

**Arts Education: Motivations, Benefits and Realities of
Educational Programs from the Perspective
of Professional Arts Organizations**

by
Lorena Janey Miller

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Approved:
Patricia Lavender (Chair)
Barbara Carlisle
Don Drapeau
John McCann

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ABSTRACT

In 1880, the 46th US Congress requested the first federal study of the state of arts education. A two-volume report, of almost 2,000 pages, was written by Issac Edwards Clarke and submitted in 1885. Titled *Art and Industry: Education in the Industrial and Fine Arts in the United States*, it stated, “The wide spread interest and activity [of the arts] gives promise of an important development in the art productions of the United States.”¹

Now, over a century later, the expansion of arts continues. A most recent development is the growth of arts education programs within professional producing/presenting organizations. The purpose of this study is to understand the motivations, benefits and realities of educational programs from the perspective of a professional producing/presenting arts organization. More specifically, what has enticed these organizations to create and sustain educational programs? Are these programs viewed as an extension of outreach, or as a program to serve their mission, or for reasons unstated?

Research was collected in Charlotte, NC, a community with diverse arts organizations, many of whom support educational programs. The school district also has a strong arts education programming. Nine arts organizations and three supporting organizations were selected for direct

interviews. Each interview was conducted in the same manner, based on five questions.

This research reveals that arts organizations are proactive and have created valuable educational experiences for their community, but many organizations are doing a disservice to their core beliefs by not defining the value the educational program provides for the organization.

¹ I. Clarke, Art and Industry: Education in the Industrial and Fine Arts in the United States (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), p. 4.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Results of recent arts education research reveal many significant positive relationships between involvement in the arts and the development of competencies for academic and personal success. Arts education, as defined in *Toward Civilization, A Report on Arts Education*, “. . . aims to provide all students, not only the gifted and talented, with knowledge of, and skills in, the arts. Basic arts education must give students the essence of our civilization, the civilizations which have contributed to ours and the more distant civilizations which enrich world civilization as a whole. It must also give students tools for creating, for communicating and understanding others’ communications, and for making informed and critical choices.”²

Toward Civilization was written in 1988 by congressional mandate for a "study of the state of arts education."³ It aimed to define the arts that are worth studying in the classroom, present reasons for studying them and show why the present state of arts education is unsatisfactory. It also examined the role of leaders in arts education and how the National Endowment for the Arts can play a part in being a leader. Information was collected via surveys at state and school district levels and from earlier studies. The work was undertaken by the National Endowment for the Arts.

A decade later, 1999, a second report, *Champions of Change*, was released. The focus of that research was to discover “. . . why and how young people were changed through their arts experience.”⁴ This study used seven teams of researchers who examined a variety of arts education programs, all of which used differing methodologies. It is in direct response to a society which values measurements and data to inform decisions when “. . . allocation of scarce resources, photographs of smiling faces are not enough to

² *Toward Civilization: A Report on Arts Education* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴ Edward B. Fiske (ed.), *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Washington DC, 1999), p. iv.

gain or even retain support.”⁵ This work was supported through a partnership of the Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

The executive summary of *Champions of Change* reports, “. . .while learning in other disciplines may often focus on development of a single skill or talent, the arts regularly engage multiple skills and abilities. Engagement in the arts —whether the visual arts, dance, music, theatre or other disciplines — nurtures the development of cognitive, social and personal competencies.”⁶ *Champions of Change* examines a variety of arts education programs. Despite the fact that each study was independent of the other and each used a different methodology with a different focus, the research from these seven studies had seven claims in common:

- The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached.
- The arts reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached.
- The arts connect students to themselves and each other.
- The arts transform the environment for learning.
- The arts provide learning opportunities for the adults in the lives of young people.
- The arts provide new challenges for those students already considered successful.
- The arts connect learning experiences to the world of real work.⁷

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. ix.

⁷ Ibid., p. ix-x.

Champions of Change and *Toward Civilization*, along with numerous other studies, have helped educators, administrators, artists, community members, etc. verbalize and petition for arts education. Yet, I was left with a question of who is creating arts education and what are the intentions of the creators?

While it is easy to identify that schools and educators are considered creators of arts education, I have found that professional arts producing/presenting organizations generate considerable arts education activities. In this report, I shall attempt to identify the reasons why arts organizations have educational programs. I want to identify what motivates arts organizations to joined forces with schools and funding agencies to support and create such programming and to test certain assumptions regarding what motivates arts organizations to support/create educational programming.

I began this research with the hypothesis that most educational programming by an arts organization does not go beyond mere exposure. I thought that educational activities produced by arts organizations were not hands-on activities, but limited to activities that focused on allowing children to watch the arts, versus providing opportunities that would allow children to be a part of the arts. I also believed that organizations were creating and supporting arts education to take advantage of grant opportunities. I thought organizations created educational activities because there was an opportunity to receive a grant if the project contained or focused on arts education. I wondered how much educational activity arts organizations would support if grants were not available.

The body of the thesis contains a synopsis of the interviews with arts organizations and supporting organizations (referenced in Table 1 and 2). While it is not possible to document each response, I have summarized the responses to one answer that accurately describes a census of the responses to each of the five questions. With each 'answer', I have included stories and/or information about organizations, which was gathered through interviews or

research and which supports my answer. Also included is one additional observation that was identified after reviewing all of the interviews.

