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ABSTRACT

A radio program about arts in American schools includes interviews with students, art teachers, parents, and heads of research panels. The commentators point out that many people think of art as something done by geniuses. The American attitude toward art must be changed, and children should be given the opportunity for creative expression in schools. David Rockefeller, Jr., was a member of The Arts, Education and Americans Panel which recently published a report on the status of art in the schools. He recommends that art be as basic to the curriculum as mathematics, writing, and history because the arts can be basic tools of learning. Inquiries to three State Art Directors about state spending on art programs revealed that only local school districts have accurate figures on art budgets. Most are very low. Several interviews present exemplary programs. The Artists in the Schools Program, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, places artists in specific schools so students can learn what an artist does and what his methods are. Architects, musicians, and poets are interviewed. Another program at the University of Massachusetts teaches children fundamental concepts of geometry through body movement, music, and large rubber bands. Concluding comments stress the need for art teachers to defend their discipline. (AV)

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ART IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

Program #83 Art in American Schools

ART IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and hero are some of the people you'll be meeting in this hour as OPTIONS IN EDUCATION focuses on people who think the arts should play a bigger part in our lives.

We're living in very remarkable times. But it's also a time when people are searching for a definition of their lives. Where often they find the "Dating Game" mentality, the selling mentality. The arts deal with the emotions and imagination of man.

We shouldn't be a nation of watchers, but a nation of doers as well. It's "do-it-yourself," which means "sing-it-yourself," "dance-it-yourself," "put-on-the-plays-yourself."

All of the stories that we're going to do for you now are written by people just like you.

Anybody who plays the violin badly will break his back to go and see Isaac Stern perform it well.

STUDENT: "A poem is to me in my heart
a special thing like sadness
or happiness.
As soon as I get an idea -
snap-crackle-pop!
You can't guess
I'm a spinning top!"

We need you to help us alert people that we need a revolution in our attitude toward education!

* * *

BLAIR: I talked to visitors to The National Gallery here in Washington. They came from all over the country and all over the world, but one 11-year old boy from Indiana summed up the problem we seem to have in America with the arts. I asked him what he saw at The National Gallery.

STUDENT: Well, I don't know. It was just a whole lot of paintings and stuff. I don't know. I ain't much of an art fiend myself.

BLAIR: Tell me why not.

STUDENT: I don't know. I don't like art.

BLAIR: That's a perfectly good thing to feel. Tell me why.

STUDENT: I don't know. I don't even know what it means.

BLAIR: Have you had any lessons or anything in ~~school~~ about it?

STUDENT: Yeah. I'm pretty good at just making paper stuff. But nothing else. I can't pa nt or draw or nothing.

BLAIR: How do you know?

STUDENT: Because I tried. And I can't do it very good. I like planes and stuff better.

MERROW: I guess I probably felt that way as a boy, too. Schools leave us with the impression that art is painting we "ought" to look at, or symphonies we "ought" to listen to.

BLAIR: And we think of art as something done only by geniuses. Art means perfection and brilliant innovation.

MERROW: But there are people who say that art should be a part of everyone's lives.

BLAIR: Yet, our country with its puritan work ethic relegates the arts to the back seat. Certainly, less important than the stock market and national defense.

MERROW: And fine art is always out of step with most people. For example, listen to this piece of music by Gustav Mahler written in the 19th Century, a part of his Third Symphony. When his works premiered, they were denounced as sterile, trivial and immoderate. Now, they're considered art.

BLAIR: Mahler's Third has achieved acceptance as art, but what about this sonata by 20th Century composer John Cage? Do you think it's beautiful? Is it art?

MERROW: It's hard to get any two people to agree about what art is.

BLAIR: I asked visitors to The National Gallery their opinion of contemporary art.

WELL, WHAT ABOUT MODERN ART?

VISITOR: I guess it's all right. Some of it was interesting. Some of it wasn't really interesting to me - it didn't even look like art, and it was very famous.

BLAIR: Like what?

VISITOR: Who's the one?

CHILD: Picasso.

VISITOR: Picasso.

BLAIR: Why doesn't that look like art?

VISITOR: I dunno. It's so abstract, some of it.

VISITOR: We come from such different backgrounds. He hasn't been exposed to the arts in growing up, and I have.

BLAIR: Do you miss them?

VISITOR: You don't miss something you don't know about.

VISITOR: To me, beauty is something that one has to have to appreciate life, to find something good in life. I work at the Library of Congress, and I walk sometimes at lunchtime, and come and look at maybe two rooms at a time, and that fills my day.

BLAIR: You've just come out of The National Gallery, and I'm wondering what your feelings are about the place of art in our lives.

VISITOR: I got turned off to art at a very early age because we had an art class and I was graded on what I did, and I wasn't a very good artist. So, I got turned off to even trying anything, and I'm just now starting to think, "Well, maybe I'll get into photography, and do some photography."

BLAIR: What sort of art education would you like to see in schools?

VISITOR: Well, I think they should have just a little bit more. It's always put in the back, and if they could bring it up with the rest of the reading, writing and arithmetic . . .

BLAIP: Why do you think it is put in the background?

VISITOR: Obviously, the people in charge don't think it's important in America anyway. It just doesn't fit in with the scheme of things.

* * *

MERROW: The point of all this is that you won't find many voters or politicians willing to spend money on the arts.

BLAIR: But a brand new study says that we can have more art and better art which involves our children without spending that much money.

MERROW: In most schools, art is an extra, a luxury. Certainly, second to things like football.

BLAIR: And it's often unconnected to activities in the rest of the school day. Art classes are a kind of reprieve, a "fun-time" between spelling and arithmetic.

