

WGAHE

Teacher Education in the Arts  
Disciplines

**TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE ARTS DISCIPLINES**

*A Statement of the Working Group on the Arts in Higher Education*

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### Abstract

The arts are a body of knowledge and skills. They represent records of transcendent achievement and modes of thought. Learning an art form involves the acquisition of both intellectual and physical abilities. Such acquisition takes place through personal interaction with subject matter, with physical challenges, with ideas, and with people. Teachers encourage and lead this interaction.

Since it is impossible to teach what one does not know, teacher education in the arts must focus on practice and study in the various arts disciplines. Such curricula must also develop an understanding of intellectual life as a whole and the role of art within it. This understanding requires progression beyond mere study of teaching methods to advanced work in all aspects of an art form and in related fields. This agenda best prepares teachers of the arts to impart their knowledge as technique, as culture, and as means for gaining further knowledge.

The arts are formally taught by school-based specialist teachers of the arts disciplines, elementary classroom teachers, artists, and teachers in community arts programs and other out-of-school settings. Although the components of teacher preparation are the same for all four groups, the balances among these components differ and emphases vary.

Preparation programs for specialist teachers and elementary classroom teachers are heavily influenced by laws and regulations. It is a constant challenge to maintain appropriate focus on arts study in an increasingly political climate for governmental policy development in education.

One constant question for policy makers is, "Who should teach art?" The answer, of course, depends on what we want students to know and to be able to do in one or more of the arts disciplines. Our aspiration for students should be high, and these high aspirations should inform policies that provide expert teachers in the arts for every student K-12.

In the elementary years, it is particularly important that students receive regular arts instruction. This means that the arts disciplines must figure more prominently in the future education of general classroom teachers. Until this policy change is made, specialist arts teachers must carry the major burden of substantive arts teaching in most schools.

Accountability is another constant problem. Numerous professional arts education organizations currently promote high standards for the preparation of arts teachers, yet bureaucratically imposed criteria often prevent implementation of these standards. For example, state certification requirements for arts teachers are well below those of the professional organizations and accrediting associations in the arts. Pressure must constantly be applied in many states to keep artistic content prominent.

Individual accountability is inherent in the teacher education process, yet current educational reform rhetoric bristles with calls for standardized examinations of teachers and teaching. The connection between a reliance on such concepts of accountability and the need for teachers who integrate high intellectual, artistic, and professional ideals into their teaching is at best yet to be proven. Again and again, aspirations for the life of the mind seem to take second place to

designs for increased bureaucracy and the application of technique. It is easy to forget that the most important form of accountability beyond tests of basic competence is that imposed on an individual by his or her own commitment to a high level of achievement.

While mass culture does not need the support general arts education, intensive, sequential K-12 arts education is important to the viability of an intellectually based arts community and to the development of high civilization. Artists, arts educators, and advocates must act on a common recognition of these connections. Teachers of the arts disciplines must be prepared to be active members of the artistic and intellectual communities both by maintaining artistic and intellectual goals and by seeking means to encourage and guide intellectual development in their students. Other institutions, organizations, and individuals in the cultural community must work for conditions that support achievement of these objectives. For example, significant additional support must be lent to the struggles necessary to establish the study of the various arts as basic curricular components in K-12 education. Efforts to address such issues as status, management, funding, demographics, and media must also be undertaken.

The current review of American education provides an important opportunity to address these questions in a supportive context. The Working Group on the Arts in Higher Education believes that the preparation of arts teachers is a major social concern. The arts shape values and values shape the nation. Teachers are the key. Identifying, preparing, and supporting outstanding teachers of the arts is a priority that needs increased recognition and support. Everyone has a responsibility. It is time to move ahead together.

## PART I CONCEPTS

### Overview

Learning and achievement in the arts disciplines result from a wide variety of education and experience. Many individuals add to this variety: parents, teachers, clergy, politicians, media executives, and school administrators, to name a few. Some teach by example, others by producing and promoting specific cultural material, and others by formal instructions. Without discounting the importance of all means for learning, this paper focuses on the preparation of those who provide formal arts instruction for students in the elementary and secondary years. The purpose of this instruction is to enable students to deal with at least one art form as a body of knowledge and skills, a record of transcendent achievement, and a mode of thought. Almost any other objective -- educational, social, or philosophical -- can be accomplished with or without attention to art. Therefore, teacher education in the arts must be centered in the practice and study of one or more disciplines -- art, dance, music, theatre.

Teacher preparation is a regular topic in current reports proposing reforms for American elementary and secondary education. The question for any educational reform movement is the extent to which eventual changes make it easier to accomplish basic responsibilities in the classroom. Fortunately, American education has many resources for making improvement. Institutions, professional standards, curricula, and accountability mechanisms are all in place. These structures are sustained by concepts basic to American educational thought: opportunity, diversity, local control, and geographic distribution of resources. Faith in these concepts is justified, because each structure, appropriately utilized by capable individuals, produces magnificent results. This report on teacher education in the arts suggests how such concepts can be preserved, extended, and enriched on behalf of the next generation of American students.

