leverage created through a 'movement', bottom up action and field wide partnership working, communality, collaboration and collective action. The role of tertiary education will be critical, the role of independent artists and those that support them in many different ways will be crucial and our employers and commissioners as well as our funders and policy makers will play important roles.

So, for artists to thrive we

also need our organisations to thrive and be sustainable – it seems to me that the key to this will sit in the area of overlap where the interests of the two coalesce, where organisational and individual interest focussed on social impact and the needs of the participant align.



I concluded that long term commitments to programmes that embed artists and organisations within the communities they serve are critical to this. For example, Dreamyard in the Bronx, New York and HOLA in the Ramparts area of Los Angeles have worked and developed communities for more than 20 years. In the UK, Sistema Scotland and In Harmony Liverpool have made 10 year commitments to their communities and have become part of the 'place'.

Underpinning all of this, it is clear that new business models are needed. The 'not

for profit'/company model appears to be broken. Individual entrepreneurial or 'solopreneurial' approaches, social enterprises, non-transactional and collaborative developments appear to be the way forward. I found social enterprises that challenged traditional business models in the sector whilst delivering services or social benefit like Fractured Atlas and Public Matters Group in LA. I came across loose organisations that were porous and able to scale up quickly for project delivery.

The wonderful thing about the Fellowship was the fact that it gave licence to ask questions, to take time out and to really listen and delve. This was a different kind of questioning and listening – more open ended and with no predetermined output or end result. I am used to framing questions and listening in my work as a consultant but that active listening is usually directed to a specific purpose. This experience was very different! Taking the time to slow down and focus on an area of enquiry, to take time to process the inputs, views and perspectives of others, to truly absorb, listen and most

importantly hear patterns, threads and connections.

The journey was fundamentally one of questions and synthesis. Synthesis literally means composition – putting different things together in one place and making something new from it. It may not actually be about new discoveries but about being open to possibility, seeking the underlying potential in something and remaining open to stories, patterns, tensions and themes and then extracting insights from them to create frameworks. That is now my challenge and I am excited about taking this learning forward and sustaining what is the beginning of an international community of practice moving forward.

The full report of Susanne's Churchill Fellowship research is available on her web site as well as through her blog.

www.supportingartists.blog.wordpress.com

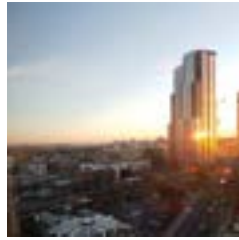
www.susanneburns.co.uk



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: SUSANNE BURNS

Susanne Burns is a freelance management consultant with over 35 years of senior management experience in the cultural sector. Her work has encompassed dance, theatre, music and the visual arts and she has a diverse portfolio of clients, including the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, In Harmony Liverpool, Opera North, Arts Council England, the Paul

Hamlyn Foundation, Northern Ballet, LIFT, Fevered Sleep, RIBA, Ballet Cymru, the Wellcome Trust and Upswing. She carries out a diverse range of projects including evaluation and research, organisational development and strategic planning. She was Project Director of ArtWorks for the Paul Hamlyn Foundation from 2011 – 2015. She is a qualified Coach and Action Learning Facilitator and she contributes guest teaching throughout the UK. She was awarded her DProf from Middlesex University in 2011. Susanne has published extensively and was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2017 to visit the USA and Australia to explore entrepreneurial and sustainable models of support for freelance artists working in participatory settings.



Work with us.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Lifetime Arts seeks a full-time Program Coordinator based at our newly-renovated offices in downtown New Rochelle, NY conveniently located across the street from MetroNorth, a 30-minute ride from Grand Central Station. The Program Coordinator will work with us to support national creative aging initiatives, programs, and services.

For complete details about the role and how to apply, please visit:

lifetimearts.org/employmentTAG18

APPLY BY APRIL 30, 2018

BETA TESTERS NEEDED

TEACHING ARTIST'S ASSET MAP



A professional network built just for TAs - and even more!

