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editor

Research
Review

Editor's Note: This issue of Research Review focuses on the interplay between arts education and social justice, through both global and local lenses. Our first review highlights the instrumental role of arts education in UNESCO's efforts to effect global reform through primary education for all, while the second review tracks the impact of arts activities on special needs students in England. Our hope is to shed light on the work of Teaching Artists abroad, and to reinforce our collective vision of a culture of peace—from the international to the intrapersonal.

—D.P.

Educating for Creativity: Bringing Arts and Culture into Asian Education.
Ellie Meleisea, ed.

Report of the Asian Regional Symposia on Arts Education. January 9–11, 2004:
Measuring the Impact of Arts in Education, Hong Kong SAR, China; and March 21–24, 2005:
Transmissions and Transformations: Learning Through the Arts in Asia, New Delhi, India. Bangkok:
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2005.

Pursuing Quality Education Through the Arts: Lessons from Asia
Amy Shimshon-Santo

UNESCO's recent publication, Educating for Creativity: Bringing Arts and Culture into Asian Education (2005), is a meaningful resource for arts educators, researchers, and policy makers interested in arts education and development. It includes findings from two major regional conferences. The first gathering, held in Hong Kong in 2004, focused on Measuring the Impact of Arts in Education, and the second was convened a year later in New Delhi, emphasizing Transmissions and Transformations: Learning Through the Arts in Asia. The report unites diverse regional perspectives and situates arts in education as pivotal to redefining and reforming quality education.

The UNESCO report is best seen in relation to the global movement for international goals and benchmarks to eradicate poverty. Certainly, in the context of globalization, arts educators around the world can greatly benefit from better understanding global perspectives on culture and education. In addition, for many of us who are working in transnational, culturally diverse, or economically struggling communities, we can learn a tremendous amount from the ingenuity of arts educators and activists who contributed to this publication. The UNESCO report shares detailed contextual reflections on arts in education and provides an opportunity for Teaching Artists in the United States to move beyond our local frames and learn from international approaches to arts in education.

Arts Education and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

It is important to begin by placing this report within the context of international development activism and the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental stability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Few U.S. residents are aware of what exactly the MDGs are, and this is a reflection of the geographic myopia that arguably plagues our country. While people are increasingly aware that globalization is dramatically changing our neighborhoods and schools, the challenge to connect up to regional and international initiatives in culture and education is complicated by the many daily struggles in our lives and communities. While many arts educators have grown accustomed to shifting between community and university settings, and within diverse cultural neighborhoods, globalization has undoubtedly deepened the contradictions within and between our communities. Interestingly, UNESCO's report allows us to hear about arts education issues that are increasingly relevant to U.S. residents, and allows the reader to recognize diverse stories and contributions of Asian artists, scholars, and activists, to the field of arts in education.

How many of us even know about the MDGs and how they relate to our daily

work in arts education? The second MDG is to achieve universal primary education for everyone in the world. *The Millennium Goals Report 2005* found that "Of the 115 million children out of school in developing countries in 2001, some had dropped out, others had never been enrolled at all." This problem is particularly grave in Southern Asia and Africa. The UNESCO report emerged from the international attention galvanized around the MDGs, but takes the commitment to educational access a step further by interrogating the quality of education itself.

The UNESCO report studies how arts in education can redefine and achieve quality education in Asia. It suggests that arts in education plays a crucial role in redefining and achieving quality education, and, therefore, is significant to achieving the MDGs. This, in itself, is a crucial contribution to our field that should not be taken lightly: that arts in education is not merely a small interest group of creative people who love the arts, but, instead, is a pivotal contributor to educational reform and community development at home and abroad. The MDGs are not only relevant to international contexts, but can also be applied to address the highly unequal social conditions plaguing communities right here in the United States.

A recurring theme throughout the UNESCO report is what constitutes a meaningful, culturally relevant, and quality education that contributes to a culture of peace. In his public appeal at the turn of the century, Koichiro Matsuura, argued that "Today we are clearly and strongly aware of the important influence of the creative spirit in shaping the human personality, bringing out the full potential of children and adolescents, and maintaining their emotional balance—all factors which foster harmonious behavior" (145). In his "Appeal for the Promotion of Arts Education and Creativity at School," Matsuura reiterates that a culturally diverse

arts curriculum is imperative for cultivating human understanding, achieving social justice, and mutual dignity among diverse individuals, communities, and nations.

The articles in this report often use a multilayered approach to cultural education that recognizes the contentious interplay between recovering and validating traditional cultures, and, at the same time, engaging with global youth culture. Recognition of this difficult mediation process is a useful contribution to arts educators who come from, and work with, culturally diverse and immigrant youth in Asia and beyond.

