

— IV —

TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH ARTS PARTNERSHIPS

by

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INTRODUCTION: MULTIPLE IDENTITIES AND BOUNDARY CROSSINGS

During this conference on Making Music Work for Public Schools we have heard a lot about the issue of identity and multiple identities. At the university, I teach courses for prospective and experienced classroom teachers. My work with Ravinia and CAPE extends to planning, designing, and teaching with artists and arts specialists. I am a singer and a musician and have spent much of my time off campus in a rehearsal or concert hall during my professional career.

As I have been listening to our conversations this week, I have found myself wondering, "Where do I slip into this equation as a teacher educator and researcher? What does this dialogue about the larger structural and organizational aspects of arts partnerships have to do with teaching artists and teachers? What does our work mean for the professional development of teachers and artists who are either new to the profession or experienced in the classroom, but not familiar with arts partnerships?" Responses to my questions involve a discussion about crossing boundaries in order to design stronger and more influential programs. Answers involve the tapping into multiple identities that many of us possess with respect to art, teaching, and scholarship.

Robert Shaw, choral conductor, philosopher, writer, and teacher, was such

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a multiple identity. After singing with him for ten years, I find my scores are littered with verbal images that he used to communicate in words what he heard inside his head. He once said something that I came across in a Faure Requiem score several weeks ago. The Faure is a relatively simple piece melodically. It can be easily sight read by most competent musicians. Those pieces are often, however, deceptive. They can lead us as performers to let our minds wander while our voices do the singing. On the front cover of my score, I noted Shaw's words: "Sing as though you are inventing it." That may be what we are doing here. We all have our areas of expertise; we all are familiar and accustomed to working within our domains. We may be ready to bring our multiple identities to the table, stretch our thinking with unfamiliar colleagues, find verbal and musical images to communicate, and invent new ways of assessing our progress. We may be ready to invent a design for collaboration among universities, arts organizations, and schools which challenges our notions of arts education.

Shaw always sported a white towel during chorus rehearsals. At one point during a regular Monday night rehearsal, he threw down his towel and said, "This is difficult and you are not making it difficult enough!" Working as artists and teachers with children in schools is more difficult than performance; it is more difficult than a gig. The notion of collectively making an impact on arts programming in our schools in partnership with dis-

tricts, cultural organizations and teaching artists involves more than assigning artists in residence to a selected number of schools.

COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: BEGINNING THE INQUIRY

We in the United States devote less to professional development of our teachers than any other western industrialized country. And yet we know that if we want student learning to improve, we must pay attention to the capacity of teachers to teach. Similar statements could be made for teaching artists who work with our children in school and community settings. The research on teaching and learning that could inform practice in our schools often never reaches those who are in the position to actually implement it - the teachers. The arts community has the capacity to address each of these challenges in a significant way to contribute to arts education for our young people.

The premises I propose might suggest some future research questions that warrant more consistent data collection and analysis across cities and partnerships doing this work with schools. We in Chicago have a strong commitment to professional development as the means by which any real change in teaching and learning will occur in schools. That commitment to teacher learning extends to a similarly deep commitment to artist learning as

the process by which authentic arts education becomes an integral part of schooling for our children. Now we are beginning to explore ways to integrate the process of sustaining partnerships as inquiry, as action research. Action research is an extension of the processes of professional development that have become the trademark of our work in Chicago. These processes include: *regular time for reflection in the form of entrance and exit slips in workshop sessions; collaborative processes that generate real products during professional development sessions; planning time as a function of meeting with artists and teachers across schools; and the consistent incorporation of exemplars and expertise from other arts programs to strengthen our work.* We are committed not only to drawing upon the research that already exists in the field to improve our work in schools, but also to engage teachers and artists in the analysis of their own teaching practices.

Action research in its most recent applications in schools and community organizations provides participants—in this case artists, teachers, arts coordinators, students, and parents—the opportunity for critical reflection on classroom practices in order to improve teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). Action research further places teachers at the center of the inquiry/research process (Burnaford, Fischer, and Hobson, 2001). They are examining their own practices; they are not subjects in others' investigations. Finally, action research is a process for

designing more effective curriculum and authoring better school improvement plans that are grounded in real experiences, systematic data collection, and collaborative analysis. Between 1998 and 2001, Arnold Aprill, CAPE's Executive Director, Cynthia Weiss, a Visual Artist and CAPE's Professional Development Director and I interviewed between 70-80 teachers and artists to unearth and articulate their practices (Burnaford, Aprill, Weiss, 2001). We encouraged them to collect and respond to student work; we sponsored a writing workshop to gather their own critical reflections on the arts programming that they had both invented and experienced. We asked them to characterize the collaboration they had experienced as a result of the arts partnership. As we went deeper into the interviewing, we realized that the research processes themselves were, in effect, professional development. Then, we also realized that our investigation was inadvertently revealing some of the very best aspects of professional development inherent in the partnerships that we needed to identify and attempt to replicate. That is, the deep teams worked on their curriculum over time; they had the opportunity to take risks, reflect, then refine their processes; they were collaborative, and they tapped into the strengths of their partners. They were agents of their own professional development.