### Art as Subject Matter

Human existence cannot be understood in its totality through any one mode of inquiry. For example, science, history, and art all reveal different truths about any one subject or event. These three fundamental forms of inquiry and the languages needed to use them form the core of a basic curriculum that teaches the knowledge and skills of civilization.

Art as basic subject matter has content similar to that of other subjects. As languages have words and syntax, as mathematics have numbers and formulas, as science has accepted discoveries and experimental methods, as history has facts and analytical principles, so each of the arts has its own vocabulary and organizing mechanisms. Each has a body of work that manifests superior application of these elements, and each has analytical principles and experimental methods. These components constitute the content of study in each of the arts disciplines.

### The Centrality of Teaching

After all the research, all the conferences, all the policy statements, and all the political debate, results in the classroom are generated by the interaction of teachers, students, and subject matter. For too many years, our tendency has been to focus on techniques for facilitating that interaction in a management sense rather than in a pedagogical sense. In our search for systems guaranteed to replicate satisfactory results, we have lost sight of the fact that the purpose of education is to produce ever-increasing capacities for thought, individual by individual.

These capacities are based on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skill. Knowledge and skills, when combined with aspirations to stretch the mind, enable individuals to push constantly against the boundaries of their capabilities. In the early years, these conditions produce a constantly expanding joy in learning; in later years, they become the foundation for significant achievement.

Learning takes place through personal interaction with subject matter, with people, with physical challenges, and with ideas. Teachers are responsible for leading and encouraging this interaction both by professional action and personal

example. Thus, the preparation of teachers is one of the most critical matters facing any society: to do less than our best is to diminish our nation's capacities in perpetuity.

Teaching art requires more than leading students to believe that art is nice. It involves providing students with individual means for in-depth access to the content of the arts disciplines. As is the case with other subjects, early work with the basics of an arts discipline makes more advanced work possible. These basics, when combined with the development of physical skills and inspired by great works of art, form a body of individual techniques and information that eventually becomes the means for personal growth in the discipline.

The symbiotic relationship between art and teaching and its meaning in operational terms remain central to the improvement of conditions for artistic and educational practice and thus central to the potential quality of our cultural advance.

Therefore, in order to reach our society's artistic goals and to fulfill the mandates of our cultural heritage, our preparation programs for arts teachers must be expanded to serve more students more intensively. All concerned with matters of art have a tremendous stake both in arts education and in the preparation of arts teachers.

## PART II ISSUES

### Formal Education

#### **Art Specialists**

Preparation programs for those who will teach one of the arts as school-based specialists must focus on the arts disciplines themselves, while integrating the development of intellectual, physical, and pedagogical skills throughout the undergraduate curriculum.

Specialist art teachers must understand the basic methods and materials for teaching their discipline. They must also understand the educational settings in which they will work. Studies in education should bring these educational elements together with artistic competence to develop a general foundation for teaching. Teacher preparation curricula for arts specialists should also develop a sense of understanding about intellectual life as a whole and the role of art within it. Skill in the use of language, an understanding of psychology, and familiarity with the historical roots of American civilization are essential.

Artistic talents, aptitude for teaching, and commitment to their profession are obvious attributes of successful specialist teachers. However, the sources of talent and aptitude are more mysterious than factors influencing commitment, which is often based on such practical matters as the availability of jobs and the long-term opportunities they offer. Students cannot be attracted to careers that do not exist. While all fifty states certify K-12 specialists in art and music, a small number offer such recognition in theatre and dance. The ramifications of these policies are obvious. Those wishing to teach theatre or dance in most states must receive their certification credentials in English or physical education. Changing this situation must become one of the highest priorities of the arts community in the United States.

Current education discussion is replete with proposals about the length, content, and sequence of teacher preparation curricula. Almost all proposals call for a greater focus on subject matter and less emphasis on educational methodology. Some have called for the acquisition of teaching skills after completion of a traditional liberal arts education. All recognize the prevailing truth that no curriculum is long enough or comprehensive enough to achieve complete preparation; yet, debates continue about the length of formal undergraduate study.

The focus on subject matter in teacher education is a tenet strongly held by arts faculties and administrators in American higher education. Statements by national organizations representing these groups recommend that at least fifty percent of the teacher preparation curriculum for an arts specialist involve studies in the art form. These studies include creation/performance, history, and analysis. General education with a liberal arts emphasis is expected to comprise approximately one-third of the total curriculum with the remainder devoted to professional education courses and student teaching.

The course distribution recognizes that specialist arts teachers must have the basic skills of a professional artist. While this pattern was structured originally to follow a four-year undergraduate sequence, various pressures have increased graduation requirements to the point that four and one-half or five years of study are necessary in many institutions.