Teaching Artists Guild is now accepting applicants for the Beta release of the Teaching Artist's Asset Map. Beta testers will have the opportunity to be the first users to test the map application, **and they will given free access to future premium (paid) features** of the map in exchange for feedback about their experience using the beta version of the map. We are only accepting 50 beta program participants.

APPLY NOW

LEARN MORE



Honolulu Theatre for Youth
Professional Development
workshop on Drama Integration



THE ARTS INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

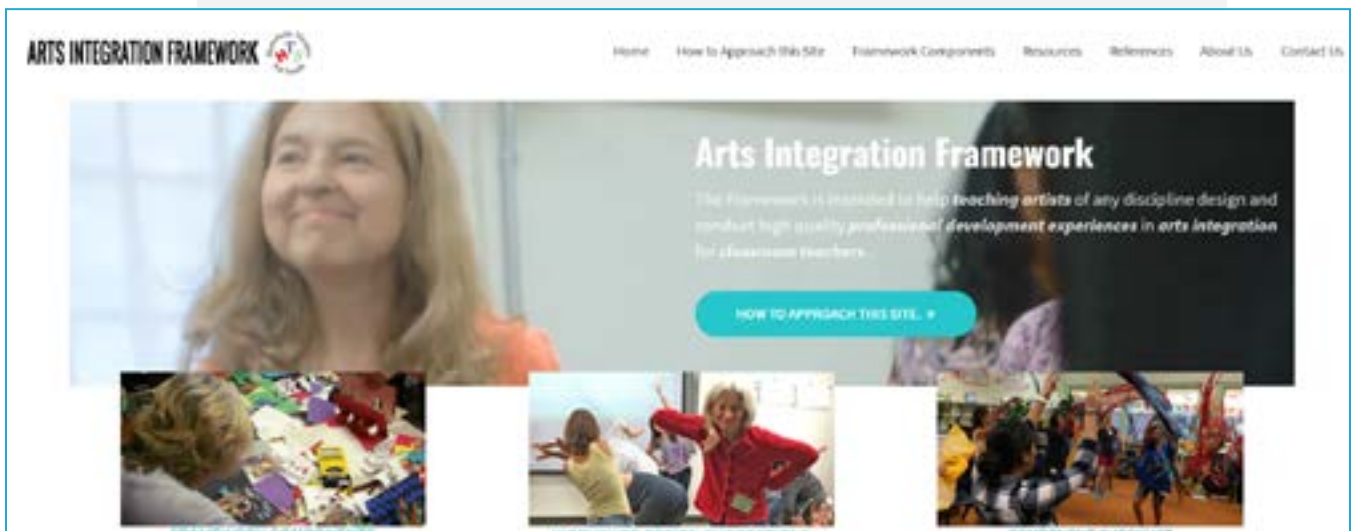
**An Online Resource for
Professional Development
of Classroom Teachers**

by Daniel A. Kelin, II

The Honolulu Theatre for Youth (HTY) recently launched the Arts Integration Framework, a freely available website intended to help teaching artists of any discipline design and conduct high quality professional development experiences in arts integration for classroom teachers. The site was conceived in response to a welcome challenge faced by arts organizations and teaching artists in Hawai'i. As the Framework developed, we at HTY thought to make the resource available to all teaching artists, as a way to contribute to the growth of the arts education field.

Professional development (PD) experiences for classroom teachers focused on arts integration happen regularly across Hawai'i. Nearly 1000 teachers annually participate. More than half of Hawaii's public schools are represented. Many of the PD experiences are a part of the Artists-in-the-Schools (AITS) residency program of the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (HSFCA), supported in part by the Hawai'i Community Foundation. About a decade ago, the HSFCA mandated that all AITS residencies must include a PD experience.

