DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 203 SO 013 409

AUTHOR Eddy, Junius
TITLE The Case for the Arts in Schools.
INSTITUTION Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc., New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Alcoa Foundation, Pittsburgh, Pa.: Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.: Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, Mich.: National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO AEA-7
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 16p.: For related documents, see ED 196 745-747 and SO 013 407-408. Photographs and some print type throughout document may not reproduce clearly from EDRS in microfiche.
AVAILABLE FROM The Arts, Education and Americans, Inc., 10 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020 ($2.00, quantity discounts available).

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Art Education: *Curriculum Development: *Educational Objectives: *Educational Philosophy: Elementary Secondary Education: *Fine Arts

ABSTRACT

Goals and rationales for designating arts education as fundamental to the educational process are presented. The document is organized into three sections. The first two sections examine goals for schooling in the United States (as analyzed by Goodlad and others) and existing rationales advanced on behalf of the centrality of the arts to education. Of the 12 educational goals listed, the majority either fall into the domain of visual and performing arts or are goals to which the arts have a potential for contributing. Rationales advanced by some educators and artists suggest that aesthetic literacy is a singular purpose for art education. Other rationales concern ways in which fine arts education directly affects educational practice through enculturation, basic skills, creativity, expressiveness, and communication. The third section refines the rationales discussed in the first two sections and places them within one of three categories. The first category, developing aesthetic literacy and creativity, suggests that only by learning in and about the arts can students acquire a basis for the development and refinement of aesthetic preferences. The second category, using the arts for general education purposes, lists contributions of the arts to other academic goals and to personal and social growth. The third category involves using the arts for specialized educational purposes such as education for the handicapped, gifted, and bilingual. (Author/KC)

The case for the arts in schools

By
Junius Eddy

A series of reports from The Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc. 7

FOREWORD

Despite the "unprecedented flourishing" of the arts in America today, arts programs in the nation's schools have not experienced a corresponding expansion. In fact, with nationwide public attention focused on such problems as declining enrollment, vandalism, low test scores, and spiraling inflation, budgetary priorities are dictating the reduction of school arts programs. In some school districts, arts programs are being eliminated entirely.

We believe that school arts programs are *basic* to individual development and a sound education. Further, we believe that the arts should be used to stimulate learning and self-expression, and recognized as valid ways to learn. If school arts programs are to continue and expand, they require the support of educators, school board members, parents, artists, arts administrators, students, community leaders, legislators, and government agencies.

The Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc. (AEA) has established a National Advocacy Program for Arts in Education addressed to these groups of individual advocates. AEA is a national organization formed in 1977 following the publication of *Coming To Our Senses*, the Report of the National Panel on The Arts, Education, and Americans, David Rockefeller, Jr., Chairman.

The AEA Advocacy Program, which encourages the cooperative action of these groups to ensure local level support for school arts programs, includes a public awareness campaign and consumer information service. The service provides Advocacy Program enrollees with a variety of arts in education information—the AEA newsletter, access to the AEA speaker referral service, informal consultation, and monographs that address pertinent arts in education issues and topics.

This monograph, part of an ongoing series, speaks to one or more of the aforementioned school arts support groups. While we recognize that few monographs will speak directly to everyone, we attempt in each to address a variety of individuals. We hope this monograph will prove helpful to you in your support of arts in education. If you are not yet enrolled in the AEA National Advocacy Program and would like to do so, write to:

The Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc.
Box 5297, Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10163

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank Junius Eddy, author of *The case for the arts in schools*, for his dedication to an arduous writing assignment. Mr. Eddy, also author of the AEA monograph series Report 2, *Your school district and the arts: a self-assessment*, brings to this project a variety of special credentials—education journalist, television playwright, film writer, former university theatre professor and school board member. Now a resident beside Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay, Mr. Eddy is an arts education consultant for numerous foundations, school districts, government agencies, colleges and universities, and arts councils.

With grateful appreciation, we also wish to thank the following organizations for helping to make possible AEA's National Advocacy Program for Arts in Education and, as part of that program, the ongoing monograph series: the National Endowment for the Arts, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Alcoa Foundation.

AEA's Board of Directors and Advocacy Advisory Group provided insight on the shaping of the Advocacy Program, and the Advisory Group in particular spent many hours reviewing monograph outlines and drafts.

The Advocacy Program is coordinated by Educational Facilities Laboratories, a division of the Academy for Educational Development. AED Senior Vice President and EFL Division Director Alan C. Green serves as Project Administrator. EFL's Nancy Morrison Ambler is Project Director and editor of the monograph series. EFL's Barbara R. Strong, Project Assistant, is editorial and photo researcher for the series. Jill Bogard, AEA Program Information Specialist, assisted with editorial research for this monograph.

Finally, we acknowledge with gratitude the hundreds of artists, arts administrators, community leaders, educators, federal, state, and local government administrators, parents, and school board members who continue to share with us their knowledge and myriad experiences in the realm of school arts programs. Without their patient and detailed explanations of how their own programs are designed, managed, and expanded—without their special vignettes about these programs—we would be unable to produce the monographs.

The case for the arts in schools

by Junius Eddy

CONTENTS

The "fundamentals" of education

Not long ago people in arts education circles were talking wistfully about ways of tinkering with the school program to get "more art" and "more music" into the curriculum. The operative words these days, however, are considerably more substantial and all-embracing.

Increasingly one finds arts education leaders speaking and writing about "comprehensive arts programs" and referring to the arts as "a basic component of the curriculum, deserving parity with all other elements." They speak of the "centrality of the arts to the K-12 educational experience." "The arts," they assert, "are fundamental to the entire learning process."