Whatever changes are made in the future, the fact remains that art is centered in the acquisition of intellectual *and* physical skills. Drill and practice, as well as study, are central to the development of fluency in an art form. In music and dance, it is particularly important that physical skills be developed at an early age. It is imprudent to suggest postponing the development of physical skills while intellectual skills are developed. The reverse is also imprudent; intellectual skills and physical skills enhance each other. The result must be specialist teachers who have sufficient technical skills to be artists, and whose work reflects a philosophical/conceptual base rather than a methodological one. Methods and techniques without relationship to a general concept become both ends and means. When this happens in teaching, the result is a tragic loss of focus on subject matter and content. This reinforces the need for an artistic



orientation in the preparation of specialist arts teachers.

### **Elementary Classroom Teachers**

Elementary classroom teachers have important roles to play in arts education, because they have the most regular contact with their students. The nature of this role, however, is the subject of much debate. The educational priorities of most school districts do not result in the availability of enough specialist arts teachers. When specialist teachers are available, they normally are able to spend one 30- to 40-minute period with each class every two weeks. This is not sufficient time to develop literacy in an arts discipline.

The prevalence of such conditions has led some policy thinkers to call for greater reliance on elementary classroom teachers for regular arts education. It is suggested that the elementary classroom teacher play an increasingly structured role as introducer of the arts and as an encourager of the artistic impulses of children. Appreciation is the expected result. Those concerned with teaching the arts as disciplines point out the exploratory nature of these approaches and contrast them with studies that build knowledge, skills, and vocabularies through sequential application. They ask whether elementary classroom teachers without sufficient literacy in an arts discipline can help someone else become literate. Specialists are particularly concerned about the ability of most elementary classroom teachers to make the connection from awareness to knowledge and skills development.

This argument tends to be clouded by economic considerations. Specialist teachers have an historically grounded fear that any excuse will be found to cut their programs. Proposals calling for greater reliance on elementary classroom teachers increase this fear tremendously. Such is the case particularly when arts advocates promote a combination of visiting artists supported by elementary classroom teachers as an optimum solution to arts education in hard economic times. Those committed to formal, substantive arts instruction see this notion as reinforcing rather than breaking the cycle of neglect that plagues attempts to generate sequential arts study as a basic in the elementary curriculum.

As important as these debates are, the central question remains a teacher's competence in subject matter, not professional designation as an arts specialist or elementary generalist. At present, approximately half of the states require arts study for certification as an elementary classroom teacher. Most of these states require one semester's work in music and one in art. Although such orientations are useful, it is questionable how much literacy in an arts discipline can be achieved in one semester. Most elementary schools must therefore rely on arts specialists to deliver sequential, curriculum-based arts education. The preparation of a pool of general classroom teachers with adequate competence in the arts disciplines would require significant changes: more arts study in teacher education programs; increased arts requirements for state certification; raised expectations for arts competence by school boards that employ teachers; and, ultimately, literacy in the arts disciplines among elementary students who may themselves become teachers. In the best of future situations, specialist and elementary classroom teachers would work together to produce universal arts literacy.

### **Artists**

In K-12 education, artists appear most frequently in conjunction with short-term opportunities for students to experience professional performances, view works of art, and learn something of the artist as a personality. These opportunities are important elements of arts education. However, such experiences are most effective when integrated into a sequential curriculum, reinforcing student efforts to make and to study art. To do otherwise simply provides a series of random events which usually have little connection with formal education.

Artists engaged for school performances need orientation to the regular teaching process. Such orientation may be provided in a variety of ways. However, the goal must always be assisting the artist to make the transition between delivering excitement and imparting knowledge in an educational setting. Since a regular objective of art is to deliver excitement and impart knowledge at the same time, artists must be able to approach their educational responsibilities with the same sense of dedication to content, the same sense of planning, and the same sense of appreciation for difficulty that characterizes their approach to art itself.

The use of artists in educational setting also provides opportunities for artists and teachers to work together. The integration of curriculum-based instruction and arts experiences involves long-range planning, funding, and other operational support. However, success is dependent on the knowledge, skills, and philosophical orientations of both artists and teachers. These conditions demonstrate that preparation for work in formal education should not be restricted to majors in the various arts who will become elementary and secondary specialist teachers.

Too many students regard teaching as an option only if they are unsuccessful as artists. This is particularly ironic, since large numbers of professionals working in any art form teach at some point. Thus, preparation for teaching is important for all arts majors in higher education. Such preparation may or may not include specific courses in pedagogy or teacher education; however, the undergraduate experience should result in an understanding of teaching and its relationship to the whole arts enterprise.

### **Teachers in Community Settings**

Arts education for the K-12 age group is also provided by teachers working in out-of-school settings. Some of these teachers work independently; other work in institutions specializing in after-school and weekend instruction. Many teachers work extensively in one or both of these situations; however, those working primarily as school-based arts teachers and artists often are involved on a part-time basis.

