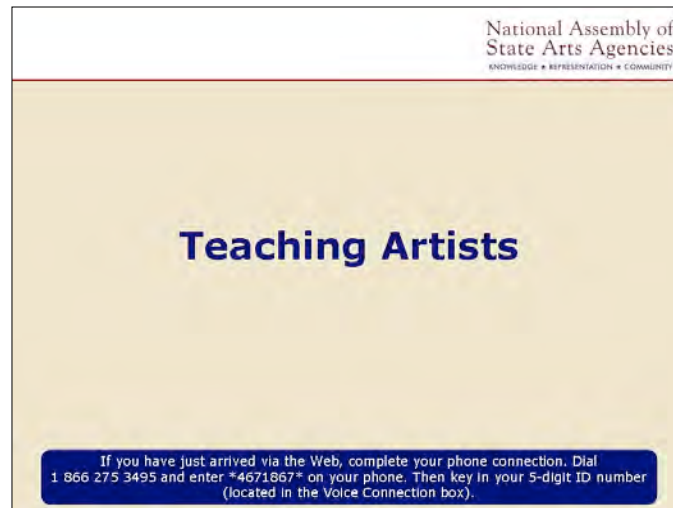


## Teaching Artists

Wednesday, April 13, 2011  
Web seminar  
Abridged Transcript



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## Introduction

**Jonathan Katz:** Good afternoon, everyone. It is my pleasure to welcome you to today's web seminar. All of us gathered here today know that supporting lifelong learning in the arts is a top priority for state arts agencies. More than a third of all state arts agency grants are devoted to arts education, and states invest major time and money in other arts education services, too—like providing teacher training, offering networking events, developing classroom tools, doing curriculum planning, etc.

Teaching artists are key contributors to all these efforts. The work that teaching artists do—in and out of the classroom—supports learning for students and teachers alike. Because teaching artists are bridge-builders who link the arts to education and community life, they are significant partners in helping state arts agencies achieve their education goals.


Today's seminar is going to showcase new research on teaching artists. Because we know that this work is highly collaborative, we've opened this session up to a variety of state arts agency partners, so I'd like to extend a special welcome to the local alliance and VSA representatives who have joined us today.

*(NASAA Learning Services Manager Eric Giles offered a brief orientation to the platform and a quick poll of audience composition and practices. He then introduced Nick Rabkin, Senior Research Scientist from the Cultural Policy Center, National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.)*

**Eric Giles:** Now let's hear from Nick Rabkin. Some of you met Nick last fall in Austin, where he presented a briefing session at NASAA's Assembly 2010 conference. We're pleased to welcome him back to present on a different topic this time—the findings of his Teaching Artists Research Project.

Before working at the National Opinion Research Center, Nick directed the Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College until 2007. He also was a program officer at the MacArthur Foundation for 10 years and served as deputy commissioner of cultural affairs for the city of Chicago.

While Nick is telling us about his research, be thinking about questions or comments you'd like to share when we open up the lines at the end of his remarks.



**Teaching Artists**

If you have just arrived via the Web, complete your phone connection. Dial 1 866 275 3495 and enter \*4671867\* on your phone. Then key in your 5-digit ID number (located in the Voice Connection box).



**Nick Rabkin**

Senior Research Scientist  
NORC at the University of Chicago

## Findings from the Teaching Artists Research Project (TARP)

**Nick:** I want to thank Jonathan, Eric, Sue and NASAA for creating this opportunity for us to discuss the teaching artist research project. And thanks to all of you participants for taking the time to join the conversation.

The Teaching Artist Research Project

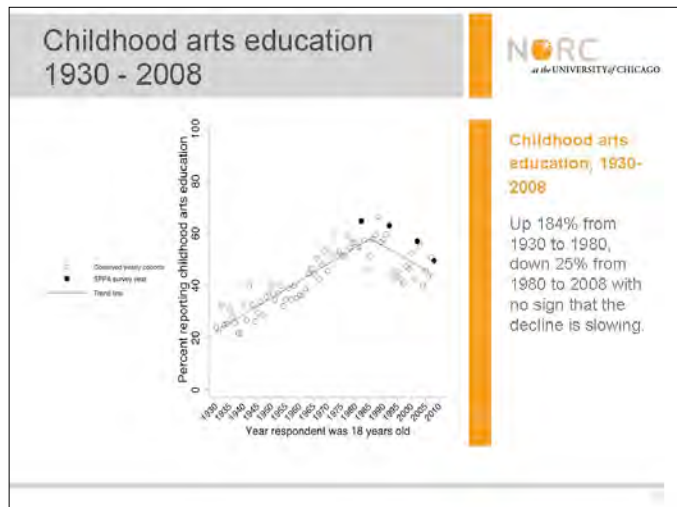
Nick Rablkin  
Senior Research Scientist