A VISIT TO AN ART CLASS IN OYSTER SCHOOL

MERROW: Reporter David Selvin visited Carol Hoffman's art class at the Oyster School in Washington, D. C.

HOFFMAN: She just pours her heart and soul into it.

SELVIN: A lot of them are doing the same picture you did on the board.

HOFFMAN: They are. [illegible] they do. Yeah. Some of them do.

SELVIN: They make [illegible]ors, all of them.

HOFFMAN: Well, it's no [illegible] want them to imitate. It's that I know that some of them . . . like, she is very afraid to do things on her own. She's at least trying it. She's doing it. And they know that they're to

use their own colors, and they can branch off from what I did. So, they're not . . . I used to say that they absolutely couldn't do what I was doing, but then I found that some of them just sat there, and just cried.

SELVIN: Do you like painting?

STUDENT: Yeah. And when I grow up, I want to go to a real artists' school.

SELVIN: Do you know any famous artists? Have you ever heard of Picasso or Gaugin?

STUDENT: Pablo Picasso. That's my name - Pablo!

SELVIN: Do you think you're going to become a famous artist? Just painting pictures of bicycles?

STUDENT: I think so. But I don't know yet.

STUDENT: What are you all talking about?

SELVIN: Art.

STUDENT: Oh, art. You know why I draw so good now? Because I've been practicing.

SELVIN: Really? Do you practice at home?

STUDENT: Yeah. "Star Trek" and things like that.

HOFFMAN: We have all kinds of problems, don't we? My hands are dirty!

SELVIN: Your name is Alex? It looks like you're painting yourself instead of a picture!

ALEX: No. I'm not painting myself! The brush just keeps getting paint on me.

SELVIN: What are those brown spots up in the clouds?

ALEX: No, that's the cloud's marks.

SELVIN: Oh, I see. Is that a cloud there?

ALEX: Yeah. And the cloud's making rain.

HOFFMAN: Now. You're getting louder and wilder, and now I'm seeing some people who have stopped painting entirely in order to carry on a conversation. Remember. Art is a fine line of enjoyment between the playground and school. I know you forget. It's hard sometimes to remember, but there's a different kind of fun -- I didn't say, "Unfreeze." It's a different kind of fun - between playground fun and the art room fun. Remember that. Ricardo, Victor, Pablo, remember that. Okay.

SELVIN: I should have worn my work clothes.

HOFFMAN: I should have warned you. I'm so sorry I didn't. I thought of that a little while ago. I'm surprised you're not filthy!

SELVIN: Somehow, I managed to slide through.

HOFFMAN: Yes. But it's not over yet. Maria, that is good. You really, really put beautiful, beautiful colors together. I'm so pleased with that. You've learned a lot. You really have. Those bricks turned out beautifully. Excellent work. That's good!

MERROW: Reporter David Selvin at Carol Hoffman's art class at the Oyster School in Washington, D. C. In that school, there is one art teacher for 346 students, and each student gets one art class per week. That may not sound like much, but art educators say that's typical.

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THE MAGIC CARPET PLAY COMPANY

BLAIR: But there are schools trying to offer as many kinds of artistic experience as possible, and artists are organizing to help them do it.

MERROW: "The Magic Carpet Play Company" is based in San Francisco, but spends most of its time traveling around the country visiting schools.

BLAIR: The players call their technique "creative dramatics," and the idea is to teach kids about theater by using their natural desire to play and their imagination. The players ask the kids to write the script by imagining what happens next in the story the players are acting out.

PLAYER: I'd like to tell you guys that we are called "The Magic Carpet Play Company."

CHILD: Where's your magic carpet?

PLAYER: Where's our magic carpet? Right here.

MERROW: Here's what happened when The Magic Carpet Play Company visited an elementary school in Fargo, North Dakota.

PLAYER: See that? You let him do this? (Laughter)

So, when they got back . . . all the other leprechauns were pleased that she could stay. And live there happily ever after.

("The Players" sing a rollicking "Happily Ever After.")

PLAYER: I always look for a unique idea, something that is very special to the individual author that has written it - either a feeling, an idea, something that will transcend his individual school, his individual geographic place, and will communicate with children everywhere. In terms of the theater, the television is so fast, the image changes every five seconds. It is, I think, limiting the concentration of children to five second blocks, and so it's very difficult for them to relate to anything, a book, a story, sitting in the classroom, practicing music, whatever, longer than in those short blocks. And, particularly, when they come to the theater, our theater is designed to move so fast that we can compete with that habit that kids get into - that of, seeing a new image on the

screen every five seconds. And I think that this is at least hampering the creativity of children because it doesn't give the imagination time enough to develop a new idea - rather than an imitative idea of something they've seen. But if they could stay with it for ten seconds, maybe something unique to their own person, their own spirit would develop. And that' what I would like to see happen from their writings. That's why we try to do this thing.

PLAYER: Would you guys like to see something that was written by people just like you?

KIDS: Yeeesssss!

PLAYER: All right. On your mark. All of the stories that we're going to do for you now are written by people just like you. We didn't change one single word of any of these stories.

PLAYERS: Once upon a time, there was a little pig . . .
And the little pig had no friends . . .
Not one!
The little pig said to the cow,
"Oh, Mrs. Cow, will you play with me?"
And she said, "N-O spells 'No.'"
So, he said, "Oh, Mrs. Hen . . ."
"Yesss??"
"Will you play with me?"
And she said, "No!"
So, he gave up and sat down.

