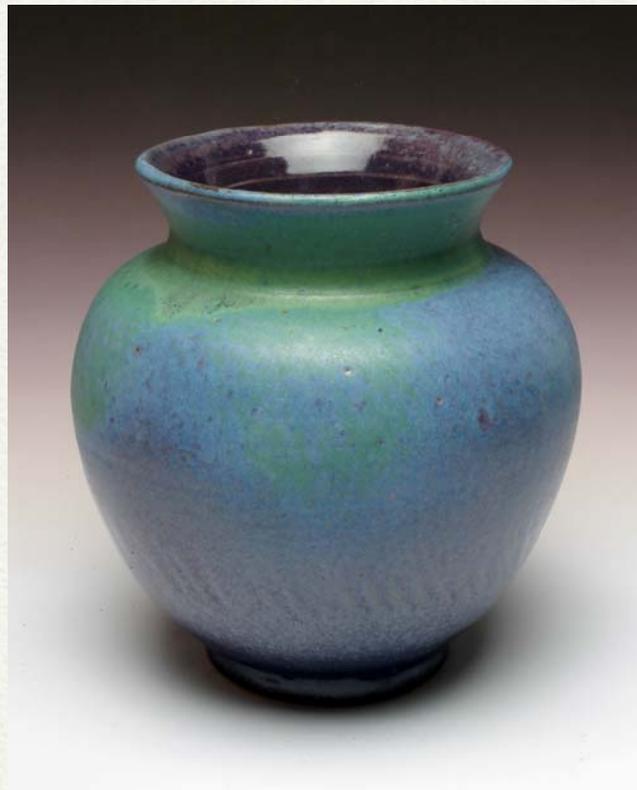


Weston K-12 Visual Arts Department

Program Review

Self-Study Report



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Weston Public Schools
June 2013

**Weston Art Department
Self-Study Report**

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Introduction:

Weston’s K-12 Visual Arts Department Comprehensive Program Review begins with the conducting of an extended self-study process. This is the first step in a multi-step process, and it frames the External Review with an in-depth assessment. The self-study then guides the “Charge” for the external review committee’s visit. The final phase of the Review cycle is completed when the department presents their response to the external review and develops an implementation plan.

Recommendations and reflections made through the process of the review are informed by our search for best practices through research and national guidelines, as well as learning from site visits, conferences and consultants. The self-study committee, which was comprised of the whole K-12 Department, is recognized for their contribution to this essential first step of the review process.

Committee Members:

Co-chairs: Chris Fehl and Amber Bock

Members: Elementary: Lucy Leyland

Colleen Lucas

Beth Bosworth

Middle: Margaret Burns

Dawn Nelson

High: Chris Fehl

Ted Garland

Julie Hom-Mandell

Margaret Kauffmann

Cat Ciccolo

Purpose:

The self-study is a combination research report and analytical assessment. Its purpose is to provide current information to the department on exemplary Visual Arts program practices as a benchmark of comparison for assessing Weston’s current program and to set goals for future departmental improvements. The purpose of defining ‘exemplary’ programming is not to set the expectation that all components of such a program should be incorporated into Weston’s practice, but that we can then thoughtfully and purposefully select those that most benefit our program in the context of our school size and need within our school population. The overarching goal is always to provide the best possible art experience for all Weston students.

Process:

The committee approached the study through a set of varied lenses each of which explore the department from different vantage points and help to cross reference ideas, practices, and assumptions guiding departmental practice:

Review of Weston Standards, Learning Goals & Benchmarks

Reflects on curriculum framework, core goals, and learning experience

In-depth assessment of rigor, relevance, and alignment

Research

Grounds all practice and vision

Develops knowledge and builds cohesive voice of department

Site Visits

Extends ideas and provides new thinking

Survey of parents and students

Explores assumptions and perceptions

Assesses current program by constituents

The committee took preliminary program feedback from the whole department and sorted information into areas of strength and need (See Appendix A). The committee prioritized this department data and established questions to be explored. These questions guided committee work, as well as the questions and ideas that emerged from committee research and assessment. The report provides background and information on each of the areas of focus, followed by a section of self-assessments and committee questions.

Self-Study Assessments

The report shares what we learned from our study using the lenses to explore exemplary programs and to examine our own program. This immersion of the self-study committee in research and analysis is reported as a series of Exemplary Program Targets that present highlights of what are exemplary practices within different aspects of an excellent art program. Self-Assessments and Emerging Committee Ideas regarding Weston's program are then compared to these exemplary practices.

Sections are organized by five important program components:

- **Instruction**
 - Time
 - Pedagogy
 - Feedback and Assessment
- **Curriculum**
 - Standards Learning goals and Benchmarks
 - Scope and Sequence

- Projects and activity experiences
- **Program Design**
 - Schedule
- **Facilities and Equipment**
- **Departmental Practices**

Instruction:

Exemplary Program Targets:

● Well articulated approaches for varied deadlines, projects, and choices that allow for student responsibility and autonomy
● Maintenance of a welcoming, safe learning environment that recognizes and supports the artistic abilities of all learners
● Quality instruction guides specific concepts & skills for projects that frames moving into open choice or experimenting with the original lesson
● Emphasizes effort over ability and process over product, and that making mistakes is essential to learning
● Seamless integration of discussion and critique establishes a culture of learning from each other and creates opportunities for multi-dimensional self-reflection.
● Specific, targeted instruction to explore artistic vision: developing students to see more, become more aware, and think metaphorically.
● Innovative uses of technologies to infuse the art process for both artistic expression and communication of process.
● Sharing and celebrating art through approaches that promote joy and excitement
● Design experiences for children that are focused on the exploration and creative manipulation of materials. These explorations do not always need to be geared toward the creation of a finished product.

Self-Assessment:

Over the past several years of professional development and PLC work (professional learning community), the Weston Visual Arts Program has focused on improving its ability to connect with students and motivate them to create personally important art work. Departmental work has focused directly on instructional approaches, with the goal of sharing practices across art faculty. Through the study of student art, reading books together such as “*Art and Fear*”, “*Imagine*”, “*Drive*”, and “*A Whole New Mind: Why Right-brainers Rule the Future*”, the department has looked to improve instructional approaches that impact student learning and artistic achievement. In Viktor Lowenfeld’s seminal text, “*Creativity and the Mind*” one finds “In teaching art to

children, the most important factor is the teacher himself.” The climate of the art room itself, which is the responsibility of the teacher, was also found to be critical. From *Creativity and the Mind* “The teacher has the important task of providing an atmosphere conducive to inventiveness, exploration, and production.” In addition to the idea that quality education in the visual arts starts with the passion and enthusiasm of the teachers, department discussion and research repeatedly surfaced several other concepts including the following: instruction that emphasizes experimentation and making aesthetic decisions that are personally connected to the art student; discussion, critique, and feedback; exposure to a variety of materials and techniques; opportunities for student choice, flexibility and differentiation providing several potential outcomes, and a caring atmosphere created by a thoughtful, passionate teacher are essential to quality art education. Harvard’s *Project Zero* supported similar findings after surveying a number of arts educators in thriving arts programs in their 2009 report, “*The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education.*” In it they found that, “ideas about what constitutes quality in arts education were, for most of these people, inextricably tied to fundamental issues of identity, purpose, and values as an artist, an educator, a citizen in the world”. Strong curricular programs center on the essential quality of relationship and connection to support risk taking in art exploration and development. According to Viktor Lowenfeld in *Creative and Mental Growth*, “What is needed instead is an artist or teacher who is warm, friendly, and democratic, someone who wants to help children develop their own concepts, (and is genuinely interested...” (pg 150-151). In the department self-assessment, it is evident through conversation, observation of classrooms, and looking at student work, that Weston Art faculty work to actively create an inviting classroom experience, and genuinely care about their students. As a department this is a departmental strength, but continual improvement of this work is a goal.

