

IV: Teaching and Learning

This chapter offers guidelines covering three critical areas for successful teaching and learning: developing curriculum, creating an effective learning environment, and providing professional development for teaching artists and public school teachers. In these as in all aspects of building an arts education partnership, remember to keep the focus on children and classrooms, and never forget the labor-intensive nature of learning partnerships—that is, don't try to do too much too soon.

Creating Content

Most arts education partnerships begin with the purpose of creating and delivering content. A CSA's impetus is often to share its artistic expertise with a larger number of students. A public school usually needs to teach the arts or address a specific educational goal. Thus the partnership's projects may variously teach a specific art form; use arts learning as a way to approach a social or cultural issue; or tie an art form to a seemingly unrelated academic subject in order to generate greater understanding of both. In all these cases, the outcome will be richer and deeper than anything either partner could have achieved on its own.

Whatever content you create, it should be an expression of both partners' desires for the students. Therefore, it must address learning in the arts as well as any other classroom goals. The partners should both make a commitment to excellence, and work to develop and obtain high-quality resources for teaching and learning. Overall, an

Sources for Lessons and Units

- ▶ Ideas suggested by the teachers or artists
- ▶ Specific themes
- ▶ Character development
- ▶ One or more of the content standards
- ▶ The goal of improving academic or workplace skills
- ▶ Enrichment of another subject area

arts partnership should model learning and development in the arts as a basis for cross-curricular learning and development.

General Practices for Developing Curriculum

- Work with others to identify the strengths, needs, and concerns in the arts education currently available in your community.
- Connect your curriculum to existing curricula and national standards, but do not be limited by them.
- Ensure that the partnership supports *evolving*, not *revolving*, arts education. That is, your routines and practices should change as the partnership evolves.
- Make sure artist-teacher teams consist of people who can work well together.
- Allow artists and teachers each to own their own work.
- Create an atmosphere in which people can bounce ideas off each other.
- Students, artists, and teachers should know and be able to articulate the goals of the lessons and the overall unit of study.
- Artists, teachers, and students should be making art together. Whenever possible, offer parents and the community at large the same opportunity.
- Efforts made toward meeting the goals should be apparent in the artwork itself and should be celebrated publicly through performance or exhibition.

Maintaining Artistic Integrity

Faced with the need to develop a strong partnership structure and to address school mandates, CSA staff are often concerned about maintaining artistic integrity. In addition, monitoring the quality

of the arts experiences, instruction, and learning process provides a basis for assessment of learning outcomes, crucial in today's culture of accountability. Experienced arts organizations have developed ways to make sure that the content of the work they do within schools is artistically sound.

- Young Audiences New York works with students to develop a rubric (a set of guidelines by which the quality of work can be evaluated) that includes criteria for good work. These self-established criteria are used throughout the lessons. See “Qualities of a Good Lesson,” page 78, for one type of rubric. The website of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (www.grdodge.org) also provides excellent examples.
- Studio in a School, in New York, gives students opportunities to work with a variety of materials, so they know their qualities and can plan how and when to use them.

Gail Flanery, a Studio in a School teaching artist, reported that the practice of defining goals and expectations for each class spurred her toward greater clarity, helping her keep a clear focus on the arts learning. Every assignment included separate lists of academic and arts learning criteria. These lists were posted alongside all displays of student work.

Effective Teaching

Effective teaching practice has certain universal qualities:

- It respects the fact that students perceive in different ways and encourages various interpretations of new material.
- It provides entry points into new lessons at various levels of proficiency, acknowledging that there are many ways of understanding.

- It creates a nonjudgmental atmosphere that encourages experimentation.
- It acknowledges and models the ongoing work of learning by demonstrating that teachers are also learners.
- It empowers children by rotating leadership opportunities and modeling positive peer and adult behavior.

When good teaching practice takes its cues from artistic practice, these additional characteristics signal high-quality teaching and learning:

- Participatory activities are framed by clear introductions to materials and techniques at the beginning and time for response or reflection at the end.
- The best practitioners understand that students have differing needs and can adapt to help each child learn. They create environments where children feel free to take risks, special abilities are recognized, and mistakes are viewed as a natural part of the learning process.

Encourage and expect both classroom and artist teachers to exhibit these characteristics. Remember that co-teaching is a great way to deepen the partnership and honor the expertise of both artist and teacher. Build in a way for the artist to try out what he or she has learned from observing the teacher's strengths—such as handling a minor classroom conflict—and be sure to give the teacher a chance to present arts information. In this way, both artist and teacher can develop new skills.