And he thought, "Why are they like that?
I do not like it."
And he said, "I did try to be like them.
Oh, I give up. I'm not going to be clean
like them anymore.
I'm going to be me!"

So, he took a mud bath!
And they all wanted to play with him.
And they all said,
"I like you. You're you!"
And he had all the friends he wanted!

And they lived happily ever after!

(Moooo, Baaaahhhh, Cockle-doodle-do!)

PLAYER: The majority of stories we've performed, Jim has screened, and he has a very good feeling for the soul of a child. And most of our stories have that basic element of feeling.

PLAYER: And we try through doing our stories, hopefully, to go back to the school and have the child see his own work, and put a little confidence in his own life that he, himself, has something to say, and it not only can be enjoyed by him, and he can be proud of what he has to say and what he feels and thinks, but that other people will enjoy and respect what he feels

CHILD: I liked most of the animals. They'd walk around and do . . . each person would do about five of the animals, and they would express theirselves well.

CHILD: I liked the animals, too, because they imitated 'em, and they really know how to act good.

MERROW: That report on "The Magic Carpet Play Company" from Bill Siemering of Station KCCM, Morehead, Minnesota.

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BLAIR: The most ambitious programs try to offer as many different kinds of art experience as possible - using poetry, dance, music and painting to stimulate students and broaden their general knowledge.

MERROW: There have been arguments over the place of art in the school ever since 19th Century reformer Horace Mann first promoted drawing classes back in 1844. He got the idea from schools in Europe, and he believed that drawing should be taught as a form of writing that would ultimately help students write better - that is, more legibly.

BLAIR: That sort of practical approach persists. Art is worthwhile as long as it helps teach the basics -- reading, writing and math.

MERROW: And there are a lot of people who believe that art is a frill! That too much emphasis on art in school is a waste of time and money.

BLAIR: But some of our Founding Fathers hoped that one day art would become an integral part of society.

DAVID ROCKEFELLER, JR. ON ART IN THE SCHOOLS

ROCKEFELLER. You probably remember what John Adams wrote long ago:

> "I must study politics and war so that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture."

BLAIR: Thirty-five year old David Rockefeller, Jr., son of David and nephew of Nelson, assembled a panel of 25 American artists, scientists, government and business leaders. The panel has just issued its report - "Coming To Our Senses."

MERROW: The report's major point is that art - defined broadly to include dance and other performing arts, and all the visual arts - ought to be as basic to the curriculum as mathematics, writing and history. "Arts," the panel says, "awaken our senses and improve the quality of our lives."

BLAIR: NPR's Susan Stamberg, Co-host of "All Things Considered," asked David Rockefeller, Jr., why he wants arts to become a basic part of the curriculum when schools are having such problems teaching the basic skills of reading and writing.

ROCKEFELLER: Well, that's a fundamental question, and I think we answered that in two ways. We say that the arts are basic to education, if you consider the whole man. Secondly, the arts, the panel feels, are very important tools of all learning. For example, theater games, the use of

theater in the teaching of history. The use of music in the teaching of mathematics. There are many. Obviously, poetry and verbal skills are in the same category.

There are many tie-ins that we just don't recognize. And, when we talk about the Three R's, I think that concept is too, too narrow. I think in many ways it includes the arts, if you see them as vehicles of education.

STAMBERG: But can you specifically give me an example of a way in which you can use painting to help my six-year old son learn how to read?

ROCKEFELLER: All learning is very complex, and I don't think there is a direct, easy relationship between painting and reading skills. It's much more, really, between music - which has a left-right component, and verbal reading skills. But what painting does, with a good art teacher, among other things, is to enliven the child to the visual world around him or her. And to enliven that person perhaps to the general environment, to the architecture of the city in which that child lives.

So, there aren't connections between everything and everything else. That's what I'm trying to say. But there are many, many connections which are very powerful, but the arts are tools, as buttresses, of learning.

STAMBERG: There is an attitude, though, in the public that arts are a kind of frill, are "Rockefeller" kind of stuff. You know, for the leisured and moneyed class which has the time not to have to make a buck everyday.

ROCKEFELLER: I think that's an old attitude. If you look at the populations of people who are going to concerts, and going to the theater, still to films, of course, and not only sitting at home and watching television. We're very hopeful about the audience aspect of the arts, and I don't think it's any class of people primarily who is attending the arts, and the Louis Harris survey recently show this. So, I think already the democratization of the audience has occurred. The real question to me is whether we're going to take the leap, and say the arts are also important as learning.

BLAIR: David Rockefeller, Jr., organizer and Chairman of the panel, Arts, Education and Americans, talking with NPR's Susan Stamberg. The panel's report, "Coming To Our Senses," is available in paperback. The publisher is McGraw-Hill.

MERROW: The Rockefeller Panel says that the arts appear to be flourishing. For instance, the number of professional orchestras doubled between 1965 and 1975. And, in that same decade, the number of professional, resident dance companies increased seven-fold. And the number of professional theaters quadrupled.

BLAIR: But the Rockefeller Panel asserts that art education - meaning arts in public schools - is struggling for its life. We want art, the panel says, but we haven't realized yet that we need it.

MERROW: But are the arts being cut out of schools? Are art teachers losing their jobs left and right? The Rockefeller Panel examined closely sixteen school districts in four states.

BLAIR: But there are 16,000 school districts in all.

MERROW: Cynics have suggested that the Rockefeller Panel began with a set of conclusions about art in schools, and, so, didn't really need the survey. And, in fact, the conventional wisdom is that art is secondary, a frill in the schools.

DR. JOHN MAHLMANN
NATIONAL ARTS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

BLAIR: But what are the facts? We asked the National Art Education Association, the art teachers' professional organization.