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies  
April 15, 2011

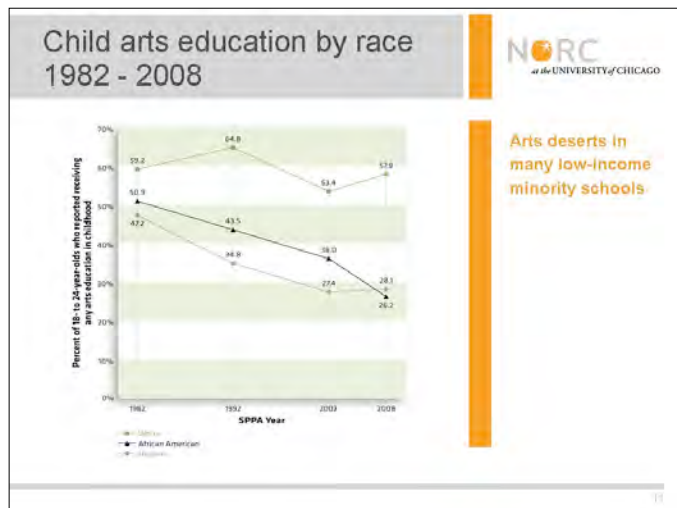
Photo by Jack Warner

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There are two headlines in arts education today. First, after a century of steady growth, childhood arts education has declined dramatically. In 1930, less than a quarter of all children had any arts education. By 1980, its peak, 65% had some. But by 2008, it was back below 50%. The decline shows no sign of abating.



The decline has been concentrated among low-income black and Hispanic children, and in music and visual art, the two forms most taught in schools. There is a virtual arts desert in many schools today.



The second headline in arts education is that, despite the declines, innovative arts education programs have a track record of remarkable successes, especially in schools that serve low-income children. This is primarily the work of teaching artists, who moved into the schools in large numbers after a century of work in other community venues. State arts agencies are among the few public agencies that support their work, and I'm grateful that three supported this research. But the track record of arts education successes has not broadened policy support.

Headline #2: TAs enter the schools

Photo by Joel Wamek. Photographer Cecil MacDonald with Herzl Elementary students.

Sometimes pathways to solving complex problems are in plain sight, but we fail to see them. Americans believe good schools and education are essential to getting children off to a good start in life. But schools are not working well for an unacceptably large proportion of American children. This is a complex and resistant problem. It involves large systems, poverty, privilege, race, politics, and conflicting values. The successes of arts education light a pathway to practical solutions, but policymakers stare blindly at the light. Developing that resource will require that we know more about teaching artists, and, through them, about arts education. That is why we undertook this study.

We looked at teaching artists in a dozen communities from Boston to San Diego, collected 3,500 surveys from artists and program managers, and conducted 210 in-depth interviews with artists, managers, funders, teachers, principals, and district leaders. They work in an array of settings, but I'm focusing today on schools, the only place where all children could possibly get access to arts education, and where what teaching artists have to offer is badly needed. I'll start with a quick review of the survey data.

TARP: 12 sites, 3500 surveys, 210 interviews

Study site	Artist survey responses	Manager survey responses	Key informant interviews
Chicago	810	127	26
Providence area	189	43	16
Boston area	281	77	25
Seattle/Tacoma	458	111	38
S. F. Bay Area	426	141	36
Santa Cruz, Salinas, Bakersfield, San Bernardino, Humboldt County	190	37	54
Los Angeles	406	108	34
San Diego	114	53	7
TOTAL	2871	687	210

Teaching artists are more likely to be women, somewhat more diverse, and better educated than artists in general. Two-thirds have arts degrees, and half have masters. They know their stuff.

TAs are more likely to be women and more diverse than the general population of artists. Half have masters and 2/3 have arts degrees.

Mean age	45 years
Gender	Women – 68%, Men – 32%
Race	White – 77%, African Am – 8%, Hispanic – 7%, Asian – 4%, Indian/Pac Island 2%, Other – 7%
Master's	49%
Bachelor's	38%
Associate	3%
Some college	8%
High school or GED	2%

They have a lot of experience. Their average age is 45, and they have been teaching 12 years. Most enter the field in their early to mid-30s.

The average TA has been teaching about 12 years.

Average age is 45. Most enter the field in early to mid-30s.

Less than two years	5%
Two to five years	23%
Six to ten years	24%
11 to 20 years	25%
More than 20 years	23%
Mean teaching experience all TAs	12 years

They teach all the art forms, and mostly to young people. Over half work for nonprofit arts organizations. Most teach where they are employed, but half are sent elsewhere to teach, and they are mostly sent to schools. In all, about half of teaching artists teach in schools at least some of the time.