Culturally Grounded and Integrated Approaches to Arts Education

The report is structured into seven major sections, with helpful introductory analysis, vivid case studies, and intricate annexes of the conference participants and topics. The first section overviews a common vision for arts education in Asia. The regional meetings are then overviewed before presenting a series of heterogeneous case studies from a broad range of countries including Indonesia, Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, Korea, India, and Central Asia. Common streams flowing throughout the divergent analyses include recovery of culturally grounded frameworks, a preference for integrated "arts in education" versus arts-only focused curriculum, and a commitment to creative expression over rote learning in the arts.

Contributors to the UNESCO report often expressed dissatisfaction with stifled approaches to arts education. Writing from India, Pawan Sudhir critiques prevailing approaches to arts education as part of the problem and not the solution. Sudhir explains, "The way in which children are currently asked to do art activities in the formal school system is ineffective and counter productive ... [and] makes children

view art merely as a skill rather than a tool of expression ... using the existing formal approach to art education, does not allow children to exercise their creativity, but instead makes children lose their creative impulse" (108).

But the contributors did not stop at critiquing defunct, or nonexistent, arts education practices. Victor Ordoñez argues that, "There is an increasing sense of frustration among today's educators regarding the fact that education systems and programmes of study remain stubbornly unchanged while the world around us changes rapidly" (80). However, Ordoñez explains how the reform movement in the Phillippines created alternatives to the dominant system by developing the notion of *makabayan*, or citizenship. *Makabayan* became a term for designing comprehensive curriculum that "grouped arts education, music, health, civics, and physical education" (81). Another culturally grounded alternative is presented in Sangeeta Isvaran's "Rasa and Dance: Bringing Creativity into Education." Isvaran recovers the Sanskrit concept of rasa to revitalize dance education. Her standard for quality arts education becomes the essence of *rasa*—which she translates "as a form of ... fulfillment' or 'satisfaction'" (Isvaran 57).

Defining a Common Purpose for Arts Education

In a U.S. environment where arts education is increasingly guided by formal standards-based structures, Jane Cheng's "Artists in Schools: Integrating the Arts in Education" is refreshing. In her case study, the open-ended project goals (which were supported by lofty partners including the Hong Kong Development Council, the Hong Kong Bank Foundation, and the Education and Manpower Bureau) were to "develop creativity and imagination, develop skills and processes, cultivate critical responses, and understand arts in context"

(Cheng 63). The project outcomes in Cheng's study highlighted the important, and often overlooked, benefits of improvement in the following areas: artistic skills, creativity, cooperation and bonding, motivation and enjoyment of learning, and affective experience (65).

These open-ended goals stand in dramatic contrast to trends in the United States, where arts in education advocates are constantly battling with public agencies to defend their core purposes. Oftentimes, qualitative and affective assessment categories, like those used in Cheng's study, are overlooked or seen as inconsequential. For example, it is quite common to find arts education projects that are required to demonstrate their ability to boost test scores in other core curricular areas (other than the arts) in order to substantiate future investment. Cheng's finding that arts in education resulted in "cooperation and bonding," and "motivation and enjoyment of learning" offer a delightful contrast to the trend towards standards-based arts education and assessment so common in California and other states.

Conclusion

UNESCO's Educating for Creativity highlights diverse strategies for revitalizing arts education in Asian contexts. While this report tends to focus its attention on bigger schemes and plans, rather than detailed in-class arts ideas, its overarching gifts are generous. It reminds readers that arts education ought to be culturally relevant, enjoyable, and creative, and that integrated approaches to arts in education often provide creative solutions that make the arts meaningful to young people in challenging circumstances.

Shakti Maira suggests that the "inter-pollinated cultures of Asia" have much to teach each other and the rest of the world. In fact, Maira continues, the history of arts education goes back to the earliest civiliza-

tions where "creation and learning were intertwined, arts and knowledge were virtually synonymous" (7). Educating for Creativity places the notion of quality education alongside discussions of educational access. The report inspires readers to learn from Asia's rich diversity, but, also, to ask ourselves: How can we make arts in education meaningful, enjoyable, and culturally relevant? How can arts education support social justice efforts, help decrease poverty, and increase the rasa, or satisfaction, in the lives of students and teachers? These important questions can be applied across different geographic and cultural contexts from Asia to the Americas.

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Serious Play: An Evaluation of Arts Activities in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units.
Anne Wilkin, Caroline Gulliver, and Kay Kinder.

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2005.

Pursuing Social Inclusion Through the Arts: Lessons from England
Dana Powell

In recent decades, arts education has experienced a bit of an identity crisis. The arts have been held up for their intrinsic value (art for art's sake) and their instrumental value (art for math and reading's sake). There is a growing movement among arts advocates to articulate the value of the arts in terms of social justice. In this context, the arts are believed to advance positive development both within and among individuals, ultimately leading to a more equitable, compassionate, just, respectful, and democratic society. At the heart of social justice lie the inclusion, engagement, and belonging of each individual.