The exploration of teacher research has led us to rethink assessment within arts and learning in classrooms. The word "assessment" comes from *assidere* in French,

which means "to sit beside." If we consider how this etymology might be applied to teaching, then we must recast the role of the music teacher, the teaching artist, and the classroom teacher, as adults in classrooms who are observing, listening, and learning from what the children are doing. That's a very different stance from the traditional stance of assessment. The methods of teacher action research provided a number of ways to do this: collecting field notes, looking at video, doing a lot of listening to recordings—not of performances, but of student thinking, of children talking with each other about their art. These reflective methods (Wolf & Pistone, 1991) are intended to improve children's performance and achievement; they are valuable as tools to contribute to evaluation of arts initiatives; they are also effective approaches to professional development for adults in schools.

One of the things we discovered in our research is that we have eight sets of what we have termed "deep teams" within the partnerships in Chicago. Deep teams are teams that have worked together over several years: an artist and a classroom teacher. We've asked them how their work has changed in order to assess how they talk to each other and what the conversation has been like over six years. We found that as the same classroom teachers work with the same set of artists over the years, the student work gets better. The implication for professional development and arts partnerships is obvious; if we can build inquiry-based, consistent teams of teachers and artists who work each year

together, students in classrooms will learn more. The deep teams in our research were more able to articulate their practice in our interviews than those who had worked with a team partner sporadically or briefly; they had collected student work over the years and were prepared to show us that work and describe how, as their own arts teaching improved, so did the products of students.

Professional development that assumes an action research stance, then, involves interview sessions, the collection of student work, and cross-school/cross-team feedback sessions. As Jeanne Bamberger has suggested, it also means taking small slices of music, small slices of classroom episodes or video vignettes, and with teachers and artists, asking, "What's going on here? What is happening? What do we see?" The process involves interviewing children and young people about the experience; it might mean conducting a focus group of parents who are encouraged to reflect on the meaning of the arts project for their children. The final question that we ask teachers and artists is, "What does it mean?" Developing research questions that are valuable to both teachers and artists can promote dialogue and enrich the actual teaching that occurs when artists visit classrooms.

We have taken these first steps in Chicago toward a merging of the roles of artist/teacher/scholar, although there is much still to be done. We have found that Gardner's four roles for students who



Bridging drama and music is another essential medium for interdisciplinary learning.

are engaged in the arts (Gardner, 1973) are useful frameworks for professional development of teaching artists, music teachers, and classrooms teachers. The four roles, composer, audience member, critic, and performer give artists and teachers a frame or empty outline to use in order to ask the inquiry questions, "Why is the child doing this? What is she learning? What is he expressing? What did I as the teacher or artist do to help? What can I be doing next?"

Teacher learning is the way in to student learning; teachers need to experience all four of those roles too. In a professional development context, teachers need to compose; teachers need to practice those roles--even music teachers, because they haven't done that in the professional setting all of the time.

James Catterall said earlier that he believes policies grow out of classrooms. Strong professional development, with action research processes embedded, can facilitate

improvement plans, long-term strategic plans, and assessment of teaching and learning, equipped with data from their school sites and classrooms. Deep teams that engage in classroom teaching, professional development and reflective inquiry can contribute to the larger educational discourse.

HIGHER EDUCATION: RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIPS

My colleagues at Northwestern haven't seen *Champions of Change*, and I suspect most university education faculty and arts faculty have little or no familiarity with the discussions regarding arts organization, the cultural institutions, or arts partnerships and their role in schools. The current climate seems conducive, however, to an exploration of partnerships that include community and university collaborations. University professors with funded research agendas that involve public schools, particularly in urban centers, are often keenly inter-

the process of policy decision-making that grows from authentic practice by teachers and artists. Professional development that is action research based prepares teachers, administrators, and artists to participate in the conversations regarding school

ested in what community organizations know and can do to leverage participation and engagement in school settings. University participants also typically have access to technology and resources that can facilitate collaboration across classrooms and school sites. They offer research courses that can inform teachers and artists about scholarship and meaningful reflective practice, particularly in the schools of education where action research is sometimes a systemic part of the teacher education and professional development curriculum.

We need to design consortia that systematically include a higher education institution with particular partners identified within a school, as well as community arts organizations and cultural institutions. Cultural institutions, symphonies, and museums, provide a perspective that Schools of Music and Schools of Education in universities don't have. Conversely, research that has been generated by Schools of Music and Schools of Education can inform the practice of partnership organizations. We can learn across those two venues about practice-based research, data-based change, and program design.