Within departmental instructional practice, it is agreed that students need to be exposed to a variety of materials and allowed to experiment with a range of techniques, not only to manifest latent abilities, but to expand critical thinking ability and to work through the process of failure. It is through failure that students not only understand the nature of the materials, but train themselves to see failure as a guide toward future success. Emerging technology like the iPads and iMovie are being used to help students understand how failure and varied iterations lead to creative solutions, especially when there is an opportunity for multiple correct solutions. In MS Robotics for example, students are video-recording each step of the creation of a robot, including the steps that did not work. Other mediums such as photography, graphic design and clay already provide ways for students to chart progress through failures. Initial struggles and eventual success also teaches students about discipline and persistence. Learning and mastery require setbacks for growth. A variety of explorations in different media provide students with an array of experiences that can be applied in unexpected ways to the solution of a future problem. Highly effective use of time and materials create maximized opportunities for learning and discussion time. At departmental meetings, the approach is to share strategies that promote these goals. Strong visual art instruction also provides thoughtful, timely feedback to students through

formative assessment, small group discussions, and organized critiques. The department grapples with how to give feedback that grows the art, and shares the knowledge, while protecting the dimensions of the process that are personal to the student? The department is exploring decisions about the appropriate balance of feedback and assessment such as rubrics or other kinds of grading with the objective goal that no grading should ground or limit creative thinking. The faculty believes that effort is the key to finding personal success in art and much of our instruction focuses on encouraging or motivating students to give their best effort. How do we evaluate and assess “effort”? Our research indicated others have struggled with authentic, useful art assessment. From “*A Discussion of Best Practices in Arts Education*” we found that some programs “actually used the measurement of joy as an assessment”. In addition, other arts programs have “developed measures based on skills acquisition in the arts, affective behavior modification, and attitude changes, which suggest that we have affected academic performance, too.”

The K-12 Visual Arts department recognizes the power of strong instructional practice and seeks to continually grow team knowledge of how to improve. The program review process refocused the team on digging deeper into developmental phases, and to re-emphasize the importance of matching instruction to the appropriate benchmarks of student development.

Emerging Departmental Ideas:

1. Continue to develop strategies to create warm, friendly, inviting studio spaces with awareness of the special vulnerability students feel when making art.
2. Develop K-12 art assessments and feedback that includes critiques, assessment using a baseline, and self-assessment. Articulate the subtle distinctions between the goals of “feedback” for instructional growth and “assessment” as an attainment of specific objectives of art practice, for the purposes of purposeful use of both tools.
3. Create purposeful feedback strategies that are authentic, effective, developmentally appropriate and encouraging to students.
4. Analyze the full accessibility of all K-12 art programming for students across the range of all learning needs to identify areas for improved access and improved instructional scaffolding to ensure successful and full inclusion in the art experience. Use data of high school participation to assess if students with special needs are electing to take art programming, and identify other clear data points to assess program success for all learners. Share in curriculum update report.
5. Further explore the use of recording technologies to explore capturing art development and progress to support student growth and celebration of art.

Curriculum:

Exemplary Program Targets:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ongoing opportunities for creative risk-taking and failure which provides students the opportunity to develop resiliency and recognize the strengths of iterations in project work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● K-12 Visual Art Standards aligned to Mass Frameworks and NAEA National Standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Curriculum Map that clearly articulates a logical progression of learning goals and units of instruction, and identifies K-12 skill strands.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Multiple opportunities for making connections to ourselves, others, our studies, and the world around us, embedded in the use of art language.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Curriculum that explores a variety of developmentally appropriate materials, tools, and techniques.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Student assessments aligned with state/national art education standards and the written art curriculum – both formative and summative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use of clear rubrics and innovative approaches for assessment of student performance in areas of skill development, artistic knowledge, and innovation.

Self-Assessment:

The Art department spent extensive time discussing and dissecting what constitutes the basis of a strong art curriculum. Committee discussions were aided by the site visitations (Appendix B) and viewing the curriculum descriptions of other school districts' art programs. While Weston's art program is grounded in a range of fundamentally meaningful core experiences and program strengths, there is a need to legitimize and further analyze program work by creating a clear set of curriculum maps to complement the updating of Weston's standards and learning goals.

During self-study the department was able to reflect on how completing this work will ground a wide array of goals and projects. An in depth examination of the curriculum was begun during the district-wide standards and benchmarks initiative. Across this past year the department has continued to utilize professional development and departmental time to make progress on this work, as well as while the self-study has progressed, to ensure that the curriculum is reflective of the latest best practices. The department recognizes that it needs to better articulate the scope and sequence of the skills, and art exploration to establish how the student experience develops across the span of K-12.

Additionally, the department embraced the development of a grounding departmental philosophy, which were purposeful outcomes of both the Wellness and Science Department Program

Reviews. While the faculty shares a range of common practices and ideas, the discussions surfaced areas for further discussion.

The Art department is guided by these philosophical and curricular benchmarks which will be the basis of a Departmental philosophy statement:

Strong art curriculum is designed around helping students find connections in the following ways:

- Connections to ourselves- personal, psychological
- Connections to world around us- wonderment, curiosity, attention to details, enhanced vision
- Connections to ideas, people, cultures outside of our experience- expand our thinking and problem solving capabilities, develop empathy

Strong art curriculum explores a variety of media, techniques and experiences in a logical and sequential way.

- Knowledge of one technique informs the next technique
- Knowledge of materials are cumulative
- “Random” information and experiences can yield previously unnoticed connections- these connections can be cross-curricular
- Strong art curriculum builds in risk taking and failure giving students the opportunity to develop resiliency

Curricularly, the department is small and focused on sustaining anchor experiences that have blended into a sequence of continuity over years of common planning and shared professional development. In viewing and exploring each other’s instructional work, colleagues have been able to shift learning goals and experiences to support the development of a wide range of rich learning explorations across the span of K-12. Teachers initially worked toward their own interests and strengths, guided by the Massachusetts Frameworks and Weston’s Standards. Each level has anchor experiences and flexible responsiveness based on student or building based events - such as the weaving project that emerged at one of the elementary buildings.

Emerging Departmental Ideas:

1. Articulate within the Standards and Learning Goals, the importance of the studio setting- as an anchor of instructional practice. Develop a well articulated framework describing the “Studio” approach for instructional delivery. (i.e. At Weston, classes typically begin with a short demo followed by student practice).
2. Assess the completed standards and learning goals to articulate areas where learning progressions need to be coordinated. i.e. concept work such as portraiture, landscape, sculpture, clay, collage, etc. what experiences require multiple experiences over time.

3. Assess curriculum program work against highest standards- Lowenfeld book of child development. Articulate these as guiding principles for instruction and assessment across the grade levels.
4. Articulate the ‘Digital Art Medium’ as a core art experience, to be developed K-12 with a clearly articulated continuum of skills (See Appendix C).

Program Design:

Exemplary Program Targets:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flexible work environments that provide ‘open studio’ opportunities for students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Committed time and articulated value to sufficient and flexible time needed to create art.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clearly articulated K-12 Curriculum Map.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● K-12 interdisciplinary coordination.