They teach all the art forms

- 75% teach young people
- More than half work for non-profit arts or arts education organizations
  - Community arts schools/centers, theaters, arts education, music, visual art, dance, museums, media arts, and literary
- ¾ teach at where they are employed
- ½ are sent elsewhere to teach
  - Most of those are sent to schools
  - 3/8 of all TAs teach in schools

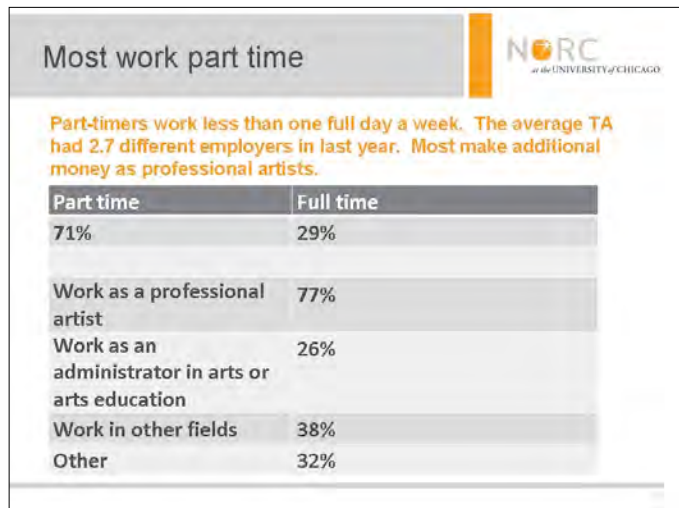
Three-quarters work on contract. They are not salaried. Their average pay is \$40 an hour.

Average pay is \$40 an hour.

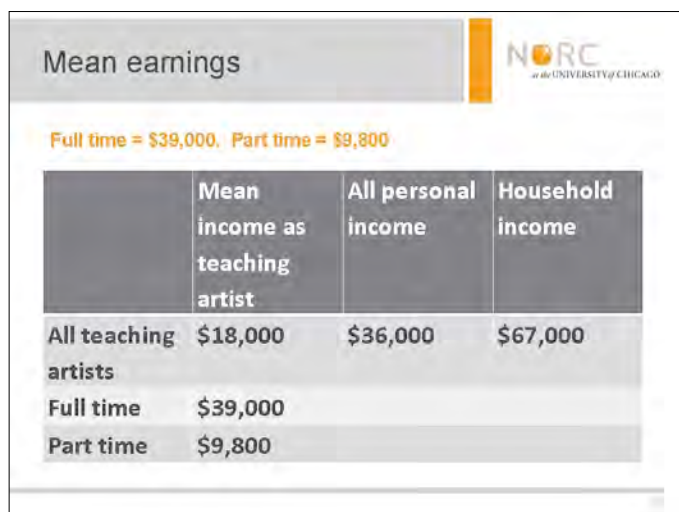
¾ are not salaried, work on contract.

In-school	Non-school	Mean
\$44	\$36	\$40

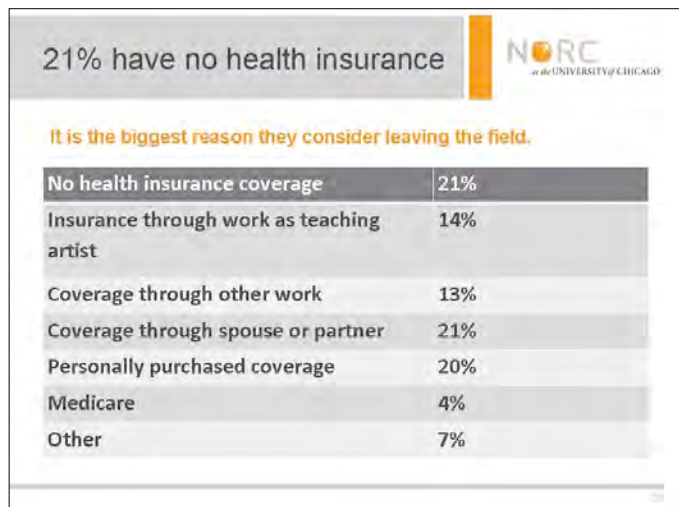
Less than a third work full-time. Most work part time, averaging less than one full day of work a week. The average teaching artist had 2.7 different employers in the last year. Most also earn income with work as professional artists.



Full-timers make around \$39,000, but part-timers make just \$9,800 from teaching. Income from other sources takes their total personal income to \$36,000. That is pretty much in line with what artists earn on the average nationally.



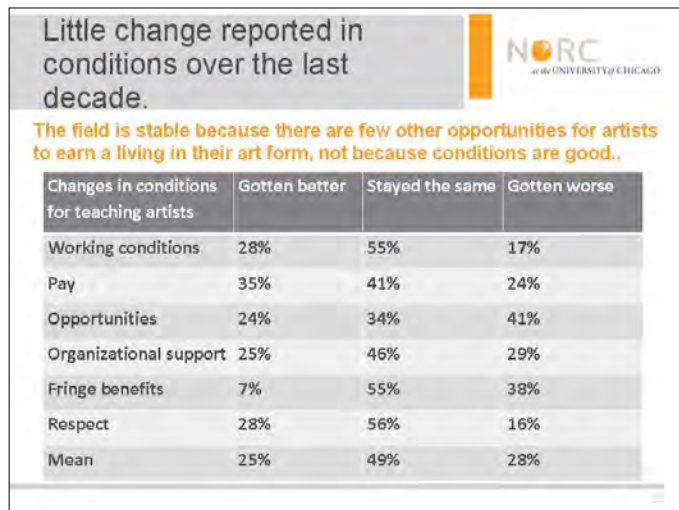
21% of teaching artists don't have health insurance. That's a third higher than the national rate of 16% for all people, and it is the biggest reason teaching artists consider leaving the field.