MAHLMANN: That's a difficult question. Again, if it's based on statistics, and whether you wish to know if there are more art teachers or fewer art teachers, I can't give you the answer to it. We don't have those figures.

BLAIR: In fact, the National Art Education Association was hard pressed to say how many art teachers there are. The Executive Director, Dr. John Mahlmann, did estimate that only 3% of all teachers are art teachers.

MERROW: Mahlmann said that he knew of large cuts in several cities. He cited New York City and Seattle as examples. But he'd also heard that in other cities, some cuts were being restored. We'll hear more from him later in the program.

BLAIR: So, we're left with an odd situation. A prestigious and expensive panel saying that arts really aren't being given their due in the schools, despite the fact that nobody really knows the overall picture - that is, how much money overall is being spent on arts in schools, what is being neglected or where budgets are being slashed.

A REPORT FROM THREE STATES

MERROW: It's not easy to get information. We tried by calling State Art Directors in South Carolina, Ohio and Florida.

BLAIR: Basically, we learned that they don't have a clear picture either.

MERROW: In South Carolina, for example, the Director was able to tell us the approximate number of kids taking art in school, and the number of art teachers. In both cases, by the way, the numbers have increased over the past few years. But the State Art Director didn't know how much money South Carolina spends on art in its schools.

BLAIR: We learned even less when we called Ohio, where the State Art Director said he didn't have overall numbers of art teachers, students or classes. He said, "If you want to know that, you'll have to call each district!"

MERROW: Apparently, when it comes to spending money for painting, music and dance, local school districts are firmly in control. The state doesn't always keep figures.

BLAIR: Florida, however, did have a dollar figure -- 22¢ per pupil. It's a piddling sum, the State Art Director told us. And he's right! Twenty-two cents per child when a box of crayons costs about 65¢.

MERROW: He would like Florida to spend more - at least nine times that amount. And his problem is not hostility toward art in school. The problem is money in general. There's just not enough of it.

BLAIR: We hear that a lot. Art is the last to get money, and the first to lose it when times are tough. We can't prove it's true or false. Nobody really knows.

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MERROW: Right now, you're listening to OPTIONS IN EDUCATION. And we're talking about "Art In Our Schools." And we're going to visit several schools in North Dakota, Minnesota, Delaware, Wisconsin, California, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Washington, D. C.

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI SLASHES ITS ARTS BUDGET

BLAIR: Money is the issue in Columbia, Missouri, where the elementary school music program faces cutbacks in the fall. The State has come up with some extra money, but the School Board will have to decide what programs will get it. And music will have to compete with Health Services and Athletics. Dave Irwin reports.

(A student plays "Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey" - sort of.)

IRWIN: The sound of an elementary school student learning to play the saxaphone. He's a fifth grader, one of almost 900 students attending a summer instructional music program in Columbia, at one of the city's two high schools. This aspiring Boots Randolph hopes to continue his musical training in the fall, but, like many school districts in the country, the Columbia district faced financial uncertainty this year.

Because of the Columbia School District's uncertainty on funding, they failed to uphold the contracts of, among others, two non-tenured music teachers. If the two teaching positions were not to be retained, the music program underway this summer would not be continued in the fall.

Music instructor Steve Scott's contract was withheld.

SCOTT: Music is just as important and just as needed a program to the students involved than athletics, drama, or speech, art. Music, really, should need no other justification than the fact that it's music, and it offers the students to take part in it: something that they can get nowhere else.

IRWIN: Many parents of these music students agree with Scott, and was the only group to actively protest any cutbacks in educational programs. One of those parents, Vestala Zetnick says, "If the fall elementary program is eliminated, the entire music program will suffer."

ZETNICK: The way I feel most affected is that my four children were all able to have the advantage of the marvelous instrumental program, and I just feel very sorry that the children coming up won't have the same opportunity.

IRWIN: Mrs. Zetnick joins several hundred other parents in signing a petition protesting cuts in the music program. Music instructor Phil Wood has been teaching in the Columbia School System for 13 years, and he agreed that dropping two music instructors is a step in the wrong direction. He says that the elementary school program gives a student vital, early instruction.

WOOD: In order to have an instrumental music student as well prepared as Mr. Patterson and myself now get them in high school, all of the music staff strongly feels that we would need a daily beginning program, if we were forced to start in the 7th grade.

IRWIN: Sharing Wood's view on the importance of early musical instruction is University of Missouri Associate Professor of Music Charles Nick.

NICK: The quality of performance and sensitivity of the musician will not be the level that we have today, if we prolong study until the secondary level. They're just not the musician that they would have been if they had started at an earlier level.

IRWIN: How do the students themselves feel about a delayed musical training. One 6th grader in the Columbia music program, Brad Hicks, typifies the views of many.

HICKS: I probably have quit because I wouldn't be ready for the 7th grade band. I wouldn't be ready to play with them. I wouldn't be good enough because all of the rest of the players would be experienced - the 8th and 9th graders. And if they didn't have it, then, some of the other kids like my little brothers and sisters wouldn't have a chance to do it.

IRWIN: One suggested alternative to continue the elementary school music program with limited school district funds is to encourage youngsters and their parents to sign up for private instruction. But one teacher says that this would make music a luxury, something only the more affluent could afford.

BLAIR: That report from Dave Irwin of Member Station KBIA, Columbia, Missouri.

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ST. PAUL'S "ARTS AWARENESS" PROJECT

MERROW: Even where there aren't budget problems, the school might not be able to afford a full-time art teacher, but there are other ways. For example, Minnesota, which has a reputation for strong support of the arts, is experimenting with some other approaches. First, Rachel Kranz reports on an "Arts Awareness" project in St. Paul.