Finally, the thesis will conclude with four identified principle points, which summarize the issue of arts organizations and the realities of how arts educational programming is realized in the organization.

II. METHODOLOGY

While the seven claims found in the *Champions of Change* report are relevant and important to anyone who creates or implements arts education programs, I do not wish to replicate or further this study. This does not mean to imply that I do not recognize or value the myriad goals that education and involvement in the arts provides to everyone involved. The focus of this research is to understand the intentions and expectations of arts education from the perspective of professional arts organizations. The purpose is to identify:

- Why professional arts organizations create educational program(s)?
- What are the intentions behind these programs?
- What are the benefits for the organizations when providing these kinds of activities?
- How these programs serve the organizations in other ways?
- Who do these programs serve?

I collected information through interviews and informational gathering (via the Internet and/or brochures created by the organization) of nine arts organizations (see Table 1 for a listing) and three supporting* organizations (see Table 2 for a listing) all of which are located in Charlotte, NC. One interview was conducted with each organization. The representative for the organization was either the executive director or program directors. Each arts organization interviewed has educational programs. Each interview with the arts organization was comprised of five questions (See Table 3 for a listing), always asked in the same order.

History of Support Mechanisms for Arts Education in Charlotte, NC

Charlotte, NC, was selected as a place to conduct my research, because it is a city that contains many dynamic arts organizations, supporting all arts disciplines. Charlotte also has a strong commitment to the arts via the Arts and Science Council, which is complemented by a stable, yet expansive, school district that has sustained arts education in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg County schools for many years.

The importance that the Arts and Science Council (ASC) brings to Charlotte is evident by the amount of money raised in the ASC's annual fund drive. In 2000, their united arts drive raised \$9,134,820,⁸ ranking Charlotte as number one in the nation in per capita giving to the arts.

In 1994, ASC implemented a cultural action plan that established arts education as its highest priority for the next three years. Toward this end, the Council was successful in securing over \$600,000 to initiate A National Model: A Comprehensive Program of Arts Education in partnership with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.⁹ Also in 1996, ASC formally approved an arts education plan for Charlotte/Mecklenburg — a comprehensive, curriculum-based program of arts and cultural education for all ages.¹⁰ The ASC established another policy, which designated arts education as a top priority. This policy requires that one-third of all new money raised must go to support educational programs that directly benefit Charlotte-Mecklenburg youth.

In 1997, a third cultural action plan was launched with a primary focus on public participation. The Cultural Education Collaborative (CEC) was incorporated as a non-profit, affiliated partner of the ASC and began implementation of a program to coordinate all in-school and/or community-

⁸ The Charlotte Observer, February 25, 2000, p. 1.

⁹ <http://www.artsandscience.org>, April 6, 2000.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

based arts and science education programs.¹¹ The CEC receives annual operating support from the ASC. The CEC awarded \$508,166 in cultural education grants for the 1999-2000 school year.¹²

A profile of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg school district was recently featured in *Gaining the Arts Advantage*¹³ for its strategic and effective long-range plan and implementation of arts education. Fifteen years ago, the Charlotte/Mecklenburg school district, Arts and Science Council and community arts advocates brought in consultants to assist with development of arts education. The Wolf Organization of Boston developed a vision based on the following notion “. . . the arts play an important role in helping children to think critically and to find creative approaches in solving problems.”¹⁴ A 10-year plan was created to integrate arts in the schools through the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Charlotte/Mecklenburg County School District currently has 130 schools and 92,619 students. They have 515 arts teachers in all disciplines including dance, music, theatre and visual arts.¹⁵

While the school district provides a strong arts education program for the K-12 population, it also welcomes collaborative projections between teachers and their students with the arts organizations of Charlotte.

In the fall of 1999, every 8th grade student in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg school district attended a performance titled *Mountain!* at Spirit Square Center for Arts and Education.¹⁶ This production was sponsored by the CEC, but was written and produced by Children's Theatre of Charlotte with period music arranged and performed by the

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Cultural Education Collaborative Brochure: “Education Through the Arts, Science, History and Heritage”, 1999-2000, p. 5.

¹³ *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons From School Districts that Value Arts Education, Arts Educational Partnership* (Washington, DC: 1999), p. 41-42.

¹⁴ <http://www.artsandscience.org>, April 10, 2000.

¹⁵ *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons From School Districts that Value Arts Education, Arts Educational Partnership* (Washington, DC: 1999), p. 41.

¹⁶ Cultural Education Collaborative Brochure, “The Battle of King’s Mountain In-School Workshops”, 1999.

Charlotte Symphony Orchestra. *Mountain!* was a production based on an actual battle that took place in 1780 at King's Mountain, which is located thirty miles southwest of Charlotte. This battle turned the tide of the British southern campaign and the outcome of the American Revolution.

Not only did this project provide a required field trip for every eighth grade student, it also offered in-school curriculum-based workshops at no cost. Numerous cultural organizations and individual artists offered many 'Classroom Offerings' based on the work *Mountain!*. The teacher could choose to collaborate with any among the following organizations: Afro-American Cultural Center, Carolina Raptor Center, Children's Theatre of Charlotte, Museum of the New South, Ramona Moore Big Eagle of Eagle Tales, Ron and Brooks Gullege of Teller of Tales small and Tall, Stageworks Theatre, Charlotte Symphony, The Light Factory and Community School of the Arts. The Mint Museum of Art created a Teacher Resource Notebook of images and research on North Carolina colonial history.

