

Reviewing Arts Education Practice: Some International Trends, Approaches and Perspectives

LARRY O'FARRELL - QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON, CANADA

Abstract

This paper reviews a broad and diverse range of arts education practices to be found around the world with a view to clarifying trends, approaches and perspectives in both the educational sector and the cultural and recreation sector. It examines the dichotomy between arts as a self-standing cultural right and arts for instrumental purposes, presenting numerous international examples. The paper discusses the arts in formal school curricula and in extracurricular activities. It also describes programs offered by community groups and professional arts organizations such as theatres, dance companies, orchestras, and museums, along with examples of partnerships between the sectors involving governmental and non-governmental organizers and sponsors.

Biography



PATRICK SHEPHERD is Professor Emeritus and holder of the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Learning, Faculty of Education, Queen's University, Canada. He is Chair, Board of Directors, Canadian Network for Arts and Learning and Chair, Steering Committee, International Network for Research in Arts Education (INRAE). Larry served two terms as President of the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (IDEA). As General Rapporteur for the 2nd UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education (Seoul, Korea, 2010) he was instrumental in preparing *The Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education*. His research includes participation in international studies on creativity in drama/theatre and arts education, singing, and monitoring the Seoul Agenda. Larry is Honorary Professor at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. He is a recipient of the Campton Bell Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the American Alliance for Theatre and Education.

Arts education may be as old as education itself

Of course, we can only speculate on the origins of both art and education. But we can ask questions. Were the magnificent animals painted on the walls of a cave near Lascaux, France 17,300 years ago, intended as icons in a religious ritual? Or might they have been used to teach young hunters how to improve their skills. Or both? Were students in ancient Egypt both artists and scholars when they wrote their school assignments in the form of hieroglyphic images? We do know that Plato's ideal education was based on play and included a study of singing, dancing and literature. (Courtney, 1968) In Medieval Europe, liturgical drama was used to teach religious concepts, and, in the Renaissance, students performed plays to improve their public speaking skills and their fluency in Latin. In many cultures, though the ages, young people of privilege have been taught musical and artistic skills to build their cultural capacity, skills that they would call upon as adults in a variety of social situations.

Many of our modern ideas about the educational value of the arts derive from the Progressive Education movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At a time when compulsory education was in its infancy and civil society was trying to serve the social needs of diverse populations including immigrants and disadvantaged children, philosophers like John Dewey (1938) and innovators like Maria Montessori (Montessori, trans. 1994) imagined approaches to teaching that would be relevant to the lives of learners and that would engage children in active experiences as opposed to rote learning. In this fertile environment, teachers in and out of schools, experimented with all of the art forms – dance, music, theatre and visual art. Their goal was to facilitate the child's development as a whole person and to helping children learn the content of their school's curriculum in a richer, more enduring way.

When we look around the world for examples of arts education, today, we see a vast array of practices. We see the arts being taught in schools – sometimes in primary schools, sometimes in secondary schools. We see community organizations running programs in which children, youth and life-long learners have an opportunity to explore a variety of art forms. We see conservatories and professional training schools preparing young adults as professional artists. We see theatres, dance companies, orchestras, museums, libraries and other professional arts organizations offering programs designed to engage young people in an appreciation of the art form and to build new audiences for the future. The range and scope of arts education programming can be overwhelming.

Confusing as this picture may seem, we can find some clarity when we keep in mind that there are a small number of general categories into which most of these practices will fit. As I attempt to describe some of the current trends, approaches and perspectives to be found in the field today, I will concentrate on four of these general categories. I will look at the sectors in which arts education has flourished.

- In schools (educational sector) and
- Out of schools (culture and recreation).

I will also discuss the possibility of building partnerships between these two sectors.

In addition, there are two general approaches to consider from the point of view of the purpose of arts education.