Since 1997, the London-based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has fostered the social inclusion of young people through artist residencies in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Learning Support Units (LSUs).

These units are special learning centers for youth identified by the school system as disaffected, disruptive, or otherwise at risk. PRUs operate as stand-alone schools, serving youth who have been "excluded"—or expelled—from their regular schools for extended periods of time. Students assigned to PRUs often have emotional or behavioral difficulties ranging from truancy to violence. In contrast, LSUs operate as designated classrooms within a mainstream school site, serving youth with relatively temporary challenges ranging from anxiety to teenage pregnancy.

The Foundation set out to evaluate the "effects and effectiveness" of its PRU/LSU arts initiative because the existing literature on the arts and disaffected youth was viewed as "patchy and largely anecdotal" (9). The study targeted "the distinctive contribution that arts activities might make to pupils' educational, social and personal development, to assess the impact of arts projects on staff and institutional outcomes and to audit perceptions of cost-effectiveness" (9). According to the report, the primary methodology included 69 interviews with pupils, teachers, artists, and administrators across 7 program sites. These interview data were supplemented by student data regarding attendance, behavior, expulsions, achievement, and "reintegration"—or successful return to their mainstream classes. The results of the study have implications for Teaching Artists with regard to both the implementation and impact of residencies with this youth constituency.

Lessons on Implementation
Effective implementation of the residencies was explored from the perspectives of the students, artists, teachers, and administrators; the findings were presented in 6 categories.

• Pupils' preferences. Students engaged in the residencies preferred "practical"—or

hands-on—activities, because it was better suited to their learning styles.

• Artists' input. Key factors in success were the artists' backgrounds, personalities, and approach to teaching, which tended to be more informal and relaxed, and demonstrated sensitivity to and respect for young people.

• Project planning. Not surprisingly, residencies were more successful when the artist and teacher had co-planning time in advance. The researchers point out the value of including co-planning time in the initial design and budget of such partnerships.

• Schools' culture and ethos. As might be expected, the projects were subject to school politics, perceptions, and competing funding priorities. The value placed on arts and culture in the school community was critical to the success of the residencies.

• The distinctive nature of the arts. The arts activities represented a departure from the students' regular curriculum in a number of ways: they were more hand-on and contemporary in nature, allowed for success and positive expression, and focused on developing one's self-image.

• Cost-effectiveness. While teachers and administrators perceived the residencies as expensive, they unanimously supported the cost-effectiveness of the programs in terms of both student outcomes and teacher development within the PRU/LSU.

Lessons on Impact

The residencies had a variety of impacts on the students, teachers, artists, and organizations involved.

• Impact on students. For pupils, the key areas of impact were knowledge and skills, communication, self-confidence and self-esteem, and enjoyment. The "enjoyment" factor was emphasized throughout

the report, as the United Kingdom's government and Department for Education and Skills have recently targeted the need for student enjoyment in education. The residencies were not found to have long-term effects on students' "entrenched problems" due to the short-term nature of the arts experiences (12). However, the positive impact of the residencies on student behavior, attitudes, and attendance suggested that sustained arts involvement could result in extended benefits and commitment to school.

• Impact on teachers. Among the teachers interviewed, the majority reported that their own knowledge and skills in the arts had improved. Further, teachers reported that the artists inspired new approaches to their own instruction and classroom management. Because the expectations and extent of teacher engagement in the lessons varied across the sites, teacher development was inconsistent. The researchers suggest that teacher involvement be established and defined through coplanning prior to the residency.

• Impact on artists. The key benefits reported by artists included enhanced flexibility and teaching skills, and an increased awareness of student issues and needs within the PRU/LSU context. Overall, artists expressed enthusiasm for continued work in this area.

• Impact on organizations. While the staff of the school sites and arts organizations were interested in further collaboration, "sustained funding was perceived to be an enormous barrier to building on this legacy" (13). This represents a critical challenge, as even the sponsoring foundation recognized the long-term limitations of continuing its PRU/LSU initiative.

Conclusion

The researchers repeatedly emphasized the challenge of establishing long-term

effects in a climate of "short-termism." This sentiment resonates with American school reform efforts, both within and beyond the arts. Teachers are often torn between their commitment to the arts in education and their apprehensions about investing in partnerships that may quickly dissolve due to a lack of funding. As concluded by the authors, this study "begs the question as to what might be possible if more sustained funding or a more permanent place for arts activities...is made available" (94). Indeed, the possibilities may be endless for the socialization of our youth, and the creation of a broader culture of social justice.

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