Effective Learning

To meet the learner's needs, arts learning should be both enjoyable and challenging. The most effective learning takes place through a sequence of experiences characterized by continuity and consistency. The best approaches deliver content by allowing all students to participate actively as they gain skills, understanding, and confidence.

In effective learning, the emphasis is on process, not product. Thus it's important to engage children in the inherent *processes* of art and arts learning. "Doing" art—for example, coloring photocopied Thanksgiving turkeys—is not the same as "learning" art—for example, discussing the shapes, colors, and sounds of autumn, then creating and refining an original piece reflecting that time of year.

Providing both *individual* and *group* activities enables students to proceed at their own pace and gives them the opportunity to solve problems individually and develop the teamwork skills, such as communication, that are so often necessary to success.

The artist's traditional practice of observation, reflection, and critique transfers to the classroom very well. At the end of each lesson and unit, everyone—teachers, students, and artists—should be asking and answering such questions as, "What did we find out?" "What worked?" "What didn't work?" "How can we change it?" Participating in this process gives students an understanding of a fundamental practice of revision and refinement that applies in many areas of life.

What happens when teaching and learning really work? Students take ownership of their work. Their motivation becomes internal, rather than external, and they become eager, finishing lunch early to work on the next stages of a project. They are not afraid to ask questions and take more risks. They have the vocabulary to express themselves. Artists report seeing students making connections with something they learned in

another context. They can recognize a good idea and adapt and personalize it, so there's no more "cookie cutter" work. Finally, they demonstrate personal investment: they are proud, engaged, and joyous. Over time, the work has an impact on their values and life choices: they develop a broader perspective on possible career goals and show more personal investment in their long-term success.

Building a Community of Learners

Several characteristics distinguish a community of learners:

- Learning goals are clear and universally accepted.
- Students acquire essential skills and knowledge.
- Students actively participate in learning.
- Thinking skills are emphasized over rote learning.
- Knowledge is applied in a variety of contexts.
- Students take responsibility for their own learning.
- Outside resources are brought into the classroom.
- Multiple assessments are used to gauge progress.
- Ample time is provided for professional development.

The best teachers inspire students to be lifelong learners by showing how they themselves are continually learning. They are not afraid to share their own successes and failures. By showing that they are still learning, they create a community of learners.

The best partnerships contribute to creating such a community by making creative problem solving and exploration part of the education and even the daily lives of children, teachers, artists, administrators, and parents.

Think about your favorite teachers. What made them special? What extra something did they do to make you remember them? Your answers might include:

- She pushed me to my limits. She always had high but realistic expectations.
- He treated me like a special person and answered all my questions; he was interested in me.
- She made me feel good about myself. She cared about me.
- She was honest, even when she didn't know the answer.
- He made learning fun and exciting, and made connections between seemingly different things, like language, history, and art.

These are all characteristics of a teacher who has established a learning community in the classroom. They represent the ideal that an arts education partnership should strive toward. To this end, as your program proceeds, remember to identify and support instructional leaders, facilitators, and coordinators, and to identify model teachers and artists as exemplars.

When a project focuses on the *process* of learning, teachers, artists, and students can explore goals together. They share expectations, which helps build trust. A community of learners can unleash a high degree of experimentation. The strongest part of the curriculum is what emerges through the process, rather than from a prearranged march toward a product. Experienced arts education partners recognize that learning has occurred when they observe teachers and artists taking on new roles and students accepting responsibility for the work.

Example: Studio in a School

Studio in a School's Amy Chase Gulden offered a good illustration of how a partnership can build a learning community. In a program that combined learning in the arts with language arts, the artist-teachers displayed connections between language and visual images by using words to describe a picture in the classroom. After several years of partnering, classroom teachers started creating their own integrated lessons based on professional development activities provided through the partnership. The teachers became more comfortable with process work. They valued the learning that happens through investigating and problem solving—techniques they had seen in the art studio—and sought to create more of these opportunities in their classrooms. Rather than simply copying each other's lesson plans, they adapted and adopted ideas they admired.

Gulden also found that, over time, some of the more resistant teachers started moving away from photocopies of prepackaged art activities and began giving students opportunities to create their own imagery. She was particularly pleased to see a computer teacher using original, child-created imagery instead of clip art to design greeting cards.