With the rapid growth of PD experiences came the challenge of consistency and continuity. As most workshops across the state are conducted independently, there is little connection to, or extension of, other workshops. At the same time, a growing number of classroom teachers participate in multiple work-



Homepage of the Arts Integration Framework website



shops on multiple islands. For myself and other arts organization leaders, that growth indicated a need: to define what constitutes quality PD experiences in arts integration using a common vocabulary to help both increase local teaching artists' effectiveness in instructing classroom teachers and develop connections between the multiple PD experiences.

“...growth indicated a need: to define what constitutes quality PD experiences in arts integration using a common vocabulary to help both increase local teaching artists' effectiveness in instructing classroom teachers and develop connections between the multiple PD experiences. “

With funding from the Hawai'i Community Foundation, a stakeholder in the growth of arts and arts integration in Hawai'i's local schools, I assembled a cadre of experienced and knowledgeable teaching artists and teachers representing arts



Honolulu Theatre for Youth Professional Development workshop on Hula Ki'i puppets

organizations, schools, a university and independent teaching artists. Individually and collaboratively we reviewed research, deconstructed our own work, compared ideas and discoveries and decided on a very tight focus for the Arts Integration Framework: the 'big ideas' of PD work. Plenty of materials exist, we commonly agreed, that focus on what should be taught, and even how. We felt, however, that a common set of 'big ideas' relating to PD work conducted by teaching artists of all disciplines were not as well represented. We asked, what are key, foundational components of an effective PD experience and why is each so crucial to reaching classroom teachers?

“We asked, what are key, foundational components of an effective PD experience and why is each so crucial to reaching classroom teachers?”

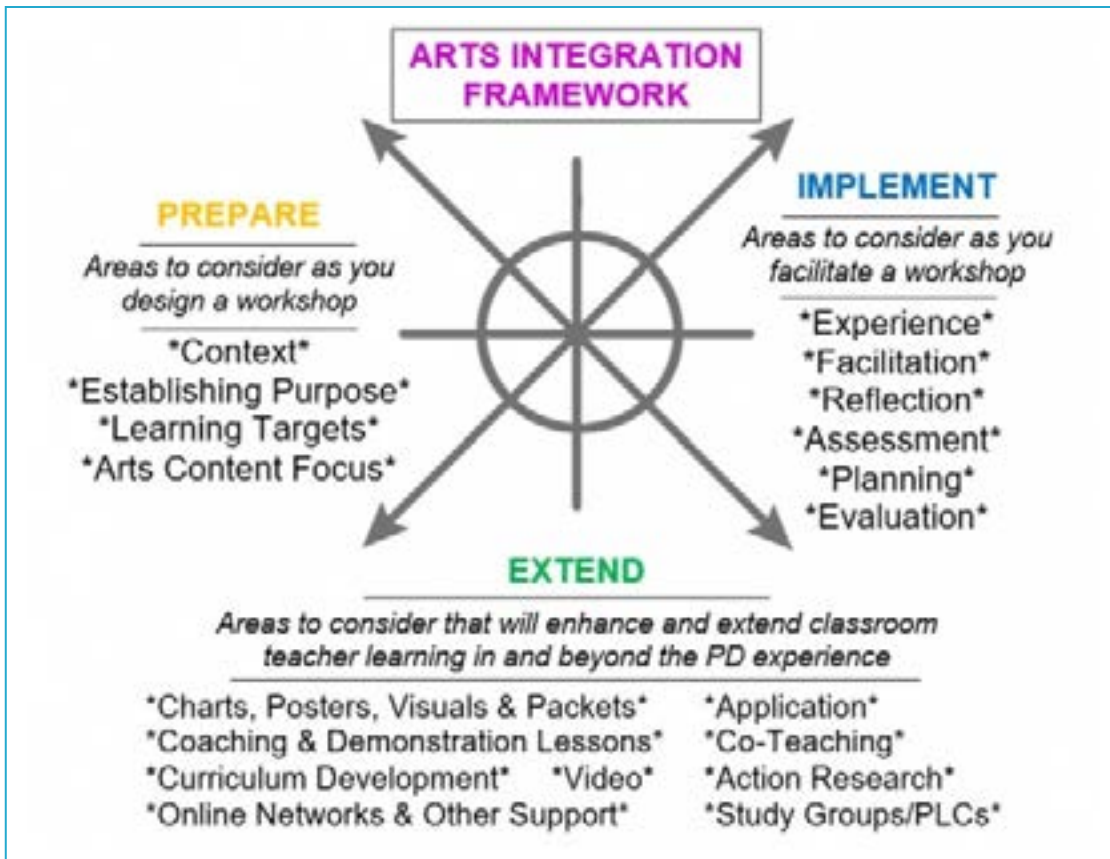
As we, the writing cadre, brainstormed ideas, compiling, combining and culling lists, we challenged ourselves to consider