Self-Assessment:

While many school systems face limitations in the learning environment by providing insufficient class time, Self-study committee conversations around class time found that Weston designates enough time in art for authentic learning experiences. Elementary and Middle School time allotments seemed appropriate for the age of the students being taught. Elementary Art meets once a week for about an hour, Grades 1-5. Rather than extending class time, it was determined that improvement would only be seen through greater frequency of art classes. The unusual quarter-based arrangement at the Middle School seems to approach the ideal scenario for middle school aged students. The class time of 50 minutes is long enough for students to invest in large scale projects. The quarter long courses that meet 4X a week make for an intense experience that minimizes students getting frustrated as their skill level is challenged by their creative thinking abilities. Weston High School’s block schedule with 76 minute class blocks seems to provide adequate time for students to experiment and explore within lessons. Some art instructors from other districts shared with us the frustration, the waste of materials, and the reduced chances for success in trying to teach HS Art and Clay within a 45-55 minute class block.

In reflection, the department agreed that the studio environment, with a focus on making art, creates the best opportunity for the experiences and learning that the Art department can provide a Weston student. Entering into the External review process it will important to gain feedback on this grounding instructional approach. The art making experience is especially important in overcoming fear of failure and to promote creative risk-taking. Weston art teachers are able to

notice a rise in the number of students that express inhibitions around creative risk-taking as early as the elementary levels, when typically it is seen at the MS and HS levels of art maturity. As a department the goal is to recognize this and work to create lessons that require personal investment from each student. Weston’s art faculty knows the challenge inherent in making art is essential to a student’s personal, long-term growth, future success, and happiness.

Emerging Departmental Ideas:

1. Assess the practice of multiple sections taking place within same course - pros and cons along with semester versus year long courses.
2. Develop a guiding Mission Statement that articulates the Department’s Philosophy.
 - Articulate the importance of joy within the frameworks of the mission statement
 - Articulate the focus on studio based approaches
3. Develop District-wide coordinated K-12 Art common assessments to facilitate the discussion of student artistic growth. Assessments will be targeted by contact area. Pre- and post-assessment of student views of art or clay or photo. Electronic could be seen over time.
4. Explore the range of experiences for exhibition and celebration of student work- do we need more exhibition and celebration of student work and what are the goals of the various opportunities provided.
5. Meet with principals in preparation for the External Review to gather ideas and review the Self-study learning.
6. Continue to develop specific opportunities for purposeful project based learning across curricular areas K-12. The core focus of this connection should focus on the design aspects of the design and engineering process.
7. Explore providing a “lifted” level of art course at the High School where it is folded into GPA and meets on the 5x cycle. This could be embedded in another level to avoid it being a singleton.

Facilities & Equipment:

Exemplary Program Targets:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Studio Space that provides flow of movement and supports innovative instruction with ample work space and varied demonstration and work spaces.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Seamless, on-demand integration of new technology.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Systems for acquisition of new equipment and updating existing equipment. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Diverse and unique materials that encourage open exploration without limits. |

Self-Assessment:

Overall, the K-12 Weston Visual Arts Department enjoys a district that is committed to providing well for students and their course work. During site visits faculty observed some schools that had superior art teaching spaces, however on a whole we found the Weston art facilities are comparable to, or better than other quality art programs. Relatively recent renovations to the Country and Woodland Schools, and the quality of planning that went into the renovation of the Middle School have resulted in very appropriate art teaching spaces. Adequate storage, sink placement, and large windows all contribute to the quality of the art experience for students. At the High School, the recent building project provided a new, much-improved Clay Studio, and the addition of a Digital/Analog Photography Studio and Darkroom.

Weston Art has embraced the inclusion of digital media into the framework of the department. In core courses - such as Digital Photography and Film - it provides the fundamental basis of the art, and a wide array of other course are impacted by technology, such as digital cameras, digital labs, HD Video, and iPads at MS. This transition provides both opportunity and challenge for the department; the budgeting of such programming can be challenging. For example, as the department transitioned this year into a digital photography experience at the High School, it was fortunate that WEEFC provided 20 cameras for the Photography classes. Through careful planning, these 20 cameras support almost 200 students, grades 9-12, over the course of one year. Should any cameras become inoperable, the current art budget would be challenged to afford replacements, and the courses would be impacted. To offset these and other costs, comparable schools rely on a lab fee to fund the upgrading and replacement of digital and other equipment items, such as video cameras, scanners, and printers. A small lab fee from each HS art student, placed in a specific account, would allow the Art Program to be more self-reliant as new and replacement equipment is needed. Another area to be explored is the ability of parents to provide a digital camera for their children. In the past, it was requested that students acquire their own film camera for photography classes, with the idea that these cameras would be put to use after the student's high school experience. Both questions about a lab fee and digital camera support will be asked on the parent survey to be administered as part of the Review.

Emerging Departmental Ideas:

1. Establish a clear protocol and budget plan to coordinate with the technology department and department based budgeting on a process for the replacement of new cameras, printers, and other items that require upgrading.
2. During our self-assessment conversations specific issues around facilities were introduced. Minor adjustments can be made to specific art classrooms that would have significant

positive impact on teaching and learning. Sinks in elementary school classrooms, while well placed, are quite small and inefficient for washing up tools and containers. Retrofitting larger sinks would remedy this situation. Support of iPad video cameras at the MS would allow the use of this new technology to become part of daily practice, rather than an intermittent special event. Installation of modest air filtration systems would improve air quality during woodworking projects in the MS Art Rooms. Installation of a larger darkroom door or a light trap corridor would dramatically improve work flow in the HS darkroom. Skylights or clerestory windows could provide much needed daylight in the new HS Digital Photography Lab.

3. Ensure that the art teacher and Director continue to provide input during the development of the new Field School to ensure that all schools provide efficient and energizing art teaching spaces.
4. Increase the visual impact of Arts in all buildings to ensure that each school communicates the value of the Arts when people enter a school. Assess each building for available display space for 2D and 3D work.
5. Explore possible solutions for the upkeep of our digital imaging programs, including the acceptability of a lab fee, or student-owned digital cameras.
6. Articulate a long range vision to repurpose the former darkroom space into a fully functional art gallery, equipped with track lighting, self-healing walls and/or adjustable hanging systems. This space would be an ideal setting for additional community outreach through solo and small group exhibitions of the work of community and regional artists, as well as special student and Weston staff exhibitions.

Departmental Practices:

Exemplary Program Targets:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visual art faculty is a resource for their principal, teachers, and staff, instructing colleagues on the importance of art in the development of students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Art faculty is researched based, seeks knowledge of emerging art forms, materials and technology, and continues to pursue personal art practice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established and well planned meeting times to sustain and direct the department work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integration of the visual arts into the greater Weston community through internal and external exhibitions, interaction with practicing artists, and sponsoring visual art-based events and activities for students and community members.

Self-Assessment:

Weston's Visual Art faculty is an important and integrated part of each school building. They provide a source of information and creative ideas that support the classroom teacher and principal. They are all practicing artists, developing unique personal style in a variety of media. This passion for creating art informs their instruction and maintains understanding for the challenge and struggle of making art that is important to the artist. In recent years, Weston Art faculty has participated in several group shows, presenting their own artwork to the Weston area.

The Weston Art Department works to bring art created in the classroom to the community through building-based art shows, regular displays in the hallway, outside exhibitions such as the Norumbega Point Country School exhibition, and through various websites. This year marks the return of the K-12 Art Show hosted by Weston High School. Students, parents, teachers, and community members can see the progression of skills and experiences from early childhood to graduation. Visiting artists add to the classroom experience and allow students to meet and interact with working artists in a variety of media. Field trips to local museums and galleries, like DeCordova, provide students with the opportunity to relate to the actual art work, rather than only relying on reproductions.