Example: New York City Opera

Paul King, Education Director at the New York City Opera, worked for six years with Martin Luther King Jr. High School to develop a real connection with the students. The partnership found that what resonated most with these inner-city teens was passion. They responded to the melodramatic stories of the operas, including those centered on murder. However, the teaching artists and arts specialists from the school resisted the temptation to exploit the appeal of the violence and melodrama. Rather, it was only after students began to get involved in the music itself that the teachers focused on the story line. As the teachers and artists became caught up in the process of approaching the work from different angles, they began—with their students—to look for other connections. Although the NYCO had already collected a body of teaching materials, each team preferred to find its own themes and build its own lessons.

Professional Development

After the desire to deliver specific content to students, the strongest motivation for a partnership between a CSA and a public school is often to give both faculties the knowledge and experience that result from working with each other. Arts education partnerships are created both by and for the artists and teachers. Since the partnership outcomes rest on the shoulders of those who develop and implement the curriculum, it is critical to support their professional growth. If the classroom teachers and teaching artists are not recognized at the institutional level, there is very little chance of success. If they do not share a vision for the curriculum, they cannot work together to implement it effectively.

Thus your partnership should provide continuous professional development that supports teachers and artists as collaborative decision makers. Ongoing opportunities for professional development enable teachers and artists to understand both their individual strengths and how they can work together to accomplish the overall goals of the partnership.

Speaking at the Partners in Excellence Conference, David E. Myers noted that professional development should “encourage, model, and support the highest possible quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.” He cited two primary aims:

- Making sure that arts learning experiences have artistic worth and value (i.e., content); and
- Matching the learning tasks and the instruction to the learners’ developmental level (i.e., process).

“Though many professional development programs emphasize packaged strategies, with artists teaching teachers and the separation of content and process,” Myers added, “arts education requires models of professional development that reflect the inherent qualities of arts learning experiences.”

Comments made throughout the Partners in Excellence Conference made it clear that the process of developing lessons and curricula itself results in interdependent professional development for both artists and teachers. Of course joint curriculum planning is not the only way to provide effective professional development; other opportunities, such as workshops and observations, can enhance the experience. However, joint planning is particularly beneficial to partnerships between CSAs and public schools, since they share a common mission and often common community issues.

Two essential components of public school teaching are content knowledge and classroom practice. Professional development for partnering artists and teachers should be about choice and production of appropriate materials, sequential instruction, and thinking conceptually and in an interdisciplinary framework. It should also involve planning, developing clear roles for teacher and artist, and helping participants understand and empathize with each other. At its best, it should inspire lifelong learning.

Guidelines for Designing Professional Development

But how do we “encourage, model, and support” this level of quality? What kind of professional development “reflects the inherent qualities of arts learning experiences”? First of all, CSA artists should be able to articulate what is involved in their creative and teaching processes. Likewise, teachers, who are sometimes intimidated by the professional artist, need to be willing to share their educational expertise. Beyond that, participants in the Partners in Excellence Conference offered the following suggestions for designing the professional development component of a CSA–public school partnership.

- **Provide authentic arts experiences for teachers.** Aim for personal gratification. When something is meaningful to us, we are eager to find ways to share it with others, and this becomes our personal mission. One participant recalled a music teacher whose colleagues gave her a T-shirt when she left the school system. It read, “I’d like to teach the world to sing.” She had successfully conveyed her joy in making music to both students and faculty. Aim to develop joy among your teachers and artists.
- **Frame classroom work with facilitated planning and follow-up sessions.** Help artists and teachers continually refine their collaborative work by allowing time for brainstorming, planning, revising, trying out, and reflecting. Diversify roles, so that the teachers are not totally dependent on the artists to plan or explain the art lesson.
- **Provide sufficient and appropriate space away from school pressures,** if possible, to allow effective, focused, and uninterrupted time for professional development and planning.
- **Use a common vocabulary.** Teachers and artists do not speak the same professional language. For example, musicians and teachers use the word “sequential” in different contexts. Make a conscious effort to define terms.
- **Design a rubric for good practices and curriculum content.** Use it for peer review and self-evaluation. Having specific criteria to aim for keeps everyone moving toward the same objective. (For a sample rubric, see “Qualities of a Good Lesson” on page 78.) Consider videotaping lessons in progress. An advantage of taping is that the teams need not be “watching themselves” as they work, but instead have a tangible way to review and reflect on their teaching. Taping should include the children to help gauge their response to the lesson. Focusing on the class response also makes taping less threatening.