TEACHER: Does that painting make you think of anything special, or does it look like anything to you?

CHILD: A face or something.

TEACHER: Why do you think it looks like a face, a mask?

KRANZ: Those are the sounds of youngsters learning about art. Teachers in the "Arts Awareness" program try not to tell the students what the

painting means. Instead, they ask the children how they feel about the painting or a piece of sculpture, or they involve them in exercises to help them find out how they feel. The Museum's Director of Education, Jan Swearer, talked about the goals of the program.

SWEARER: One is to reinforce the child's image of himself as a creator. As you know, most of us lose that confidence that it takes to be able to create anything very early in life. The other goal is to heighten their senses of seeing, hearing, their sense of touch, of body movement, to really open up all the pathways to enjoying the world. We take that from the artist's work into the real world, and in the schools we talk about where do you see line in your room, or in your clothing. And, in a sense, we're making judgments about line and color and form all the time as we live. But better to be aware of them than not to be aware of them. And to enjoy them more fully by being aware of them.

KRANZ: Museum Director of Education Jan Swearer. The students aren't just supposed to look at art. The three-hour program at the Museum includes studio time to draw or paint. The Museum has college students to design "environments," large sculptures that the students can walk in and out of, so that the kids can be part of the art, and the program teachers try to get the children to express their feelings about the art through movement. Jan Swearer led a group of children in an exercise based on a painting called "Seascape."

CHILD: Well, maybe it took him like a week or something. Some days he was happy, and then he painted certain kinds of happy lines, and some days he was mad, and he really pressed down hard.

SWEAREP: Let's see if we can take that in a sculptural form? Who would like to be the waves coming this way with me? Okay, Diana, and David. Would you like to come, too? And would you and you like to be the waves coming the other way. Let's try it with sound, too.

CHILD: We saw this painting and we were trying to get the feeling of the painting.

KRANZ: And what was the feeling that you got?

CHILD: An explosive feeling. Exciting.

KRANZ: How did you get that feeling?

CHILD: By lines and shapes, different kinds of lines and shapes.

KRANZ: Did you like it?

CHILD: Yeah.

KRANZ: Think you learned something?

CHILD: Yeah.

KRANZ: What did you learn?

CHILD: That lines can make a lot of different kinds of feelings.

* * *

(Dance Class Demonstration in a Student-Built "Environment")

CHILD: I learned almost everything I didn't know about lines. I didn't think lines were anything until today.

KRANZ: Do you like looking at pictures and sculptures better now that you've done this?

CHILD: Yeah.

KRANZ: The sounds of children talking about [illegible] learning about art at the Minnesota Museum of Art's "Arts Awareness" Program. I'm Rachel Kranz.

MARK VINZ, POET
NEA'S GIFT OF POETRY TO THE MOREHEAD, MINNESOTA SCHOOLS

VINZ: I'd like you to write about what you think a poem is. Or another title -- How To Make A Poem.

MERROW: That's Poet Mark Vinz talking with students at the Riverside and Sabin Elementary Schools in Morehead, Minnesota. Vinz was able to meet with those students because of the "Artists in Schools Program," funded by The National Endowment for the Arts.

BLAIR: The National Endowment now spends about $4 million a year to put nearly 2,500 poets, dancers, painters and filmmakers into schools for several days a week. It isn't just to teach kids how to sculpt or dance, but to give them an idea of what artists do, and what their lives are like.

VINZ: Yeah. And you said, "Poetry is easy as peanut-butter." Could you do another one to go with that? "Poetry is as hard as . . . . what?"

CHILD: Lemon drops.

VINZ: Lemon drops?

CHILD: Hard as work.

CHILD: Oh, I thought about different things. Like, before I hated poetry. Now, it's okay to me.

CHILD: Before I couldn't see any fun in it, but now that I've started doing it, it's really fun.

SIEMERING: Do you think of things when you're out away from school sometimes that you want to write down?

CHILD: Like playing around the rocks up there, our private fort, and you see lots of things that you think about, and you can write about them.

SIEMERING: What do you find as the impression kids have of poets before you come in?

VINZ: I suppose the main problem is with some of the boys. Sissy! And sometimes the first question I get asked is, "Do you do any sports?"

If I say "yes, I used to play basketball", that makes it O.K. But it's a total thing, it's just fostering that interest in poetry, it's breaking down barriers, it's getting them to write and working with them a little bit on their writing. For the initial exposure to poetry, that's the best thing that can happen. It's fun, it's fun to write about yourself, it's fun to use your imagination. It's the beginning of everything.

VINZ: Now, do you think you could do something like that? Not necessarily on a pair of socks, but on something very common and everyday.

CHILD: Ode To My Toes:

Ode to my toes,
as they look like a hose.
Without my toes,
whenever my sneakers come untied,
my toes curl up
and keep them on my feet.
Without my toes,
I couldn't run,
I would just sit
on my bun.

SIEMERING: Do you enjoy writing poems?

CHILD: Yes, because then you can say what you really feel like.

CHILD: A Poem Is:

A poem is laughter, sadness
maybe even something that was found
over the rainbow.
Poems can have feelings,
strong or weak.
Maybe sometimes poems can be funny
or make you mad.
maybe even cry.
Poems are wonderful.

VINZ: I'm really glad that I could be in this class all week. Thank you very much and I'll see you soon.

BLAIR: Poet Mark Vinz, talking with Bill Siemering of Station KCCM, in Moorhead, Minnesota.

