



Creative Youth Development Toolkit

Landscape Analysis

Preparing Artists and Educators

by Travis Loughlin

About Americans for the Arts and Our Commitment to Arts Education

Founded in 1960, Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education. From offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, we provide a rich array of programs that meet the needs of more than 150,000 members and stakeholders annually. We are dedicated to representing and serving local communities and to creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

Americans for the Arts envisions an America where every child has access to—and takes part in—high quality and lifelong learning experiences in the arts, both in school and in the community. Through our Arts Education Program, Americans for the Arts provides leadership development, networking, research, and tools designed to empower individuals and organizations to create equitable systems and strong policies which strengthen the arts education ecosystem. For more information, visit <http://www.americansforthearts.org/ArtsEducation>.

About this Paper

Americans for the Arts is proud to be one of the leaders of the **Creative Youth Development National Partnership**, which is working to advance the field of creative youth development (CYD), the intentional integration of arts learning and youth development principles. As part of this collective initiative, Americans for the Arts commissioned field experts to produce a set of seven landscape analyses about key topics within youth development. These papers identify trends in creative youth development, share recommendations for CYD practitioners, and suggest areas for future exploration. The areas of focus of these papers are:

- 1) Trends in CYD Programs
- 2) Advocacy and Policy
- 3) Working in Social Justice
- 4) Program Evaluation
- 5) Preparing Artists & Educators
- 6) Working with Youth
- 7) Funding, Sustainability, and Partnerships

These landscape analyses are one part of a larger project led by Americans for the Arts to create a new, first-of-its-kind **Creative Youth Development Toolkit** that will aggregate the most effective tools and resources from exemplary creative youth development programs throughout the country. The CYD Toolkit will build upon the success and longevity of the Youth Arts Toolkit (2003), a landmark study of arts programs serving at-risk youth that can be found at <http://youtharts.artsusa.org/>.

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INTRODUCTION

As the field of Creative Youth Development (CYD) evolves, one key aspect of this evolution is strengthening the training provided to teaching artists. While the individual needs of teaching artists and the structure of training may vary amongst organizations depending on the organization's mission, location, and/or the communities in which they work; however, there are key components of effective professional development upon which the field can agree, and there are areas in which teaching artist training and support must be examined and shifted. It is my intent to provide an overview of some research contextualizing historical and current trends with regard to preparing teaching artists for CYD work, and then to put forth recommendations for how to deepen the work organizations do with teaching artists in hopes of implementing changes that will positively impact the organizations, teaching artists, and the field at large.

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

As stated in the report from The Teaching Artist Research Project (TARP) from NORC at the University of Chicago, training and professional development is a challenge for all organizations seeking to implement high quality arts programming (Rabkind, Reynolds, Hedberg, & Shelby, 2011, p. 15). Organizations employing and engaging with teaching artists must ensure those individuals are prepared to meet the needs of the classroom and build upon their professional practices as educators and artists. Regardless of the size of the program, staff training is an essential component of any successful CYD program (The Kennedy Center After-School Protocol Task Force, 2000, p. 22). Yet, it is important to not just train for training's sake. Professional development must be ongoing, address the needs of teaching artists at varying career points, and employ elements of community building among teaching artists.

Effective professional development is ongoing and consistent (The Kennedy Center After-School Protocol Task Force, 2000, p. 18; Montgomery, Rogouin, & Persaud, 2013, p. 58), because training that is one-off does not effectively train nor engage teaching artists. Organizations must work to ensure that professional development is "presented in an intensive, sustained, and continuous manner over time" (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. ii) to adequately support the growth of their teaching artists.

Organizations with effective professional development work to ensure training programs meet the needs of veteran artist educators as well as preparing those new to the field (Rabkind et al., 2011, p. 16).

Training which focuses on curriculum and lesson development are of course essential, but training cannot reside solely in this area, nor should training simply be an orientation to the organization's mission, policies, and procedures.

