Cultivating Demand for the Arts: Arts Learning, Arts Engagement, and State Arts Policy

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September 2008
Two Trends Motivated This Report

- The supply of the arts is outstripping demand
  - The number of artists and nonprofit arts organizations has steadily expanded since the 1970s
  - But the arts audience is no longer growing

- Public support for arts learning has stagnated
  - Some school districts have reduced their spending on arts education (1970s, 1990s, 2000s)
  - Education reforms have shifted class time towards reading and mathematics

- Are these trends related?
What I Will Do in This Presentation

• Identify the individuals and institutions that enable people to have rich experiences with art (supply, access, and demand)

• Review the evidence on the connections between arts learning and demand for the arts

• Describe what we know about the status of youth and adult arts learning

• Examine the role of SAAs with respect to arts learning

• Suggest next steps for SAAs and other policymakers
Essential Elements of a Vibrant Culture: Supply

Funders and policy-makers

- Individuals and organizations that
  - create
  - perform
  - display and conserve
  - record and broadcast
  - train artists

Supply

Works of art
Essential Elements of a Vibrant Culture: Demand

Supply

- Individuals and organizations that
  - create
  - perform
  - display and conserve
  - record and broadcast
  - train artists

Demand

- Individuals and organizations that
  - educate in the arts
  - mentor others in the arts
  - discuss the arts
  - write reviews and criticism

Funders and policy-makers

Works of art

Individuals who seek arts experiences

Funders and policy-makers
Essential Elements of a Vibrant Culture: Supply, Demand, and Access

Supply

Individuals and organizations that
- create
- perform
- display and conserve
- record and broadcast
- train artists

Access

Works of art

The Arts Experience

Demand

Individuals and organizations that
- educate in the arts
- mentor others in the arts
- discuss the arts
- write reviews and criticism

Funders and policymakers

Individuals and organizations that seek arts experiences

Funders and policymakers
Implication: Arts Policy Should Have Three Objectives

- Increase the number of works of art that can provide engaging arts experiences (supply)
- Promote the opportunity for citizens to encounter such works of art (access)
- Cultivate the capacity of individuals to have engaging experiences with works of art (demand)

The third objective is the focus of this report
What Is the Best Way to Cultivate Demand for the Arts?

• Youth arts learning is highly correlated with adult participation in the arts

• Four learning objectives have been linked to arts appreciation and engagement:
  — Aesthetic perception
  — Artistic creation
  — Historical and cultural context
  — Interpretation and evaluation

• These objectives map closely to state and national arts standards
The Support Infrastructure for Youth Arts Learning

- Higher Education
  - K–12 Arts Education
  - After-school programs
  - Arts Learning in the Community
    - Arts organizations
    - Community service organizations
    - Community schools of the arts

Student
The Support Infrastructure for Adult Arts Learning

- Higher Education
- Arts Learning in the Community
- Arts Journalism

Adult Learner

RAND A6938-5.1
The Role of State Arts Agencies (SAAs)

• To what extent have SAAs sought to
  – expand the supply of quality art works
  – improve access to the arts
  – cultivate demand for the arts?

• We looked at SAA grantmaking data for 1987-2004, categorized by
  – type of grant recipient
  – type of activity funded
  – extent of education-oriented activity funded

• And considered how SAAs have used policy tools other than grantmaking
Trends in SAA Grants, by Type of Recipient*

* as a share of the total value of grants; NASAA data
Trends in SAA Grants, by Type of Activity*

* as a share of the total value of grants; NASAA data
SAA Funding of Education-Oriented Activities, 1998-2004*

• By value, 25 percent of SAA grants went to support educational activities
  – 17 percent of institutional support grants were education-oriented
  – 25 percent of grants supporting the creation, exhibition, and preservation of art were education-oriented

* NASAA data
Beyond Grantmaking: Lessons from Rhode Island

• The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) has worked closely with its state Education Department to
  – Create an arts learning partnerships that includes representatives from all the major stakeholders
  – Work with its partners to facilitate coordination among arts learning providers at home, in the community, and at school
  – Pass a statewide, proficiency-based arts graduation requirement for high schoolers
Beyond Grantmaking: Lessons from New Jersey

• The New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA) has worked closely with its state Education Department to
  – Create an arts learning partnership that includes representatives from all the major stakeholders
  – Work with its partners to map the status of arts education in every New Jersey public school and school district
  – Use the results to raise awareness of arts education among parents, administrators, and elected officials
Key Implications

• Working closely with the education community to support comprehensive arts learning, SAAs and other arts policymakers can:
  – Raise public awareness of arts education
  – Assess youth arts learning statewide and begin to address the gaps
  – Encourage alignment of community-based arts learning programs with the state content standards
  – Identify and promote exemplary programs
Backup Slides
It Takes Both Supply and Demand To Create a Vibrant Culture

Artists

- Artistic creation
- Critical response to art
- Work of art / performance

Audiences

- Aesthetic experience
Purposes and Methods

• Purposes
  – Explore possible connections between declines in arts audiences and arts learning
  – Derive policy implications
  – Examine policies of SAAs and other policymakers—is right balance being achieved?

• Methods
  – Interviews & discussions with members of arts and arts education communities
  – Review of relevant literatures
  – Analysis of national and state data from multiple sources
What Is the Best Way to Cultivate Demand for the Arts?

• Youth arts learning is highly correlated with adult participation in the arts (Orend, 1999; Orend and Keegan, 1996; Bergonzi and Smith, 1996; Walker and Scott-Melnyk, 2002)

• Four learning objectives are linked to arts appreciation and engagement (Beardsley, 1982; Eisner, 1988, 1991; Reimer, 1992; Greene, 2001; Taylor, 2006):
  — Aesthetic perception
  — Artistic creation
  — Historical and cultural context
  — Interpretation and evaluation

• These map closely to national arts standards
Youth Arts Learning – What Do We Know?

• Most elementary school students receive some arts education; participation in middle and high school is minimal
  – Data suggest that educational content is often spotty, casual, and brief

• Little information on after-school or community-based arts programs
  – But there may be some movement toward greater integration with school curricula

• For arts specialists, teacher preparation is robust, but for general classroom teachers it is weak

All four components of the infrastructure emphasize creation and performance but not the other learning objectives
**Adult Arts Learning – What Do We Know?**

- Colleges and universities are by far the most important source of comprehensive arts education at any age
  - But trends over the past few decades have deemphasized the arts and humanities as core courses

- Arts presenters and producers have increased their educational offerings
  - But for adults not on campuses, educational offerings are still scarce

- Public discourse about the arts has been contracting as newspapers devote more space to listings

  *Is it already too late to get most adult Americans interested in the arts?*
SAA Funding of Education-Oriented Activities, 1998-2004 (NASAA Data)

• By value, 25 percent of SAA grants went to support educational activities
  – 17 percent of institutional support grants were education-oriented
  – 25 percent of grants supporting the creation, exhibition, and preservation of art were education-oriented

• Within the set of education-oriented grants,
  – 40 percent were institutional support grants
  – Less than 25 percent fell within the activity category “arts learning”
Summary of Key Points

• Cultivating demand is a necessary focus of arts policy

• The knowledge and skills that enable aesthetic experiences can be taught

• Educational support for this kind of learning is weak

• Overall, arts policy support for this purpose is also weak, although practices in some states are promising