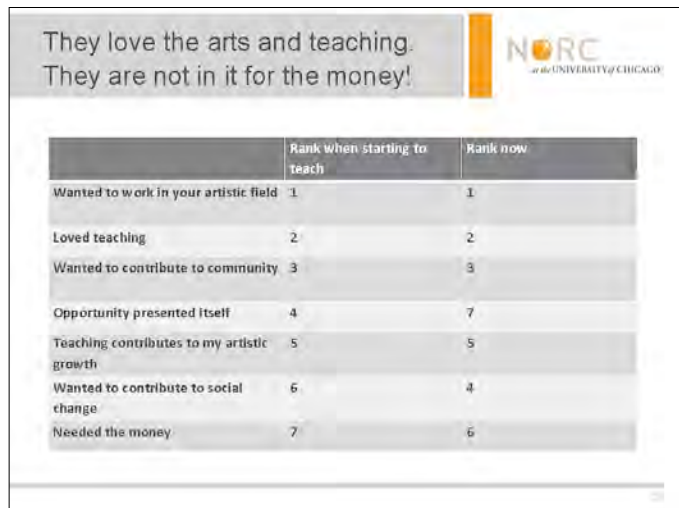
Most teaching artists would take more work if it were available—even the full-timers—and they plan to stay in the field, most for a decade or more. They also tend to stick with their employers for a long time. In contrast, the average school superintendent holds the job just 3.5 years.



Teaching artists work hard when they work, don't earn much, and have no job security. Conditions are not good, and teaching artists don't think much has changed over the last decade. But they like the work, and the poverty of other opportunities for artists tends to keep the field stable.



They love the arts and teaching. They are not in it for the money! Ninety percent report that they believe teaching makes them better artists.



That is the picture of teaching artists today. Since there was relatively little variation among our sites, the situation is likely very much the same in your state. Let's look now at the big picture in education and explore why teaching artists are so important to the future.

There are two big reasons arts education has declined and they are the same reasons it has been overlooked by policymakers:

1. Testing is the polestar of school reform, but it has narrowed the curriculum. Though officially a core subject, the arts are considered insufficiently academic and cognitive and a diversion from tested competencies.

2. Economic restructuring and white flight reduced the tax base of urban schools. And broad resentment of the cost of public services, like education, has prohibited raising funds for schools. Schools need to get better, but they need to do it without new resources.

**Reasons arts education has declined**

- Testing has narrowed curriculum, and the arts are mistakenly viewed as insufficiently academic and cognitive.
- School funding has suffered as tax bases declined – the result of resistance to paying for public services like education and the general economic restructuring.

After three decades, school reform has not made much progress, though. Good teaching is the most significant predictor of student achievement, but most education reform policies have not improved it. Diane Ravitch, one of the designers of No Child Left Behind now thinks the reform obsession with testing has made it worse.

Good teaching is why and how teaching artists make a difference. So what is good teaching? Research at the Harvard School of Education, the University of Chicago, and reports on standards by the professional associations of educators in science, math, language arts, social studies, early childhood and the National Board for Teaching Standards agree about what good teaching looks like. Those reports, developed by mainstream professional organizations and outstanding researchers, strongly endorse teaching methods and learning theory that is consistent on key issues.

All the reports call for classrooms filled with challenging, authentic, and collaborative work. They urge deeper exploration of a smaller number of subjects. Their recommendations cluster in three categories:

1) Good teaching is student centered: It starts with students' interests and what they already know, offers them real challenges, choices and responsibilities. Good curriculum connects ideas, events and materials; it doesn't fragment them.

2) Good teaching is cognitive. Learning is the consequence of thinking and making work that reflects and demonstrates mastery of meaningful ideas and compelling problems. Good teaching employs the range of communicative media—including the arts—and makes student reflection a regular part of the learning experience.

3) Good teaching is also social. The classroom's a community, students are citizens, and teachers nurture the community and provide intellectual, emotional, and social supports to students. Not every program or teaching artist is completely committed to the kind of teaching and learning described in those reports, but many are experts at them. As quasi-outsiders with more freedom from the constraints and norms of conventional schools, teaching artists can be

**Reports from all professional educators associations**

**Good teaching: The most powerful predictor of student learning**

- Student centered: Starts with students' interests, questions, and prior knowledge
- Deeply cognitive: Learning is the consequence of thinking and making work about meaningful, rich, compelling problems, concepts, and ideas
- Social: Collaborative activities are more powerful than individualist strategies

Zemlin & Davis & Hill (2005) Best Practice: Topics Standards for Teaching and Learning in Illinois's Schools.  
Folkes (2010) Making Learning Work: How Great Principles of Teaching Can Transform Education.  
Smith, LaParo, and Thomas (2011) Instruction and Assessment in Chicago Elementary Schools.



vital partners for change, building learning communities with teachers, principals and students. Teaching artists and program managers spoke often about elements of their pedagogy that are exemplars of the three qualities of good teaching. I'll focus on just a few:

Teaching artists in our survey ranked “developing students’ enthusiasm for working in the art form” higher than any other objective. Making art calls on sophisticated cognitive processes—planning, problem solving, hypothesizing, testing, and revising. Making art connects hand, heart and mind, and the art students make is both a pathway to learning and a demonstration of learning.