- Arts as a cultural right (i.e. with no purpose other than as cultural expression and appreciation)

- Arts for instrumental purposes (i.e. arts as a medium to facilitate learning in another subject area or to meet personal development goals).

Included in this discussion will be the question of whether these two approaches have elements in common. Are they mutually exclusive?

Arts in Schools

Opportunities within the general curriculum

The arts are often found within the formal curriculum of the school system. The arts are typically presented as an obligatory component of primary education, while a selection of courses in the arts is available on an optional basis in secondary education. This is the case in the Province of Ontario, where I live in Canada. Teachers of children from Kindergarten to Grade Eight (age 13) are required to teach dance, drama, music and visual art in the context of general education. There is a detailed curriculum guideline available to direct their teaching of the arts (although, unfortunately, most teachers do not have sufficient training in the arts to carry out the entire curriculum). The situation is very different in our secondary schools, where courses in these same four subjects plus media arts are available on an optional basis (although students are required to complete at least one course in the arts prior to graduation). Again, there is a detailed curriculum guideline to control quality and, in this case, teachers are required to complete specialized training before they are considered qualified to teach courses in the arts. I should add that, in my Province, arts courses are accepted as valid credits toward secondary school graduation.

This picture of curricular arts is fairly representative of arts in school curricula in other jurisdictions around the world although there is considerable variation within the model. For example, in some countries, only two or three arts forms are represented in the curriculum. Another variation can be found in the grade or age levels at which the subjects are available.

When the arts are included in the secondary curriculum with the professional guidance of a qualified teacher, a number of elements are usually included in the program. Although there are different ways of articulating these elements, I have found that, generally, students are engaged in doing art work themselves; they are expected to be able to look at their own work and that of others with a discerning or analytical eye: they study the technical aspects of working in a specific medium; and, at the same time, they learn something about the history and theory behind the art form.

Finally, it has to be recognized that, in some parts of the world, the arts are not included in the formal, school curriculum, in any way.

Schools of the arts

Some school systems give students who display a special interest or talent in the arts more extensive and intensive artistic learning opportunities than are generally available in the normal school setting. A model that is frequently followed is that of the school of the arts. Schools of the arts are normally required to cover the entire academic curriculum while, at the same time, offering a full range of programming in the arts. Some of these schools concentrate on primary education, some concentrate on secondary education and some include students at both levels. Some of them require students to compete for admission through auditions or by submitting a portfolio. Others allow any student who

has a particular interest in the arts to register.

I have visited schools of the arts in a number of countries, some of them housed in state-of-the-art facilities and all of them staffed by well-qualified and dedicated artists and teachers. As an example of how such a school might operate, I will describe the program of the FACE school in Montreal, Canada. This school covers the entire public school cycle of the Province of Quebec, beginning in Kindergarten and concluding at the end of Grade 11. Because so many of the students arrive at the FACE school at a very young age, this is clearly not a school that bases admission on demonstrated talent. Any student from the district (this is an English-language school) is invited to register.

As in other schools of the arts, FACE students follow the full, public school curriculum while also receiving a substantial amount of instruction in the arts. Every student, in every year, is required to follow courses in Music, Theatre and Visual Arts. Eventually, each student chooses one of these art forms as a specialization while continuing to take classes in the other two forms. One factor contributing to high student motivation is the fact that most of the teachers of the arts in this school maintain their own artistic practice in addition to fulfilling their teaching duties. One time when visiting this school, I had an opportunity to hear the student orchestra rehearsing for a concert. The rehearsal was held in the principle concert venue of the city of Montreal. The student orchestra, which had won numerous competitions in previous years, had been “hired” by an adult choral group to accompany them in a major recital. I can still remember my amazement at the high level of musical achievement of these students, some of whom I knew from earlier meetings to be only 14 or 15 years of age. They played very difficult music with great skill, sensitivity and coordination.