FAC Teachers

Comment

- ▶ “The use of warmups within lessons [introduces] ideas, topics, and activities by fostering discovery learning. The FAC workshops also [enabled me] to incorporate more critiquing and group reflection after a lesson.”
- ▶ “You find such pride in producing a wonderful product that you hope and believe will empower and bring joy.”
- ▶ “It was new for me to have the opportunity to look through an artist’s kaleidoscope of talent and experiences. The [practice presentations] helped me learn more about the process of reflection and supportive questioning.”

- **Provide tiered professional development.** Respect the expertise of experienced partnership teams, who can be very helpful as mentors and demonstrators. As teacher attrition occurs, consider holding a special orientation day for new faculty. Alert new teachers to the partnership during their interview. Provide opportunities for people coming in at various levels of experience.
- **Solicit feedback from teachers and artists at least twice a year.** Include meetings between partnership leaders and teacher-artist teams in your work plan. Share best practices, successes, and challenges. Exchange ideas to help overcome obstacles. Maintain a portfolio of successful practices and lessons.
- **Document the work.** Consider using videotape for this purpose also. Collect student work to share with other teachers. Some partnerships pay participants who document what they got out of the training or develop new curriculum ideas for publication on the school website.
- **Train a core group to become mentors and advocates.** Involve the principal and parents in an authentic arts experience, including an opportunity for reflection and discussion. The experience will help them become advocates for professional development and arts education.
- **Provide incentives in the form of compensation and/or continuing education credits.** Some partnerships have gone so far as to provide childcare so teachers could attend professional development workshops. Have the most successful teams present at faculty meetings and at other schools. Recognize and reward good models at special events, forums, and conferences.

All strong professional development programs need time for thoughtful planning, reflection, and self-evaluation. Think of professional development as an ongoing process, providing opportunities for continued growth for the teacher-artist teams. Many part-

nerships have found it helpful to use a facilitator for planning and guiding workshops. Finally, remember that exemplary team teaching is characterized by ownership among both artists and teachers. If you are uncertain about how to begin, investigate the model of collaborative professional development provided by the Institute for Arts and Humanities Education's Family Arts and Creativity (FAC) Program (see the worksheet on page 80).

Overall, public school teachers who have taken part in FAC development sessions have been very pleased by their ability to participate in teaching an art lesson. Artists have been amazed at the enthusiasm with which the partnership program was received by the teachers.

Over the three years of the Family Arts pilot project, many initial bumps were smoothed out. For example, in the first year, team feedback surveys indicated that there were issues regarding the division of labor in planning the lessons and having sufficient time to work on them, as well as, frequently, an uncertainty about teaching roles. Once these issues were addressed and modeled by the project director, they more or less disappeared. As team confidence grew, veterans acted as informal mentors to new participants during the training period. The experienced teams were pleased and stimulated by the fresh ideas, while the newcomers were grateful for the help and advice of those with more experience.

FAC Artists Comment

- ▶ "I usually work in one discipline at a time. FAC gave me the opportunity to mix [arts] disciplines toward one goal. And it's more fun than I anticipated."
- ▶ "I am more aware of the demands on teachers. I feel more confident in facilitating reflection activities."
- ▶ "I have been working at engaging kids in arts activities for years, but have never analyzed my performance... Hearing what the teachers found useful was so helpful. I've tried to make learning impossible to avoid, to be specific and directive but still flexible and creative."

Worksheet 10:

Qualities of a Good Lesson

Please comment on each item, using the numbered indicators of success as guides.

	PARTICULAR STRENGTH	AREAS THAT NEED REFINING
<p>WARMUPS: Content is fun, focuses students, and leads to lesson</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructions are clear. 2. Students are involved at the warmup stations. 3. There is an exchange of ideas about what they have done. 4. The warmups are clearly related to the main activity. 5. The transition to the main activity is smooth and natural. 		
<p>MAIN ACTIVITY: Content is substantive</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have the opportunity to build on the ideas and concepts introduced in the warmup activities. 2. Connections are incorporated—personal, career, historic, cultural—that make the lesson more meaningful. 3. There is a natural inclusion of relevant vocabulary, with definitions. 4. Students are pleased with what they have experienced. 		