Emerging Departmental Ideas:

1. Explore how the department communicates to parents and the community the subtle differences between "arts education" and "arts integration in education" such that both can be recognized for their importance independent of one another.
 - articulate the connections and differences between integrating art into classrooms versus the education of art - which is taught in art classrooms.
2. Assess the strategic and purposeful application of time blocks for both the length of one contact period and the number of contact times.

Conclusion:

The Weston Public Schools Visual Arts Department is comprised of enthusiastic artist/teachers. Our goal is to instill a love of the art experience and help others see with joy. We look forward to welcoming the External Review Committee in October 2013 to continue the important process of a comprehensive Visual Arts Program Review. The combined learning of the Self-study and the external review will allow us to continue to improve the visual art experience for Weston students.



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Weston Art Department Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- We help develop flexible thinking by encouraging students to improvise or shift directions in a project.
- We encourage multiple responses and creative risk taking.
- We introduce our students to a wide variety of media, which not only makes the program an in-depth experience for them, but also helps them to find an area where they may experience success.
- We do an excellent job of displaying student artwork whether in school lobbies, on blogs or other Internet sites, through school based or district-wide shows, or within the surrounding Weston community.
- Through observational drawing, photography, cut paper, etc. we teach students to pay attention to the subtleties of their world and increase their perception.
- “Art is a doorway to the world” and we use art to connect with people, places and cultures outside *and inside* our schools. We help them to understand and appreciate everything from the birds of Uganda to the celebration and significance of Chinese New Year or Dawali.
- We offer students the opportunity to work outside of class whether through art club or afternoon “open” studios, free periods, etc.
- We are a department of passionate art teachers and we have garnered tremendous respect within our schools and across the District. As a result, each school values the work we do and our time with students.
- We have the respect of our colleagues within our schools and the faculty enjoys collaborating with us.
- We value the work that each of us does. We support each other, encourage each other, share information with each other, teach each other and grow together.
- We are practicing artists continuously developing our skills which improves our teaching.
- We are a team of life-long learners who continue taking courses, either at night or during the summer to learn, inspire and constantly challenge ourselves to be better teachers and artists.
- We provide a much needed alternative creative, human, and physical outlet to traditional academics.

Weaknesses

- Insufficient time spent reflecting on our teaching practice and the learning accomplished by our students.
- We learn to master new technology but I feel we should be teaching each other how to use this technology rather than showing what we’ve done with it.
- Need for a more thoughtful and comprehensive use of technology across the entire program.
- Not enough class time to go into great depth with our students.

- Need to connect more with the curriculum of all subjects in our schools.
- We need to make time to share more about what we are currently working on with our students. It would help us to see connections between our schools and inspire each other.
- Lack of defined expectations and rigor across HS Art courses including homework, sketchbooks, etc.
- Lack of a K-12 curriculum map to improve communication and expectations about curriculum between schools.
- Need to show our larger community the work we do and the growth of our students' artistic ability sequentially from K-12.
- We could learn much more from each other by going to see our different working environments, the work, the process, the results, etc., for then we will be able to see and understand what we do in common.

WESTON ART DEPARTMENT

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Teacher	Date	Site	Best Practices Observed	Affirmation Of What We Already Do	Insights/Other Take-Aways
Beth Bosworth	4/29/2013	Winchester Muraco Elementary School	Intro and instruction given around large table. Students engaged and happy.	20-23 students per class, \$2300 budget for 500 students. “Friends of Art” Supplement with \$500-600 per year	No storage, no white board, 1 Large sink, no phone, kiln room down hall, 45 min. classes, no time in between classes
Chris Fehl and Julie-Hom-Mandell	4/5/2013	Lexington HS	Great Community Outreach events—“Lexicon” graphic novel convention, Wheel-a-thon (clay) fundraiser, objectives clearly posted in classroom—school-wide mandate	Highly engaged and motivated teachers Wide variety of course offerings New graphic design room	No storage. Short classes—(45-50 min.) little time for depth and large works—especially in painting and clay—wasted materials—no time to use all of the mixed paint etc. Small teaching space—little room for still life arrangements and easels. Class size large 24 max for noticeable small teaching space, all flash animation—no stop motion. 5 DSLRs for all classes/students plus 1 DSLR for teachers to share

WESTON ART DEPARTMENT

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Teacher	Date	Site	Best Practices Observed	Affirmation Of What We Already Do	Insights/Other Take-Aways
Dawn Nelson	4/23/2013	Cambridge Pub. Schools Vassal Lane Upper Campus	Positive/engaging atmosphere Expectations clearly spelled out on wall. Students understand the expectations and get right to work. There is a back-up project for those who finish.	Highly engaging and motivated teacher—very experienced- it is apparent. Commitment to having students involved in Art. They spend more time in art than WMS students. Opportunities exist for students interested in spending more time in art.	Murals in school foster student ownership. Class size similar 18-24. There is technology—computer and smart board, but they do not seem to be used. Student Population—more urban—and more of a mix of cultural, educational and financial backgrounds.

WESTON ART DEPARTMENT

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Teacher	Date	Site	Best Practices Observed	Affirmation Of What We Already Do	Insights/Other Take-Aways
<p style="text-align: center;">Colleen Lucas & Beth Bosworth</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4/10/2013</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lincoln Public School</p>	<p>Teacher really connected with each kid. Art connected to world cultures and classroom curriculum—(Japan) Vocabulary Presented in “Eye Can”. Routine clearly established—students knew how to access materials and how to put them away!</p>	<p>Lots of Art throughout the school. Exhibit of student art at Town Library. Value human connections.</p>	<p>Older facility, Large sinks. Lots of visuals everywhere! Good space, good light 45 min. class—not enough time. 6 classes per day with little time in between. Good storage. Each project went home as completed-no portfolio. Kiln in separate but attached kiln room.</p>

WESTON ART DEPARTMENT

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Teacher	Date	Site	Best Practices Observed	Affirmation Of What We Already Do	Insights/Other Take-Aways
Ted Garland and Margaret Burns	4/22/2013	Wellesley HS	Great Metalwork class Rotating Curriculum over 2 years for certain courses. Well thought out display spaces	Similar curriculum	No requirement for grad, but upper level art courses included in GPA calculation. Lab Fee for Art Courses Film/Video in Science/Tech. Dept.

WESTON ART DEPARTMENT

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Teacher	Date	Site	Best Practices Observed	Affirmation Of What We Already Do	Insights/Other Take-Aways
Marky Kauffman	4/2013	Milton Academy	Art Gallery supports art program. Small classes. Every 3 rd year, they host an internationally recognized artist for an artist-in-residence, known as the Melissa Dilworth Gold Fellowship.	Photo students at WHS get a broad and deep photo experience—including digital and chemical work.	Color copier/Xerox Machine allows students to see a hard copy of their images immediately at minimal cost. Digital Cameras are loaned to students for approx. \$75/yr. Students get \$ back if returned in good condition. No chemical photo.
Marky Kauffman		NESOP New England School of Photography	State of the Art computers and printers. Highly skilled students in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Light room.	WHS Photo students on a par with NESOP. WHS Photo—quite sophisticated visually and conceptually.	NESOP instructors felt that the Adobe Photoshop being used at WHS was a perfect tool for this level—no need for Adobe Light room

WESTON ART DEPARTMENT

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Teacher	Date	Site	Best Practices Observed	Affirmation Of What We Already Do	Insights/Other Take-Aways
Lucy Leyland	5/26/2013	Wellington Elementary Belmont, MA	Engaging students in the layout of materials. Great presentation of lesson. Routine clearly in place. Excellent clean up with students. “ART SHARE” - time for reflection and challenge questions.	Use of technology. Wide variety of materials and projects. Excellent student art displays. Storage for class projects.	Web site a challenge—here and there. Field School has adequate prep time and a well thought-out schedule. Be sure to have display areas for 3-D work in new building. FS art show includes every child Connected with teacher and we will stay in touch!