This is just one example of many collaborative arts and cultural opportunities being sponsored every year by the ASC and CEC, bringing students, educators and arts organizations of Charlotte together, providing quality and creative education for all.

It was within this context and environment that I conducted my research through direct interviews with arts organizations.

III. OBSERVATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS

Question #1: What Drives Educational Programs?

Personal Commitment

Behind every action there is a motivating factor which drives an intention to complete a goal. I found that educational programs needed more than a mission statement to be created. Assuming that the goal is arts education, I started each interview by asking, "what was the drive to start your [arts education] program(s)?"

These programs usually started with an individual's personal commitment to education and the art form. Interestingly, each organization I interviewed had someone who was highly committed to an educational goal. There was no consistency among the organizations as to what position that person held. I wondered how does their position relate to their commitment, or does it?

When I contacted each organization to set up an interview I would request to meet with the executive director. I felt my results would be more accurate in comparing responses if I had interviewed people that had the same title. But, some organizations suggested I meet with the program director instead, because they would be better able to answer my questions.

Each organization has its own history, thus the development of educational programs varies. Some organizations were founded with a high commitment to education. In these cases, the executive director typically held a high personal commitment to the programs, such as the Afro-American Cultural Center (AACC). The AACC “. . . exists to preserve, promote and present African-American art, history and culture, and to increase the awareness, understanding and appreciation of African-American cultural traditions among all citizens of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and surrounding counties.”¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://www.aacc-charlotte.org>, April 25, 2000.

When I approached this organization, I was referred to Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey, the Interim Executive Director. The AACC has nine total staff members, five of whom have 'Program Director or Program Associate' in their title. I believe any of the five could have assisted with answering my questions, yet, I was directed to speak with Dr. Roddey. Serving as the leader, she is the one providing the vision for the organization's educational programming. It was quickly evident during the interview that she had high personal commitment to these educational programs.

Other organizations started with a focus on the artistic process. In these cases, the program coordinator typically had a higher personal commitment to education than the executive director did. When I called to make an appointment with the executive director of The Light Factory, I was referred to the Director of Education, because, "she knows more about those programs than I do." The Light Factory functions as, ". . . a dynamic, non-collecting laboratory for the education and presentation of photographic art and current issues. Its galleries offer presentations of both new art forms and historical works that elucidate issues engaging artists today."¹⁸ In fact, this director of education revealed that her commitment to these programs is so high that she has concerns about what will happen to the programming when she leaves (at the time of the interview, she was scheduled to leave the organization in two weeks). It was obvious that her boss trusted her ability to understand and develop educational programming and she saw fit. Unfortunately, this kind of trust between co-workers can be difficult during times of change – especially when the co-worker with the high personal commitment leaves the organization.

Opportunities

The second factor that drives organizations to provide educational endeavors, is opportunity. I use the term 'opportunity' very liberally, such as: opportunities to fill the needs of a community, opportunities to expand the

organization, opportunities for others to tell their story or merely take advantage of missed opportunities. While the opportunity to start a program was unique and evident in each organization, in Charlotte it is very clear that these opportunities were typically coupled with a specific incentive — *money*.

In Charlotte, there is a strong force that provides incentives to create opportunities, that is the Arts and Science Council (ASC) and its partner the Cultural Education Collaborative (CEC). All of the organizations I interviewed receive funding from the ASC and CEC. These two funders require a commitment to education to receive funding. Ergo, educational programs get created.

This ‘carrot and stick motivation’ (to create educational programs for money) is not a negative component, but funding from the ASC & CEC is an important aspect that drives educational programs in Charlotte. I did not ask arts organizations any specific questions about the application process for funding from the ASC/CEC. Nor, did I ask about how they perceive their relationship with the ASC/CEC, but through the interviews I did get a feeling that all organizations were grateful for the opportunities that the ASC/CEC provide. Administrators, especially, appreciate the CEC's ability to bring organizations together to work as collaborators at the same table on the same educational projects.

CEC is a regranting organization and I feel it lives up to its name as a cultural, education, *collaborative*. The CEC does not try to structure what kinds of educational programs it will fund. It assists and promotes the development of educational activities in Charlotte. With a positive and supportive approach, the CEC allows each organization the opportunity to provide educational activities, which are appropriate to their mission.

During my interview with the CEC, I wanted to know how it perceives arts organizations. Are arts organizations truly interested in educational programs or are they simply applying for grants to receive money?

¹⁸ <http://www.lightfactory.org>, April 20, 2000.

In 1994, the ASC changed the requirements to receive a 'Basic Operating Grants Program,' which provides unrestricted funds for administration, operations, and programs of major arts, science, history and heritage organizations. Arts organizations were now required to demonstrate a commitment to educational programming to receive a Basic Operation Grant.

This new policy was met with resentment. It was described to me that a few organizations still maintain a "grudging compliance attitude."¹⁹ There has been an influx of educational activities within the past five years due to this policy. However, many organizations have yet to define to what extent education is important to the organization.

¹⁹ Interview with Lori Swift, President, Cultural Education Collaborative, March 2, 2000.

Question #2a: What are the Intentions of Educational Programs?

Provide Opportunities to Create

and

Provide Opportunities to Experience

Two commonly mentioned factors behind the importance of any program were:

- Provide opportunities for the general public to create their own art,
- Allow the general public to experience the art made by an organization.