how those components could work in essentially every workshop size and focus. We also realized that the Framework would not be a tool to train new teaching artists how to conduct PD experiences. Rather, the Framework would help teaching artists with a solid understanding of their arts integration work design and conduct PD experiences responsive to the needs of classroom teachers not well-versed in embedding arts practices into their own methodologies. For our teaching artists in Hawai'i, we knew that many had been thrust into implementing PD experiences with very little training or resources. This meant that too many of the PD experiences simply became another day in the residency geared for students. Very little of the PD experience offered classroom teachers what they needed to transfer the training into their own classrooms.

“Rather, the Framework would help teaching artists with a solid understanding of their arts integration work design and conduct PD experiences responsive to the needs of classroom teachers not well-versed in embedding arts practices into their own methodologies. “

As research suggests, quality professional development includes opportunities for classroom teachers to become actively engaged in meaningful discussion, planning, and practice, including time to observe expert teachers and to be observed teaching; to plan how new curriculum materials and new teaching methods that will be used in the classroom; to review student work in the topic areas being covered; and to lead discussions and engage in written work (Carey & Frechtling, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Lieberman, 1996; Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998).

The Arts Integration Framework consists of three major sections divided into nineteen various sized components that build on and beyond the research mentioned above. As shown in the illustration included here, the three sections are: Prepare, Imple-



The Arts Integration Framework components

ment and Extend. Prepare and Implement include components that we, the writers, suggest are important foundations for virtually all PD experiences, with Extend consisting of various possibilities to enhance or expand beyond an experience. We challenged ourselves to be brief with each component, to offer teaching artists a basic understanding and encourage them to seek additional resources (many of which are included in the Framework) to deepen their knowledge and skill.

The Resources section is one we hope will grow in time and with outside contribution. It includes video clips of teaching artists at work that illustrate the Framework components. Our desire is to offer more video clips in the future. We also created a Workshop Design page that offers suggestions for how to include the components in various sized PD experiences as well as a Component Checklist, which has proven to be the most popular section to date. The Checklist consists of questions related to each component to help teaching artists critically examine and fine-tune their own workshops.

We encourage website visitors to ask questions about and offer suggestions to help keep the Arts Integration Framework a living and relevant online resource for all teaching artists.

References

Carey, N., & Frechtling, J. (1997). Best practice in action: Follow-up survey on teacher enhancement programs. Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Garet, M.S., Porter A. C., Desimone, L., Birman B.F., Yoon, K.S. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38 (4), pp. 915-945. Retrieved from http://www.imoberg.com/files/Unit_D_ch._24_-_Garet_et_al._article.pdf

Lieberman, A. (1996). Practices that support teacher development: Transforming conceptions of professional learning. In M.W. McLaughlin & I. Oberman (Eds.), *Teacher learning: New policies, new practices*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Loucks-Horsley, S., Hewson, P. W., Love, N., & Stiles, K. E. (1998). *Designing professional development for teachers of science and mathematics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.