Elements of TA pedagogy:  
Student centered, cognitive, and social

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Making art is a pathway to learning and a demonstration of what students have learned.

Artists in every art form spend their lives developing their “voice”—a metaphor for building a coherent perspective on the world and life, a focused set of concerns and ideas that matter to them, and an aesthetic signature of their own. Teaching artists expressed a conviction that students have voices waiting for development, and a focus on voice is a focus on students. Giving students choices does not limit curriculum to what they already know, though. Students want to understand their own world, but they also want to broaden it.

Elements of TA pedagogy:  
Student centered, cognitive, and social

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Voice is a coherent perspective on the world and life, a set of concerns, issues, and ideas that matter to students personally, and an aesthetic signature

A poet summed it up well: “I’m all for standards of excellence. But that means more than teaching students poetic forms to write poems. They might get the form right, but they’d write lousy poems. Writing a good poem demands that the writer know what they care about, why they care, and how words can make others feel the way they feel. Poetic form has to serve the meaning. There’s no excellence without meaning.” Meaning is about putting knowledge to use to create something that matters—intellectually and emotionally. Good teachers encourage their students to make great effort. Teaching artists model it.

Elements of TA pedagogy:  
Student centered, cognitive, and social

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Meaning is about putting knowledge to use to create something that matters, that has intellectual and emotional meaning – for the maker and others.

Most teaching artists are critical of the arts standards codified by the states. They consider them too aspirational—because they cover far too much material indiscriminately. Paradoxically, teaching artists also consider state standards insufficiently aspirational—because they don’t

cover higher-order cognitive and social goals, skip lightly on the idea of meaning, and pay scant attention to connecting curriculum.

Subjects are ways to organize and access knowledge, but they are not how we learn. Good teaching builds curriculum around big themes and problems that can be explored through multiple subjects, encouraging the movement of students' minds from discipline to discipline. The learning is in the movement of the mind. Arts integration links art methods and ideas with the methods and ideas of other disciplines around compelling problems. It makes a fragmented curriculum whole. Nearly two-thirds of teaching artists said that making these links is of high or highest importance to their work, two times more important than "teaching the standards."

Elements of TA pedagogy:  
Student centered, cognitive, and social


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Good teaching builds curriculum around big themes or problems, encouraging the 'movement' of students' minds from discipline to discipline. The learning is in the movement of the mind. Arts integration links art methods and ideas with the methods and ideas of other disciplines around compelling problems.

Arts integration is very challenging, and it can be just as trivial as bad disciplinary arts education, but it can also be extraordinary. It is probably the most significant innovation teaching artists have brought into schools over the last two decades. A program manager in Chicago said, "We develop units that work like two-way streets. We read strong works of literature to inspire student art, and they make art that deepens their understanding of literature."

A math problem  
Stacks of Wheat (Monet) by Luke Albrecht, 8<sup>th</sup> grade math, Crown Academy

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A Chicago teacher and teaching artists from Project AIM at Columbia College linked concepts in middle school math—ratios, proportion, measurement, patterns and relationships—to paintings at the Art Institute of Chicago. Instead of looking at works with geometric shapes and angles, they built curriculum around Monet's *Stacks of Wheat*. What do those paintings have to do with math? They are a data set: Monet painted light and color over time. Careful observation of the paintings reveals patterns and relationships that enable predictions. Guess what? That's what math does, too. These connections are real and exciting. Curriculum like that elevates both math and visual art, trivializes nothing, and engages students in algebra in a very low-income school.

Elements of TA pedagogy:  
Student centered, cognitive, and social

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Artists constantly assess, reflect, and revise their work. They make formative assessment routine, so students can manage their own learning, challenge themselves, reflect and revise their work in progress, and demonstrate understanding by solving meaningful problems. TAs bring a different kind of assessment to schools.

Artists reflect on their work. They assess it, measure its progress against their vision, and imagine how it will work for others. They tinker, tweak, and revise. They make judgments based on intuition and imagination, trial and error. They learn from mistakes. These are sophisticated meta-cognitive functions, formative assessments that are rare in school environments, where mistakes are discouraged and testing is the ultimate assessment.

Many teaching artists expressed deep skepticism about assessment altogether, because it has become so distorted by testing. Teaching artists are beginning to make assessment a priority in only a few places. It isn't one of teaching artists' strongest suits now, but role of assessment in the arts is so central, and the need for better assessment in schools is so great, that assessment is an area to focus on in the future.

All these pedagogical elements are badly needed in schools, and they are abundantly available through teaching artists. They are what make Teaching artists such a powerful resource for improving schools. Where did they come from?