The way into a School of Education is through its preservice program. If you want to start a partnership with a university, you need to devise specific coteaching experiences for preservice/prospective teachers who can work with your project in a classroom or school. I can tell you the teacher education programs need placements for their students. With the teacher shortage

and the increasing ranks of teachers retiring, meaningful field experiences for prospective teachers are challenging to find. Arts partners could request the active participation of college students. Students could, in turn:

- take field notes
- coteach
- work with a small group
- document the curriculum
- participate in assessment conferences with students
- ask the questions that may clarify the process

The college students will be learning:

- to teach
- to assist with curriculum development
- to participate in the professional development opportunities with our artists and classroom teachers
- To be researchers
- To engage in collaboration and research to improve what happens in schools

This type of experience for prospective teacher candidates cannot be overestimated.

We have begun to do that at Northwestern. We have an early field experience for sophomores who may not be sure if they want to be teachers but who are sort of intrigued by the idea, and who are looking at social policy issues as well. So we place them in small cohorts with after school organizations, as well as with in-school organizations. Some are working at Street Level Youth Media Project; others are with the Steppenwolf Theater or be paired with

Ravinia artists and CAPE artists in partner schools. There is also another positive in this approach. If we want a new generation of young teachers to embrace this work, we have got to get them while they are energetic, questioning, and open. They are ready to learn what we in the partnership community have to teach them. We are also finding, from the research on urban education, that a lot of urban school teachers come from non-urban settings. They can benefit from an integrative education where museums, community organizations, and cultural institutions are seen as partners with schools in teaching students. With this kind of experience in their teacher preparation program, these candidates will be more prepared to build those collaborations into their own curriculum programs when they become teachers.

The National Board Certification process is gaining recognition throughout the country, as states and school districts provide incentives, mentoring, and course work to assist teachers who wish to be nationally board certified. The procedures that are inherent in that process, including video analysis and analysis of student work, are consistent with the goals of professional development within arts programming. Arts teachers and artists working in schools are perhaps more experienced than others in the processes of portfolio development, analysis of performance, and consideration of elements of quality in student work.

The current movement toward standards-based learning extends



Music provides unique and powerful opportunities for collaborative learning.

beyond the students to the professional preparation and recertification of teachers. The standards promote performance assessments, the compilation of professional teacher portfolios, and the process of collaborative conferencing to improve teaching. Arts partnerships can and should educate themselves about these initiatives in the field of education in order to ascertain how they relate to their work in schools. The current climate, while still focused predominantly on high stakes testing as a means for looking at performance, is also beginning to question that preoccupation as states where performance assessments and low stakes testing have shown positive results in student achievement. Arts educators need to be aware of these circumstances.

Arts organizations and universities could be partners with schools to provide support for teachers to pursue National Board Certification. The deep teaming that we have seen in Chicago is a first step toward the collaborative process necessary for National Board Certi-

fication. Arts partnerships provide a model for pursuing this reflective process.

NEXT STEPS: PARTNERSHIPS THAT LEVERAGE CRITICAL AND RIGOROUS PRACTICE

It's time to design cross-city, cross-school, cross-partnership models that embed consistent professional development, engagement with the larger school community beyond a few interested teachers and one invested administrator, and action research that persistently informs improved practice and suggests policy decisions.

We need to be able to articulate why this work matters to school boards. Arts partnership coordinators can attend school board meetings and inform parents and community members of the teach-

ing and learning going on in schools. Action research data as well as the results from large scale evaluation efforts can be shared with constituents by teachers, musicians and arts administrators who are directly involved in the work. Classroom teachers and artists can present their work at whole-school faculty meetings. University partners can share in initiatives, by involving their students in co-teaching, co-researching, and co-learning. Just as Shaw urged on himself and his singers in rehearsals, we too need to make the work 'difficult enough' to assure its sustainability and to improve the quality of arts programming for our children. ¶

Since the conference at the New England Conservatory, Northwestern University, Ravinia Music Festival, and the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education have become consortium members in a funded project to further examine the framework

of Artist/Teacher/Scholar in education. This cross-city initiative is the beginning of a process that will contribute to the goals I've described in this piece. University undergraduate student interns will participate in arts partnership classroom with musicians, music teachers, and classroom teachers who are designing, implementing, and assessing a project with students. Interns, teachers, and musicians will participate in action research, focused on research questions of particular interest to them as well as the questions identified by the participants in Atlanta, Boston, and New York. What we learn through this three-year initiative will contribute to the professional development processes in both Ravinia and CAPE. It will also suggest program changes for prospective teachers and performance majors at Northwestern. Faculty members at Northwestern in the School of Music and the School of Education and Social Policy will be engaged in school-based work, performance, and inquiry. They will be learning more about multiple identities and crossing boundaries as a result of this consortium. ¶

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