Extracurricular Opportunities

When I was a high school student, I had the option of choosing either music or visual art courses within the school curriculum. My choice was visual arts and I am happy to report that I was able to follow a series of excellent art courses taught by a dedicated and well qualified teacher. However, as I developed an interest in the theatre, I had to deal with the fact that no courses in theatre were available to me at that time. Fortunately, some teachers of other subjects were willing to devote their time, after class, to direct me and my fellow students in the production of plays in the school auditorium. This experience of extra-curricular artistic activity continues to be familiar to students in many parts of the world. The term co-curricular is often used, today, to make it clear that these activities are seen as supportive of the learning goals of the official curriculum even though they are not, normally, allocated academic credit. The possibility of teachers engaging with students on extra-curricular arts projects varies from one jurisdiction to another. In Canada, there is an expectation that teachers will provide leadership in one or more co-curricular activities in fulfilment of their professional contract, but this expectation is not universal. In places where teaching is more strictly limited to the classroom, students must rely on out-of-school programs or on school-based programs that are led by adults who are not members of the academic teaching staff.

One example of a special, extra-curricular arrangement in my own field of theatre education, can be found in several states in the USA where secondary schools have a history of employing non-academic staff members to run their sports programs. Following this staffing model, schools also employ professional theatre directors to produce plays and musicals, after class, with students, often achieving near-professional results.

Another example of school-based, extracurricular arts programming using non-

academic teaching staff can be found in Finland where a national, government funded, system of arts schools provides extensive training in the arts to secondary students after regular classroom hours. These programs are provided with separate school buildings and are staffed by professional artist-educators. The Finnish model goes so far as to include official curricular guidelines approved by the government. These schools differ from the schools for the arts described above in that they have no responsibility for covering the academic curriculum. Attendance is optional and the focus is entirely on the arts (Sorin Sirkus Website, Retrieved August, 18, 2015, from <http://www.sorinsirkus.fi/english.html>). When visiting Bogotá Colombia, recently, I observed a similar system of arts education programming, located in what were called CLAN centres around the city.

Arts out of School

A very important outlet for learning in the arts can be found in the world beyond the classroom – in the culture and recreation sector. In countries where the arts have no place in the schools, out-of-school arts education is essential if children and youth are to receive any kind of introduction to cultural expression. Even in those places where the public schools do provide excellent learning opportunities in the arts, out-of-school programs can play a vital role in expanding a student's artistic education. I am thinking about outreach programs that are offered by various kinds of community groups as well as professional arts organizations such as theatres, dance companies, orchestras, libraries and museums. There are so many types of programs, supported by national, regional or municipal governments, sponsored by private foundations, or relying entirely on tuition fees, that I will not attempt to categorize them further. I will simply offer a number of examples that, I hope, will give a sense of the scope of this kind of programming without attempting to be exhaustive.

A program for pre-school aged children

There is wide agreement that learning in the arts should begin when a child is very young – certainly well before school-starting age. Young children naturally learn through play and playing with artistic media is accessible to them in ways that playing in other disciplines is not. The arts were central to the pedagogy of Friedrich Froebler (Froebler, 1912) the father of kindergarten, who believed that children should participate in making art and enjoying the art of others as a means of promoting personal development. Today, we find that most early childhood arts are conducted in day-care centres and in schools as part of kindergarten and junior kindergarten programs. Parents of children who are not yet registered in one of these organized programs are encouraged to introduce artistic activities within the child's play at home.

A notable program for very young children can be found in the city of Bogotá. I was able to visit centres operating under the title El Nido (the nest) where infants accompanied by their mothers were able to explore richly prepared aesthetic environments that were designed and facilitated by professional artist-educators.