The reasons they advance to justify such statements embrace an extraordinary number of educational goals and objectives. In fact, it often seems as though the arts are prescribed as a cure-all for virtually anything that ails our schools or stunts the personal growth of their students.

At the same time, few educators would deny that there is genuine, observable substance behind much of the current "arts are fundamental" rhetoric. The stated goals for students are not merely wishful thinking. The achievements are real, and they happen all the time. They are being documented daily in a host of different ways in a considerable number of school systems around the country. In such places, you can find seasoned school administrators, experienced teachers, and once skeptical parents eager to testify to the fundamental place of the arts in students' lives.

Much has been written in justification of school arts programs, and it may seem pretentious to attempt, in this limited space, to further refine the many stated cases. In this monograph, however, we will dissect, distill, and restate some of the familiar educational goals and objectives for the arts, in an attempt to clarify the principal rationales for arts in the schools. In so doing, we hope to assist arts education advocates identify more precisely what about the arts is of such fundamental importance that it would be unthinkable to deny students access to them at any level of the educational continuum.

> The humanities would be expendable only if human beings didn't have to make decisions that affect their lives and the lives of others, if the human past never existed or had nothing to tell us about the present; if thought processes were irrelevant to the achievement of purpose; if creativity was beyond the human mind and had nothing to do with the job of living; if human relationships were random aspects of life; if human beings never had to cope with panic or pain, or if they never had to anticipate the connection between cause and effect; if all the mysteries of mind and nature were fully plumbed, and if no special demands arose from the accident of being born a human being instead of a hen or a hog.
>
> *Norman Cousins*[1]

> It seems to me that upon graduation from high school a young person should know what music and art and theatre are, and how they are created. He should be acquainted with the diversity of art: old and new, familiar and exotic, simple and complex. He should have a feel for the way dancers work and for languages that do not use words. He should have mental habits receptive to the use of symbols and metaphor. He should be prepared to draw upon the arts for pleasure, for knowledge of how men and women think and feel and behave, and for information about the range of possibilities open to him as a human being.
>
> *Kathryn Bloom, Director Emeritus, JDR 3rd Fund Arts in education Program*[2]

To begin with, let's examine briefly what is meant when people say that some elements of schooling are "fundamental" to the educative process. In other words, what elements are of such value to the truly educated person that they are indispensable and cannot, therefore, be eliminated from responsible school programs without serious functional deprivation in adulthood. Presumably, such elements should be capable of being organized into a curriculum and taught as a regular part of the elementary classroom program. At the secondary level, they should appear as a required area of study, not an elective option. Extracurricular experiences ought to bear some of the teaching and learning responsibility, too, enriching and extending for the most interested students what is prescribed in the formal curriculum.

We are not concerned here with those elements of schooling to which it is "nice" for students to be exposed, or that the home and community institutions can provide more effectively – assuming that *all* youngsters have equal access to them. Rather, we are talking about skills, attitudes, processes, sensitivities, interests, and appreciations we deem of cardinal importance to the development of educated human beings fully functioning in today's world. Ultimately, of course, it is difficult to talk in these terms without confronting the goals and purposes of education in general.

John Goodlad, director of the UCLA Graduate School of Education, points out in his book, *What Schools Are For*, that educational goals fall into four broad categories: academic, vocational, social and civic, and "the goal of personal fulfillment, which is a fairly recent development."[3]

It is interesting, indeed, to observe how often, within their definitions of education, eminent writers in the field now include goal statements concerned with personal growth and development, and aspects of learning that fall most properly within the domain of the humanities.

The same general emphasis on humanistic goals also permeates goal statements produced by committee, e.g., state and local boards of education, curriculum planning bodies, and a host of educational commissions and task forces. The work of such groups formed the basis of an analysis of goals for schooling undertaken by Goodlad and his colleagues at the research office of the Institute for the Development of Educational Activities (/I/D/E/A/) as part of its landmark project, *A Study of Schooling* in the United States. Goodlad states:

From approximately 100 such goals, we ultimately defined 12 that seemed to constitute a reasonably discrete list with a minimum of repetition. Broadly representative of interests, the 12 goals constitute a sociopolitical expression of external expectations to which school personnel presumably pay some attention and for which they might expect to be held accountable.[5]

Grouped under each heading were seven to ten subdivisions that offered a variety of perspectives on each of the major headings. Because they bear directly on our concerns here, we list the 12 major headings and, where necessary, summarize the content of the subheadings.

> . . . teaching sounds like a dreary thing for a work of art to do, but it isn't—and it's because it isn't that we don't at a first or second or third glance perceive it to be teaching at all.
>
> *Brendan Gill, theater critic, The New Yorker*[6]

GOALS FOR SCHOOLING IN THE UNITED STATES

(as analyzed by Goodlad et al.)

1 ***Mastery of basic skills or fundamental processes:*** verbal and mathematical literacy; the 3R's; acquiring ideas and communicating them; etc.

2 *Career education/vocational education*

3 *Intellectual development:* ability to think rationally and logically; make critical judgments; utilize past knowledge and new information; develop problem-solving skills; etc.

4 *Enculturation:* awareness of one's cultural and historical heritage, literary, aesthetic, and scientific traditions; differing group norms and values, etc.

5 *Interpersonal relations:* cross-cultural and intergroup understanding, family functions, communicating effectively in groups; forming satisfying relationships with others; social behavior; etc.

6 ***Autonomy:*** developing personal goals, positive attitude toward learning, coping with change and unforeseen demands; risk-taking; assuming responsibility for one's own needs; etc.

7 *Citizenship:* knowledge of government processes, community participation, preparing for citizen involvement in political and social life of the country; etc.