T.J. GOETTING
AN ARCHITECT IN THE SCHOOLS OF DELAWARE

MERROW: There's An Artist in the Schools program in every state. Each state has to match the amount provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

BLAIR: When Delaware got its money, it decided to put an architect into a school. Lianne Hansen, of Station WUHY, in Philadelphia, talked to

architect T.J. Goetting

GOETTING: This woman from the National Endowment called me. I got so enthusiastic about what she was talking about, because it was the only other person that I'd ever heard that thought about architecture in terms of environments that kids were in and that teachers could use to help them to want to learn.

HANSEN: It was that phone call that saved T.J. Goetting from designing sky-scrapers and propelled him into the position of architect in residence at the Renniny Middle School, in Middletown, Delaware.

HANSEN: T.J. was familiar with the play-while-you-learn concept, having numerous public school playgrounds out of pieces of junk. But he was not quite prepared for the classroom when he asked what it was he was supposed to do, he was told "do what you want". But within the social structure of a school that's not so easy. He was told that in order to develop a rapport with the kids, he should not become identified as a teacher. And because the school year was already eight weeks old when he arrived, he felt doubly alienated. Finally, one of the newer teachers, out of desperation, asked him to help her. His foot was in the door.

GOETTING: It started out when I went in the classroom, I said " well, what don't you like about your classroom?" There were sort of mumbles. That's not the way you ask a question. So then I asked them what they'd like to do with the classroom and in unison, they said "burn it down". So I decided, well, we'll start from there. You need to do a lot of fast thinking. You're sitting there with all these kids and you wing it quickly. So I decided: O.K., that's what they want to do, I don't want to discourage them from saying things like that. So I said"O.K. Everything out of the room and let's burn it down". With great glee, they whisked all the desks outside, and took the things off the blackboard. Then they came back in with these empty looks on their faces, like "well, now what?". And I said"well, you know what happens when you burn a school down, it's made out of concrete, and bricks. It doesn't burn down, you just burn stuff inside of it". So here we are, how are we going to start over? They had all these empty looks, they just didn't know what that meant.

So then I started to feed them with : "well, what didn't you like about it?" "Now that it's gone, what don't you want to bring back in". They were asking themselves very intelligent questions like "why is it so hot in here?" , which is the way architects think about things.

HANSEN: But T.J.'s purpose was not to get the kids to think like architects, but to show them that they can manipulate their own environment in order to make it serve them better. It was decided unanimously that because of time and resources, it would be best to paint the room. The class then listed their favorite colors, voted, and chose the top seven. A supergraphic design was worked out and a model of the classroom built. Finally, the paint brushes were put to the wall. For T.J., the biggest difficulty was breaking down the kids' notion that there is a prescibed way of doing things.

GOETTING: Two days before we started it, they were still asking "Are they really going to let us to this? And I felt that what should happen is that the kids should say " well, who cares what someone else thinks about

it". "Right now, what do I think about it? what do I want to do?" If they're willing to ask that question and find out that they wanted to do something that someone else didn't want them to do, then they would say, "Well, what would someone else think if I paint the window?" And then I want them to say, "If they don't like what I decided I wanted to do, can I fix it and call it a mistake?" And I think that's what they really learn to do in that classroom. They're having a good time painting and they were having a good time sort of putting together a funny place to have classes in. But the work they were doing on their own was -- "Hey, you know, we did this. We discovered this all ourselves. We put it in all ourselves. And we've done some things that people don't ordinarily do here."

HANSEN: The final result is a blue room with white clouds on the ceiling and multi-colored, circular rainbows and sunbursts adorning the walls and windows. T. J. has said what he hoped his kids learned from this experience, but what do they think they learned?

STUDENT: Learned to look at the unobvious, and look at different things so that you don't see everything the way they're supposed to be seen.

STUDENT: It puts your mind to work. And makes you think. We've learned to argue constructively instead of just blah, you know?

STUDENT: And you get to show your ideas more instead of just, like, your teacher just giving you all the ideas, and you don't get to say what you feel.

STUDENT: We're not just learning subjects - we're using them.

STUDENT: Yeah, yeah, that's right.

HANSEN: For National Public Radio, this is Lianne Hansen.

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LORIN HOLLANDER, CONCERT PIANIST

MERROW: Those artists in those schools were there because of "The Artists in Schools Program." The Rockefeller Panel on Arts, Education and Americans says that children in school don't have enough experiences like that. Most people would probably agree that art can be fun, but Rockefeller Panel members believe it can also be a broad learning experience to serve children throughout their lives. Concert Pianist, and Panel member, Lorin Hollander says, "Art can help us all cope better with our emotions."

HOLLANDER: You know, we're living in very remarkable times. It's a time when science is learning a great deal. Intuition is given more credit. But it's also a time when people are searching for definition of their lives. Where often they find the "Dating Game" mentality, the selling mentality, the experience of the arts playing musical instruments, dancing with each other -- is the experience of people sharing emotion. Our society has not dealt with the question of how human beings deal with emotion. Our children somehow have learned to be ashamed of these feelings passion, fear, terror of death, love, a need, gentleness, tenderness.

We have made a terrible mistake in relegating the arts to a second status. We all feel this way. We need you to help us alert people that we need a revolution in our attitude toward education in this country.

MERROW: Concert Pianist, and Rockefeller Panel member, Lorin Hollander says, "We need a revolution in our attitudes toward art education." Another Rockefeller Panel member, Former U. S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel, argues that art actually teaches discipline. I asked Keppel if schools, with their interest in control, order, discipline, aren't at odds with art, which unleash creativity.