A professional arts outreach program

It is now normal practice for a professional arts organization such as a theatre, dance company or orchestra to operate some kind of educational outreach program for children and youth. Using an orchestra as an example, it may go no further than presenting a concert of its usual repertoire for an audience composed exclusively of young people. It might extend to touring a small group of musicians to schools, at the same time

expanding the repertoire to introduce popular pieces that may be more accessible to untutored listeners. Ultimately, it could be extended to include training for teachers and workshops for students. An example of a well-developed orchestra program is that run by the educational department of the London Philharmonic which includes in-school performances and workshops, out of school performance opportunities for young musicians, and the nurturing of a new generation of professional artists (London Philharmonic Website, Retrieved August, 14, 2015, from <http://www.lpo.org.uk/>).

In this context, I should mention the community based approach to music education known as El Sistema. Pioneered in Venezuela over decades by conductor, educator and activist Jose Antonio Abreu and adopted by orchestras and music education programs in many other countries, El Sistema aims to provide developmental opportunities to impoverished children and youth through free classical music education.

A museum-arts program

As an example of an arts education program offered by a museum, we can consider the School Programs offered by the National Gallery of Canada. Understandably, this programming is built around visits of school children to view the gallery's excellent collection. When led through an exhibit by museum staff, young people are encouraged to become engaged in a personal interpretation of the works they see. Staffs also run practical workshops with visiting groups of children. The gallery makes it possible for students from across the country to access and learn from artworks in its permanent collection via the Internet (National Gallery of Canada Website, Retrieved August, 14, 2015, from <http://www.gallery.ca/en/learn/school-programs.php>).

A university outreach program

Universities and other institutions of higher learning often establish educational arts activities in the community to complement their academic programs in either the arts or education. The Department of Cultural and Creative Arts at the Hong Kong Institute of Education collaborates each year with two of the companies that provide bus transportation throughout the city to convert 20 buses into moving galleries of student art. This project, titled, Artbus: On the Move, invites students to compete for the right to display their original art on the exterior of the buses. Throughout the year, at least one of the busses is pressed into extra duty, carrying groups of student artists to schools and other venues where young people are engaged in artistic displays and workshops. This year, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Museum of Education organizers decorated the compartment of one Arts Bus as a time tunnel, taking visitors back to the 1960's and 70's through historical photographs. On the same bus, a well-known Hong Kong actor working with students from the Hong Kong Institute of Education presented an original, interactive play featuring collective memories of life on the bus (Hong Kong Institute of Education Website, Retrieved August, 14, 2015, from <http://www.ied.edu.hk/web/news.php?id=20140503>).

Arts training for talented youth

Another important, community-based form of artistic education is the training of talented young people in preparation for their debut as professional artists. My example of this type of programming, the National Ballet School of Canada, could have fit as well under the category of in-school arts education because, like the schools for the arts that described above, this school is responsible for covering all subjects in the full

educational curriculum in addition to providing intensive training in ballet. I chose to introduce it in the out-of-school category because of its historical connection with the National Ballet of Canada and because of its clear mission to provide our country with professional dance artists. Children audition for the school at a very young age and, if their families do not live in Toronto, the children are obliged to leave home to take up their studies in that city (National Ballet School of Canada Website, Retrieved August, 14, 2015, from <http://www.nbs-enb.ca/Home>).

Arts for marginalized youth

It is important that we not further disadvantage our marginalized young people by depriving them of an experience of the arts. I have already mentioned the El Sistema method of music education for impoverished young people. Another example, located in Toronto and operating with partners across Canada, is a community-arts-development organization called SKETCH. This initiative aims to engage young people (aged 16 to 29) who are homeless and on the margins of society. It has broad social and economic goals for the young people who enter its doors including increasing their health, education, self-sufficiency and community participation. Indeed, the main workshop space is built around a kitchen area so that no one leaves the place hungry. At the same time, the focus of activity is clearly on the arts. The facility is able to accommodate work in a number of art forms including music which is supported by a professional quality recording studio. (Sketch Website)

A youth led initiative

While most community-based arts education programs are led by professional artist educators, it is important to recognize the potential of young people to set up and run their own arts education activities. The Arts Network for Children and Youth (ANCY) has had considerable success encouraging this kind of youth-led arts projects across Canada through its National Youth Arts Week held annually at the beginning of May. Featuring youth-driven projects and events in communities across the country, the week “provides a space for young people to express and exchange ideas, showcase talents, get excited about the arts and celebrate their positive contributions to their communities.” (ANCY [Arts Network for Children and Youth] Website, Retrieved August, 14, 2015, from <http://www.artsnetwork.ca/?q=nyaw>).