Daniel A. Kelin II ----- lives in Hawai'i and travels a great deal. He is Honolulu Theatre for Youth (HTY) Director of Drama Education and served as President of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE). He has worked in American Samoa, the Marshall Islands, Pohnpei, Guam and India. Education@htyweb.org

CITIZEN ARTISTS REPORTING FOR DUTY: ARTISTYEAR PREPARES A NEW GENERATION OF TEACHING ARTISTS THROUGH NATIONAL SERVICE

BY D'ANNE
WITKOWSKI

IMAGINE, if you will, a kindergartner screaming and crying. She has just been caught trying to run out of the school building and has been placed in the library where she awaits the arrival of the assistant principal. She is pinching herself as hard as she can. She is trying to pick up a chair to throw it. You don't know why she is upset, you only know that she is clearly struggling.

What do you do?

If you're Caleb Wiebe, you take out your trumpet and show her how the valves work. She likes drawing, so you ask her to show you what she can draw. By the time the assistant principal arrives she is calm.

Wiebe's intervention works because he is an ArtistYear

Fellow in the child's music room. She recognizes him from a class in which she is engaged and feels noticed. And so during this moment of crisis, "Mr. Caleb" is a trusted and familiar adult at a time when she needs one most.

This is not exactly the role Wiebe imagined himself playing as a teaching artist. After years of conservatory training at Indiana University, Colburn, and Curtis, he pictured himself working at a high school somewhere leading brass sectionals and giving trumpet lessons. He did not picture himself at Samuel Powel Elementary School in West Philadelphia teaching children how to play the recorder.

But as an ArtistYear Fellow, that's exactly what he did.

And while Wiebe might have

been a little nervous on his first day, he knew that he could do this. Not only was he paired with Carroll A. Kelly, a veteran music teacher at Powel, but he also knew he had the full support of ArtistYear backing him up.

"The thing that is really great about ArtistYear is that they work with the schools to make sure it's a good fit for both the fellow and for the school," Wiebe says.

A part of the AmeriCorps network, ArtistYear is the first national service program dedicated to arts education. The organization trains and supports recent college arts graduates to serve as full-time teaching artists in Title I schools, where they collaborate with school faculty to deepen and expand arts experiences.

Upon arriving at Powel, Wiebe and Kelly worked together to create a plan for how Wiebe could best help. Class size was identified as a big problem.

"Most classes were at capacity," Wiebe says. About 33 students in a classroom, in fact, and many students had IEPs, which means they received some level of special education. Their main classrooms were staffed with a teacher and another adult. But when it came time for music, Kelly was on his own.

Wiebe and Kelly determined that the best way to help would be for Wiebe to pull out small groups of up to 10 students for recorder classes. These were students who needed additional motivation or challenge. "Mr. Kelly would then have fewer students in his class so he could better focus his teaching," Wiebe says. With this set up, Wiebe saw 65 students every week, building a strong recorder choir and improvisation class. His goal was to create a space where otherwise disengaged students could have a voice through music. However, Wiebe was not an instant success. Though he



2018 ArtistYear Fellow Caleb Wiebe with his Samuel Powel music students after rehearsal

relied on his ArtistYear training and curriculum to structure his sessions, like most first-year teaching artists, Wiebe had to learn on the ground.

One thing he quickly realized is that even the best laid plans can, and often do, go awry. "I would do these lesson plans and spend hours thinking through the entire plan, from the moment when the students would come into my classroom through the moment they were walking out. It never went how I had visualized it."

Bringing the perfectionism he had cultivated during his years in conservatory to the classroom at Powel wasn't working. He had to devise a better way.

When his advisor at ArtistYear came to observe his class she told him something surprising: "You talk too much." The children needed more time playing music, and less time listening to him talk about music. Wiebe met weekly with his advisor and the other ArtistYear Fellows to discuss issues and ideas in the classroom, something Wiebe found invaluable.

So Wiebe learned to let go of his desire to control every class dynamic and outcome. He talked less and made more flexible plans.

"I found that when I became less dependent on a perfect plan I was then able to make better relationships with the students and meet their needs," he says. In other

words, he focused on the students as individual learners and got to know them. It was through connections like these that he was able to calm that distressed kindergarten in the library. Like all accepted ArtistYear Fellows, Wiebe came to the organization with strong

age," Wiebe says. He wanted to find a way to live out these values through a life in music. His conservatory training did not give him the tools he needed for this kind of career. When he learned about ArtistYear and its mission to develop citizen artists like him in order to provide a

in tears."