8 *Creativity and aesthetic perception:* self-motivation, flexibility; ability to create and appreciate creations of others, develop perceptual skills; communicate through creative work; sensitivity to problems, tolerance for new ideas; etc.

9 *Self-concept:* search for meaning in one's activities, self-confidence, ability to live with one's limitations and strengths, positive attitude toward one's physical appearance; etc.

10 *Emotional and physical well-being:* expanding one's affective sensitivity; skills for continuous adjustment and emotional stability, empathy for fellow human beings, use of leisure time, physical fitness, expression of emotion in creative acts; etc.

11 *Moral and ethical character:* moral integrity, necessity for moral conduct; commitment to truth and values; judging phenomena and events as good or evil; developing personal value systems, etc.

12 *Self realization:* fulfillment; efforts to develop oneself to the fullest and thereby contribute to the development of a better society, etc.[7]

Several things strike one about these goals, an amalgam that represents what a number of thoughtful people inside the schools and out believe the nation's schools *should be* addressing through their programs, activities, and processes.

It is intriguing to note how many goals on this list are concerned directly with nonacademic matters involving social and personal growth. As Goodlad points out, such goals foster "the development

of a compassionate understanding of humankind, the ability to solve untamiliar problems . . . to establish appropriate relationships . . . and to achieve personal goals," most of which are casually or inadequately attended to, both in our schools and in the larger society.

Most striking, however, is the extraordinary number of goals which seem uniquely susceptible to the kinds of teaching and learning that fall within the domain of the visual and performing arts, or to which the arts have an enormous potential for contributing or illuminating. Indeed, many arts education advocates would probably assert that virtually *all* of these goals could be addressed in some manner by the arts.

Certainly, *aspects* of many of these goals, under favorable circumstances, can be served by a first-rate, comprehensive arts program. The question is: which ones, and to what extent? Is it realistic to expect school districts to try to make the arts do *everything*? Are the arts truly fundamental to the *entire* learning process, or to just some parts of it?

Advocates may have to come to grips with the larger issue, e.g., what they believe to be the essential goals and purposes of education as a whole, before they can determine how fundamental the arts are, or should be, to any given aspect of education.

A look at some existing rationales

Let's look briefly at some of the reasons and purposes others have advanced on behalf of the centrality of the arts to education. In the process, let's see how well these reasons actually stand up against a kind of "fundamentals" litmus test. Our intent is not to provide a final verdict on the fundamental nature of each rationale, but to help readers clear away some of the rhetorical underbrush and clarify, for themselves, the issues involved.

The link between the arts and cognition strengthens the *counter-claim* that arts education can be justified. . .
in terms of its varied, intrinsic, internal merits as an integral and integrated part of the curriculum.

Frank S. Kessel, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Houston[2]

Indeed, except for the handful of students who become professional artists after a grounding in the public school, the benefits of teaching art to the young will consist mainly in the pleasure that comes of being able to see and hear works of art more sharply and subtly, and compare notes with other people similarly inclined. The cultivation of the arts is a social as well as an individual enterprise, which is a second reason why its beginnings, however difficult to teach, properly belong among the teaching duties of the school.

Jacques Barzun[3]

In their zeal to strip away the rhetoric and refine the cure-all element in arts education to a mother lode of meaning, some educators have arrived at a single overriding purpose for school arts programs. Consider, for example, the statement of Jacques Barzun, former provost of Columbia University, who has chided arts educators for "getting drunk on hope and verbiage." Passing his own sobriety test, Barzun states bluntly:

There do not have to be 18 reasons to justify art in the school. One is enough. Let it be put this way: "Art is an important part of our culture. It corresponds to a deep instinct in man; hence it is enjoyable. We therefore teach its rudiments."[4]

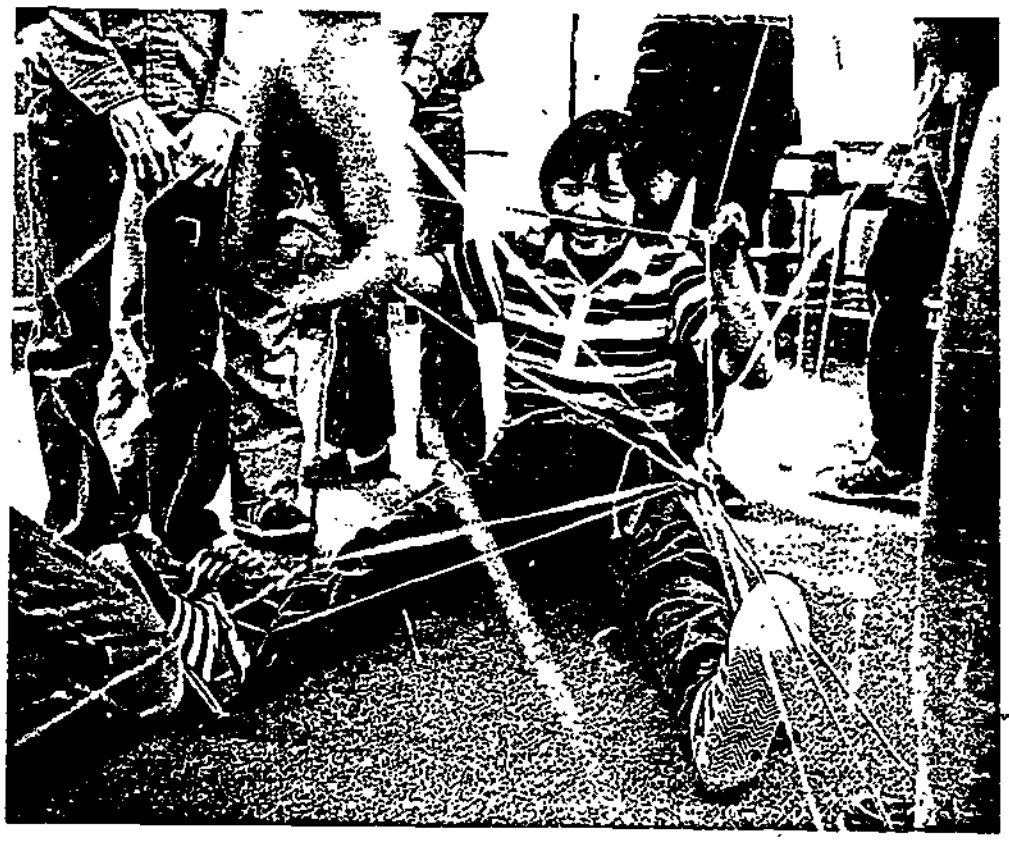
Overlooking the possibility that not all deep human instincts are necessarily enjoyable and the fact that an enjoyment quotient is not necessarily a reason for teaching a subject, it is perhaps an injustice to quote Barzun out of context. We therefore provide, in an adjacent column, more of his supporting argument. The central question is, however, does he have a point here? Does his argument dignify the field in its simplicity and serve to make a more reasonable case to the unconvinced? Or does it trivialize the contributions of the arts by ignoring their broader educational potential?