WESTON ART DEPARTMENT

SITE VISIT REPORTS

Teacher	Date	Site	Best Practices Observed	Affirmation Of What We Already Do	Insights/Other Take-Aways
Margaret Burns	Art Review Committee	BB&N	Skill building in various art techniques At HS, art in halls and gallery space— validates student work. Studio Environment.	Teachers as Artists, doing their best, informed by their own work. Environment is encouraging for students to find their own voice. Art Show— important cultural event in community. Studio environment where students have open access (teacher present) to art rooms before school, lunch time etc.	The hard work of making student work visible is necessary, and should be happening all the time. Making sure students understand why we make art. The importance of trying to make sense of the daily events of our lives in a visual way. Allowing students time to develop some competence through carefully orchestrated experiences – and then, letting it rip. Opening up opportunities for “trying out” ways of “speaking” about the important things. Taking students’ efforts seriously by attending to what they have to say. Having conversations all the way through the process. Allowing students lots of necessary failure experiences. Art is not about talent, it is finding one’s way. Working in series promulgates the idea that it is the work that informs the work and points the way forward. Showing work of artists across time that documents their early years as preparation for the work for which they are known.



INSTITUTE for EDUCATION and the ARTS
Education Alive!

A DISCUSSION OF BEST PRACTICES IN ARTS EDUCATION

Roundtable Report from the National Overture of Education and the Arts

learning . academe
artistic experience
creative processes
connections
2003
April

during the week of April 6-13, 2003, the Institute for Education and the Arts held its first National Overture of Education and the Arts in the Grand Traverse Region of Michigan. In partnership with the community, the IEA developed a week-long series of presentations, workshops, and symposia by visiting guests from IEA's national partner organizations and by local individuals, organizations and schools. The Institute's focus is use of the arts to teach core academic subjects and educators are a primary audience. As effective education depends on support from the entire community, many Overture programs are for everyone.

This report is a summary of a two-hour roundtable discussion of Best Practices in Arts Education, conducted on April 9, 2003, at the Interlochen Arts Academy. Moderated by Kristin Fontichiaro of the University Musical Society at the University of Michigan, participants included area teachers and visiting experts from IEA's national partner arts and cultural organizations.

The roundtable was a stimulating conversation about the assumptions, challenges, and current issues of effective practices in arts education. As basic assumptions were challenged, new ideas were explored. It was a powerful beginning to a conversation that the Institute intends to continue, in on-line exchanges and at similar roundtables at future National Overtures in other communities around the country. Until the arts become a mainstream aspect of quality education for all, continuing this discussion about how the arts can enhance every child's education and life will be central to the Institute's mission.

This is the first of a series of reports about effective practices in arts education to be published by the Institute. As you read this report, think about what is useful to you and what ideas you would like to explore further.

For more information or to share your ideas, thoughts, and new perspectives with the Institute contact us at info@edartsinstitute.org.

A DISCUSSION OF BEST PRACTICES
IN ARTS EDUCATION

MODERATOR

Kristin Fontichiaro Youth Education Manager of the University Musical Society, University of Michigan

PANELISTS

Chad Andrews Director, Interlochen Visual Arts Department

Mark Borchelt Dance Instructor at Interlochen

Tina Curran Director, Language of Dance Center of the United States and guest artist at Interlochen

Dawn McAndrews Director of Education at the Shakespeare Theatre

Celeste Miller Co-Artistic Director, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

Vicky Risner Dance Specialist, Library of Congress

Jeff Wescott English Instructor at Interlochen

Joan Zaretti Manager, Secondary School and World Music Programs at Carnegie Hall



“Arts Education” means different things to different people. What does it mean to you?

Mark ■ I see it as a way to get back to a more integrated, holistic approach to teaching young people so that they not only understand process, but also who they are, where they stand in the world, and what they have to offer to society.

Tina ■ I see it as a continuum—learning in the arts, learning through the arts, and learning the arts as a specific domain of study.

Celeste ■ I see it as a spectrum...from training the artist to the integration of arts as a way to learn. We need to understand how each piece feeds the others, how we can relate to each other rather than stepping on each other's turf.

What about the difference between “arts education” and “arts integration in education”? I get frustrated with teachers who say, “so we read Harry Potter and then we drew pictures and then we acted it out,” and call that arts integrated education. That approach not only catapults students straight into performance without understanding process, it's also not teaching them to be artistic in the way they think. How can we honor both the art form and the academic subject, giving them equal weight in learning?

Tina ■ What you describe is what a friend of mine calls “drive-by art.” Ideally, arts integrated education is rather a constellation of experiences—literature tying into math or science, great artists working with students in class or on a field trip, experiencing life in the community. Arts are the way that we make meaning in the world.

Chad ■ In my studio course in printmaking, we spend three-quarters of the year learning the processes, not just the how, but the why—all of the concepts in the print making process. Then, in the last quarter, I sit back and the students have to develop their own processes. They

have access to all the other studios. They spend a lot of time in chemistry class, in physics, all with great freedom. In the last month, the light bulbs come on and they really get it. Then they begin to prepare their own portfolios to present to art galleries. It's very exciting stuff.

Jeff ■ In my course here at Interlochen we read Tobias Wolfe's wonderful memoir, *This Boy's Life*, followed by Howard Gardner's *Creative Minds*—Stravinsky, Graham, and Picasso, which gets us into creativity as an intellectual pursuit—how you talk about creativity. What is a field? How are judgments made? Students are struggling with how the mind can give some foundation to this quite nebulous stuff.

How do we know a “best practice” when we see one?

Vicky ■ It's really linked to what is good artistic experience. First, you have to look at the best—the best printmakers, the best dancers, the best actors, the best plays. Whether you're going to be a dancer or a mathematician, knowing what a musician has done to create a great work will enrich your experience.

Celeste ■ If you can give me the key to my [artistic] ancestors, I will feel more infused with their courage behind me to work with my students. If I can thus understand better my own creative process, I can give my students an understanding of why I do what I do, a grounding.

Vicky ■ Our history can help us generate in children a sense of fearlessness. If you have no sense of history or of community, it's scary. We have to be fearless ourselves in taking the lead on things that are important. When you combine knowledge with spirit you give courage to your students, and that goes beyond academics into the broader community.

Joan ■ Everyone links together. It happens between performances, in academics, it becomes part of your life...our students in the Global Encounters unit on The Silk Road suddenly saw the Chinese fiddle player in the New York subway differently. They could relate to him as well as to Yo-Yo Ma on the stage of Carnegie Hall.

Mark ■ Diversity! What a concept!! The hard part is that if you're trying to teach from an arts based curriculum, the learning takes longer to do. You have to



A DISCUSSION OF BEST PRACTICES IN ARTS EDUCATION

create a foundation so that it can build, and then you've really got something. But the immediate pay-off is not so discernible. If you're dealing with bureaucrats who want a quick bottom line, it's more difficult.

Caller ■ We're looking for models that can show the community that we're not just interested in arts or in performance, but in using arts to build relevancy and motivation to increase academic performance.

Mark ■ It was wonderful the other day in Celeste's workshop when she said how much better the kids she's working with understand the scientific concepts she explains by creating dances. The other students do slightly better on facts, but do you want to teach concepts or facts?