Both of these factors imply access.

"Sharing the Art Form" is the one solid answer I felt that every organization stated when answering this question. Similar to the notion that each arts organization has an assumed purpose of sharing whatever they create, educational programs have a purpose to provide possibilities to experience the art. This response is much like the argument 'arts for arts sake', 'arts education for sake of educating' — the intention is to share and help others to understand the art form.

Question #2 b: Are these Intentions Stated Goals or Unstated Goals?

Intentions Are Stated Generic Goals

I chose not to experience any of the educational programs created by the arts organizations interviewed, but I did want to find out how serious the organization was about their goal(s)? I asked each organization if their intentions noted in the previous question were stated goals of the organization. And, are these intentions stated or assumed goals within an organization.

More often than not, these intentions were stated goals of a program, though not necessarily the stated goals of an organization. Usually, these goals were identified in a strategic plan. Interesting, though, is the lack of definition to the goals. Many organizations pointed out that their goals were not specifically described. What can this mean: *On average, arts organizations state their commitment to education, but rarely make their commitment explicit? If the commitment is not explicit what can this mean about their intention?* These are questions I cannot answer based on my research, but the individual who has the high commitment to the program did identify goals of their program(s) for reasons of either recognizing the need to visually and verbally identify these goals, or they simply responded to application guidelines for a grant.

Question #3: What Are the Benefits of Developing and Delivering Arts Educational Programs?

Short Term Benefit: Interaction With The Community

With the current surge of data and information regarding the benefits of arts education, I was left wondering what administrators of these programs see as benefits to the organization and their work? Specifically, what are some immediate profits for the organizations when implementing an educational program?

This was the hardest question for those interviewed to understand and answer. Initially, some would respond with the broad benefits of education, i.e., education opens eyes, education allows an art object to speak or education brings together art and an individual. When I probed with a more directed question of "what are the benefits to your organization," some would act as if I was asking either an offensive or irrelevant question. Many wanted to make it clear that their educational program was not created to benefit the organization. Thus, having someone list benefits for the organization, whether it is short term and/or long-term benefits, was difficult.

I think this question was perplexing to answer because, while organizations do discuss the benefits of the programs for the participant, there is not a perceived need to know why the program is necessary for the organization. There is an understanding that what is good for the audience or those they serve will then indirectly advance the organization.

After some probing, organizations did identify that an immediate benefit of developing and delivering educational programming was interaction with the community. I did not continue to ask "what is the benefit of this interaction?" but if I had, I think some of the responses would have been "it raises the possibility of getting someone involved with your organization." Assuming that interaction with the community does raise the possibility of increased attendance at an event, I think organizations see education programs as an indirect link and/or chance to create support for the

organizations' values. . . more momentum. . . more programs . . . more money . . . more! Thus, the benefit of having your organization's name spoken in the community can only raise your chances to have more people involved with your organization. This kind of benefit is an honest and important goal to acknowledge.

Long Term Benefit: Building Life Long Learners.

This response didn't necessarily shock me, but the notion that arts education has a long-term benefit of creating a community of people who strive for a nourishment of the arts is euphoria. And yet, how possible is it that organizations could achieve such a benefit? Do and/or can arts organizations, through educational programs, build life-long learners? This research did not measure the success of the established goals, it only identified what were the perceived goals.

Notable, though, is the relationship between the mentioned short term and long term goals. The short term, *interaction in the community*, coincides with the long term, *building life-long learners*. In order to build a community of life long learners, an organization must reach out to identify those who are interested. Whether that extension into the community has an intention to reach those who do not have access to the product, or to increase awareness of social issues, or to provide a forum for those who need to be artists, the main benefit short term and long term is the notion of interaction. The primary concern is to reach those not being touched.

Question #4: Do You Have An Intended Goal
That Your Programs Will Positively Influence Your Audiences
To Become Participants Of Other Programs?

YES and NO

When developing the five questions to gather information, I did not see the a correlation between question three "what are the benefits of developing arts education programs" and question four "do you have an intended goal that your programs will positively influence your audiences to become participants in other programs." After analyzing responses, I see there is an indirect correlation.

As with question three, when I asked question four, sometimes the responder would be wary of giving a straight answer. It seemed as if there was fear of sounding like the organization is selfish and is only concerned with self-perpetuation. Many organizations would acknowledge the need for their educational programs to influence the organization as a whole, but rarely did someone respond with an overwhelming *YES*.

One aspect to remember is that some educational programs do not focus on teaching the content of the arts. Some programs have a vested interest in using the art form as a device to address social issues or other complicated matters. Theatre organizations are a good example of that type of programming.

Children's Theatre of Charlotte currently sponsors three programs dealing with issue-oriented work. These programs are: Nobody's *Listening!*, a violence prevention program; *Ice Cream Man*, a substance abuse prevention program; and *Heart-to-Heart*, a relationship Abuse Prevention Program.²⁰ In addition to these programs, Children's Theatre of Charlotte also offers MainStage productions, touring productions, education classes, education programs and other community programs. It is easy to recognize that within

all of the varied programming there is indirect relationship that each of these programs hopes to influence the others for support.

²⁰ Interview with Valerie Lyons, Director of Education, and Jane Shaffer, Education Assistant, Children's Theatre of Charlotte, March 10, 2000.

QUESTION #5: Who Are Your Constituents?