Many organizations are finding ways to activate the knowledge and experience of their teaching artists. As an example, when I was the art education director at the Joan Mitchell Foundation, I recognized the wealth of knowledge and experience of our teaching staff and sought ways to encourage veteran teaching artists to share their knowledge. One of the most successful projects we implemented was the creation of a Curriculum Resource Guide. Over the course of two years, a team of our teaching artists worked along with the guidance of the Foundation's professional development program coordinator to create this resource for teaching artists in the field. Given freedom to determine content and structure, the team of teaching artists were able to capture and share their knowledge and experience in this resource, and a veteran teaching artist of over 40 years stated it was the most impactful professional development she had ever experienced and the first time she truly felt valued by the organization that employed her.

Developing a community of peers is also a key component of a teaching artist's professional development. Teaching artists often report they lead isolated professional lives and seek communities that support them professionally (Rabkind et al., 2011, p. 20). Numerous studies reflect the importance of collaboration and connection with other educators as a key factor in educators maintaining commitment to the profession (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010, p. 25). Effective professional development models keep this in mind as they work to develop training and structures that bring teaching artists together in community and connect them in multiple ways that provide peer support (Montgomery et al., 2013, p. 58).

KEY TRENDS

My overview of the current and key trends with regard to preparing teaching artists for the field of CYD has led me to identify three continuing and key trends in the field I feel warrant focus: the engagement of professional artists, approaching CYD work with a focus on equity, and the need to connect deeply with the communities in which teaching artists are working.

TREND #1: HIRING, TRAINING, AND RETAINING PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

To ensure that participants in CYD programs are gaining a deep and valuable understanding of the arts, organizations are hiring and training artists with an established and dedicated artistic practice. While this is not a new trend, it is important to note what artists with an active practice bring. As stated in the Wallace report, *Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*, "Many arts education programs, both in- and out-of schools, fail to address the contemporary in any sense: they do not examine the practices and work of living artists. In this sense, they fall short of being high quality" (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2009, p.55). With the recognition of the value and quality hiring professional artists brings to CYD programs that link what CYD program participants are creating with the work of professional artists (Seidel et al., 2009, p. 54), effective CYD programs recognize the need to create

professional development that prepares artists for the classroom (Montgomery et al., 2013, p. 56).

I have found that most artists that come to the field of education and CYD come with great intent and dedication such as they bring to their practice. Organizations are working to meet that intent with focused, sustained professional development that best prepares artist educators for work with youth. This certainly means a focus on curriculum writing and lesson planning, but also intentional focus on youth development principles. High quality and effective professional development ensures that artist educators understand the differences between their own formal education and approaches to work in CYD classrooms. Impactful organizations recognize the need to prepare artist educators to be flexible; to develop adaptive curriculum that does not emulate rigid, fine arts teaching models, but incorporates community-based interests.

TREND #2: EQUITY/SOCIAL JUSTICE

In recent years, there has been an increase in CYD programs with focus upon social justice and equity work (Dewhurst, 2014, p. 2). The current push for a social justice focus within CYD programming requires organizations commit to training artist educators in social justice practice and to commit to equity work themselves. In the *Handbook of Social Justice in Education*, Ayers, Quinn, and Stoval define the “three pillars or principles” of social justice education as equity, activism, and social literacy (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009, p.xiv). Organizations committed to social justice and equity work are engaging in training to understand and address issues of equity within the classroom and systems at large. Social justice work requires that teaching artists be prepared to create space for student voice and action, and not simply focus on the artistic or aesthetic component of the project (Dewhurst, 2014, p.113).

This work moves beyond just training, however, and requires that organizations recruit, hire, and maintain a staff of diverse backgrounds (The Kennedy Center After-School Protocol Task Force, 2000, p. 18). Organizations have to be diligent in their recruitment and hiring protocols and analyze their own practices for implicit biases. This is deep and on-going work that will most likely require outside support and guidance to ensure success.