Arts opportunities for life-long learners

Most of the time, when we talk about arts education, we focus our attention on young learners. However, much excellent work is also being done among other populations, notably among older members of the community. In the small city where I live, we are fortunate to have a very active Seniors' Centre where members aged 50 to over 90 are able to follow courses in many subjects including the arts. The Kingston Seniors' Centre is located in a former primary school and operated by a large and dedicated group of volunteers. Throughout the year, courses in drama, music, visual art and dance are offered for very affordable registration fees (Kingston Seniors' Centre Website, Retrieved August, 14, 2015, from <http://www.seniorskingston.ca/>).

Partnerships between the sectors

From a governmental perspective, arts education belongs partly to the culture sector and partly to the education sector. In some cases, including arts in schools, government

departments of education take responsibility for organizing and supporting learning in the arts. In other cases, especially in community-based programming, arts education falls within the mandate of departments of culture, recreation or even tourism. As we have seen, however, there are occasions when the work of professionals located in one sector overlaps with the work of professionals in another sector. Artist educators, working independently or as representatives of theatres, dance companies, orchestras, museums and the like offer presentations and workshops for teachers and students – either in schools or in their own specialized arts facilities. In some cases, these offerings extend to full courses, some of which carry academic credit for students or professional qualifications for teachers. Sometimes, artist-educators work with students while teachers watch and learn. Sometimes, artists and teachers collaborate on the planning and teaching of the arts.

An example of a highly developed organization that fosters partnerships between the sectors is a program run by the Royal Conservatory in Toronto Canada called *Learning Through the Arts*® (LTTA). Founded in 1994, LTTA has become “the largest full school intervention program in the world, reaching more than 377,000 students in the last ten years” across Canada, the United States, and other parts of the world. LTTA is an excellent example of the instrumental approach to arts education that I will say more about later. Artist educators, who have been specially trained by LTTA, collaborate with classroom teachers to teach the core curriculum through arts-based activities. For example, they might teach arithmetic through dance, literacy through media arts, or science through music. An important component of each LTTA program is a research project designed to document the process and to provide evidence of the impact that it has had on students, teachers, schools and communities. Currently, the organization has completed more than 45 of these studies. (Learning Through the Arts® Website, Retrieved August, 14, 2015, from <http://learning.rcmusic.ca/learning-through-arts>).

Arts as a cultural right

I have been discussing the range of structures and venues in which arts education takes place within both the education sector and the culture, recreation and sport sector. I hope that I have been able to throw some light on the important role that each of these sectors can play in providing substantial arts education experiences for children, youth and life-long learners. At this point, I would like to turn my attention to the critical question of why we want to teach the arts.

For some artists and educators, the question of why teach the arts (in other words, what learning may be gained) is somewhat irrelevant. They consider the arts to be a fundamental, cultural right that all children should be given access to regardless of any peripheral learning that may take place. Their motto is often “art for art’s sake”. Indeed, there is much to be said for this position. Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) recognizes “the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”

Educators who maintain this position decry the wide-spread tendency to attribute general learning outcomes to artistic education, asserting that the arts are disciplines in their own right and should not be regarded merely as the servants of other subject areas. A recent publication by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was skeptical of much research that attempted to attribute academic success to experience in the arts. The authors (Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013) concluded that “. . . the impact of arts education on other non-arts skills and on innovation

in the labour market should not be the primary justification for arts education in today's curricula." (p.20).