Teachers in these circumstances have wide influence on general education in the various arts. They also exert great influence on student who will become professional artists. For both these reasons, the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed by arts teachers in community settings are similar to those of specialist arts teachers in formal K-12 education. However, the organization of collegiate-level curricula to meet these needs differs, primarily because state certification requirements are applicable only to those who will teach in the public schools. The most effective non-school arts teachers are thoroughly grounded in their respected art forms. Significant numbers are professional artists. However, the extent to which they have undertaken individual or institution-based study of the teaching process varies widely. Like school-based teachers, some have broad intellectual interests, while others are exclusively focused on their art form and pre-professional preparation for gifted students.

Counseling programs in higher education should locate students with inclinations and aptitudes for teaching in community settings. These students should be encouraged to pursue courses of study that combine intensive work in their arts disciplines with studies that broaden concepts of the connections among artistic life, intellectual life, civilization, and the responsibility of each teacher to bring these concepts to his or her work with students.

While working environments and organizational structures differ for public school teachers and community-based teachers, both teaching groups share need for graduate and continuing education that expand artistic, intellectual, and professional competence. These needs go beyond studies of teaching methods to advanced work in all aspects of the art form and in related fields. Such studies best prepare community-based teachers to teach their art as technique, as culture, and as a means for gaining knowledge. This is important for students with avocational interest in the arts and essential for the pre-collegiate preparation of professional artists.

### **Influences**

#### **Status**

Interrelationships between the status of professional practice in art and in education and the status of public support for art and for education are major influences on teacher education. Both meanings of status are appropriate here: status as an indicator of respect and status as an indication of the general situation. The interchange between overall respect and general conditions is particularly critical since support for education and for art is so dependent on the aggregation of

many individual decisions. These connections have much current interest because the status of American education is now being thoroughly reviewed. A primary goal is to raise the status of teaching and of educating in general. A parallel effort has been under way in the arts for at least a quarter of a century.

While each of these efforts is massive enough to touch many people, the extent to which public opinion in general has been changed is not clear. However, it is probably safe to say that most Americans regard art fundamentally in the orbit of entertainment, and education primarily as preparation for a career. The lack of public understanding that both art and education are fundamentally concerned with the intellectual and spiritual life of the mind continues to have heavy influence on the status of art, the status of education, and the nature of the interchange between the two.

These conditions influence the decisions of individuals whether to seek careers in arts teaching and whether to remain in those careers for a lifetime.

Much has been written about the sorry state to which the working lives of most teachers has fallen. Salaries are always mentioned as one of the great problems to be solved before more outstanding individuals can be attracted to teaching careers. However, other studies show that while financial problems remain important, it is a real or projected lack of intellectual, artistic, and professional satisfaction that slows interest and causes other careers to be chosen. Most capable people seek working conditions that enable them to use their knowledge and skills in a personal way. Unfortunately, many of the answers proposed to improve educational quality emphasize increased bureaucracy and minimize individual empowerment.

Institutions concerned with the preparation of teachers do so in relationship to the kinds of jobs available. Rigorous, sequential arts education for all students has not been the norm in most American schools. If it were, teacher education programs would be quite different. At the elementary school level, most teachers do not see students with sufficient regularity to teach an arts discipline with the same intensity and focus accorded to English, math, and science. Relatively brief teaching periods are separated by long intervals. At best, there are opportunities for interested students to volunteer for intensive extracurricular arts activities oriented toward public presentation. In secondary schools, the voluntary nature of arts activity is typical. Students elect to join organizations and classes devoted to the performance aspects of the various arts. Since these are the expectations for teaching of the arts in most elementary and secondary schools, these are the skills which are the most highly developed in teacher preparation programs. The current system rewards a teacher's ability to produce a nearly professional quality performance in one of the art forms with a select group of students. There is almost no status associated with providing general arts education. Until the scope of this value system is enlarged, there is little prospect for much change of orientation in teacher education curricula for specialist arts teachers. The national voluntary K-12 standards published in 1994 represent a potential major force for expanding arts education goals to include all students.

It is certainly desirable to maintain high-level performance opportunities in elementary and secondary schools. Such programs are the glory of American arts education and have many benefits for cultural development. They identify potential professional artists, they provide advanced work for capable students, they provide a practice-based demonstration of the meaning of the art form, and they provide access to works of art for a broad public. It would be foolish to subtract from these programs. Instead, a major commitment to a basic arts education for all students needs to be added. Then, commitment and status could regenerate each other.

### **Management, Funding, Demographics**

In a society where the perceived purpose of education is imbalanced in favor of pragmatic vocational goals, management issues often become the occasions for massive bureaucratic power struggles. Involvement in this power struggle too often becomes the primary agenda for educators. Responsibilities to students and to subject matter can easily be lost in the process. Analyses stemming from the current educational reform movement are producing greater recognition of this problem. One does not support calls for greater intellectual application to teaching and learning with the imposition of more bureaucratic regulation and power structures.