Everyone

The final question in each interview was one more probe in an attempt to understand the motivations behind educational programs. If an organization had answered the first four questions with a specific agenda and/or program intention, I wanted to know if that specified audience is also considered a constituent. While the objective of the interviews did not delve into the format of an educational program, it was inevitable that I heard many stories of organizations' motivations and intentions through explanation of their program.

Most of these stories suggest programs primarily serve youth and underserved community members. And yet, the first response for almost every organization when I asked who are your constituents was “anyone between the ages of Pre-Kindergarten and Senior Citizen.” A typical second response included youth and public schools. Then an array of possible constituents would be added. Examples include, underserved-all ages, higher education, potential new audiences, artists, donors, audience, community at large and even the Arts and Science Council.

Priority of constituents is obvious through programming and I found that the priority is school children and teachers. Every organization I interviewed (except the Charlotte Choral Society) has educational programs that serve public schools. Everything from location, educational materials, length of program, subject matter, etc. all focus on K-12 students. And arts organizations have realized that the best way to reach those students is through the classroom teacher.

‘TEMPO - Teaching Everyone More through Professional Opera,’ is a good example of an educational program that is really created for a targeted audience (K-12 students) but attempts to be relevant for anyone. In the 2000-01 season brochure for TEMPO, a program sponsored by Opera Carolina states, “let us entertain you with well-loved opera and Broadway favorites . . . Opera

Caroline Theatre singers will delight audiences with their beautiful renditions of your favorites and some of our favorites."²¹

Yet, the two performances offered include: *An Enchanted Evening* and *The Three Little Pigs*. *An Enchanted Evening* does reference "possible performance venues include but are not limited to: Senior Centers, Community Theatres, Country Clubs, Women's Clubs, Civic Clubs, Churches and Synagogues, Retirement Homes, Middle Schools, High Schools and Colleges and Universities." But *The Three Little Pigs* is only targeted to Grades: Pre K - 5 and is limited to 45 minutes in length. Obviously, 'Residencies! Workshops!' is a program created for youth and schools. A section on the brochure includes 'Rave Reviews'. The two reviews are from a 3rd grader and 4th grader.

The other program included is Residencies or Workshops described as, "English. . .Math. . .Science. . .Music. . .Opera has it all! Opera Carolina's Department of Education and Community Programs will custom design a residency or workshop to meet the needs of your school and community. Residencies or workshop can target your curricular needs in the arts and other areas."

When interviewing Opera Carolina, the response to 'who are your constituents' was Everyone, backed with "we partner with schools". I visited their web-site and clicked on the Education & Outreach page. At the bottom it states, "then look no further than Opera Carolina's award-winning Department of Education and Community Programs. Here you'll find curriculum-based programs like Music!Words!Opera! and The Science of Singing, performance-based programs for K-12, and community programming with the family in mind!" The website references three specific programs — all are targeted toward youth.²²

²¹ Opera Carolina Brochure, "TEMPO: Teaching Everyone More Through Professional Opera 2000-2001 Season" (Opera Carolina Brochure, 2000).

²² Interview with James Meena, Executive Director, Opera Carolina, March 3, 2000.
<http://www.operacarolina.org>

Opera Carolina has identified a primary constituent for educational programs — it seems to be students and educators. While everyone could be a possible constituent, I see organizations' creating educational programs for youth, not everyone.

Secondly, how can an organization reach everyone? Do organizations think that they satisfy everyone at the same time with the same program? Or, is this just wishful thinking? Keeping in mind that this research was limited to one interview per organization, I believe each organization would agree with the following statement by Keith Martin, executive director of Charlotte Repertory Theatre: "We should be all things to all people some of the time."²³

²³ Interview with Keith Martin, Executive Director, Charlotte Repertory Theatre, March 9, 2000.

Other Observations

Below are additional observations. Questions, asked during the interviews, did not directly relate to this issue, but as I began to understand an organization's programming, the following was revealed.

Professional Development Provided by Artists

Arts organizations are finding a role to provide education for educators. I think this type of professional development is a positive step in developing life-long learners and audiences. Not only must organizations search to expose the arts; we must develop leaders to carry on the torch that the arts are accessible to everyone.

Many educators in public and private schools are not comfortable with expression through the arts, and there are not enough artists and arts educators to visit each classroom to keep the arts at the forefront of education. The classroom teacher needs to be aware of the creative possibilities that the arts can provide to engage students in learning. Arts organizations and artists can provide that type of professional development.

In Charlotte, arts organizations have taken on the responsibility to engage educators, showing and teaching the possibilities of arts instruction in daily classroom activities. North Carolina Dance Theatre (NCDT) created 'Head to Head', a program which "works closely with public school and university educators to develop meaningful curriculum resources and to provide dance related, in-service training for teachers and teaching artists."²⁴

Two programs contained within 'Head to Head' include, '*Jumpstart* - Capturing the Create Process in Dance' and 'Dancing Through the Curriculum'. *Jumpstart* is a "cutting edge research in the choreographic process bringing artists, teachers and middle school students together through

²⁴ Interview with Alain Charron, Director of Education, North Carolina Dance Theatre, March 9, 2000.

the creation of new dance works."²⁵ 'Dancing Through the Curriculum' is a video resource guide available for the classroom teacher. Sample and model lesson plans and assessments are included with the package.