This response from his students showed him that he really did make a difference in their lives. "I don't know how much they remember on their recorder," he says, "but I think that's less important than if I made a positive impact on them wanting to be at school and them wanting to continue to learn."

"It was an opportunity through music to learn how to be better people to each other; how we can be supportive and how we can work together," he said of his year at Powel. "All of these things that go beyond how to play a specific note on a recorder."

A new ArtistYear Fellow has now come to Powel after Wiebe, building on the foundation he created. ArtistYear partners with schools for multiple years, helping to build capacity for more arts-rich schools.

ArtistYear's training is robust, preparing Fellows not only for success as a teaching artist in a Title I school context, but also for a career as a community-minded artist. Wiebe has embedded the lessons of

“WHEN I BECAME LESS DEPENDENT ON A PERFECT PLAN I WAS THEN ABLE TO MAKE BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE STUDENTS AND MEET THEIR NEEDS”

mission alignment. Wiebe grew up in the Mennonite Church. Inspired by his father, who played violin and viola, and the four-part a cappella singing that is a big part of Mennonite worship services, Wiebe knew he wanted to study and perform music.

However, Wiebe never felt comfortable with the traditional end goal for a professional musician: practice until you're perfect, then join a large symphony orchestra.

"In the Mennonite tradition, peace and social justice were highly regarded and those were instilled in me as important values at a very early

year of service teaching arts education to underserved children, he knew it would be a good fit.

When he recalls his year at Powel, he speaks fondly of the relationships he formed with his students.

"We were able to build something very special," he says. "I went and visited Powel for their winter concert six months after I finished teaching there. The students started walking in and saw me and said, 'It's Mr. Caleb!' and ran and gave me hugs and made sure all of their friends knew that Mr. Caleb was there. I was pretty much

leadership and social justice into his post-ArtistYear work. He is now a teaching artist for elementary brass students at Play On, Philly!, an el Sistema inspired music program in Philadelphia. His professional brass sextet, The Brass Project, has education, access, and social relevance as core mission components. Armed with experience and training, Wiebe is curating a career in music that feels meaningful to him. And he is just beginning.

"I will always have more to learn as a teacher and an artist, but being full-time with ArtistYear for an entire year was an incredible jump-start to this kind of work," Wiebe explains, "and on top of that, I had a cohort of other artists to learn and grow with." Wiebe looks forward to Ar-

tistYear's continued expansion, believing the benefit to school-based arts programs and the field of teaching artistry will be significant.

"Right now there are 25 Fellows in three locations, Philadelphia, New York, and Colorado," he says. "They are doing so much in the communities they are in. And if

you think about increasing that to a hundred, or a thousand. What if you could get a million people to serve for a year in the arts? I think it would have an unbelievable effect on our country."

Learn more about ArtistYear or apply to become a Fellow at ArtistYear.org.



ArtistYear music students and 2018 ArtistYear Fellow Caleb Wiebe after a winter community concert in West Philadelphia



ArtistYear

D'ANNE WITKOWSKI is a writer living in Southfield, Michigan with interests in social justice and the arts. Visit her at www.dtwitkowski.com.

ARTISTYEAR, a proud new part of the AmeriCorps network, is the first national service program that enables artists to dedicate a year of service to our country. ArtistYear believes the arts—as vehicles for critical-thinking, empathy, self-discipline, social bonds, and civic engagement—are imperative for a thriving democracy. Our vision is to develop engaged citizen-artists committed to strengthening the fabric of our nation. How? By supporting school districts to provide every underserved student in America with access to arts education via national service. ArtistYear recruits, trains, and supports artists who seek to harness their unique skills and dedicate themselves as full-time teaching-artists to underserved youth.

**TEACHING
ARTISTS
GUILD**



WWW.TEACHINGARTISTSGUILD.ORG