At the college level, funding for specific academic departments is often based on course enrollments. This produces an economic and management orientation for debates about curricular distributions for various majors, including teacher education. Capitation funding also places false ground under decisions about the administrative home for arts education curricula, whether with art, dance, music, or theatre, or with education. This is not to suggest that one valid model exists for administering curricula that prepare arts teachers. A wide variety of successful practice is evident throughout the nation. However, the decision-making climate is too often clouded by a power versus content syndrome exacerbated by formulaic funding patterns.

Financial pressures in teacher training institutions have a severe impact on the availability of funds for faculty development. This condition remains fairly hidden from public view since it has little of the media appeal found in macro budgets, interplays of power redistribution, and grand statements of problems and solutions. However, the capabilities of those who teach teachers are perhaps the most central influence on the developing quality of arts teaching in the nation as a whole. The lack of focus on professional development of faculty is tragic in its exemplification of the difficulties inherent in achieving operational support for the centrality of content.

The changing demographic situation also provides a major influence on the climate for teacher education. Demographic shifts have direct bearing on the number and distribution of elementary and secondary teachers employed in any given time. Shifting population profiles also change priorities. By the year 2010, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians will constitute approximately one-third of the total population of the United States. Minority representation in the teaching force becomes of increasing importance as these conditions develop over the next twenty years. There is concern that minorities are currently under represented in the professions of K-12 arts education. There is also speculation that this may change as more minority group families achieve middle and upper-middle income status. The children of these families may feel freer to pursue altruistic as well as economic goals.

Demographics also influence arts curricula. The United States is an assimilation of many cultures, each with its important contributions. Demographic shifts, however, can result in programmatic goals for arts education that see cultural orientation rather than art itself as the central focus of the curriculum. Debates about the extent to which elementary and secondary arts curricula should become an adjunct to social studies will be a feature of the landscape for teacher education programs for many years to come. Keeping art at the center of arts education may become increasingly difficult.

### **Media and Policy Development**

The aggregate power of the mass media to create taste presents a daunting challenge to all teachers, and especially arts teachers. The easy availability of entertainment made possible by the electronics revolution is a major influence. The concept that joy, creativity, and art are the result of hard work is hard to maintain in a society where instant gratification is routine. While everyone expects English, mathematics, science, and historical studies to be difficult and intellectually challenging; art is often seen as something available at the flip of a switch.

The combination of an omnipresent mass culture with the lack of a commonly understood connection between art and work produces broad influence on the preparation of arts teachers. Students whose acquaintance with the arts disciplines is primarily passive and oriented toward instant gratification often find the challenges of rigorous arts study distasteful. Incredible skills are required to lead students to the place where they can appreciate more in each of the art forms than what is most commonly available through the mass media. This situation requires that arts teachers have the ability to expand awareness and understanding of the possibilities inherent in art, music, dance, and theatre by creating in their students an evolving will to learn. Such creation is based in turn on the ability to inspire students to deal with art as a body of knowledge and skills, a record of transcendent achievement, and a mode of thought. The difficulty of this job demands the highest possible intellectual, artistic, and professional aspirations and capabilities as basic equipment for the successful teacher.

Mass communication also has a tremendous influence on policy development. Media emphasis on the spectacular often dims public focus on the need for steady, long-term effort. Such effort is at the core of successful education. However, the drill and practice necessary to master the languages of the various arts disciplines seem unspectacular, so media attention falls more upon superficial display than upon productive work. This search generates policies calculated more to create dramatic images than to address basic realities and core problems in education.

The search for spectacle also produces an oscillating set of expectations. Education is supposed to develop high levels of knowledge and intellectual skill; likewise, it is expected to solve every social problem. Neither time nor money exists to do both, and so one agenda suffers at the expense of the other. The constant change in local, regional, and national priorities in this regard produces a moving target for the teacher preparation process.

## **Accountability**

### **Institutions**

Current education reform rhetoric is replete with calls for accountability, usually in terms of standardized test scores. Such rhetoric is consistent with the American inclination to seek verification only through numbers. As debate continues, warnings are being heard that to replace a search for methodological technique, sociological perfection, and appropriate authority profiles with a new emphasis on accountability has a high prospect of leaving subject matter and skills out in the cold once again.

Teacher education, and particularly teacher education in the arts disciplines, has numerous accountability systems. As is the case with all aspects of our educational systems. As is the case with all aspects of our educational system, present accountability mechanisms work extremely well in specific instances, while in others they fail. This suggests that failure lies not so much with the accountability structure itself, but rather among the various values and conditions that inform specific uses of it.

The most rigorous teacher education standards in the arts, disciplines are found in the accreditation statements of the National Association of Schools of Music, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the National Association of Schools of Theatre, and the National Association of Schools of Dance. These statements are consistent with statements by the professional organizations of teachers in the arts disciplines such as the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Music Educators National Conference, the National Art Education Association and the National Dance Association. They are also consistent with student competency expectations in the national voluntary K-12 arts standards.