Others, including Vincent Lanier, professor of art at the University of Oregon, have also spoken out against a multi-purpose rationale. In Lanier's view, "The proper single purpose of art education should be aesthetic literacy . . . the enhancement of the pupil's aesthetic potential in visual experience."[10] The case for aesthetic literacy is certainly a strong and highly persuasive one and we will return to it later. Our concern here is whether it can stand as the sole justification for school arts programs.

Now listen to John Coe, chief primary advisor for the County of Oxfordshire, England. Discussing a recently completed survey of Great Britain's primary education Coe says that one of the most important findings has to do with the basic skills. He reports:

There's absolutely no sign that an increased attention to the arts, or to the emotional and social aspects of the child's growth, in any way inhibits the development of sound basic skills. Very much the reverse seems to be true. The survey found that basic skills were highest where the curriculum was *widest*. . . . If the basic skills are imbedded in a web of direct experience on the part of the child that engages the many facets of his personality and being, then the basic skills grow *most strongly*.[11]

From this one might assume that, for Coe, the fundamental reason for having a strong program in the arts would be their effect on basic skill development.



The academic skills are essential, but incomplete for a quality life unless supported with that skill fundamental to all learning—the ability to create. The arts involve elements of self-discovery which are vital to the learning process and to personal fulfillment. All the skills, the academic, the creative, and the expressive are more successfully integrated within the individual if they are linked in the teaching-learning process.

Benjamin P. Ebersole, President of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development[12]

Nonetheless, he goes on to say,

My friends and I believe . . . that the natural creativity in all of our children is a great force for education. Our children's natural impulse to create a shape for their world, to convey what they feel about it, is a force that we use time and time again in our schools. Therefore, the work in the arts and crafts, the work with materials, is not seen merely as an extra to be enjoyed after the main work of the day is done; we see the day and the learning experiences of the children as a wholeness.[13]

One can hardly find a more compelling statement supporting the creative function of the arts in children's lives, and from a seasoned school administrator at that. Clearly, Coe places a value on the arts that one suspects he would term "fundamental," and he does so for at least *two* quite different reasons from those offered by Barzun and Lanier. Are Coe's arguments necessarily better or more fundamental? Or should all four reasons be accorded generally similar weight as rationales?

Let's add another element to the mix at this point, a concise statement by Joseph Featherstone, a former educational journalist now teaching at the Harvard Graduate School of Education:

One reason to talk about the arts in the schools is that everything we know about human nature—and in particular the nature of children—points to the centrality of expressiveness. The arts are the language of human experience.[14]

So, if you believe with Featherstone that communication is central to human experience, you must incorporate that as another important educational contribution of the arts. But precisely how essential is it? Can the arts teach communication skills entirely on their own? Can they do so more effectively than other methods? And can they teach all forms of communication or only some forms?

Thus far, the reasons advanced as to why the arts are fundamental to education *directly* affect educational practice in some form—enculturation, basic skills such as math and reading, creativity, expressiveness, communication, and

aesthetic literacy. What about reasons that affect the schools *implicitly* as the only institution responsible for ensuring that the chronicle of human aspirations is transmitted to new generations? Consider the broader societal and spiritual rationales expressed by the distinguished English art historian, critic, and poet, the late Sir Herbert Read:

> . . . art is deeply involved in the actual process of perception, thought and bodily action. It is not so much a governing principle to be applied to life as it is a governing mechanism which can be ignored at our peril . . . without this mechanism, civilization loses its balance and topples over into social and spiritual chaos.[13]

In somewhat the same vein is this eloquent statement by the American novelist Katherine Anne Porter:

> In the face of such shape and weight of present misfortune, the voice of the individual artist may seem of no more consequence than the whirring of a cricket in the grass, but the arts live continuously, and they live literally by faith, their nature and their shapes and their uses survive unchanged in all that matters through times of interruption, diminishment, neglect. They outlive governments and creeds and societies, even the very civilizations that produced them. They cannot be destroyed altogether because they represent the substance of faith and the only reality. They are what we find again when the ruins are cleared away.[14]

It would be difficult to come upon a more poetic yet reasoned credo for the centrality of the arts to human existence. But does it follow, therefore, that the schools are the proper place to nurture "the voice of the individual artist?" If so, *how much* of that specialized responsibility should school systems shoulder?