As a life-long lover of the arts, I have considerable sympathy for this position. Of course, I want access to the arts to be celebrated as a cultural right. At the same time, I cannot help but recognize that education systems everywhere have adopted a utilitarian approach to the organization of their programs. Before policy-makers agree to spend precious resources on a subject or a pedagogical approach, they insist on knowing what good it will do for students. They see this as their responsibility to both the students and the taxpayer. If we want the arts to find a secure place in public education, it is not enough to simply assert that it is a right. We will need to be able to articulate the value of these subjects. Indeed, I see this as our responsibility as arts educators.

Instrumental approaches to the arts

A discussion of instrumental approaches to the arts in education returns us to the developmental goals of the Progressive Education movement. As an example of how the arts were expected to aid in personal development, I would like to refer to an important publication in the field of drama/theatre education. In 1968, Brian Way, a British actor and director who had already developed an approach to presenting plays to children in a way that would engage them directly in the action, published his seminal book, *Development Through Drama*. (Way 1968) Way's premise was that participation in dramatic play was the key to developing a number of personal skills and character traits including self-confidence, expressive movement, articulate speech and cooperation with others. To help teachers achieve these goals, Way provided detailed descriptions of specific dramatic exercises. The activities recommended by Way, were very similar to dramatic activities used by educators in a number of other countries. For example, I recall a conversation with Ms. Rita Crist whom I was privileged to meet in 1980. She described improvisational drama activities that she led in Chicago area schools in the 1920s in a program led by American dramatic arts pioneer Winifred Ward (Crist, R., 1980, Personal Communication at Arizona State University).

More recently, the instrumental approach has become increasingly prominent as teachers of the arts find themselves being pressed to justify the presence of their subjects in school systems that are governed by a strictly utilitarian mandate. These teachers have been looking to research for evidence that an experience in the arts is able to facilitate learning in the general curriculum. In spite of the reluctance of some scholars to accept the credibility of correlations between arts education and academic achievement, considerable effort has gone into exploring the capacity of the arts to produce learning that can be transferred into another domain. For example, a recent publication by the *International Network for Research in Arts Education* (INRAE) entitled *Wisdom of the Many* (Schonmann, 2015) contains 91 entries written by arts education specialists around the world. Most of these essays describe instrumental benefits of arts education. They presented arguments to the effect that:

The arts in education can be used to construct knowledge in other domains of learning;

- The arts can promote embodied learning;
- The arts can effect significant transformation in a young person's life;
- Arts education can positively impact personal wellbeing;
- The arts are a powerful venue in which young people can construct and maintain identity;

- Arts education has potential to facilitate social cohesion and community building;
- Arts education can contribute to the goals of multiculturalism. (Tang 2015)

Several contributors were especially sanguine about the potential of arts education to facilitate improved Social Cohesion. They cited examples of how the arts promoted social inclusion and community building and how they provided the kind of socialization spaces that enable social cohesion. Related to social cohesion is the theme of Social Justice. Entries described how arts education could contribute to peace building, environmental sustainability, and building awareness of other social justice issues. Democracy is another related theme, one in which arts education, and particularly drama education are shown to be effective ways of teaching democratic skills. Because the arts and creativity are within the capacity of everyone, arts education is seen as a democratizing factor.

Entries related to several of the above themes are optimistic about the potential impact that arts education can have on the lives of young people. Like them, the theme of Multiculturalism includes reference to beneficial results – bridging cultural gaps.