The accreditation of teacher education in general is the responsibility of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE has just completed a redesign of its standard and accreditation procedures. While NCATE does not have specific statements on the arts disciplines per se, its regulations call for institutional attention to standards developed by professional disciplinary groups. NCATE utilizes and works with review decisions by the arts accreditors.

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education Certification also maintains general standards for certification in various specialty areas. In most cases, its statements are consistent with, but less rigorous than, those articulated by the professional arts accrediting associations and professional teacher organizations in the arts.

Finally, there are the certification standards of the individual states. As might be expected, the states take a variety of approaches to the issue of rigor and specificity. However, in most cases, state certification standards present lower expectations than the standards set by arts education professionals.

Notably, while many institutions volunteer to be reviewed for accreditation, the curricula of all institutions must meet state certification standards. Thus, differences between state certification standards and standards set by professionals in the arts disciplines result in uneven expectations and objectives between accredited and non-accredited institutions.

The continuous battle in many states to keep state certification standards for teachers of the arts sufficiently concerned with artistic content attests to the chronic nature of this problem as an influence on teacher education programs.

### **Individuals**

Individual accountability is constant in the teacher education process. Admission to, retention in, and graduation from teacher preparation degree programs all represent specific stages, followed in close succession by individual certification and, eventually, permanent certification as a teacher. The current education debate has developed proposals that would change the basic accountability structure in American education. pursuit of these ideas beyond issues of power

redistribution reveals that the basic accountability functions to be served would remain the same. As always, subject matter, skills, content, and values are the real matters of concern.

While examinations are easy to develop to determine those who should not be allowed to teach at all, accountability concerns must extend beyond disaster prevention. The requisite capability of an excellent arts teacher goes far beyond that which can be demonstrated in a multiple-choice examination. The use of such examinations to establish thresholds of basic acceptability have merit. However, the connection between reliance on such examinations for accountability and the need for teachers who integrate high intellectual, artistic, and professional aspirations with their teaching is at best yet to be proven, and at worst dubious. Again, aspirations for the life of the mind seem to take second place to aspirations for the application of technique. While short-term accountability is achieved, misuse of testing can remove the prospect for the kind of long-term accountability that makes a difference.

Present rhetoric which wishes to put "teaching to the test" could become central to American education if translated into future policy. Such rhetoric, however, avoids a significant fact: the most important kind of accountability beyond basic competence is that imposed on an individual by his or her own commitment to a high level of achievement. Policies which promote further bureaucratization and standardization corrode individual commitment and initiative among teachers. The opposite is required if education is to be improved.

Perhaps the nature of evaluation in the arts disciplines themselves can have more meaning for the current search for new accountability approaches. In each art form, constant evaluation shapes creation of a work. Such continuous, personal evaluation is indigenous to the commitment of the artist to her or his art; it is indigenous to the commitment of all professionals to their professions. For the artist, however, a carefully crafted element means little unless that element has an appropriate relationship to the entire scheme of the work. If specific evaluation in service of holistic goals were more central to the thinking of teachers and administrators, great progress could be made in American education, and quickly.

## PART III RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overview

Suggestions for improving the preparation of K-12 arts teachers have less than complete utility unless developed in light of conditions in the field. The interrelationship between teacher preparation and teaching conditions is both deep and complex. The developing nature of this relationship is critical to the formation of values underlying arts teaching. Many recommendations for improvement call for structural change. However, no one really knows how well our present arts education structure could work, because it has never operated in context with appropriate values and support. No new structure can be more successful in delivering real arts education unless values at its center support higher expectations for intellectual development.

No matter what the structure, the future quality of American arts education depends upon the extent to which everyone involved can work together for long-term results. Teacher education is a central aspect of this effort. The circle of relationships among the arts, education, and arts education communities needs strengthening as a condition for rapid progress. The arts and arts education communities must convince the education community and the public that arts study is basic to K-12 education. The arts and arts education communities must also be willing to undergo the tensions and strains concomitant to necessary expansions in arts education. Both creating this challenge and meeting it require intensive coordination. The following recommendations deal with what various groups might do to support the teacher education aspect of this task.

### Parents and Teachers

Parents and teachers share the greatest responsibility for the education of each elementary and secondary student.

*Parents* have significant opportunities to influence the context for the preparation of arts teachers. They can be most effective by:

- o Supporting intensive, sequential teaching of the various arts in their local schools
- o Providing a home environment that supports the serious study of music, visual arts, dance, and theatre and that encourages student attendance at cultural events of the highest quality.
- o Recognizing that teaching is an important and valuable profession. This means encouraging children to pursue teaching careers if they are so inclined.