Celeste ■ Well, I hope it's helping the part of the country that wants to cut arts integration and says those things are fruitless. For me, it brings up deeper questions about whether we in the U.S. are really working to maintain ourselves as a democracy, or are we not? What does it mean for us at this table to say we want citizens to think for themselves, to be creative, to be strong individuals who think conceptually, beyond facts? I think there are people who would argue with us on that.

How do you deal with qualitative vs. quantitative assessment of what you do?

Dawn ■ At the Shakespeare Theatre we have in the past year looked at all of our education programs with a set of essential questions and have aligned them through a backward design process, as if we were developing a curriculum or lesson plan. We looked at actual outcomes of our programs against the outcomes we had intended to reach. Then we put together learning materials that really lead to those intended outcomes. Too many teaching artists or arts educators say, "This is the time I have and the art I want to teach, now what am I going to do to get students connected?," rather than asking, "What are the implicit and explicit outcomes that I want?"

Mark ■ When I moved from professional performing into an academic career teaching dance, I groused with all the other faculty about having to justify what we did to school administrators. Why did the arts have to be

justified? But then I realized that, instead of just asking students to do what I do, I had to go back and do more research to understand anatomy and kinesthesia, how movement works. This made me a better educator because I understood what I was presenting. If you can't justify what you do it probably means that you haven't really explored inside of it to see how and why you do it.

Dawn ■ If we have to be based on standards, how can we bring different pieces of different standards together to expand the notion of what we're actually testing for? We don't want to just measure facts learned, we want to see how it all overlaps, if we're actually creating aesthetic human beings who can take what they've learned and apply it some place else.

Mark ■ If you're dealing with bureaucrats who want a quick bottom line, how can you build a K-12 curriculum that will allow students to know who they are, to identify their passion in life, who have a process/skill set they want to pursue, and who want to give back to the community in a meaningful way?

How do we know what has changed as a result of our work?

Dawn ■ Clayworks in Baltimore actually used the measurement of joy as an assessment! We've also developed measures based on skills acquisition in the arts, affective behavior modification, and attitude changes, which suggest that we have affected academic performance, too.

Joan ■ We all feel that time is of the essence when we're designing a curriculum. How do we teach students, not as artists, but so that they know how to do something, they know the skills, what they want to ask, a little more about what they want to learn. It doesn't matter where they live, you hope they're learning how to apply what they learn to many other situations in their lives.

Jeff ■ One of my students was a voice major questioning how she could fit into the world of voice. At a panel discussion on the life of Stravinsky with five of our music instructors she became a very vocal questioner. She carried the conversation beyond that moment to other music faculty, and then decided that composition, rather than voice, was where she belonged.

What do you say to the teacher who says you're either teaching the mind or you're teaching art, but you can't teach the mind through art?

Chad ■ I would say that art is about life—what's going on in society and everything around us.

Jeff ■ I think that teacher needs to acknowledge the process that goes into just choosing a subject to make into art. You can't act in a vacuum. What is it in your life, your history, your mind that makes that still life your own?

Mark ■ You need to understand how and why a process works in your life—whether you're going to run a bank or a major corporation or be on a basketball team. I'd been dancing for several years, and was proud of my technical proficiency, before I had a choreographer come in to look at me. I was just going to blow him away and he looked at me and said, "What are you doing? We've got a lot of work to do, don't we!" I had to go back through an entire piece to understand what every gesture meant and its purpose and how one step evolved into the next. I hadn't even thought about who I was or why I wanted to take this forward.

My whole life changed. I hadn't thought about teaching before, but now I wanted to go to students and say, "Hey, guess what...there's more!" You have to look at your life and see that it's this huge journey that's going to be horrendous and fabulous and amazing and mystifying all the time because of how you relate to the people around you, what you give to the people around you. That's what we do. Art is the entry point to that.

Do you think the trend is more toward bringing teaching artists into the classroom or encouraging more artistic teachers?

Tina ■ I think the question is what best serves the students being taught—but I wonder when the arts experience and the process of art and the thinking of art will become a more integrated component of teacher education so that teachers are using as much of their creative imaginations to teach as they are to meet academic standards.

Celeste ■ I don't want my daughter's math teacher to teach her dance...but I do want her to be taught

math by someone who thinks creatively, has been stimulated creatively in a hands on experience—perhaps with one of us, in print making or dancing or whatever—so that she is a better, more rounded human being. We need to figure out how to help each other to work together instead of, "Uh oh, here comes the visiting artist, everybody back away."

Vicky ■ As a content provider, I think teachers have much to bring to the artists. I don't have a clue what teachers need, but you know what you need and I know what I have and I can make that yours.

Kristin ■ Unless there's a sense of partnership, there's a risk with artists going into the classroom for the first time. The teacher has to be an equal partner, even while you're trying to raise her sense of artistry.

Tina ■ I think we should acknowledge that teaching is an art. A master teacher is very much an artist in how she goes about thinking, observing, revising, and constantly problem solving. As a parent, I don't think there's anything greater that you can do than be a teacher.

Chad ■ One of the interesting things that has happened in this National Overture is how the National Gallery of Art and the Library of Congress have just opened their doors to us. As educators, it's now our responsibility to go browse their websites (www.nga.gov and www.loc.gov) to find out what we can start incorporating in our classrooms.

Earlier this week the Library of Congress gave a presentation with a 16th century Spanish choir book. As we all were looking at it, everyone saw different things...and that's exactly what a classroom is like. You bring out one thing and everybody sees something different. Students ask questions and then want to go to the library and do research, find their own way in their education. As educators we need to find out more about these national treasures that we can incorporate in our classrooms.

As an arts presenter, how do you know what teachers want?

Joan ■ They're pretty vocal! Even though arts aren't usually what global studies teachers are taught, they want to integrate arts into their curricula because they know it works as a way to motivate their students...it enlivens what they already do.



A DISCUSSION OF BEST PRACTICES IN ARTS EDUCATION

Kristin ■ At the University Musical Society, we have a Teacher Advisory Committee that meets once a year and tells us what they think our core program should be. If it doesn't correlate with their curricula—if it's not a natural fit—why do it?

Mark ■ One of the key components is how to train artists to be successful in an academic environment. A great artist who doesn't have the skills to work with students isn't going to be successful. You also have to train the teachers to work with the artists and to prepare their students. Artists and teachers working together also can present the idea of arts integration to people in the community so that they can see its value and provide the support to make it happen.

How about the replicability question...how do you feel about having your program evaluated based on whether or not someone else can do it?

Joan ■ Here in Traverse City, we're doing our LinkUp! program from Carnegie Hall and we're learning a lot about the process of moving from one community to another. By providing structure and some material, with each community bringing its own strengths to the process, it can be done in a way that is very powerful.

Mark ■ In any community you look around and identify who the best artists are. It might be someone who is rebuilding cars in a creative, fantastic way and would love to bring that into the schools. Then you need to find a teacher who's interested and connect them. Any community can do that.

Dawn ■ Why shouldn't teachers have the same opportunity to continue to grow and have the same discoveries as we want for our students? Why not create learning environments where teachers and administrators and communities can work together? Maybe if there's a best practice it has to do with being authentic—responsive and connected within communities.

I think that best practices and replicability in terms of models is somewhat limiting. National standards may not work because they can't fit all circumstances. It has to be responsive, not imposed from the outside.

Caller ■ We've tried to move away from the term "best practice" and use the term "effective practice" because that's limitless.