The first teaching artists were hired to run the arts programs at Hull House, the first settlement house, an early social service and reform organization, founded in 1889. Its founders believed that art was for everyone, and that expression was essential to developing a democratic society—an early notion of voice. By 1913 there were 400 settlements in the country, and their influence spread. The settlements embodied the ideas that the arts were for everyone, and that learning the arts involved critical exploration of the realities of life—these students are drawing in the alley, not the studio—as well as learning the craft skills of the art forms.

The Settlement Movement



A new pedagogy grew there that included rigorous and critical exploration of the real world. A break with the conservatory's embrace of the classical world and elite patronage.

Photo courtesy of Jane Addams Hull-House Museum

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This required a new kind of pedagogy, different from the pedagogy of the conservatories. Arts education in the settlements was serious, it was for everyone, and it had multiple and complex goals: artful expression, social criticism, building community, cultivating imagination and creativity, learning about aesthetics, the world, and culture. Those same purposes animate the work of teaching artists today.

Theater games



... engage students, make learning fun, provoke imagination, and build community.

Photo by Joel Wanek. Theater artist Kharisha Foster

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Incidentally, imaginative play and games were important to both the arts and social work at Hull House, and theater games, part of the repertory of many teaching artists, were developed there by Viola Spolin in the 1930s. She put it this way: "Most games worth playing are highly social and have a problem that needs solving within them. Theater-games offer students the opportunity for equal freedom, respect, and responsibility within the community of the schoolroom."

Teaching artists have so much to offer schools, but the match is not easy or simple. One challenge has been that arts specialists sometimes think teaching artists as a form of outsourcing. There surely is an association between deep cuts to arts education and the emergence of a serious teaching artist presence in schools. But there is no evidence that school systems have replaced art and music teachers with teaching artists to cut costs. In fact, it is likely that the cuts came first and motivated principals subsequently filled the void.

We found that in many schools arts specialists believed teaching artists made the arts central to the identity of the school and raised specialists' status, rather than diminishing it.

In the few minutes left, I'm going to offer seven recommendations for your consideration.

First priority, better advocacy! Build effective alliances with all educators who believe in good teaching. Advocate for better education, not just arts education, and for research to document the work and its results. We have a powerful story to tell that has not been fully told.

**Opposition to teaching artists in the schools**

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- Concern that artists will be low-cost outsource for arts faculty in schools.
- Concern that artists lack pedagogical skills and understanding of the standards.

**Art specialists on TAs**

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"TAs open up the experience for students, sometimes even beyond the school walls..." HS visual art specialist, Chicago, IL

"I say, 'lengthen on your supporting leg' a hundred times. But then a TA comes in, says it once, and a light goes on." Dance specialist, Cambridge, MA

**Build alliances with others who see the need for new paradigms in education.**

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- Advocate for *better education* not just arts education
- Practice should advance *cognitive and social outcomes*
- Document and evaluate the work – more research!

Make the field sustainable. Employers and funders cannot continue ignoring underemployment, and the absence of job security and benefits that teaching artists endure.

Make the field sustainable

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Under-employment, low pay, and health insurance are serious problems for artists. Funders and employers need to take them seriously.

Disciplinary and integrated instructions are more alike than different when they are grounded in good teaching practice. Let's get over our internal conflict about arts integration. It gets in the way of progress. Arts integration needs to be developed far more methodically.

Develop integrated arts instruction on a serious basis

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Integrated and disciplinary instruction are more alike than different when grounded in good practice. Let's get beyond the conflict and invest in serious development!

Let's also get over the conflict about who delivers instruction. Teaching artists and specialists already work together in many schools, and those schools should be a model for how to reconcile the conflict.

Advocate for specialists *and* TAs

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Good schools have both already. Make them models for collaboration, not competition.

Teaching artists have made enormous contributions to pedagogy and curriculum. Now it is time to add authentic assessment to that list.

Assessment – the next frontier

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Bring the authentic assessment of the arts into classrooms.

Teaching artists told us that the best professional development is, like the best arts education, learner centered, hands-on, cognitive and social. In the words of a Seattle teaching artist, "use the form to teach the form." Remember—one size does not fit all. Arts education has too many purposes for that.

Professional development

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- One size does not fit all.
- "Use the form to teach the form": Use the best arts pedagogy to train teaching artists in all settings.

The best partnerships between schools and arts organizations, teachers and artists, require nurturing and time. Funders should understand the costs of real supports and make patient investments so artists don't need to subsidize programs; programs should commit to sustained relationships with schools, and managers should be in the field, supporting their artists and building those relationships.