*Individuals preparing to be teachers fall into two groups:* those in formal preparation who are not yet full-time teachers, and those already teaching who are engaged in professional improvement. These individuals contribute to their own development by:

- o Maintaining a sense of professional responsibility for their art, for teaching students, and for the relationship between the two.
- o Developing their capabilities to be active members of the artistic and intellectual communities by maintaining artistic and intellectual goals as well as career goals, and by seeking means to encourage and guide intellectual development in their students.
- o Acquiring the skills to work for the highest artistic standards and educational principles in a general climate of misunderstanding and disrespect. This means developing historical and sociological knowledge of the American environment for policy development in arts education.



*Current teachers* have significant influence on the teacher education process. In addition to the activities outlined immediately above, they can assist by:

- o Identifying and encouraging students showing potential to become career teachers in one or more of the arts.
- o Working with local teacher education programs and serving as mentors for new teachers.
- o Participating in organizations at local, state, and national levels committed to the advancement of strong arts teaching in the schools.

### **The Arts and Humanities Communities**

These professional communities are the progenitors of educational content in the arts disciplines. Their influence is broad, particularly as it reflects their convictions about the importance of curriculum-based K-12 arts education.

*Artists and arts organizations* can assist the teacher education process by;

- o Operating with a greater sense of the importance of intensive, sequential K-12 arts education to the future viability of the arts community.
- o Lending significant additional support to the intellectual and political struggles necessary to establish the study of the various arts as basic curricular components in K-12 education.
- o Seeking new means of cooperation with teacher education institutions, particularly with respect to programs that develop the artistic life of career arts teachers.

*State and local arts and humanities agencies* have strong roles to play in many aspects of K-12 arts education. They have opportunities to provide the same types of promotional support for arts teachers as they do for artists and humanists. They can provide specific assistance to the teacher education effort by:

- o Supporting artists and arts organizations in carrying out the three recommendations immediately above.
- o Maintaining political pressure to ensure strong teacher preparation programs and certification standards for prospective arts teachers. This means assisting the professional arts education community in its struggle to keep significant arts requirements in state certification standards.
- o Creating new partnerships with the arts education community based on a comprehensive view of the arts that recognizes the symbiotic relationships among creation/presentation, education, and support. This means bringing additional resources to bear on efforts to integrate performances and exhibitions for students into curriculum-based instruction in the arts disciplines.

*Federal arts and humanities agencies* play important roles in establishing the national agenda in their respective fields. These agencies can assist the teacher education process by:

- o Supporting the recommendations made above for artists and arts organizations and state and local arts and humanities agencies. By encouraging these groups to act in their respective areas of responsibility, the federal presence becomes both powerful and productive.

- o Using their national influence to articulate the need for strong K-12 arts curricula and for a delivery system centered on the adequate provision of well-prepared teachers and artists in each American school.
- o Encouraging pilot projects and planning efforts at the local level to improve the aggregate prospects for K-12 arts education and thus the climate for teacher education in the arts disciplines.

**Research Groups, Philanthropy, Media**

Research groups and philanthropists have increasing influence on the development of educational policy. The nature of this influence suggests a greater policy focus on ways to help competent and dedicated professionals, rather than on the futile search for national panaceas.

Research groups and philanthropists can be particularly useful in teacher education by:

- o Involving practitioners who work successfully in the field and organizations of professional arts educators in the development of their recommendations for change.
- o Exploring options from a policy rather than an advocacy perspective by focusing on ideas, subject matter, and skills rather than events, personalities, and public relations.
- o Focusing more on means for implementing professionally developed standards and practices, and less on innovation for innovation's sake.
- o Proposing and supporting means by which the strengths of the arts and arts education communities can be joined in a powerful partnership on behalf of K-12 arts education and the concomitant need for a strong corps of teachers.
- o Discovering and promoting improved ways to tailor arts education funding patterns so that content needs drive expenditures rather than the reverse.
- o Developing and funding projects that support intensification of the intellectual and artistic skills of teachers-in-training and career teachers.

*Arts editors in the media* also have great deal to contribute by:

- o Providing public notice of successful arts teaching as well as successes in the world of artistic creation and presentation.
- o Focusing more on work and ideas in the arts and in arts education, not just on personalities and events.
- o Presenting arts education as both normal and useful, and espousing high aspirations for teaching the arts disciplines.
- o Reporting cultural and educational policy debates concerning arts education as news items of major importance.

**The Education Community**

*Higher education* has more direct influence on teacher preparation than any other single elements. Therefore, teacher

education is the responsibility of the entire institution, not just the school or department of education. higher education can increase its effectiveness by:

- o Recognizing in operational terms that elementary/secondary education is a major priority.
- o Taking responsibility to promote art along with science, language, and history as basic in K-12 education.
- o Upgrading arts requirements for elementary classroom teachers.
- o Reviewing current teacher preparation curricula for arts specialists to determine their effectiveness in producing intellectual skills and commitment as well as artistic and professional competence.
- o Expanding research activities to include more emphasis on integrating results into teaching practices.
- o Utilizing the convening power of colleges, universities, and schools of the arts to provide serious forums for policy makers directly or indirectly concerned with K-12 arts education and the preparation of arts teachers.
- o Offering continuing education services for teachers that focus on development of artistic and intellectual skills.
- o Orienting arts students to policy issues concerning the importance of elementary and secondary education in the arts.
- o Ensuring that baccalaureate-level training in the arts disciplines for specialist arts teachers is at the same level as that expected of future professional artists.