It was described to me that, "NCDT tries to provide a meeting ground, to level the playing field."²⁶ NCDT recognizes that many educators do not have experience in dance, nor do dance educators have many possibilities for professional development. Through creative programming NCDT has created professional development providing advancement for dance educators and classroom teachers alike.

²⁵ <http://www.ncdance.org>, April 25, 2000.

²⁶ Interview with Alain Charron, Director of Education, North Carolina Dance Theatre, March 9, 2000.

IV. Summary

Findings

A. Arts organizations create real educational activities. There is more than mere exposure taking place through educational activities.

I had a preconceived notion that organizations do not create educational programs that go beyond mere exposure. I actually found that organizations do create programs that provide true educational learning opportunities. Interesting to note is the lack of publicity these programs receive.

Most organizations view the educational programs as a device to provide access. Whether that access is for personal or social understanding, the intent remains the same — using the arts to open new pathways for understanding and feeling. While this intention typifies why an organization exists, educational programs deepen the possibilities for access. An organization produces art to share; yet educational programs can take that product and explore the content. This allows for participants to dig deeper into a work of art, more so than experiencing a performance might allow.

Existing educational programs do provide access to the product with a direct intention to create personal understanding and most arts organizations have found creative ways to accomplish this. Yet, organizations do not advertise or promote these activities as widely as they do their other programs. It is easy to observe that most organizations only provide exposure educational opportunities, because typically these are the types of educational programs they advertise. The brochures I reviewed mainly promote those activities that are easily accessible and understood by the community at large — activities that would be considered exposure activities. I found that every organization I interviewed does provide a range of educational opportunities,

they just do not promote all of their activities with the same emphasis or exposure.

B. There is not a clearly identified reason why arts organizations support educational programs or what educational programs can do for the organization.

The volume of educational activities that every organization is supporting surprised me. There is not a lack of arts education programming in Charlotte. Nor, did I perceive a lack of audiences. Yet, despite the interests and support for arts education, I did not sense an overall understanding of why and what education provides for each organization.

For the most part, people believe educational programs are not primarily concerned with benefiting the organization. The focus of educational programs involves service to the community and less with creating a program that will positively influence other activities of the organization. During the interview, many people revealed that they believe a benefit for the organization includes access to the community. Some went on to say that educational programming provides immediate interaction between organization and the community, possibly even developing life-long learners. Organizations suggest this type of interaction could be a long-term benefit, and their program will create life long learners.

Most educational programs are targeted to K-12 students and their teachers, but many organizations believe that their programs can reach anyone and everyone, ranging from age 1 to 101 years old. When it comes to defining the value of the educational program it is important to identify the value of the program, who will find it valuable and how you will reach those identified constituents.

Most organizations have not realized exactly who their target audience is. Remembering that no one has been able to answered the question, “how do you create a life-long relationship with members of a community if they

are not knocking at your door,” organizations must understand the limits of education. Educational programs are important because they allow organizations to go knocking on the community’s door, but organizations are ignoring reality if they think just because they have reached out to the community and had a positive experience that they are creating life-long learners of the arts. Education has its limits — it is only outreach.

Organizations do want to interact and connect with their community. They have defined how their programs are ‘good’ for the community, but they have not answered how education is ‘good’ for their organization. Organizations need to articulate and connect the value of their educational programs to their mission.

Before I came to Charlotte, I traveled to a few cities (Chicago, Hartford, Houston, Providence, St. Louis and Washington DC) and met with arts organizations to discuss their educational projects. I found that almost every organization has educational programming, but their intentions also were not clear. In all of the cities I visited, it seems that many education programs grew out of an opportunity. Many times these opportunities were associated with a grant. A side effect is that commitment to education comes after the grant has been received. What happens to the commitment once the money is gone then becomes a significant question.

In Charlotte, it is difficult to assess commitment to arts education because of the ASC and CEC. There is a positive atmosphere in Charlotte in regards to arts education. Most every organization is interested in supporting education, but when I asked ‘what are the intentions of your programs’ I was confronted with a broad range of emotions. Some suggested that their education does help the organization in ways beyond interaction with the community, but many defended the organization’s position that education programs are not about raising money for the organization.

C. Educational programs exist because some one within the organization has a personal commitment to the project, but the personal commitment is somewhat limited

My research found that within every organization there is someone who places value on educational programs. While there is no right or wrong scenario as to which staff member has personal commitment, what is interesting to note is what happens to the program when that person leaves? Where high commitment exists, so does knowledge. Therefore, when you lose an individual, it can have a double impact. The organization is left void of commitment and may possibly lack information necessary to continue the program.

Within the organizations there is not a sense of 'shared vision' when it comes to education programs. This is a problem that organizations must face when the key individual leaves. This is not to suggest an organization must continue the status quo when an individual leaves. My purpose for identifying the need to share personal commitment is to allow others to understand where the foundation of a program lies to ease and assist transitions when change occurs. 'What happens when that person leaves?' and 'How is change going to affect the program?' are two questions that should be addressed by the organization before the situation arises.

D. Education is considered secondary to the real work of the organization.

This refers to my second and third point — since the value is not defined, then the work is not understood. In turn, those who consider educational programs secondary to the organization do not have personal commitment to the program. Thus, when an organization faces change, money from the grant doesn't stop. Then the educational program continues, but the resources of staff and time are depleted. Eventually, the educational programming suffers.