It would certainly resolve a great many pedagogical difficulties if arts educators could hone their various educational purposes to a single reason, such as that proposed by Professors Lanier and Barzun. It seems most unlikely, however, that such a drastic refinement of purposes would produce a single, fundamental rationale which everyone could accept.

A 1977 report of the National Art Education Association (NAEA), in fact, succinctly and convincingly states the case for a multipurpose approach.

> In a pluralistic society it is appropriate that the goals we strive to achieve, the content we teach, and the methods we use will vary with the contextual setting of the school and the unique needs of the children to be served in that environment.
>
> The NAEA, therefore, acknowledges that there are a variety of appropriate rationales which may be equally viable as conceptual bases for teaching and learning in art within a given school context.[15]

Although the visual arts are the topic here, the idea can obviously be extended to encompass other art forms. Each art form demands its own unique set of educational rationales, which, in turn, will vary according to the learning circumstances.

Making the case

Thus far, we have examined some fundamental goals and components of education, together with some reasons for the centrality of *arts* to education. Now let's proceed to the task at hand: refining the rationales advanced and identifying which, if any, aspects of the arts are *fundamental to* education.

Our resulting rationales will be categorized roughly in three clusters of ideas. The first cluster will encompass aspects of the arts that seem absolutely indispensable to education, regardless of the circumstances in which individual schools or students find themselves. The second cluster will involve uses of the arts to help meet other academic goals or nurture social and personal growth. The degree of importance of such uses of the arts may not necessarily reach the indispensable level. However, they clearly have extraordinary educational value for those schools with a strong commitment to quality education. The third cluster will include an educational role for the arts which may be of fundamental importance to *some* groups of people, or which may address the crucial but highly specialized needs of *some* students. This final cluster, therefore, would not meet a strict "indispensable" test for education as a whole.

Developing aesthetic literacy and creativity

In the reasons falling roughly in this cluster we find the most straightforward justifications for arts in education. Nothing else in formal schooling seems capable of teaching students about this crucial aspect of human experience. Only by learning in and about the arts can students acquire a basis for the development and refinement of aesthetic preferences, and for making valid aesthetic judgments about their environment and the individual works of art within it.

The arts are crucial because they help, as nothing else does, to sharpen the ability to use to the fullest one's perceptual equipment, both sensory and cognitive. Moreover, through direct experiences not encountered elsewhere in schooling, the arts enlarge and enrich the learner's basic knowledge of human endeavor. Through such experiences, the student comes face to face with the

> What, then, can such a teacher do to enhance students' opportunities to achieve aesthetic literacy? It is important, first of all, to realize that the domain of the aesthetic is more far-reaching than the world in which works of art exist. Everyone has some memory of sunsets, moon-flecked woods, snowy streets, children's hands. An awareness of certain aesthetic concepts (distancing, let us say, shape, timbre, form) may move an individual teacher to uncouple certain phenomena from the context of ordinariness and to perceive them aesthetically: a black tree shape on a winter day; the texture of a flower petal, the wind moving the leaves.
>
> *Maxine Greene*[16]

differing ways human beings have perceived the world around them, and with the different modes they have found to express those feelings and perceptions. Perhaps Harry Broudy, professor emeritus at the University of Illinois, says it best:

> Aesthetic experience is basic because it is a primary form of experience on which all cognition, judgment, and action depend. It is the fundamental and distinctive power of image making by the imagination [which] furnishes the raw materials for concepts, and ideals, for creating a world of possibility . . . [The imagination] is the matrix and motivator of all that is characteristically human. Dampen image making and image perceiving, and creativity is diminished and intelligence itself is deflated. This is as true in everyday knowing, thinking, feeling, and choosing as it is in the highest reaches of science and art . . .[19]

Historically, if not theologically, Broudy points out, "In the beginning was the image, not the word; the forms of feeling, not the forms of thought." He believes that education's failure to realize how much of thought and action is guided by images is responsible for what he calls

> . . . the grand misunderstanding: namely, that image making and image perceiving can be left to develop without tuition, and that formal instruction is to be concentrated on the skills of cognition and problem solving. It is this relation between the imagination and the other functions of mind that grounds the claims of arts education.[20]

Beyond all this, of course, involvement in the arts offers the student a wide array of opportunities for "creative work," activities that help develop the willingness to experience, and the ability to enjoy, the act of creation. British educators have for some years placed high value on this aspect of experiences in the arts, as Coe's earlier comment indicates. One of the major recommendations concerning the teaching of young children, contained in the 1967 Plowden Report on primary schooling in Great Britain, places "special stress on individual discovery, on first-hand experience, and on opportunities for creative work."[23]

> . . . arts education enriches the store of images that makes comprehension of concepts possible. . .
>
> *Harry Broudy*[21]

> When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset. . . .
>
> *Alfred North Whitehead*[22]

Working in the arts is certainly not the *only* way that creativity can be nurtured and developed in children, but freeing the child to *make* art – to create and interpret it – may be one of the more direct and meaningful ways open to educators today. It would seem only expedient that educators at least equalize their options by providing arts programs that maximize these opportunities for students.