Provide real support to partnerships

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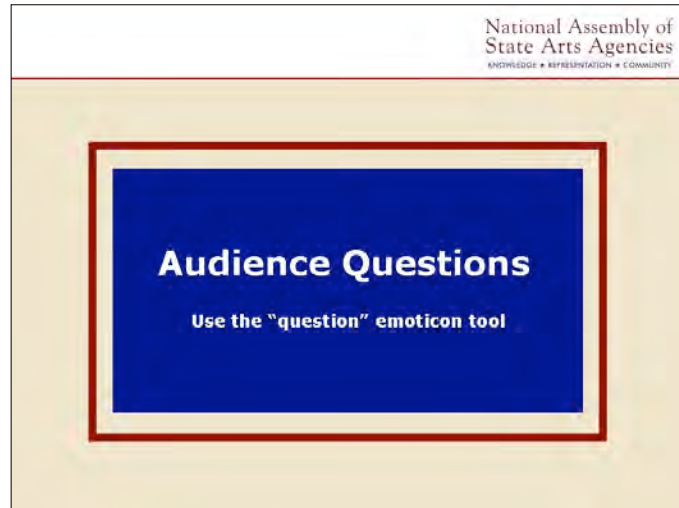
- Funders: recognize the real costs
- Program managers: work in the field to build learning communities
- School leaders: give teachers what they need
- School systems: give schools what they need
- Develop new national networks to develop the field

## Audience Questions

**Eric:** Thanks, Nick. Now for some questions and comments from the audience. Our first question comes from Lisa Jaret.

**Lisa Jaret, Washington State Arts**

**Commission:** What really rose to the surface for me was how social justice came up as a theme in a couple of different places in your presentation, from the historical background with the settlement houses on through. One thing that I noted with interest was how teaching artists rated social justice lower on their priority scale when they started, but it rose as they gained experience in the field. I was wondering if you could talk a little more about that and what implications that may have for the field.



**Nick:** Social justice and building community were of some importance for teaching artists when they entered the field, and tended to rise the longer they stayed in the field. That may be because those that felt less strongly about those issues left the field and we didn't capture their opinions on this survey. That is always one of the hazards with certain surveying research. But there is no question that issues of social justice are front and center for a great many teaching artists, especially veteran teaching artists. You are certainly right that it grows from the tradition of teaching artists that reaches back to the settlements and progressive reform in that era. Jane Adams, who founded Hull House, was one of the leading progressive reformers of her time.

Progressive reform of that time was also associated with progressive educational ideas. Constructivist education ideas were developed in large part by the great education philosopher John Dewey, who was a personal friend of Jane Adams and who established schools in Chicago and beyond on the principles of constructivist education with the arts at the center. In general the social justice issue is a big one in schools, because social justice is right in the middle of the current school reform challenge. The schools that are failing are the ones that serve low income and minority kids, and to a large extent those are the schools where teaching artists have an opportunity to work. They go there in part because they feel committed to making those schools a better place for kids.

**Sherilyn Brown, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts:** We have a regional association for teaching artists and their express mission is to develop the field. They do professional development on a number of different topics, but something that hasn't really been tackled is the issue of salary and insurance. Have you found anyone through your research that has come up with a solution, particularly with regards to the insurance issue? And what could you recommend to us nationally to really move that piece of the agenda forward?

**Nick:** On the insurance issue, I think the problem for teaching artists is the same that most part-time workers and most low income workers in America have: it is just too expensive to afford. The only way we are going to solve that problem, beyond the economy turning upside down and artists earning what they are worth, is if we move forward with national health insurance and

discounts really do become available for low income workers. In other words, I think that the solution for teaching artists is the same as that for other low income workers.

**South Carolina Arts Commission (Guest):** Do you have any advice for teaching artists on how they can adjust their marketing or programs since there are fewer opportunities now available to go into schools?

**Nick:** Good question. I think it is very important for teaching artists to understand as deeply as they can how the schools view the problems that they face as educational institutions and fully understand what they as a teaching artist can do to help them. Then communicate that to the schools as clearly as possible. Part of that is to document your work and document the work that the students do when you work with them. Showing students' work can be an enormously effective marketing tool and it also effectively demonstrates that students are learning, really learning, and shows that what students are doing in those classrooms is serious and not just fun and games.

**New York State Council on the Arts (Guest):** How were you able to determine that teaching artists were responsible for good teaching? How did you come to this conclusion?

**Nick:** It was actually through doing this research that I came to that conclusion. I reviewed a lot of research on arts education programs that showed that those programs were having a significant effect on student achievement and learning. What I realized was that the programs that were associated with documented improvements with students in school were the ones that engaged in longer-term partnerships that went beyond the performance or the concert or the school visit to the museum. It was after the review of the literature on those programs that I realized that we needed to learn more about teaching artists. And then I asked myself, "why would they have these effects?" The literature said that the biggest influence on student achievement and learning in schools is the quality of teaching. I reviewed the literature on what good teaching should look like and then compared it to the data we gathered on teaching artists teaching practices, and they were teaching in ways that was generally aligned with the qualities found in the literature on good teaching.

In many ways the type of teaching described by that literature is discouraged by the pressures being put on schools by the current school reform, the pressures of testing and accountability and so forth. It is the relative independence that teaching artists enjoy from the rigors of being part of the school faculty that allows them the ability to bring this benefit to the schools. And we heard this again and again—from the teaching artists, the faculty they work with and arts specialists—that they bring a breath of fresh air into the classroom that we just don't get any other way. The final report will include much more detail, including the quotes that I have referred to here. I hope to have that report done in the next few weeks and it will be on-line and available to the public shortly after that.

**Christine Hopkins, [Goodspeed Musicals](#):** When in a more rural area, what marketing strategies do you suggest for teaching artists so that they can get into more schools?