FRANCIS KEPPEL
FORMER U. S. COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

KEPPEL: I don't think so. To begin with, I think you have somewhat overstated the extent to which schools are there for the purpose of creating order and discipline. And I think you also, frankly, misstate the role of discipline in the arts, which is very considerable if it's well done. I mean, discipline fully comparable to any other scientific or humanistic discipline.

BLAIR: Former U. S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel.

MERROW: That argument that art requires discipline is likely to appeal to educators. Especially today when "back to basics" is a popular cry. The Rockefeller Panel even went so far as to suggest that there's a correlation - that's not necessary cause and effect, but an association - between rising test scores and increased, improved art programs. In Oakland, California, three schools are attempting to integrate art into the whole curriculum. Students there are learning to read at an average of twice the normal rate. Jay Baltezore reports.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA'S "ARTS ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS"

BALTEZORE: For the past seven years, the Oakland, California Public Schools have experienced some success in incorporating arts with the learning process. There are nearly 250 students in the "Arts Alternative Schools." Arts Magnet, which covers grades K- 3; Moss-Wood for 4th through 6th graders; and, Renaissance schools for those from 7th through 12th grades. There are no bells signaling the starts of class, or reprimands for those students who don't make it to class right on time. Involvement from parents is not only requested but required for any student to be able to attend the schools. The student with the parent must take the initiative to request admission to the school. If the child is at the 4th grade level or higher, he or she must be evaluated by some teachers or parents to see if the child has the creative interest. And there's a bit of a waiting list. But the children who get in aren't Oakland's most elite students. They come from nearly every part of the city and from all types of backgrounds. Stan Cohen, an advisor to the schools, says arts are not just peripheral to the curriculum, but an essential part of it.

COHEN: That takes the form of such courses as art and science, math and art, art through history. Pupils with potential that had not been realized found themselves in fertile soil, and grew more rapidly.

BALTEZORE: In the Arts Magnet School, children can be doing just about anything. What kinds of things do you write in your journal?

STUDENT: Stories.

BALTEZORE: What kind of stories?

STUDENT: Any kind.

BALTEZORE: What do you learn from it?

STUDENT: How to write. And we learn how to draw beautiful pictures.

BALTEZORE: On this particular day, students in the Moss-Wood school, that is the fourth and sixth graders, were on a three-day camping trip. But Renaissance, the high school, was in session, and many of the students were taking tests - the results of which, in the recent past, have shown that the students are reading and comprehending at a much higher level than their peers in traditional programs. Officials for the Oakland Public Schools agree the arts programs has been successful, but they're not committing themselves to further expansion right now. The program costs about $250,000 a year, most of which comes from local tax revenue. But the Arts Magnet School is attracting some money from outside institutions, particularly the California Arts Council, and school officials are looking for that kind of support to expand the program in the future. For OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, I'm Jay Baltezore in Oakland, California.

THE ANISA MODEL

BLAIR: The idea of using art as a tool to help students learn the basics will probably catch on. Researchers at the University of Massachusetts School of Education have developed "The ANISA Model," in which arts become an essential part of classroom work for young students. Tom Looker went to an ANISA kindergarten class in Amherst, Massachusetts.

JORDAN: I'm going to do something. Whatever I do I want you to do after me. You remember how we do "Echo?" Listen to it first. Then you do it.

(Following is a Demonstration of Sound Game.)

JORDAN: Much of competence depends on the seeming connection among things. And it is precisely here that the traditional public school fails because the kid gets everything disconnected. Not very many mathematicians teaching in school see the connection between math and music. Nor will the mathematician and musician get together and provide an integrated experience for the child except in our system.

Life comes whole. And in a piece. And integrated. And beautiful. And not just chopped up into dry bits that don't connect.

LOOKER: Dan Jordan, Director of the ANISA Project. Jordan and his colleagues believe that the arts can be used to teach everything from reading to relativity. There are weighty theoretical reasons behind this belief ranging from the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead to the psychology of Jean Piaget. But the most obvious justification for strongly integrating the arts into an educational curriculum is that art activities make learning fun. Again, Director Dan Jordan.

JORDAN: There are about 15 million functionally illiterate young people in American schools today. And our experience over the last fifteen years in working in public schools indicates that many of those children are disabled readers because they found the experience painful. Now, our approach, which makes it joyful - that just by itself over the long haul - ought to remove an enormous percentage of those disabilities.

LOOKER: At a kindergarten class, the Wildwood School in Amherst, Larry McCullough, a research associate at ANISA, uses music and poetry to develop pre-reading skills.

McCULLOUGH: The research has shown that children who can rhyme and who can recognize rhymes easily have a much easier time in the initial stages of reading. Children - even in the crib - will use their language and their sounds rhythmically, and if poetry is using rhythmic elements of speech, even . . . la-da-da-da-dahhh-dahhh . . . is the basis of poetry and the basis of music.

LOOKER: But in the ANISA curriculum, art is used to teach more than just pre-reading skills. Here's how 5-year olds learn geometry. The teacher again is Larry McCullough.

McCULLOUGH: Okay. I'm going to give everybody a rope. Untie it first. Now, the neat thing about these is if you put your body inside of it, you can make shapes. So, I'd like you to stand inside of it, and see what kinds of shapes you can make.

LOOKER: Director Dan Jordan explained what was going on.