*State education agencies* have significant influence because of their powers to set teacher certification policies. As part of their current operational reviews, state education agencies should be:

- o Ensuring that state education policies promote K-12 arts study as basic education for all students, including the provision of sufficient teaching personnel to accomplish the task.
- o Maintaining strong certification requirements for arts specialists and elementary classroom teachers that include high levels of accomplishment in one or more of the arts as well as teacher preparation in the content area.
- o Including study of the arts disciplines in all presentations of state goals and plans for elementary and secondary education.
- o Maintaining policies that require rigorous in-service training programs at the graduate level for those who teach the arts disciplines.
- o Establishing specialist certification for theatre and dance.

*Local school boards* create the marketplace which has significant influence on teacher preparation programs. they can provide assistance by:

- o Maintaining high requirements for the artistic competence of specialist teachers of the various arts.

- o Recommending that all general elementary teachers newly hired have basic literacy in at least one art form.
- o Assisting teachers to take advantage of continuing education and professional development programs that focus on enrichment of intellectual capabilities and artistic skills.

*The federal Department of Education* has broad powers of influence in developing policies that support strong teacher preparation programs. It can be of significant assistance by:

- o Engaging in policy analysis, research, and goal setting that encourage a fusion of intellectual, artistic, and professional capabilities in teachers of the arts.
- o Studying and proposing means for solving the funding dilemmas increasingly present with respect to the education of teachers.

*Professional arts education organizations* at local, state, and national levels can intensify their current commitment to strong teacher education programs by:

- o Leading efforts to generate public understanding of the ideas behind the importance of arts education based on connections among study and practice, art, and the development of civilization.
- o Developing services that orient student members to all aspects of the profession, especially the cultural struggle to solidify the place of arts education in schools.
- o Providing more linkage to and identification with specific art forms. This means maintaining philosophical and operational organizations that support the work of artists and arts organizations.

### **Conclusion**

Much is to be accomplished if the strengths of our present teacher education programs in the arts are to be maintained and built upon in years to come. Many countervailing forces mix in unintentional ways to make preservation and enhancement increasingly difficult. These difficulties must be overcome, however, not simply to preserve a profession, but rather to advance a civilization. The connections between science, technology, and economic advance are well understood. Yet while there is prevalence of rhetoric about the connections among art, culture, and civilization, such connections cannot be sustained without intensive effort. The practical orientation of most Americans makes it difficult to achieve an essential realization: economic development is enveloped by culture and not the reverse. Therefore, the quality of our culture as expressed in the aggregate of individual knowledge, skills, and aspirations depends upon our ability to give serious attention to teaching the arts disciplines.

Arts teaching requires personal interaction in ways different from subject matter focused purely on the factual and the quantitative. Arts teaching requires a synthesis of intellectual, artistic, and professional skills that should be the basis of social respect and all of the benefits that flow from such respect. Such conditions would go a long way to remove false notions of status which imply that competence is measured on a scale by grade level taught. Perhaps the most important teachers of the arts we have are those concerned with children under ten years of age.

Our problems do not reside in a lack of published standards for achievement. Even though any statement or set of operations can always be improved, it is important to remember that if the whole nation were achieving the goals inherent in standards the profession has already set, American teacher preparation in the arts disciplines would be soaring to incredible heights of effectiveness. The primary objective is to change conditions which prevent our aspirational standards from becoming operational standards in many specific situations. These conditions are the results of values. Changing present conditions means changing values first. The Working Group on the Arts in Higher

Education is confident that the same energy, dedication, and expertise responsible for the original establishment of the arts in American K-12 education is available to serve the cause of improvement and advancement. The question is the extent to which other elements in the context can be brought to support this effort. The answer in large part resides in the ability of the arts teaching community to change current values in the marketplace of ideas. Clearly, there is no more critical element in this effort than the preparation of teachers who can provide leadership in the struggle for high civilization.

The Working Group on the Arts in Higher Education is a cooperative project of National Association of Schools of Music, National Association of Schools of Art and Design, National Association of Schools of Theatre, National Association of Schools of Dance, and International Council of Fine Arts Deans. These organizations represent the academic and administrative leadership of over 1,000 postsecondary schools and departments providing professional education and training to artists and teachers of the arts as well as arts instruction for all college students.

This publication on teacher education was developed and produced by the music, art and design, dance, and theatre organizations in the Working Group on the Arts in Higher Education, and they are solely responsible for its contents.

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