As the American art historian/philosopher Susanne Langer writes:

> Art . . . that is, the generic term subsuming painting, sculpture, architecture, music, dance, literature, drama and film – may be defined as the practice of creating perceptible forms expressive of human feeling.[24]

Yet, as Broudy and numerous other authorities have pointed out, both the creative act and the aesthetic mode of experience have a rich cognitive base as well. Among the intellectual activities involved in artistic creativity are planning, sequencing, problem-solving (and problem-raising), decision making, and,

perhaps most significant, coming to understand the nature and function of art as another kind of symbol system. Elliot Eisner, professor of education and art at Stanford University, points out:

If one examines any culture, it becomes apparent that a variety of symbol systems are used within it. Although discursive and written language are the most salient of these systems they do not exhaust the ways in which humans conceptualize and express what they believe, value, hope for and fear. Dance, visual art, music, drama, mathematics and physics and so forth represent some of the symbol systems that have been invented by man to communicate what he knows, feels, or loves [26]

In sum, then, it is probably in this broad area of aesthetic literacy and creativity that arts education can be justified in the most fundamental ways. Arts education must be valued in education first and foremost on its own varied and intrinsic merits because it is in so many ways the only means available for teaching students about, and involving them in, aesthetic literacy and creativity.

Using the arts for general education purposes

In addition to their indispensable role as a field of learning in their own right, the arts have the potential for serving a wide range of crucial purposes in *general* education. Of these roles, their usefulness in helping to meet other academic goals and in addressing the personal and social needs of students comes closest to being of fundamental importance to education.

Contributions of the arts to other academic goals are theoretically without limit, and they are probably the most fully developed instrumental uses in practice as well. There are quite literally scores of ways in which aspects of the arts can be of value to both elementary classroom teachers and subject teachers at the secondary level. Used purposefully and consistently (in partnership with arts specialists wherever possible), the arts can provide new insights into other content areas, reinforce key ideas and

The arts involve important processes of thinking both similar to and different from scientific knowing but, in no meaningful sense, 'less than' the later.

Frank S. Kessel[25]

What we need to remember is that helping children learn to grow through art is a process which takes time, depth of involvement, and that by its very nature is open-ended in regard to expectations.

Jo Alice Leeds[27]

The slow, sure development that comes from living with materials and gradually associating form and idea, as a farmer comes to know his fields and animals and weather is a gestalt that is too often bypassed in this day of quick-drying, quick-learning, instant perfection. . .

Adelaide Sproul[28]

concepts, and forge rewarding interdisciplinary links with the "academic" curriculum at all grade levels.

This instrumental role of the arts has been emphasized in a number of varied school districts around the country which in recent years have adopted "comprehensive arts programs." Often referred to as Arts in General Education (AGE) programs, or arts in basic education programs, many were developed along lines piloted in a score of school districts by the JDR 3rd Fund during the 1970's.

In a 1974 booklet written for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (an early advocate of the AGE concept), journalist and consultant in the arts Charles Fowler describes some of the key elements of this approach:

Properly conceived, the arts constitute a great integrating force in the school curriculum [because] their subject matter is as broad as life itself . . . All the major subject-matter disciplines have aesthetic components that can provide bases for incorporation of the arts . . . The idea of the arts in basic education means that the arts will be infused with major areas of the curriculum in such a way that they will mutually nourish one another to the benefit of all students. In other words the arts ought to *permeate* the subject matter of the schools [29]

The areas of social studies and the language arts are perhaps the most obvious fields in which direct supporting contributions can be obtained from the arts. Since most art forms deal imaginatively with the human experience, they provide the curriculum's widest range of "raw materials" on which the student can draw to enlarge his or her own understanding of what it is to be human. In addition, the arts are powerful transmitters of a people's cultural and racial heritage, and serve as eloquent instruments for documenting aspects of history.

At the same time, support is growing for the theory that the arts can play an enlarged instrumental role in children's development of the verbal and computational skills requisite to function effectively in school and throughout life.

This development, now largely experimental and in need of further assessment and documentation, begins to take the arts well beyond their unique expressive functions as alternative modes of communication. As several notable pilot ventures indicate, students can and indeed are "learning to read through the arts."

Such uses of the arts to help teach students the 3 R's or other non-arts content do not, in and of themselves, justify the arts as "indispensable" to education. Other methods, longer established and more readily testable, address the academic objectives involved. Whether the customary teaching methods may in fact be *less* effective than teaching through the arts is not really the question. Given the national economic climate and its implications for the nation's schools, it seems wishful thinking to envision in the near future a wholesale reversal of the ways the so-called basics are taught.

Advocates should therefore avoid making broad claims about the indispensable (and perhaps even the fundamental) role of the arts for *general* education purposes. A more realistic approach would view the arts as highly effective supplementary vehicles, a potentially powerful option, for helping students master standard curriculum components.

On the other hand, the arts stand virtually alone among the disciplines in their capacity to serve in such an instrumental fashion. *Each* of the art forms can be used in a variety of pedagogical ways to help motivate and teach students across a broad range of non-arts content areas. This factor lends a formidable utility to what is already a crucial aspect of learning in its own right. No other element in the curriculum appears to hold such potential for *extra* service that enriches the entire learning process.

Contributions of the arts to personal and social growth are also unlimited in their potential. So far, however, their capacity for meeting these urgent student needs has not been explored or pursued by

19

Every man and woman is a living universe of experience, sight, sound, feel and thought. The material of poetry is everywhere and in every person.... But the poetry no more makes itself than painting paints itself. To release and expose splendors in likely and unlikely places takes training, skill, daydreaming, and magical flashes of sheer luck. Good poetry is not made as impulse or pastime but by an honorably difficult craft through which the apprentice, journeyman, and master can transform and display some of the glory of the world.

Richmond Lattimore, poet[29]

... being able to translate ideas and feelings into symbolic forms requires both emotional and intellectual discipline.

Geraldine Dimondstein[33]

the schools as purposefully as their capacity for contributing to academic goals.