Dawn ■ Yes, and then it also can keep changing, in response to teachers and school administrators in any given community.

Where could you go if money were no object?

Mark ■ If teachers were celebrated as athletes instead of being so over worked, if the federal government were to really make education a top priority, if teachers were given time and training to do their magic, it would work.

Dawn ■ With more money and more time teachers could teach fewer classes, they could prepare better, they could create a better learning environment.

Kristin ■ People are frightened to dream a little because they think it can't possibly happen right now. But that vision is what drives us. When we lose it, we start giving up, we lose hope and the students feel it. Any other comments?

Caller ■ As a school health coordinator I can see arts and health education interwoven and hope we can work more on that. They may not be core subjects, but they are the core of who we are as human beings.

Jerzy Sapijevski from the audience ■ One thing many high school teachers are missing is the concept of non-verbal communication. I'm a musician, so to me, talking is second best; I'd rather play. As a university professor, I teach music appreciation to non-music students and when I ask them what they learned in music appreciation in high school all they know is birthdays and death dates of musicians. They have no understanding of the spirit of music. This is criminal!

I do an analysis of Mozart's *Requiem*, but not by talking about it. I don't even tell them it's Mozart because they're so prejudiced. Oh, god, not that old guy again. I tell them this was written by a person who was dying and I ask them to see what images come to their minds as they listen to the music. So I trick them for the emotion. They may think it was written last year, but they perceive it on a different level. That's what's relevant—the perception and emotion of art, not the facts about it.

Final word from the audience ■ You have given me hope that with people like you doing these sorts of things we really can help other generations coming up so that they can deal with the incredible problems of being cold and shut out from the rest of the world. Thank you.

artistic experience
creative processes &
connections
learning
academic

Toward a New Fluency

Margaret Burns
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As is often the case, taking a look beyond our daily purview can help us better assess our work as educators. Years ago, in a Maryland elementary school, I witnessed a group of 3rd graders (*social studies class*) talking about their drawings of ships crossing the Atlantic with people full of hope for a better life. “They were hungry and many were sick,” was the story. The camera panned across the drawings, symbolically charting a course across the waters. This was a movie, poignantly told in the drawings and voices of young children. About 5 years ago, a colleague (*science class*) invited me to look at a video on his pocket camera. He had placed his camera lens on the eyepiece of a microscope, and there before my eyes was the movement of microbes! Both teachers shared in a very contagious excitement for the possibilities that lay ahead.

Last year, students in my 7th grade *robotics class* used the camera on their iPads to document the process of building and programming a robotic animal. The final presentation of their work came in the form of a video (recorded and edited in iMovie on the iPad, a seamless technology) which tells of attempts at solutions that failed, ideas that were discarded, changes of course based on analysis of failures, the final result, and, importantly, their understanding (metacognition) of the course content told in their own words, backed up indisputably by the evidence of video documentation. With this pilot project, *learning was placed directly into the hands of the students*. The time had come when students could take complete *ownership of their work*. <http://youtu.be/BtvRhBQ602k>

History tells us of the profound changes brought about with the invention of the **printing press**. The mass production of printed material called for a literacy that still defines language arts programs in schools today. Written and spoken language operate across academic disciplines from science journaling even to the arts (critiques are “talking about art”). Now, however, with digital devices, we have the means of expanding language based learning with the dramatically new capabilities of **media-based learning**. Look to the web: open courseware at major universities([Edx](#), [Coursera](#), etc.) YouTube videos, [I-tunes U](#), TED Talks, Google sites, New York Times portals, etc., etc. In the last 10 years, the development and proliferation of digital devices has placed media acquisition and production in the hands of everyone, including children. As they consume information, so, too, are they capable of producing information, thereby contributing to the vast pool of human understanding. What is called for now is *a new literacy*, and as such, it should become a matter of extreme importance to our schools.

The 'fine arts', by tradition, while falling historically under the liberal arts umbrella, have been seen as separate from academic disciplines. If, however, we conclude as we ought, that teaching students fluency in the digital media is essential to contemporary modes of communication, we are able to look to **the arts as an environment where students can learn digital languages that serve all disciplines**. In fact, the *collaborative model* that we espouse for our students' learning must be modeled by faculty as they acquire fluency by watching and learning from each other. The content of the disciplines vary, but the languages that describe them are the same. As faculty become more fluent, the wholeness of learning becomes possible. We are on the threshold of something we can only imagine.

Recommendations:

COMMUNITY

Faculty must see themselves as part of the greater community of learners. It is no longer enough to limit one's experience and teaching to what has worked in the past. Today, one must give relevance to the working and learning environment remembering that students today come with very different sensibilities and skills. In short, schools must be viewed as learning laboratories for all, students and faculty alike.

Paradoxically, *going out to see best practices in other schools*, public and private, can help build faculty collegiality by defining a common purpose for maintaining present practices while looking towards meaningful updates or changes of course. Better that it happens often.

How to implement the newer media/technologies, once they are seen to be valuable, means that faculty must be given **learning opportunities on an ongoing basis**. Technology integration demands prime technical support from highly qualified people, not only in the realm of networks, web access (Google docs, teacher web, etc.), but also in the realm of apps and/or specific programs that contribute to course content. There are many ways to learn: university courses, workshops, free video training on internet sites (Apple video tutorials and YouTube, etc.), subscription training sites (Lynda.com), publications, and **very importantly, the faculty itself**.

Time for arts faculty meetings should be regularly scheduled in different schools. Everyone would benefit from looking at student work in the environment in which it is produced, especially in seeing how the new media can be used to provide a rich experience for all. Videos of students' progress could open up meaningful discussions for further possibilities. Teachers working with and teaching each other what they have found to be worthwhile is the model of collaboration necessary to all professionals. It is often a ground up endeavor-- trying out ideas, keeping what

works, tossing out what doesn't. It takes time to develop good learning experiences with informed media content.

The newer technologies give us a common language that fosters community because it speaks across all disciplines. Therefore, I consider it the language we need to know *to help us communicate with each other* and the language we must embrace to communicate with the students who are growing up with it.

CURRICULUM

Open the entire arts curriculum to **digital media**. They can be important and useful in many ways:

1. Enrichment of the traditional class offerings. Some examples:

- **Book making** students could scan their drawings, collage them with web and/or video captured images, add text in visually compelling fonts, digitally print the composites on various art papers and transparencies, then bind them by traditional methods. <http://youtu.be/WBPbJYmwv8E>

Furthermore, they could proceed to “digital” books from this material by combining the imagery in a movie format that encompasses sounds and voice. The physical book can be held in the hand, the digital book can be held in the view of a far wider audience. Both have value.