JORDAN: One thing we would do, and have done, is to combine movement and dance and music with understanding triangularity. By involving the child in moving his body inside an elastic band which he shapes by putting it between his feet, and running it up over his head. So that he makes three sides. And no matter how he moves, if he keeps three points of contact with the elastic band, he'll always have a triangle. If you have a mirror in the room, then he can see that the triangularity emerging, and if you would put on the music, as we would do, and have him dance around with his legs stiff -- call it a "Triangle Dance" if you like -- then he comes to understand that geometric shape very easily, and it's very difficult for a child to forget what a triangle is if he's been one.

McCULLOUGH: You can use feet and arms and hands and heads.

CHILD: I'll use my head and my feet.

McCULLOUGH: Do you think you could move all around the room and keep the triangle - always keep it a triangle?

(And the kids do a fantastic "Triangle Dance.")

LOOKER: Art activities are integrated into all aspects of the ANISA science curriculum. Physics is linked with music, and from an early age, kids begin to learn concepts which Dan Jordan says lead eventually to Einstein's theory of relativity.

JORDAN: A range of pitch is a scale - simply as a sequence of relationships, which is what relativity refers to. So that one note of a certain pitch is higher than another, but in relationship to another pitch it will

be lower. So, we introduce to the child the classification system that enables him to understand relativity of pitch. We don't wait until he's in the 8th grade, you know, or in college, and then you start talking about Einstein and The General Theory of Relativity. The basic notions of relativity - vibration, frequency and all those things - very early. So, it's just a part of you by the time you're ready for that.

LOOKER: The ANISA Model has only recently been tried out in schools. Initial results look favorable. Children taking standardized tests after three years of an ANISA program show marked superiority in basic skills to non-ANISA children. But ANISA is bound to raise controversy. Not the least in its basic assumption that art - in fact, concepts of beauty itself - should be used to teach children order and discipline. ANISA will be tested more widely in the future. So, the next time you hear a kindergarten class singing what seems to be a simple rhyming song, don't be fooled. If they're ANISA kids, they're well on their way to understanding $E=MC^2$.

McCULLOUGH & KIDS:

Where do you work a'Gail'a?
I work to deliver the mail'a.
Where do you work a'Larry?
I work to help people marry.

Nikiddy, boon-yah, boon-yah.
Nididdy, boon-yah, boon-yah.

LOOKER: In Amherst, Massachusetts, for OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, this is Tom Looker.

ELIZABETH MCCORMACK
ARTS AFFECT VANDALISM & VIOLENCE?

MERROW: The Rockefeller Panel also raised the possibility that more art might mean less vandalism and violence. There's no data yet. Only a hint. I asked Panel member Elizabeth McCormack, former President of Manhattanville College about that.

Are you trying to kind of sneak this arts recommendation by the American public via appealing to our interests in rising test scores and reduced vandalism?

McCORMACK: Well, I don't think it's beyond us to try to sneak something by you, but I think we know that you're not going to let it be snuck by you, as they say. As a matter of fact, we don't really know, and neither does anyone else, whether or not arts in the schools would increase reading scores, and would decrease vandalism. We just don't know that. On the other hand, many people say that the way to find it out is by research, applied research. A project in this or that school - and find out, whether in fact, if the arts are put in the schools, reading will improve and vandalism decrease. In my opinion, research should be done. We need research, but one research team can prove one thing, and another research team will prove another thing. You start with an assumption, and it really

isn't hard to find the data to prove whatever your assumption is. So, that while research can be used, in my opinion, the only way we'll really know if there is a correlation, is if we try it. In my opinion, there is a correlation because when a child doesn't read, or when a child is a vandal, usually the refusal to do one thing, and the doing of another, is a kind of protest, an expression of anger against society, and children love the arts, and perhaps if the arts are in the schools, they'll become happier children, that are reading children, and not vandals.

MERROW: Rockefeller Panel member Elizabeth McCormack. She now works for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

BLAIR: Well, now you've heard about half a dozen or so school arts programs, but we still don't know the real state of art in public schools nationwide. The conventional view is that it's pretty bad - underfunded, and just an after-thought.

MERROW: On the other hand, there is scads of evidence that Americans are going to more artistic events than ever - plays, concerts, movies and museums. So, we must be doing something right!

BLAIR: Maybe we're already coming to our senses?

MERROW: The National Art Education Association puts the responsibility for improving art education on the shoulders of art teachers everywhere. They should go out into the community and teach the people how important art is, according to Executive Director John Mahlmann.

MORE WITH DR. JOHN MAHLMANN

MAHLMANN: I don't think art teachers should sit back and expect everyone else to do their work for them -- that is, to defend their discipline, its worth in the schools and so forth. That's their job. The math teachers are doing that. The science teachers are doing that. The art teachers should do it as well - so that they do drum up the support and business. If they don't stick up for the arts program in the schools, who will?

MERROW: Dr. John Mahlmann, Executive Director of the National Art Education Association.

Material for this program on "Arts in American Schools" came in part from Jay Fitts, WHA, Madison, Wisconsin; Bill Siemering, KCCM, Morehead, Minnesota; Rachel Kranz, KSJN, Minneapolis; David Irwin, KBIA, Columbia, Missouri; Lianne Hansen, WUHY, Philadelphia; Tom Looker in Amherst, Massachusetts; Jay Baltezore in Oakland, California and Susan Stamberg and David Selvin in Washington.

BLAIR: If you'd like a transcript of this program - "Art in American Schools" - write National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D.C. 20036. Be sure to ask for Program #83. Transcripts are 50¢. And cassettes are available for $5.00.

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MERROW: I'm John Merrow.

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair. And this is NPR - National Public Radio.

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"Danse Pour Katia" by Armand Bournonville - Performed by James Pellerite, Flute, and Ashley Miller, Piano -- Golden Crest Records, RE-7010.

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