Yet, we are dealing here with a majority of the 12 goals that Goodlad and his colleagues found most Americans want students to acquire during their schooling: enculturation, sound interpersonal relations, autonomy, self-concept, emotional well-being, ethical character, and self-realization. They are the "human purposes of school," which educator Terry Borton, in his book, *Reach, Touch and Teach*, asserts are included in statements of educational objectives "only for show [because] everyone knows how little schools have done about them."[30]

Borton is not alone in noting this curious and long-standing neglect. J. Richard Suchman, a former staff member of the U.S. Office of Education (now the U.S. Department of Education) and the Portola Institute, a California-based educational research group, says:

It is significant that in the schools we have less high regard for "soft" talent—sensitivity, openness, and flexibility talent, the stuff of which communication, human relations, and personal growth are made. A child who is able to "tune in" to other people, to open himself and communicate readily with others who can without strain revise his knowledge and beliefs as new sources of information and ideas and values become available, is richly endowed. He has great potential for social and intellectual growth.[31]

The arts, virtually alone among the disciplines, can nurture this kind of "soft" talent in students. The arts speak to the learner's affective needs and help students deal in healthy ways with their emotions. Because they often place the student "at risk," the arts encourage an adventurousness of spirit, a willingness to strike out in new directions and take greater responsibility for individual actions and decisions. Involvement in the arts, due in part to their strong cognitive base, helps to develop flexible, independent, and critical-thinking processes and fosters a tolerance for ambiguity.

Finally, the development of a positive self-image, including pride in one's cultural or racial heritage, can be a principal outcome of arts experiences. Work,

play and study in the arts which concentrate on elements of the student's cultural or racial heritage have two central functions here. One function involves developing in the student an awareness of the artistic richness of that heritage, as expressed in works that the culture has produced. The other function involves providing opportunities for students to draw on that historic past for inspiration, images, and ideas in their own creative work.

In these ways the arts can speak directly to the crucial "human purposes" of schooling and help meet important aspects of each student's personal and social needs. They can do so, moreover, through approaches provided by little else in the typical school program—except perhaps by those gifted master educators whose teaching styles have been crafted in humanistic modes regardless of their arts background or training.

In the last analysis, the degree of importance an individual places on this particular function of the arts in education will depend on the degree of importance placed on these personal and social characteristics in the mature human being. If such characteristics are deemed of fundamental importance to individual happiness and social equity, then the arts in education become absolutely essential.

Using the arts for specialized education purposes

Clearly, we have not exhausted the ways in which important educational objectives can be achieved by a strong school arts program. There are a number of equally crucial but more specialized educational concerns which educators are finding can be successfully addressed by such programs or by employing special teaching techniques and approaches based in the arts. Let's look now at a few additional contributions arts programs can make to education:

> Week by week, over the course of a year, all of us, using all sorts of art forms, slowly built an enchanted forest. . . that would fill the empty classroom next door. . . The important ingredient was that children and adults conceived and executed the forest together. It was as if we had brought into the life of the school an image of such vibrancy that no one . . . could resist interpreting it artistically.
>
> *Richard Lewis, Director, Touchstone Center for Children, New York, New York* [34]

> Neglect of the arts in the school curriculum becomes an unrealized form of experience for all students. In this respect, our limited conception of talent or giftedness or intelligence supports, in practice, a form of cognitive deprivation. Because we have drawn our circle too small we have deprived a great many children of the opportunity to cultivate their intellectual potential.
>
> *Elliot Eisner* [35]

> While standardized tests may have valid use in cognitive areas, the price paid in other important areas is simply too high to justify the uses currently being made of them.
>
> *Sue Buckler* [36]

Creating a more healthy school climate by helping to reduce vandalism, increase attendance, make the school more attractive visually, and develop a warmer and more humane school environment. These concerns are of enormous importance to teachers and administrators, in urban settings especially, and are often cited as positive outcomes of a strong school arts program.

Contributing to special education by helping to meet the needs of physically and mentally handicapped students and those who are learning disabled.

Contributing to programs for the academically and artistically gifted and talented by identifying and nurturing such students, thereby expanding their current horizons and ultimate career and vocational options.

Contributing to bilingual education by employing arts-related teaching techniques in programs designed to meet the needs of students to whom English is a second language.

Obviously, none of these justifications for school arts programs can be claimed indispensable to education as a whole. Most are reasons of great potential importance in certain learning situations to some students whose educational needs are highly specialized. However, in recent years educators have found that the benefits are very real indeed when school arts programs are extended to meet the needs of such special student populations.

Some conclusions

We conclude by suggesting that arts education advocates avoid the tendency to view our categories and distinctions as mutually exclusive domains within the curriculum or the school program as a whole. It is important to recognize that several purposes often can be served by the same arts experience. Aesthetic literacy, for example, can be advanced when dramatic improvisation is used primarily to illuminate a social studies lesson on the First Amendment. Conversely, affective growth and devel-

opment can be an outcome when students in an English literature class are engaged in giving coherent dramatic form to an improvisational exercise. In effect, at least three quite different educational objectives are being addressed here through the use of dramatic improvisation. The fact that only one, or perhaps two, of these purposes may be spelled out in terms of behavioral objectives does not mean that cognitive development, personal growth, or new understanding does not occur.

Nor is it wise, or even possible, to specify behavioral objectives in ever greater detail to justify what, in the end, seem to emerge as our most important educational goals and purposes. "Rather than reducing such goals to hundreds and thousands of specific behaviors," says Goodlad, "we should seek to understand their meaning for substance and process—in effect, to determine whether they might be advanced through educating" more effectively than through any other means.

Furthermore, as Eisner points out,

> Some objectives one cannot articulate, some goals one does not achieve by the end of the academic year, some insights are not measurable, some ends are not known until after the fact.

So, although it behooves us to work diligently at refinement of goals, seeking "substance and process" in our statements, we should be wary of efforts to reduce them to behavioral shreds in the testing and measurement machines.