Because organizations have based their educational programming on opportunities, the projects themselves have become random events. I witnessed many situations where education activities are assumed 'secondary' to the ideals of the organization. With a label of secondary work to an organization, dedicated focus to educational projects is lacking. Most staff members perceive that educational programs are good projects, but many do not understand why these projects are vital to the organization's mission. Sharing information about a program to board members and co-workers, by those individuals with high commitment, will also help elevate some of the stigma that educational programs often carry.

Another associated problem for educational projects considered secondary to the mission is when an organization hits hard times. When an organization loses financial or administrative resources, it responds to the situation by taking care of its primary activities. I do not mean to insist that organizations must be everything at all times, but a significant problem arises for educational projects during times of organizational change. Since most educational projects are supported by outside funds (e.g., grants), there exists an unequal balance of money as compared to project support. In turn, educational programs suffer due to lack of commitment but continue because an outside source has provided the means.

If the value of an education program is defined at the time when the organization can support the project, then when the organization is faced with change it can easily assess what the organization wants to do, can do and should do. All in all, defining the education role can help the organization remain honest to its responsibilities.

Conclusion

Through interviewing and experiencing the culture of the selected organizations in Charlotte, NC, I have gained an awareness of the perceptions and motivations behind arts organizations' intentions to create and support arts education. Lasting effects of arts education are not as easily discernible, but currently arts organizations place value on arts education as a process to share and promote involvement with the community, using the arts as a conduit.

Charlotte is a very blessed community because a positive and successful relationship exists between funding organizations, the school district and arts organizations. Arts organizations have been able to take advantage of educational opportunities that exists because the Arts and Science Council and the Cultural Education Collaborate contribute vision and financial support. All three factions understand and have faith in the creative process. More importantly, all three understand the capacity of arts education to provide a better community.

Arts organizations believe that educational programs create opportunities for people to experience and create their own art. They have also found a niche through educational programs by providing professional development for educators and artists alike.

But there is one issue that organizations deem as reality, but where I think they are dreaming. This is the question of who an organization serves and how they go about serving them. In the long term, this relates back to education. Keeping with the idea that a long-term benefit of arts education is creating life long learners, I do not think there is an understanding of how to create a long relationship with members of a community. Speaking as someone who received an undergraduate degree in Music Education, certification in vocal and instrumental K-12, I believe there is a misnomer in how to reach students and future audiences. I am speaking about the belief that "if you show them how to be an artists, then they will become life-long learners in the arts."

I would like to see organizations go beyond a basic responsibility to engage the community in the arts. I did not observe any organization that is spearheading the effort to reveal the mystique of the creative process and its relationship to managing a nonprofit organization.

In the profit world, there is no denying that a bottom line exists for a product. Businesses want us to buy their product, not always for reasons of good will, but to increase profit. This bottom line does not belong in the arts. Arts missions are the opposite; the 'art product' is based on a gift exchange.²⁷ This exchange may lead to a financial profit, but the onus of the exchange relies on the acceptance and understanding of the giver to the receiver. Therein lies the problem. Many artists, especially young artists, do not recognize the responsibility and demands related to art as a product beyond practice and/or rehearsal for creating art.

There is little awareness of how non-profit organizations work. I suggest that educational programs must do more than invite people to participate in the arts. Organizations need to invite the community to understand and share the demands of an art organization.

But, for me, a different question has yet to be answered. While we know and understand the benefits of education for those it reaches, what can educational programming become for the organization itself. Can education become another sustaining factor for arts organizations? And what is the value for the organization when implementing arts educational?

I believe education programs can become a sustaining characteristic for organizations. Education is not a short-term solution to solving problems. It takes years of investing time and money to see the results, but education programs can assist with the development of every aspect within an organization, assisting an organization to reach anyone interested in understanding and learning.

²⁷ Lewis Hyde, The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property (New York: Vintage Books-Division of Random House, 1983).

If arts organizations would take an additional step to define the value of their educational programs, those already adopted and supported by the organization, from more than the perspective of who they are and attempt to understand and verbalize their motivations and benefits for the organization, then the real value of the educational programs can be realized and everyone involved will reap great benefits.

V. REFERENCES

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Mint Museum. Personal Interview with Cheryl Palmer, Vice President of Education and Public Programs. March 1, 2000.

<http://www.mintmuseum.org>

North Carolina Dance Theatre. Personal Interview with Alain Charron, Director of Education. March 9, 2000. <http://www.ncdance.org>

Opera Carolina. Personal Interview with James Meena, Executive Director. March 3, 2000. <http://www.operacarolina.org>

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VI. TABLES

Table 1: List of Arts Organizations Interviewed by Discipline

9 organizations total

Cultural Center:

Afro-American Cultural Center

Dance:

North Carolina Dance Theatre

Music:

Charlotte Choral Society

Charlotte Symphony

Opera Carolina

Theatre:

Children's Theatre of Charlotte

Charlotte Repertory Theatre

Visual Arts:

Mint Museum

The Light Factory

Table 2: List of Supporting* Organizations Interviewed

3 organizations total

Charlotte/Mecklenburg School System

Cultural Education Collaborative

Arts and Science Council

*Supporting in this context is defined as organizations that could be consider partners of a program or provide support to arts organizations via grants.

Table 3: Five Questions Asked During Interviews
with Arts Organizations

1. What was the drive to start your program(s)?
2. What are the intentions? Are these stated or unstated goals?
3. What are the benefits of developing and delivering arts educational programs? Short and long term benefits?
4. Do you have an intentional goal that your programs will positively influence your audiences to become participants of other programs?
5. Who are your constituents?