**Nick:** We got the sense that rural areas are difficult, partly because in big city arts organizations have an institutional presence and legitimacy that can make it a little simpler and, at the very least, act as an intermediary between the artists and schools. That is obviously much more difficult in areas where the institutional infrastructure of the arts is less well developed. A couple of quick thoughts occur to me. There is no reason that artists can't develop their own networks and co-ops and market themselves together. There are lots of materials that I think you can find on-line from a variety of arts organizations that do this kind of thing across the country, from national organizations to state arts agencies to local institutions. Availing yourself of those resources will also stimulate your creativity and your thinking about how to elevate the quality of your work and put you in touch with a network of peers nationwide who are really innovators and experts in education.



**Eric:** Nick, I have had a couple of questions come in over chat that I would like to ask you. Did most of the teaching artists start off wanting to be teaching artists or were they mainly artists who added teaching to their skill set later?

**Nick:** Interesting question. The average age of our respondents was 45 and on the average they had 12 years of experience as teaching artists. If you subtract 12 from 45 you get 33, which means that is likely that many of them started around that age. I think the data shows that many of them became a teaching artist somewhere along the line as opposed to right out of school. What we heard from our interviews is that this was not a conscious, deliberate career aspiration. This was something they stepped into largely because the opportunity presented itself. Many of them had some background experience in education already and had some feeling towards teaching.

Others said that they had deliberately tried to stay away from teaching. One woman told us she was pushed toward teaching early in her career but that she really didn't want to go that direction because she felt they were pushing her toward that career because she was a woman. It was only after being a professional artist for some years that she realized that being a teaching artist really enriched her life as an artist. So the answer is that there is really a lot of diversity here. The one thing that connects the people that we interviewed is that once they entered the field they found the experience of teaching enormously rewarding in many, many respects.

**Nebraska Arts Council (Guest):** Is the settlement movement a major influence on teaching artist practice today, or just research to back up the need for teaching artist programs?

**Nick:** There are a few settlements around in major cities today, but few of them still have active arts programs. The settlements after World War II faded in importance and became more conventional social service agencies providing day care, health services, job and psychological counseling and that sort of thing. The arts faded, but other organizations picked it up and the settlement arts tradition was really revived again in the 1960s and '70s by what we normally refer to as the community arts movement.

**Nebraska Arts Council (Guest):** Would the research and survey results show that funders—the National Endowment for the Arts, private foundations, etc.—believe in the continued funding of teaching artists even as school budgets are being cut so drastically?

**Nick:** I don't have any data on that and can speak only from anecdotal experience. Here in Chicago and in Seattle, Boston, the Bay area and Los Angeles we conducted surveys where we talked to some funders and found that there are indeed some that are profoundly committed to arts education and hoping that they might have some influence on public education policy. But I think the jury is out on this. I don't really have any hard data that I feel can help me make any predictions at this time. These are hard times and I think the environment is such that making predictions right now would be little short of guesswork.

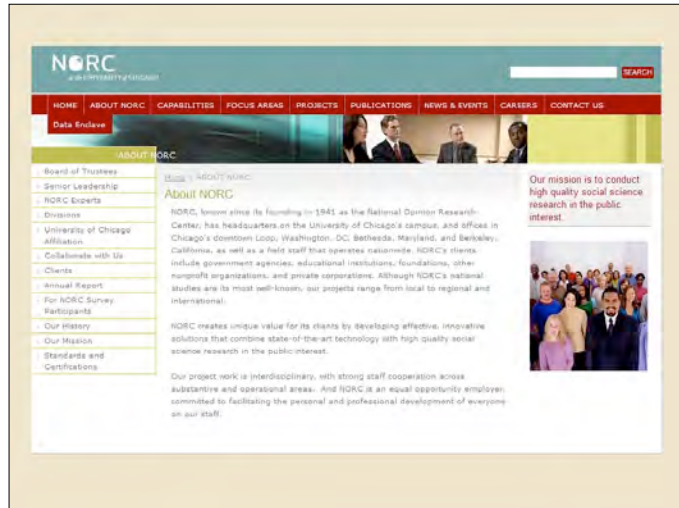
**Eric:** That's all the time we have for questions, but if you want to continue to talk with Nick by email, he's agreed to do that and we'll be sending out his contact info to you shortly.

Now I'll turn things back to Sue for our wrap-up.

## Wrap-up

**Sue:** Thanks, Eric. And thanks to you, too, Nick—a lot of good food for thought in your findings.

Before we close, I want to alert you to a few resources. The first resource is the [NORC site](#) where you can learn more about TARP, how the study was constructed and who participated in it.



There is also a lot of great information about arts education on the NASAA website in the [Arts Education section](#) under Key Topics. Here's you'll find arts education research—both by and about state arts agencies—as well as links to useful policy and advocacy tools.



In particular, check out the link to the [State Arts Agency Arts Education Profiles](#). This area of the site contains detailed information about each state's arts education programs, including their residencies, rosters, training, fees for teaching artists and other great details. And with that I want to thank you all. We hope to see you next time.

