



Session Summary: SUPPORTING TEACHING ARTISTS' WORK IN BIPOC COMMUNITIES

Teaching artists play an essential role in facilitating arts education. They work at the intersection of learning, human development and community development to help students of all ages experience the transformational power of the arts.

Through funding and training programs, state arts agencies can support the development, employment and empowerment of teaching artists. A meaningful part of this work is equipping teaching artists with the skills to work in diverse environments and respond to the needs of distinct populations.

This Assembly 2022 session—facilitated by Ivonne Chand O'Neal, Ph.D., Founder and Principal of MUSE Research—featured a panel from the [Butler Community Arts School](#):

- Seth Allen, Composer, Pianist, Music Educator and Content Creator, Butler Community Arts School
- Jasmine Hung, Guitarist, Composer and Teacher, Butler Community Arts School
- Alejandro Reyna, Assistant Conductor, Butler University Chorale
- Lauren Shelton, Director, Butler Community Arts School
- Abby Witt, Administrative Assistant and Teaching Fellow, Butler Community Arts School

Christie Dobson of the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission also joined the panel, to share a state arts agency perspective on developing and delivering state-level programs to support teaching artists.

The panelists all shared factors that can impede—or support—the success of teaching artists as they move through their careers.

- Teaching artists often make a living by stitching together multiple jobs and short-term gigs. Apart from **economic insecurity** and **stress**, this juggling act makes **scheduling** a fundamental challenge for teaching artists. Schedule constraints affect how teaching artists can participate in trainings, prepare grant applications and take advantage of other resources.

What would help: Promoting equitable compensation that covers time spent for lesson preparation and/or more predictable income streams. Training and support services that allow for asynchronous participation by teaching artists. Flexible office hours for technical assistance and consultation aimed at teaching artists.

- Teaching artists are avid learners and are eager for **training opportunities**. However, they can face substantial loss of income if they must decline gigs/engagements in order

to spend time on training. (Most teaching artists are not salaried with professional development benefits.) This can limit opportunities for professional growth.

What would help: Paid professional development opportunities where participating teaching artists receive stipends for their training time.

- Few university arts programs prepare students for the nuts and bolts of **self-employment** after graduation.

What would help: Access to information or professional development courses on topics such as tax preparation, business planning, grantwriting, etc.

- Teaching artists must possess not only a high level of technique in their chosen art form but also in **pedagogy**—the science, art and skill of teaching and the design of successful learning experiences. Artists trained primarily as performers or creators may need to supplement their learning in the pedagogy realm.

What would help: Training or coaching programs that help artists develop their knowledge, skills and experiences with pedagogy. Flexible professional development funding that allows artists to pursue growth in their creative domains and/or teaching techniques, depending on their needs and career trajectories. Communities of practice that allow teaching artists to share ideas and provide mutual support.

- Each learner brings a unique combination of identities, needs and life experiences into the arts classroom. In addition to having to adeptly navigate **diversity**, teaching artists are certain to encounter students who are living in **crisis**, living in **poverty**, or coping with the effects of **racism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism** or other forms of individual, family, community or intergenerational **trauma**.

What would help: Equip artists with the knowledge and skills needed to employ culturally responsive and trauma-informed instructional practices. Train them to respond to distinct cultural or developmental needs present in certain populations. Demonstrate the creation of equitable, inclusive and empathetic learning environments.

To help Butler University teaching artists address the needs of a diverse student population, MUSE Research provided a week-long training session on culturally responsive and trauma-informed teaching practices. Two video modules included in the training were [The Race](#) and Brené Brown's [Empathy](#).

MUSE Research

Ivonne Chand O'Neal Ph.D. is the Founder and Principal of MUSE Research, a creativity and arts research firm providing arts impact assessment, research design, evaluation and training services for schools, cultural organizations and multinational companies. Chand O'Neal earned her Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology with emphasis on creativity, arts integration, impact of the arts and culture sector on society, and program evaluation from Claremont Graduate University. She sits on the Board of Directors for the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and the Editorial Boards of the Creativity Research Journal, and the Arts Education Journal. She also serves on the Research Advisory Board for the University of Pennsylvania's Human Flourishing Initiative and the AP Research Development Committee for the College Board. She has also served as Chief Research Strategist for Crayola, and

founding Director of Research and Evaluation for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. MUSE Research currently is working on a major U.S. Department of Education initiative to examine the impact of arts integration on creativity, student engagement, and social emotional learning in highly rural and remote school districts throughout the United States.

Butler Community Arts School

The [Butler Community Arts School](#) (BCAS), an initiative of the Jordan College of the Arts, offers performing arts instruction to anyone ages five and up, including adults. Taught by Butler University students known as teaching fellows, the BCAS believes in the importance of providing high quality, affordable instruction to music, dance, theatre, and visual art to Indianapolis and the surrounding area. Compared to pre-college programs at other universities, BCAS is distinctive in holding over 60 percent of its class offerings at off-campus community sites and in utilizing college students as primary instructors. The school is highly committed to expanding arts education opportunities for all learners, regardless of age, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, level of ability, or economic status.

Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission (KCAIC) Programs

- KCAIC’s Creative Aging Teaching Artist Training program tackles ageism as an equity issue and equips artists to develop programs and pedagogies developmentally attuned to the needs of older adults.
- Arts Labs at the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission are discipline-based programs where teaching artists can incubate and refine ideas, stimulate creativity, get hands-on training and build networks of creative collaborators. All labs have partnerships with community organizations and/or higher education and incorporate diversity equity and inclusion principles. Previous labs have focused on music, dance and playwriting.
- KCAIC’s Indigenous Arts Initiative invests in the network and professional pathways of Native artists to help them hone their creative skills, expand their networks and gain leadership experience.

Supplemental Resources

[Teaching Artist Relationships with State Arts Agencies](#)
[My Dearest Arts Organization, Are you Listening?](#)
Mid Atlantic Teaching Artist Retreat Proceedings: [2020](#)