Policy makers internationally have accepted the instrumental value of the arts in education. For example, UNESCO has made it clear that it sees the arts as a means to improve teaching and learning in pursuit of its own social and cultural goals. I refer, particularly, to the *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the development of arts education* (UNESCO, 2010). This document, an action plan for arts education around the world, was a major outcome of the Second UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education, held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in 2010. The Seoul Agenda was unanimously endorsed in 2011 by the General Conference of UNESCO, giving clear, international assent to the utilitarian value of arts education. This plan is built around three goals. The first is to ensure access to arts education – for the purpose of improving education. The second is to ensure the highest quality in arts education, including a commitment to consolidating evidence of the impact of arts education (a clear reference to the instrumental uses of the arts to promote learning). The third goal of the Seoul Agenda is the one most clearly utilitarian in intent. It advocates applying arts education to help resolve “the social and cultural challenges facing today’s world.” (UNESCO, 2010, Goal-3) A key focus of strategies in support of this goal, is the belief that an exposure to the arts will be effective in promoting creative capacity among the students.

Even the OECD report (Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013) that was so critical of much arts education research methodology was prepared to recognize the merits of some research. For example, it strongly credits drama/theatre education with effectiveness in improving verbal achievement (a claim made at an earlier time by Brian Way, among others).

Conclusion

I hope that I have managed to give an impression of the range of arts education programs and activities in schools and in the wider community, including partnerships between the education and culture sectors. I have also attempted to convey the essential differences between the instrumental approach to arts education and the position held by some that the arts are a cultural right that needs no further justification. Perhaps I might conclude by trying to suggest that a bridge can be constructed between these divergent outlooks.

At the beginning of my presentation, I fancifully suggested that the origin of arts

education may have occurred simultaneously with the origin of art itself. Certainly, the history of the arts is replete with commentary on the learning that inevitably accompanies an artistic experience. To begin with the field of drama/theatre, I recall that Aristotle explained the effect of a tragedy on an audience as the purging of negative emotions, which we could interpret today as contributing to personal development. Medieval church leaders produced plays to teach the events of the bible and to provide moral guidance to the population. Nineteenth century dramatists like Swinberg, Ibsen and Shaw used their plays to awaken their audiences to the social and economic injustices of their time. Twentieth century political dramatists like Brecht deliberately aimed their plays at teaching ideological dogma. Art for art sake is a concept that is not easily compatible with the history of theatre art.

The other art forms are also associated with learning in various ways. Film and dance are capable of dealing with the same themes that I mentioned above under theatre art, as is visual art which can have a strongly narrative character. Young people are known to rely heavily on popular music in the construction of their personal and collective identity. Even when artists are most concerned with creative expression and completely uninterested in conveying any kind of message, they cannot entirely escape the role of teacher. Innovative visual artists from the impressionists to the fauvists to the cubists have taught us to see the world in entirely different ways than were possible before. Composers are continuously re-inventing musical form in ways that teach us to listen differently and even to feel with a different set of sensibilities. Abstract dance pieces that reject their traditional narrative form teach us to live in the moment and to see our relationships in existential terms. We cannot help learning from the art works we encounter any more than artists can evade their inherently educational function.

Because the arts have always been associated with learning and because arts education is entirely dependent on artistic quality for its effectiveness, the gap between instrumental and rights-based approaches to arts education may ultimately prove to be illusory.

References

- Courtney, R. (1968). *Play, drama and thought: The intellectual background to dramatic education*. London: Cassell & Company.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Kappa Delta Pi.
- Froebel, F. (1912). *Froebel's chief writings on education* (Trans. Fletcher, S. S. F. & Welton, J.). London, Edward Arnold & Co.
- Montessori, M. (1994). *From Childhood to Adolescence* (Trans.). Oxford, England: ABC-Clío.
- Schonmann, S. (Ed.). (2015). *INRAE Yearbook 2015: Wisdom of the many – Issues in arts education*. Münster: Waxman.
- Tang, A. (2015). *Significant themes in arts education* [Unpublished research report]. Kingston, Canada: Queen's University.
- United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the rights of the child*. Retrieved August 10, 2015 from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>
- Winner, E., Goldstein, T.R., & Vincent-Lancrin, S. (2013). *Art for art's sake: The impact of arts education*. Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- UNESCO. (2010). *The second world conference on arts education, 2010*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/creativity/arts-education/world-conferences/2010-seoul/>