TREND #3: CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

CYD programs are frequently situated in community-based organizations that partner with arts-based organizations to receive their arts programming. As the social justice lens becomes more focused, so does the focus on ensuring that artist educators working in CYD programs respect and find connections with, and value in, the communities in which they work. Ideally, this can be accomplished by hiring working professional artists directly from the communities in which the CYD programs are located. However, more often than not, CYD programs are an amalgamation of partnerships that place professionals from outside the immediate comity into the programs. Teaching artists from partner organizations must be integrated into the community-based organizations where they are working and find the value in the pre-existing culture into which they are being placed.

This means that teaching artist training programs must commit to moving away from missionary models to implementing approaches rooted in reciprocity and respect. Organizations such as

Alternate ROOTS and Ifateyo Cultural Arts Academy are prime examples of organizations working to ensure teaching artists understand the rich assets held within the communities that they work and take an assets-based approach to their work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FIELD OF CYD

For the field of CYD to move positively and effectively forward, it is my feeling that three key factors must be addressed by organizations that are charged with the hiring and training of teaching artists. To embolden and truly train and support teaching artists, organizations must commit to deep work in equity training for their entire board and staff, ensure professional artists are adequately compensated, and commit to supporting the pedagogical and artistic growth of teaching artists.

Institutional Equity Training

In order to prepare teaching artists for equity and social justice work, it is imperative that the organizations that hire these artists understand, embrace, and engage in equity work themselves. As Carlton Turner points out in his 2016 essay “Why We Can’t Achieve Cultural Equity By Copying Those In Power”

“As we work to understand and develop solutions to these problems as a field we cannot do so disconnected from the larger social context. And yet so many of the professional development programs offered to build the capacity of artists and organizations of color are ignorant of these issues at best, and actively reliant on the perpetuation of them at worst.”

Organizations must do the deep work of analyzing the systemic practices at play within their structures and create institutions embedded in social justice practice as a whole to allow teaching artists to take risks. This type of institutional examination embeds equity at every level of the organization and those organizations interested in this imperative work should consider trainings by the Racial Equity Institute and The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond.

Compensation

If the field stands behind the ideas that effective CYD programs must hire, train, and retain professional artists, then the field must work to ensure professional teaching artists are compensated with fairness and respect for their work (National Endowment for the Arts and the Center for Cultural Innovation, 2016, p. 16; Rabkin et al., 2011, p. 18–20; Montgomery et al., 2013, p. 57). The field cannot continue to seek professionals in the classrooms if they are not willing to honor their expertise by providing compensation aligned with the expertise and expectations of the role. In response to the need for adequate pay for teaching artists, the Teaching Artist Guild created a pay rate calculator to aid teaching artists in advocating for, and organizations in understanding how to determine, a fair and living wage.

Professional Development that Recognizes the Educator and the Artist

Most professional development for teaching artists focuses on pedagogy, but as Eric Booth reminds us, the teaching artist's role is a hybrid (Booth, 2013). Organizations that seek to hire professional teaching artists must be willing to support both sides of their professional selves—the teacher and the artist. Efforts must be made to ensure artists can take time for residencies to strengthen and explore their artistic practice without the fear of losing their (more often than not part-time) jobs in CYD programs. Organizations must also make sure that art making and exploration accompanies the pedagogical within their professional development offerings.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that effective and impactful CYD programs value the professional growth of teaching artists they employ and the skills these professional artists bring to the youth with whom they work. To best support these artists, organizations must commit themselves to examining their own systems to analyze, understand, and work to eradicate systems of implicit bias within the organization. There is a need to show the value that teaching artists bring to the work by not only providing them with on-going professional development, but by adequately compensating them for their work both in the classroom and during their training. Teaching artists must also be holistically supported as both educators and artists. As the CYD field advocates for youth and works to dismantle systems, so must it advocate for and stand with those charged with working with those young people within those very systems.

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