In the end, this special attribute of the arts for transfer, crossover, and interconnection—for obtaining double or even triple mileage from a single lesson, exercise, or experience—may lie at the heart of our educational concerns here. The arts, as we have suggested, seem to possess this quality more than almost anything else in the school program. This factor, then, may provide us with the most convincing rationale for asserting that the arts are indeed fundamental to the educational process.

Everyone hopes that the new year and the new Administration will work towards furthering international understanding, peaceful solutions and finding answers to solve the serious economic problems here at home. Though these are noble generalities, specific hopeful beginnings should have primary concern. What I hope for most is an understanding of the deep need and unmatchable value to our society to make more available in our education system a true, professionally guided system of arts education. More than anything else the arts must be accepted as a basic civilized necessity, available to every child in the country as a natural function of the art of living, not as an occasional social adornment. I believe profoundly that this broadening of the vision of the young makes more possible a humane understanding between nations and leads inexorably to the development of the people who, as adults, are better equipped to work constructively toward the goals I mentioned at the beginning. This is something which must be begun yesterday, so that we have the hope of a good tomorrow.

Issac Stern, violinist[38]

REFERENCES

1 Norman Cousins. "How to Make People Smaller Than They Are." *Saturday Review*, Vol. 5, No. 30, December 1978

2 Kathryn Bloom. Foreword in Stanley S. Madeja, ed. *All the Arts for Every Child. Final Report on the Arts in General Education Project in the School District of University City, Missouri*. New York: JDR 3rd Fund, Inc., 1973

3 John I. Goodlad. *What Schools Are For*. Indianapolis: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1979

4 Brendan Gill. "The Uses of Art." a talk given at The Maryland Institute, January 1972

5 Goodlad, op. cit.

6 *Ibid*

7 Frank S. Kessel. "Developing the Art of Knowing." a paper presented at "What is Basic Education? A Texas Statewide Conference on the Arts, Cognition and Education." June 1978

8 Jacques Barzun. "Art and Educational Inflation." *Art Education*, Vol. 31, No. 6, October 1978

9 *Ibid*

10 Vincent Lanier. "Six Items on the Agenda for the Eighties." *Art Education*, Vol. 33, No. 5, September 1980

11 Vincent Rogers. "A Kappan Interview: A British Administrator Looks At British Schools." *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 61, September 1979

12 Benjamin P. Ebersole, a speech given at the 1980 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Conference, and quoted in *Art Education*, Vol. 33, No. 5, September 1980

13 Rogers, op. cit.

14 Joseph Featherstone. "The Arts and the Good School." *Cultural Affairs*, No. 13, January 1971

15 Herbert Read. *Education Through Art*. New York: Pantheon Books, third revised edition, 1956

16 Katherine Anne Porter, cited in *Coming To Our Senses: The Significance of the Arts for American Education*, a report of The Arts, Education and Americans Panel. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977.

17 National Art Education Association. *Report of the Commission on Art Education*. Reston, Va.: NAEA, 1977

18 Maxine Green. "Aesthetic Literacy in General Education." *Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

19 Harry S. Broudy. "How Basic is Aesthetic Education? or is 'R' the Fourth R?". *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 35, No. 2, November 1977

20 Harry S. Broudy. "Arts education: Necessary or just nice?". *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 60, No. 5, January 1979

21 Alfred North Whitehead. *Science and the Modern World* (one of the 1925 Lowell Lectures). New York: Free Press, 1967

22 Broudy. "Arts education. . ." op. cit.

23 Central Advisory Council for Education (Great Britain). *Children and their Primary Schools: A Report*. London: CACE, 1967

24 Susanne K. Langer. *Philosophical Sketches*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962.

25 Kessel, op. cit.

26 Elliot Eisner. "The Cognitive Contribution of the Arts in the School Curriculum." a paper presented at "What Is Basic Education? A Texas Statewide Conference on the Arts, Cognition and Education." June 1978.

27 Jo Alice Leeds, a letter to the editor of *Art Education*, Vol. 32, No. 2, February 1979

28 Adelaide Sproul. *With A Free Hand: Painting, Drawing, Graphics, Ceramics, and Sculpture for Children*. New York: Reinhold Book Corporation, 1968.

29 Charles Fowler. *The Arts Process in Basic Education*, a publication of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1973.

30 Terry Borton. *Reach, Touch and Teach*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970

31 J. Richard Suchman, cited by Martin Engle, now Arts and Humanities Advisor to the National Institute of Education/U.S. Department of Education, in *Quotations About Children, Learning, School, Education, Art, Bureaucracy, Reason and Life*, an unpublished collection of quotations.

32 Richard Lattimore. "Sestina for a Far-Off Summer." cited in *Bryn Mawr Note*, February 1976.

33 Geraldine Dimondstein, a letter to the editor of *Art Education*, Vol. 32, No. 2, February 1979

34 Richard Lewis. "The Forest of the Mind: Nurturing Imagination in Children and Teachers." *Today's Education*, Vol. 69, No. 2, April-May 1980

35 Eisner, op. cit.

36 Sue Buckler, a letter to the editor of the *Washington Post*, September 10, 1980.

37 Eisner, op. cit.

38 Issac Stern quoted in "25 Cultural Wishes for the New Year." *The New York Times*, December 28, 1980

PHOTO CREDITS

Page 11: Courtesy of Arts Are Basic program, Bell School, Marblehead, Massachusetts

Page 16: Courtesy of Arts Are Basic program, Eveleth School, Marblehead, Massachusetts

Page 19: Courtesy of Western Opera Theater, the touring and educational subsidiary of San Francisco Opera, San Francisco, California

Design/Betty Binns Graphics