- **Self portraits** Work accomplished in pencil can be scanned and printed on colored papers of various sizes providing students the opportunity to experiment with the *Renaissance painting technique, grisaille*. Using colored pencils, chalk, Conte, watercolor, etc., students could apply color to the tonal prints in order to learn about modeling with color. Because the original drawing is left untouched, experimentation with the prints invites playfulness. When no one work becomes too “dear,” authentic learning thrives. The “perfect” is replaced by the “process,” and paradoxically, much better work develops. Student self assessments are enabled when students can discuss their work when it falls into categories such as “no good,” “better,” and “best.” Their reasoning is backed by evidence. In searching for compelling modes of expression, drawing students share in the refinement process evidenced in the language arts, and in the working to good solutions model for STEM, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. (STEAM, if the added A stands for the Arts.) <http://youtu.be/aHhN27mozeQ>

2. Art forms in their own right. Some examples:

- **Video** is becoming much more user-friendly, especially Apple's iMovie. Sixth grade students, having built wooden fish in the woodshop, came up with the idea to make a movie of them swimming! Stapling fishing line to their fish allowed students to become puppeteers hidden behind a **green screen** from where they could orchestrate an underwater world of swimming creatures! The wooden fish adorned the annual art show, hanging from ceilings, swimming through "kelp" forests made of yards of shimmering fabric. Behind it all was the student produced video projected on 10' high scrim giving an air of surreal fun! <http://youtu.be/Q70XQXiSPi4>
- **Digital Images**, produced in Photoshop are enabling the creation of new visual realities. Eighth grade students are each asked to create a narrative unfolding on a visual stage where images from various sources are skillfully composited: sky images downloaded from web sites; hand drawn, colored and shaded, trees, etc. using program tools; student pictures captured from digital cameras; and scans from family albums, etc. All of these sources must come together in a visually believable, meaningful, and compelling image. For this to happen, much must be learned, not only in the technical aspects of the program, but in typical art concerns: the depiction of depth, the rendering of form through light and shadow, lost and found edges, the achievement of asymmetrical balance, the importance of mystery, etc. Possibilities can be explored through observation of the historical record: Raphael's use of space through linear perspective, da Vinci's aerial perspective, La Tour's candle lit paintings where form is defined by light. The following video, from student work, gives evidence of the process. <http://youtu.be/1l46rTcdvgY>

Digital media does not supplant traditional media. It relies on it, is enhanced by it, and is made rich and exciting in its reference to the best creative work across time. All art is about trying to make sense of our experiences and in our time, digital media are able to bring them together in new and unimagined ways. As new art forms emerge so, too, do new ways of making them public.

3. Cross discipline vehicles of communication. Some examples:

Finally, digital media provide vehicles of communication in ways that schools are just beginning to implement.

- **Design and Construction students** (seventh grade, using iPads) have begun self assessments by way of video "conversations" that combine digitally documented performance on challenges with their new found understanding told in the language of the discipline.

- **Music students** (sixth grade, using Garage Band) have created scores for dance classes, as well as for a video for the annual art show. <http://youtu.be/aw1luZPCYCc>
- **Teachers as Students** learn from each other as websites with curriculum content supported by evidence of student work and links to valuable resources become the norm. Meaningful connectedness of learning cannot happen if we can't see behind classroom walls. <http://www.weston.org/schools/ms/technology/>

4. A flexible means of dealing with current events and social issues. Some examples:

- Back in 2001, Digital Photo students, working on their first assignment, were **immediately** able to switch to a different topic: September 11. In trying to make sense of events, they determined that we were all “there,” all participating through the sheer inundation of media. Downloading photos from the web into Photoshop, students then photographed each other taking poses of onlookers. They placed themselves in the virtual landscape, and to “prove” their presence in their images, their shadows were made to fall onto the wreckage around them. In this way, students began to deal with the devastation.
- Student bullying has become a topic of concern, especially now that it is out in the open. Students were able to voice their feelings using Photo Booth on Apple computers. They took poses of what bullying might look like, photographed each other, manipulated the images in Photoshop, then brought it all together in an iMovie video. <http://youtu.be/70thEPm-gnI>

Visibility

All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone...the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.”

— **Marcel Duchamp**

The arts, seen publicly, complete the circle of the human need to communicate with each other.

Some Ideas for Ways of Showing Student and Faculty Work:

- Walls covered with art
- Gallery spaces
- Art Shows, including all schools shows, perhaps around themes.
- Informal gatherings and performances of student musicians, dancers, singers, and actors during lunches, etc., including arts projections on scrims, banners, pull down screens.
- Wall mounted video monitors showing process of making things, with student commentary (including the things that go wrong!).
- Combined happenings, i.e., musical performances enhanced with video projections of student artists working their way to a finished painting and/or student athletes battling their way across a field, science students working through an experiment, or math students working through a problem. All student endeavors are worthy subject matter, and seen as such, enhance community.
- Web Galleries posted on the school website including links to YouTube. When students see their work online, they come to understand themselves as ***participants on a world stage***. Process, including student commentary, should become visible through video documentation. ***We need to see and hear how things are made. Parents can share in the work of their children in this way.***
- Student portfolios should be digitized, and, perhaps, uploaded to a web portfolio site. Guidance counselors are advising middle school students (Weston) to keep examples of their work for possible use in college applications.
- Students showing and discussing work with students in other schools via Skype or other web meeting sites. Arts seen as a continuum of interest across age groups, difficult at best, could be managed, even on a small, trial scale, with current technologies.
- Media fluency crosses all disciplines, thereby increasing the **visibility** and **value** of the arts as a place where fluency can be learned.

Easy change of content is critical, both in the brick and mortar gallery spaces as well as the virtual spaces. In the former, wall systems exist that provide hanging bars and hook systems that do no damage to the walls and **do not leave the space feeling empty** when nothing is shown. There are also *mobile* wall units on wheels that provide freestanding exhibit areas for larger halls and lobbies; work can be mounted and removed in nonpublic places which accommodates students' curatorial efforts. The virtual galleries can also be seen with monitors and larger pull down screens. A key piece to the virtual gallery is its maintenance by someone who understands the technology and who sees it as part of his work description.

Regular updating of shows, which takes effort, validates student work.

Students should be involved, as appropriate, in the efforts.

Further Recommendations

Since we cannot know what learning will look like even a few years out, we must build flexibility into buildings, curricular offerings, and ways of coming together. The work that is valued must drive the ways that buildings are shaped and the ways in which digital technologies are accessed. There is a constant need to move back and forth between traditional tools and computers for the richness of experience that is outlined above. It is imperative that much consideration be given to it. For example:

- During construction or renovation, rooms that *might* serve varied usage should be **wired** for technology (including internet). Computer labs should be accessible to different disciplines and doors should be conveniently oriented.
- Ceiling mounted projectors (including speakers) should be part of every classroom. More and more content is coming via the web.
- Adequate electrical outlets should abound for computers, printers, scanners; for charging digital cameras, iPads, etc., as well as for tools such as glue guns, drills, electric staplers and pencil sharpeners, etc.
- Windows and building systems should provide adequate ventilation.
- Lighting should be considered. Skylights often need to be equipped with shades for light control.
- Furniture should be easily reconfigured depending on projects. If floor space is needed for **large** work, furniture should be moveable and stackable.
- Sinks with deep tubs and utilitarian faucets should be strategically placed to preclude traffic jams.
- Storage, a typical problem for the arts, can be found in atypical places, i.e., pulley systems hanging from the ceiling or rolling carts that can be removed or placed under tables.
- Large, moveable walls are necessary for large-scale work. **Changes in size affects the “presence” of a piece, and thereby its meaning.** Provisions should be made for students to work BIG. Standard paper size should not be a decisive factor. <http://youtu.be/9ZHlq516B6M>

Acceptable use policies must be determined. Permissions to record or video people have legal implications; parents must sign waivers (or deny them) for their children to be included in digital media. Teachers must keep current lists. Uploading video to a school website must be considered. Should videos be placed online showing student faces? Should students be allowed to use cameras on their iPads or iPhones? There is much to think about.

Lastly, the culture of the schools will determine much of what happens with the technologies. It is presumptive to think that one media curriculum ought to be introduced into any educational environment. Schools are living, breathing, communities that have faculties of all age groups and students from diverse

backgrounds. Courses are in place that are beloved and valuable. New ones should be taking their place along side them. One thing is certain: It will take a clear vision of the value of media fluency and the will to move forward to make it happen. I hope that the examples of work provided by middle school students will help in your decisions to proceed.