	PARTICULAR STRENGTH	AREAS THAT NEED REFINING
<p>MAIN ACTIVITY: Process is well planned</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lesson begins on time. 2. Students appear to be engaged in and enjoying the activity. 3. Facilitators are flexible—able to think on their feet. 4. Facilitators are open to whatever students can accomplish; there are no preconceived notions. 5. Each facilitator has a role to play; individual strengths are utilized. 6. Supplies are sufficient and readily available. 		
<p>MAIN ACTIVITY: Reflection is meaningful for students</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are comfortable experimenting with and revising their work. 2. Lesson is well paced, leaving time for discussion and reflection. 3. Facilitators are able to elicit insights and responses from students. 4. Most students participate in the sharing process. 5. The dialogue is interesting to an observer. 		

Worksheet 11: A Model of Collaborative Professional Development

Courtesy of the Institute for Arts and Humanities Education's Family Arts and Creativity (FAC) Program

1. Assemble three-person teams consisting of a classroom teacher, a teaching artist, and one other person—a school arts specialist, if possible, but otherwise a curriculum specialist, librarian, or other interested person from the school.
2. The program director or an experienced team presents a model lesson, with participants acting as the students. Lessons are structured as follows:
 - a. One or more warmup activities related to the lesson
 - b. Discussion of the warmups, then a segue to the main activity
 - c. The main activity: an arts project, including introduction of relevant vocabulary
 - d. Reflection on the main activity
 - f. Distribution of take-home materials and resources
3. After critiquing the demonstration lesson, the teams develop their own lessons within specified criteria and parameters: they must follow the structure provided in step 2, and the lessons must be of high artistic quality, educationally sound, personally meaningful, and fun. They must also meet one or more state core curriculum standards in the arts. After three years of piloting, FAC has built an archive of over twenty lessons, so FAC teams now have the option of either creating a new lesson or modifying or combining existing ones. Initially, the teachers provided the subject matter and the artists devised the activities, but over time these roles have blurred.
4. Each team teaches its lesson, followed by reflection and evaluation. They may also use the rubric you have designed to help them self-evaluate.
5. Based on the results of the practice teaching, the team modifies its lesson.
6. The project director maintains regular contact, providing support and, on occasion, resources and supplies.
7. The teams reconvene as a group to reflect on their successes and challenges.

Worksheet 12:

Arts Activities To Warm Up a Professional Development Session

Courtesy of Maureen Heffernan, Executive Director, Institute for Arts and Humanities Education, New Jersey

Four Directions (20 minutes)

1. Introduce the group to the activity. Each direction represents a different working style. Posted on the walls of the room are:
 - North: *Action*. Just do it!
 - South: *Inclusive*. Wants everyone to have an equal voice or opinion; never wants to hurt anyone's feelings.
 - East: *Details*. Wants to know who has to do what, by when.
 - West: *Vision*. Interested in the big picture; wants to think about all the options.
2. Ask each person to move to the direction that best represents his or her way of working. Each group discusses its strengths and limitations, which other groups they most and least like to work with, and what they need from the others to make a collaboration successful. They list these items but do not yet share them with the other groups.
3. Each group forms a human sculpture depicting its strengths and limitations, which the other groups try to interpret. The conclusions are compared with the individual groups' own lists.

Skills-Based Arts Learning as a Complement to General Learning (30 minutes)

The members of five-person groups take on these roles: 1 teacher, 2 students, 1 observer of workplace readiness skills, and 1 observer of curriculum connections. As the teacher instructs the students in a simple arts activity such as creating a movement pattern, learning a song, or writing a group poem, the observers record each time they see a workplace readiness skill addressed or reinforced (using the list of skills identified in the SCANS survey; see page 101) or a connection made to the school curriculum. Groups then share their findings.

Sharing Your Big Idea (30 minutes)

Give the groups a partnership scenario. Each member assumes a different persona (school administrator, teacher, artist, CSA administrator, or interested community member) who must devise a plan for the partnership based on the scenario. Provide time for the groups to share their plans.

Short Individual Arts Activity: Creating a Lune (20 minutes)

Each participant creates a lune, a three-line poem consisting of 3 words, 5 words, and 3 words, often referred to as the American haiku. The last line often expresses a surprise or a question. People may also illustrate their poems. The theme of the lunes is "What I know (or have learned) about being an effective partner." You can use other themes as well.