VII. Vita: Lorena Janey Miller

Objective: To serve the arts through education or management

Education:

Virginia Tech

Master of Fine Arts, Arts Administration, GPA - 4.0, May 2000

Thesis Title - Arts Education: Motivations, Benefits and Realities of Educational Programs from the Perspective of Professional Arts Organizations

University of Missouri-Columbia

Bachelor of Science in Education, Magna Cum Laude, May 1994

Certification held in Vocal and Instrumental K-12

Bachelor of Music, May 1994

Primary Instruments Piano and Percussion

Professional Experience:

Marketing and Public Relations Assistantship, August 1997 - May 2000

Virginia Tech School of the Arts

- * Develop and implement marketing plan for the School of the Arts performing arts season, which includes the departments of Art and Art History, Music and Theatre
- * Create, design and manage publicity, outreach and advertising materials for the School of the Arts
- * Procure money for visiting artists to perform at Virginia Tech through grants
- * Assess publicity, promotion, outreach and box office sales
- * Box Office Manager for over 100 music and theatre events - training and maintaining fiscal records
- * Event Leader/Front-of-House management for music and theatre performances

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Virginia Tech

Arts Management, Instructor. Fall 1998

- * Classroom instructor for undergraduate Arts Administration class, with a focus to provide an overview of not for profit arts organizations, including mission and vision statements; structure of boards, staff and volunteers; and fiscal management
- * Devised class syllabus and tests

Creativity and the Aesthetic Experience, Teaching Assistant. Fall '98 - Spring '00

- * Teaching Assistant for core curriculum class - class of 500+ students
- * Operated class web page and listserv

Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator, Summer 1999

Chautauqua Conservatory Theater Company (CCTC), Chautauqua Institution

- * Responsible for alternative programs (thirteen events) including publicity, locate/reserve space, manage front of house
- * Write press releases and feature stories; decorate kiosk; oversee press and archive photo calls
- * Design season brochure, consult with designer to create production programs (four productions)
- * Liaison to 'Friends of the CCTC' - plan cast parties and coordinate Adopt-an-Actor and Take the CCTC to Lunch

Intern, Summer 1998

Nashville Institute for the Arts (NIA)

- * Summer Intern with the NIA and the Aesthetic Education program 'ArtSmart'
- * Tabulate and analyze survey results of NIA's evaluation of programs
- * Compile statistical data of current and prospective Board Members

Performing Arts Assistant, March 1996 - August 1997

Mid-America Arts Alliance

- * Aided with creation and preparation of grants
- * Member of team to design, develop and maintain Web page
- * Produce and coordinate mailings of all performing arts grants awarded by M-AAA
- * Administer data entry of grants received and corresponding statistics (database: HOBIE)

Music Teacher, August 1995 - June 1996

Brookside Day School

- * Initiate a comprehensive elementary K-6 music program
- * Produce winter and spring music programs
- * Instruct extracurricular recorder ensemble
- * Organize educational trips to Kansas City Symphony
- * Maintain consistent communication with parents concerning program direction and student progress

Community Activities:

Graduate Student Assembly, Virginia Tech: '98-'99, Secretary; '98 Virginia State Coordinator; '97-'98, '99-'00, Delegate Representative for Theatre-Arts Department
 Graduate Arts Council, Virginia Tech: '97-'99, Treasurer
 Alpha Delta Pi - Chapter President, Chapter Treasurer, Alumnae Social Chair Advisor
 Member of PEO - a national society of women
 Member of Junior League of Kansas City
 Member of Sigma Alpha Iota - a national music fraternity

Honors and Awards:

Omicron Delta Kappa - national leadership honor fraternity
 Phi Kappa Phi, national honor fraternity
 Order of Omega, national honor society
 Graduate Research Development Project Grant, awarded Spring 2000
 1994 Harvest Ball Honoree, Kansas City, Missouri (1 of 12 honored as outstanding volunteer in Kansas City, Missouri)

Music Activities:

'97 - '00 Member of University Percussion and Marimba Ensembles at Virginia Tech
 '94 - '97 Principle Percussionist with Liberty Symphonic Orchestra, Liberty, MO
 '95 - '97 Director of Youth Choir at Second Baptist Church, Liberty, MO
 1996 Accompanist for *Anything Goes*, production by Liberty Theatre Company
 1994 Missouri's All Collegiate Band

Technology Skills:

Experience with Macintosh and IBM computers and the following programs: Adobe PageMaker, FileMaker Pro, Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Excel, Adobe Illustrator and Microsoft Word

References:

Don Drapeau
 Dept. Head for Theatre Arts at Virginia Tech
 Arts,
 203 Performing Arts Building (0141)
 Blacksburg, VA 24061
 (540) 231-5335

William Crocken
 Dir. Emeritus of the Center for the Performing
 College of Arts and Architecture, Penn State Univ.
 PO Box 482, State College, PA 16804
 (814) 235-4893

Bob Dustman
 Senior Coordinator of Performing Arts Division at M-AAA
 912 Baltimore, Suite 700
 Kansas City, Missouri 64105
 (816) 421-1388

Rebecca Guy
 Artistic Director, CCTC
 PO Box 1098
 Chautauqua NY 14722
 (716)357-6200